



Eye of the Tiger

District 879 Newsletter April-May 2018

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Spring musical

Dates to remember

April

- 5....."Screenagers," 7 p.m.
- 6.....HS spring musical, 7 p.m.
- 7.....HS spring musical, 1 p.m.
- 9.....HS PIE, 6 p.m.
- 9.....MS PIE, 6 p.m.
- 9.....District PIE, 7 p.m.
- 10.....SciTech Showcase, Noon
- 10.....ES PIE, 7 p.m.
- 16.....MS conferences, 5 p.m.
- 18.....DIS info mtg, 6:30 p.m.
- 19.....Imagination Fair, 4:30 p.m.
- 19.....District Advisory Council meeting, 7 p.m.
- 21.....Prom Grand March, 5 p.m.

May

- 1.....7-8 band concert, 7 p.m.
- 2.....Senior Awards, 7:30 p.m.
- 3.....5-6 band concert, 7 p.m.
- 5.....Tiger Dash, 8 a.m.
- 6.....NHS induction, 1 p.m.
- 7.....HS band concert, 7:30 p.m.
- 8.....5-6 choir concert, 7 p.m.
- 10.....HS choir concert, 7:30 p.m.
- 10.....Grade 1 program, 6:30 p.m.
- 11.....Grade 1 Grandparent's Day
- 14.....HS PIE, 6 p.m.
- 14.....District PIE, 7 p.m.
- 14.....HS choir concert, 7:30 p.m.
- 15.....7-8 choir concert, 7 p.m.
- 16-18.....Grade 5 LLCC trip
- 20.....Graduation, 1:30 p.m.
- 23.....Last day of school; half day for students

• For more event details, see
www.delano.k12.mn.us.



Title town

The unseeded Delano Tigers defeated No. 3 Mankato East, No. 2 Austin and No. 4 Columbia Heights to claim their first state basketball championship on Saturday, March 24, at Target Center. It was also the first team title for DHS since dance won in 1998.

Construction journey and high achievement continue

By Matthew Schoen
Superintendent

The district is definitely in the second half of our construction journey. The new intermediate building will be completed by May of this year. This timeframe will give district personnel the opportunity to move in and work out all the logistics of operating a new school.

The newly renovated high school building is on schedule, with academic areas to be completed by the end of the summer of 2018. The performing arts center will be the final portion of the project, with an estimated timeframe of completion by the end of October.



Schedule change on last day

It is obvious to note that this year's school calendar was extremely condensed and had very few breaks. As all of you know, the rationale for such a confined calendar was to provide the maximum amount of time for our construction projects to be completed in the summers of 2017 and 2018.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform our parent community that the entire district will facilitate a half day schedule for all students in grades kindergarten through 12 on the final day of school, currently scheduled for May 23. The elementary bus will load students at 11:30 a.m., and the high school and middle school will follow at 11:45 a.m. The purpose of this half day is to give our staff some additional time to prepare and move due to the completion of the new school, and the transitional logistics within the elementary and the newly redesigned high school.

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District among nation's best

New study places Delano in top 3 percent in U.S.

By Paul Downer
Communications Coordinator

A recent survey has determined that Delano Public Schools ranks among the top 3 percent of school districts in the United States.

The National Council for Home Safety and Security evaluated 9,577 school districts to develop its Best School Districts in America list, and Delano was ranked 345th overall. A total of 26 districts from Minnesota were included in the top 500, and among those Minnesota districts Delano was No. 13.

To compile its rankings, the home security trade association that advocates for safe communities and community involvement used four criteria: student



performance measured by math and reading tests, school funding, poverty rate and dropout rate.

In regard to student performance, the report noted that strong districts can benefit all students, regardless of where they fall on the grade scale.

"Enrolling your child in a school where

students perform well on tests and get good grades will increase his or her own achievement through osmosis," the report noted. "Children and teenagers are highly influenced by their peer groups, and competition between students to achieve top marks can be a very good thing."

The ranking adds to a banner year for Delano Public Schools, which was ranked No. 9 in Minnesota by SchoolDigger.com last August, and which was one of just seven Minnesota school districts honored by The College Board with placement on the 8th Annual AP District Honor Roll in December.

For complete results and further explanation of the methods used in the rankings, see www.alarms.org/best-school-districts-in-america-2018/.

Schuler a Distinguished Principal Finalist

By Paul Downer
Communications Coordinator

When it comes to providing leadership at the elementary school level, Delano's Darren Schuler stands a head above the rest.

His success in that regard was recognized when the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association named him one of three statewide finalists for the Minnesota 2018 National Distinguished Principal honor.

"It's fun to be recognized. There are some amazing folks out there doing some amazing things," Schuler said. "It's neat to be part of the process any way it goes."

Schuler was nominated for the honor by former DES assistant principals Corey Lahr, now the principal at St. Michael Elementary, and John McDonald, now the principal of Albertville Primary, St. Michael-Albertville Schools.

