

MOOSE LAKE, Minn. – In the Moose Lake area, the passion for increasing youth financial literacy is active and thriving. This passion has united people from various institutions to work together to improve students' financial knowledge. These individuals form the Moose Lake Financial Committee, which focuses on enriching youth, providing skills and improving lives.

The Moose Lake Financial Committee is composed of employees from Lake State Federal Credit Union, First National Bank of Moose Lake, the University of Minnesota Extension and Moose Lake Community Schools. The school representatives include the superintendent, elementary school principal, high school principal and two elementary school teachers.

Though small in number, the Moose Lake Financial Committee has made significant steps over the last two years toward improving financial education in Moose Lake.

“The financial committee has brought into the schools various curriculum that teachers can use,” Moose Lake Community Schools Superintendent Tim Caroline said. “They helped us to coordinate our curriculum much better so that kids are introduced to the same concepts each year but at different levels.”

The committee has spent much of the past two years meeting with area teachers and administrators to review and evaluate what the schools' curriculum teaches kids about finances. Using this information, the committee is currently compiling a variety of financial activities that elementary teachers can integrate into their current curriculum. The committee will present these activities at a staff development training session in the fall. These resources are intended to be short, turn-key and easy to implement.

At the high school level, the committee is promoting High School Financial Planning Program curriculum created by the National Endowment for Financial Education. Lake State Federal Credit Union and First National Bank of Moose Lake are working together to meet with teachers and provide them with instruction on the curriculum. The glue that holds this unique partnership together is each institution's commitment to the committee's mission.

“The bank and the credit union in Moose Lake both share a passion for teaching kids about finances,” said Terry Burn, committee member and employee of Lake State Federal Credit Union. “We're sharing our resources and presenting to the community a unifying front between the two financial institutions.”

The momentum driving the committee forward is the shared interest and passion in youth financial literacy, Becky Hagen Jokela of the University of Minnesota Extension noted. The committee is dedicated to helping youth have a better understanding of finances once they leave school.

“We hope to provide youth with the right tools to make future financial decisions. When they go out on their own, these tools will enable them to make wise decisions,” Hagen Jokela said.