

Eye of the Tiger

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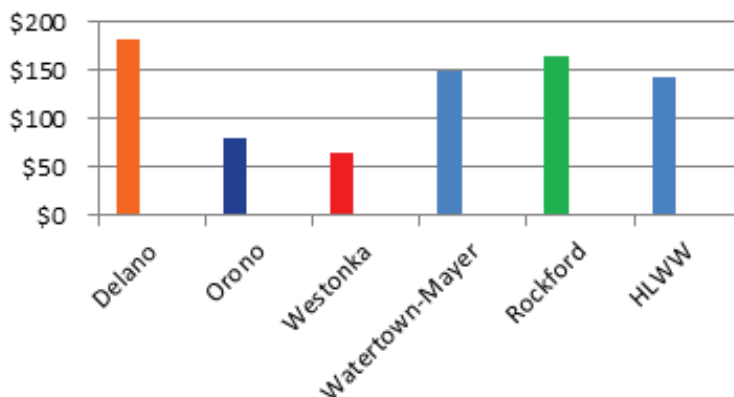
Why are School Taxes Higher in Delano than Surrounding Districts?

Answer: Property Wealth

Imagine you are standing in the checkout line at your favorite convenience store and see that the customer in front of you has the exact same coffee and doughnut as you. You are surprised that the total on the register for his purchase is less than what you usually pay. When the clerk rings up your purchase, the total is twice as much. Baffled, you ask the clerk why your exact same purchase is so much more, he calmly replies, "That is why we ask for your zip code, we have to charge the people from your town twice as much."

As you probably know, property taxes are a very important element in Minnesota's education funding system, but school districts have widely varying levels of property wealth. The Minnesota Constitution calls for a "uniform" system of public education. Yet, in school districts without significant commercial and industrial development to expand the tax base and lower the individual taxpayer cost, the burden for school levies falls heavily on the local home and small business owners in mostly residential school districts like Delano. This DOES NOT provide a "uniform" system of public schools. Today, taxpayers in low property wealth districts can pay two to three times more than similar taxpayers in high property wealth districts. This is why the school portion of your tax bill is higher than surrounding districts.

The availability of quality educational services should not be determined by your zip code. All students deserve quality programs and facilities and all property taxpayers need school levies to be equitable and affordable.



This graph illustrates what a taxpayer in each of these school districts would pay on a \$100,000 home. As you can see by the chart, a Delano taxpayer pays \$183 dollars to Westonka's \$65. This graph shows the educational funding inequities that are evident in surrounding districts.

What can you do as a taxpayer in the Delano School District?

The 2017 Legislative Session will address educational funding. Lawmakers in this legislative session must fix this inequity by increasing current equalization funding which will provide immediate property tax relief to taxpayers and will make the education system more equitable statewide.

Schools for Equity in Education (SEE) encourage taxpayers to talk with their local state legislators to ask them to make property tax relief for school levies and bonds a top priority in the upcoming legislative session. Delano Public Schools are a member of SEE and continually encourage legislators to address the inequities. For more information on how you can help, please visit www.SchoolsForEquity.org.

- Matthew W. Schoen, Ed.S.
Superintendent

Why Does Delano Public Schools have a Director of Teaching & Learning?

In 2001, the Delano Public School district asked voters to approve an operating levy to maintain staffing across the district. Unfortunately, the operating levy did not pass and as a result, one of the reductions made was to reduce the Curriculum Director and the High School Assistant Principal positions to half time. Prior to that, each position was staffed as full time. For the past 14 years, we have staffed these two previously defined positions with one staff member. During this time, the district has grown by more than 27% from 1877 students to over 2400 students in 2016-2017.



Last spring the Delano School Board approved the reinstatement of both the Assistant High School Principal and the Curriculum Director back to full time positions. Since the Curriculum Director position will be dealing with more than just curriculum, it has been renamed the Director of Teaching and Learning (DTL). As the name suggests, there is a major emphasis placed on how we are teaching and how our students are learning. This position has three primary responsibilities: overseeing the Professional Development Committee, the District Assessment Coordinator, and the Curriculum Director.

The Professional Development Committee, delegates the resources of time and money. This committee is responsible for establishing budgets for each of the buildings across the district and establishing and approving agendas for each of the four professional development days throughout the school year. This committee has been instrumental in the development and completion of mapping our curriculum district-wide which is part of our 5-Year Strategic Plan. Additionally, there is a Staff Development Report that is required by the Minnesota Department of Education as part of the Annual Report on Accountability. The DTL must compile and submit this report to be accountable for the expenditures of that committee.

The Director of Teaching and Learning provides curriculum guidance, professional development planning, student assessment management, and research insight to assist staff with best practices to maximize student achievement.

As the District Assessment Coordinator (DAC), the Director of Teaching and Learning is responsible for all things related to district-wide testing, particularly the MCA state tests in reading, math and science. Any year-to-year changes from the Minnesota Department of Educa-

tion are related through the DAC's for implementation. Coordinating with the IT department to ensure that our technology can handle the rigors of testing up to 250 students at one time as well as scheduling are critical to a smooth testing experience for all students. Additionally, all testing results are sent to the DTL which then are organized and uploaded into our district student information database. This year, for the first time, teachers were given a list of their individual students with their previous year's test results which helps teachers prepare more personalized learning experiences.

The responsibilities of the Curriculum Director portion of the DTL position is two-fold. First, the DTL facilitates the District Advisory Committee, whose main job is to review curriculum, recommend board approval, and review the district's report on accountability. The District Advisory Committee meets approximately four times per year. At the first meeting, they review the accountability report. At subsequent meetings, one curriculum area is reviewed at each meeting. Secondly, the Annual Report on Accountability is presented to the District Advisory Committee, and after approved, presented to the school board.

