

LOCALNEWS

Added funding good news for Falls schools

BY EMILY GEDDE
Staff Writer

Added funding to schools in tough economic times is a step in the right direction, but a local school official says continued support from the state is still needed.

A release from the Minnesota Department of Education earlier this month said International Falls Schools will receive an additional \$33,794 in new funding this school year thanks to \$54 million in new education funding enacted by the Minnesota Legislature and Gov. Mark Dayton during the 2014 legislative session.

“Any additional funding in these tough economic times is a blessing,” said Falls Superintendent Kevin Grover.

The new funding, according to the release, is for increased student aid, early learning programs, nutritious breakfast and lunches and other important measures. These new funds will benefit International Falls’ more than 1,000 students, as well as the more than 840,000 students across Minnesota.

Locally, Grover said additional dollars will help the district maintain its focus on keeping class sizes small, and implementing free preschool classes. The money will also be used to introduce a variety of new courses including a college in the schools program, which will enable high school students earn an associate’s degree at the same time they receive their diploma.

“The money will be used to keep class sizes down, help with preschool costs, aid in the start-up costs of our new classes and ease the burden of some improvements in the technology area,” Gover continued. “Falls Elementary, West End Elementary and Falls High School will have wireless connectivity throughout the buildings allowing for increased use

of technology devices. This is a positive step for many of our educational devices that will serve the district for years to come.”

These new investments, like those mentioned by Grover, are critical for students to be successful, said Education Commissioner Brenda Cassellius in the release.

“With smart investments in the things that matter, we will be able to tackle our achievement gaps more effectively, help more kids get a great start in their academic career, and better support every student on his or her path to high school graduation and beyond,” she said.

Beyond district control

The funding will also help offset new costs rolling in that are out of the district’s control. Grover said schools are now required to provide all kindergarten students a free breakfast costing the district \$1.30 per student.

“That generates roughly \$15,000 and does not guarantee we cover our costs to feed these students,” the superintendent said. “I agree with the concept, but am not sure it is adequate money from the state to mandate the actions.”

And, as International Falls administrators continue to tackle the issue of a declining student enrollment, Grover said fewer students will impact money going into the schools’ bank accounts.

“Most of the money is generated by student enrollment,” he explained, “thus a decline in students will result in a decline in the amount of money the district will take in...In other words, it will not solve the problem, but any addition to the formula is good news for



Kevin Grover

all schools and the students who attend them.”

Ongoing effort

Statewide, \$660 million was invested in education from early learning to grade 12 over the last two years. International Falls schools will receive \$722,701 in new school funding as a result of the 2013 and 2014 legislative sessions. Those new funds are ongoing increases that will continue to provide better resources for International Falls students and teachers into the future.

“Ongoing means the formula increase is not for a single year, thus this means we can budget for the increase to continue, but legislatively things change,” Grover said. “Being it is ongoing, we can cautiously plan using the new formula number to make improvements to our educational programs while continuing the great services that we currently provide.”

In addition, the state paid back the \$2.8 billion previously borrowed from schools, also known as the school shift.

“Over the last two years, we have paid back all the \$2.8 billion previously borrowed from our schools, funded 9,000 early learning scholarships, provided access to free full-day kindergarten for every student and significantly increased funding for every school district in Minnesota,” Dayton said in a release. “These investments will greatly improve our nation-leading education system, and help provide our students the advantages and opportunities they need to succeed in school, life and the jobs of tomorrow.”

Grover gave a nod to local legislators for “their ongoing hard work in terms of fighting for education as they continue to work diligently to help our schools, and do base their votes on what is best for students in northern Minnesota.”

DISTRICT COURT

The following people have been sentenced for aggravated misdemeanor or felony crimes in Koochiching County District Court.

Jonathon R. Barg, 25, International Falls, was sentenced July 7 for gross misdemeanor liquor — purchase, sell, barter, furnish, give to someone less than 21.

He was sentenced to one year jail and \$3,300 fine and fees. The jail time and all but \$500 of the fine and fees were stayed on court conditions and he was placed on three years supervised probation. He was ordered not to use alcohol or enter places where it is sold or used. He must submit to random tests and searches.

Georgina G. Bluebird, 41, International Falls, was sentenced July 7 for gross misdemeanor driving under

the influence of alcohol.

She was sentenced to one year jail and \$4,125 fine and fees. All but 10 days jail and \$1,625 of the fine and fees were stayed on court conditions and she was placed on two years supervised probation. She was ordered to serve 80 hours with the Sentence to Serve program and ordered to follow the recommendations of an evaluation. She may not use alcohol or drugs, or enter places where they are sold or used, and must submit to random tests and searches.

Dawson L. Lush, 33, was sentenced July 7 for gross misdemeanor driving after cancellation of license — posing a risk to the public.

He was sentenced to one year jail and \$3,600 fine and fees. All but 20 days of the jail

time and \$1,100 of the fine and fees were stayed on court conditions and he was placed on two years probation.

Cami M. Vance, 47, New Hope, was sentenced July 7 for gross misdemeanor driving under the influence of alcohol.

She was sentenced to one year jail and \$4,125 fine and fees. All but 30 days jail and \$2,125 of the fine and fees were stayed on court conditions and she was placed on two years supervised probation. She may serve the jail time under home detention electronic monitoring at her own expense and must serve 80 hours community work service. She was ordered not to use alcohol or enter places where it is served or sold and she must submit to random tests and searches.

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INTERNATIONAL FALLS, MINNESOTA

The Journal

GENERAL NOTICE

TO CONTROL OR ERADICATE NOXIOUS WEEDS

Notice is hereby given this 9th day of July, 2014, pursuant to *Minnesota Statutes, Section 18.83, Subdivision 1 (2009)*, that all persons in Koochiching County, Minnesota, shall control or eradicate all noxious weeds on land they occupy or are required to maintain. Control or eradication may be accomplished by any lawful method, and may need to be repeated in order to prevent the spread of viable noxious weed seeds and other propagating parts to other lands. Failure to comply with the general notice may mean that an individual notice, *Minnesota Statutes, Section 18.83, Subdivision 2 (2009)*, will be issued. You may obtain a listing of the plants that are designated noxious from your County Agricultural Inspector. You can also obtain this information from your Local Weed Inspectors. Local Weed Inspectors include city mayors or their appointed assistants. More information regarding the Noxious Weed Law and State designated noxious weeds can be obtained from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Web Site by visiting: <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/en/plants/pestmanagement/weedcontrolcailist.aspx>. In addition to the State listing, noxious weeds specific to Koochiching County include Field Bindweed, Hemp, Perennial Sowthistle, Bull Thistle, Tall Buttercup, and Orange Hawkweed.

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| Koochiching County Agricultural Inspector | 218-283-1126 |
| Koochiching County Extension Agent | 218-285-0962 |
| Or Your Municipal Weed Inspector | (City Mayor) |

BY ORDER OF THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
and THE KOOCHICHING COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Rob Ecklund, Chairperson
Date July 9, 2014

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