

New Salem-Almont School board approve increase in lunch prices, election results and more

By Richard Mendoza
mcnjreporter@gspublishing.net

The New Salem-Almont School Board unanimously approved a .25 cent increase in lunch prices for students in k-12 and adults for the 2026-2027 school year while also approving the election results and discussing policies at its monthly meeting, held on Monday, June 22.

The board's decision to raise lunch prices by .25 cents increases the amount for students in K-6 to \$3 a day, \$3.50 a day for students in 7-12, and \$4.50 for adults. This amounts to an increase of \$43.50 a year per person. Milk and breakfast prices will remain the same.

Though the brunt of the price increase will be shared equally in order to offset rising costs of living, Superintendent Brian Christopherson explained that there are applications and programs parents and families can apply for to receive free and reduced lunch.

He referenced the school's milk fund as well as state legislature passed two years ago which increased the federal poverty from 200 percent to 225 percent

as opportunities for parents to offset the cost increase.

"...The state will make up that 25 percent difference," Christopherson said to the board. "Your total family income can be a little higher; you can still qualify. Obviously, [the] more kids you have, the better chance you can qualify, and I think it's really important that people apply for that."

Results from the recent school board election were also reviewed and unanimously approved by the board. Justin Barclay officially replaces incumbent Jackie Lausch in the Area 1- City of New Salem seat after receiving 159 votes to Lausch's 80. Natesa Messerschmidt officially replaces incumbent Monica Reiner-Pletan in the Area 2- North of Highway 10 seat after defeating Craig Hort; Messerschmidt received 128 votes while Hort received 71.

While Kyle Bopp, Jr. received the most write-in votes (58) for the Area 4 - Almont/Sims District seat currently occupied by Mark Feland, it was noted that Bopp, Jr. declined to accept the two-year term. Instead, he has reportedly agreed to serve a one-year term on

the board.

First readings of the policies related to Drug and Alcohol Testing Program for Employees (DBAA), Board Communication With The Public (BGA), and Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace (DEAA) also took place and were approved.

In other new business discussed, Supt. Christopherson stated he had met with the Personnel committee in regard to the open Prairie View Elementary Music Teacher position. After discussions on the long-term vision for the music program, a decision was made by the committee to assign the fifth-grade music class to NSA Band/Choir Director Jacob Wanner.

The decision to move fifth-grade band to the high school according to Sup. Christopherson was one centered around allowing Wanner to begin building "foundational music skills, music theory, note reading, and possibly starting band at that age."

For grades k-4, the Personnel committee recommended the hiring of Mariah Harter for the 26-27 school year. The board unanimously approved Harter's contract for the upcoming school year. In the spring, the

district will reopen the position.

On a recommendation by Supt. Christopherson, the board approved an increase for Substitute teacher pay from \$140 to \$150 a day as a way to provide competitive offers and retain good quality substitutes.

A review of the 26-27 Faculty/Staff Handbook also took place. Revisions made included an update to the Emergency Standard Response Procedures, Storm day expectations, High school and PVE expectations "in general," description of types of leave, requiring staff to use Frontline and enter absences in a timely manner, and specific co-curricular duties.

School Board President Austin John stated that during the Finance committee's meeting on June 15, a unanimous decision to have Security First Bank continue as NSA's financial institution was made.

When asked by board member Meagan Miller as to why the decision was made, Supt. Christopherson stated Security First matched the interest rates offered by other institutions. Going forward, quarterly meetings will be held between school officials, specifically business

manager Annie Dukart and Security First Bank.

He added that expectations have been made clear and that if interest rates falter as they had been previously, the process to search for another banking institution will begin sooner.

"The hometown banking is not gonna mean what it did, but I feel like there's some trust [that] was built back," Christopherson said.

"They also retroactively went back to January and increased our interest rate on our money market account and paid that back to us because it had dropped since January," Dukart added. "From January through the end of May, they paid out to us \$20,000 in interest from them."

An update on the Almont Gym was provided. Christopherson stated he had met with the senior project managers from Kraus-Anderson to tour the gym.

Among the various observations and findings from the tour, Christopherson shared that the gyms' structure is still solid, the bathrooms are likely in need of work, and costs would be high if heating ducts and floor tiling are needed. Christopherson stated he would present

his findings to the Almont Historical Society.

