



INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 2142

ST. LOUIS COUNTY SCHOOLS

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JANUARY 2021

"Small Schools With Big Opportunities -- Where Everybody is Somebody!"

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Social workers build new links between students, parents, communities



Annalise Settergren, social worker at Cherry Campus.



Elizabeth Sorenson, social worker at South Ridge Campus.



Tia Jansen, social worker at North Woods Campus.

By Lee Bloomquist

Attending St. Louis County Schools has become even more social.

The hiring of social workers at three district campuses is bringing more help to students and families.

Annalise Settergren (Cherry Campus), Tia Jansen (North Woods Campus), and Elizabeth Sorenson (South Ridge Campus) are already making a positive impact at schools, according to district officials.

"When we surveyed the teachers last school year, one of the number one concerns they had was that we did not have enough resources to help ALL of our students," Reggie Engebritson, ISD 2142 superintendent said. "We have ADAPT through Range Mental Health, but students need to have a diagnosis to receive those services. We have students who struggle with a number of issues and do not have a diagnosis or a disability."

In response, Engebritson, Business Manager Kim Johnson and the school board worked together to come up with a plan to hire social workers at the district's largest schools.

Each of the social workers provides students and families with crisis intervention, mental health education, suicide prevention, emotional health planning, friendship and life skills, parent support, parent education, and connections to non-school resources.

In an unprecedented school year due to both in-person and distance learning challenges, educators say the need for student and family support is more important than ever.

The district is also looking at ways to hire social workers at Northeast Range Campus and Tower-Soudan Elementary Campus, Engebritson said.

Cherry Campus

Settergren, a Minnesota State University Mankato graduate, worked at a homeless shelter, substance abuse

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Supt's. Update



Supt. Reggie Engebritson, Ed.D.

We are pushing through this pandemic. As I write this, there are only a few more weeks left of 2020. Is it just me, or has this year seemed like it was three years long? Sunday, March 15, 2020, seems like ages ago. That is the day the Governor announced that all schools would close on March 18, 2020. We had two school days to get child care and food drop-offs set up. Students would be sent home, but we did not know for how long. We would need to provide distance learning and we were not prepared.

Now, it is mid-December and we have been able to keep our students in school almost up to the winter break. The five days of distance learning before and after the winter break will allow our staff, students, and families to be healthy before the holiday and to stay that way when returning back to school on January 11, 2021. We are pushing through this pandemic. We are going to get to the other side and my hope is that we look pretty good when we get there. What do I mean? By keeping our students in school we have been able to make educational progress. For our elementary students who are not in person, we have provided them with a teacher who is only focusing on them,

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PRESCHOOL 2021-2022 REGISTRATION



Preschool registration information will be mailed out in February to all families on our Early Childhood census. If you want to be added to the census, please call and leave DaNeil the following information: Child's legal name, birthday, parent name, address, phone number and email. Children must be 4 years old on or before September 1, 2021, to register.



***Wishing Everyone a
Safe, Healthy and
Happy 2021***

from all of us at ISD 2142

Dr. Reggie Engebritson ... (Continued from front page)

as distance learners. We have been able to teach kids how to read, do math, work with others and get along. We have been able to make connections and have face-to-face interactions (either with masks on or over a computer screen). We have been able to catch them up from the two months we lost last spring and move them ahead. We have moved students closer to the finish line of graduation.

I won't kid you. We have lost some students along the way. They are not connecting with their teachers and they are not responding to our phone calls, emails, and letters. We will continue to try because we know what the statistics say for students who do not receive a high school diploma and their ability to earn a wage for living independently. It's not good. I feel that by keeping kids in school, we can continue to support them and move them forward. If we don't teach kids how to read or learn skills or graduate, **this school year**, we will have more problems down the road, for years to come. The learning gap will widen and we may have students who are not able to recover from the months of no school.

As we start the new calendar year of 2021, we are going to hear more and more about schools trying to reopen. The MN Department of Education (MDE) has formed a committee to figure out what data to use to reopen schools. If we just go by the Community numbers for the virus, some schools may not reopen this school year. Here, in 2142, we have been looking at the data within each school to make decisions about which learning plan to follow. While we had to move to distance learning for a period of time

at Tower-Soudan and Cherry due to what was happening within the school, we have been fortunate to be able to keep all schools open until mid-December. Back in August, I don't think many folks thought we would be open past the MEA break in October.

