

Mar. 13

2024



# VES Spotlight

Deadline, March 21 - Board  
Nominations Needed

Please contact Kathy Skinner for more information. According to MN law, minimum requirements are 1 parent, 1 community member, and 1 teacher. The board typically meets once per month for 1.5 hours. Board members are not paid, and it is a two-year term, running from July 1, 2024-June 30, 2026. This is a great way to support your school community and your students!

## New Cell Phone Policy

Voyageurs will be "Cell Phone Free" during the school hours of 8:30-3:05, starting in Block 5, April 8. See the attached poster and letter at the end of this newsletter, or visit our website on the news, calendar & lunch menu page. We have hopes that this will increase student concentration throughout the day, and allow for higher levels of success. Thank you for your support of this important policy.



## Bus Registration for next year - Important

Looking ahead to next fall, already, the Bemidji district needs to know if you plan to utilize their transportation to get your student(s) to VES next year. Please fill out the required information by going to our website and clicking on "bus registration" at the top of the page to avoid delays in busing next fall. The district deadline is May 1 to ensure busing for the first day of school.



Students can access their headrush login from our website! Have them show you what they are working on!

Check out the resources page on our website!  
<https://www.voyageursschool.org/student-family-resources/>

We continue to emphasize that we have fewer days in school so STUDENTS need to make them count. Attendance, showing up as best they can, and being productive, are important. Being present in school will promote success in school. Thanks for your active participation in your students' success in school.

Please call (218)444-3130 or email [attendance@voyageursschool.org](mailto:attendance@voyageursschool.org) if your student will be gone from school for any reason. Lunch count needs to be submitted by 8:40 am if your student plans to eat hot lunch. Thanks!

## Upcoming Events

- Mar. 13 ~ CONFERENCES START 3:30
- Mar. 14 ~ CONFERENCES!
- Mar. 15 ~ NO SCHOOL
- Mar. 19 ~ MAP Math Spring Testing
- Mar. 20 ~ MAP Science Spring Testing
- Mar. 21 ~ MAP Reading Spring Testing
- Mar. 21 ~ Board nominations due
- Mar. 29 ~ NO SCHOOL ~ Staff Day
- Apr. 4 ~ End of Block 4

MAP testing  
next week



Students will be re-taking the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests next week. Please help your student do their best on these assessments by helping to make sure students are well rested each night. Student academic growth is measured between the fall tests, the scores of which you should receive during conferences this week, and the spring tests. We will be taking the math portion of the test on Tuesday, the reading portion on Thursday, and 8th graders and select HS students will be taking the science portion on Wednesday. Please make a point to get your student to school on-time these days. Thank you for your support, both for your student and Voyageurs as a whole.

Follow VES:   

[www.voyageursschool.org](http://www.voyageursschool.org)



### Dreamy Bulls Update

Block 4 has been quite the long haul, but we're pushing through. Guardian/Teacher conferences will be held this Wednesday & Thursday - looking forward to chatting about student successes so far this year! The sunshine and warm temps this week have been a nice addition to the school day. On Wednesday morning, we needed some fresh air so the Dreamy Bulls headed outside for a trash walk to earn some extra service minutes. We filled 2.5 bags!

*HS Update  
Nicole's  
Advisory*

Hello from the Tootie Frooties! This block has been flying by! This week we have conferences and are also celebrating Pi Day (3.14)! We will be selling Treat Yo' Self spa products that we made in our last E-Week during conferences! Baked goods will also be sold. All proceeds will go towards future E-Week opportunities! We can't wait to see you!

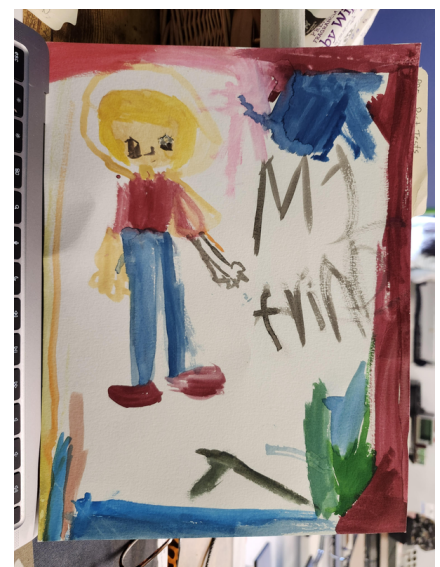


*MS Update  
Kayla's  
Advisory*



### *Updates from Cafeteria Corner*

Hello everyone! We've been having some fun connections time in the cafeteria since FEB 2024...lots of talent shared for my temporary name badge and here's the final product - thanks to Summer, Shay, and Carter, and to all the other students for their submissions (in order of appearance - James, Kaydence, Tristan, Geo, Aries, Emmie, & Violet)



The Jenga Challenge was a big hit with lots of winners for an ice cream treat!



