

JUNE 2026 - FROM THE BUSINESS OFFICE:

Fiscal year end 2025-2026 is quickly coming to a close. As I write this, the office is buzzing with final payroll payouts for teachers, educational assistants, and food service. Teachers receive one paycheck for the month of June on the 15th of the month, and then receive their July and August paychecks on June 20th. For educational assistants and food service, their paychecks will reflect their May hours along with any accrued vacation time they have remaining. Our hourly clerical and maintenance staff will receive their June hours in July 2026, and those dollars are booked back into the FY 25-26 school year.

This time of year is when the business office workload spans 3 fiscal years. On our May 15, 2026, payment from the Minnesota Department of Education, we received our final Special Education revenue for the 2024-2025 school year. The budgets you will be approving at this meeting will be our revised estimates for 2025-2026, and our best preliminary estimate for 2026-2027.

The 2026-2027 Adopted Budget reflects the staffing updates for the upcoming school year. We have accounted for the personnel shifting, retirements, resignations and new hires, and have also added the additional teacher salary and benefits for the Thunder Academy. We have reduced our revenue to reflect the decrease in our Compensatory Revenue from MDE, but have increased the per pupil unit revenue on the automatic increase to the basic formula as is written in statute. Going into the 2025-2026 audit preparations, we will be using some of our reserve account balances to ease the loss of compensatory revenue going into next year. One of the areas we can help reduce the burden on the general education fund is using our MA billing reserve account balance on our special education fringe benefits. Special education revenue does not reimburse any fringe benefits, so by using a portion of the MA billing balance, we are easing the fund balance reduction in the undesignated account.

Another area to watch in the budget going forward is going to be in the area of support staff unemployment. When unemployment was first introduced, the legislature set aside a pot of money for schools to receive a reimbursement for their staff that chose to apply for unemployment during the summer. According to MDE, the remainder of this one time allocation will be used up after final payouts for the summer of 2026. General education dollars will then need to be used to pay the unemployment bills when they come due.

Unemployment has become a major piece of the summer workload for district offices statewide. Each individual that applies has their own file at the State. Our office then needs to login to the unemployment website daily to answer questions on each individual application. These questions include things such as job duties, end of the school term, start of the next term, was the applicant full-time or part-time, what did that look like, etc. We also have to let Unemployment know if we expect that person to return next school year, if they will have the same or equivalent work, hours, pay, etc. Any errors or discrepancies between the applicant's submitted information and our information is then dealt with on an individual basis until all those discrepancies are fixed. Needless to say, diligence and accuracy are extremely important.

As always, if you have questions regarding district finances or current spending, please reach out. We are always happy to review reports, provide additional detail, and answer questions.

Thank you for your continued support of Long Prairie–Grey Eagle Schools.

Sherrí Evenson