I am proud of what we have been able to do so far. I am deeply grateful for the support of our parents, the school board, our teachers, and our support staff. It has not been easy. Every job within the district has stressors and you add a pandemic to that and you have enough reasons to crawl under the bedcovers and not come out. But, we didn't do that. We showed up every day and did our best. We learned how to recognize faces from the eyes up and we remembered why we chose this profession and the importance of connecting and building relationships with students, and with each other, even from a distance.

I don't know what the rest of the school year from January to June 2021 will look like, but I'm optimistic that as schools look to reopen and a vaccine is on the horizon that we will be able to stay open for the rest of the school year. Of course, we will continue to look at the data of what is happening in each of our five schools as the New Year unfolds. We will continue to push through this pandemic and educate our children. Our kids don't get a do-over. They will not get this school year back to do over again. By working together, we are making sure that this school year has meaning and purpose. Thank you parents, staff, students, and community members! We are in this together and we will get through this together!

SOCIAL WORKERS BUILD NEW LINKS

(Continued from front page)

facility, as a mental health counselor, and in foster care and adoption before coming to Cherry.

"I love it," Settergren, a native of Hermantown, said. "Kind of my experience in working with kids led me here, which helps a lot. It's fun working in a small community where everybody works with each other."

Getting to know all the Cherry students and families is a learning process, Settergren said.

"Sometimes, people hear the word social worker and they get nervous," Settergren said. "But this is different than some of the typical work. I'm just trying to help the students feel confident in school and work with families to make referrals to outside agencies."

Settergren says she's enjoying the students, school and community.

"It's been good," Settergren said. "It's been a learning process for me, but I've loved it. It's nice to be able to have one-on-one relationships with kids. I've been able to build rapport with students. I am still working on building more rapport with students and with parents because it's something they're not used to."

Having a social worker in a school is an important resource, Settergren said.

"The aspect of having social workers in schools is growing," Settergren said. "It's good to have that person in schools."

Settergren is a huge asset to the school, Michael Johnson, Cherry Campus principal said.

"The position provides another supportive adult in our school who is looking at the whole person and helping kids learn and grow," Johnson said. "Annalise is consistent, caring, and has a high empathy with students, which allows her to communicate with students openly. It's great for kids and families. She has a lot of initiative and she hit the ground running."

North Woods Campus

Jansen grew up in Willmar, Minn., and graduated from the University of Minnesota Duluth with her social worker degree. Jansen completed a year-long internship at Hermantown High School before coming to North Woods.

"I love it," Jansen said. "I loved Duluth because of the scenery and I liked the summer activities and what you can do in the winter, so I knew I wanted to stick around up north."

Jansen says her primary role at North Woods is to connect students and families with needed resources and help students who may be struggling with a variety of issues.

Getting to know all the students and parents, especially in a time of distance learning, is a challenge, Jansen said.

"I'd like to say that the first day I was here, everyone knew what a social worker does, but that's not the case," Jansen said. "I'm just here to help them."

North Woods students are "awesome," Jansen said. And she's continuing to develop her role within the school and community, she said.

"I explain myself as a link between the community, the school and home," Jansen said. "With students, I try to aim myself as more of a counselor. With parents, I try to angle my role as a resource for them."

Jansen brings an upbeat, positive attitude into the building, John Vukmanich, North Woods principal said.

"Tia works well with kids of all ages and is a self-starter," Vukmanich said. "She has been a real asset in terms of keeping in touch with our distance learning families. Working together with the principal, dean of students, counselor, and school resource officer, we will be leaning on her expertise to help support our students and families in many ways."

South Ridge Campus

Sorenson previously volunteered at a homeless shelter in Scotland, as a social worker at King Elementary School in Deer River, and as a therapist at Duluth Denfeld. She holds a master's degree in social work from the University of Minnesota Duluth and a bachelor's degree in psychology.

Growing up in Cloquet, Sorenson has found a home at South Ridge.

"The kids here are really good," Sorenson said. "They're nice kids. I'm constantly impressed with the overall student body."

