

Valley View Elementary School students arrive for their first day of school.

A Message from Superintendent Les Fujitake



Collaboration strengthens community



Superintendent Les Fujitake visits with 100-year-old volunteer Joseph Moses in a Kennedy High School manufacturing class. More on page 3.

A few years ago I wrote in this space about our collaboration with civic, educational and business leaders to enhance the social, academic and economic well being of our community.

When we all “work together to make children and youth the focus, great things happen,” I wrote.

We continue to partner on initiatives and programs to close the opportunity gap and create educational pathways for all students to graduate career and college ready. We’ve initiated strategies to identify all children from birth to age 3 so we can offer targeted early childhood programs and prepare them for kindergarten.

We continue to leverage efforts across housing, education and regional planning to attract families and young adults to make Bloomington their home.

Another potential collaboration is with the City of Bloomington and its pursuit of a new community center. We support the city’s efforts to improve the quality of life for residents and attract new families.

Earlier this year, School Board members Maureen Bartolotta and Dick Bergstrom and I joined a city stakeholder workgroup to represent the district’s

interests, primarily our Jefferson and Kennedy activity centers. Each 75,000-square-foot facility offers recreational space for community use, including a wide range of fitness equipment, an indoor running/walking track, fitness and weight rooms and five maple hardwood gym courts.

As the district’s representatives, we serve to ensure existing community investments in facilities and programming are not overlooked. Our activity centers and Community Education offer a diverse array of programs for children, families, senior citizens and residents.

When schools and community leaders work together, learn from each other and share resources and best practices, as we have, we collectively improve the educational opportunities for all children, and the quality of life for all residents.

While our focus as a school system is to prepare all students for future success, we are keenly aware of the importance of helping our community. By supporting one another across racial, political, socioeconomic and neighborhood lines, we are building a brighter future for all.

Student attendance improves

A district-wide effort to improve student attendance in the 2018-19 school year had a positive impact: Attendance improved two percent over the previous year.

Attendance Matters, the district-wide campaign aimed at improving daily student attendance, encourages families to ensure students are in school every day.

Building good attendance habits has a lasting impact. An analysis of Bloomington testing data shows a link between chronic low attendance and lower academic test scores. Research also indicates that chronic low attendance in early grades impacts reading progress and, by 6th grade, is a leading indicator that a student is more likely to drop out of school.

Attendance Reminders for Families

- Call the school attendance line before the start of the school day if your child will be absent.
- Try to schedule appointments outside of the school day when possible, or at a time that is least disruptive to a child’s learning.
- Pre-approve absences for family travel with your principal.
- The district is required to report students with chronic unexcused absences to the Minnesota Department of Education.





Shonte Brown

Student board reps promote Bloomington unity

While high school seniors **Ally Starks** (Kennedy) and **Shonte Brown** (Jefferson) have big personal goals for their senior years, they have a vision for their schools as well: Bringing the Eagles and Jaguars together.

Starks and Brown are this year's student representatives to the Bloomington School Board, with Starks in her second year in the position and Brown in her first year.

Student representatives attend board meetings once a month and are expected to provide reports about school activities and participate in discussion of board agenda items. Starks and Brown also co-lead meetings of high school representatives of the Board Student Advisory Council (BSAC).

Get to know your student board reps!

How long have you lived in Bloomington?

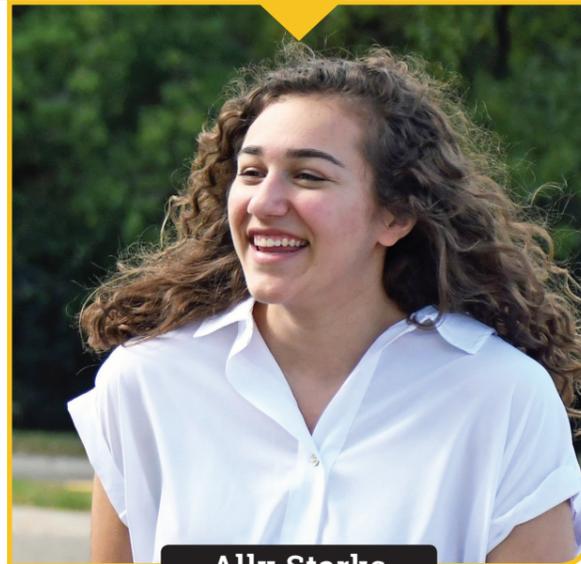
■ **STARKS:** I've lived on the east side of Bloomington my whole life, and I love it. I attended Oak Grove elementary and middle schools and now Kennedy.

