

The Patriot Promoter

Distributed by the Win-E-Mac School District

www.wemschools.org

August 2026



2026-2027 School Year Information

Open House

Open house will take place on Wednesday, August 26, 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.

7th Grade Orientation at 4:30 pm in the main gym

* 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), or by mailing a check (23130 345th St SE, Erskine)

* See wemschools.org/tech for more information



Click here for the full school Calendar -

[2026-2027 School Calendar](#)

August

25th, 26th, 27th, 31th – Staff Workdays

26th – Open House 5:00-7:00 pm

September

1st – First Day of School

21st-25th - Homecoming Week

October

15th – No School – MEA/NEA

16th – No School – MEA/NEA

30th – End of 1st Quarter

November

3rd– Election Day

12th – Early out at 12:30, Parent/Teacher Conferences

13th - No School

18th – Board Meeting 5:30 pm

25th – Early out at 12:30

26th – No School: Thanksgiving

27th – No School

December

22nd – Early out at 12:30

23rd-31st – No School: Winter Break

SUPERINTENDENT'S NOTES

Aaron Cook, Superintendent



Introduction

Welcome back, Patriots! As we begin the 2026-27 school year, we are excited for another great year at Win-E-Mac. The start of a new school year brings new opportunities, new experiences, and plenty to look forward to for our students, staff, and families.

We remain focused on providing a great experience for our students, building strong relationships, and creating opportunities for every student to succeed. We also look forward to celebrating the many accomplishments of our students throughout the classroom, activities, athletics, and our community.

Thank you to our families and community for your continued support of Win-E-Mac. We are looking forward to a great school year and another great year to be a Patriot!

September 1 school start

Win-E-Mac students will return to school on Tuesday, September 1 this year.

The Minnesota Legislature approved a two-year window allowing school districts to begin classes before Labor Day. Win-E-Mac is taking advantage of that temporary flexibility for the upcoming school year.

We are excited to welcome our students and staff back on September 1 and get another great school year started!

Seasonal Tax Base Replacement Aid

During the 2026 legislative session, Minnesota lawmakers approved a new Seasonal Tax Base Replacement Aid program. The program is designed to help school districts like Win-E-Mac that have a significant amount of seasonal recreational property within their district boundaries.

Seasonal recreational property is not included in the tax base used to fund voter-approved school operating referendums. Because nearly 40% of Win-E-Mac's applicable property tax base is seasonal recreational property, the remaining cost of the referendum has

historically been spread among a smaller group of local taxpayers.

Under the new law, Win-E-Mac is estimated to receive approximately \$308,500 in state aid annually. This funding will replace a portion of the local referendum levy, resulting in property tax relief for Win-E-Mac taxpayers while maintaining the same level of funding for the school district.

This is a significant change for our district and provides a more equitable way to fund our voter-approved operating referendum.

Permanent School Trust Fund Vote

This November, Minnesota voters will see a proposed constitutional amendment regarding the state's Permanent School Fund. The fund has supported Minnesota public schools since statehood and is currently valued at more than \$2.3 billion.

The proposed amendment would change how money is distributed from the fund. If approved, annual distributions would be based on 4.5% of the fund's three-year average market value. The goal is to increase and stabilize funding to Minnesota schools while protecting the fund for future generations.

What could this mean for Win-E-Mac?

Win-E-Mac received \$34,237 from the Permanent School Fund in FY26. Using statewide estimates for the increased distribution, that amount could have been approximately \$50,850 under the proposed formula — an increase of roughly \$16,600 per year. Actual future amounts will vary based on the value of the fund and student enrollment.

The amendment does not increase individual income or property taxes. It changes how much of the existing Permanent School Fund is distributed to Minnesota schools each year.

The question will appear on the November 3, 2026 General Election ballot. Because it is a constitutional amendment, it must receive a "Yes" vote from a majority of everyone voting in the election. If a voter leaves the question blank, it has the same effect as voting "No."

If approved, the change would take effect July 1, 2027, with the increased funding beginning in FY28.

ASEC Educational Learning Center

This past legislative session brought exciting news for the Area Special Education Cooperative (ASEC), as the State of Minnesota approved \$6.5 million in bonding funds toward the construction or renovation of a new Educational Learning Center (ELC). This is a significant accomplishment, as state bonding dollars have only rarely been awarded directly toward educational facilities.

Win-E-Mac is one of 11 rural school districts that make up ASEC, which has served northwest Minnesota since 1969 and covers approximately 3,300 square miles.

