

THE BUZZ

September 2026

FRESHWATER'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Welcome Back Freshwater Staff!

As we start the 2026-2027 school year, I want to extend a warm welcome back to each of our dedicated employees. I hope your summer provided you with the necessary time to recharge and reflect on the impact you have on our students, member districts and the communities we serve.

Our Unwavering Mission

Our work remains anchored in a single, powerful mission: to increase and improve educational opportunities for all learners. Whether you are providing instruction in a classroom, supporting staff and students in member schools, ensuring our technology systems run seamlessly, or rendering services in the business office, your role is a critical component of this collective goal. We exist to provide comprehensive services that member districts might otherwise find difficult to afford or implement on their own, ensuring all students are being served, regardless of their geography or resource constraints.

Commitment to Learning, Growth, and Achievement

This year, we continue to sharpen our focus on student learning. Our commitment to growth is evidenced by our data-driven strategies, including:

- Academic Excellence: Implementing academic support through Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and the Read Act requirements to ensure every learner has the skills needed for a bright future.
- Specialized Support: Providing high-quality programs such as Early Childhood, White Pine/Leaf River/Elm Tree Academies and ALCs to meet the most unique needs of our student population.
- Continuous Improvement: Investing in professional development, such as our recent successful training for over 185 paraprofessionals and updates for 80 special education teachers, to ensure our staff remains at the forefront of educational expertise.

Cultivating Our Climate and Culture

The culture of the Freshwater Education District is built on the values of collaboration, integrity, and excellence. As we gather for the new year, we strive to maintain an environment that is supportive, accountable, and collaborative.

Our recent All-Staff Meeting presentation, "MN Not so Nice: Navigating Challenging Personalities," serves as a reminder of the professionalism and grace we bring to our roles every day. We are committed to fostering a workplace where every voice is respected and where we work together to find innovative solutions for the families and member districts we serve.

Looking Ahead

We are excited for the energy and expertise you bring to Freshwater. Your dedication creates meaningful relationships that make fantastic learning opportunities possible. Thank you for your continued service and for being a part of the Freshwater team. Let's make the 2026-2027 school year our most impactful one yet.

Partners in education,
Paul Brownlow, Executive Director

SCHOOLS NEED YOUR SUPPORT ON THE BALLOT THIS FALL

The Permanent School Trust fund question will be on the ballot in November. Jordan Anderson presented this information at the All Staff Meeting.

Please read this MSBA article which explains why it is important to vote on this item: <https://www.mnpsfamendment.org/>

Minnesota's Permanent School Fund (PSF) is one of the oldest sources of funding for public education in our state. Constitutionally established in 1858 when public lands were set aside specifically to support public education, Minnesota's Permanent School Fund (PSF) is built upon proceeds from public lands. Rather than a one-time spending account, it acts as a permanent endowment, continually generating revenue from Minnesota's natural resources. In the late 1800's most of the land in southern Minnesota was sold to private interests to promote development and agriculture.

Today, over 2.5 million total acres plus 1 million acres used for mineral rights remain. Much of the land is intermingled with county, federal, tribal, private, and other state lands. Revenues generated from trust lands, including timber sales, mining activity, land leases, and other natural resource activities, continue to contribute to the fund. The fund's assets are invested by the State Board of Investment and managed to support both current and future generations of Minnesota students. Passage in the Minnesota Legislature was only the first step in trying to update the trust distribution language. Since the trust distribution language is enshrined in the constitution, this now heads to Minnesota's voters as it requires the majority of

Minnesota's voters for passage. Unfortunately, if this ballot question is left blank, the vote will be counted as a NO, which makes it extremely important that voters understand this ballot item.

