

MCA

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test, which according to the MDE website, was just below the state's average of 61.2 percent.

At the elementary level, Falls students scored 59.9 percent and at the secondary level, students scored 52.2 percent.

The district's elementary students exceed the state's average on the science portion of the test with 55.7 percent, about four points higher than the state's average of 52.1 percent. Secondary students struggled more on the science test with a score of 25.1 percent. The two schools combined to put the district average at 35.5 percent.

Overall, Nelson said the district met goals it set for making AYP and seeing improvement on that designation.

"Our goal was to match or improve on test results from last year, which everyone did," he said. "The latest excellent test results only supports our efforts in setting goals for the future in our curriculum areas and working with all staff to continue the efforts with best practices in instruction."

Nelson said the initiative to "rock the test" made by staff last spring was "an excellent way" to set the tone for the students and put them into a mind set of "they can do it."

The superintendent said

there is always room for improvement and while test scores showed that the district's students were moving closer to state averages, he hopes to close the gap even more in the future.

"The entire educational staff at International Falls has demonstrated that they can be consistent in their instructional practices along with showing improvements with student test performance over this past two year period," he said. "On behalf of the school board, we want to recognize and thank the educators of ISD 361 for their untiring efforts in working to enhance student performance."

LITTLEFORK-BIG FALLS

The Littlefork-Big Falls School District exceeded the state average in the math portion of the testing with a score of 74.1 percent –13 points higher than the state average of 61.2 percent.

The test scores are a source of pride for the district, said L-BF Superintendent Fred Seybert.

"We are exceptionally proud of our scores and very excited to see our students continue to show hard work and diligence as they transfer information from the classroom environment into the required state testing," he said.

Seybert credited the high math scores to "the hard work" put in by the students and staff. "This hard work comes from a

tradition of pride in high test scores, a tradition students and staff want to uphold."

"Many times districts have asked us how we continue to produce scores that are above state average," the superintendent said. "In short, I strongly believe that students do not want to disappoint themselves, teachers or parents."

Math scores at the elementary level were 67 percent and 81.4 percent at the secondary level.

The district also slightly outperformed the state average in the reading portion. The district's score of 59.2 percent was about one point higher than the state average of 57.8 percent. Seybert said the reading scores are always something the district looks to improve.

"As a district, we realize that overall in the state, reading scores declined," Seybert said. "However, ISD No. 362 is always looking to improve our curriculum in all areas."

Elementary students had a reading score of 57.5 percent and secondary students scored 61 percent.

LB-F underperformed when it came to the science portion, with a score of 46.3 percent – about six points under the state average of 52.1 percent.

At the elementary level, science scores were 45.8 percent, while they were 46.6 percent at the secondary level.

Enjoying the good test results is nice, Seybert said,

but the district also refuses to be satisfied with where they are.

"We do not believe in the status quo," Seybert said. "Our goal as a school is continue our proactive position and work very, very hard to maintain our positive results with the state mandated testing."

SOUTH KOOCHICHING – RAINY RIVER

Echoing comments of other schools officials, Martin Avelsgaard, superintendent at South Koochiching-Rainy River School District, which consists of Indus and Northome schools, said no matter where test scores are, there is always room for improvement.

"Hopefully, the testing system will be more consistent and we can continue to grow from here," he said referring to the new MCA testing system.

Travis Hensch, principal at Northome agreed. He said it was hard to monitor student performance on a new testing system.

"We're just trying to look in house and benchmark our students quarterly and monitor that more closely," he said, adding other tests Northome students are taking offer more of a consistent way to measure where student performance is.

At the elementary level, students taking the math test scored 38.6 percent, the state average is 61.2 percent. At the secondary level, math scores were at 43.6 percent.

The reading portion of

the test had a state average of 57.8 percent. Elementary students scored 42.6 percent and secondary students scored 43.8 percent.

Science scores were 33.3 percent at the elementary level for Northome students and 50 percent at the secondary level. The state average comes in at 52.1 percent.

Hensch added that in small schools, one or two students can make or break average scores, but he looks forward to this year's test to offer improvement.

"I'm excited about the staff at Northome and what they're doing," he said. "I'm anxious to get into the 2014 MCA (tests) and see how well our students do."

At Indus School, principal Michael Underwood said his first reaction to how his school's students did was positive.

"When I compare the 2013 scores with the 2012 scores, we grew in both reading and math at both the high school and elementary level," he said. "In fact, we had double-digit growth in reading and math scores at both the elementary and high school level."

At the elementary level, math scores were 57.5 percent, just below the state average of 61.2 percent. At the secondary level, scores were 34.3 percent.

Reading scores at the elementary level at the Indus School were 35 percent, with the state average at 57.8 percent. At the secondary level, scores are 45.7 percent.

Elementary students record a science score of 50 percent, just below the state average of 52.1 percent. Secondary students scored 17.4 percent.

Underwood said he is a first-year principal and has plans to set goals for the school to see growth in test scores moving forward.