On a serious note, VES has been submitting grants to fund the activities + more you requested in the FEB 2024 family survey...to date, we have 7 submitted grants plus 2 more to submit in the next month...great info on the next page...thanks for your support!

~ Elaine (Grant writer/manager/Indian Ed Student Support Staff  
[elaine@voyageursschool.org](mailto:elaine@voyageursschool.org))





# VES Grants Framework 2024-2027

The focus of all grants is to provide VES youth with hands-on training to learn a variety of academic, social, emotional, and practical job skills so they can lead the extracurricular club or program along adding these experiences to their toolbox for future endeavors

## *Engagement*

\*MN Humanities Center Cultural Heritage Legacy Grant (\$150,000; 2023-25)

Through the Eyes of Youth: Creating Community Through Sharing Cultural Heritage and Storytelling

\*MDE Full-Service Community Schools Grant (\$350,000-600,000 per school site, 2024-2027)

VES commercial kitchen; food distribution; medical/dental; social workers; mental health, etc. NWICDC (partner)

\*Prairie Care Mental Health Grant (\$17,825/2024-2025)

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Peer-Team mentoring  
high school and middle school students form a team to learn and teach other students

\*Beltrami Electric Coop (\$2,000/2024-25)

Youth-Driven Fitness Club equipment  
students are trained in proper weight-lifting techniques and then can lead the club

\*IHS Environmental Sustainability Funding Program (\$3,221/2024-2025)

Youth-Driven Food Sovereignty Club  
students learn entrepreneurship by setting up a farmer's market at VES and selling plants & veggies summer/fall months  
indoor greenhouse & outdoor garden plots for traditional Ojibwe foods/medicine (Manidoo Ogitigaan (LLBO)– grant programming partner)

## *Enrichment*

\*Shakopee/MPLS Foundation Mini-Grant: Understand Native MN (\$2,000/yr; 2024-25)

Ojibwe Elder teaches language using flashcards, then youth create original flashcard videos to share their learning

\*MDE Native Language Revitalization (\$150,000/yr;2024-26)

Kwe Humphrey – Ojibwe language programming – build basic curriculum & teach skills to students

## *Entrepreneurship*

Youth Entrepreneurship Series programming: YES!

students learn hands-on soft & pre-job skills through mentorship training and how to start a sole proprietorship A to Z

\*MN Safe Routes To Schools (SRTS): BOOST non-infrastructure Grant (\$44,938/2024-25)

Bike fleet to teach safety/skills to our youth/families, learn bike repair/maintenance, after mentor-training -> youth lead classes for Bemidji  
community Aurora Waasakone Community of Learners (AWCL) - grant programming partner

\*MDE After-School Community Learning Grant (\$254,000-354,000/yr; 2024-27)

“Umbrella” for the all the listed grants above, meets afterschool and in the summer  
NWICDC – grant programming partner

## **PARTNERS**

\*BSU

\*Tony Klaers (SHIP)

\*Stacey Bender (RDC)

\*Bemidji Community Theatre

\*Trove & Tea

\*Watermark Arts

\*Manidoo Ogitigaan (Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, LLBO)

\*Audrey Thayer, Bemidji City Council

\*Mindie Bird & Daniel Barrientez (NWICDC)

\*Dan Ninham (Oneida Creator's Game History)

\*Susan Ninham (Ojibwe Language, Youth Leadership)

\*Franky Johnson (Lower Sioux Creator's Game History)

For more information or to volunteer/work with us on  
awarded grants, please contact:

Elaine O. Hardwick

[elaine@voyageursschool.org](mailto:elaine@voyageursschool.org)

218-444-3130

(email is best for contact)

Starting April 8, 2024...



# VES is Cell Phone Free

The VES School Board passed an “Away for the Day” cell phone policy for grades 6-12. This goes into effect on April 8, 2024.

Students may not use a cell phone or have a phone out from 8:30 - 3:05 except during lunch.

