Mahnomen School Newsletter

Independent School District #432

2025-2026
Quarter Two
Issue - Winter

In this edition you'll find:

- A message from Supt. Simon
- High School Update
- Elementary Update
- Health Office News
- American Indian Education Program
- Athletics & Activities
- Important Dates
- Upcoming Events
- Flyers & More!

Welcome back from Winter Break & Happy Semester #2!



Welcome to the second edition of our district newsletter! We're excited to continue sharing updates, highlights, and stories that reflect the great work happening across our schools. Thank you for being an engaged and supportive part of our school community!

Dates to Note:

Jan 16th - Teacher Work Day
Jan 19th - Teacher In-Service
Jan 20th - Start of Quarter 3
Jan 26th - School Board Meeting

Follow us on Facebook!
@MahnomenPublicSchools



Dr. Simon - Superintendent

What an incredibly busy but exciting year so far!

Quarter 2: Momentum Through Winter

Quarter 2 brought steady progress, meaningful learning, and continued focus on student support as we moved into the heart of winter. Even with a busy season, our staff and students continued to show resilience, care for one another, and commitment to doing what's best for kids.

Student Life & School Culture

This quarter, we saw strong participation in school events and activities across grade levels. From concerts and classroom celebrations to winter athletics and community events, Mahnomen students continued to show pride, teamwork, and positive energy.

Teaching, Learning & Student Support

Quarter 2 continued our district focus on supporting students academically, socially, and emotionally. Key areas of work included:

- Ongoing **curriculum alignment and PLC collaboration**
- Continued emphasis on **consistent systems**
- Supporting staff through **mentoring and problem-solving**

Operations & Facilities

As our facility improvements continue to come together, we are working hard to ensure our spaces are safe, welcoming, and functional for students, staff, and community use. Our team continues to manage winter conditions, maintenance needs, and day-to-day building priorities to keep learning moving forward smoothly.

Staffing & Recruitment

We continued working to strengthen staffing across departments. We are grateful for the staff members who have stepped up, covered gaps, and supported one another during a year that has required flexibility and teamwork. We continue recruiting for key positions, including:

- Paraprofessionals
- Substitutes
- Special Education staff





Dr. Simon - Superintendent

- Ojibwe Language & Culture teacher (High School)
- CTE Teachers

Thank you for spreading the word—personal outreach and community connections make a real difference.

Board & District Leadership

This quarter, we continued focusing on transparency, systems, and strong leadership practices. Board materials remain publicly posted on BoardBook, and we continue developing consistent processes that strengthen communication, accountability, and long-term planning.

Thank You, Mahnomen Community!

Quarter 2 was a reminder of what makes Mahnomen strong—our people. Thank you to our staff, families, and community partners for your continued support, encouragement, and teamwork. Together, we are building clarity, consistency, and momentum for a successful year.

— Dr. Andrea Simon
Superintendent, Mahnomen Public Schools



Important Reminder:

❄️ All students should come to school with proper winter gear (coat, hat, gloves, boots if possible). Elementary students should have all five items for the playground!

🚌 Bus transportation is a privilege—students who repeatedly arrive without appropriate winter clothing may be denied bus riding privileges until the concern is corrected.

☃️ Winter can bring bus delays or unexpected issues, and we want students to be prepared and safe if they're outside longer than planned. Even a short wait outside can be unsafe in winter weather without proper clothing!

Our district has an abundance of resources to aid those who may need winter gear! Please stop by or contact your student's office. Thank you for your continued support!

High School

Kevin Hedstrom - Principal



Happy New Year!

I hope you and your family had a wonderful holiday season! As we welcome in 2026, I want to say thank you to all of our families for the work you do every day with your children. We appreciate the effort and look forward to an engaging new year.

Semester one is ending, and with that, new classes and challenges. Many students will be starting a new class or two in the second semester. In addition, our school is welcoming a new staff member who is joining our team. Elizabeth Guenther will be our new technology teacher in the high school. Elizabeth brings some teaching experience with her and we are happy to have her with us and working with our students.

