



# ADMINISTRATION REPORTS MAY 2026

## **ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES & HUMAN RESOURCES**

by: Shawn Kirkeide

### Emergency Preparedness Exercise

This summer, the District will continue its commitment to emergency preparedness by conducting a second-year reunification exercise focused on strengthening coordination, communication, and operational readiness during a critical incident response.

This year's training will expand upon last summer's work by incorporating transportation and movement procedures from a designated relocation site to the reunification site. In addition, our Unified Command partners will participate in a collaborative tabletop exercise designed to evaluate decision-making, interagency coordination, and overall response effectiveness.

The exercise will involve district administrators, building leaders, staff, emergency responders, and law enforcement partners working together to review protocols and identify opportunities for continued improvement. These training sessions are an important part of ensuring we are prepared to support students, staff, and families in the event of an emergency situation.

### Bluejacket Celebration

The nominations have been submitted, the votes are finalized, and we are looking forward to recognizing the outstanding people who make Cambridge-Isanti Schools such a special place.

Please join us for the annual Bluejacket Celebration on Wednesday, May 27 at 4:30 PM in the Performing Arts Center. During the event, we will honor our retirees, recognize years of service milestones, and celebrate staff members whose dedication and contributions positively impact our students, schools, and community each day.

We hope you can join us as we celebrate the commitment, service, and accomplishments of our Bluejacket staff.

## **FINANCE AND OPERATIONS**

by: Christopher Kampa, CFA

### Finance

Last month, the district received its annual credit rating update from Moody's. The report highlighted that we continue to outperform many of our peers with respect to both financial performance and enrollment stability. Moody's noted that "Minnesota K-12 downgrades outpaced upgrades in 2024 and 2025, with the trend continuing into 2026 rating changes," citing growing

operating and instructional costs as districts are increasingly asked to do more with less. This reflects a broader challenge facing school districts across Minnesota: while education funding has increased in certain mandated and categorical areas, general education funding, which supports the classroom and provides districts with flexibility, has declined on an inflation-adjusted basis over time. Until that imbalance is addressed, many districts will continue to face increasing financial pressure. While our district has worked hard to buck these statewide trends through prudent financial management and strong fiscal stewardship, we are not immune to the broader policy and funding challenges affecting public education. We remain committed to managing district resources responsibly and using taxpayer funds wisely in support of our students, staff, and community.

### Building & Grounds

With asphalt plants reopening late last month and the scheduled day off on May 8, our Buildings and Grounds team was able to complete much-needed parking lot patching at the high school. As crews prepare for summer, several major projects are planned, including critical work in the high school gymnasium. The most significant project will be the replacement of the existing bleachers. While this represents a substantial investment, the project could no longer be delayed. The gymnasium is one of the most heavily used spaces in the district, hosting athletic events, community activities, and graduation throughout the year. The existing bleachers have experienced repeated operational failures with extension and retraction, the supporting wall structure continues to deteriorate, and it is only a matter of time before the system fails completely. Although this failure does not present a safety concern, we felt the timing was right based on recent irreversible deterioration of the rail system.



Complicating the situation, there had previously been concerns from the fire marshal that a full replacement would not meet current clearance requirements between the roof structure and the top row of bleachers, which could have resulted in the loss of six rows of seating on both sides of the gym. After receiving a favorable ruling from the State Building Inspector, the district determined it was important to move forward now while replacement under the current configuration remains possible. Delaying the project could have resulted in both a greater operational risk and the potential loss of significant seating capacity in a facility that serves as an important gathering space for our students and broader community.

In addition, the gym floor, which required emergency repairs last summer after buckling, will also be resurfaced. This will be the final resurfacing possible before a full floor replacement is needed in approximately ten years. Due to the scope of this work, the gymnasium will be unavailable throughout the summer. We recognize the impact this has on students, programs, and community groups that rely heavily on the facility, and we appreciate everyone's patience and understanding as we complete these important improvements.

### Transportation

The Transportation Department has remained busy with both current operations and planning for the upcoming school year. State bus inspections were conducted on May 1, 7, 8, and 15, with results going very well overall. Staff are also preparing summer school routing for ESY and Targeted Services programs, completing annual mileage data collection for the state report, and processing student rollovers in VersaTrans for next year. Recruitment efforts continue as the department revamps and promotes new school bus driver hiring initiatives. Transportation staff have also partnered with community members to help navigate traffic impacts related to the Highway 95 and Highway 5 construction projects during student arrival and dismissal times. In addition, the department participated in several community engagement events, including the Rotary Club visit, Isanti County Touch a Truck, and the Cambridge Bar and Grill event. Finally, the district received a positive update from Hoglund Bus indicating that new buses are scheduled to begin assembly next month and remain on track for delivery before the start of the school year.

