

November 8, 2011 - Operating Levy Information

Residents of Delano Public Schools will be going to the polls on November 8 to vote on replacing the existing \$426 per pupil operating levy that expires June 30, 2013 and replacing it with a new levy of \$990 per student. Some of the questions that have been raised include the following:

- **Why do we need to double the existing levy?** State aid was frozen in fiscal years 2010 and 2011. The first round of federal stimulus funds, \$473,428, ended on June 30, 2011. The school district is intentionally operating with a budgeted deficit this year of \$785,000 because there are sufficient reserves that can be used to maintain current operations. Replacing the existing levy will allow the district to maintain the current level of programming for the near future.
- **What happens if we just renewed the current \$426 per student levy?** Financial modeling by the district's investment advisor, PMA Financial Network, Inc., shows that the district would have a cash flow problem as soon as 2013 and a negative fund balance by 2014.
- **What is the tax impact?** According to the district's financial advisor, Ehlers & Associates, the preliminary estimated tax impact is \$124 per \$100,000 of tax value for typical residential homesteads, agricultural homesteads, apartments, commercial-industrial properties and most other classes of property. Agricultural property (both homestead and

non-homestead) will be based on the value of the house, garage and surrounding one acre of land only.

- **How will the increased revenues be used?** The revenues will be used to maintain current operations (class sizes and programs). No new programs or personnel are intended to be added. One goal of the school board is to maintain an adequate fund balance so that the district does not incur interest charges associated with cash flow borrowing.

It is important to note that the school portion of the property taxes declined by 9.74% for taxes payable in 2011 or about \$45 per \$100,000 of taxable value. This was made possible due to the early pay off of some existing bonds and weighed heavily on the school board's decision to replace the existing levy with \$990 per student.

It is also important to note that Delano Public Schools spends less per pupil than any of the surrounding schools and well under the state average while Delano students consistently perform very well on all measures of academic achievement.

More detailed information will be sent to registered voters on October 8 with the notice of election that is required to be mailed by the school district.

Do Minnesota Schools Really Need Operating Levies?

Claims are being made that the legislature has provided sufficient funding to schools so that operating levies are not needed. Here are the facts:

The state increased per pupil funding by what amounts to \$60 per student each year in the biennium. In FY13 they put in a \$52 per student literacy incentive that is calculated based on the number of students proficient in reading in the 3rd grade times the number of students in the building (estimated to come out to about \$38,000 total for Delano).

Last spring our financial planning models that were developed by PMA Financial Network, Inc., the district's investment advisors, did not account for this, as the model was developed prior to the adjournment of the legislature. The increase amounts to about \$137,000 each year plus about \$38,000 more for the literacy incentive in the second year. This increase won't have much of an impact on our situation as related to the levy. The \$785,000 deficit that we have this year, which will be funded by reserves in order to maintain the current level of programming, could be reduced by these dollars. The overall effect of the increase is that it extends by a few days how long the levy will last with costs of operation at \$366,678 per week.

It's interesting to note that legislators are talking about how these increases should deter schools from needing to pass levies when \$50 of the \$60 per student was passed with the intention to help schools pay interest charges for cash flow borrowing brought on by the legislature shifting 40% of what they owe schools this year into the next year to help the state balance the budget.

- John Sweet, Ed. D., Superintendent

For current school information, log on to
Dr. Sweet's blog at <http://suptslog.blogspot.com/> or join the district's Facebook page at www.delano.k12.mn.us.

Delano Elementary School Kicks Off Organic Recycling Program with Randy's Sanitation

As an effort by the custodial staff to save money, Delano Elementary will be shifting a lot of what used to go into garbage cans, into an organics program. This organics program takes anything that isn't metal, glass or plastic and puts it in a compost pile.

The bulk of the trash produced at the elementary school can be composted. These items include not just food, but napkins, paper towels, pencils, milk cartons and anything else fiber-based, like paper or wood products. Items such as cans and plastic water bottles cannot go into this compost pile, but are recycled separately by the school. Items that cannot be composted include foil candy bar wrappers, juice boxes, styrofoam cups and soup bowls, plastic baggies, forks or spoons. These items are considered trash.