An asbestos assessment and abatement, estimated at \$1500 and an architectural review, estimated at \$5000, were noted as the next steps forward. A recommendation to move the projects' handling to the building committee was made and approved.

Following payment of late fees, the co-op agreements with Glen Ullin for 7-8 football, 9-12 football (following the 2026 season), 9-12 girls' basketball, 7-12 boys' basketball, and 7-12 speech were noted as having been approved. Due to low numbers on the side of Glen Ullin, elementary girls' basketball will be a co-op, but boys' elementary basketball will remain separate.

The PVE roof project and window project were noted as near completion, and landscaping on the PVE playground has reportedly begun. According to Christopherson, renovation of the PVE music room has several complications, such as finding the right carpet for the walls that meets approval of the fire marshal. A timeline of the end of July was given for completion of the project.

Tell them you saw it in the Morton County News Journal!



2026 School Board Election Results

NEW SALEM-ALMONT SCHOOL BOARD AREA 1	
Justin Barclay	159
Jackie Lausch	80
WRITE-IN: Jacob Tatum	1
NEW SALEM-ALMONT SCHOOL BOARD AREA 2	
Natesa Messerschmidt	128
Craig Hort	71
WRITE-IN: Monica Reiner-Pletan	24
WRITE-IN: Ryan Fleck	1
NEW SALEM-ALMONT SCHOOL BOARD AREA 4	
WRITE-IN: Kyle Bopp Jr.	58
WRITE-IN: Mark Feland	8
WRITE-IN: Lafe Nelson	5
WRITE-IN: Bill Kramer	4
WRITE-IN: Kyla Sanders	3
WRITE-IN: Scott Hoovestol	3
WRITE-IN: Scattered	26
FLASHER SCHOOL BOARD	
Tiffany Hoff	126
Braden Hatzenbuhler	111
Jessy Meyer	102
Casey Schaff	64
WRITE-IN: Scattered	19

Area students receive degrees from NDSU

The following area students received degrees from NDSU for spring 2026.

Glen Ullin: Kathryn Dziuk, Bachelor of Science in Architecture, Summa Cum Laude.

Mandan: Abigayle Johnson, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Summa Cum Laude; Elena Joubert, Masters of Landscape Architecture; Olivia Leingang, Masters of Architecture; Dione Otten, Bachelor of Science in Art; Riley Poppe, Bachelor of Science in Social Studies Education; Madison Rivinius, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Cum Laude; Jayli Wan-

der, Bachelor of Science on Business Administration; Luke Darras, Bachelor of Science in Finance, Magna Cum Laude; Faith Eberle, Bachelor of Science in Pharmaceutical Sciences, Magna Cum Laude; Samuel Enget, Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, Cum Laude; Dakota Galt, Bachelor of University Studies; Adam Gress, Bachelor of Science in Food Science, Suma Cum Laude; Brandon Hoff, Bachelor of Science in Finance, Cum Laude.

New Salem: Raegen Miller, Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

Check out our Facebook page for more area school information!

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Notice is hereby given that sealed proposals for the New Salem-Almont School District in response to a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the purchase of commercial food products and related services from a Prime Vendor will be received at the New Salem-Almont High School Office, 310 Elm Ave., New Salem, ND 58563, until 12:00 p.m., July 15, 2026, local time.

Proposals will be publicly opened and read aloud at 12:15 p.m. local time on the same day. Any proposals received after the specified time will be returned to the bidder unopened.

A copy of the RFP may be obtained at 310 Elm Ave., New Salem, ND 58563, the district website <https://www.new-salem.k12.nd.us/page/school-board-meetings> or by contacting Annie Dukart via email at annie.dukart@k12.nd.us.

Each proposal must be submitted in a sealed, opaque envelope clearly labeled with the information required by the RFP.

The Owner reserves the right to hold all valid proposals for a period of thirty (30) days after the proposal opening date. The Owner further reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, in whole or in part, to waive any irregularities, and shall incur no legal obligation for payment until a contract is formally awarded and approved by the appropriate authorities.

Dated this 23rd day of June, 2026.

Annie Dukart, Business Manager
New Salem-Almont School District #49
PO Box 378, 310 Elm Ave
New Salem, ND 58563

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Dr. Kelsey Wiseman, MD



She's right here.

Coal Country Community Health Center