



WELCOME BACK !

I hope this message finds you all recharged, relaxed, and ready to dive into the new school year! Whether your summer was filled with sandy beaches, lakeside adventures, or simply savoring the sweet simplicity of Minnesota's beautiful summer days, I'm thrilled to have you back and can't wait to hear all about it.

As we gather our pencils, plan our lessons, and prepare our hearts for the students who will soon fill our hallways, I want to extend my gratitude for the passion and dedication you bring to our school every day. You are the heart of this school, and it's your energy and commitment that make Freshwater Education District a place where our students can thrive.

This year, let's embrace the spirit of adventure! We'll be exploring new ideas, discovering innovative ways to connect with our students, and, of course, having a lot of fun along the way. There's something special about the fresh start a new school year brings—a chance to set new goals, try out new strategies, and support each other in our shared mission.

****A Special Shout-Out to Our Amazing Support Staff!****

To our incredible **business office and clerical staff**—you keep our school running smoothly, often behind the scenes, and your hard work does not go unnoticed. From managing budgets and payroll to ensuring every piece of paperwork is perfectly in place, you are the backbone that allows our school to function seamlessly. Your dedication ensures that everything runs like clockwork, and we couldn't do it without you!

And to our wonderful **paraprofessionals**—thank you for being the extra hands, hearts, and minds in our classrooms. Your support is invaluable in helping our students reach their fullest potential, and your positive impact is felt every day. Whether you're working one-on-one with a student or assisting with small groups, your contributions make a world of difference in the lives of our students.

Last but not least, to our **custodial staff**—Your dedication to ensuring our school is clean, safe, and ready for a new school year does not go unnoticed. From deep cleaning classrooms and hallways to tackling maintenance projects, your efforts are the foundation of a smooth and successful start to the school year. I know the summer is a particularly challenging time with so much to accomplish, and yet, you have handled it all with professionalism and care. Please know how much I—and the entire school community—appreciate your commitment to our students, staff, and school environment. The pride you take in your work is evident, and it truly makes a difference.

Thank you ALL for what you do, and here's to a fantastic year ahead! Let's make it our best one yet—full of learning, laughter, and maybe even a little adventure.

With gratitude,
Eric

Help Me Connect Website - MN Resource Center

This is a Great Resource for expectant families, families with young children and those who connect families to services in their communities.

<https://helpmeconnect.web.health.state.mn.us/HelpMeConnect>



Google Training Session

Welcome back from Technology!

This fall we will be offering a few informal Google Training Sessions to help answer any questions you might have after completing the required courses in the online Google Training Portal. Please note that you will have to have completed the Google Drive, Google Docs, and Google Meet courses to attend these sessions.

Please don't be scared away by the course length, it absolutely does not take the time that it states it does! Also, if there are other courses that look to be beneficial to you, feel free to take as many as you want!

You can access the Google Training Portal [HERE](#). Keep an eye out for upcoming training dates!



MTSS News

Freshwater's MN MTSS leadership team is continuing their work evaluating Freshwater's level of implementation, building a plan for continuous improvement and monitoring the implementation process again this year. The first meeting of the school year was on August 20.

Here's a refresher on what MnMTSS is:

The Minnesota Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MnMTSS) is a systemic, continuous improvement framework for ensuring positive social, emotional, behavioral, developmental, and academic outcomes for every student. MnMTSS provides access to layered tiers of culturally and linguistically responsive, evidence-based practices and relies on the understanding and belief that every student can learn and thrive. In addition, it engages an anti-bias and socially-just approach to examining policies and practices and ensuring equitable distribution of resources and opportunity.

***Watch for updates each month in the Buzz as our leadership team moves forward.

READ ACT

The Read Act for Minnesota schools is legislation designed to improve literacy outcomes for students. It mandates that schools provide early and effective reading instruction, especially in the early grades (K-3), and includes provisions for screening, intervention, and progress monitoring to ensure students are on track to meet grade-level reading expectations. The act also emphasizes professional development for educators in evidence-based reading practices and requires schools to involve parents in supporting their child's reading development. The overall goal is to ensure that all students are proficient in reading by the end of third grade.