Schools in Hennepin County are required to participate in this composting program, but Wright County schools are not. Delano Elementary is one of the first schools in Wright County to split garbage between a landfill and composting.

Randy's Sanitation has been very helpful as DES gets this program underway. Besides being environmentally responsible, Randy's estimates it will save the school district approximately \$200 a month off the trash bill, or a little over 25% off what we are currently paying.

Delano Elementary began this program at the beginning of this school year to get students in the habit of separating their garbage. They are also being taught why this is important for the environment. If this program proves successful, and Delano Middle and High School may look at participating in the future.

What can families do to help? If your student brings cold lunch to school, switch from juice boxes to juice pouches and send sandwiches and crackers in plastic containers that are reusable. This is just a start, but it will help get everyone to think about the importance of recycling, composting and being environmentally responsible.

Delano Schools Needs Your Family Census Information

Each year, school districts throughout Minnesota are required by state law to conduct a census of the students who live within the district. The census information allows our school district to:

- Have on file the names of preschool age children for Early Childhood Health and Developmental Screening (Preschool Screening).
- Have on file the names of upcoming kindergarteners for Kindergarten Round-Up and other pertinent enrollment and program information.
- Helps determine the funding for Early Childhood Family Education.
- Helps determine the funding for Learner Readiness, as well as other school programs.

Parents are asked to report their family census information by calling the Early Childhood Family Education office at 763.972.6210, press 4, by email at jshaffer@delano.k12.mn.us or by mailing your census information to: Community Education Center, 140 Elm Avenue E., Delano, MN, 55328. The census information requested includes: Parent/Guardian Name(s), County of residence, home address, home telephone number, name and birthdates of all children.

Rather than conducting a time consuming and costly door-to-door or telephone census, the School District is asking parents to help in this endeavor. Your assistance ensures that the Delano School District receives full program funding from the State of Minnesota, and it is greatly appreciated. The information that the school district collects will be used only for school business and will be handled in a confidential manner.

Open Enrollment Information

According to Minnesota Statutes 124D.03, "Once enrolled in a nonresident district, the pupil may remain enrolled and is not required to submit annual or periodic applications. To return to the resident district or to transfer to a different nonresident district, the parent or guardian of the pupil must provide notice to the resident district or apply to a different nonresident district by January 15 for enrollment beginning the following school year."

Families that are open enrolled to other districts that have questions about this, please call the District office at 763.972.3365, ext. 2111.



Delano Partners in Education Funds New Website for Delano Public Schools



Anyone who recently visited the Delano Public Schools website has surely noticed it has gotten quite a facelift. Thanks to a grant from Delano Partners in Education (DPIE), Traci Lawman, Communications Coordinator for Delano Schools, Paul Ludwig, Technology Coordinator at Delano Elementary,

and Five Technology, a local web design and marketing firm, the district website was given a much needed overhaul. The website, which was originally launched in 2002, is one of the primary means of communication for the school district. All teachers are required to maintain classroom pages to help keep parents informed, and many parents use the website to check their student(s) progress more than once a week, read teacher newsletters or seek out their child's homework. The website also houses important information related to the Board of Education, including meeting agendas, minutes, financial statements, and other information required by law to be made publicly available. The Delano Public Schools website is the main information source for anyone seeking information about the school district and its offerings.

The results of a communications survey given to district residents in March of 2011, informed the school district that the most preferred methods of communication are Email at 81%, Family Access at 62%, and the District Website at 56%. This data encouraged Traci to put together a proposal for a grant from DPIE for the money

to update the district website. The goal of the district was to improve the ease of navigation, make it an interactive site, and give the teachers tools to improve their classpages. "The old site had not been updated in a long time, was difficult to navigate, and presented challenges when teachers wanted to update the information on their classpages. I had been requesting an update for a number of years, but the budget wasn't available," said Traci. "The new website will hopefully benefit everyone who uses it - I saw it as a very good use of DPIE dollars. Not to mention, Five Technology, who hosts the website, was very generous to us when it came to pricing. It feels great to be well supported by our local businesses."

