

A Message from Superintendent Eric Melbye

Resilience in challenging times



We began this school year with goals to Reconnect, Refocus and rebuild Relationships strained from divisions wrought by a pandemic, social unrest and political upheaval. Daunting challenges no doubt.

As a new leader with strong personal beliefs and experiences bringing people together, I didn't fret too much about how to achieve our stated goals in the face of adversity because leadership skills required in challenging times are the same as when fair winds are blowing. I also continue to have faith in the strength and grit of our students, staff and families. We pride ourselves on meeting challenges head on.

Six months into my first year as superintendent, I've come to realize the importance of another "R" word: Resilience. It's evident when we

focus our energies to push through the challenges and divisions, and accept the belief that the most important resource we have is our children. Having a common goal of working to nurture and support

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this precious resource fuels our resilience.

I'm so proud of the resilience displayed each day by students, staff, parents and families.

We all believed and planned for a "typical" school year. What we've experienced is by many measures a school year more challenging than a year ago. Yet, we stayed focused

on providing a consistent learning environment for students attending in-person or online in New Code Academy.

We accepted disruptions as reality often outside of our control while working toward a positive outcome. We stayed true to our own values as a school system and community. We asked ourselves and then delivered on what we can do, not what we can't do for our students, families and staff.

We didn't expect universal agreement on every decision or guidance set forth in response to the ongoing pandemic challenges. Yet, we appreciated hearing the diverse perspectives shared by parents and caregivers.

Resilience is an important lesson to embrace as we emerge from this pandemic. It is essential for our students, our schools and our community.

Learn and grow with us!

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

Openings for:

- Preschool for 3-year-olds
- Preschool for 4-year-olds
- Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) infant preschool
- Kids' SAFARI before-and after-school care
- Preschool SAFARI preschool with optional childcare

bit.ly/bps-learn-grow

Early Learning Services
BLOOMINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS 

Summer Childcare Registration Opens March 7

Summer registration for SAFARI, Galaxy and extended care programs will open on March 7 at 8 a.m.

Camp SAFARI is a full-day school-age child care program for children entering kindergarten through sixth grade, June 15 to Aug. 12

Summit SAFARI offers new and fresh opportunities for 5th and 6th graders, June 15 to Aug. 12

Super SAFARI offers additional days of care after Camp/Summit SAFARI, Aug. 15-17.

Early Camp SAFARI for preschool aged students, June 15 to Aug. 12 (Must have attended a ELS preschool or preschool SAFARI during the 21-22 school year)

Summer Galaxy for students entering grades 6-9 in fall 2022, June 20 - Aug. 12 (closed July 4-8)

Extended Care for students in ESY and summer school, 6:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. at Valley View Middle School.

Visit our website at the link below for fees and registration.

bit.ly/summer-safari

PANDEMIC YEAR 2

Prioritizing Health and Wellbeing

By Sarah Kyalo and Kimberly Lloyd

We started the school year planning for a return to normal, where educators could focus on helping students regain any learning gaps and loss caused by the chaos of the past 18 months.

What schools have experienced this year has been anything but normal, and the pandemic continues to impact schools, students, families and our community. And while providing a rigorous, well-rounded education is always our top priority, midway through a second school year of disruptions, emotional health is a major concern.

Social-distancing, isolation and pandemic insecurities are taking a social and emotional toll on everyone, including our youth. In a University of Minnesota study, 30 percent of students experienced mental health difficulties prior to the pandemic. Today, 70 percent of students report increased stress and anxiety that impacts their ability to focus and fully engage in school.

These findings support our focus this year on maintaining a consistent learning environment as we work hard to help students catch up. Routines help create a sense of calm and order, and being in school with their peers is critical to developing important social skills. In a BPS survey of more than 2,000 middle and high school students, 78 percent feel supported through their relationships with friends, family, and adults at school. And students in all grades consistently say the best part of school this year is being with friends.

Stress and anxiety can show up differently in children, with students fluctuating between being “in crisis” – dealing with anxiety, very low mood, poor sleeping habits, etc., and thriving – being cheerful, energetic and high performing. Adults can help by talking with students and providing tools to deal with the ups and downs.

Sarah Kyalo is a licensed social worker at Normandale Hills Elementary School. Kimberly Lloyd is a school psychologist at Kennedy High School.