We are also looking forward to our first incentive trip this year. Students who earned a grade of C or better in all their courses, plus had one or fewer discipline write-ups, will be able to join us. We plan to go to a movie in Fosston during the school day. All students earning that reward will be bringing home information in the near future. If your child was not able to participate for this quarter, please encourage them to work on it and try again for quarter three.

Another upcoming event is Sno-Daze. This will take place during the week of February 9th-13th. Activities for the week will include: Guess the Candy, Mr. & Mrs. Irresistible, Heart Scavenger Hunt, and a Rose Fundraiser. Coronation will be on Monday February 9th. More details, including days of the week, will be posted when available.

One of our highlights this year has been the Experiential Learning course taught by Mrs. Kochmann. Students taking this class have the opportunity to be placed into a work type situation, mainly within the school. Students may be helping out in an elementary classroom with learning activities, in the kitchen serving up nutritious meals, or in the gym, helping out with some physical education. Along with the hands-on learning, students write up their experiences every week and turn in time cards. As a reward for completing tasks and turning in work on time, students earn “money” that they are able to spend on a variety of donated items. This class has grown in the last few years and I want to send a loud shout out to Mrs. Kochmann for providing such a great learning opportunity for our students.

In closing, thank you for your continued support. If there is anything we can do to help you in educating your child, please reach out to our office for assistance.

Mr. Kevin Hedstrom
High School Principal





High School Guidance Office

Sheila Helgeson - School Counselor

Did you know: School Guidance Counselors do a variety of things to help students with social, emotional and academic needs.

Connect with Sheila in the
High School Office
218-935-2211 ext. 252
shelgeson@mahnomen.k12.mn.us







Juniors will be taking the ACT test in March in the school. The district pays for the test and although it is voluntary; students are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity. Juniors are also allowed college visit days so should be thinking about the colleges they want to visit and make those arrangements. Watch for information regarding Semester 2, conferences, and any planned visit days or college/career fairs.



Elementary School

Mandy Okeson - Assistant Elementary Principal



As we wrap up the first half of the year, we want to take a moment to reflect on the learning, growth, and community that have defined the first half of our school year. Our students and staff continue to demonstrate resilience, curiosity, and kindness each day, and we are grateful for the strong partnership we share with our families.

Academic Highlights

Quarter 2 has been a busy and productive time in our classrooms. Students have been engaged in meaningful learning experiences across all grade levels, including:

- Strengthening literacy skills through reading, writing, and discussion
- Building foundational math skills with hands-on problem solving
- Continued focus on goal-setting and growth mindset

Teachers use data and student feedback to guide instruction and ensure each learner is supported and challenged.

Student Success & Positive Behavior

We are proud of our students for demonstrating our school-wide T-Bird Pride expectations: **pride, respect, involvement, determination and education.** Throughout the quarter, students were recognized for positive behavior, effort, and acts of kindness toward others.

We appreciate your support at home in reinforcing these expectations—it truly makes a difference!

Thank you for your continued support, communication, and partnership. We are proud of the progress our students have made and look forward to all that Quarter 3 will bring!







School Health Office

Ellen Bueng, RN - School Health Office Nurse

Winter Wellness & Illness Prevention

Cold and flu season remains a focus throughout the winter months. Families are reminded to keep students home when they are ill and to reinforce good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette to reduce the spread of illness!

