

# The Patriot Promoter

Distributed by the Win-E-Mac School District

[www.wemschools.org](http://www.wemschools.org)

August 2025



## 2025-2026 School Year Information

### Open House

Open house will take place on Wednesday, August 28, from 5-7 pm. We are excited to welcome students back into the building to meet their new teachers, to visit their new classrooms, to drop supplies off in their desks and lockers and to see friends they haven't seen in a while! A meal will be provided on the west side of the school during this time as well.

**All forms will be online this year through ParentVue. Please make sure that you have access to ParentVue; if you need access, please contact Erin Lisburg in the office or email her at [elisburg@wemschools.org](mailto:elisburg@wemschools.org).**

### 7th Grade Orientation at 4:30 pm

\* Class schedule information (Band Room)

Contact Mr. Dugstad for schedule changes.

### Device Handout Information

- \* Students will receive their device at open house
- \* Feel free to pay the \$30 tech fee in advance either in the office, online via LINQ ([linqconnect.com/5RJYZA](http://linqconnect.com/5RJYZA)), or by mailing a check (23130 345th St SE, Erskine)
- \* See [wemschools.org/tech](http://wemschools.org/tech) for more information



Click here for the full school Calendar -

## 2025-2026 School Calendar

### August

25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> – Staff Workdays  
27<sup>th</sup> – Open House 5:00-7:00 pm

### September

2<sup>nd</sup> – First Day of School  
16<sup>th</sup> – Board Meeting 5:30 pm

### October

6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> - Homecoming Week  
15<sup>th</sup> – Board Meeting 5:30 pm  
16<sup>th</sup> – No School – MEA/NEA  
17<sup>th</sup> – No School – MEA/NEA  
21<sup>st</sup> – Board Meeting 5:30 pm  
31<sup>st</sup> – End of 1st Quarter

### November

4<sup>th</sup> – Election Day  
15<sup>th</sup> – Early out at 12:30, Parent/Teacher Conferences  
18<sup>th</sup> – Board Meeting 5:30 pm  
26<sup>th</sup> – Early out at 12:30  
27<sup>th</sup> – No School: Thanksgiving  
28<sup>th</sup> – No School

### December

16<sup>th</sup> – Board Meeting 5:30 pm  
23<sup>rd</sup> – Early out at 12:30  
24<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> – No School: Winter Break

## SUPERINTENDENT'S NOTES

**Aaron Cook, Superintendent**



### **Introduction**

Welcome back, Patriots! As we begin the 2025-26 school year, I'm excited for the energy and opportunities this fall brings. Our students, staff, and families continue to make Win-E-Mac a special place to learn and grow.

This year we will continue to focus on building strong connections, supporting student success, and celebrating the many achievements of our students and school.

Thank you for your continued support of our students and staff. Together, we will make this a great year to be a Patriot!

### **Referendum Information**



**Win-E-Mac Public Schools  
Operating Levy**

### OUR CHALLENGE - Financial Instability

Like many Minnesota districts, our schools face growing financial challenges.

- **Funding Falling Behind:** For the past 20 years, state funding for public education has failed to keep pace with the rising costs of education.
- **More Demands, Less Support:** New mandates and rising expectations have required districts like ours to do more with far less support.
- **A Growing Deficit:** Our district faced a \$300,000 budget deficit last year and faces a potential \$350,000 deficit this year, a shortfall projected to grow in the coming years.

### OUR PLAN - Long-Term Stability to Support Success

On November 4, district voters will consider one ballot question proposing an operating levy that would generate approximately \$378,000 each year (\$800 per student) for 10 years.

- **What is an operating levy?** An operating levy helps fund a school district's operating budget, which pays for day-to-day school expenses such as teacher and staff salaries, classroom supplies, program costs, utilities, and routine maintenance.
- **What would the levy do?** The additional funding will help Win-E-Mac build on our progress by maintaining teachers and staff, sustaining programming, and protecting quality education.

### THE COST-

What happens if the referendum is approved?