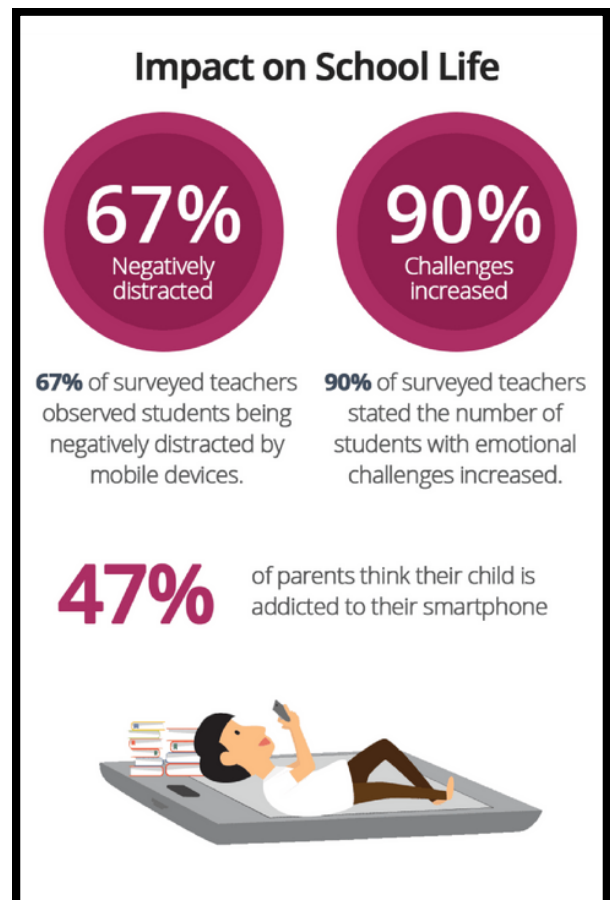
- Cellular phones and other personal electronic devices shall be either:
  - Left at home, turned off and placed in a secure location, turned in to the office/admin before 8:30 am, or turned in to the student’s advisor before 8:30 am

## The Why:

- Help students stay more present and engaged in their learning
- Increase academic success
- Promote healthy, face-to-face social interaction
- Decrease distractions

## Additional Info:

- More specifics will be communicated in the next few weeks leading up to April 8.
- This is an adjustment for all of us and will take effort, support, and commitment from families, students, and staff.
- Please reach out to Ryan with any questions or concerns.



Please visit [Awayfortheday.org](http://Awayfortheday.org) for more information about the impact of cell phone use in schools





March 13, 2024

Voyageurs Students and Families,

We want you to know about an important school policy change taking place at the start of Block 5 (April 8, 2024). **Voyageurs will be a cellphone-free school.** As a result, cell phones (and any cellular devices like smart watches) should remain at home.

If it is necessary to send a phone to school with your child, it will need to be turned off and kept in a place off of their body or they can turn it in to their advisor who will keep it in a locked box until the end of the day. No access to personal devices will be allowed during the day, except during lunch.

This is a change from previous years when teachers set individual classroom policies. We will now have a uniform, school-wide policy supported by a progressive discipline policy to reinforce it. Specifics will be communicated in the next few weeks as we get closer to April 8.

As a pro-technology school, VES wants to help teach and promote appropriate digital citizenship. Our school staff has overwhelmingly agreed that a consistent, school-wide policy to bar cell phones from the school environment will help students stay more present and engaged in their learning. The intent is to support them in their academic success and promote healthy, face-to-face social interaction by removing a major temptation and avoidable distractions. When a cellphone dings or buzzes, the minds of even the best students wander from the task at hand. Studies have shown that it can take up to ten minutes for the brain to refocus and reengage after being interrupted by a cell phone. The constant dings and buzzes affect classmates and teachers, as well as their brains, which have been trained to respond to the stimuli. We want our students' brains to respond and engage in learning and interacting with others in our school community.

Please help us promote this policy by speaking to your student/s about it and making a plan to deal with their phones for the day. We would prefer they stay home to avoid the temptation altogether, but we will gladly lock them up (assuming no risk for damage or loss) for the day if the device must come to school.

Thank you for your support as we make decisions with the academic and emotional health of our students in mind. We believe our new **"Away for the Day"** phone policy will have an impact through increased academic performance and reduced discipline issues.

Sincerely,

Ryan Haasch, Executive Director