



ADMINISTRATION REPORTS APRIL 2026

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES & HUMAN RESOURCES

by: Shawn Kirkeide

Annual Benefit Open Enrollment

The Open Enrollment period for the July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027 plan year has been scheduled from April 20, 2026 through May 1, 2026. During this time, benefit-eligible staff will have the opportunity to review, update, or add to their benefits. As in previous years, we will offer free, appointment-based enrollment assistance throughout the Open Enrollment period to support staff in making informed decisions. In addition, an Open Enrollment Open House will be held at the Education Services Center on Monday, April 27 from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m., where benefit counselors and Human Resources representatives will be available to answer questions and assist with the enrollment process.

Bluejacket Celebration

Please mark your calendars for the 2026 Bluejacket Celebration, which will be held on Wednesday, May 27, 2026 at 4:30. This annual event recognizes and celebrates the outstanding contributions of Cambridge-Isanti Schools staff. The celebration will take place at Cambridge-Isanti High School in the Richard G. Hardy Performing Arts Center.

FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

by: Christopher Kampa, CFA

Finance

The Minnesota Legislature opened the 2026 session on February 17 and is scheduled to adjourn on May 18. This is not a budget year, so we do not expect significant movement on school funding. That said, there are a number of important issues we continue to advocate for. One of our core messages, which we have shared with both the House and Senate, is that general education funding has lost roughly 20% of its value over the past 20 years when adjusted for inflation.

At the same time, total education funding has increased. However, much of that increase has not flowed into the classroom. Instead, it has been directed toward mandates and categorical programs. Many of these programs support important and necessary services, such as special education, mental health, and social supports. Those investments matter. But regardless of whether they are fully

funded, districts are required to provide these services. As more funding is tied to specific purposes, districts have less flexibility to support the core instructional program.

So what does that look like in practice? It means trade-offs: larger class sizes, fewer program offerings, delayed curriculum updates, and in many cases, increased reliance on local taxpayers to fill the gap. Our district has been fortunate to maintain relatively low class sizes while continuing to strengthen programming.

However, that has required disciplined financial management, one-time resources, and strong community support. It is not a model that can be sustained indefinitely without meaningful changes to how education is funded. Over time, the continued erosion of flexible, inflation-adjusted funding will make it increasingly difficult for districts to preserve the quality of classroom instruction that our students deserve.

Transportation

The Transportation Department is actively preparing for upcoming operational and compliance priorities, including staff completion of required certification training and preparation for state inspections scheduled throughout May. The department is also coordinating several community engagement events and has strengthened emergency preparedness efforts through a newly signed MOU with the Isanti County Sheriff's Department and ongoing collaboration with the Emergency Reunification Team to plan for transportation needs during emergencies. Operationally, staff continue to address end-of-year route coverage challenges, process driver status surveys for next year, and prepare for system updates involving Skyward, Red Rover, and related programs. Additional efforts include improving fuel inventory reporting systems, reviewing terms and conditions with HR, and reinforcing idling expectations as warmer weather approaches.

Food Service

The Food Service department is preparing for a busy period over the next two weeks, including the evaluation of grocery and dairy bids during the week of April 13 and hosting representatives from the Minnesota Department of Education the following week to begin a compliance review of the program. Additionally, on April 9, staff met at CMS to sample and evaluate potential new menu items from Rancher's Legacy, a supplier based in Vadnais Heights, with plans to incorporate selected products into future menus.

Building & Grounds

Facilities staff continue to address maintenance and safety needs across the district, including working with Nexus to obtain quotes for upgraded protection in the IIS and CIS media centers, planning to repair high school parking lot potholes as soon as asphalt plants open, and coordinating the scheduling of repairs to the CMS school sign. The district has received a few complaints regarding potholes; however, this is not unique, as asphalt surfaces across Minnesota experience significant stress and deterioration over the winter months. Asphalt plants typically do not open until late April, and once they are operational, repairs to district parking lots will be completed promptly.

Technology

During April, the Technology Department advanced several key initiatives focused on cybersecurity, staffing, and instructional innovation. Work continued on the development of the district's AI Handbook in collaboration with the AI Task Force, alongside ongoing refinement of the Information Security Plan; as part of this effort, Director Ray Sperl participated in a CrowdStrike workshop to better understand emerging AI-driven cybersecurity threats and defenses. The department also conducted interviews to fill two building technician positions resulting from a promotion and an upcoming resignation. In support of instructional practices, Mr. Sperl attended a University of Minnesota workshop on fostering deep learning in an era of instant access to information, with insights to be shared with the Teaching and Learning team. Additionally, planning for summer projects remains underway, including continued migration of on-site servers to a virtual environment hosted through ECMECC at Pine Technical College, a transition that is expected to further reduce infrastructure costs.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

by: Christina Thayer Anderson

Upcoming Annual Family Survey

As we prepare to launch the Annual Family Survey in early May, we continue working to strengthen family engagement by making it easier for families and those who support students to share feedback and stay connected to our schools. This year's survey process has been refined to support stronger participation, with thoughtful review of questions, attention to accessibility, and a continued focus on hearing from families about their experiences, needs, and partnerships with our district. Consistent feedback remains an important part of how we listen, learn, and grow in partnership with our families and community.

Volunteer Services

Volunteer Appreciation Month provides an important opportunity to recognize and thank the many individuals who so generously give their time, talents, and hearts in support of Cambridge-Isanti Schools. We are equally thankful for our outstanding Volunteer Coordinators, whose thoughtful leadership and daily efforts help make this work possible.

