

A Message from Superintendent Eric Melbye



A Year of Inspiration and Engagement



In a matter of days our classroom doors will close on another school year, my second leading Bloomington Public Schools. It was a memorable year in so many ways and I am filled with gratitude and admiration.

We've done so much together this year to inspire, engage and empower students and families. We set our sights on challenging goals that will continue to position Bloomington Public Schools as a student-centered, safety focused and technology driven organization. To that end, our community supported a school safety and technology referendum renewal by the widest margin in more than 20 years, and we assembled a diverse group of 90 partners - high school students, parents and caregivers, staff, business leaders and community members - to collaborate on a draft strategic plan.

Most importantly, we were focused on what matters the most - ensuring every student is learning and reconnecting to build positive relationships with one another.

We know our families are integral to student success. I am grateful for the many opportunities I've had this year to connect with parents, caregivers, grandparents and extended families. Your engagement is a cornerstone to your child's educational journey.

Along with celebrating our achievements this year, there is a bit of sadness in saying goodbye to our retiring teachers and staff (check out the special celebration of service on Page 3), and to our Class of 2023 graduates who will walk across the stage in the coming days with a purpose.

As newly minted graduates leaving our schools and embarking on a new chapter, I hope each of you will remember with fondness the dedicated teachers, support staff, coaches and leaders who've walked alongside you, the lessons you've learned, and the belief that you can achieve all that you dream.

As much as I love visiting classrooms, arts, activities and athletic events, the real joy is seeing firsthand the daily connections of our incredible teammates, who each day provide the richest experience possible for our students. Despite the challenges, and there are no shortage of those, we are focused on improvement and student success.

At the end of this year - like past years - we can take pride in knowing we are creating strong and collaborative schools for which our community is justifiably proud.

I am continually grateful to lead this dynamic school district. Each of you inspires me every day. I wish you a safe and wonderful summer.



Summer projects to limit school access

Normandale Hills Elementary School will undergo a comprehensive school maintenance and renovation project at the close of this school year with an expected completion date of late December. The property will be cordoned off prohibiting the use of the playground and parking lot areas.

This NH project will require installation of a portable structure to house preschool classrooms. The portable classrooms will be attached to the building and include all of the existing school safety elements, including secured accesses and alarms.

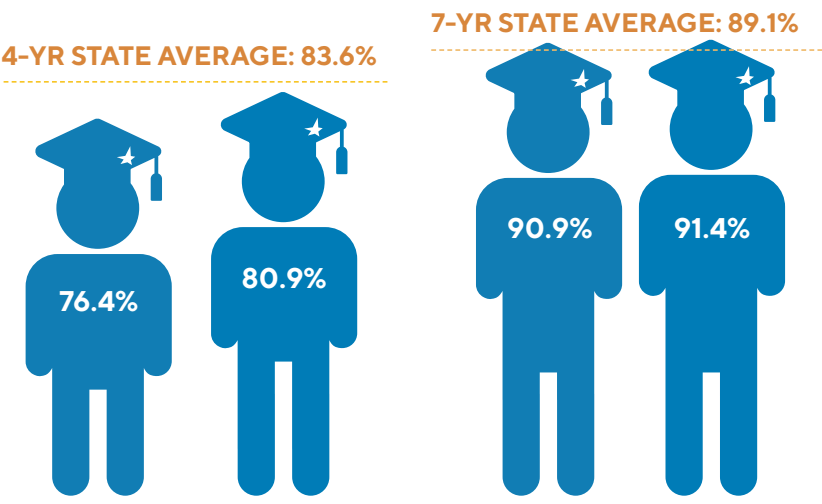
Renovations and improvements are focused on mechanical and improved energy management systems and facility upgrades, including the addition of a new flex-space learning area.

Other summer projects across the district that may result in school and campus closures including:

- Roofing projects to prepare for solar panels at Poplar Bridge, and Oak Grove elementary and middle schools.
- Resurfacing of the Hillcrest playlot (closed for the summer)
- Driveway safety improvements at Olson elementary and middle schools. This project is under the direction of the City of Bloomington.
- Kennedy High School classroom renovations, including science lab and art room, and the replacement of trusses in the auditorium.