TIPS TO REDUCE MILEAGE

Here are practical ways employees can reduce mileage claims while still meeting our student's needs:

- Combine multiple trips into one journey whenever possible.
- Plan routes efficiently to avoid unnecessary detours and backtracking.
- Use virtual meetings instead of traveling when an in-person meeting isn't necessary.
- Carpool with colleagues when employees are traveling to the same location.
- Choose the closest suitable location for meetings, training, or appointments.
- Schedule multiple appointments in the same area on the same day.
- Use the nearest office or worksite rather than traveling farther to another location.
- Coordinate deliveries, site visits, or errands so they can be completed during an existing trip.
- Avoid unnecessary return trips by planning ahead—for example, taking needed equipment or documents on the initial journey.
- Use school vehicles when they are available and appropriate, particularly for frequent or longer business travel.
- Request remote or hybrid work where the role allows it, reducing commuting-related travel.

✓ **PLEASE READ:** Many Updates to the Employee Handbook after negotiations

Click [HERE](#) to read the Employee Handbook which can also be found on our website.

**ON THE
FRESHWATER
HEALTH PLAN?
3 MONTHS
REMAIN TO EARN
FULL \$250 ON
WELLRIGHT**

Log into Wellright to explore the many ways you can earn points, which turn into dollars!

By attaining the \$250 maximum amount for 2026, it helps our Freshwater Wellness Team to function.

What the Wellness Team does:

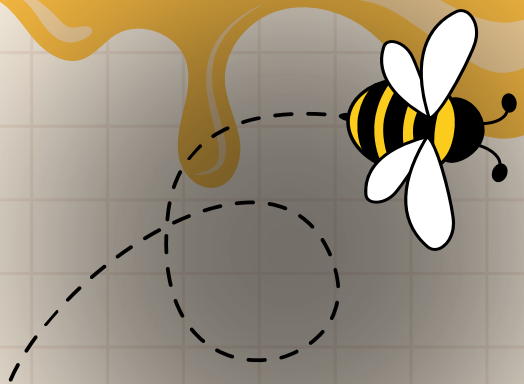
- Encourage healthy living habits through information sharing

- Provide Employee Assistance Program and other information in the Wellness area on the FED website

- Send out veggies and fruit treats once per year to the majority of our sites

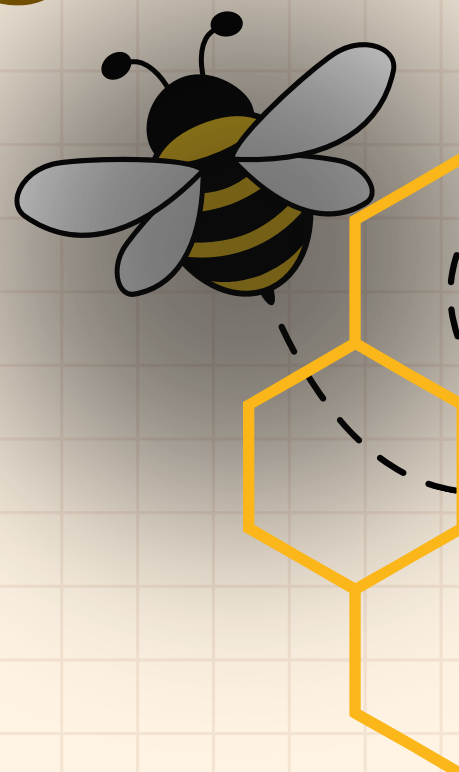
- Give out health-inspired goodies at the All-Staff Meeting

- Implement in-house Wellness Challenges throughout the school year



BLOWING OUT CANDLES THIS MONTH:

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



- Susan Nixon – 9/2
- Miranda Matis – 9/3
- Bryan Winkels – 9/4
- Cathy Newberry – 9/5
- Paige Rowe – 9/5
- Nicole Schmidt – 9/5
- Mark Houle – 9/8
- Bart Graves – 9/9
- Mallory Trumbull – 9/11
- Mary Krause – 9/12
- Ace Ludovissie – 9/12
- Amelia Rajdl – 9/12
- Susan Lowe – 9/14

- Josh Peterson – 9/14
- Brita Karolus – 9/19
- Amy Mehl – 9/20
- Peggy Kellen – 9/21
- Roseanne Rivers – 9/25
- Emili Hibbs – 9/26

