

A Message from Superintendent Eric Melbye

# Reconnect. Refocus. Relationships.



person schooling for the vast majority of students. For families who are not comfortable with in-person learning or discovered that online school works best for them, we offer New Code Academy (formerly Bloomington Online School) as a choice.

I set forth a theme this year that is centered on three words: RECONNECT, REFOCUS and RELATIONSHIPS.

**RECONNECTING** students with their classmates and friends, their teachers and school staff, teammates and coaches, all of whom are part of developing and nurturing their love for learning and growing.

**REFOCUSING** on who we are as a school system of incredibly talented teachers, support staff and leaders, and what we do best in our service to students, parents, caregivers and each other as colleagues.

**RELATIONSHIPS.** When we meet students' educational, social and emotional needs, we spark motivation, engagement and a love for learning. When students experience healthy relationships with their peers and teachers and are nurtured in their own sense of self and identity, they are motivated to learn and achieve. They have a strong sense of belonging. And, they know they matter.

This school year is a new beginning. Let's make it a great one.

It is my pleasure to welcome students, parents, caregivers and staff to the start of a new school year, one that holds the promise of reigniting our students' passion for learning and restoring the loss of connectedness we experienced this past year.

I consider it a true privilege and an awesome responsibility to return to lead a district I love and admire, where I spent 12 years working in collaboration with parents, community members, educators, support staff and administrators to create opportunities for students to explore their interests and become lifelong learners.

Now, I had hoped to begin my first year as the new superintendent with the virus more in our rearview mirror than the reality we are faced with today. We all are experiencing COVID fatigue and would like nothing more than to turn the page on this long and challenging journey we've been on.

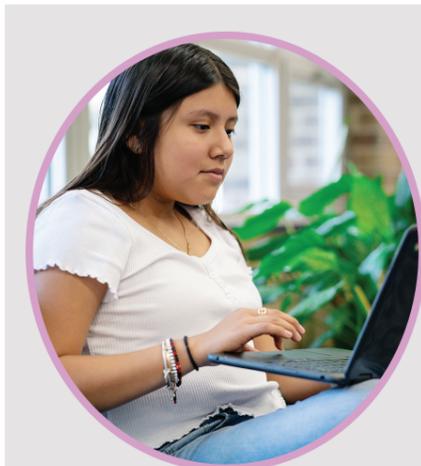
Unfortunately, the reality of the virus's Delta variant requires a more cautious approach.

Recently we shared our Reconnect & Refocus 2021 Back-to-school Plan. In these challenging times, diverse opinions are inevitable. And, though there is no universal agreement

on our guidance and recommendations, it is clear from the passionate feedback we received that we do share a common perspective. We ALL want what's best for children.

Our guidance to start the school year prioritizes student and staff safety, while balancing the importance of in-

*When we meet students' educational, social and emotional needs, we spark motivation, engagement and a love for learning.*



## BACK-TO-SCHOOL INFORMATION IN INFINITE CAMPUS

Infinite Campus, our student information system, is also one of the best communication channels for parents and students. Infinite Campus is a password-protected website and app that allows easy access to important student information, including login information, locker numbers, bus and course schedules, and teachers. Access Infinite Campus through BPS Login or via the Infinite Campus app.

Families should update their contact information and preferences in Infinite Campus to receive important school and district email and text notifications.



# COVID-19 GUIDANCE



As we plan to return to many pre-pandemic operations, we are also committed to providing safe and healthy school environments for students and staff. A complete list of our latest guidance, recommendations and safety measures can be found in the Reconnect & Refocus 2021 back-to-school plan at

[bloomington.k12.mn.us/reconnect-refocus](https://bloomington.k12.mn.us/reconnect-refocus)

Here are a few of the most important mitigation strategies to start the school year.



## Safety

- Classrooms and offices equipped with medical grade HEPA purifiers as an added layer of protection.
- Frequent hand washing and use of school hand sanitizers.



## Masks

- Students and staff in early childhood through age 21 are required to wear masks. Includes Bloomington Transition Center, Metro South, and community education programs.
- Use of masks required by all occupants on a school bus or district transportation vehicles.



## Health Screening

- Parents/caregivers should do a daily health screening of children BEFORE coming to school, and remain home if showing any signs of illness. Staff are required to follow the same protocol.
- Students who become ill at school will be sent home. Parents must pick up their child in a timely manner.
- All staff must complete a daily health screening BEFORE coming to work and stay home if ill.
- Students and staff experiencing illness may return to school after a negative COVID-19 test (taken between 5-7 days); OR alternative medical diagnosis; OR 10-day quarantine from symptom onset.



## Isolations, Quarantines & Contact Tracing

- Positive COVID-19 cases must be reported to MDH and isolate for 10 days.
- Unvaccinated siblings required to quarantine for 7 days with a negative COVID test (taken 3-5 days after exposure) or 10 days without a test.
- Exposed persons will be notified, but are not required to quarantine. Should monitor for any symptoms and get tested 3-5 days from exposure date.
- Fully vaccinated, not required to quarantine when exposed to a positive case. Should monitor for symptoms, get tested 3-5 days from exposure, wear a mask for 14 days or a negative test result.
- When necessary, we will complete contact tracing to keep classrooms and buildings safe.



## Testing & Vaccinations

- Strongly recommend weekly testing for unvaccinated students, staff, and especially those in athletics and activities.
- Recommend testing for anyone experiencing symptoms.
- Test site info: [bloomingtonmn.gov/ph/covid-19-information](https://bloomingtonmn.gov/ph/covid-19-information).
- Immunization is the single most effective strategy to prevent COVID-19. Get a vaccine, if eligible.
- Vaccine info: [blm.mn/clinics](https://blm.mn/clinics) or [vaccines.gov](https://vaccines.gov).