■ **BROWN:** My family moved to Bloomington when I was in first grade, so I've spent most of my school years here. I went to Ridgeview and Olson for elementary school, and then Olson Middle School and now Jefferson.

What do you love about Bloomington?

■ **STARKS:** It's like a big city, but there's such a sense of community. You're always running into someone you know, and I've always felt that we can make things happen. If there's something we don't like, let's change it, let's do something about it.

■ **BROWN:** I love Bloomington, I like to brag about it. Bloomington teachers are the best! I would not be who I am without them; they have done so much for me and continue to work to make sure their students succeed. Oh, and we have the best water! Just imagine not having Bloomington water.



Ally Starks

What made you interested in becoming a student board rep?

■ **STARKS:** I loved that as part of BSAC, my voice and the voices of students were being heard by school board members. I've always been into advocacy and speaking up, and I felt like I could make a difference, so I decided to run for student board rep.

■ **BROWN:** I attended BSAC meetings last year, and there were a lot of ideas, but not a lot of follow-through. I have a lot of passion and leadership skills, and I know I can get things done. I'm so passionate about bringing the two schools together and being engaged in the community.

What's been your favorite part of being a student board rep?

■ **STARKS:** Getting to know the school board members over the last couple years has been so fun. It's a great group of people who really want to see our kids succeed. They're like another family to me, and I know they have my back.

■ **BROWN:** School board meetings are actually pretty exciting! I find it fascinating to learn about people and their views, so I've loved getting to know the board members and learning their stances on different issues.

What are some of your goals for the Board Student Advisory Council this year?

■ **STARKS:** I love the theme of One Bloomington and creating unity between the two high schools. We're trying to address the preconceived notions people have about both schools and improve the relationship between the two through better sportsmanship and relationships between students.

■ **BROWN:** We've got some programs and events in the works that we're really excited about to bring the two high schools together!

What other activities are you part of?

■ **STARKS:** Three choirs; volleyball team; Ignite Mentor.

■ **BROWN:** GSA (Gay-Straight Alliance) president; Jefferson student council; prom committee; part-time job at Zumies.

What's your favorite class/area of study?

■ **STARKS:** Biology—AP Bio was my favorite class I've ever taken.

■ **BROWN:** Anatomy and Physiology.

Do you have plans for next year?

■ **STARKS:** I want to major in biology and developmental sciences. I'm looking at colleges, mostly on the coasts. I'm not applying to any Minnesota colleges; this is a time in my life where I'm excited to go out and try something new and make connections in a new place.

■ **BROWN:** I'm planning to attend Northwestern Health Sciences University to get my certificate in massage therapy, and Normandale Community College for my general education classes. I would eventually like to get into business and entrepreneurship, which is my true passion.

PREPARING FOR WINTER WEATHER

A proposed plan to use a two-hour late start as an option in the event of severe winter weather is no longer under consideration.

Research and scenario planning by our severe weather team revealed factors outside of the district's control pose safety issues for students, including transportation, communication and scheduling impacts. In each scenario the exposure to extreme weather conditions were either too difficult to predict or put students at an unacceptable risk.

In general, the district will remain open unless absolutely necessary, which could result in...

- canceling classes and programs;
- early release when weather conditions worsen as the day progresses; or
- operating as normal.

Families are encouraged to use their judgement to determine what is best for their children.

bloomingtonschools.org/severe-weather

Sharing a century of experience



1 Joe Moses assists a student in building a cabinet



2 Teacher Lorne Kelley Collins helps a student with a woodworking project



3 Students measure wood scraps for projects

Students taking career and technical education classes at Kennedy High School receive hands-on experience learning life skills. They also get a chance to learn from someone with decades of career and life experiences.

Joe Moses has been volunteering at Kennedy High School since 2002, logging thousands of hours helping students in the woods and manufacturing classes. He also celebrated his 100th birthday last month.

“Joe is a great asset to this class. He helps students with the tools and machines, and

he knows how to operate and repair all the equipment,” said Lorne Kelley Collins, a tech ed teacher.

A retired mechanical engineer who owned his own manufacturing company, Moses came to the United States from Germany while it was under Nazi rule.

“The U.S. has been very good to me and my family so I wanted to give something back,” said Moses.

Former Kennedy student Riley Mathiasen worked with Moses throughout high school in tech ed classes and robotics. “He was amazing to work

with. He used to run his own machine shop, so you could ask him any question about machining or tools and he knew the answer,” said Mathiasen.