South Ridge students are extremely welcoming to new students and the close-knit student body is a big advantage in knowing each student and their family, she says.

"With the smaller size of the school, it feels intimate here in a way," Sorenson said. "These kids grew up in this building and the staff knows these kids and their families. It feels tight-knit, which is cool."

Helping students and their families succeed is her overreaching goal, Sorenson said.

"I'm kind of the bridge between home, school and the community," Sorenson said. "We support students, parents, staff and the community. I'm a firm believer in equal access to education, so it's about removing barriers. It's really about figuring out what the needs are in this community and how I can help them meet those needs."

Sorenson brings educational experience, an understanding of how schools operate and a positive personality to South Ridge, Principal Andrew Bernard said.

"It's the final link in the chain with the school and families that we've needed for a long time," Bernard said. "Her personality is that she's easily approachable with students. She has the experience and credentials to work in one-on-one settings with kids in mental health and connections outside of school that she's able to make instead of us piecing it out."

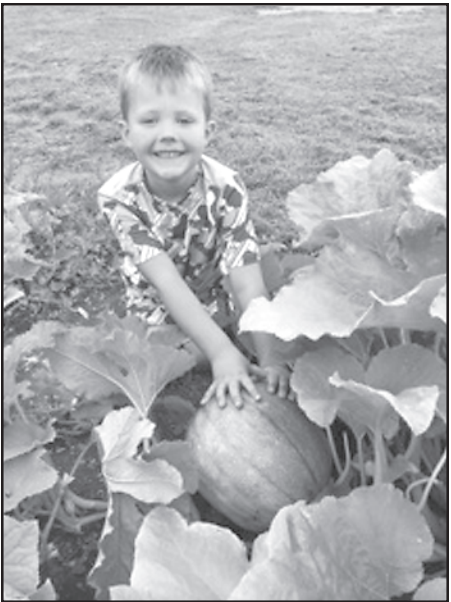
KINDERGARTEN 2021-2022

Kindergarten registration information will be mailed out in February to all families on our Early Childhood census who are not attending preschool. If you want to be added to the census, please call and leave DaNeil the following information: Child's legal name, birthday, parent name, address, phone number and email.



GARDENING FUN!

Cherry preschoolers in Ms. Deb’s class were studying gardens in the spring. One of the activities the class enjoyed was to select different seeds to plant, care for and watch grow. Here, students show the progress of their sunflower and pumpkin plants.



CHERRY SCHOOL READING WALL OF FAME

The following students became members of the Cherry School "Reading Wall of Fame" by the end of November: Charlie Peterson (K), Simon Johnson (3), Natalie Halley (5), Arwen Steele (5), Josie McNickle (5), Bristol Fink (5), Deegan Pittman (K), Michael Perburner (K), Chase Samson (K), Jed Asuma (K), Merida Furey (K), Preston Pew (K), Zoey Biles (K), Kaden Adkisson (K), Annalise Alesch (1), Aubree Pitman (1), Scarlett Constantine (1), Clara Halley (1), Hank Peterson (2), Eden Besemann (3), Cadence Kick (5), Emma Wesley (5), Mieka Davis (6), Arabella Grotberg (6), Logan Peterson (6), Gertie Puhek (6), and Kaidence Stokes (6).

Students had to read books and take AR quizzes to earn 40 points. Their pictures are posted in our main hall at the school. Cherry School is so proud of our Reading Tigers!!!

GREETINGS FROM VINE!

Volunteers in Education (VinE) is proud to once again be providing support for St. Louis County’s students and teachers through our volunteer tutoring program. We work to bring together caring, supportive individuals from the community and students who could use a little extra help to succeed academically. Traditionally, tutors have been face-to-face in classrooms, working with students in small groups or individually. This year, classrooms look a bit different, but the need for help is still there. VinE is committed to supporting students as they grow and learn, both in person and online.

Tutors play an important role in classrooms. There are so many students who benefit from additional time to work on skills, develop strategies, or just receive one-on-one attention. Tutors are able to focus on students’ unique learning styles and needs, which builds their confidence and makes learning a positive, more enjoyable experience.

