

August 2022
State of the School
Edition

The State of the School



Highmore-Harrold School District 34-2

Special Interest Articles:

- New school district staff members.
- End of universal free breakfast and lunch.
- Track Project.

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New Staff Hires!

The Highmore-Harrold School District is excited to add three new staff members to our team for the 2022-2023 school year. Cory Lambley will join us as our new Pre-K through 12 Principal. Mr. Lambley comes to Highmore-Harrold from Waubay, where he also served as PK-12 Principal. Prior to that he was a principal in Bon Homme and Philip. Originally from Burke, SD, Mr. Lambley is a graduate of Northern State University and received his Master's in

Administration and Supervision from the University of South Dakota. In his spare time, he enjoys helping his parents on their ranch near Burke.

Beth Aasby is a familiar face who is joining the teaching staff as our new 5th grade teacher. Mrs. Aasby spent the past 7 years teaching at Stanley County Elementary, and prior to that she was a regular substitute teacher here in Highmore-Harrold and taught at Crow Creek

Elementary. Mrs. Aasby lives in Highmore with her husband David, and in her spare time she enjoys spending time with her grandchildren.

Rachel Oligmueller is joining the Special Education staff as a SLP aid. Rachel is a graduate of Miller High School and Mitchell Tech, joining our district straight from college.

Please join me in welcoming our new staff to the district!

Universal Free Breakfast and Lunch Ends

The US Congress has not renewed the portion of the COVID-19 relief acts to include free breakfast and lunch for school districts. Because of this, students who do not qualify for free or reduced lunch (see later article) will once again be charged to eat meals at school.

New pricing for school meals are: PK-12 breakfast \$2.00; K-4 lunch \$3.00; 5-12 lunch \$3.25; second lunch servings \$2.00.

The Highmore-Harrold School District must annually review school lunch pricing to maintain compliance with the Federal School Lunch Program. For the 2022-2023 school year the school district will receive over \$3.35 for lunches served to students who qualify for free lunches, which is an increase of nearly \$0.30.

Students will always have the right to bring a sack lunch to school, however Federal School Lunch Program stipulations do

not allow consumption of outside meals from commercial wrapping such as a Hot Stuff pizza box or Subway sandwich wrap. The school district will still allow students to eat commercial meals if they arrive wrapped in foil or from alternative wrapping. Meals eaten in the lunchroom from commercial wrapping could result in the district losing our federal reimbursement money and the elimination of free or reduced meals for students who qualify.

Track Project to Take Shape



The Highmore-Harrold School District has entered into an agreement with Civil Design, Inc. in Brookings to begin the preliminary bid process of building a new running track. The new track will be located on the same foundation, which is south of the city baseball field, and it will have an all-weather surface to increase the quality of construction and help

increase the surface life of the track. The track will be 6 lanes wide with markings for relay exchange zones and hurdle placement.

The district is excited to begin this project to provide an appropriate practice facility for our track athletes, and to provide a high-quality walking surface for the community. Everyone will be welcome to enjoy

walks on the track surface, provided a track practice is not in progress. New fencing will be built around the track to prohibit wheeled traffic such as bicycles and motorized vehicles such as motorcycles, mopeds, or four-wheelers.

“All community residents and guests will have opportunities to walk on and enjoy the new track.”

School InfoApp

Last school year the district partnered with School InfoApp to build a mobile phone app for both Android and iOS. Any person with an applicable mobile device can go to either Google Play or the App Store and download the app connected to the Highmore-Harrold School District. Just search for “Highmore-Harrold Schools” to download the

app to your phone or tablet.

App users can sign up for daily and weekly school calendar updates, while parents can subscribe to their teacher or coach’s account to receive messages specific to their child.

As many teachers and coaches transition over to use the app, the district is hopeful that the platform

will help increase communication between teachers/coaches and families, as well as increase community awareness of the school’s activity calendar.



New Windfarm adds School District Revenue

The completion of the Triple-H windfarm in Hyde County in the fall of 2020 resulted in over 90 functioning wind turbines. Each turbine pays a set utility tax plus a production tax based on the amount of electricity produced during that calendar year.

For the 2021 year, the amount of tax paid to the school district amounted to \$421,000. This revenue is deposited in the district’s general fund, and in five years will result in the district losing state aid.

The West Bend Wind Project on the Hyde/Hughes border will add another 71 turbines, with approximately 50 built on Highmore-Harrold district land, resulting in additional funding for the school district.

District General Fund Balance Increases for 22-23

The Highmore-Harold School District ended the 2020-2021 school fiscal year with a General Fund balance of approximately \$60,000. This extraordinary low balance was largely brought about by decreasing enrollment resulting in lower state aid, and the state legislature passing a law that significantly decreased the district's ability to generate Capital Outlay revenue. Each year 45% of that revenue can be transferred to the GF.

