

Faribault County Register

Faribault County Register Article

Dr. Topinka- December 2025

As November came to a close, Mother Nature reminded us she has the final say on the calendar, with weather that led to an unexpected closure. Looking ahead to December, United South Central Schools is asking families to prepare for the possibility of Virtual Learning Days. While another traditional “snow day” may still occur early in the season, the district will transition to virtual learning as needed for weather-related closures from here forward. We will aim to provide as much notice as possible whenever a Virtual Learning Day is called, giving students and families the opportunity to be as prepared as possible for remote instruction. We would like to encourage parents to consider what their students may need to stay successful while learning from home. Academically, we know that nothing replaces the instruction that takes place in-person on a regularly scheduled school day. Our staff works very hard to deliver the best instruction possible virtually. While it’s not the same, virtual learning allows classes and curriculum to continue with minimal interruptions, and it also enables our staff to maintain quality connections with students even when the weather gets in the way.

Discussions about a potential facilities project at USC continue as our board considers a potential project in the fall of 2026. We have been doing our best to engage staff, students, parents, and community members to better understand our long-term needs, including enrollment trends, student demographics, instructional requirements, and future building maintenance needs. Last spring our initial facilities taskforce, consisting of representatives from each district community, helped launch these discussions. This month, the taskforce will reconvene and expand to include individuals who expressed interest at the October community meeting. Members will review feedback from staff and students and help shape potential plans and layouts for consideration. Additionally, a community survey will be released as the 2026–2027 school year approaches that we hope helps us hear from many local voices and continue to guide long-term planning.

With property tax notices arriving in mailboxes, December is the time to review United South Central's annual tax levy. Minnesota school districts determine tax levies through fourteen funding categories, only one of which requires voter approval. While the process is largely guided by state regulations and processes, our School Board is pleased to have a slight decrease in USC's proposed property tax levy this year. USC remains committed to providing high-quality education while being responsible stewards of taxpayer funds. Overall, our budget remains stable, though some areas are being pared back in anticipation of a projected shortfall in the State of Minnesota's 2027–2028 budget. As funding from the State of Minnesota represents the largest source of revenue for USC, proactive planning is underway to mitigate potential financial challenges and to make sure we can maintain the stability of our districts budget for years to come.

We are aiming to have a great month of December at USC, and I hope to see you at a USC game, event, or competition here as we close out the calendar year.