### Food Service

The Food Service Department continues to work through its administrative review with the Minnesota Department of Education, with the exit conference scheduled for May 18. While no major concerns have been identified, staff have been completing several administrative follow-up items as part of the review process. The department also recently completed its RFP process for grocery and dairy vendors and is pleased to continue its partnerships with Indianhead Foodservice and City Wide Dairy. In addition, Head Cooks will begin training later this month on the district's updated Skyward program that will launch next year. The new system is expected to improve functionality and help streamline daily operations across the department.

### Technology

The Technology Department continues to make significant progress in strengthening and modernizing the district's digital infrastructure. In response to the evolving cybersecurity landscape, the team is refining identity management protocols and enhancing incident readiness to better protect district data, systems, and staff. At the same time, the AI Guidance Task Force is finalizing a framework for the responsible use of artificial intelligence, which will support upcoming staff training focused on improving productivity and student engagement through emerging technologies. Looking ahead to this summer, the department is also preparing for a major network infrastructure upgrade at Isanti schools. By leveraging E-Rate funding, the district will replace network switches to provide the faster, more reliable connectivity needed to support modern digital learning environments.

## **COMMUNITY EDUCATION**

by: Christina Thayer Anderson

### Recognizing Afterschool Professionals and the Impact of Out-of-School Time

April included Afterschool Professionals Appreciation Week, providing the opportunity to pause and recognize the impact of out-of-school time programs in our district. Across Adventure Center, enrichment and recreation programs, and other extended learning opportunities, our afterschool professionals create safe, welcoming environments where students build relationships, explore interests, and continue learning outside of the traditional school day.

Research reinforces what we see every day: high-quality out-of-school time programs support student success. These programs help strengthen school-day attendance, academic engagement, belonging, confidence, and social-emotional growth. They also give students meaningful opportunities to collaborate, problem-solve, and build independence in environments that are both structured and flexible.

As we move into summer, these programs not only continue, they ramp up! Our afterschool and summer program staff provide continuity for students and families, ensuring that learning, connection, and care do not pause when the school day ends. We are grateful for the dedication, creativity, and commitment of these professionals who serve students every day and help bring our mission to life in powerful ways beyond the classroom.

### Celebrating Week of the Young Child and Our Early Learning Team

April also gave us the opportunity to celebrate the Week of the Young Child, a time to recognize the importance of early learning and to honor the educators who serve our youngest Bluejackets and their families.

Our birth-to-five educators, including those in Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE), Preschool, and Early Childhood Special Education, play a foundational role in our district. Through home visits, classroom experiences, and family-centered programming, they build strong relationships with children and caregivers during some of the most critical years of development. Their work supports early literacy, social-emotional growth, and school readiness, while also strengthening the connection between families and our schools.

This work continues year-round. Throughout the summer, our early learning team remains deeply engaged with families through birth-to-three services, ECFE in the Park, and ongoing outreach and programming. These experiences not only support continued development for our youngest learners, but also help families feel connected, confident, and prepared as they approach important transitions, including the start of kindergarten. We are incredibly grateful for the care, expertise, and commitment of our early learning staff, teachers, and leaders.

### You are Invited: Adult Education Graduation Ceremony on June 23

We are excited to share that our Adult Education Graduation will take place on Tuesday, June 23 at 6:30 PM at Cambridge Middle School. This event is a powerful celebration of perseverance, growth, and achievement.

Our Adult Education learners have worked diligently to reach this milestone—balancing school, work, family, and many other responsibilities along the way. Earning a GED through Adult Education represents not only academic success, but also determination, courage, and a commitment to building a better future. We look forward to honoring our graduates and celebrating alongside their families, educators, and community members who have supported them on their journey.

## **TEACHING & LEARNING**

by: Dr. Jason Bodey

Throughout the year, the District Instructional Leadership Team (DILT) has worked to advance Strategic Plan end result statement 1.8 - Ensure consistent use of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to improve student outcomes and 1.14 - Ensure that the continuous improvement process addresses and aligns curriculum with current state, national, and industry standards.

Central to this effort is the recognition of the "Three Big Ideas of PLCs," laid out in the book, *Learning by Doing*, that our DILT has been reading together this year. This structure will serve as the foundation for our professional learning communities (PLCs) across the district in the near future.