Students should remain home if they experience any of the following:

- Fever, including a fever accompanied by a new rash
- Vomiting more than twice within a 24-hour period
- Diarrhea that causes accidents, is bloody, or results in more than two bowel movements above the child's normal pattern in a 24-hour period
- Skin sores that are draining fluid on an uncovered area of the body and cannot be covered with a bandage
- Respiratory virus symptoms that are worsening or not improving and are not better explained by another cause, such as seasonal allergies

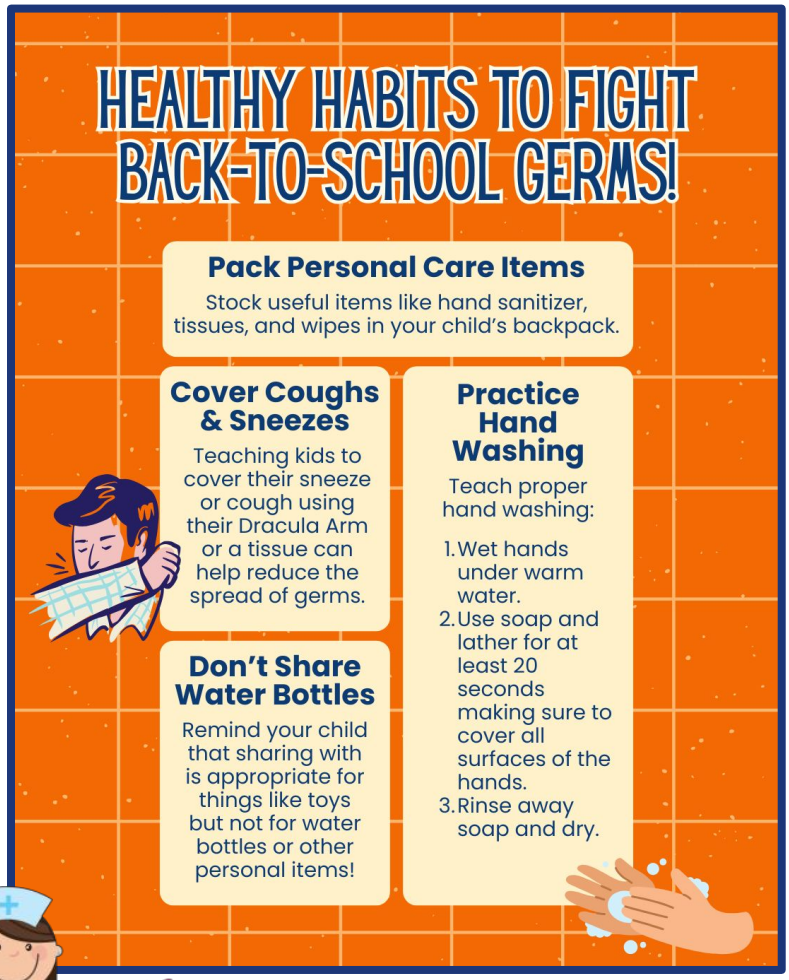
Cold Weather Preparedness

Students are encouraged to dress appropriately for winter weather, including warm coats, hats, and gloves. Thank you to families for helping ensure students stayed safe and comfortable during colder temperatures!

Health Record & Immunization Review

Vaccine compliance records have been reviewed and families have been contacted as needed to address missing or updated documentation. ***Thank you for your timely responses and cooperation!***

Families are also reminded to follow up on referral letters sent home for hearing and vision screenings so students can attend school with the appropriate supports and accommodations in place!





School Health Office

Ellen Bueng, RN - School Health Office Nurse

For the safety of all students and staff, please be reminded that our school follows a **no self-carry medication policy**. With the exception of inhalers and EpiPens, students are not permitted to carry most medications on their person while at school. Even for inhalers or EpiPens, students must check in with the school nurse to ensure that the appropriate authorization form is on file. This documentation is required for students to be approved to self-carry these medications.

Students in grades 7–12 may self-carry non-prescription pain relievers, such as Tylenol or ibuprofen, **only if a completed medication authorization form is on file with the school and the school nurse has deemed it appropriate**. These medications must be used appropriately and may not be shared with other students.

All other medications—whether prescription or over-the-counter—must be brought to the school office, securely stored, and administered according to school procedures. Students should not carry medications in backpacks, pockets, or other personal belongings at any time.

This policy is in place for important safety reasons.

Please note that the health office does not supply Tylenol or ibuprofen. If you wish for your student to have non-prescription medication available at school, please provide a labeled bottle and **complete the appropriate self-carry/non-prescription medication form.** Forms are available in the health office and on the school website.

