



**Newsletter  
Welcome Back  
2021-2022**

**Big Woods Elementary School  
St. Michael-Albertville #885  
Excellence is our Tradition**

I am overjoyed to see students smiling each day. On the second day of school I asked a student, "Isn't it great that it is Friday?" She responded with deep sadness and a frown, "No, we only had two days of school this week!" The students are focused each day. Each classroom is working as a team to create the best possible learning environment despite the large class sizes. I am very proud of everyone at Big Woods.

**Devices Reminder**

As a reminder, devices deemed disruptive to the learning environment are restricted. Such devices will be taken and returned to a parent/guardian. We have many students coming with watches that can be used as a device and it has become a distraction. Please remind your child of the proper use of such devices.

**November Conferences**

Due to our large class sizes, we can only schedule 10-minute parent teacher conferences on November 22 and 23. More information and sign-up still to come.

**Bus Transportation Mask Mandate**

The school district is asking for your assistance regarding wearing masks while riding the bus. You may be aware that this is a Federal mandate that the district must follow. Please speak to your child about this requirement and provide a mask for him/her to wear while riding the bus.

Each bus will have masks available for students but we are going through them at an alarming rate and need your help to minimize this expense.

**Upcoming Events**

**PTO Meeting - October 5**

**PTO Fundraiser - October 7-15**

**Homecoming - October 3-9**

**Picture Retakes - October 12**

**No School - October 20-22**

**Harvest Parties - October 29**

**Big Woods Elementary**

www.stma.k12.mn.us

Grades 1-4

Enrollment 656

**School Hours:**

**7:45-2:15 PM**

13470 Frankfort Parkway NW

St. Michael, MN 55376

Phone: 763.497.8025

Fax: 763.497.6563

**Breakfast and Lunch  
Prices**

**2021-2022**

**Breakfast & Lunch Prices**

**Breakfast: Free**

**Lunch: Free**

The US Department of Agriculture is extending free breakfast and lunches to all students for the 2021-2022 school year. Students who bring cold lunch can purchase a milk for \$0.50



**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

On November 2nd, 2021, STMA residents will be asked to consider an operating levy to maintain our tradition of excellence. As your principal, it is my job to provide information to families. It is important for you to be informed with factual information to see how the levy may impact your child. Please read through the following information, as I know student learning, class sizes, activities and the way in which we deliver instruction may be greatly impacted depending upon the outcome of the levy vote.

- **Class Sizes**

**In a typical year, class size targets in grades K - 4 = 20-26.** THIS YEAR, class sizes range from 26-36 in grades K-4. If an operating levy is not passed, an additional 60-70 staff will need to be cut and class sizes will increase dramatically. Absent additional dollars such as a levy, class sizes are estimated to be 35-45 in grades K-8.

- **Expanded Walk Zone Maps (Affected Students in Grades K-6: 400 Students):**

- [Albertville Primary](#)
- [Big Woods Elementary](#)
- [Fieldstone Elementary](#)
- [St. Michael Elementary](#)

- **Programming**

- Eliminate high potential/advanced programming K-12
- Eliminate intervention programming

**Please refer to the STMA website for more information.**



# ST. MICHAEL ALBERTVILLE SCHOOLS



## LEVY 2021 FACT SHEET

www.stma.k12.mn.us



MAINTAIN CLASS SIZES | MAINTAIN K-12 PROGRAMMING | MAINTAIN ACTIVITIES

### STRONG SCHOOLS = STRONG COMMUNITIES

On **November 2, 2021**, STMA residents will be asked to maintain our tradition of excellence by voting on a modest levy.

Low state funding, pandemic-related costs, and stabilizing enrollment have wreaked havoc on the district's bottom line. Without a sustainable source of local revenue, STMA will likely face a significant decrease in the quality and quantity of student programming, larger class sizes, more staff reductions, and fewer activity opportunities for students.

### APPROVAL MAINTAINS ESSENTIALS

This levy would fund essential functions throughout the district such as teachers and support staff. Approval of a levy would allow us to hire staff back and return class sizes to previous levels. We are only asking for what we need to avoid the following:

- Increased class sizes [cuts of 60-70 additional staff]
- Elimination of programs [art, music, high-potential/advanced]
- Elimination of middle school activities and lower-level high school activities
- Increases in walking distances to school

### PAST STMA ELECTIONS

STMA has only brought forward 2 voting issues in the last 10 years.