These projects are annually funded by the school board approved Alternative Facilities Levy.

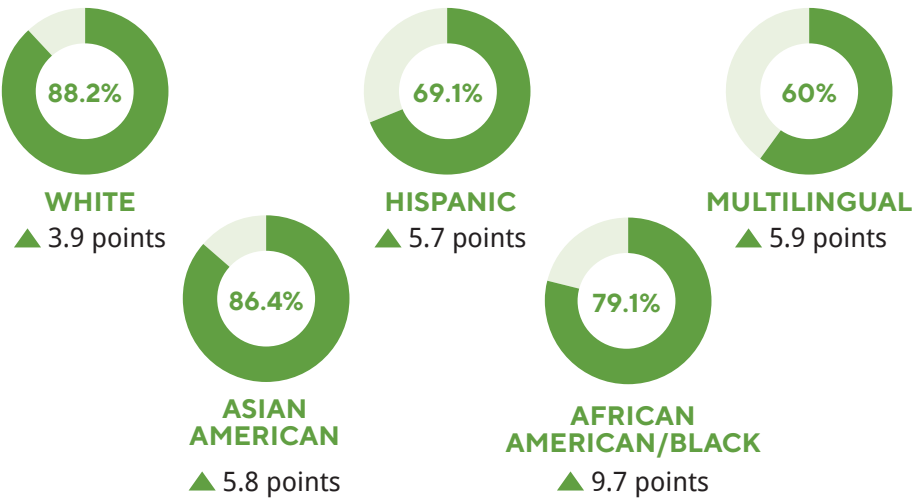
Graduation Rates See Big Gains



Bloomington Public Schools’ four-year graduation rate increased from 76.4 percent to 80.9 percent between 2021-2022. The state’s four-year graduation rate rose slightly to 83.6 percent, a 0.2 percent increase. The district’s seven-year graduation rate increased from 90.9 percent to 91.4 percent, higher than the statewide rate of 89.1 percent.

“Despite the multitude of challenges brought on by the pandemic we have continued to outperform state graduation averages with a combined focus on essential learning, positive relationship building, and a focus on the holistic wellbeing of each student,” said Jaysen Anderson, principal of Jefferson High School.

Four-year graduation rates for most student groups increased, including:



Rates for students who receive free- or reduced-price lunch and students who receive special education services also increased.

“Coming out of the pandemic, nothing has been more important than rebuilding each student’s sense of belonging to our school community. With relationships at the center, staff and teachers are working in partnership with students to create learning environments that honor students’ humanity and hold them to high academic expectations. It’s inspiring to see their excellence shine,” said Molly Hollenbeck, principal of Kennedy High School.

BPS also monitors its seven-year graduation rate in alignment with a strategy to ensure all students graduate career and college ready. Students can defer their diploma and continue in transition, special education and credit recovery programs up to age 21 while completing personal growth/post-graduation plans and goals.

Seven-year graduation rates for African American/Black, Asian, and students who identify with two or more races increased by 7.9, 8.9, and 23 points, respectively. The seven-year graduation rates for African American/Black and Asian students are the highest in six years, with 100 percent of Asian American students graduating high school within seven years.

**Note: seven-year graduation rate data in this report will differ slightly from the MDE Report Card due to a change in ethnicity codes used by MDE for students who identify as American Indian, two or more races, or Hispanic or Latino. Bloomington Public Schools will continue using current reporting codes at this time in order to maintain a consistent year-over-year comparison of graduation data.*

“At Jefferson High School we are very proud of our students, families, and staff. Despite the multitude of challenges brought on by the pandemic we have continued to outperform state graduation averages with a combined focus on essential learning, positive relationship building, and a focus on the holistic wellbeing of each student.”

“Nothing has been more important than rebuilding each student’s sense of belonging to our school community.”