Tips for Emotional Support

- ✓ Validate emotions and normalize feelings
- ✓ Accept when students feel a variety of feelings
- ✓ Allow children to see you show and model thoughtful responses to a variety of feelings
- ✓ Create space to listen to your child's experience
- ✓ Responding to emotion doesn't always require action: Consider asking if they'd like time alone or with you. It's ok to just be with them in silence. Ask children if they want feedback before offering it.
- ✓ Help children focus on what they can control (actions, personal boundaries, self-care, etc).
- ✓ Allow for varied activity (e.g. physical activity, social, quiet time)
- ✓ Routines and structure help support a child's ability to regulate emotions and decrease stress. Establish and maintain consistent routines when possible.
- ✓ Allow children to ease back into social commitments at their pace
- ✓ Allow children to reset and restart. Allow yourself to reset and restart, too.
- ✓ Capacity changes over time. Encourage your child to do their best in the moment.

School Safety & Technology: School Board favors levy renewal

When our community comes together to embrace and support the mission of schools, it is a tribute to the families and residents that live here. That was the case in 2013 when voters approved the Safe & Innovative Schools capital projects levy to fund \$6 million a year for 10 years.

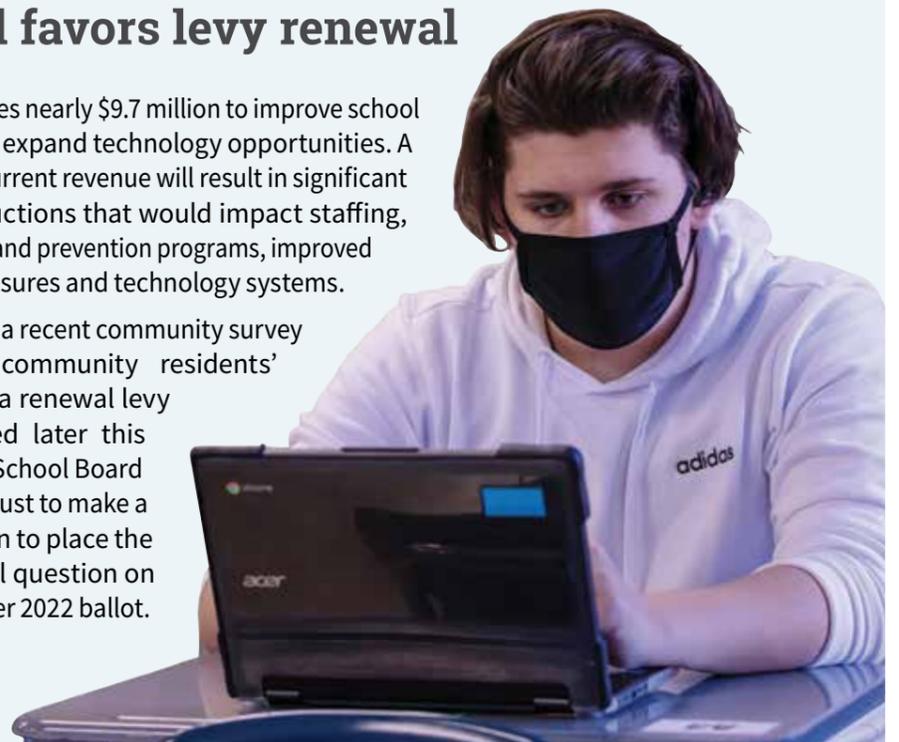
To date, more than \$60 million has funded safety and security projects to better prepare for, protect against and respond to potential school emergencies, and educational technology that has prepared students to compete in a global economy.

With the levy set to retire in 2024, the School Board is supporting the Administration's plan to ask voters this fall to renew the school safety and technology levy for another 10 years. If voters approve the levy renewal, homeowners would not see a tax impact unless the individual property value changes.

The levy is based on a percentage of the net tax capacity of all Bloomington properties. The current percentage is 5.858 percent,

which provides nearly \$9.7 million to improve school security and expand technology opportunities. A loss of this current revenue will result in significant budget reductions that would impact staffing, intervention and prevention programs, improved security measures and technology systems.

Results from a recent community survey to assess community residents' support for a renewal levy are expected later this month. The School Board has until August to make a final decision to place the levy renewal question on the November 2022 ballot.





