

Dear Parents & Caregivers,

Please take a moment to review this month's edition of our e-newsletter. District officials have put together a variety of articles to keep our district's constituents up-to-date on a variety of topics at all levels of our schools. If you need additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out to acquire more details. Thank you!

MASTER PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

In February there will be some resumed discussion regarding planning for the future of the District's buildings. This discussion is two-fold with focus on planning for the short-term completion of maintenance projects, some of these taking place in the summer of 2023 as well as some in the summer of 2024. These types of maintenance projects typically include repairing roofs, replacing aging ceiling tile, the removal of VCT tile, upgrading light fixtures, carpet replacement and painting. The second part of this discussion involves looking at the replacement or upgrade of HVAC systems, replacing windows and upgrading safety features like installing a secured entrance at the middle school.

The District will also resume discussion on the retirement of LDES. As a reminder, in June of 2021 Architectural Design Consultants Incorporated (ADCI) of Lake Delton presented the findings of its follow-up facility analysis that was previously completed in 2015. This is an on-going process identified as one of the District's four strategic objectives of Facilities, Finances, and Operations. The purpose of this objective is to implement a long-term plan that ensures clean, healthy and safe facilities to deliver student-focused services while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

As mentioned in last month's newsletter article, the District now sees more students living west of the Wisconsin River. If this school format had been in place, the student population of a new PK-5 elementary school west of the river would see approximately 478 students. This school format will also be a full-service school in that it will offer special education services that, other than Speech & Language services, are not offered in the current setting. This would also assist in balancing the enrollment disparities that now exist with Lake Delton Elementary School (LDES) having 217 students and Spring Hill Elementary School (SHES) having 606 students this past fall when the third Friday count was taken. In redrawing the attendance areas, this sees a shift of 260-plus students going to a more centrally located school for their elementary experience.

Lastly, the District will continue to explore upgrades to Wisconsin Dells Middle School, now 70 years old, as well as Spring Hill Elementary School, now 30 years old, and finally exploring the replacement of the district office. At some point the District will look to seek greater community feedback potentially via a survey that will determine what level of support there may be for all or some of these aforementioned projects.

MID-YEAR ENROLLMENT TRENDS

Annually, the District, working in conjunction with the Department of Public Instruction, takes two student counts. The first count is referred to as the third Friday count, and this past fall this took place on Friday, September 16, 2022. At that time the District had 1,804 students attending school and had a district membership count of 1,800. The second Friday count took place on January 13, 2023, and the most recent count showed an attending count of 1,803 and a district membership count also with 1,803. Please see the six-year trend comparing the third Friday membership counts with the second Friday membership counts.

Fall & Winter Student Membership Count Historical			
School Year	Fall Membership Count	Winter Membership Count	Gain/Loss
2022-23	1800	1803	+3
2021-22	1804	1774	-30
2020-21	1718	1709	-9
2019-20	1778	1756	-22
2018-19	1811	1786	-25
2017-18	1748	1716	-32

As you can see, this current school year is the first time the District has experienced a gain in the membership count when conducting winter (Second Friday) count. Typically, the District has always experienced a decline in this count. This small increase will provide some slight increase in aid as a result of increasing. These mid-year numbers also assist the District in planning for the 2023-24 school year and specifically setting the number of classroom sections at the elementary and middle school levels.

In closing, please take note that Friday, February 24, 2023 will be a make-up day, and it will be an early release day as the inclement weather day that caused this make-up day was also an early release day. Please allow me to close out this newsletter by saying thank you for the opportunity to serve the children of our community, for they are our highest priority and it is our privilege to do so!

Have a great month!

Terrance R. Slack