Moses plans to keep volunteering as long as he is able. While the tools, technology and class names have changed over the years, one thing has remained constant: his passion for passing along his trade to future generations.

Moses will be recognized as a Friend of Bloomington Public Schools at the Oct. 28 School Board meeting.

bit.ly/Joe-Moses

Career and Technical Education spaces get a facelift

The former shop class spaces at Kennedy High School were cleaned, organized and renamed over the summer to better reflect the career pathways they represent. The automotive, construction and manufacturing labs are the home of career and technical education classes for woods, metals, manufacturing and automotive technology.

New programs and partners bring new opportunities for students. The construction pre-apprenticeship pathway, part of Bloomington Career and College Academy, has moved to Kennedy, and local business partner Freeway Ford is providing opportunities for students in the automotive pathway.

School Playground Guidelines

In response to safety concerns, access to all school playgrounds and playfields are limited to Bloomington Public Schools students between the hours of 6:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. each school day. Before-and after-school programs run during those hours, including Kids’ SAFARI and Galaxy programs.

School playgrounds and playfields may be used by the general public when students in school- and district-operated programs are not present. Signs with language to this effect are now posted at the school sites.

Parents and grandparents with children and grandchildren may use the playgrounds during before-and after-school programs when students are present.

Parents and grandparents must be on site and actively chaperoning their children and grandchildren.

Additional exceptions are allowed in summer months when district programs are limited to a few school sites.

Performing Arts Calendar

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Kennedy High School musical: <i>The Little Mermaid</i> | Oct. 24-26..... 7 p.m. |
| | Oct. 27 2 p.m. |
| Kennedy High School orchestra concert @ Jefferson | Nov. 7 7 p.m. |
| Olson Middle School fall show: <i>Who Killed Elvis</i> | Nov. 7 6:30 p.m. |
| Oak Grove Middle School choir concert | Nov. 14 5:30 p.m. |
| Olson Middle School Dolce concert: 6th, 7th, 8th | Nov. 19 6, 7 & 8 p.m. |
| Jefferson High School musical: <i>A Christmas Carol</i> | Dec. 1 1 p.m. |
| | Dec. 5-6 7 p.m. |
| | Dec. 8 1 p.m. |
| Oak Grove Middle School orchestra concert | Dec. 5 7 p.m. |
| Kennedy High School holiday choir concert | Dec. 5-7 7 p.m. |
| Oak Grove Middle School band concert | Dec. 3 5:30, 6:30 & 7:30 p.m. |
| Olson Middle School band concert | Dec. 12 6, 6:50 & 8 p.m. |
| Valley View Middle School orchestra concert | Dec. 10 6:30 p.m. |
| Valley View Middle School band concert: 7th, 8th | Dec. 12 6:30 p.m. |
| Jefferson High School choir concert | Dec 13-14 7 p.m. |
| Olson Middle School orchestra concert | Dec. 17 7 p.m. |
| Jefferson High School winter band concert | Dec. 17 7 p.m. |
| Valley View Middle School choir concert | Dec. 17 6:30 p.m. |
| Kennedy High School band concert | Dec. 19 7 p.m. |



IN THE KNOW

Kindergarten Registration Events

Our elementary schools will offer kindergarten open house and registration events for incoming fall 2020 families.

| | | |
|------------------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Hillcrest Community School | Feb. 11 | 4:30 - 5:30 p.m. |
| Indian Mounds Elementary School | Jan. 23 | 5 - 7p.m. |
| Normandale Hills Elementary School | Jan. 28 | 6 - 7 p.m. |
| Oak Grove Elementary School | Jan. 28 | 6 - 7 p.m. |
| Olson Elementary School | Jan. 30 | 6 - 7:30 p.m. |
| Poplar Bridge Elementary School | Jan. 29 | 6 - 7 p.m. |
| Ridgeview Elementary School | Jan. 24 | 6 - 7:30 p.m. |
| Valley View Elementary School | March 17 | 5:30 - 7 p.m. |
| Washburn Elementary School | Jan. 28 | 5 - 6 p.m. |
| Westwood Elementary School | Jan. 30 | 6 - 7 p.m. |

bloomingtonschools.org/school-locator

Bus Tracking on MyStop

Parents and students can access live school bus GPS information to view current bus locations and estimated arrival times through MyStop, a web-based app available to all families.

To use MyStop, log in to the Hub using your Bloomington username and password. Click the MyStop icon. A map will display your student's bus route and current bus location. Select a different student from the dropdown menu to switch views.

