



ISD 318 District Newsletter

Teaching & Learning for Life to Achieve Excellence

Spring/Summer 2021

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District contact information

Find us

820 NW 1st Ave
218-327-5700

Find us online

www.isd318.org

Find us on Facebook
facebook.com/ISD318

A Year Unlike Any Other

This will be my 15th year as a Superintendent and it has been a year unlike any other. I want to thank all the parents and families who trusted us to keep their children safe during the pandemic. Your patience and resiliency as we navigated through the different learning models is something that we are all grateful for.

However, I am most grateful to begin planning for a school year that looks more normal than those in the recent past. As we bring the school year to a close, we have been able to offer prom and in-person graduation ceremonies at both Bigfork High School and Grand Rapids High School, our youngest learners have been able to participate in their annual Fun Days, and all are approaching the end of the school year with hopes of a brighter future.

During the summer, we expect to receive updated guidance from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). We know now that during our Summer Learning Academy and summer school offerings students and staff will not be required to social distance or wear face coverings.

I am committed to being open and transparent about any updates to the school year that we receive from the Departments of Health and Education. As always, you can contact my office at 218-327-5704 any time with questions. I hope you have a wonderful summer filled with laughter and family!

Matt Grose
Superintendent of Schools

Forest Lake Demolition

It is always so hard to see a school demolished. This is a place where students learned and laughed and felt safe. It does become a little easier if we can offer a newer and more inviting space for learning though. Luckily, that is the case with the recent demolition of Forest Lake Elementary.

While it is hard to see this fixture of our district gone, the 70-year-old school has been empty this year as students spent their days in the new and renovated elementaries. Forest Lake Elementary first opened its doors in 1951 and the school was no longer adequate for today's learning.

The land that Forest Lake sat on was exchanged with the City of Grand Rapids for the West Elementary site, minimizing the impact of the referendum on our taxpayers. Once demolition is completed, the city will begin construction of residential projects.



Play, Create, Explore, & Learn with Community Education

Ready, set, register! Get learning with Community Education by exploring the many opportunities across the Itasca Area to get active and learn this summer! Youth organizations across the county have many amazing programs to keep kids learning, active, and having fun. Check out the Summer Itasca Youth catalog for lots of activities, classes, camps, sports, and events. It's full of exciting, engaging and energizing opportunities for youth of all ages. There are also opportunities for adults to explore, create, and learn! Check it out online and get registered today. For more information about the great Community Education opportunities in the Itasca Area visit www.getlearning.org, call 218-327-5730, text EDUCATE to 22828 to sign up for our monthly email notifications, and connect with Itasca Area Community Education on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.



GRHS Interact Club and IB Students Recognized

Earlier this spring, Itasca County Public acknowledged the Grand Rapids Senior High School Interact Club and International Baccalaureate (IB) students, under the leadership of GRHS Social Studies teacher Brielle Carlson, for their efforts to support our local COVID-19 vaccination efforts.

At the onset of our vaccine rollout, it became evident there were barriers making it difficult for some in our community to schedule vaccine appointments on their own. This was especially true for those who did not have access to technology. In February, Public Health staff approached Mrs. Carlson with the idea of forming a collaboration between students, Itasca County Public Health, and Eldercircle, to assist those who were seeking help. Mrs. Carlson and four IB students

organized a plan and worked after school contacting individuals and helping them register for vaccine appointments.

In addition, students provided outreach calls to area employers to notify them of vaccine eligibility.



The Interact Club students joined the IB group and participated by volunteering their time at COVID vaccine clinics each week. They assisted with appointment registration and directed patients through the clinic.

Public Health and our local community benefitted from the assistance of these professional and capable high school students. We are grateful to them and Brielle Carlson, who, when asked, pitched in to help in the effort to end this pandemic. Thank you for collaborating with our community partners!



GRHS Receives Award for Closing Learning Gaps

After enduring five different learning model transitions, principals and teachers at Grand Rapids High School (GRHS) recognized the need to address growing learning gaps in their students' high school experience. Like many schools across the state, the struggles for students and staff during last year's distance learning during lockdown were compounded by the need to change from in-person learning, to hybrid, to full-distance and back again.