Delano Partners in Education (DPIE) is an organization created exclusively to engage in, advance, support, promote and administer charitable and educational activities, causes and projects for Delano Public Schools. The grant was awarded in July by its Board of Directors. "We liked the proposal by Traci primarily because of the positive impact we knew it would have on a large number of people in the district, including teachers, administrators, as well as parents and students," said Dan Stolfa, President of DPIE.

Delano Partners in Education is always looking for new individuals to grow the efforts and objectives for the betterment of Delano Public Schools. If you have an interest in making a donation or becoming involved, please contact Dan Stolfa at dan_stolfa@ml.com

Delano Public Schools Joins List of EPA ENERGY STAR Leaders

Delano Public Schools is proud to join EPA's list of ENERGY STAR Leaders, an elite group of organizations that have improved energy efficiency across all of the buildings in a portfolio. To date, ENERGY STAR Leaders include organizations such as schools, hospitals, supermarkets, commercial real estate businesses, government organizations and hospitality companies.

Delano Public Schools is pleased to be named an EPA Energy Star Leader," said John Sweet, Superintendent. "Through this achievement, we have demonstrated our commitment to environmental stewardship while also lowering our energy costs."

ENERGY STAR Leaders manage energy strategically across an entire portfolio of buildings using EPA's ENERGY STAR standardized measurement tool, Portfolio Manager, for tracking building energy use. These select organizations are recognized by EPA for meeting one of two energy efficiency improvement milestones.

The first milestone requires a 10 percent improvement in energy performance across the entire building portfolio,



and subsequent recognition is given for each ten percent improvement thereafter. The second, known as "top performer," requires the buildings in an organization's portfolio, on average, to perform in the top 25 percent of similar buildings nationwide.

The ENERGY STAR program was introduced by EPA in 1992 as a voluntary, market-based partnership to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency. Today, the ENERGY STAR label can be found on more than 60 different kinds of products, new homes and commercial and industrial buildings. Products and building that have earned the ENERGY STAR designation prevent greenhouse gas emissions by meeting strict energy-efficiency specifications set by the government. Americans, with the help of ENERGY STAR, have saved about 19 billion on their energy bills while reducing greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those of 31 million vehicles annually.

Delano School District
700 Elm Avenue East
Delano, MN 55328

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Delano Public Schools Core Values

- I. Academic Excellence
- II. Developing One's Full Potential
- III. Building and Maintaining Positive Relationships
- IV. Managing Resources Effectively

2011 Board of Education

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Educational Excellence is Our Foremost Goal

Upcoming Events

September

- 27 DHS Honor Roll Breakfast 7 am
 Grades 10-12, DHS Cafeteria
- Operating Levy Informational Meeting 7 pm**
DHS Cafeteria
- 29 Early Childhood Health & Development Screening
Operating Levy Informational Meeting 7 pm
DHS Cafeteria
- 30 Early Childhood Health & Development Screening

October

- 3 DHS Conferences 4:30-8 pm
- 10 DHS P.I.E. Meeting 6 pm
 DMS P.I.E. Meeting 6:30 pm
 Delano Partners in Education Meeting 7 pm
 Talent Development Parent Forum 7 pm
 DMS Media Center
- 11 DES P.I.E. Meeting 7 pm
- 18 **Operating Levy Informational Meeting 7 pm**
DHS Cafeteria
- 20-21 MEA - **NO SCHOOL**
- 24 School Board Meeting 7 pm
- 25 **Operating Levy Informational Meeting 7 pm**
DHS Cafeteria
- 27 DHS Band & Choir Concert 7 pm
 DMS Auditorium
 ECFE/SR Halloween Carnival 6:30-8 pm

Come Get Your
FLU SHOT

- When: Monday, October 3rd, 2011**
4 - 7 p.m.
- Where: Delano High School Cafeteria**
- Who: Ages 3 years old and up**

There are 17 major insurance plans accepted as well as personal checks. Please bring your insurance card and a picture ID (drivers license or employee badge). Also, wear clothing that allows easy access to the upper arm. The cost is as follows:

- Flu Shots \$27.00**
- Flu Mist \$32.00**
- Pneumonia \$57.00**

This is provided by qualified, professional, Registered Nurses from:



Remember to Vote - November 8, 2011