"Throughout his tenure at Delano Elementary, Mr. Schuler has always had a vision for excellence," Lahr and McDonald wrote in their nomination. "His goal is to make all staff



Darren Schuler

better at their jobs by promoting best practices. Mr. Schuler not only strives to help the staff at Delano Elementary grow, but he is constantly working on making himself better too."

Under Schuler's leadership, Delano Elementary has been recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School, a Senator's School of Excellence, an Active Schools Award winner, a MAEF School Spotlight Award winner, and has been credentialed by MESPA as a Minnesota School of Excellence.

"On behalf of the school district, we're extremely proud

'Mr. Schuler has always had a vision for excellence.'

**Corey Lahr and
John McDonald**

of Mr. Schuler's accomplishments professionally as the principal of our elementary school," said Delano Superintendent Matt Schoen. "Over the past 11 years, working with Mr. Schuler both as a fellow principal and as superintendent, I've been very impressed with his ability to be the instructional leader in our elementary school. Mr. Schuler has built positive and effective relationships over the past several years that have created an optimal teaching and learning environment for all students and staff."

Schuler has been a principal for 18 years, including the past 13 years in Delano. Previous principal stints included three years in Lanesboro and two in Milaca. He also taught second grade in Watertown for seven years before embarking on his career as an administrator.

Building a strong staff

Schuler said his biggest focus as a leader has been to build a school culture that breeds success. At the front end of that effort is a relatively extensive hiring process that ensures a skilled teaching staff.

"I feel like we get really good, high-quality people that fit the Delano mold," Schuler said, adding that a strong work ethic, team spirit and a focus on doing what's best for students are emphasized.

Next steps

Schuler and the other finalists, Lisa Pikop (principal of Garfield Elementary, Miltona Science Magnet School, and Carlos Elementary of Alexandria Public Schools) and Curtis Slater (principal of Wyoming Elementary in the Forest Lake School District) will have in-person interviews with a selection committee in late April.

The 2018 Minnesota National Distinguished Principal, along with 49 counterparts representing their own states, will earn a trip to Washington, D.C. for an awards ceremony.

• See www.delano.k12.mn.us for a more complete story.

Three Reading Corps tutors needed

By Paul Downer
Communications Coordinator

Few skills are more integral to learning than reading, and students who don't learn to read well by the end of third grade typically have a difficult time catching up during the rest of their school years.

In Minnesota, about one in three third-graders struggle with reading, so the extra help provided by Minnesota Reading Corps (MRC) tutors can make a big difference.

Delano Elementary School is seeking three full-time MRC tutors to step in for the 2018-19 school year to replace three outgoing tutors. Sue Dehne, Angela Westlund and Lacy Punt have served during the current school year, and each one said they would highly recommend the experience.

"I was a stay-at-home mom for 11 years, and this was something to just get back into the swing of working," said Westlund, who is wrapping up her work at DES after two years.



Minnesota Reading Corps tutors for 2017-18 were, from left, Sue Dehne, Lacy Punt and Angela Westlund. Three new tutors are needed for 2018-19.

Punt saw a notice seeking tutors in one of the district's publications last year and decided to go for the experience.

"I just wanted to try tutoring young kids," she said, adding that an educational benefit provided to MRC tutors was also an incentive.

Full-time tutors earn a stipend of about \$500 every two weeks, and they also earn an

education award of just under \$6,000 per year for two years.

Because tutors receive thorough instruction in MRC methods both before and during the school year, they do not need much in the way of prior qualifications beyond a high school diploma.

"They are fully trained, so when they come and start they feel pretty confident," said DES

basic skills teacher Lisa Downer, who oversees the Reading Corps program at DES.

Tutor hours run from about 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and Dehne, a former teacher who has served as a tutor for the past three years, said the opportunity to work on the same schedule as her own school-age son was a good fit.

"I like the one-on-one or the small group teaching," Dehne said. "I've enjoyed it so I just stayed with it."

Delano Elementary School has been a Minnesota Reading Corps site for the past 10 years. Tutors have their own instruction area, and Downer said the staff appreciates the work done by the Reading Corps personnel. Dehne said the feeling is mutual.

"It's just been very nice working with the staff here and being a part of the school," she said.

For more information, contact Downer at lisa.downer@delanoschools.org, or see www.minnesotareadingcorps.org.

Announcements

Attend 'Screenagers' showing

Are you watching kids scroll through life with their rapid-fire thumbs and a six-second attention span? Stanford-trained physician and filmmaker Delaney Ruston saw that with her own kids, and learned that the average kid spends 6.5 hours a day looking at screens. She wondered about the impact of all this time, and about the friction occurring in homes and schools in terms of negotiating screen time.