13th District-wide Food Drive Nets 63,500 pounds

Thank you to students, families, business and civic partners and the community for your donations to our annual Food Drive. We collected over 11,300 pounds of non-perishable food and \$14,495 in monetary donations during the week-long District-wide Food Drive in April.

The collection totaled 63,523 pounds with the cash donations-to-pounds conversion, providing nearly 53,000 meals. Each dollar donated accounts for three meals, and each meal is approximately 1.2 pounds.

All of the food and cash is donated to Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People (VEAP), a non-profit agency serving low-income families and individuals in Bloomington, Edina, and Richfield. VEAP serves 10,000 people a month, more than half of whom are children.

The Parent Teacher Student Advisory (PTSA) Council coordinated the annual food drive, and had set a goal of 50,000 pounds. This year’s total is 14,350 pounds more than what was collected in 2022. More than 652,000 pounds have been collected since the food drive’s inception in 2009.

We wish to thank our business and civic partners who supported schools in this year’s food drive: Bloomington Acura Subaru, Bloomington Ice Garden, Cedar Valley Church, City of Bloomington Fire Department, Covington Apartment Homes, Early Learning Advisory Council, Martin Luther Campus, Minnesota Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, MSA Baseball Cages, My Credit Union, Northstar Tavern, Oak Grove Presbyterian Church, Oxboro Evangelical Free Church, Planet Fitness, Quality Bicycle Products, The Toro Company, and United Methodist Church.

Thank you volunteers!

Hundreds of committed volunteers help our students learn and grow, and make our schools a better place. Volunteer contributions have a lasting impact on every student’s life, and we are grateful for the dedication and support of our community volunteers.

We invite you to peruse some of their stories.

bit.ly/3L8PDYq



A Fond Farewell

Thank you for 1,253 years of services

A Celebration of Service will honor 55 employees with a combined 1,253 years of teaching and supporting students. The annual reception recognizes employees with 10 or more years of employment at the time of their retirement or departure. Congratulations to our longest serving employees on their hard work and dedication to Bloomington Public Schools. We wish them the best in their future endeavors.



Debra Goebel, 36 years
Licensed Early Childhood Family Education Teacher

Goebel spent her career in Early Learning Services, teaching children and families birth through preschool, early childhood screening, family literacy programs and mentoring Reading Corps volunteers.

"I've been a strong advocate for young children and families, and I am excited to see this work continue to expand. They are the true key to our future."



Kelley Spiess, 35 years
Teacher Evaluation Coordinator

Spiess began her career as a substitute teacher before becoming a full time classroom teacher for more than 20 years. She was also a district instructional mentor before moving to her current role. Spiess helped develop new staff mentoring guidelines for the MN Department of

Education and served on the legislative committee that created the current state framework for teacher evaluation. She was actively involved in the Bloomington Federation of Teachers throughout her career.

"I've loved my time working with all the staff in Bloomington and I thank the entire Bloomington Schools community for being my friend in our important work serving students and families."



Marcy Ager, 34 years
Administrative secretary

Ager has shared her talents working in several district departments, including Finance as an accounts payable clerk, Technology and most recently Student Services.

"My favorite part of working at BPS is helping students and staff get ready for the next school year. It's the busiest time of the year and I love it. I've worked with many wonderful staff and learned many things. There are so many memories to behold. I am blessed to have worked in Bloomington Public Schools, and wish to thank the many staff that have helped me grow."



Sara Schnadt, 34 years
Counselor, Kennedy High School

Schnadt began her career at Olson Junior High for three years and then moved to Kennedy High School for the past 31 years. She served on many committees, including facilitating SEED, developing the framework for BRAVO school, high school advisory, and as the district's counselor lead. She also

served on the Board of the Lake Area Counselor Association and the Tri City Board serving Bloomington, Edina and Richfield.

"It has been a ride. I've enjoyed working at Kennedy with our diverse student population and such a hard working and dedicated staff."

We thank the following dedicated professionals and wish them success in their future endeavors.