Performing Arts Calendar

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|---------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Jefferson High School | District Orchestra Festival | February 28 |
| Jefferson High School | Pops concert | March 3 |
| Olson Middle School | Spring musical "Camp Rock" | March 3-5 |
| Kennedy High School | Orchestra and band concert | March 3 |
| Jefferson High School | Choir concert | March 10 |
| Oak Grove Middle School | Spring Musical "SpongeBob: The Musical" | March 16-19 |
| Kennedy High School | Rhythm & Gold Annual Show | March 18-19 |
| Jefferson High School | Choir showcase | March 18-19 |
| Olson Middle School | Honors music concert | March 22 |
| Kennedy High School | Spring Musical, "Shrek" | April 21-24 |
| Jefferson High School | Spring Musical "All Shook Up" | April 21-24, April 28 - May 1 |
| Oak Grove Middle School | Choir Concert | April 28 |
| Oak Grove Middle School | Band Concert | May 3 |
| Oak Grove Middle School | Orchestra Concert | May 5 |
| Olson Middle School | Orchestra concert | May 5 |
| Olson Middle School | Band concert | May 10 |
| Valley View Middle School | Band concert | May 10 |
| Jefferson High School | Band concert | May 12 |
| Valley View Middle School | Orchestra concert | May 12 |
| Jefferson High School | Orchestra concert | May 19 |
| Valley View Middle School | Musical, "Disney's The Lion King Jr." | May 20-21 |
| Kennedy High School | Band and Orchestra concert | May 24 |
| Kennedy High School | Choir concert | May 26 |
| Jefferson High School | Choir concert | May 24 |
| Olson Middle School | Choir and Ovation concert | May 24 |
| Valley View Middle School | Choir concert | May 24 |

12th Annual Districtwide food drive returns

After a two-year pandemic related hiatus, the 12th Annual Districtwide Food Drive is scheduled from March 21-25. Students, families, staff and community members with the ability and means are invited to donate non-perishable food items or cash to their schools throughout the week.

Approximately 40 percent of U.S. households with children had difficulty paying for usual household expenses, according to data from the Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey. These findings provide new details on the serious financial hardships experienced by families during the pandemic, including the disparate impacts across racial and ethnic groups.

Higher percentages of families continue to report they are food insecure as the pandemic reaches its two-year mark. Food insecurity at any age carries the risk of poor physical and mental health outcomes. But food insecurity in households with children is particularly concerning because poor outcomes may influence health and well-being at sensitive points in human development, including both early childhood and adolescence.

All food and cash donations are presented to VEAP (Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People), a Bloomington basic needs and social services organization with programs promoting access to healthy foods, stable housing and other supportive services.

Learn more

bit.ly/2022-food-drive

Pond Clinic offers free care

The Health Commons at Pond is open 2-6 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays with additional Tuesday hours as needed. Appointments are preferred. Call 952-681-6277 to schedule an appointment.

Care and services offered:

- Immunizations and COVID vaccines for kids 5 and older
- Mental health support services
- Sports physicals
- Treating acute illness (infections and other minor illnesses)
- Health screenings and referrals
- Vision/hearing/dental/early intervention screenings
- And more!

bit.ly/bps-pond-clinic

A CALL FOR RESERVE STAFF

Bloomington Public Schools has an immediate need for reserve staff to assist in classrooms, food services and transportation.

Reserve Teacher—If you hold a bachelor's degree, you are eligible to apply for a Minnesota short-call sub license. Training and lesson plans are provided; pay starts at \$155 per day. License and background check/fingerprint fees are approximately \$145.

Classroom Para—Requires high school diploma. **Food services and bus drivers**— training provided.

bit.ly/bps-reserve-staff



POINTS OF PRIDE



Jefferson seniors **Alexander Kiner**, **Jamie Melville** and **Joseph Shetaye** and Kennedy senior **Isaac Stein** have been selected as National Merit Scholarship semifinalists.



Elias Caspari and **Snezhanna Medvedovski** (Jefferson) and **Marques Monroe** and **Salina Sang** (Kennedy) are this year's Excellence in Community, Education and Leadership (ExCEL) Award nominees, which recognizes high school juniors for their involvement in

school activities, volunteer efforts and leadership qualities.

Saamee Oh and **Zachary Studdiford** (Jefferson) and **Tyler Jost** and **Julia Ohm** (Kennedy) are this year's Academics, Arts and Athletics Award (Triple 'A') nominees, where high school seniors are selected for their participation in Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) sponsored arts and athletics while maintaining high academic standing.



