



# United South Central Schools

*"Empowering students to reach their full potential through a supportive community and engaging school experiences, inspiring them to be lifelong learners and responsible citizens."*

Taylor Topinka, Superintendent

Hello United South Central Families,

It's hard to believe we're already entering April and the final stretch of the school year. MCA testing will be getting underway soon, and the remaining weeks of classes will move quickly. As we approach the end of the year, we appreciate your continued support in encouraging students to stay focused and do their best. Finishing the year strong is an important part of setting them up for continued success.

**District Budget** - March and April are typically when we really dig into building our budget for the upcoming school year, with the goal of having a final version approved by the School Board in June as the State requires of us. At this point, our initial projections are in a good place, and we are planning for a balanced budget with only some minor adjustments and right-sizing in a few areas. Overall, our budget at USC remains very stable, and a big reason for that continues to be our students. Minnesota funds school districts based on enrollment, and our strong student numbers are a major positive as we plan ahead. We also take a lot of pride in being good stewards of the taxpayer dollars we receive, always working to make sure those resources have the greatest possible impact for our students and classrooms.

At the same time, we're keeping a close eye on what's happening with the legislature in St. Paul, as there are several items being discussed that could have a significant impact on school funding. One of the more challenging parts of this process is that we are required to have our budget finalized before the legislature wraps up its work and gives us a clear picture of what our funding will be. Because of this, we plan cautiously, keep some funding in reserve, and prepare for a range of scenarios, so we can stay on stable footing no matter how things ultimately play out.

**Facilities Referendum Process** - We continue to dedicate a great deal of time, thought, and discussion to the future needs of our building and overall school facilities. After our facilities task force developed a potential design and expansion scope, we hosted two community informational meetings and were grateful to gather input from more than 100 individuals at each session. As we work toward a plan that best serves our entire district, it's important that we hear from as many voices and perspectives as possible. With that in mind, a community survey will be mailed to district residents prior to April 9. The survey can be completed either digitally (using a unique code provided to each household) or returned by mail. The survey will close on April 27, and we strongly encourage you to participate so we can gain a clear understanding of our community's thoughts and priorities.

**Staffing** - This spring has brought news of several retirements from staff at USC, which means we will also see a number of new faces joining our team. To date, our principals have hired for five of our open positions, and we are actively working to identify strong candidates for a few remaining roles. One of the greatest strengths of our school district is the tremendous team of educators and support staff we are fortunate to have. It will be exciting to welcome new members to this team, and we are looking forward to all that the year ahead will bring.



Independent School District No. 2134

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**Looking Ahead** - On April 21st, our regularly scheduled school board meeting will take place in Bricelyn at the Community Center. Everyone is welcome to attend and see how school governance works. Public schools are unique because they are truly run by the community, and we encourage you to be part of that process. Our June meeting will be in Kiester, August in Walters, and October in Freeborn. The rest of the meetings are scheduled to be held at our building in Wells. At each meeting outside of Wells and on May 19th in Wells, the board will hold a question-and-answer session about our facilities process starting 30 minutes before the meeting. We hope you'll bring any questions you have and join the conversation.

**Stay Connected** - Follow USC on Facebook, Instagram, and X to stay up to date on all the exciting things happening at school. Be sure to download the USC app from the Apple Store or Google Play for easy access to important updates. Plus, don't miss the USC update on KBEW Radio at 10:10 AM every other Friday and our monthly updates in the Faribault County Register!

#### **Upcoming Events and Activities at USC -**

- April 3 & 6, Easter Break
- April 21, School Board Meeting (in Bricelyn) - 5:30 PM
- May 29, Commencement and Last day of School

Thank you for your help and support as we wrap up the school year.

Go Rebels!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Taylor Topinka". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Taylor Topinka  
USC Superintendent