"Each learning model presented new challenges, while at the same time amplifying existing struggles for students," said GRHS Principal Matt Dass. "We recognized the need to respond accordingly for the benefit of our students and to preserve on-time graduations."

Early in the school year, GRHS staff and administration recognized that students would need additional supports to find success and close learning gaps. Teachers and administrators worked hard to identify students who were in danger of failing and created opportunities for students to recover semester credits in their classes. Significant gains were made in English and Math as well as core content and elective classes.

"I am so proud of the implementation of evidence-based practices by our high school teachers and principals," said Sue Akre, Director of Teaching and Learning. "They have tried to minimize the impact of the pandemic on our students and have also created a model that can be replicated in the future to help all students achieve our state's rigorous standards."

The hard work by both students and staff has paid off. In addition to minimizing failed coursework by over 66%, the school has been recognized by the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP). MASSP has presented GRHS with a Gold Star of Innovation Award. The Star of Innovation Award is designed to recognize MASSP member schools statewide for the development and support of an exemplary and innovative education program in their school. Awards are given at gold, silver, and bronze levels.

"Our staff and administration can proudly look our community members in the eye and confidently state, in the middle of a global pandemic, that every student is being served to the best of our ability," said Dass.



Congratulations Retirees and 25-Year Employees!

ISD 318 Retirees and 25-Year Employees

Retirees

Mary Anderson	Alan Nettifee
Kathryn Bernier	Sally Niemi
Teresa Domagall	Scott Patrow
Carrie Fowler	Lyn Rajala
Kim Jones	Paula Schafer
Eileen Korpi	Scott Shrimpton
Kim Lahti	Lori VanZinderen
Bruce LaRoque	Kris Watson
Robert McDermond	Pat Webber

25-Year Employees

Corrine Casio
Lynn Clifton
Craig Hegrenes
Shelly Lindstrom
Sonja Olfelt
Greg Tatter
Jodi Zuehlke-Tulla

we are
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We at ISD 318 want to congratulate our employees who are retiring and those who achieved the hallmark of 25 years of service during the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year. Thank you for all that you have done to help our kids achieve academic excellence!

Budget Challenges

Like many schools across the nation, ISD 318 has been facing budget challenges. In our case, the challenges have come from a reduction in compensatory funds and a drop in enrollment due to the pandemic. Compensatory aid comes from families who complete an Educational Benefit form, also known as a Free and Reduced Meal form. With free meals provided by the federal government to help all families during the pandemic, the district saw a significant drop in benefit form submissions, which will result in lower aid from state government sources for the coming year.

At the March 22nd Board Meeting, a budget reduction plan was presented to the board that contains nearly \$2 million in budget reductions. Every effort was made to create reductions that had the least impact to our students. The district has been striving to reduce ongoing expenditures since the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year and increased reductions became necessary as a result of the pandemic.

While our current enrollment loss due to the pandemic is a contributing factor to budget challenges, our renovated and newly constructed elementary buildings were done just in time because our long-term enrollment projections look strong and the construction costs were funded completely by the voter-approved referendum. In fact, having new elementaries with adequate space for our students and improved ventilation allowed us to keep students in person for longer during the pandemic. And, while enrollment has been down as parents choose to homeschool or enroll their students in online virtual academies, we are confident that enrollment levels will return to pre-pandemic levels next year. Next year's Kindergarten enrollment is consistent with predictions made at the start of the referendum process.

This is all a process that will create a healthy budget that can sustain our students and staff long-term regardless of economic upheaval. If you have questions, please contact the Superintendent's Office at 218-327-5704. And, be sure to fill out your Educational Benefit forms this fall!

Cares Act and ESSER Spending

In response to the pandemic, the federal government has supported schools with additional funding. Three rounds of funding are available for schools. Last summer, schools were provided with funding as a result of the Cares Act. This was emergency funding that schools could use to support students in learning for the 2020-2021 school year. At ISD 318, that money was used for technology to support distance learning, such as hot spots and iPads for students; cleaning supplies and enhanced cleaning techniques; items that supported social distancing, such as purchasing desks to replace learning tables where students were crowded together; and other pandemic mitigation strategies, such as infrared thermometers and face-coverings for students.