VinE hopes to serve as many students as possible this year. If you or someone you know might be interested in tutoring, please contact us by email, info@vine-mn.org or by phone (218) 404-5742. We are looking for volunteers to work with both in-person and distance students. Tutoring is a great way to give back to your community and make a difference in a student’s life.

Engaging the community in the education of its students

PARENTS — WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!



Check out the Parenting Resources section on our website at

<https://www.isd2142.net/page/3003>

There are four newsletters that are changed monthly along with a parent involvement library full of short brochures on a variety of topics parents are interested in.

We’re Hiring!
Apply online at: www.isd2142.net
Equal Opportunity Employer



"Small Schools With Big Opportunities -- Where Everybody is Somebody!"

Northeast Range Students get National Press!

The Iron Mosquito robotics team pivoted from building a new summer parade T-shirt cannon robot to building a grocery social distance robot at the start of the pandemic. Hours before the doors at school closed, the students wrapped up a grocery delivery prototype and started regular service at local Zup’s stores. The students served Babbitt, Tower and Ely for six weeks until the economy started opening back up. They will be ready to help again if needed, but hope we move back to parade robots! See and hear the story at the following links. One of the links has a video of Kelly Tran, a STAR WARS ACTOR, showcasing what our students did! Some of the video was shot by our students. Nice work Oskar, Isaac, Wilson, Phoebe, Kaleb, Layne, Zoey, Ethan, Eli, Robert and Lara.

Forbes: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/briannegarrett/2020/05/08/8-under-18-the-young-trailblazers-stepping-up-during-the-pandemic/#54a22fee7ba2>

2020 FIRST Showcase (Star Wars Actor highlights our student work around 10 minutes 45 seconds in): <https://www.twitch.tv/videos/609132663>

360 Podcast: <https://purpose360podcast.com/episodes/humanity-at-its-best-first-robotics-teams>

KBJR: <https://kbjr6.com/2020/04/08/northland-steps-up-grocery-shopping-robot-in-high-demand-on-the-range/>

MPR: <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2020/04/02/daily-dose-sweetness-high-school-robotics-team-finds-new-mission-to-help-the-community>

WDIO: <https://www.wdio.com/coronavirus/robotics-team-delivers-groceries-babbitt-covid-19-social-distancing/5689796/>



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Northeast Range High School and Elementary Bands Perform Fall Concert



The Northeast Range High School and Elementary bands performed their fall concert on Thursday, November 19. With specially designed masks and bell covers, students were able to perform on stage and provide a variety of music to a limited audience in person and to a much larger online audience through Zoom. Both bands were directed by Mr. Kevin Ryks and did an excellent job.



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Call 211 for immediate assistance or visit 211.org for more info.



South Ridge students enjoy the outdoor classroom of their School Forest



Fridays are reserved for the School Forest in Ms. Edwyna’s K-Ready class at South Ridge School. The class brings its curriculum and learning out into nature’s playground each Friday morning. Children explore, take risks, investigate, ask questions, and share ideas with their peers. The class utilizes the wonders of nature to provide a rich experience that cannot be offered indoors.

Each “Forest Friday” begins with a class greeting. Children focus on social skills while greeting their peers in the outdoor classroom. As they hike, they are on the lookout for new discoveries. Children are equipped with their own personal magnifying glasses to help further their investigation. When they find something, they sing a song to alert the others of what they

have found. They spend as little or much time at each discovery as the children like, before moving on in their adventure.

When the time is right, they find a tree to settle in under and enjoy storytime. It’s peaceful in the forest for storytime.

Nearing the end of the time, they focus on small group collaboration, which might include finding shapes in the forest, sorting and classifying nature objects, or collecting items for art and sensory play.

Each adventure is concluded by hugging a tree, telling the forest “thank you,” and leaving it just as the class found it for others to enjoy and explore.



BUILD A CHILD A LIBRARY BY AGE 5!

Donations to United Way of Northeastern Minnesota support our local Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program!

To sign up a child you know for this FREE program, contact 218-254-3329 or info@uwnemn.org



Santa Visits Tower-Soudan PreK



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Northeast Range Theatre Troupe records performances



The Northeast Range Theatre Troupe prepared for a December 4 opening night in front of a few masked family and friends. However, life pulled a fast one on these amazing actors when the Governor called a halt to all extracurricular activities and the show was put on hold. Because "the show must go on" and the kids worked too hard to just stop, Director Mr. Joe set-up Zoom rehearsals, and play practice continued. On December 10 and 14, parts one and two were recorded through Zoom, with the hope of getting a copy out to family and friends after the holidays. "Theatre is such a unique opportunity to open your mind to all possibilities and these wonderful kids did just that and well, we pulled it off." Thanks to technology, the show prevailed.

