



# 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,

As we turn the calendar to March, the forecast for this week sure looks to be a welcome taste of spring. With the final quarter of the 2025-26 school year just ahead, it won't be long before students begin counting down the days to summer. As we move into this last stretch, it remains important that we stay focused, engaged, and committed to finishing the year strong.

**Testing Season** - March and April bring the start of our spring testing window at USC. During this time, students in grades 3–11 will take the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA), and our 11th graders will also sit for the ACT. These assessments give us a helpful snapshot of where students are at academically and allow us to reflect on how well we're meeting the needs of all students. As we move into this stretch, I'd simply ask that you encourage your student(s) to take the process seriously and do their best. A good night's sleep and a solid breakfast can go a long way in helping them feel prepared and confident on testing days.

**Facilities Referendum Process** - On February 19, we hosted our second Community Engagement Meeting at the Golden Bubble Event Center as part of our ongoing facilities planning process. Approximately 120 community members joined us, and we continue to be grateful for the time, questions, and thoughtful input people are willing to share. Since our first meeting in October, we've completed a demographic analysis, facility condition assessment, and educational adequacy study to better understand enrollment trends, the state of our building systems, and how well our spaces align with today's learning needs. The evening centered on sharing those findings, answering questions, and beginning to outline potential options as we look ahead to a possible November 3, 2026 referendum vote. We also reviewed preliminary financial details, including the Ag2School and Minnesota Property Tax Credit programs, which could significantly lessen the local tax impact should a project move forward.

No decisions have officially been made, and this stage is about building shared understanding and gathering input. We met again with our Community Task Force on March 2nd and continue collecting feedback, including a mailed survey in April, as we work toward a plan that reflects both our district's needs and our community's voice. For those who would like to follow along more closely, there is a "Facilities Project Process" tab on the front page of our district website that is regularly updated with presentation materials and information from each step of the process. We are very thankful for the strong turnout and the continued dialogue. It speaks to the pride our community has in USC and in our schools.

**Spring Conference Date Change** - Both our elementary and middle/high schools have moved their spring conferences to Tuesday, March 10, a change from the original school calendar. Because this date coincides with a township election, conferences will conclude by 6:00 PM. We appreciate your understanding and look forward to connecting with you to discuss your student's progress.



Independent School District No. 2134

# 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

**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 for 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.

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

- March 10, K-12 Evening Conferences
- March 13, No School for March Break
- March 16, Staff Development Day, No School
- March 17, School Board Meeting - 5:30 PM
- March 25, End of 3rd Quarter

Thank you for your continued support as we partner together in providing the best education and experience possible to our students.

Go Rebels!

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

Taylor Topinka  
USC Superintendent