Due to the low beginning fund balance, when Governor Noem and the state legislature approved

the 6% increase to education funding which allowed many of our neighboring school districts to increase teacher pay from 5-7%, Highmore-Harold had to remain frugal and increase teacher pay by only 2%. As disappointing as it was to fall behind the other districts in the state, increasing salaries by any amount larger than that would have been irresponsible.

Finding ourselves in this position caused us to focus our efforts to shore up our General Fund, not only to be competitive with teacher salaries in the

future, but also so we can prevent our fund balance from operating so close to the edge. Creative practices with federal ESSER/COVID relief dollars, plus the influx of windfarm tax revenues have the Highmore-Harold School District ending 21-22 General Fund Balance over \$610,000. We will continue to work hard to ensure the district's finances are thriving!



Capital Outlay Fund Balance Flourishing

Have you noticed your property taxes, or at least the amount paid to the school district, decreasing? If you have, this is largely due to the law passed by the SD State Legislature in 2017 to restrict the amount of Capital Outlay revenue a district can receive from \$3.00/\$1000 of land values to \$3441/pupil. This caused the district to see a decrease in revenue from \$1.3 million to \$772,000. Capital Outlay revenue is used for building projects, facility

upgrades, textbooks, classroom supplies, and other physical "capital" expenses. The Capital Outlay Fund CANNOT be used for salaries.

This drop in funding caused the district to reject bids on the proposed track project in 2019-2020. An analysis of our Capital Outlay budget expenses and revenues since that year has revealed that we have been able to continue to build our ending fund balance year after year.

Today the district's Capital Outlay fund balance is at over \$3 million, which has given us the chance to revisit the track project. Again, we are excited about the possibility of this project, not only for the opportunities it can provide our students and residents, but for the prospect of adding another high-quality feature to our community to help exhibit our growth and vitality!

"A new track complex will help exhibit community growth and vitality."

Who Should Apply for Free/Reduced Lunch? And why?

“Free and reduced lunch applications affect school district Title I dollars.”

At the beginning of every school year parents receive a packet of information from the school, ranging from important dates, forms to update, and a school calendar. Also included in that packet is an application for free and/or reduced lunch. In our experience, less than 50% of parents fill it out.

So, who should fill it out? The answer is: everyone. The free and reduced lunch program is a federally funded program to help low-income families afford school lunch for their children. It is an entitlement program, meaning if you qualify, you are entitled to that benefit. And all applications are kept in strict confidence.

As for another reason why, the district’s Title I program is awarded federal money based on the numbers of free and reduced lunches. The more applications our district receives, the more likely we will receive adequate Title I funds, as family incomes will still have to qualify for the benefits. When in doubt, fill it out!

What a 6% Funding Increase Meant for HH

During her state budget address, Governor Kristi Noem introduced the plan to increase educational funding 6% for the 2022-2023 school year. This increase in funding amounted to \$62,000 in state aid, with 50% allocated toward salary increases, and the remainder for overhead

costs to account for inflation and increased operating costs.

As a comparison, the 6% increase state employees received was all allocated into their salary budgets. Any increases for overhead came through their normal budgeting process.

State funding is based on a student: teacher ratio, so declining student enrollment was the primary factor as to why our 6% increase was so small. So, we need to stay creative to figure out how to do more with less, which we will continue to do.

New Outside Library Addition



Welcome to the take one, leave one library!

Built from barnwood from the Thingelstad homestead, this little library was installed on the south side of the elementary school on July 3, 2022, by the Mayes and Knox families. All students are welcome to participate with the library, the only rule is you must follow the rule: take one book, leave one book. This will allow students to share their reading

libraries with others, all while expanding their own.

We hope everyone enjoys the library!

School Lunch Updates-Continued

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has allocated money to schools to help offset costs incurred from supply chain disruptions to school lunch programs. The Highmore-Harrod School District received \$8,947 in supply chain assistance which we can use to purchase local beef to serve in our school lunch. We are in hopes that this will not only help our supply chain ordering, but most importantly promote our local ranchers, their local beef, and the local support in our school.

Supply chain assistance funding cannot pay for beef processing, but it can pay for the purchase of the live animal. The school district will pay the costs of processing, as well as transport, if needed. To meet state inspections, the animal cannot be injured, blind, or have cancer.

If interested, please let the school know when you will have a beef ready so we can schedule a processing appointment with an area butcher.

In other lunch updates, open-campus lunch will remain in effect for students in grades 9-12. Beginning with the second week of school (giving time for waivers to be signed), students will be able to leave school and drive for lunch. The two big reminders with this policy are:

1. If students are not eating lunch, they cannot/should not sign up for it.
2. Students only have the 22-minute lunch period to be gone from school. If they arrive late, they are tardy.



District to purchase local beef

Additional Personnel Change

As Mr. Lambley comes on board to become PK-12 principal, Mr. Cermak will add Director of Special Education to go with his role of Superintendent. Mr. Cermak and Mr. Lambley will work together to support the teaching staff to ensure the district is promoting the best possible educational environment for students. Both administrators will continue to evaluate teachers, with each taking a mix of elementary and junior high/high school teachers to work with.