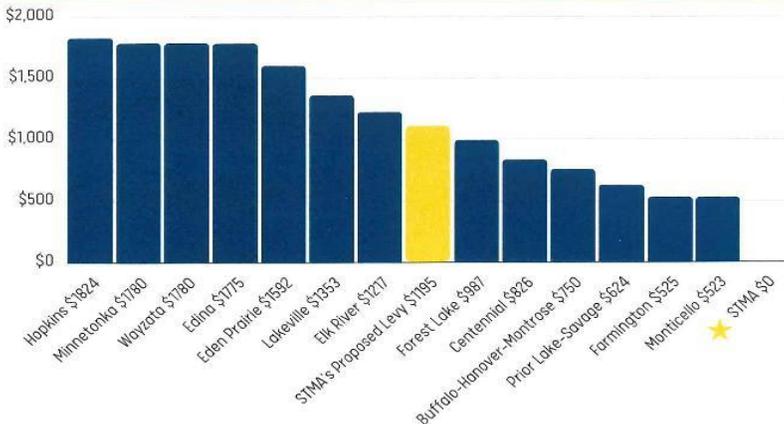
2011: STMA voters approved a levy. However, due to legislation changes in 2015, the levy dollars were rolled into Local Optional Revenue. This essentially eliminated the additional per pupil funding we were receiving.

2017: STMA voters graciously approved a bond. Bond referenda are for buildings and levy referenda are for learning or paying for operating costs such as staff salaries. The 2017 school election was a bond referendum as the dollars were used for buildings, not operations.

### TAX IMPACT: \$1195 PER STUDENT = \$59/MONTH\*

\*on an average home value of \$250,000

### RESIDENT FUNDING COMPARED TO SIMILAR DISTRICTS



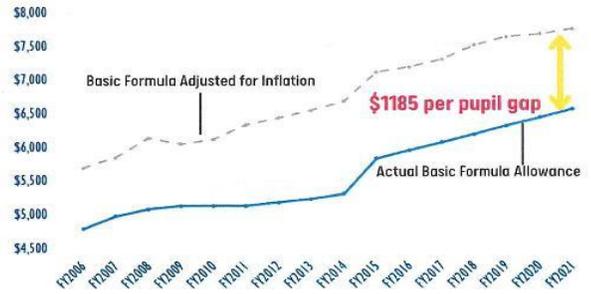
### DID YOU KNOW?

Since 2011, STMA has refinanced debt multiple times, saving taxpayers nearly \$20 million.

\$20 MILLION  
IN SAVINGS



If state funding had kept up with inflation, STMA would have received over \$7 million more in 2020-2021.



STMA school taxes have not kept pace with rising home values.



The average home value has increased **41.8%** in St. Michael over the last 10 years.\*



The average home value has increased **44.1%** in Albertville over the last 10 years.\*

\*per the Wright County Assessor's Office

# Students first Taxpayer sensitive Maintain excellence Academics matter



# ST. MICHAEL ALBERTVILLE SCHOOLS



## LEVY 2021 BY THE NUMBERS



MAINTAIN CLASS SIZES | MAINTAIN K-12 PROGRAMMING | MAINTAIN ACTIVITIES

**\$7m**

Revenue loss and extra costs due to the pandemic.



**71%**

of MN districts have voter approved levies.  
STMA is NOT one of them.



**3.2%**

STMA ranks in the top 3.2% in reading, math, and science achievement among Minnesota schools



**330  
330**

STMA ranks lowest in the state in per-pupil funding



**\$6m**

cuts made by STMA in the last 15 months [-70 staff]

**LEARN MORE AND VOTE ON NOVEMBER 2**



763.497.3180



STMAlevy@mystma.org



www.stma.k12.mn.us



Follow us!

## Big Woods Fall Orientation Survey Results

**WOW! What an incredible two days.**

- 98% of families attended
- 423 surveys completed
- 99% of those surveyed were **Satisfied** or **Extremely Satisfied**
- Extremely supportive feedback yet multiple responses on how we can improve this special event
- Thank you!