Volunteer Services continues to expand in meaningful and important ways, strengthening direct support for students, families, and staff through strong community partnership. This year, material and monetary gifts have exceeded \$40,000 year to date, while needs connected to the Care Closet, Food Shelf, and Here to Help have continued to grow. At the same time, the team has expanded support for buildings, staff, and community-connected initiatives. These efforts reflect the very best of our community and the powerful difference that care, generosity, and partnership make for those we serve.

Aquatics

Our aquatics program continues to be an important part of how Community Education serves and connects our community across all ages. From infants and toddlers attending with caregivers to

swim lessons and opportunities for adults and seniors through lap swim, family open swim, private lessons, and summer programming, aquatics creates access to recreation, wellness, skill-building, and connection. It is one of the many ways we live out our mission, in partnership with our community, by supporting learning, belonging, and well-being at every stage of life. We are grateful to our Recreation Coordinator, Deck Manager, and dedicated aquatics staff for their continued efforts to expand opportunities for our community and seek ways to maximize the pool at CIHS.

TEACHING & LEARNING

by: Dr. Jason Bodey

The official 2025 Graduation Rate data has finally been released to individual districts. There are many factors and variables that go into calculating final graduation rates and it takes the state a long time to release last year's data.

From 2024 to 2025, here are the highlights:

- The overall 4-year graduation rate increased from 79.3% to 81.07%, a gain of 1.77 percentage points. This shows steady improvement across the system.
- At Cambridge-Isanti High School, the 4-year graduation rate rose slightly from 84.5% to 85.15% (+0.65), indicating stable performance with modest growth.
- The most notable increase occurred in the CIO program's 4-year rate, which jumped from 69.6% to 84.85% (+15.25), a significant 15.25-point gain, showing strong progress for that group.
- Riverside Academy also showed gains in the 4-year rate, rising from 21.2% to 32.26% (+11.06).
- The 7-year graduation rate remains strong. In 2024, the rate was 86.75% (347 of 400 students). In 2025, it was 85.61% (339 of 396 students). This measure often shifts due to cohort size, mobility, and individual student circumstances. Even with slight variation, it reflects a consistently high number of students who do finish over time.

Overall, the district shows positive upward momentum, with strong gains in targeted programs helping drive the overall increases.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

by: Rachel Kasper

2025–26 MDE Indicator Data Collection (IDC) Record Review

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) requires all districts to participate in annual monitoring aligned with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This process is part of the state's Annual Performance Report (APR), which evaluates district compliance and continuous improvement across key special education indicators.

Cambridge-Isanti Public Schools has been selected as part of a statewide random sample for review. What this means for our district:

- 16 student records have been selected for review by MDE.
- Reviews are conducted through a standardized online process aligned to state criteria.

- This is a routine monitoring process applied to districts statewide.

District actions underway:

- The Special Education team is completing all required record reviews using MDE's online system.
- Internal resource guides are being utilized to ensure accuracy and consistency in responses.
- Systems are in place to maintain documentation and calendars in the event of state verification.
- Any identified areas of noncompliance will be corrected promptly, and no later than one year from the issuance of formal findings, in accordance with MDE requirements.

Timeline:

- All required record reviews will be completed by May 11, 2026.

Why this matters:

This process not only ensures compliance with federal and state requirements, but also strengthens the quality of plans for students as they prepare for postsecondary education, employment, and independent living. The district views this as an opportunity to reinforce strong practices and address any gaps in systems or implementation.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

by: Dr. Nate Rudolph

Across our schools, April has been marked by continued momentum and meaningful progress. With the second trimester complete, students and staff are focused on finishing the school year strong while also looking ahead to 2026–27. This time of year represents an important balance of reflection and preparation as we celebrate progress and begin shaping what comes next.

In recent weeks, we have also had opportunities to connect with families and those who support our students. Kindergarten Welcome Nights were held at Cambridge Primary, Isanti Primary, and C-I STEAM School, with strong turnout across all locations. Kindergarten and Preschool enrollment for the 2026–27 school year is currently open, and enrollment is ahead of where it was at this time last year, demonstrating eagerness from our families to be engaged with C-I Schools.

We are also preparing to celebrate the Class of 2026 as they approach graduation and the many milestones that come with the end of their senior year. Graduation Commencement is scheduled for Friday, June 5 at 6:00 p.m. in the Cambridge-Isanti High School gym, with overflow viewing available in the Performing Arts Center.

One highlight each spring is the Dollars for Scholars Scholarship Reception on Friday, May 15. This event is designed to create meaningful, personal connections between students and those who support them, with community members and district staff presenting awards, including on behalf of donors who are unable to attend. Students often learn of their scholarships for the first time at that

moment, reflecting the strong partnerships and generosity that continue to support their next steps.

Across the district, we are seeing encouraging academic progress, particularly in literacy at the elementary and middle school levels. This growth reflects focused instructional efforts, strong collaboration among staff, and the partnership we share with families in supporting student learning.

At the same time, district and building leaders are maintaining a strong finish to the school year while actively preparing for 2026–27. This includes staffing and organizational planning, program alignment, and thoughtful resource allocation connected to our strategic priorities.

District leadership is also advancing implementation of our Strategic Plan. Following the annual review process, feedback from the Strategic Planning Task Force is being incorporated into Year 4 planning. This input emphasized alignment to our priority areas, with a focus on refinement and clarity moving forward.

Our community plays an important role in supporting our schools. Through Dollars for Scholars, the Bluejacket Education Foundation, and ongoing volunteerism and mentorship, we see daily examples of the shared investment in the success of every learner.

Thank you for your continued leadership and partnership as we move through this important time of the school year.