Chronic Condition Support

The health office continues to support students with chronic health conditions. Medication administration and care plans are closely monitored and adjusted as needed in collaboration with families and school staff.

Thank you for a great first semester!

Ellen Bueng, RN
School Health Nurse



American Indian Education

Desiree Linden - AIE Program Director

To our District Families,

The American Indian Education Program experienced a strong and engaging second quarter, centered on culture, community collaboration, and student success! We are proud of the work our staff, district, and students put in to accomplish the many things we have. Here are a few Key Highlights from the last few months:

Tribal Consultation - Our Quarter 2 Tribal Consultation was very successful. We appreciate the meaningful conversations and look forward to continued collaboration with the White Earth Education Department.

Guest Author – Marcie Rendon - We were honored to host White Earth enrollee and author Marcie Rendon for a student writers workshop and as our guest at the Native American Fall Feast. Students explored storytelling, voice, and creativity through her guidance.

Student Cultural Experiences

- **Detroit Lakes School Powwow**
- **Mashkiki Event at White Earth Tribal and Community College (WETCC)**

AIE also celebrated Native American Heritage Month with daily activities that honored culture, history, and identity.

This year we hosted our 1st Annual AIE Winter Workshop where st hands-on sessions to create handmade gifts together:



- **Woodworking – Kelly Phillips & Brent Miller**
- **Ribbon Skirts/Shirts – Lakeisha Londo**
- **Beaded Earrings – Courtney Stuness**
- **Hand Drums – Craig Bower**
- **Moccasin Earrings – Morrissa Fanning**
- **Tie Blankets – Curt Uran**
- **Dreamcatchers/Medicine Ornaments – Jess Goodwin**

We are also excited to share that our Ojibwe Quiz Bowl team is officially back in action! The team competed for the first time this year at the Fortune Bay Casino in a competition hosted by Bois Forte Health & Human Services. This was a great opportunity for students to showcase their knowledge of Ojibwe language, culture, and history, and we could not be prouder of their efforts. Way to represent—go show what you know! 🎉📚 Miigwech to Coach LaKeisha and Liaison Curt for their leadership, dedication, and for getting our students there safely.

Thank you for an amazing first semester,

Desiree Linden, AIE Program Director

Stay Connected: *Upcoming events will be shared on the* ***Mahnomen American Indian Education Facebook page!***

American Indian Education

Desiree Linden - AIE Program Director



Athletic & Activities Office

Aimee Pederson - Activities Director

Thunderbirds,

The winter sports season is underway and we continue to celebrate Thunderbird excellence! Our gyms, courts, and practice spaces are once again filled with energy, teamwork, and school pride as our Thunderbird student-athletes represent our community through hard work, dedication, and sportsmanship! We offer 7-12 winter programs in basketball, wrestling, dance, and e-sports with rosters full of amazing young individuals.

I am thrilled to share that Coach John Clark Jr. has been named one of the 2026 Minnesota Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame inductees! This distinguished honor recognizes Coach Clark's outstanding contributions to high school football, his leadership, and his lasting impact on our student-athletes throughout his career. We are incredibly proud of Coach Clark, his coaching staff, and the many teams/athletes he has worked with. Please join me in congratulating his accomplishments!

I am also excited to recognize Blake McMullen and Isabella Schlick as the 2026 Triple 'A' Award winners from Mahnomen High School. The Minnesota State High School League Triple 'A' Award honors students who excel in Academics, Arts, and Athletics, and these students exemplify the very best of what it means to be a Thunderbird. Their achievements reflect balance, perseverance, and a commitment to excellence that inspires our entire district. Congratulations!

As our winter sports continue, we encourage everyone to come out, cheer loudly, and support our Thunderbirds. Together, we celebrate not only competition and achievement, but the character and values that make our student-athletes — and our district — something to be proud of.