We will be implementing Phase 1 this school year. Phase 1 focuses on establishing a strong foundation in early literacy for students in kindergarten through third grade and for students receiving special education services. The key components of Phase 1 include:

1. **Screening and Identification:** Schools are required to conduct early and regular screening assessments to identify students who may be at risk of reading difficulties. These assessments help educators determine which students need additional support.
2. **Evidence-Based Instruction:** The act mandates that reading instruction in K-3 is grounded in scientifically-based reading research. This includes explicit and systematic instruction in the five essential components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
3. **Intervention and Support:** For students identified as at risk of falling behind, the act requires schools to provide timely and targeted interventions. These interventions are designed to address specific areas where a student is struggling.
4. **Progress Monitoring:** Schools must continuously monitor the progress of all students, particularly those receiving interventions, to ensure they are making adequate progress toward reading proficiency.
5. **Professional Development:** Educators are provided with professional development opportunities focused on evidence-based literacy instruction, enabling them to effectively support students' reading development.
6. **Family Engagement:** The act emphasizes the importance of involving families in their children's literacy development. Schools are encouraged to communicate with parents and provide them with resources to support reading at home.

Overall, Phase 1 of the Read Act is about early identification, effective instruction, and intervention to ensure that all students are on track to becoming proficient readers by the end of third grade.

What does this mean for Freshwater?

All **Early Childhood Teachers** will be trained in LETRS EC (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling for Early Childhood). LETRS EC is a professional development program designed to provide educators with in-depth knowledge and skills in teaching reading. It is based on research in literacy and language development and focuses on the foundational components of reading, such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. LETRS training equips teachers with evidence-based strategies to effectively teach reading and spelling, especially for students who struggle with literacy. The program emphasizes understanding the science of reading and applying that knowledge to improve student outcomes in the classroom.

All other **special education teachers** will be trained with the Online Language & Literacy Academy (OL&LA). OL&LA is an online professional development program designed to help educators improve their literacy instruction skills. It offers training modules based on the science of reading, covering key areas such as phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The program is flexible, allowing teachers to learn at their own pace, and focuses on applying evidence-based practices in the classroom to support all students, particularly those who struggle with reading. The OL&LA aims to enhance teachers' effectiveness in fostering literacy development in their students.



Jena Osberg and Trent Becker were passed the "leash" from Buckie's handler/trainer on Friday, August 23. They, along with Angela Eckhoff, who will provide a home for Buckie outside of school hours, will be her main handlers.

Comfort Dog joins Academies Staff

The Academies welcomed their newest staff member, Buckie, just in time for school. Buckie is a 2-year-old Golden Retriever who has been trained as a comfort dog for the Level IV students.

Some things to keep in mind when you come in contact with Buckie is that she is a working dog. Please follow the lead of her handler and ask before petting and touching her. She is also only allowed to take treats from her handler and should not be fed other foods. Buckie is well trained to have a calming effect on the students, but at the end of the day she is still a dog. Please respect her space while her handlers learn how to bring out the





~ WE APPRECIATE YOU ~

Our Physical Therapists - Missy Tabery & Alyssa Rieland

World Physical Therapy Day – September 8

Our Technology Team – Rich Murdock & Erin Huebner

National IT Professional Day – September 17



Staff Recognition



I just wanted to share how grateful I am for Maria Theisen! She has done a wonderful job in Bertha this year. She is always focused on finding solutions to problems and making things work out. I have never heard her complain and even in difficult situations, she keeps a positive demeanor.

-Suzanna Holper



Share *YOUR* Wellness “WOW”

*Did you take a hiking trip, join a cooking club, complete a marathon or start a new summertime activity or hobby? There are many of you who have taken on physical challenges or done other relaxing, mentally rejuvenating activities over the summer.....**The Wellness Team is asking if you are willing to share your WELLNESS WOW with the Freshwater staff.***

Whatever you wish to share, we will highlight your WOW in an upcoming issue of The Buzz. If you would like to send a photo along, we will try to include that as well. Please e-mail your WOW to Marlo @ mbenning@fed.k12.mn.us.



