



Eye of the Tiger

District 879 Newsletter May 2021

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State History Day
DHS spring musical

Dates to remember

May

20.....DHS musical, 7 p.m.
21.....DHS musical, 7 p.m.
22.....DHS musical, 7 p.m.
24.....School board mtg, 5:45 p.m.
24.....Jazz concert, 7:30 p.m.
27.....Gr. 5 band concert, 7 p.m.
27.....Gr. 6 band concert, 8 p.m.
28.....Seniors' last day
31.....Memorial Day, no school

June

1.....Gr. 5-6 choir concert, 7 p.m.
3.....Last day of school
6.....Graduation, 1:30 p.m.
9.....School board mtg, 5:30 p.m.
28.....School board mtg, 5:45 p.m.

July

19.....School board mtg, 5:45 p.m.

September

7.....First day of school



Several Delano students mentioned, earned honorable mention recognition, or secured a topical prize in the state History Day competition. See Page 4 for details.



Swinging into summer

Delano Elementary School students enjoyed their annual track and field days, a sure sign of the school year's end, with a few modifications and new attractions last week.

Closing a challenging year

By Matthew Schoen
Superintendent

As we journey to the close of the 2020-21 school year, we are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel with regard to this pandemic.

Last month Delano Public Schools was the first district in Wright County to host a vaccination clinic for students age 16 and older. In addition to our high school students, students from neighboring school districts were able to schedule a vaccination as well. The second dose of the Pfizer vaccine was administered Wednesday, May 12. Even with these vaccine clinics, we must remain vigilant in maintaining



a safe learning environment through the end of the school year. The virus and its variants are alive and well, and still spreading through our community, yet our mitigation efforts have paid off and have allowed us to maintain our in-person learning model.

I would like to thank our parents, who have patiently partnered with us regarding the department of health's mandated quarantines during this entire school year. We know that this creates a difficult situation at home, but the quarantines have been successful in supporting in-person learning as much as possible. Our parent community has definitely gone above and beyond in assisting the school district with these difficult measures. Your patience and support is truly appreciated!

In addition, I would like to thank our entire staff for their dedicated work through this most challenging school year. Your professionalism

See Schoen
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Schools earn high marks

By Paul Downer
Communications Coordinator

While COVID-related disruptions to testing and education in general have complicated annual efforts by various organizations to quantify school success, Delano Public Schools continued to fare well in several 2020-21 evaluations.

Backgroundchecks.org completed a survey of 10,247 school districts nationwide and ranked Delano Public Schools No. 12 among Minnesota school districts for 2020.

Factors contributing to that ranking included the number of K-12 students in the district, graduation rates, funding, the district's student-to-teacher ratio, and the percent of students scoring above proficient in standard math, reading and language tests.



In addition, U.S. News and World Report again named Delano High School to its annual list of Best High Schools in 2021. The organization examined 877 high schools in Minnesota, and 414 of those high schools qualified for the rankings.

In terms of math and reading proficiency, Delano High School ranked No. 15 in the state. DHS was also ranked No. 36 among traditional

public high schools and No. 42 overall.

In addition to traditional public high schools, the list also included magnet, charter and STEM schools.

Factors considered in the rankings included college readiness as determined by the proportion of seniors who took and earned qualifying scores on Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate courses, college curriculum breadth, math and reading proficiency and performance, under-served student performance, and graduation rate.

At the national level, U.S. News and World Report reviewed about 24,000 high schools and ranked 17,860 of them. Delano placed in the 85th percentile of high schools nationally at 2,526.

Schoen

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and willingness to go the extra mile to support our students has been truly amazing. This will be a year that we will not forget for a long time. But, in the grand scheme of things, our efforts to maintain our tradition of educational excellence have been a tremendous success, even in these very challenging times.

In conclusion, I look forward to the time when we can return our school operations to a normal mode. My hope is that next fall we will see that time come. Have a great summer!

Schoen earns honor

Superintendent Matt Schoen has received a Regional Administrator of Excellence Award from superintending peers across a nine-county area. "Delano is lucky to have him," said School Board Chair Lisa Seguin. See details at <http://bit.ly/SuptAward21>.

School board considering referendum

Existing voter-approved operating levy expires next year

Why is the Delano School Board considering a referendum?

A portion of the district's funding comes through an operating levy approved by voters in 2012 that expires at the end of 2022. If this levy is not renewed, the district will lose about \$1 million in annual funding.

Would a referendum approval raise my taxes?