If the operating levy is approved, a \$300,000 home in the district (approx. median value) would see a property tax increase of \$23.38 per month starting in 2026. Use the tax calculator at [ThePatriotPlan.org](http://ThePatriotPlan.org) to determine your specific tax impact.

What happens if the referendum fails?

Without additional funding, our district will need to consider difficult cuts that could include:

- **Fewer Staff:** Teacher and staff positions may be reduced.
- **Larger Class Sizes:** More grades may be combined into one section, resulting in bigger classes.
- **Reduced Opportunities:** Budget cuts threaten our programming, activities, and personalized student support.

Look for more information in the coming weeks. If you have any questions please visit [ThePatriotPlan.org](http://ThePatriotPlan.org) or reach out to me - [acook@win-e-mac.k12.mn.us](mailto:acook@win-e-mac.k12.mn.us)

### **Staffing Updates**

We are excited to bring on our new staff members for the 2025-26 school year. Information about each member is available later in the newsletter.

#### New Licensed Staff Members -

Carl Dugstad - Principal

Jeffrey Burvee - 1st grade Teacher

Becky Holter - HS Special Ed

Brend Hallgren - Part Time Special Ed

Sydney Tadman - Part Time purchased Speech Services from Fosston

## **After School Programming**

We will be offering our Lil' Patriots Program again this year at no cost to families. The program will start the week of September 8th.

There will be a booth with additional information at open house or you can contact Heather Burd - hburd@win-e-mac.k12.mn.us

## **Fitness Room Renewal**

Membership to the School Fitness Center must be renewed prior to **August 31, 2025**. You will need to renew the **\$75** membership fee by that date, or your card will be deactivated until a payment is made. If you did not purchase a membership last year and would like one this year, please come to the District Office to fill out a membership application and pay the fee. Each adult member of a family must have their own individual membership card. Parents can use their card to supervise school aged children, but will not have access to any other areas of the school. Please call 218-563-2900 for any questions.

## **Important: Immunizations**

Before a student can attend a school in Minnesota, a child must have their immunizations up to date. Immunizations are typically required for students entering kindergarten, 7th, and 12th grade. If you have a question, please call the school for information.

## **WIN-E-MAC SCHOOL WEBSITE**

There are many tools' parents/guardians have access to via our website: [www.wemschools.org](http://www.wemschools.org)

You have the ability to check food service account balances, look at menus for the month, use TITAN/LINQ to pay on your child/children's account, view the school and activities calendars, access teacher daily lesson plans, monitor your child's progress & grade reports, read the daily bulletin, contact teachers and staff via email, find any jobs postings at the school, view information and photos about happenings at the school as well as other website features. If you have any questions or problems concerning the website, please call the school.

## **Office Hours & Contact Information**

The Win-E-Mac School District Office will be open from 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM Mon-Fri during regular school

days. To reach the school, you can use the following numbers:

Erskine: 218-687-2236

McIntosh: 218-563-2900

Fax Line: 218-563-2902

## PRINCIPAL'S NOTES

Carl Dugstad



*Carl Dugstad*

### **Inservice:**

Inservice week is almost here as we have been waiting for the staff and students to come back into the building. Inservice marks the official end to the summer for many as we transition into a new school year. Teachers will be busy setting up their rooms, getting reacquainted with colleagues, scheduling, and getting ready for the best students in the world to show up September 2, 2025.

### **New Testing/Screening:**

You may hear someone from the school or read in the Board minutes about some new testing/screening that will be happening this year. We will be using a new software called Capti to screen students at WEM. Some of the students will not have been screened before-and many will be screened once again. The purpose behind this is to find students who may have characteristics of dyslexia and/or might not be reading at grade level. This being a new requirement for all the schools in Minnesota, bear with us for the first year as we establish our protocols, etc. We appreciate it!