Becky Blanchard - 9/1	Mark Houle - 9/8	Amy Mehl - 9/20
Susan Nixon - 9/2	Mary Krause - 9/12	Peggy Kellen - 9/21
Miranda Matis - 9/3	Jeff “Ace” Ludovissie – 9/12	Roseanne Rivers - 9/25
Bryan Winkels - 9/4	Amelia Rajdl – 9/12	Emili Hibbs - 9/26
Nicole Schmidt - 9/5	Susan Lowe - 9/14	Cheri Tumberg - 9/26
Abby Montgomery – 9/6	Josh Peterson - 9/14	Kristina Harstad - 9/29

Various Things to Do in Minnesota during September:

1. Minnesota Renaissance Festival

Dates: Weekends, through October 1, 2024

Location: Shakopee, MN

Step back in time at the Minnesota Renaissance Festival, one of the largest and oldest in the country. Enjoy themed weekends, live entertainment, artisan crafts, and delicious food. A fun experience for all ages!

2. Apple Orchard Visits

Dates: Throughout September

Locations: Various locations across Minnesota

September is the perfect time to visit one of Minnesota’s many apple orchards. Enjoy apple picking, cider tasting, and other fall activities like hayrides and corn mazes.

3. Twin Cities Marathon Weekend

Dates: September 28-29, 2024

Location: Minneapolis and St. Paul, MN

Participate in or cheer on runners during the Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon. The weekend features various races, including a 5K and 10K, leading up to the full marathon on Sunday.

4. Duluth Oktoberfestival

Dates: September 13-15 & 20-22, 2024

Location: Duluth, MN

Celebrate German culture at the Duluth Oktoberfestival. Enjoy authentic German food, beer, live music, and cultural performances on the shores of Lake Superior.

5. Art in Bloom at Minneapolis Institute of Art

Dates: September 21-24, 2024

Location: Minneapolis, MN

Experience the beauty of flowers paired with classical art at the Minneapolis Institute of Art. This annual event features floral arrangements inspired by artworks from the museum's collection.

6. North Shore Fall Colors Tour

Dates: Throughout September

Location: North Shore of Lake Superior

Take a scenic drive along Highway 61 to experience the stunning fall colors along Minnesota's North Shore. Stop at state parks like Gooseberry Falls, Split Rock Lighthouse, and Tettegouche for breathtaking views.

7. Valleyfair's Tricks and Treats

Dates: Weekends starting September 21, 2024

Location: Shakopee, MN

Valleyfair's Halloween event, Tricks and Treats, begins in late September. Enjoy family-friendly Halloween activities, themed attractions, and, of course, your favorite rides.

8. Minnesota Harvest Apple Festival

Dates: September 7-8 & 14-15, 2024

Location: Jordan, MN

Celebrate the apple harvest season with live music, apple picking, tractor rides, and more at this family-friendly festival.

9. Harvest Moon Festival

Dates: September 13-15, 2024

Location: Ely, MN

Celebrate the arrival of fall at the Harvest Moon Festival in Ely. This event features arts and crafts, live music, food vendors, and activities that showcase the beauty of the Northwoods.

10. Como Park Zoo & Conservatory's Fall Flower Show

Dates: September 28 - October 20, 2024

Location: St. Paul, MN

Visit the Como Park Zoo & Conservatory for their annual Fall Flower Show, featuring vibrant chrysanthemums and other seasonal blooms in a stunning display.