Not necessarily. If the current levy is simply renewed, taxpayers would actually see a small decrease in taxes because the tax capacity of the district has grown by 50 percent since the last levy was approved in 2012 (more homes and businesses spread the taxes over a wider base).

However, simply renewing the existing levy will not be enough to end the district's current level of deficit spending. The board may seek voter approval for a higher levy amount in order to halt or slow deficit spending.

Why is the district currently deficit spending?

There are three primary reasons. First,

about 80 percent of the school district's budget comes from the state, and state funding has not kept pace with operating costs in recent decades. This means that many districts depend in part on a local operating levy to cover remaining costs.

Second, our district has experienced an enrollment decline in recent years, which has led to a drop in funding. We believe this dip in enrollment is temporary.

Third, the operating funds for the new intermediate school were approved by voters in 2007, before the school itself was approved. When DIS eventually opened in 2018 the funds approved to operate it in 2007 were already insufficient due to inflation and higher costs. This difference was budgeted for by spending down savings, but a new operating levy could provide adequate funding going forward.

When might a referendum take place?

The school board is gathering information at this time and has not yet decided to move ahead with a referendum. The board can call for a referendum in November of 2021 or November of 2022, which

would be the last opportunity to renew or increase the current operating levy before additional budget cuts are required. The board is scheduled to make a decision in June or July on whether or not to hold a referendum this fall.

Bond vs. levy

Bonds are for building; levies are for learning. Bond referendums, like the one approved by Delano voters for the new intermediate school and other campus upgrades in 2015, are for facilities and maintenance. Operating levies cover the expenses of running the schools, including salaries, utilities, supplies and technology. These income sources cannot be mixed.

If the levy is not renewed, what would \$1 million in cuts entail?

About 80 percent of the district's budget goes toward the salaries and benefits of teachers and other personnel. If deep cuts are needed, positions will be affected. This means larger class sizes, and/or fewer electives, options and extracurriculars for older students.

New principals hired for DES, DIS

Erlandson in as new Community Education director

A leadership transition will occur over the summer, as two new principals and a new Community Education director join Delano Public Schools in July.

Rachel Schultz will become the next principal at Delano Elementary School, Katie Thompson is the new principal at Delano Intermediate School, and Eric Erlandson will begin serving as the director of Delano Community Education.

Rachel Schultz

Schultz currently resides in Monticello and is dean of students at the elementary level in the St. Michael-Albertville school district. She also spent five years as an instructional coach and 14 years as a classroom teacher in the Big Lake School District, and was an instructor for St. Mary's University for six years.

She holds a bachelor of science degree in Elementary Education K-6 from St. Cloud State University, a masters degree in teaching and learning from St. Mary's University, and a K-12 administrative certificate from SCSU.

Greg Hinker, who was the interim principal at DES



Rachel Schultz

this school year, will serve as assistant principal at Delano Intermediate School next year.

Katie Thompson

Thompson, a Delano resident, is finishing her fifth year as assistant principal of the Independence STEM Elementary School in Big Lake.

Prior to that position she was dean of students at Watertown-Mayer Primary School, and she also spent 10 years as a language arts teacher in Watertown-Mayer and Columbia Heights.

Thompson earned a bachelor's degree in communication



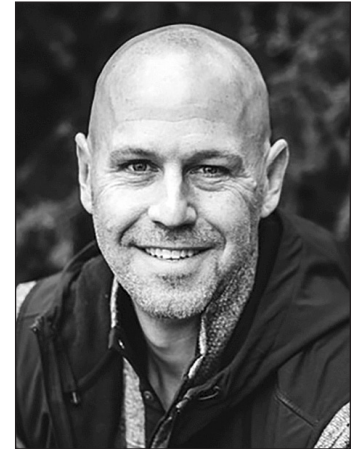
Katie Thompson

arts and literature with a 5-12 license, as well as her master's degree as a reading specialist with a K-12 license, from Bethel University. She obtained her K-12 principal license from Hamline University, and also holds a special education director K-12 license from Bethel.

This school year Joe Vieau served as the interim principal at Delano Intermediate School. Vieau plans to retire at the end of the 2020-21 school year.

Eric Erlandson

Erlandson, who hails from Albertville, brings a broad base of leadership experience from



Eric Erlandson

both the public and private sectors.

He has previously served as a Community Education director in Albany and Annandale/Maple Lake. He also has supervisory experience with the Community Education programs in Waconia and Monticello, served as the business manager for the Annandale School District, and has filled the role of general manager and president for a private company.

Erlandson will replace current director Diane Johnson, who is retiring after 16 years in Delano.