"We have significant room to grow in all areas," he said. "We have a lot of positive things happening at Indus School with a dedicated group of educators. Their focus is to improve the academic and social performance of every student that walks through our doors."

The AYP results for L-BF and South Koochiching districts were not available to Journal staff in time for this edition.

OVERALL

When reviewing scores of any school, the education commissioner cautioned that the true measure of progress does not hinge on year-to-year ups and downs, but on trends established over several years.

"Anytime a new test based on new standards is given, a drop in scores is to be expected," Cassellius said. "But setting high expectations is the right thing to do. If we want our students to compete in a global economy, we must continue to stretch and hold ourselves accountable for helping students meet higher standards."

Staff writer Spenser Bickett contributed to this report.

DONAHUE

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was given in 2009 to the city by the Donahue Family Trust. The city agreed to pay 5 percent of the \$1.8 million appraised value, or \$90,000, in brokerage fees to MJD Enterprises, a firm owned by Matt Donahue. In addition, the land came with a 17-point agreement which requires the city to establish a monument recognizing the Donahue family and a trail within the property.

In early July, the International Falls City Council made the fourth of six annual \$15,000 brokerage fee payments to Donahue's firm, as required in the agreement.

At that time, Falls Mayor Bob Anderson questioned the price tag of what was earlier called a "gift" to the city and suggested the council consider gathering more information about the deal, which he said could cost the city more than \$100,000.

Anderson has suggested the city sell the property

as well as consider an offer made in July by Matt Donahue to purchase the property from the city for the amount the city has paid in brokerage fees.

Anderson has also questioned the \$1.8 million appraisal of the land, upon which the brokerage fees were based. The appraisal was conducted in 2009 by Bigelow Appraisals of Hibbing.

Mason told The Journal the appraisal firm hired by the city used the sale price of the property that now houses U.S. Homeland Security's Border Protection along Highway 11 East in comparison. She said the price per acre of that site was \$77,500 per acre. The appraisal also considered two other properties in comparison to the Donahue property, which showed sales of \$21,858 per acre and \$15,000 per acre.

"The Donahue site has 122 acres of land, with 1,440 feet of river shoreline, and over 2,000 feet adjacent to the golf course," she said. "The appraiser used the lowest comparable (\$15,000 per

acre) to arrive at the value. It came to \$1,830,000 so he rounded it to \$1,800,000."

Anderson has said the county set the value of the land for taxation purposes at \$376,000 and noted that since the land is now owned by the city, no taxes are being paid on it. He told The Journal that he believed the taxes on the property were about \$1,600 per year when it was owned by the Donahue family. Mason said the Donahues have indicated that taxes were less than \$1,500 annually.

In July, Matt Donahue told The Journal, "There is no cost to hold that land, no taxes on it because it belongs to the city. There is no cost to hold the land unless there are expansion ideas and then they would be real glad to have the land."

Donahue also said there is no restriction in the agreement on the city selling the land, except that the land involved in the trail may not be developed, a clause he said is intended to benefit the residents of the city.

Mason told The Journal

members of the Donahue family have indicated they would be willing to reimburse the city it's investment at the end of the agreement.

"Knowing that this is an option should give comfort to those who want the city to do nothing," she said. "So, right from the get go, citizens will know that option exists. Citizens can then begin to brainstorm other options to consider as well. At the end of the process, the mayor and council can review all options presented by the citizens and determine which option to endorse."

In June, Councilor Cynthia Jaksa told the council she questioned in 2009 the amount of the appraisal, but at that time believed, and continues to believe, that the brokerage fee and closing costs were still a good investment and opportunity.

And other members of the council have said they believe that the property represents an opportunity for the city, even with the city paying the brokerage



STAFF PHOTO BY LAUREL BEAGER

Shawn Mason in October 2012 discusses a temporary trail and the plans for a permanent one on walking tour of the property.

fees and closing costs, for a total of \$94,000.

Mason has told city officials that the Donahue family agrees that the trail and monument need not be expensive. She told the council in July that a monument — native rock with a bronze plaque — similar to that at the Pat Roche Memorial Access of Highway 11 East, would be acceptable.

And as for the trail, Mason told The Journal that Donahue family members are working with a local business person regarding constructing the trail in return for some of the wood fiber.

Because the city owns the property, the family understands it will have to "present any idea to reduce cost or secure pro bono services to the city council," Mason stated. "If officials like the idea, they may even need to advertise the opportunity to help. The Donahues are also working to get someone to donate the rock for the monument that would sign the trail."