### **ADSIS Program:**

As you may have seen on the website or Facebook, Mrs. Frannie Langemo will be taking on a new challenge this year. She is now our ADSIS teacher. This is an effective program that can help students who are struggling readers to catch up and become effective readers. If you receive notice that your student has a chance to work with Mrs. Langemo I would encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity. All students learn at different rates and she can help our students by giving them an extra boost in reading. She will be using evidence-based strategies to target student's weaker areas and help them become better readers. I am excited to get this program started.

### **FastBridge:**

If your student comes home and said that they were tested they might be referring to FastBridge testing. We are using it for the first time this year. In my past as a principal coach and school advocate I worked with a lot of schools that used FastBridge-it is a pretty useful tool for schools. We can screen students (usually 3x per year) as many times as needed/wanted to see where they are at academically. With this data we are able to pinpoint areas of strength and weakness that we can celebrate or address depending on each student's needs and skills. As we get used to using the data to drive our instructional changes we will be able to get students additional support in specific areas to get them on the right track or to make sure they stay on the track they are on. Any questions about FastBridge can be directed to me, Carl Dugstad, and I will be happy to chat about it.

### **Handbook Changes:**

We have made some changes to the school handbook for this upcoming school year. Most of the changes deal with fixing a few words here and there and not really with policy.

The biggest change-and the one my eldest isn't happy with-is that we are not going to allow students under 9th grade to have their phones with them all day. We are making this change as there is momentum across the country that we are joining in on to limit phone use during the day. There is a ton of research out there that supports us limiting phone use during the day. Students will be able to focus better, without distractions from texts, games, etc. and I believe they will improve academically from this change. I would appreciate the support of families and the community with our new policy because I know from personal experience that teenagers parting with their phones-even for a school day-may be hard right away.

We are also going to expect students to eat and drink (other than water or medically required things) in the areas designated for those activities. After considering feedback from staff as well as experiences I have had we want to limit eating, etc. from classrooms as we have places and times for that. We appreciate the support-the school and community are a team. We are BETTER TOGETHER!

### **Title I:**

A quick note on Title I, here at WEM we use Title I monies to lower classroom sizes. Any questions about Title I should be directed to me, Carl Dugstad.

## DEAN OF STUDENT/AD NOTES



**Brady Langemo**

I would like to start by welcoming everyone back for the school year. We are going to build off all those great changes that we made last year and make the 25-26 school year a safe and enjoyable one. I cannot wait to start rewarding all those students who embody 'Be the Best Patriot' in their actions.

### **Fall Sports**

Practices are already underway for football, volleyball, and football-cheerleading for 7th-12th grade students. If you would still like to participate please reach out to the school and we will get you in contact with the appropriate coach. Please remember that all students must register online, and have an up-to-date sports physical before they can participate in practices. Students also need to have their sports fees paid and have attended the mandatory amount of practices before they can compete in games/matches.

### **7th Grade Orientation**

Before the open house on Wednesday, August 27, there will be a short 7th grade orientation for students and parents/guardians starting at 4:30. This will be an important time to get information about the school day, help your child feel more comfortable as they move off into junior high, and also allow staff to help inform you of any big changes happening at Win-E-Mac.

### **Locker Rooms & School Lockers**

The locker rooms at Win-E-Mac are meant to provide our physical education students, and students participating in extracurricular athletics a safe place to store their sports equipment, clothing, and prepare for class/games/practices. In order to ensure everyone's privacy and safety the locker rooms will remain locked during the school day, only being opened by physical education teachers each class period, students not participating in a sport or not currently taking a physical education should not be occupying the locker rooms. Locks for gym lockers are available upon request from Erin Lisburg in the office.

All class materials, school backpacks, coats/jackets, and other items should always be stored in a students

assigned school locker in the junior high & high school wing of the school. All Win-E-Mac students have been assigned a school locker.

### **Mobile Kiosk/School Store**

I am very excited to announce that due to the Community Engagement Committee receiving a grant from the Snustad Foundation, Win-E-Mac will now have a school store. All the details are still being worked out, but it will now be easier for you to get access to Patriot clothing and gear (vintage football jerseys, two new hat designs, and Patriot socks are a few items we will be selling this fall). We plan to have the store ready for business at the open house and also hopefully at most home football and volleyball games.