Announcements

Notify school of address changes

Moving? Changing schools? If your family is moving out of the school district, whether or not your students will continue attending Delano Public Schools next year, please notify the school office at 763-972-6200 for DES, 763-972-7602 for DIS, or 763-972-7601 for DHS. This information is vital for class assignments and staffing needs for the 2021-22 school year.

Tutors sought for math, reading

Delano Elementary and Delano Intermediate are both seeking tutors for the next school year.

The elementary is seeking multiple Minnesota Reading Corps tutors, and the intermediate is seeking multiple Minnesota Math Corps tutors.

Tutors work with students during school hours throughout the school year. Whether you're a recent grad, career changer,

stay-at-home parent or retiree, you can make a great tutor. No experience? No problem. Tutors receive great training, so they are well-equipped to help students grow.

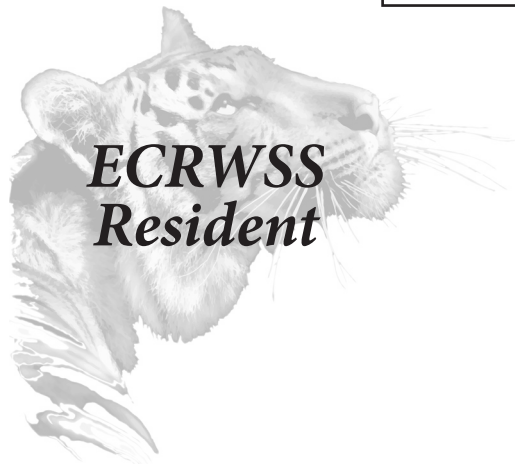
Part-time and full-time positions are available. Tutors commit to serving 35, 25, or 18 hours a week throughout the school year. Opportunities begin in August 2021. Tutors can expect to:

- Build your skills, network, and resume.
- Receive a paid stipend every two weeks.
- Earn up to \$4,400 for college tuition or student loans. Tutors 55 and older may gift the award to their child, grandchild, step-child or foster child.
- Receive access to health insurance with no monthly premium and child care assistance for those who qualify.

Ready to be the change for struggling students? Learn more at ReadingAndMath.net. Direct questions to join@servetogrow.org, or call 866.859.2825.

Delano School District
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Delano Public Schools Vision

*Systemic growth toward educational
excellence for every learner.*

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State History Day

The State History Day competition was held virtually earlier this month, allowing students to present in-depth research projects.

At the sixth-grade level, Grace Horeis and Lauren Froehle were the top finishers for Delano, taking third place for their website, "Brown v. Board of Education."



Lauren Froehle, left, and Grace Horeis were Delano's top finishers at state with a third-place website.

Isabelle Bushey, Layla Noll and Mary Leyda took fifth place with their website, "Brown and Blue Eyed Project."

Honorable mention finishes came from Sofia Blomquist and Anna Lamecker's website ("The First Nazi Trial Televised Worldwide"), Abigail Main's website ("Female Code Breakers of WWII"), and Evalyn King and Greta Lins' exhibit ("American Propaganda in WWII").

In addition, Brooke Merritt, Harry Stenback and Joey Taylor won a topical prize for their "Japanese Sakoku" project.


Eighth grade

Honorable mention finishes came from an exhibit by Clara Lawrence, Evalyn Green and Mallory Musta ("The Jungle: Changing America's Industries Forever"); a website by Reese Black and Sophia Grant ("The Monday Demonstrations: The Key to Unlocking Borders, Elections, and Freedoms"); and a website by Abby Wadholm, Anneka Zaun and Kayleigh Olson ("The White Rose Resistance Group: Fighting Until the End").

Henry Ulberg also won a topical prize for his documentary, "Monopoly: The Untold Truth Behind the World's Most Popular Board Game."

Delano Drama Presents

PRODUCTION OF



**THE THEORY OF
RELATIVITY**

MUSIC & LYRICS BY
NEIL BARTRAM

BOOK BY
BRIAN HILL

May 14 & 15 - 7pm
May 20 & 21 - 7pm
May 22 Matinee - 1pm

Directed by Joe Lawrence
Choreographed by Carly Linden
Musical Direction by Eric Conway & Jason Koets
Scenic & Lighting Design by Jack Neveaux

Originally Produced by Goodspeed Musicals, East Haddam, CT. The Musical was presented at the National Alliance for Musical Theatre's Festival of New Musicals in 2015.

\$5 for Students and Seniors, \$7 for Adults (staff free)
Reserve tickets online at delano.k12.mn.us

Presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI (mtishows.com).