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Koochiching County
SAP 036-598-029 (CR 71) Bridge replacement
BIDS CLOSE **Thursday, September 19, 2013 at 2:00 pm, local time**

NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS: Sealed proposals will be received by the Board of County Commissioners of Koochiching County, Int'l. Falls, Minnesota until **2:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 19, 2013** at the office of the County Auditor/Treasurer in the Koochiching County Courthouse 715 4th Street Int'l. Falls, Minnesota 56649 at which time they will be opened and read publicly for the following:

Project Designation: SAP 036-598-029 (CR 71) Bridge replacement and grading on CR 71

Project Location: On CR 71, appx. 0.8 miles east of TH 65, appx. 6.75 miles south of Littlefork. Total Length – 0.04 miles, incl. bridge approach work

Major Project Quantities include:

- removal of existing timber bridge (appx. 22' long), Existing Bridge No. 93477
- 64 lin. Ft. of 10 ft. x 7 ft. precast concrete box culvert (2 lines x 32 ft. long = 64 ft., excluding aprons)
- appx. 681 CY of Common Excavation
- appx. 287 CU YD of Common Borrow
- appx. 386 tons of Aggregate Base Class 5

Proposals, Plans and Specifications are available at:
Koochiching County Highway Department
715 4th Street
Int'l. Falls, MN 56449

Cost for Plans: Cost of one set of plans and proposals is \$75 (Minnesota State Sales Tax Included). There is no cost for electronic plans and specs, they are at <https://egram.co.koochiching.mn.us> or phone (218) 283-1186 or email to joseph.sutherland@co.koochiching.mn.us.

Bidder's Bond: Bids must be accompanied by a certified check or bidder's bond made payable to the Treasurer of Koochiching County in an amount not less than 5% of the total bid.

Bid shall be plainly marked on the exterior of the containing envelope: **"2013 Box Culvert, Letting Date, September 19, 2013".**

The County Board reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive irregularities and informalities therein, and to award the contract in the best interests of Koochiching County.

Dated at International Falls, Minnesota**August 27, 2013.**

Joe Sutherland, Koochiching County Highway Engineer
Phone: 218-283-1186
Email: joe.sutherland@co.koochiching.mn.us

Public AUCTION

Saturday September 7, 2013 10:00 AM

Kabetogama, MN: From the Gateway Store and Highway 53 take County Road 122 North to the Pine Ridge Gift Shop Gamma Road. Take a left and go to the Northern Lights Road 332. Take a right and go to the end of the road and stay right on to Wildwood Dr. to Timber Wolf Road No. 10136.

Larry and Madge Crolla

<p>Shop / Tools</p> <p>Hand Tools Small Power Hand Tools Craftsman Belt Disc Sander Durra Craft Bench Drill Press Air Paint Spray Guns and Paint Tank DeWalt 740 10 in. Radial Arm Saw Craftsman Portable Tool Caddy's</p> <p>Outdoors / Lawn Tractor</p> <p>Craftsman 20 hp., 44in. Cut Lawn Tractor Craftsman 20 in. 4hp. Push Mower Craftsman 32 in. Lawn Sweep Lawn Tractor Trailer Husqvarna 136 Chain Saw</p> <p>Yard / Patio</p> <p>3 pc. Decorative Wrought Iron Yard Settee Plastic Lawn Furniture and Picnic Table Patio Glider Glass Top Patio Table w/ 4 Chairs 5pc. White Wicker Set</p> <p>Sporting Goods</p> <p>14ft. Sylvan Aluminum Boat, Trailer and 6 hp. Outboard Evinrude Late 70's Model 9.9 hp. Outboard Fishing and Camping Equipment Hummingbird LCR 2000 Graph Electric Evinrude Trolling Motor</p> <p>Furniture</p> <p>Matching Night Stand, Dresser w/ Mirror and Desk w/ Hutch Hide a Bed w/ Brown Tan Geometric Pattern Table w/ 4 Chairs (Painted) Howard Miller Grand Father Clock Walnut Drop Leaf Table Cedar Wardrobe w/ Blanket Chest</p>	<p>L Shape Computer Desk System Curved Drop Leaf Writing Desk w/ Leather In Lay Futon w/ Northwood's Pattern Ornate Curved Writing Desk</p> <p>Antiques / Collectables</p> <p>Collectible Glassware Lionstone Whiskey Decanter Baseball Player Figurines Doll Collection White Enamel Top Hoosier Style Kitchen Cupboard 13 pc. Silverplated Silver Service Murano Glass Clown</p> <p>Household</p> <p>Pots N Pans Kitchen Aid Mixer Small Kitchen Appliances Panasonic AM/FM Radio Stereo w/ Speakers Akai Reel to Reel GX 280 5D Dolby System w/ Epicure Speakers Older RadioShack computers, computer printers and computer accessories White Sears Upright Freezer White Kenmore Refrigerator / Freezer</p> <p>Pottery Equipment / Dark Room Equipment</p> <p>Econo Pottery Kiln w/ Kiln Sitter Electric Belt Drive Stand Up Wheel Pottery Assesorys Beseler Universal Color Head Enlarger Dark Room Assesorys</p>
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Coleman Vertex 5500 Portable Vertical, 11 hp. Generator w/ Electric Start, like new.

1979 18ft. Sylvan Closed Bow I. O., 140 hp. Mercruiser, EZ Loader 5.2 Trailer

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