Regarding the chain of command at the school, all parent concerns regarding their children should first come to the attention of the classroom teacher or activity supervisor. From there, all principal questions should be directed at Mr. Lambley, who will oversee all students in grades PK-12. If issues are not resolved at this level, Mr. Cermak will be brought in to help resolve the issue.

My door is always open, and even though I am transitioning into a new

role, my dedication to being involved with our students will not disappear. However, our district will operate much more smoothly if we follow the chain of command to allow everyone to maximize their efforts within their defined roles. This means parent contact needs to start with the teachers, then to Mr. Lambley, and then finally to me. This will allow all of us to work together, and more importantly trust each other, as we work to build a successful culture of learning.

“New roles mean new opportunities for school staff to work together for the betterment of the district.”

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COVID/ESSER Funding Update

The Highmore-Harrold School District has received three separate federal COVID/ESSER funding distributions totaling approximately \$890,000. Of those distributions, ESSER I and ESSER II have been completely exhausted. ESSER III will be used this fall to provide staff

retention bonuses for all staff, as well as instructional software fees and other technology. After these disbursements, the district will have \$63,000 remaining, with a deadline of the fall of 2024 to spend the funds.

Dual Credit Reimbursement to End

The Highmore-Harrold School District has been able to reimburse the price of tuition of College Dual Credit classes to students since the spring semester of 2015. Starting this fall, the district will discontinue this practice.

In the fall of 2014, the district received utilities taxes that exceeded budgeted revenue by \$16,000. The decision was made to use the funds to reimburse students to tuition cost of Dual Credit classes. This

funding has been exhausted, but the district will continue to encourage students to take Dual Credit courses, as the cost savings will amount to between \$700-\$1000 per class when compared to on campus classes.

We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://www.highmore-harrold.k12.sd.us/>

Fall Sports Schedules

Volleyball

Aug. 23 - at Stanley County - 6:30
Aug. 25 - v Ipswich(H) - 6:00(Parents Night)
*Aug. 30 - at James Valley - 6:15
Sept. 1 - v Lower Brule(H) - 6:30
*Sept. 6 - v SBA(H) - 6:30
Sept. 10 - at Philip Tourney - 10:00 CST
Sept. 13 - v Potter County(H) - 6:30
*Sept. 15 - at Hitchcock v Hitchcock-Tulare - 6:30
Sept. 20 - at Faulkton - 6:30
*Sept. 22 - at Iroquois v Iroq./L. Preston - 6:15
Sept. 24 - CSDC Tourney at Wolsey - 10:00
*Sept. 27 v Sanborn Central/Woonsocket(H) - 6:30
Oct. 1 - 281 Tourney at Wolsey - 10:00
Oct. 4 - v Sully Buttes(H) - 6:30
*Oct. 7 - at Wessington Springs - 6:15
*Oct. 11 - v Wolsey-Wessington(H) - 6:30
Oct. 13 - at Selby v Herreid/Selby - 6:30
Oct. 17 - v Crow Creek(H) - 6:30
Oct. 18 - at Lyman - 6:30
Oct. 25 - at Miller - 6:00
Oct. 31, Nov. 1, 3 - Regions at Higher Seeds - 7:00
Nov. 8 - SoDak 16 at TBA - TBA
Nov. 17-19 - State at S. Falls

Football

*AUG. 19 - at Miller v Wagner - 7:00
*AUG. 26 - at Miller v Mt. Vernon/Plankinton - 7:00
- Parents Night(6:45)
*SEPT. 2 - at Menno v Jim River - 7:00
SEPT. 9 - at Deadwood v Lead-Deadwood - 7:00
*SEPT. 16 - at W. Springs v W/WS/SC - 7:00
SEPT. 23 - at Miller v Hill City - 7:00 -
Homecoming(HH & Miller)
SEPT. 30 - at Elk Point v Elk Point-Jefferson - 7:00
OCT. 7 - Bye Week
*OCT. 14 - at Miller v TD/A/AC/DC - 7:00
OCT. 20 - 1st Round Playoffs
OCT. 27 - 2nd Round Playoffs
NOV. 4 - Semi-Final Playoffs
NOV. 10-12 - State Finals at Vermillion

*Denotes 281 and SESD Conference Games

Cross Country

Sept. 1 - at Redfield - 10:00
Sept. 7 - 281 meet at W. Springs - 10:00
Sept. 10 - at Ipswich - 10:00
Sept. 15 - at Chamberlain - 2:30
Sept. 17 - at Gettysburg - 10:00
Sept. 21 - at Faulkton - 1:00
Sept. 26 - at Miller - 2:00
Oct. 1 - Action Club-Highmore - 10:00
Oct. 5 - CSDC at Gettysburg - 1:00
Oct. 12 - Region 4B at Gettysburg - 1:00
Oct. 22 - State at Huron