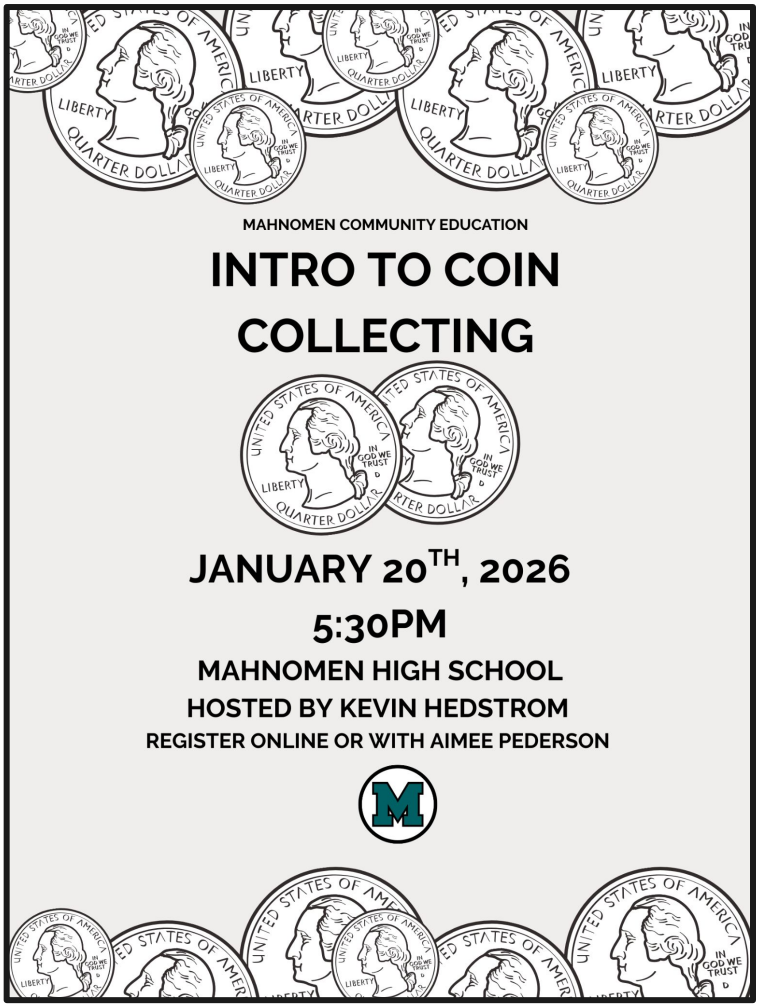
Go Thunderbirds!



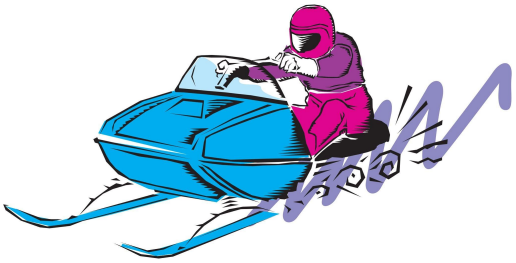




Community Education







Snowmobile Safety review/performance test hosted by the Sno-Drifters Snowmobile Club will be hosted on Sunday, February 1st at Noon at the Mahnomen High School Door #8. Contact Charles Kochmann at 218-331-5696



Dance classes offered for ages 3 to 12th grade! Contact JFK - Mahnomen Director Ashley Neis for more information!

Visit the school webpage for more Community Ed information!