### **Corporate Sponsorship**

If you are looking to advertise, honor/memorialize, or just support the Win-E-Mac school we have quite a few new sponsorship opportunities for you. More information can be found on our website or by contacting [blangemo@wemschools.org](mailto:blangemo@wemschools.org) but here is an overview:

- Gymnasium Scoreboard Advertisement (multiple levels)
- Softball field fence signage
- Fieldhouse Sponsorship
- Stadium Chair (portable bleacher backrests)

### **Attendance**

Whether it be classes, athletics, or other extracurriculars, we expect all Win-E-Mac students to be on time. We want to promote responsibility, commitment, and reliability. Being on time is just one way students can show their Patriot Pride. Attendance issues can result in reduced playing time/participation in extracurriculars, and/or lunch detention, in school detention, or after school detention if attendance becomes a concern for students' classes.

### **After School Supervision**

As the school year and sports seasons begin, we want to remind parents about our expectations. Unless your child is involved in a school approved after school program, they are to go home on the bus. Then return for evening activities with adult supervision.

If your child has an after school activity, and has a gap between the end of school and the start of the activity, please visit with your child about your expectations of them. Many times students will leave school grounds during this time, if you do not want them to do so please make that clear with them.

## New Staff Introductions

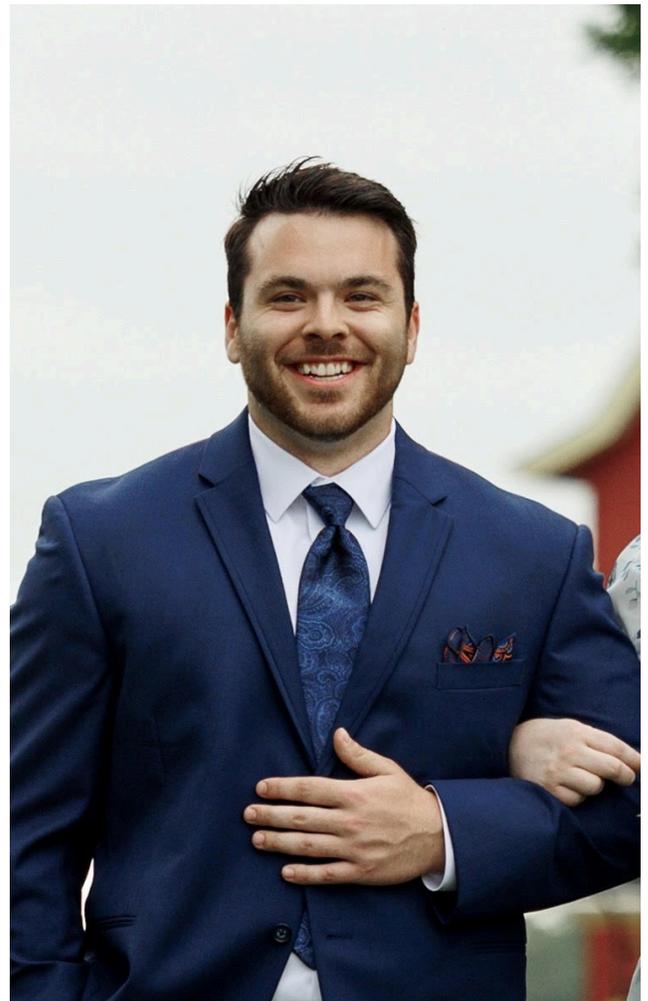
### **Carl Dugstad, Principal**

Hello, my name is Carl Dugstad and I am excited to be the new principal at Win-E-Mac. I am originally from Oklee, MN where my parents taught for many years. The community, staff, and students of Win-E-Mac have been awesome thus far in making me and my family feel welcome. When I am not at school I like spending time with my family, riding my Ranger around the countryside and watching/playing sports. See you at school!