The new ELC will provide specialized programming and services that are currently limited or unavailable in our region. This includes a Setting IV program for students requiring intensive daily support, autism programming, transition services for students ages 18-22, early intervention services, and a centralized location for ASEC staff and services.

The total project is estimated to range from approximately \$12.5 million to \$17 million, depending on whether ASEC moves forward with a renovation of an existing facility or construction of a new facility. The \$6.5 million state investment will provide significant support toward making the project a reality. This project will strengthen special education services throughout our region and, most importantly, provide more opportunities for students with significant needs to receive high-quality services closer to home.

Staffing Updates

We are excited to bring on our new staff members for the 2026-27 school year. Information about each member is available later in the newsletter.

New Licensed Staff Members -

Ann Brekken - Language Arts and FCS

Brooklyn Ose - 3rd grade Teacher

Rylee Haugen - Special Ed

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. The program will run three (3) days per week: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday to allow the program to run further into the spring.

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, 2026**. 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.

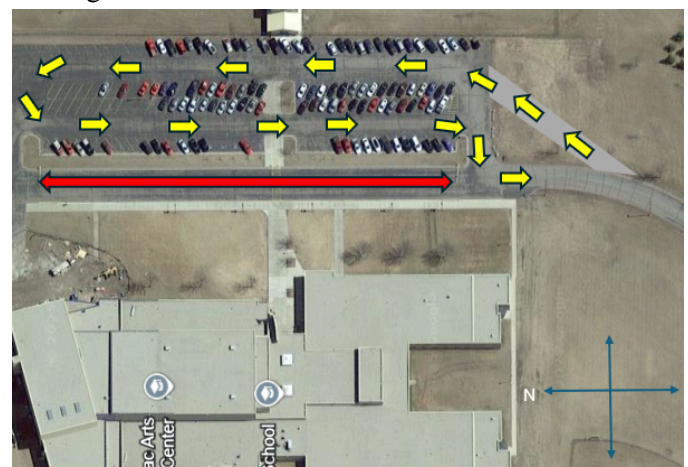
Important: Immunizations

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.

Proper Traffic Flow

I want to remind everyone of the proper traffic flow at the school. The school parking lot is a one way parking lot. Please refer to the yellow arrows on the graphic below for the correct flow.

As a reminder, the lane closest to the school is for school vehicles only. There should not be any vehicles, at any time of the day or year, that are not school vehicles in this area. Please refer to the lane with the red arrow on the diagram below.



PRINCIPAL'S NOTES

Carl Dugstad



Carl Dugstad

Welcome Back!

I would like to say welcome back to school to all of our students and families. I am excited to start my second year as part of the team here at Win-E-Mac. My first year was a year of learning and trying to understand the best parts of the past while working with our staff to point ourselves in the right direction for the future. I visit many schools with coaching and watching sports or activities and I am extremely proud to be able to call our school my home. The campus is beautiful, the students are welcoming, and the staff genuinely cares about each student. Students have started to filter into the building-it is great to catch up and makes us excited for September 1st so we can all do what we were meant to do-help our students reach their full potential. Go Patriots!

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 1, 2026

ADSIS Program:

We are once again going to lean on our ADSIS program to provide specific and timely interventions to help our students become better readers. I had information in the Patriot Promoter last year but I want to reiterate that if you get a notice that your student qualifies to work with our ADSIS team they will then get to access great

instruction and our preliminary data says that the program works for our struggling readers.

FastBridge/Testing:

We are going to continue to use FastBridge to find baseline data and progress monitor our students this year. It is essential that we use data to inform our instructional decisions and FastBridge has become popular for many schools as it is easy to use, the testing is pretty quick and painless, and the reports are easy to interpret. We will also continue to use Capti testing with our students to make sure that they are reading where they need to be. Our ADSIS program, who help many of our readers improve, ran this testing last year and it was a smooth process for our students. We also do the MCA tests in the spring

Handbook Changes:

We have made some changes to the school handbook for this upcoming school year.

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 once again going to prohibit cell phone usage from our students in 8th grade and down. This went very well last year and it allows our students to learn in a less distracting environment. If you need to get ahold of your student-call the office and we will help you out.

The only two specific issues that I want to mention is that we are not going to allow students to sell things to other students here at school. It opens up too many issues with money, theft, lack of oversight, allergies, etc. The other issue is squishies. I know they are everywhere-I have too many at my house-but they can't come to school. Just like Pokemon cards, things like this will undoubtedly cause drama. Even well-meaning students can get caught up in trading, etc. and that isn't something we are going to deal with this year.

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

Let me start by welcoming you all back for another school year. Thanks to all of you who have played a role in helping promote positive changes at Win-E-Mac for students, staff, and community members alike. I hope we can build off everything we accomplished last year and make the 26-27 school year another great one.