Timothy Bjerke, 38 years
Mechanic

Debra Goebel, 36 years
Early Learning Teacher

Julie Checcho, 35 years
Kindergarten Teacher

Kelley Spiess, 35 years
Teacher Evaluation Coordinator

Marcelina Ager, 34 years
Tech Support Clerk

Sara Schnadt, 34 years
Counselor

Margaret Dahl, 33 years
Kindergarten Teacher

Susan Lenton, 33 years
Food Services Clerk

Don Verdegan, 33 years
Industrial Technology Teacher

Mary Turrito, 32 years
Administrative Secretary

Kim Healey, 31 years
Program Management Support

Charlene Jax, 30 years
Beacon Program Secretary

Paris Solberg, 30 years
Occupational Therapist

Judith Stelmazek, 30 years
Administrative Clerk

Lisa Vanderlinden, 30 years
Science Teacher

Wendy Andrews, 28 years
Cook Manager

Debra Johnston, 28 years
Instructional Assistant
Paraprofessional

David Mousel, 28 years
Math Teacher

Terri Robertson, 26 years
High School Lead Secretary

Jeanne Jones, 25 years
Quiet Room Monitor

Shawn Conradi, 24 years
Fifth Grade Teacher

Eric D Johnson, 24 years
Bus Driver

Curt Naumann, 24 years
Mechanic

Jeremy Kuhns, 24 years
Principal

Kristine Goodwin, 23 years
First Grade Teacher

Jody Petter, 23 years
Teacher, Music Specialist

John Vallejo, 23 years
Maintenance Tech

Jennifer Coughlin, 22 years
ECSE Coordinator

Jodi Eschrich, 22 years
Sixth Grade Teacher

Staci Nelson, 22 years
Math Teacher

Lisa Porte, 22 years
Speech Language Pathologist

Enriqueta Rocha, 22 years
Classroom Support/
Paraprofessional

Jeffrey Lindquist, 21 years
Social Studies Teacher

Jeremy Negen, 21 years
Physical Education Teacher

Kari Govig, 20 years
Third Grade Teacher

Arthur Andrews, 17 years
Maintenance Tech

Susan Conter, 17 years
Media Center Clerk

Sarah Olson, 16 years
Special Education Teacher

Cecilia Manzano, 16 years
Food Services

Kristin Schulz, 16 years
Kindergarten Teacher

Andrew Vollmuth, 16 years
Principal

Carol Wagner, 16 years
Bus Driver

Rebekah Holman, 15 years
Science Teacher

Benjamin Powell, 15 years
Sixth Grade Teacher

Jessica Rice, 15 years
Math Teacher

Cynthia Swartout, 15 years
DCD Teacher

Susan Telander, 15 years
ESL Instructor

Mary Brinkhaus, 14 years
Food Prep Assistant

Elizabeth Nunez, 14 years
Family Literacy

Mary Braun, 12 years
Administrative Clerk

Glenn Ehorn, 12 years
Bus Driver

June Oliver, 12 years
Program Management Support
Para

Thomas Ollhoff, 12 years
Bus Driver

Joe Wilson, 11 years
Elementary Custodian

Nicholas Vogel, 10 years
Middle School Dean of Students





IN THE KNOW

CHIP IN FOR SCHOOLS

Space is still available to register for the 2023 Chip in for Schools Golf Classic. The event is Tuesday, July 25 at The Wilds Golf Club, Prior Lake. Tickets cover 18-holes of golf, cart, dinner and awards ceremony.



Tournament proceeds support Bloomington students through the Education Foundation of Bloomington (EFB) Children's Food for Thought, student success stipends, classroom innovation grants and other programs and scholarships. Save the date and register today.

bit.ly/efb-23-chipin

BPS IS HIRING

Join our dynamic team of professionals dedicated to helping all students achieve their greatest potential. We have immediate openings for full and part-time staff in many areas including teachers, paraprofessionals, bus drivers, health service providers, custodial and maintenance, food services and reserve positions.

bit.ly/bps-hiring

LET'S TALK

The District launched *Let's Talk*, a new platform for families, students, staff and community to provide input and feedback on the current strategic planning process and general inquiries. *Let's Talk* can be accessed on the district website's Contact Us page.