### **Jeffrey Burvee, 1st Grade Teacher**

Hi, my name is Jeffrey Burvee, and I'm excited to be teaching 1st grade this year! I graduated from the University of Minnesota–Morris in the spring of 2024 with a degree in Elementary Education. Over the past year, I've had the opportunity to gain experience as a long-term substitute teacher in a variety of grade levels, which has helped me grow as an educator and deepen my passion for teaching. I'm originally from Monticello, MN, and I'm super excited to join the Win-E-Mac community and proud to be a Patriot!



## **Becky Holter, HS Special Education**

Hello Patriots!

My name is Becky Holter and I will be the new high school special education teacher. I have 22 years of teaching experience between RLCC, Fargo Public Schools, and Clearbrook- Gonvick. I have taught special education and have been an instructional coach and elementary interventionist. I'm looking forward to being back in special education.

I live in McIntosh with my husband. We love to ride UTV and fish together. I especially love fishing in my kayak. If I'm not outside enjoying the sun I'm usually crafting or reading.

I'm excited to being more involved in the Patriot community.



## **Brenda Hallgren, Special Education**

Hello, my name is Brenda Hallgren. Our family moved from Michigan to the Fertile area two years ago. I was a teacher in Michigan for over 30 years in the field of special education. Since my retirement in Michigan, I have been teaching Art Education part-time in MN. I hold a Bachelor of Science in Special Education and a Masters Degree in Teaching with a focus on Reading and Language Arts. I look forward to partnering with the special education team as I will be assisting with academic testing and IEP development. This summer, my husband Kirk and I watched our oldest daughter and our son graduate! Lilly finished her degree in medical coding and Joshua graduated from high school. He will be attending the University of Northwestern - Saint Paul studying Engineering. We are also excited to make many trips to the cities to watch him play football for UNW this Fall! Jessica, will be a High School Senior this year at FBS and runs Cross Country. My husband works at Digikey. I am looking forward to being a part of the Win-E-Mac family!



## **Sydney Tadman, Speech**

Hello! I'm a proud Win-E-Mac graduate now living in Fosston, and I'm excited to be back providing speech/language services one day a week at Win-E-Mac. This is my second year as a Speech/Language Pathologist with the Fosston School District, serving students from Preschool through 12th grade. I'm thrilled to support both the Fosston and Win-E-Mac communities!





### **SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM**

Win-E-Mac School provides delicious, healthy meals for breakfast and lunch. All students will continue to receive a free breakfast and free lunch at the school. This is state law that was initially introduced for the 2023-24 school year. If students wish to take ala carte options, a second meal, or a non-reimbursable lunch/breakfast those will be charged to their accounts.

Even though all student meals are free it is vitally important for families to still fill out the free and reduced lunch forms. The state has funding mechanisms that are directly tied to a school's free and reduced lunch percentage. There are also federal advantages to having a higher free and reduced lunch percentage that can include better chances at grant opportunities and additional title funds being allocated to the school.

Form can be filled out by accessing the school website [wemschools.org](http://wemschools.org) or by clicking here -

[Free and Reduced Lunch Application](#)

To view the monthly breakfast and lunch menus please click here -

[Breakfast and Lunch Menus](#)

PLEASE TAKE NOTE: THE WIN-E-MAC SCHOOL DISTRICT HAS A NO-CHARGING POLICY. This means there must be sufficient funds in your child/children's lunch accounts for each time they purchase items. If your account happens to have a negative balance, you will get an email, text or phone call once a week.



### **SCHOOL MESSENGER**

In our effort to keep high level communications between parents and the school, Win-E-Mac has a telephone broadcast system that will enable school personnel to notify all households and parents by phone within minutes of an emergency or unplanned event that causes early dismissal, school cancellation or late start. The service may also be used from time-to-time to communicate general announcements or reminders. This service is provided by **School Messenger**, a company specializing in school-to-parent communications. Win-E-Mac will continue to report school closings due to snow or weather on area radio and TV stations and will use this system as an overlay to the public announcements.