### The Three Big Ideas of PLCs

As decided by the DILT, these three pillars guide the district's collaborative work:

- **A Focus on Learning:** The fundamental purpose of our schools is to ensure all students learn at high levels. Educators work together to clarify exactly what each student must learn, monitor progress, and provide systemic interventions or extensions based on student mastery.
- **A Collaborative Culture and Collective Responsibility:** Collaboration is not optional, it is a systematic process where educators work interdependently in teams to achieve common goals. These teams take collective responsibility for the success of every student, moving from "my students" to "our students".
- **A Results Orientation:** Effectiveness is assessed based on results rather than intentions. Teams engage in a continuous improvement cycle by gathering evidence of student learning and using that data to inform and improve professional practice.

### Strategic Alignment and Implementation

To ensure these ideas translate into consistent practice, the DILT is implementing several key structures:

- **Alignment for Impact:** The district is establishing a direct line of alignment from the Strategic Plan through to the individual Professional Growth Plans (teachers) or Mutual Commitments (administrators). This ensures that goals, instructional strategies, and professional learning are directly supported by school and district-level objectives.
- **Clear Collaborative Teams:** Next steps include ensuring every teacher is part of a collaborative team by next school year and providing professional development on connecting individual growth plans, collaborative team (PLC) goals, and site goals.
- **Consistent PLC Protocols:** The DILT is finalizing a common PLC agenda template to be used districtwide by next school year. These agendas will include the "must-have" components, including team norms, attendance, data recording, and reflection on the four critical DuFour questions
  - What do we want students to know?
  - How will we know if students know it?
  - How will we respond if students don't learn it?

- How will we respond if students already know it?
- **Program Improvement Cycle:** A structured five-phase cycle is in development to help teaching teams align academic standards with evidence-based best practices .
  - Learn & Reflect
  - Design
  - Explore
  - Implement
  - Monitor & Adjust

By focusing on these big ideas and establishing consistent systems, Cambridge-Isanti Schools is moving toward a culture where student growth is intentional and data-driven rather than accidental.

### **STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

by: Rachel Kasper

As we wrap up the school year, special education teams are actively engaged in transition planning for students. These transition efforts help ensure that next year's teachers, service providers, and building teams understand each student's strengths, supports, and needs so students experience a smooth and successful start in the fall.

In addition, we are finalizing registration and staffing for Extended School Year (ESY) services. Completing this process now allows staff time to collaborate, prepare programming, and plan for individual student needs prior to the start of ESY in June. We are looking forward to a successful and engaging ESY session for our students and staff.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

by: Dr. Nate Rudolph

May is one of the busiest and most meaningful times across Cambridge-Isanti Schools. Students and staff are engaged in concerts, competitions, classroom celebrations, scholarship events, field trips, final projects, and graduation preparation. It is also a season filled with reflection and anticipation as many students and families begin looking ahead to what comes next.

Recently, Cambridge-Isanti High School hosted its annual Career Connections event, welcoming more than 100 representatives from local businesses and industries to engage directly with students about future career pathways and opportunities. We were also honored to welcome Minnesota Commissioner of Education Willie Jett, who shared high praise for our students, staff, and school community.

Our seniors also recently participated in Decision Day as they finalized plans for life after graduation. In addition, Cambridge-Isanti Dollars for Scholars held its annual scholarship reception, once again awarding a record-setting \$286,100 in scholarships to this year's senior class. At the

same time, the Bluejacket Education Foundation is preparing to award more than \$10,000 in spring grants to staff members who are leading innovative efforts to enhance learning experiences across our schools.

As we celebrate the Class of 2026, we are also preparing to welcome future Bluejackets through preschool and kindergarten planning for the Classes of 2039 and 2040. At the same time, our teams are actively planning for the 2026-2027 school year through staffing, programming, scheduling, professional development, and student support planning. This work is essential to ensuring strong learning experiences and opportunities for students across the district. What amazing partners and supporters we have in our community!!

Finally, we are looking forward to our Bluejacket Celebration on May 27, from 4:30-6:00 PM in the CIHS Performing Arts Center, where we will honor retirees, years-of-service milestones, staff members who have gone above and beyond, and the many community partnerships that help strengthen our schools. Thank you to our HR Team for their outstanding work in preparing for this always special event and we hope to see you there.

This is only a small sampling of the amazing things taking place throughout the district in the month of May. We have so much to celebrate and to be thankful for!

**GO BIG BLUE!**