Bloomington teachers **Angela Fritzlar** (Ridgeview Elementary), **Niccole Goulet Jordan** (Kennedy High School), **Beth McCoy** (Hillcrest Community School) and **Teri Roder** (Jefferson High School) are candidates for the 2022 Minnesota Teacher of the Year program.

School Board Members, **Nelly Korman**, **Mia Olson** and **Heather Starks** received awards from the Minnesota School Board of Association (MSBA). Korman received the Lighthouse Award for her commitment to racial equity work, while Olson and Starks earned the Director's Award for attending 100 hours or more of MSBA programs within the past four years of their term.

Katherine Holzbauer, Early Learning Services physical therapist, received the Inclusive Educator Award from Intermediate District 917. The award recognizes educators for their outstanding work in creating an inclusive environment for students with disabilities.

Early childhood DAPE (developmental adaptive physical education) teacher **Liz Hill** earned the Young Professional Award from the Minnesota DAPE Leadership Committee.



Speech language pathologist **Cindy McInroy** received the Nancy McKinley Leadership Award at the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association convention.



Heidi Simons, JHS social studies teacher and department lead, was selected to the National Constitution Center's Teacher Advisory Council for the 2021-2022 school year.

Early Learning and Youth & Family Services director **Sarah Moline** was named to the Minnesota Association for Family and Early Education Board of Directors for a three-year term.

JHS junior **Katie Christensen** created a computer science themed sensory walk at Indian Mounds Elementary School as part of her Eagle Scout project. Check out a video highlighting her project at bit.ly/IM-sensorywalk

Oak Grove Middle School won a Star of Innovation Gold Award from the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP) for its Student Support Response Team during distance learning. **John Polhill**, **Erik Jacobson**, **Mike Sheehan**, and **Sandra Mortensen** made weekly home visits to connect with students, provided SEL and technology support, and delivered school supplies.

Olson Middle School 8th grader **Wesley Friberg** was the sole Bloomington delegate to the YMCA Youth in Government Conference, Jan. 6-9.

BPS fall sports teams and athletes had strong representation in conference and state competitions. Kennedy girls soccer junior captain **Isabella Lone** was selected for the AA 2021 All-State 2nd Team.



The Jefferson girls volleyball team won the section 6AAAA championship. **The Jefferson boys cross country team** capped their regular season with a 13th place finish in the state meet. **The Jefferson girls cross country team** placed third at the Section 3AAA meet. Two runners, **Amelia Borgen** and **Megan Lee**, qualified as individuals in the state meet, placing 24th and 41st respectively. **The South Suburban Jets** competed in the Adapted State Soccer Tournament. Kennedy students, senior **Candice Luu** and junior **Cassie Fetsch**, competed in the 2021 Class A Swimming & Diving State Championships, placing 29th and 32nd respectively.



The Bloomington Debate team finished in the top 20 at the state high school debate tournament. Jefferson senior **Joseph Shetaye** and junior **Darian Whittet** placed 14th and 16th respectively, and Kennedy freshman **Addison Wendt** placed 18th.



The Bloomington Nordic boys team skied to a first place finish at the MetroWest Conference Championships. Individual results included: **Jon Clarke**—first and conference champ; **Keaton Mayhew** and **Ethan Ishaug**—first in sprint relay and all conference; and **Anders Westanmo**, **Ian Klein** and **Mason Young**, all conference and 3rd, 9th and 11th place respectively. **The Nordic girls team** placed third, with **Caroline Haag** and **Molly Woods** earning all conference and placing 7th and 11th respectively, and **Vivian Khirin** and **Megan Schrooten** placing 3rd in the sprint relay and earning all conference honors.

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

Writers: Rick Kaufman, Kate Martin
Photos: Lucas Wells, Scott Knight

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IN THE KNOW

Stay informed with Chalk Talk!

Interested in hearing more about Bloomington Public Schools? Chalk Talk is a new e-newsletter for BPS families and community members. Chalk Talk is emailed the second Thursday of each month featuring updates from the superintendent, news, photos and videos of the great things happening in the district. BPS parents are automatically subscribed. To subscribe visit:

bit.ly/bps-subscribe

Homework Connection offers free tutoring

Volunteer Connection offers free homework help for students of all ages at Penn Lake and Oxboro public libraries. In addition to homework help, tutors assist students to practice reading and studying math.

Tutors are available in 30-minute time slots from 5:30-7:30 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays through April.

Parent and guardian supervision is recommended for Kindergarten - Grade 8 students.

Contact Volunteer Connection with questions or for more information: 952-681-6292