Fall Sports

Practices have already begun for football, volleyball, and sideline cheerleading for all levels (grades 7 - 12). If you missed the informational meeting/registration night, please reach out directly to me about getting signed up. It is not too late, although time is running out. Registration can be found on our website under the activities tab. We have switched over to a new registration company, Bound, and so far the transition has been smooth.

<https://gobound.com/mn/schools/winemac>

7th Grade Orientation

Before the open house on Wednesday, August 26, 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

Our custodial staff has been busy working on getting the building into tip-top shape before the start of the school year. One area they spent a lot of time was the lockerrooms, by fully cleaning them out and also making repairs where needed. I am hopeful with help from our PE teachers, coaches, and custodians our students can work to keep the locker rooms picked up and organized. Please help encourage your student(s) to bring home and wash their p.e./practice clothes and get rid of any clutter that accumulates.

Dr. Dish - Shooting Machine

With support from some outside organizations (Snustad Foundation, Erskine Legion), fundraising from sports

teams, and a very large and anonymous donation, we have been able to purchase a brand new Dr. Dish shooting machine. This machine will work properly (as our old one was on its last leg) to rebound and pass to shooters working on their basketball skills, but it will also allow for advanced statistics to be tracked and for students to log and coaches will have access to see practice/results. Again, a thank you goes out to all who assisted in purchasing this, especially to the anonymous donor. This is yet another tool our athletes can use both during practice and on their own time to improve themselves and their teams.

Corporate Sponsorship

After a very successful first year of providing multiple sponsorship/advertising opportunities, I am excited to begin year two. Thank you to all businesses and individuals who advertised/sponsored with us last year. If you are interested please reach out: blangemo@wemschools.org, information will be posted online soon for 26-27, for now here is an overview:

- Gymnasium Scoreboard Advertisement (multiple levels)
- Softball & Baseball Fence Signage
- Fieldhouse Sponsorship
- Stadium Chair (portable bleacher backrests-limited availability)
- Other permanent/long-term sponsorship opportunities.

Positive Leadership

Whether in the classroom, cafeteria, hallways, playing surfaces or out in the community, we encourage all students of Win-E-Mac to develop and become positive leaders. We hope all our Patriots are accountable, compassionate, resilient, and empathetic people. Leadership is not just for presidents of clubs or captains of sports teams, we all are provided with daily opportunities to lead.

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. We want to keep our kids safe, but remind you they cannot simply stay at school and hang around until their activity begins.

New Staff Introductions

Ann Brekken, Language Arts & FCS

My name is Ann Brekken. I grew up in Erskine, and am a WEM graduate. I graduated from UND with my Bachelor and Master Degrees in Education. This will be my 23rd year teaching, and I'm so excited to be back in the WEM school system! I'll be teaching 7th and 8th grade English, along with 9th grade Careers and Senior High Foods. I live in Erskine with my husband Tyler, and our two kids-Josie, who is a freshman at UND, and Logan, a freshman at WEM. I'm looking forward to a great year getting to know new students and families. Go Patriots!



Brooklyn Ose, 3rd Grade Teacher

Hello! My name is Brooklyn Ose, and I am so excited to join the Win-E-Mac School District as a third grade teacher! I have spent the past eight years teaching fifth grade in Red Lake Falls. I'm excited for this new adventure and can't wait to get to know my students and their families!

I grew up in Thief River Falls and now live in Erskine with my husband, Tahlor, our daughter, and a baby boy on the way! Outside of school, I am a huge sports fan and enjoy spending time with my family, cheering on my favorite teams, and being involved in the community!



Rylee Haugen, Special Education

My name is Rylee Haugen, and I'm excited to be joining Win-E-Mac this year as the Special Education Resource Teacher for grades 7–9! I graduated from the University of Minnesota Duluth with a degree in Integrated Elementary (K–6) and Special Education (K–12). Last year, I taught special education resource students in grades K–5 in Forest Lake, Minnesota. I'm especially excited to be back at Win-E-Mac, where I attended kindergarten through 12th grade. It's a great opportunity to return to a school that has been such a big part of my life, this time as a teacher! I'm looking forward to getting to know my students, attending school activities and sporting events, and being back in the community.





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 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 voicemail. **Please make sure that your phone number(s) are up-to-date within ParentVue**

CELL PHONES & ELECTRONIC DEVICES

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

Elementary & 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 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 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

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



**Home of the Patriots
Welcome Back to School
September 1, 2026**

POSTAL PATRON