When used, the service will call all phone numbers in our selected parent contact lists and will deliver a recorded message from a school employee. The service will deliver the message to both live answer and answering machines. A call that goes unanswered will be automatically retried twice in fifteen-minute intervals after the initial call. **Please make sure that your phone number(s) are up-to-date.**

### **CELL PHONES & ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Please see the handbook for rules around cell phones and electronic devices.

New this year is that junior high (7th & 8th grade) students will not be allowed to have cell phones during the school day. This includes passing time and lunch time.

### **SCHOOL SUPPLY LISTS**

The lists of supplies needed for each grade can be found on the website [www.wemschools.org](http://www.wemschools.org) and the school office.

## ATTENDANCE

It is our belief that there is a clear and positive correlation between student learning and consistent and prompt attendance in class. Much of what is presented in classes is sequential; therefore, learning requires a continuity of attendance and effort. Regular attendance, an essential cornerstone of learning, is based upon a partnership between home and school in promoting responsible attendance habits. The students, the parents/guardians, and the school share responsibility for student attendance. Students are expected to attend classes regularly and to be on time. We believe that in order to earn credit in a course, a student should not have more than 10 absences during a semester. To adequately communicate this policy with parents, we will mail notices when your child has missed 5, 7 and 10 days respectively from any class period. Reaching the 10-day maximum could result in no credit for that class for the entire semester. We also want to reward good attendance for those students who make every effort to come to school and do their very best. Years ago, we instituted an exemption policy by which students could be exempt from semester tests based upon their attendance and academic progress. To review either of these policies, please request a handbook from the office or log on to our website at [www.wemschools.org](http://www.wemschools.org) to review them in their entirety.

## WIN-E-MAC SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

This year, postcards will not be sent in the mail. Instead, bus routes and times will be posted on our website. A link will be available for all parents to view bus times, bus numbers, and driver information.

Please note that these are approximate times and your bus may arrive earlier than listed. Be ready and waiting for the bus at least 5 minutes before your scheduled time.

If you have moved since the end of the school year, **please call the school immediately** and let them know your new address and phone number. If you are new to the district, it is also very important to register your children. It is extremely difficult to develop accurate bus

routes until we know exactly where each student is residing.

If your child/children will not be riding the school bus, please contact the school with that information as well.

We would also like to remind you to fill out a child care form for pickups and drop-offs that are different from your home. These are very important so that our staff can pick up and deliver your children to the correct address. The teachers and office staff need to have notes if a child needs to be dropped off somewhere else or be picked up by someone other than the parent or guardian.

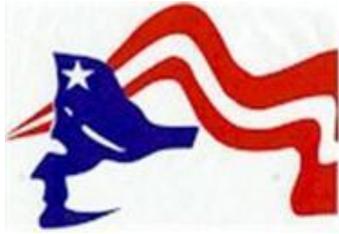
Minnesota Law governs Transportation by the school district as a privilege and not a right for an eligible student. A student's eligibility to ride a school bus may be revoked for a violation of school bus safety or conduct policies, or violation of any other law governing student conduct on a school bus pursuant to the school district's discipline policy. Revocation of a student's bus riding privilege is not an exclusion, expulsion, or suspension under the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act.

### Bus Rule Consequences

- First Offense: Warning
- Second Offense: 5-day suspension from riding the bus
- Third Offense: 10-day suspension from riding the bus
- Fourth Offense: 20-day suspension from riding the bus
- Fifth Offense: Suspended from riding the bus for the remainder of the year
- NOTES: Based on the severity of the student's conduct, more serious consequences may be imposed at any time.

If you have any questions or concerns about transportation at Win-E-Mac, please contact Kristi Plante at 218-563-2900 or 218-687-2236 or by email at [kplate@win-e-mac.k12.mn.us](mailto:kplate@win-e-mac.k12.mn.us)

Thank you, and welcome back to school!  
Be the Best Patriot!



**Home of the Patriots  
Welcome Back to School  
September 2, 2025**

**POSTAL PATRON**