HELP US BUILD OUR EARLY CHILDHOOD MAILING LIST!

Do you have a child under the age of 5?

If so, we would like to add you to our
Early Childhood mailing list.
Please call and leave a message for DaNeil
at 218-749-8130 ext. 1116 or email her at
dsirjord@isd2142.k12.mn.us

Or you can contact your school Early
Childhood team and ask them to add you to
the Early Childhood list. We need: Parent and
child's name (legal names), child's birthday,
address, phone number and if you have an
email we would like that too!



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OUTDOOR RECESS GUIDELINES for Pre-K through Grade 6

ISD 2142 has developed guidelines for outdoor recess for elementary students. In the past, students have not participated in outdoor recess if the temperature or wind chill at the time of recess was zero degrees or lower. This has resulted in many days when students have not had needed physical activity during their lunch period.

Based on information available from the National Weather Service, outdoor recess guidelines have been adopted by building administrators. Students will go outside for recess each day that the temperature or wind chill combination is above 15 below zero. According to the National Weather Service, the risk of frost bite remains minimal until after 30 minutes of exposure when the temperature and/or wind chill are 15 degrees below zero provided appropriate clothing is worn.

Parents are encouraged to plan ahead to be certain their children will have appropriate outdoor attire by the time winter arrives. If it is a financial hardship for a family to provide a warm jacket, snow pants, boots, hat and mittens or gloves for their elementary age children, please contact your school health office at your earliest convenience and we will assist you to obtain these items. It is also important that children bring this outdoor clothing to school each day as students frequently own the items, but leave them at home.

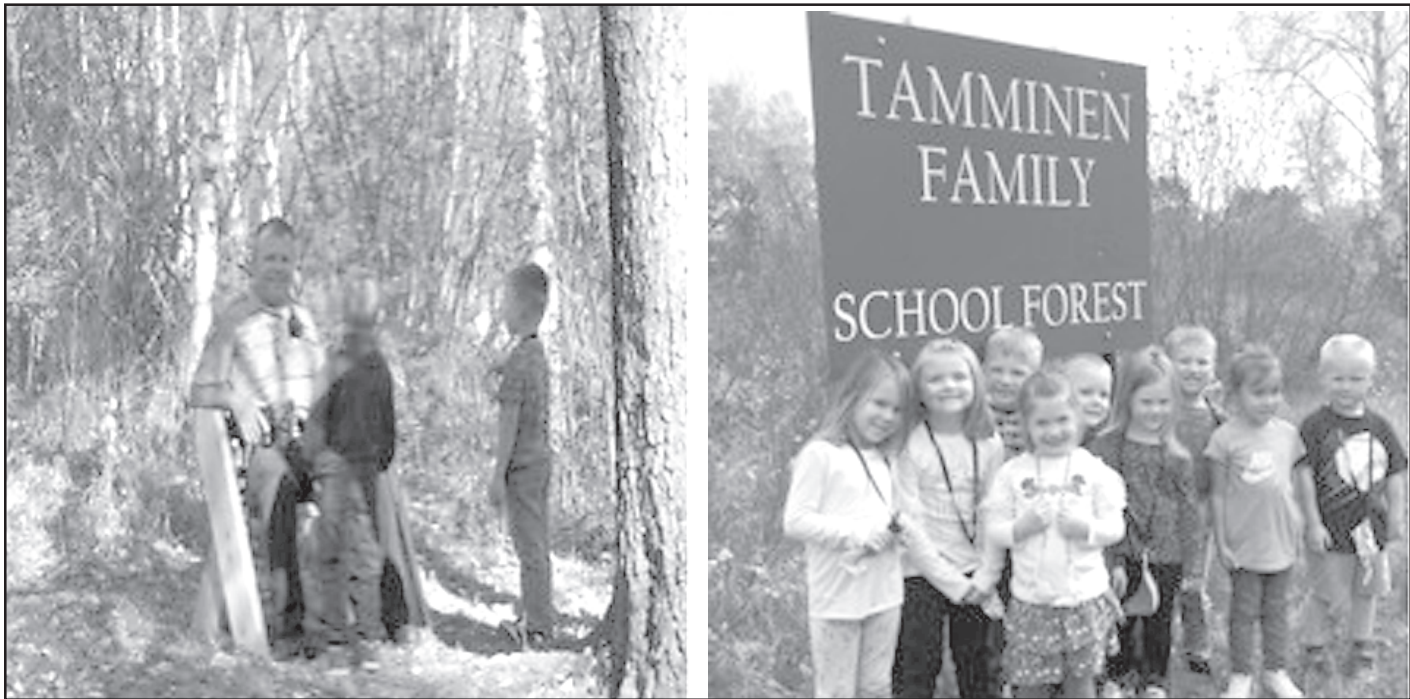
Upcoming School Board Meetings:

