

School District 12 Update

August 13, 2026

From the Desk of Dr. Mary Henderson

Calendar, Events and Links

[2026-27 School Year Calendar](#)

Special Board of Education Meeting: Tuesday, August 25, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. location TBD

Regular monthly Board of Education Meeting: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at Lake Park East High School

[Board Meeting Agendas](#)

[District 12 website](#)

[Safety Threat Report](#)

Dear D12 Families,

Welcome to the 2026-27 school year! I write this with an incredible mix of emotions as I begin my final year in District 12. Retiring after 30 years in education is a tricky thing: August will always feel like "the new year," the sight of school supplies in the stores makes me smile, and there is no greater feeling I have found than welcoming our learners on the first day of school! I am looking forward to another great year for our learners, our staff, our families, and our community.

Introducing Ms. Graf

As we have shared throughout last spring, Ms. Dumelle retired in June. I'd like to introduce Ms. Mary Ellen Graf who began as the administrative assistant to the superintendent in June. Ms. Graf brings 14 years experience in the same position and most recently worked in District 214 in the community engagement department. Ms. Graf is looking forward to meeting families and getting acclimated to life in District 12!

AO Hours

The administration office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

Proposed Capital Project for Our District/Budget Presentation

At the August 11 Board of Education meeting, Mr. Ohannes and I presented a comprehensive financial picture of the District. I began with an overview of where we were 10 years ago when the District 12 community approved a referendum to stabilize the District's finances. With a very healthy fund balance (similar to a family's savings) and the ability to issue **non-referendum** bonds that will **not** increase the taxpayers' obligations to the District, we have the ability to address two

long-standing items to enhance the District 12 experience: a fully operational and functional gym space that will allow our RMS teams and learners to have true "home game" experiences and a District 12 preschool program. Currently, District 12 is the only district in our feeder group that does not have a preschool program. Learners who qualify for preschool programming through special education programs or for at-risk programming must go to Medinah District 11. Bringing those learners home as well as having a traditional, tuition-based program would make preschool an option for all of our District 12 families. A district-based preschool program historically runs five days a week, which greatly increases the time spent in school. There is also greater cohesion and collaboration when the preschool team and the primary team from Spring Hills are all part of the same District. Finally, the District would add its offices to the addition allowing us to address the costs that come with a district office that is reaching the end of its functional life cycle. Our District Office footprint is fairly small as we house seven employees and do not foresee a need to add additional district level staff.

This [link](#) will allow you to view my presentation on the past, present and future state of the District's finances followed by Mr. Ohannes' presentation on the fiscal year 2027 budget.

Questions or thoughts about the project? You may use this [link](#) to share both. The information gathered will be accessible to all Board members as they make their decision on whether or not to take on this project.

Superintendent Search

At a special Board of Education meeting on August 4, the Board heard proposals on conducting a search for the next superintendent from four groups and selected Cathie Pezanoski Consulting. They will meet with Ms. Pezanoski on August 25 in a special meeting to firm up and finalize a timeline for the search. A [link](#) is on our District home page to keep the community updated on the progress of the search.

We are excited to welcome our staff back on Monday, August 17. We have two packed days with them as we prepare to welcome all of our learners back on Wednesday, August 19. I look forward to seeing our families on Tuesday, August 18 at our Meet and Greet!

Sincerely,
Dr. Mary Henderson
Superintendent
#YouBelongInD12



Mary Henderson

Mary is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