Let's Talk is another tool in our ongoing commitment to transparent communication and meaningful engagement opportunities. All stakeholders are invited to share their questions and feedback. Submissions will be reviewed and shared with appropriate school or district staff.

bit.ly/bps-contactus

I-35W CLOSURES

Construction on I-35W in Bloomington to resurface the road, and improve ramps, sidewalks and signals is underway. Effective now through mid-June, the north and southbound on- and off-ramps of 106th, 94th and 90th streets will be closed for the roadwork.

The local detours for these closures are from 106th St. to Lyndale Ave. Please note all timeframes are subject to change, and are weather and schedule dependent.

bit.ly/i35w-closures

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Ed.D., Ex Officio



POINTS OF PRIDE

- **Indian Mounds, New Code Academy** and **Poplar Bridge** elementary schools received a CS100 Award from CSisElementary and CSforAll for committing to teach computer science (CS) to K-5 students for a minimum of 10 hours. BPS provides 25 hours of CS to each student: bit.ly/bps-cs100

- Jefferson and Kennedy high school students earned recognition at the Minnesota DECA conference in March. JHS students **Katie Christensen**, **Caroline Harding**, **Caleb Hecimovich**, **Henry Matson**, **Carly Peterson** and **Elena Plaster** advanced and represented their schools at the International Career Development DECA conference: bit.ly/bps-deca23

-  Jefferson activities/athletic director **Chad Nyberg** was named Region 3AA Activities Director of the Year by the Minnesota Interscholastic Activities Administrators Association (MNIAAA).


- Senior **Connor Wigglesworth** (JHS) earned Best of Show - Normandale Award of Excellence at the Metro West conference visual arts exhibition for his wooden stoneware, Pitcher Study 2. Junior **Renee Peacha** and sophomore **Aidan Arkley** received the Award of Excellence and junior **Synnové Erickson** received the Award of Achievement: bit.ly/mw-art-exhibit23



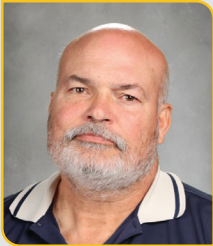
Kennedy Swim and Dive team and coaches received honors at the MSHSCA All State Banquet. Junior **Sam Gardner** finished 8th at the class A State Swimming and Diving Championships and was recognized for his all state performance in diving. Kennedy swim coach **Todd Walsh** was named Girls' Section 2A Coach of the Year and Boys' Section 2A Coach of the Year. **Braden Fraser** was named Boys' Section 2A Assistant Coach of the Year and Section 2A Diving Coach of the Year. The girls team was recognized for their Team Gold Academic award (3.89) and boys were recognized for the Silver Academic Award (3.65).



Megan Lee (Jefferson) and **Isabella Lone** (Kennedy) are this year's Athena Award winners, presented annually to outstanding senior female athletes from schools across the metro area: bit.ly/bps-athena23

-  **Emelia Lowe** (JHS) received a Rising Star award from the Minnesota Aspirations in Computing awards (MNAiC) program. Lowe is one of 91 honorees from Minnesota recognized for their technological skills, interests, and aspirations: bit.ly/bps-mnaic23

- **Daniel Freitag** (JHS) was named to the 2022-23 Star Tribune All-Metro boys basketball team. Freitag, a junior, finished the season averaging 28.8 points, 9.6 rebounds, four assists and 2.1 steals per game.

-  Kennedy social studies teacher and wrestling coach **Charles Vavrosky** was named Section 5AA Coach of the Year. The team finished 10-5 in the regular season, with four athletes advancing to state and completing the sectional tournament as runner-ups. Vavrosky has coached the KHS wrestling program for 43 years.



Kennedy's **Rhythm in Gold** finished first runner-up at the FAME Nationals competition in Branson. Senior **Sophia Hanson** received best soloist and best stage performer awards.