Finally, the Director of Teaching and Learning needs to stay abreast of the latest educational research and keep district staff members informed of this research. There has been a multitude of research in the last two decades which has given teachers a clear idea of what works best with students and how to maximize achievement in and out of the classroom. Regular classroom visits are also critical in maintaining strong relationships with staff, while watching student-teacher engagement.

If you have any interest in becoming a member of the District Advisory Committee or attending these meetings, please contact Joe Vieau, Director of Teaching and Learning, at joe.vieau@delanoschools.org, or via phone at 763.972.3365, ext. 3019.

Leadership in Educational Excellence Awarded to Delano Educators

Three staff members from Delano Public Schools were honored at River's Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud on Wednesday, October 26. Mark Schmitz, Executive Director of Resource Training & Solutions, welcomed and congratulated the 155 recipients while expressing, "No matter your profession, a positive influence is timeless. No matter what the media tells us, schools are a great place for kids."

Leadership in Educational Excellence (LEEA) winners were nominated by their school districts, and recognized with a plaque and certificate from the Governor of Minnesota. Represented at the event are public, private, parochial, charter schools and Meeker & Wright Special Education Cooperative. Over 500 people attended this special event from over 40 school districts and agencies.

V.J. Smith, keynote speaker and author of the best selling book *The Richest Man in Town* shared, "People who express gratitude and care characterizes the honorees tonight." It is time well spent to recognize those who make a difference in our students' lives.



Pictured L to R: **Joe Lawrence, DHS Language Arts Teacher; Steve Heil, DHS Principal; Monica Kunkel, DHS Media Specialist; Katie Culviner, DMS 6th Grade Teacher; and Mark Schmitz, Executive Director of Resource Training & Solutions**

New Members Elected to the Delano School Board

The general election proved to bring some changes across-the nation and also to the membership of the Delano School Board. On November 8, 2016, voters selected some new faces to serve four-year terms on the Board of Education. This group of seven members work for the betterment of the school district and the students we serve.

The three members elected include: Amy Johnson, who was an incumbent and has served as Board Chair for the last five years. The two newcomers to the school board are Alan Briesemeister, former teacher at Delano Public Schools and most recently he taught internationally in Ethiopia and at the Harare International School of Zimbabwe. Alan has worked beyond the classroom in many capacities and believes a great educational system requires teaching students to be life-long learners as well as skills to be active in their community. Rachel Depa is a stay-at-home mother who volunteers for many organizations including DYSBA, Park Nicollet Clinics, St. Mary's Czechochowa Church and Delano Public Schools. She feels that Delano has an amazing school district and wants to be a voice for the community, families and students as a member of the board.

The new board members will take their oath of office at the organizational meeting on January 9, 2017.

DHS Student-Athletes Sign Letters of Intent



Congratulations to four of the finest Delano High School student-athletes for achieving the opportunity to participate in athletics beyond high school. Tori Hanson, will play volleyball for Concordia College-St. Paul, Ellie Norling will play basketball for Wayne State College in Nebraska, Jordan Schramel will play baseball for Minnesota State University-Mankato and Tucker Sjomeling will wrestle for University of Nebraska-Lincoln. All four of these talented student-athletes have signed Letters of Intent with their respective colleges, enabling them to begin their college athletic careers in the fall of 2017. Only 3% of high school athletes in the United States are able to pursue athletics at this level. Delano Public Schools wishes each one of these fine young adults success in their future careers on and off the playing court, field or mat.

Delano School District
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Delano, MN 55328

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Delano Public Schools Vision

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

2016 Board of Education

Amy Johnson, Chair
Randy Durick, Vice Chair
Carolyn Milano, Clerk
Lisa Seguin, Treasurer
Sarah Baker, Director
Corey Black, Director
Mark Larson, Director

Eye of the Tiger is published by Delano Public Schools, 700 Elm Avenue East, Delano, MN, 55328. Editor, Traci Lawman, Communications Coordinator, 763.972.3365, ext. 2111, traci.lawman@delanoschools.org

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www.delano.k12.mn.us

Educational Excellence is Our Foremost Goal

Strategic Plan 2013-2018 Moving Forward...Learning for the Future

Upcoming Events

December

1	5th/6th Grade Choir Concert	7 pm
2	Tiger Kids Club HoliDAZE	5-8 pm
3	ECFE Holiday Boutique	7 am-3 pm
4	HS Jazzy Holiday Concert	7 pm
12	7th/8th Grade Band Concert	7 pm
15	5th/6th Grade Band Concert	7 pm
19	School Board Meeting	5:45 pm
23-30	Winter Break - NO SCHOOL	

January

2	Winter Break - NO SCHOOL	
16	Teacher Workshop Day - NO SCHOOL	
19-20	Early Childhood Health & Development Screening (all screening by appointment only - call 763.972.6210, press 4)	
23	School Board Meeting	5:45 pm



For detailed information on school events, go to www.delano.k12.mn.us and reference the district calendar on the front page of our website.

For up-to-the-minute activity schedules, go to www.wcconference.org or call the Activities Information Line at 763.972.6505.

Helping Clothe Minnesota Veterans



During the two weeks prior to Thanksgiving, DPS staff members Ginny Schuelke and Karla Otterness led the fundraising effort, "Helping a Veteran in Need - New Clothing Drive." Thanks to the generosity of the Delano community, they delivered 780 new clothing items and five winter coats to the St. Cloud Veteran's Clothing Center on November 23. While delivering the items, the ladies were able to meet with several veterans who were accessing the clothing center. The smiles on the veterans' faces expressed their gratitude. They were extremely touched by the donations from the Delano Community. We would like to thank all of the students, families and staff that made the clothing drive a success.