In "Screenagers," Delaney explores struggles over social media, video games, academics and internet addiction. Through poignant and unexpectedly funny stories, along with surprising insights from authors, psychologists and brain scientists, "Screenagers" reveals how tech time impacts kids' development and offers solutions on how adults can empower kids to best navigate the digital world and find balance.

"Screenagers" will be shown at Delano High School on Thursday, April 5. Students in grades 9-12 will view the film during the school day, and a longer version will be shown for parents and community members at 7 p.m.

Become a substitute teacher

Have you ever wanted to try your hand at teaching? A two-day workshop is planned for people with a non-education four-year

bachelor's degree from an accredited college who would like to become a limited, short-call substitute teacher. Participants will receive training in:

- the process for applying for the two-year license through the Minnesota Department of Education,
- the substitute teacher's role in the classroom and district,
- the basics of classroom management, instruction, and child development, as well as communication skills, and
- awareness of legal issues relating to students and a teacher's obligations.

The workshop takes place from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Wednesday, April 4, and from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 5, at Resource Training & Solutions (137 23rd Street S, Sartell).

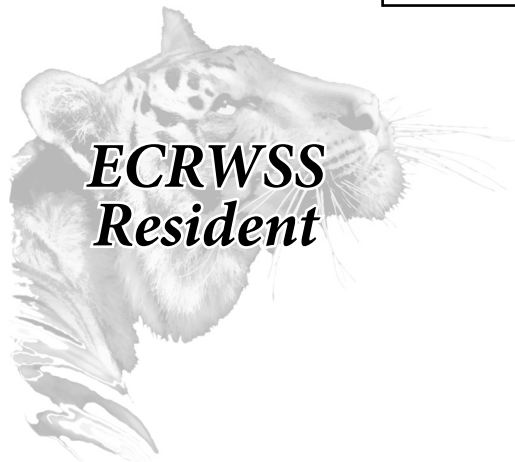
There is a fee to attend. To register, go to www.resourcetraining.com, enter the course code in the "Search for Events" box located to the right on the homepage, then follow the prompts. The course code is 9999. For more info, visit www.resourcetraining.com.

Volunteer at Delano schools

Whether you have just a few hours a year or several a month, there is no shortage of opportunities to share your skills and interests at Delano Public Schools. For more information, or to register as a volunteer, visit www.delano.k12.mn.us/district/school-services/volun or call 763.972.3365, ext. 2333.

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Delano Public Schools Vision

Systemic academic growth to promote educational excellence and continuous improvement for every learner in a digital society.

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Eye of the Tiger is published by Delano Public Schools, 700 Elm Avenue East, Delano, MN, 55328. Editor, Paul Downer, Communications Coordinator, 763.972.3365, ext. 2111, paul.downer@delanoschools.org

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Educational Excellence is Our Foremost Goal

Schoen

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High academic achievement continues

Even with this very unique school calendar, our talented students and staff remain positive and optimistic in making sure that academic achievement remains the focus of our educational system.

Evidence of this high level of academic achievement exists in a number of school rankings and scores that have been announced both before and during the current school year.

- In August of 2017 Delano was ranked No. 9 among school districts in Minnesota by SchoolDigger.com.

- MCA and college readiness scores released in August significantly exceeded the state average, and marked Delano's highest proficiency rates in science and reading since the current tests were introduced in 2012 and 2013, respectively.

- In September the district's average composite ACT score of 23.5 exceeded the state average of 21.5. This was significant because Minnesota had the highest score in the nation among states that gave the ACT to all students, and the national average was 21.

- In December the district was one of just seven districts in Minnesota honored by The College Board with placement on the 8th Annual AP District Honor Roll.

- In January of 2018 Delano ranked among the top 3 percent nationally on the National Council for Home Safety and Security's list of Best School Districts in America. That ranking placed Delano 13th in Minnesota (see related article on Page 2).

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our parents, community members, staff and students for their patience and flexibility throughout this very unique and sometimes challenging school year.



DHS will present "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" on Friday and Saturday, April 6-7.

'Peanuts' characters coming to life in play

Delano High School will present its spring musical, "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown," next week.

Show times for the production, based on the "Peanuts" comic strip, include a 7 p.m. performance on Friday, April 6, and a 1 p.m. show on Saturday, April 7.

The cast is led by Gabe Otto in the title role. Other characters include Lucy (Grace Schaust), Linus (Blake Koehler), Schroeder (Hunter Elwood), Sally (Jenna Kantrovich), Snoopy (Owen Dai-ley), Woodstock (Justin May), Peppermint Patty (Kelli Carroll), Marcie (Mary Ludwig), Violet (Claire Bruhn), Frieda (Juney Anderson), Eudora (Isabelle Hokanson), Pigpen (Sydney Sinnott) and Thibault (Autumn Trujillo).

That group is augmented by an "enthusiastic ensemble," according to play director Barb Roy. Middle school/high school vocal director Sandy Meyerson is managing the music.