At the beginning of January, an additional \$54.3 billion was approved for schools across the nation through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER II Fund). ISD 318 received \$2.6 million. In planning for use of these funds, the district identified four priorities. Funds are being used to provide academic interventions and student support to help students with learning gaps; to create and expand systems to detect and respond to increased mental health and behavioral needs; to ensure adequate staffing for effective and safe instruction; and to invest in physical learning environments to improve teaching and learning conditions, health and safety, and operational efficiency.

The district will receive a third allocation of funds known as the ESSER III fund. These funds will be distributed using the same priorities identified above. A detailed spending plan will also be posted on the district website. For specific questions about planned spending amounts, please contact the district Business Office at 218-327-5703 or email Business Manager Kara Lundin at klundin@isd318.org.

Drivers Needed!

Drivers are needed for the 2021-2022 school year. If you're looking for flexible employment that makes a difference, you're invited to learn more about becoming a 318 driver.

Come join our team and work in a dynamic school district! Successful candidates must be able to work split shift; have skills and aptitude to operate a bus safely; enjoy the presence of children; be reliable and punctual; and pass a criminal background check.

Drivers start at \$18.04 per hour, but can make up to \$20.83/hour after the first 45 days of driving. Great benefits and a safe working environment are also a perk!

Training will be provided to obtain the necessary license and endorsements. The time to start is now! Learn more by calling the Transportation Department at 218-327-5830.



Our drivers make a positive difference in the lives of kids!

ISD 318 Board of Directors

The members of the ISD 318 Board of Directors are comprised of six members who are charged with the care, management and control of the schools of the District.

Board Chair Dr. Malissa Bahr	218-259-4391
	mbahr@isd318.org
Clerk Sue Zeige	218-301-0167
	szeige@isd318.org
Treasurer Ben Hawkins	218-326-1607
	bhawkins@isd318.org
Director David Marty	218-259-8215
	dmarty@isd318.org
Director Pat Medure	218-244-1122
	pmedure@isd318.org
Director Mindy Nuhring	218-259-4061
	mnuhring@isd318.org

Members of the public are welcome to attend School Board Meetings in person, stream meetings live, or watch recorded meetings. Meeting dates and streaming links are listed on the homepage of the district website at isd318.org.

Enrollment for 2021-2022 is Open

Enrollment for the coming 2021-2022 school year is available online and in person. We are so excited to be planning for a return to normalcy with the 21-22 school year. We hope that also means welcoming your child to in-person learning!

We know that with all of the rigorous professional development our teachers have been participating in, along with a more normal looking learning environment, the best place for kids to learn is with our teachers in our schools.

Plus, with the new elementary school offerings and extensive electives at the middle and high school level, all of our students from Kindergarten through 12th grade, from Bigfork to Grand Rapids are sure to find something to engage them in learning.

Learn more and enroll online today at www.isd318.org/ enrollment, or call Central Student Enrollment at 218-327-5707.



School District 318



ISD 318
820 NW 1st Avenue
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
www.isd318.org



District 318 Contact Information

Administration
218-327-5704
Superintendent:
Matt Grose

Cohasset School
218-327-5860
450 Columbus Avenue
Cohasset, MN 55721

East Rapids Elementary
218-327-5880
1195 NE 10th Street
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

West Rapids Elementary
218-327-5870
901 SW 22nd Avenue
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

Bigfork School
218-743-3444
100 Huskie Boulevard
Bigfork, MN 56628

Robert J. Elkington Middle School
218-327-5800
1000 NE 8th Avenue
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

Grand Rapids High School
218-327-5760
800 Conifer Drive
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

Area Learning Center
218-327-5750
409 SE 13th Street
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

Central Enrollment
218-327-5707

Community Education
218-327-5730

Early Childhood Invest Early
218-327-5850

Early Childhood Special Education
218-327-5572

Food and Nutrition
218-327-5771

Itaskin Education Center
218-322-4129

Special Services
218-327-5705

Transportation
218-327-5830