

Faribault County *Register*

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Dr. Topinka - April 2026

With about five weeks remaining in the 2025–2026 school year at United South Central, things are beginning to wind down as we enter the final stretch. It is a good time to reflect on what has been a productive and engaging year for our students. Thank you to our families, staff, and community members for your continued support throughout the year, this partnership is what helps keep USC a positive environment for learning and growth.

Our facilities planning process continues with our community survey, which was mailed to district residents in early April. The survey is designed to gather input from all our district residents and we encourage as many to participate as possible to help guide our future facility planning efforts. The survey will remain open through April 27, after which a facilities task force will be convened in early May to review the feedback and help inform the next steps of the school board in this important process. We encourage you to follow along by visiting the “Facilities Project Process” tab on the front page of our district website, where we regularly post updates and materials from each step. As always, if you have questions or feedback, please don’t hesitate to reach out to me directly at (507) 553-3134 or ttopinka@unitedsouthcentral.org.

We were fortunate to hold our April School Board Meeting in Bricelyn last week, and we are scheduled to meet in Kiester on June 16th. Prior to each meeting held outside of Wells, we also host a question-and-answer session with the school board before the start of the regular meeting. We will hold the next session for the Wells community prior to our May school board meeting on Tuesday, May 19th from 5:00–5:30 PM. We encourage you to attend with any questions you may have about the facilities process, and if you are unable to attend, please feel free to reach out to me directly.

School budgeting remains a challenging process, as districts are required to set budgets for the upcoming year before the legislature finalizes decisions on K–12 education funding in St. Paul. With only a few weeks left in the legislative session and several major funding issues still unresolved, there continues to be uncertainty around areas such as compensatory aid, special education funding, and overall state support for schools. This timing gap between local budget planning and state decision-making is an ongoing reality for school districts across Minnesota. Despite this uncertainty, the USC budget is currently stable, and we are well-positioned to manage the majority of potential changes coming out of the legislature. We continue to monitor discussions closely, particularly proposals that could impact long-term funding formulas and program support. While there are still moving parts at the Capitol, the district remains focused on maintaining financial stability and making thoughtful, responsible decisions for the year ahead.

Even with our share of winter weather events this year, we remain in a strong position in terms of our required instructional time and did not need to utilize as many weather-related closure days as anticipated. Because of this, we have one traditional snow day built into our calendar that was not used this year. The school board elected to adjust the academic calendar accordingly, resulting in the last student day moving up one day to May 28th, with May 29th now serving as a professional development day for staff.

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The Lions Club is once again hosting the annual athletic banquet this spring, scheduled for Wednesday, May 27th. The Lions structure the event by selling tickets for \$5.00 and seeking donations to cover the cost so that United South Central athletes may attend at no cost. If you are interested in supporting this effort, please contact the school or a local Lions Club member.

Our annual commencement ceremony is scheduled for Friday, May 29th at 7:00 PM. This is our opportunity to celebrate the Class of 2026 and our 49 graduating seniors. The ceremony will be held in our big gym and is open to the public. Congratulations to the Class of 2026.

As we move into the final weeks of the school year, there is still much to celebrate, accomplish, and look forward to, now with just 23 days remaining in the school year.