Tuesday, January 26, 2021
ISD 2142 District Office

Tuesday, February 23, 2021
ISD 2142 District Office

Tuesday, March 23, 2021
ISD 2142 District Office

Preschoolers at Cherry explore the Tamminen Family School Forest



Preschoolers at Cherry took advantage of an unusually-warm Fall day and toured the trails in the school forest. They were busy exploring, jumping off stumps, finding a caterpillar and ended the afternoon hike with a special cool snack of Popsicles. Students were joined on their exploration by one of the district’s School Resource Officers.

ECFE – Early Childhood Family Education

Classes are offered at all of our schools for children and their parents before the child goes to Kindergarten. Some classes will be in person for parents and children and other classes will be held virtually for parents and children together and also parent only virtual classes.

If you have questions about ECFE please contact the ECFE staff at your school! We are here to support you as a parent! Please reach out!



School	Staff	email
Cherry	Lori Udovich, Parent Educator Jocelyn Jerkovich, Child Educator	ludovich@isd2142.k12.mn.us jaerkovich@isd2142.k12.mn.us
North Woods	Becky Chopp, Child Educator Lori Udovich, Parent Educator	bchopp@isd2142.k12.mn.us ludovich@isd2142.k12.mn.us
Northeast Range	Jane Bradford, Child Educator Sarah Hansen, Parent Educator	jbradford@isd2142.k12.mn.us shansen@isd2142.k12.mn.us
South Ridge	Christina Nelson, Child Educator Sara Lorbiecki-Brown, Parent Educator	chrisnelson@isd2142.k12.mn.us slorbieckibrown@isd2142.k12.mn.us
Tower-Soudan	Mary Larson, Child Educator Sarah Hansen, Parent Educator	mlarson@isd2142.k12.mn.us shansen@isd2142.k12.mn.us

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NER Teachers and Staff hold ‘We Miss You’ Parade



Northeast Range teachers and staff took to the streets on Friday, April 17, 2020, to spread joy and show their support and pride for students and families with a "We Miss You" parade through the communities of Babbitt, Embarrass, Tower, Soudan, and Ely. Approximately 20 decorated cars, escorted by police officers, were driven through the streets with horns honking and flags blowing as excited teachers and staff waved to students and their families who were filled with elation. They had not seen each other since school transitioned to Distance Learning one month earlier. Students and their families shared their excitement through smiles, shouts, and homemade signs with messages of appreciation. It was a fun afternoon that will be remembered by all. #NighthawkStrong



EARLY CHILDHOOD SCREENING

Early Childhood Screening is provided by the school district **free** of charge and is required for entrance in kindergarten and is required for participation in preschool. Screening offers a snapshot of your child’s health and development and it is recommended that children be screened around age 3-1/2.

If you are not on our Early Childhood mailing list, please contact us so we can add you and your child to the list so that you receive all information related to screening. We will need the child’s legal name and birthday, parent name, address, phone number and an email. You can call 1-218-749-8130 ext. 1116 to leave your information on the voice mail for DaNeil or you can email the information to dsirjord@isd2142.k12.mn.us

As always, if you have concerns about your child’s behavior or development, please contact DaNeil or any of the Early Childhood teachers at your local school. We are here to help!



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