<u>Upcoming Class/Sessions:</u>

Community Walking Club
DIY Coir Rug
Shirt Design & Heat Press
Rag Rugs
Bouquet Building
ECFE
Getting Started with Email
Facebook Basics for Staying Connected
Meet your AI Helper



Upcoming Events & Important Dates

January 2026 - March 2026

January 16th - Teacher Work Day

January 19th - Staff In-Service (MLK Day)

January 26th - School Board Meeting

January 26th - High School Solo Music Contest

February 10th - Team Wrestling Postseason Begins

February 16th - No School (President's Day)

February 20th - Individual Wrestling Postseason Begins

February 23rd - School Board Meeting

February 23rd - GBB Playoffs Begin

February 24th - Elementary Conferences

February 26th - Elementary Conferences

February 26th - High School Conferences

March 2nd - BBB Playoffs Begin

March 9th - Staff In-Service

March 10th - Sub-Section 30 Music Ensemble Contest

March 16th - Spring Choir Concert

March 19th - Spring Band Concert

March 20th - End of Quarter 3

March 23rd - School Board Meeting

March 25th - Large Group Music Contest

March 28th - 30th - Spring Band/Choir Trip

Extra Announcements

Find the latest Thunderbird Activity Schedule Online here!



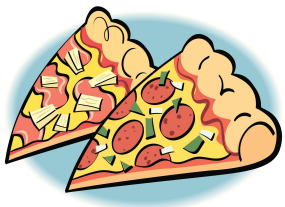


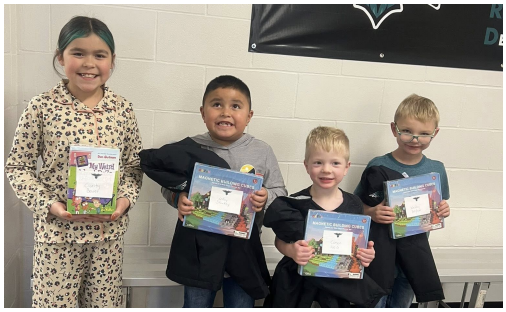

Mrs. Heller's Pre-K Celebrating 67 days of school!



Congratulations to our September, October, November, and December Student and Staff of the month earners!

PTSO Pizza Sales Top Sellers!







The following School Board Meeting dates have been changed from the regular third Monday of the month date:

- January's meeting is set for January 26th, 2026
- February's meeting is set for February 23rd, 2026

Dental Screenings



When: April 7th -9th , 2026

Where: Mahnomen Public School in Health Office

Who: Provided by White Earth IHS



Oral hygiene supplies given including a NEW toothbrush, toothpaste, and floss!



If interested, please see Ellen in the Health Office for a consent form!



Dental services offered

**Visual screening and Cleaning*

**Sealants and Temporary Fillings (if needed)*

**Oral Health Instructions and Nutritional Counseling*

**Fluoride Varnish (strengthens teeth and prevents cavities)*

MAHNOMEN ELEMENTARY

PRE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

2025–2026

VOLUNTARY PRE-KINDERGARTEN
–4'S ALONE –
SCHOOL READINESS

Open for Enrollment

Our Programs offer:

- ✓ Highly qualified, licensed teachers in the field of Early Childhood
- ✓ Research-based curriculum
- ✓ Classrooms with consistent daily routines
- ✓ Indoor & Outdoor Play
- ✓ Full day program, five days a week; following the ISD #432 calendar



To be eligible: 4 years old by Sept 1, 2025

Contact us to get registration information today!

218–935–2581

Join us for ECFE 2025-2026



ENJOY LEARN PLAY

Spring 2026 Session Dates:

March 16th

March 23rd

March 30th

April 13th

April 20th

April 27th

Mahnomen Community Education

hosts Early childhood Family Education Class for ages birth to five years!

Join the fun!

MAHNOMEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

5:00-6:00 PM

PLEASE USE DOOR #1

Contact Mrs. Heller with questions at kheller@mahnomen.k12.mn.us

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Mahnomen School District

Spring 2026



Early Childhood Pre-School Screenings

Monday, May 4th, 2026

at Mahnomen Elementary

- ✓ Screenings by appointment only
- ✓ For Children who are 3-4 years old, or 5 and entering Kindergarten in the Fall
- ✓ Mandated in the State of MN to be completed before entering Kindergarten

Screenings include: Age Appropriate activities that look at motor, concept, communication skills, as well as host a hearing and vision screening!



Contact Mahnomen Elementary at

(218) 935-2581

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