



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,

We are officially at mid-quarter and well into the 2026-27 school year! After 19 days of classes, Homecoming Week is here, and we have just 25 days remaining in the first quarter. It has been a fantastic start to the year, and we are incredibly grateful to our extraordinary students, staff, parents, and community for the energy, support, and enthusiasm they have brought to USC. There is a lot to be proud of already, and we are excited for what the rest of the first quarter will bring!

October 8 Community Engagement Meeting – As we approach the November 3 referendum, we invite parents and community members to join us on Thursday, October 8, from 5:30–8:00 p.m. at United South Central School to learn more about the proposed \$22.9 million facilities plan. Community members can tour the school from 5:30–6:30 p.m., followed by an informational presentation and discussion at 6:30 p.m. The purpose of this meeting is to provide information about the needs identified through nearly two years of planning and community engagement, walk through the proposed improvements, and explain how the different pieces of the project would support our students and programs. We will be available to answer questions and provide additional information. This meeting is part of the district's effort to make sure our community has an opportunity to understand the proposal and the process leading up to the November 3 ballot. Food and childcare will be provided, and we ask that families RSVP for those needs by contacting Laura Foley at lfoley@unitedsouthcentral.org or 507-553-3134. We hope you'll join us, take a look at the school, and learn more about the proposed plan.

Virtual Learning/Snow Day Preparation – While we're hoping winter weather holds off for a while, now is a good time to review our Virtual Learning plans in case winter weather prevents us from holding school in person. Our calendar includes an extra student day, which gives us the flexibility to use a traditional "snow day" early in the season before shifting to Virtual Learning Days if needed. We will do our best to provide as much advance notice as possible before a Virtual Learning Day so students and families have time to prepare and gather what they need. Please take a few minutes to consider what resources your student(s) may need to be successful while learning from home. If your household needs internet access, we have a limited number of hotspots available for checkout. As always, please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions about our Virtual Learning plans.

Minnesota Permanent School Fund Ballot Question - You may notice a constitutional amendment on your November 3 ballot related to Minnesota's Permanent School Fund. In simple terms, the fund is a long-standing state resource dedicated to supporting Minnesota's public schools, and every public school district receives money from it each year. The proposed amendment would change how the state calculates the amount distributed to schools, which could provide more consistent and additional funding for districts like USC while preserving the fund for future generations. For USC, this would mean another source of state funding that could help support the programs and services we provide to students. Importantly, this would not be a new tax or increase individual income or local property taxes. The amendment, if approved, would take effect July 1, 2027.

Activities Supervision – We enjoy the energy and enthusiasm our students bring to USC events and activities throughout the year. To help ensure a safe and positive environment for everyone, we ask that parents and guardians directly supervise their elementary-aged children (6th grade and under) when attending events at USC. Please keep in mind that school staff do not supervise students at after-school events in the same way they do during the school day. If students are not appropriately supervised, they may be asked to leave the



Independent School District No. 2134

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event, and families will be contacted to pick them up. Thank you for helping us keep USC events safe and enjoyable for everyone.

Upcoming Events and Activities –

- October 12, MS/HS Parent-Teacher Conferences 3:30–7:30 PM
- October 15 & 16, MEA Break – No School
- October 19, Professional Development Day – No School
- November 10, End of First Quarter
- November 11, Start of Second Quarter

We're looking forward to a fantastic October here at United South Central! As always, please don't hesitate to reach out, we're proud to partner with you in providing a high-quality educational experience for our students.

Go Rebels!

Taylor Topinka
USC Superintendent