**Congratulations to Cora S. and Evelyn H., our Survey Drawing Winners**

## Big Woods Fall Orientation Survey Drawing Winners



# Big Woods Activities



Caught Being Good!



Caught Being Good!



Big Woods Garden and October Students of the Month



# BIG WOODS ELEMENTARY

## FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES



### TO SIGN-UP:

1. Go to [morerewards.com](http://morerewards.com), at any participating store or use the MORE Rewards App.
2. Designate Preferred School: **BIG WOODS ELEMENTARY PTO**

The points your school earns will help grow their share of the \$150,000 total. It is like a pie...the size of Big Woods slice, depends on how many points we receive.

### PARTICIPATING STORES:

- Coborn's
- Marketplace
- Cash Wise

### PARTICIPATING BRANDS:

Food Club, Full Circle, Top Care, @ease, Paws, Tippy Toes



### TO "GIVE CREDIT":

1. Scan your Receipt
2. Tap the star "credit" button
3. Type in your Child's Name and Teacher's Last  
ie: Anna Smith, Peterson

Use the Box Tops APP to scan your store receipt, find products & instantly add cash to your school's earnings online!

### PERKS OF BOX TOPS:

- **Convenient:** Redeem Anywhere
- **Easy To Use:** Comes right from your receipts
- **Real Time:** School updates with each scan
- **Extra Cash:** special offer on top of your Box Top Earnings

## Be Kind to Your Mind

### Be Kind to Your Mind!

October 11-15 is Mental Health Awareness Week or, as we call it in our elementary schools, Be Kind to Your Mind. During this week, our elementary students will learn strategies for managing emotions and being kind to their minds so they can stay positive in learning new things. All students and staff are encouraged to participate in these dress up days:

Monday, October 11: wear all colors/rainbow colors to celebrate all of the character counts traits

Tuesday, October 12: wear orange for being kind and preventing bullying

Wednesday, October 13: wear blue for trustworthiness, our October character trait

Thursday, October 14: wear green for growing good mental health

Friday, October 15: wear bright colors or neon for being your bright self

## Come Drive Bus!

### Get behind the Wheel!!!

October 9, 2021

Come **DRIVE** a **BUS**

See what it's like to drive a bus and find out what opportunities are available.

All within the St Michael Albertville High School Parking Lot.

Hours are 10:30 AM – 2:00 PM

Enjoy a light lunch and gather information on what bus driving entails.

## Daily Communication

### COMMUNICATION

**Breakfast:** Breakfast doors close at 7:30 AM each morning. Students arriving after that time will not be able to enter the cafeteria. If a bus is late, students on that bus will still receive the opportunity to eat breakfast.

## Has your contact info changed?

If so, please login to ParentVue and update your info. Pick up login directions for ParentVue in the Big Woods office. This expedites school personnel in contacting you in a quick and efficient manner. Please call the office if you have any questions or need assistance.

## Picture Retakes

**Tuesday, October 12th**

**Please bring your picture packet back if getting retakes.**

## Attendance Procedures

Please call Big Woods 24-hour attendance line number 763-497-8025, Ext. 1 if your child will be absent due to an emergency, illness or any other reason. If you know your child is going to be absent for an extended period of time, please call the attendance line in advance. It is extremely important to contact school before 7:45 AM each day your child is absent. If we don't receive a call from you by the end of the school day, the absence will be considered "unexcused". If a student has excessive absences, we will contact you in order to both inform and offer assistance in improving your child's attendance. State law requires all school age children must attend school every day that school is in session and our district attendance policy provides us with truancy guidelines and procedures. Thank you in advance for your diligence regarding your child's school attendance.

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Enrollment 656



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# Big Woods PTO



Find PTO on Facebook at Big Woods PTO and "like" them for updates.

Contact PTO at [bigwoodspto@gmail.com](mailto:bigwoodspto@gmail.com)

Volunteers at [bigwoodsptovolunteers@gmail.com](mailto:bigwoodsptovolunteers@gmail.com)

Thank you for all your support Big Woods PTO!

### PTO Meetings

October 5th - 6:00 PM @ Big Woods Media Center  
November 1st - 6:00 PM @ Big Woods Media Center  
December 6th - 6:00 PM @ Big Woods Media Center