- The most accurate information is available within 15 minutes of your student's scheduled pick-up time.
- The bus route and bus position only display when the bus is on its scheduled route.
- When a bus is not yet on its route, the student's bus stop is indicated, but not the bus.

With questions, contact the Transportation Center at transportation@isd271.org or 952-681-6300.

School Board Election

The school board election is Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2019. Absentee and early voting is now available at Bloomington Civic Plaza. Candidates are Maureen Bartolotta (incumbent), Nelly Korman (incumbent), Scott Christensen, John Moravec, Mia Olson and Heather Starks. Bergstrom is not seeking another term.

blm.mn/voting

E-flyers Save Trees

Peachjar is the district's electronic flyer system that delivers weekly information on school, district and community programs, resources, and other events directly to parents via an email link and posted on each school's website.

The use of Peachjar has saved the district more than 2.9 million sheets of paper and 330 trees over three years of use.

bloomingtonschools.org/peachjar

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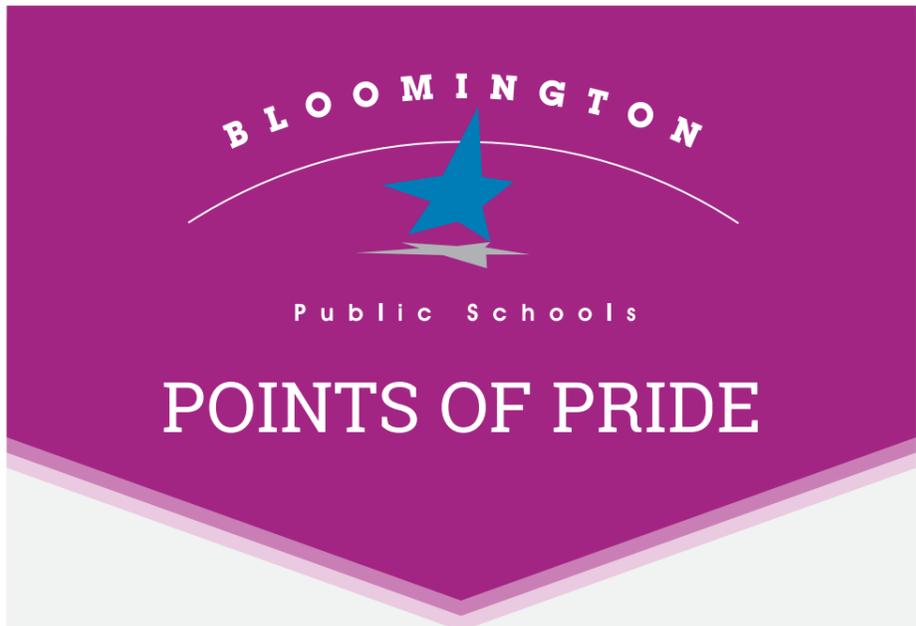
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- Oak Grove Elementary School literary coach **Beth Flottmeier** is one of 40 state educators selected to the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in English Language Arts Revision Committee. The group will recommend changes to the current standards based on research and public input, ensuring they promote culturally sustained learning and align with K-12 and early learning standards.



- Fifth grade instrumental music specialist **Rick Ballew** was selected to Google's Certified Innovator program, which draws educators from over 50 countries to grow professionally, advocate for innovative technologies and drive school transformation.
- The College Board Advanced Placement (AP) program recognized **12 National AP Scholars, 40 AP Scholars with Distinction, 34 AP Scholars with Honor** and **122 AP Scholars**. View the full list of students at bit.ly/BPS-AP-Scholars.
- Eight seniors were named semifinalists in the 2020

National Merit Scholarship Program: **Katelynn Brandwick, Jillyne Clarke, Colden Longley, Christopher Melville, Kayla Nguyen, Jordan Thomson, Charles Weismann** and **Henry Weismann** are candidates for a merit scholarship to be awarded early next year.

- Five students earned National Merit Commended Student status, which recognizes students performing in the top 5 percent of all entrants on the qualifying test: **Ingrid Anderson, Wyatt Doppmann, Timothy Leuth, Ashley Marker** and **Thomas Quiggle**.



- Kennedy High School senior **Ben Griesel** earned scholar recognition through the National Hispanic Recognition Program as he scored in the top 2.5 percent on the PSAT among Latino students nationwide.



- Hillcrest Community School teacher **Cory Wade** received a distinguished alumni award from North Central University.