



## Proctor Public Schools

### Superintendent's District News and Updates

Empowering all learners to achieve in a respectful, innovative and creative environment



#### Featured Articles



#### WEATHER RELATED CLOSINGS



#### A DISTRICT WITHIN A DISTRICT



#### JUST A SECOND - IT'S MY MOM!



### Weather Related School Closings:

It's that time of year again to start thinking about school closures and delays related to hazardous weather conditions. Last year, we enjoyed some pretty nice weather early into the winter months and, as a result, didn't have many weather-related concerns. It is more common to have weather-related closures in March and April than in December, January, and February. But, every year brings different weather conditions.

We make every effort to ensure that our students have safe routes to school when inclement winter weather arrives. Because our District is so large, sometimes weather conditions vary significantly from one end of the District to another. Once we decide to cancel classes, I contact Lori Johnson (Assistant to the Superintendent) to schedule an Alert and notification in Parent Link. That alert is sent at 6:00 am. Coupled with this, we post the school delay or closing information on our webpage, Facebook, and notify our local television and radio stations. It seems like a lot of notifications, but they are essential measures to keep our students safe. I highly recommend getting our ParentLink App. You can download our ParentLink App from the Apple App Store or Google Play. Just search Proctor Public School District. If you have other questions about school delays or closures, feel free to contact me.



### Proctor Life - A District Within a District:

Last year the Proctor School District created a new school District. WHAT? That's right. We created a new District within the walls of our high school. The new District is only possible because the Northern Lights Special Education Cooperative (which consists of 12 school districts), restructured to become a joint powers organization. Restructuring allowed us to do things differently, especially from a



structural standpoint. Operating as a joint powers, the Northern Lights Special Education Cooperative established a collaborative Setting 4 (children with disabilities receiving special education and related services for greater than 50 percent of the school day in public separate facilities) program which opened in Fall 2017 to more appropriately serve students from member school districts in need of unique and/or intense special education and related services in order to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education. Currently, Northern Lights Academy has an enrollment of 27 students in grades K-8. The maximum enrollment is 32 students, and Proctor has three students enrolled with one student pending enrollment.

So the question you might have is, “why do this?” We do this to leverage funding. Each school district in the state has its own cap or ceiling for special education funding. Districts receive a set amount of federal dollars for special education. Also, the District could receive 60% reimbursement from the state of Minnesota for special education services, but only up to the District cap or spending ceiling. Once that limit is met, all expenses are the responsibility of the District without the 60% reimbursement.

In some cases, this could be a funding catastrophe. For example, if a family moves into a District with five children who have severe medical and special education needs, the costs could be in the millions. By forming a joint powers in the Northern Lights Special Education Cooperative, we can create new learning Districts and avoid situations where an individual District would not exceed their special education spending ceiling.



For those reasons, last year, we established Proctor Life, which is an independent District operating in our school with its own governance and funding. It is a District within a District! Kristina Otten is the instructor at Proctor Life which operates in the Proctor High School. She has three students who live in our

District and who have intensive one-on-one learning needs. By establishing Proctor Life, we have created something special at Proctor, and Kristina is doing an outstanding job. Our one significant drawback is space. If you have questions about Proctor Life, you certainly could talk directly with Tim Rohweder, Kristina Otten, or me.

## Just a Second, It's My Mom:



I am sure many of us can relate to our students' attraction to their phones. Our students demonstrate an overwhelming feeling of being connected with their cell phones. Parents also feel a need to be in constant contact with their children while they are in school and even when they are in class. Before there were smartphones (2007) teachers and administrators had a firm no cell phone policy in schools. We would confiscate the phones, usually not before the students popped

their Simms card out. With smartphones came the capability to access the internet and anything students might need to research. At first, teachers and administrators thought we were entering a brave new world filled with optimism and hopes that smartphones could be a game-changer for education. Across the country, Districts ushered in "BYOD" (bring your own device) programs. Unfortunately, like most adults, kids got distracted by these hand-held computers we call phones.

As an administrator, I have become intentionally interested in research regarding student distraction and how the design of cell phones and apps is distracting students from learning. More appropriately stated, apps are being designed to keep us motivated and engaged in the app. This intentional effort by app designers is known as persuasive design.

Stanford professor B.J. Fogg has determined that the best way to use persuasive design in apps development includes the use of these three factors: motivation, ability, and triggers. He has named this theory the Fogg Behavioral Model (FBM). According to FBM, understanding these factors helps app developers optimize desired behavior by designing apps that keep users wholly engaged.

Winning customers and keeping them rewarded is the end game in persuasive design. Instagram, SnapChat, Facebook, and Twitter all utilize persuasive design. A design executive at Facebook stated that their three biggest competitors were: YouTube, SnapChat, and sleep.



Researchers have also found that cell phones are negatively impacting learning. The research also points out that the only way to increase learning is through physical separation from the device. Turning them off or turning them over did not improve learning.

Where we go from here is going to be interesting. Many schools have implemented lockers for student phones to lessen distractions. I will continue to be engaged in research on this topic especially the business side app development. I would be interested in your thoughts as well.

## In Closing:

As always, I value your input and your feedback. Feel free to reply and share ideas and thoughts and you're always welcome to stop by for a visit.