11. Lake Superior Harvest Festival

Dates: September 7, 2024

Location: Duluth, MN

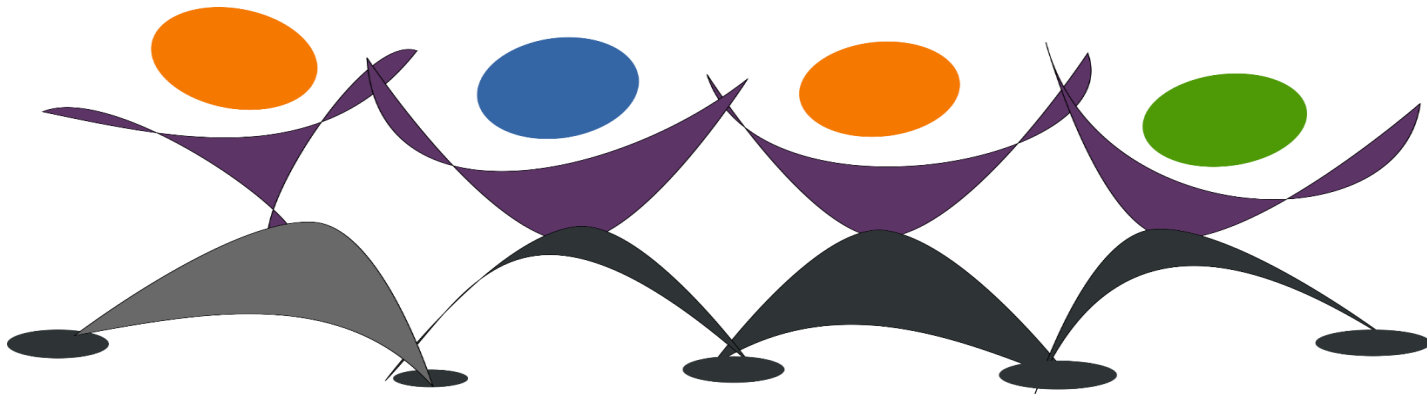
This one-day festival at Bayfront Festival Park features local food, crafts, live music, and family-friendly activities, celebrating the fall harvest in the Northland.

12. Canterbury Park's Festival of Champions

Dates: September 2, 2024

Location: Shakopee, MN

Celebrate Minnesota's horse racing industry with this special day of racing at Canterbury Park, featuring the state's top Thoroughbreds and Quarter Horses competing in championship races.



Major Concerts and Music Festivals in Minnesota - September 2024

1. Prairie Burn Music Festival

Date: September 14, 2024

Location: Hudson, WI (just across the MN border)

A family-friendly music festival featuring a mix of local and national acts, along with food trucks, craft beer, and activities for kids. It's a great option for a fun day trip from the Twin Cities.

2. Surly Brewing Festival Field Concert Series

Dates: Various dates in September 2024

Location: Minneapolis, MN

Surly Brewing hosts several concerts throughout September at their outdoor Festival Field. Past performers have included big names in indie, rock, and alternative music. Check their website for specific dates and artists.

3. Minnesota Music Summit

Dates: September 19-21, 2024

Location: St. Paul, MN

This event brings together musicians, industry professionals, and fans for workshops, panels, and performances. It's an excellent opportunity to network and enjoy live music from some of Minnesota's best up-and-coming artists.

4. Trampled by Turtles at Bayfront Festival Park

Date: September 20, 2024

Location: Duluth, MN

Minnesota's own Trampled by Turtles returns to Duluth for a special outdoor concert at Bayfront Festival Park. The bluegrass/folk band is known for their high-energy performances, and this show is sure to be a highlight of the month.

5. First Avenue's Rocktoberfest

Dates: September 27-28, 2024

Location: Minneapolis, MN

First Avenue's Rocktoberfest kicks off in late September, featuring two nights of rock music from local and national acts. This is a must-attend for fans of rock and indie music.

6. Widespread Panic at The Armory

Dates: September 13-14, 2024

Location: Minneapolis, MN

Jam band legends Widespread Panic are set to perform two nights at The Armory. Known for their improvisational style and loyal fanbase, these shows promise to be a memorable experience.

7. Outlaw Music Festival with Willie Nelson & Friends

Date: September 8, 2024

Location: Somerset Amphitheater, Somerset, WI (near MN border)

The Outlaw Music Festival brings together Willie Nelson, John Fogerty, and other country music legends for a day of music under the stars. It's a short drive from the Twin Cities and offers a full day of country and Americana music.

8. We Fest at Canterbury Park

Dates: September 21-22, 2024

Location: Shakopee, MN

We Fest, traditionally held in Detroit Lakes, is expanding to Canterbury Park for a special two-day event. Expect a lineup of country music's biggest stars along with plenty of food, drinks, and activities.