# BCCA students outpace state graduation, college averages



A comprehensive study of Bloomington Career and College Academy (BCCA) students shows higher graduation rates compared to the state average, especially for students of color.

The four-year graduation rate of 2016 BCCA graduates averaged 85.0 percent, compared to the Minnesota average of 82.5 percent. The overall graduation rate for the 2016 BCCA graduates was 92.0 percent. Since the start of the program the graduation rate for all 2016-2020 BCCA graduates has averaged 87.2 percent.

BCCA students were about ten percent more likely than average to pursue college.

In a comparison of 2016 graduation data, 72.1 percent of BCCA students pursued college compared to 62.3 percent of similarly matched students in Minnesota.

For students of color, there was an even greater increase in attending college: 85.2 percent of BCCA students compared to 66.7 percent of

similarly matched Minnesota students. College is defined as a four- or two-year academic, technical or trade school degree, program or certificate.

“BCCA provides an important opportunity for many students, who may or may not be college bound, to experience careers in the trades and earn college credits while still in high school,” said Gary Kressin, M.Ed., Ed.S., Bloomington Career & College Academy director. “The financial savings alone is a huge benefit to students.”

The district is measuring the return on investment (ROI) of its career and college readiness programs, including BCCA, to understand how district programs impact the earnings, employment, and postsecondary success of students into their adult life.

The long-term study merges K-12, higher education and Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) data to “follow”

*BCCA provides an important opportunity for many students, who may or may not be college bound, to experience careers in the trades and earn college credits while still in high school.*

kids longitudinally from graduation into the workforce. The early findings also indicate that graduates who complete some college are more likely to earn more over time compared to graduates who go right into the workforce and don't attend college.

The research is part of developing the Workforce Development Information System (WDIS), a unique state project involving partnerships and data sharing agreements with the Minnesota Office of Higher Education, Department of Education, DEED, Hennepin County, Normandale Community College and Hennepin Technical College. Bloomington Public Schools is the only Minnesota school district participating in the project.

**We're looking forward to welcoming students to a new school year! Please note these important dates:**

**MONDAY, SEPT. 6**  
No school – Labor Day

**WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 8**  
No school K-5 – Elementary assessment day

**WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 8**  
First day of school for grades 6-12

**THURSDAY, SEPT. 9**  
First day of school for grades K-5

The full school year calendar can be found on the district website:

[bloomington.k12.mn.us/calendar](http://bloomington.k12.mn.us/calendar)

BLOOMINGTON



Public Schools

## POINTS OF PRIDE



■ **Assistant Superintendent Dr. Jenna Mitchler** was elected to the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) board of directors, representing the metro central region.



■ **BEC-TV (Bloomington Educational Community Television)** earned three awards in this year's "Best of the Midwest" Media Fest.



■ Oak Grove Middle School music teacher **Bryan Blessing** completed his National Board Certification. The process is designed to collect standards-based evidence of accomplished practice and allows teachers to reflect on how their teaching practices support student learning.



■ Olson Middle School students **Frankie Meany** and **Owen Woods** were named 2021 state champions in the Minnesota on the Map Competition. Their interactive map explores the causes and effects of air pollution in Minnesota..



## IN THE KNOW

### Learn and Grow With Us!

Find your community here and help your child build a love of learning. Our early childhood and preschool classes help prepare you and your child for a successful start to kindergarten and their school years.

We have openings for:

- Preschool for for 3-year-olds
- Preschool for 4-year-olds
- Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) infant preschool

[bit.ly/BPS-early-learners](https://bit.ly/BPS-early-learners)

### Pond Clinic Offers Free Care!

The Health Commons at Pond is open 2-6 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays with additional Tuesday hours on Aug. 31 and Sept. 7.

Appointments are preferred. Please call 952-681-6277 to schedule an appointment.

Care and services offered:

- Sports physicals
- Treating acute illness (infections and other minor illnesses)
- Immunizations
- Health screenings and referrals
- Vision/hearing/dental/early intervention screenings
- Mental health support/referrals
- And more!

[bloomington.k12.mn.us/health-services/pond-clinic](https://bloomington.k12.mn.us/health-services/pond-clinic)

### EFB Golf Classic a Success

This summer's Education Foundation of Bloomington (EFB) Chip in for Schools Golf Classic raised more than \$50,000 to support programs and scholarships for Bloomington schools and students.

Thank you to the 136 golf participants this year and sponsors who made the event possible.

Congratulations to Kevin Mendel of Big Frog Custom T-Shirts and More, who scored a hole-in-one to win a 2022 Jeep Grand Cherokee from Walser Automotive!



Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Twin Cities, MN  
Permit #2086

Bloomington ISD 271  
Educational Services Center  
1350 West 106th Street  
Bloomington, MN 55431-4126

**ECRWSS**  
**RESIDENTIAL POSTAL CUSTOMER**

**School Pages** is published by Bloomington Public Schools  
1350 W. 106th Street  
Bloomington, MN 55431-4126  
[www.bloomingtonschools.org](http://www.bloomingtonschools.org)

**School Pages** is printed and delivered by mail to 39,700 Bloomington households at a cost of 15 cents per copy to inform Bloomington residents about their public schools.

**Editor:** Rick J. Kaufman, APR  
Executive Director of Community Relations  
952.681.6403

**Writers:** Andrea Allis, Kate Martin  
**Photos:** Lucas Wells

**Bloomington School Board**  
**Nelly Korman**, Chair  
**Dawn Steigauf**, Vice Chair  
**Heather Starks**, Clerk  
**Beth Beebe**, Treasurer  
**Tom Bennett**, Director  
**Mia Olson**, Director  
**Jim Sorum**, Director  
Superintendent **Eric Melbye, Ed.D.**,  
Ex Officio