

School Pages

Back-to-School 2024-25

BLOOMINGTON



Public Schools



A Message from Superintendent Eric Melbye

DREAM ★ BELIEVE ★ ACHIEVE

The golden hues of summer will soon fade, giving way to the crisp air and shorter days that herald autumn. For school leaders, teachers, bus drivers and support staff, it is a time of anticipation and excitement for the new school year ahead.

As I embark on my fourth year as superintendent, I welcome back our school community.

I'm also excited to share our team's commitment to nurturing every student's wish, fostering their self-confidence, and celebrating their accomplishments. In short, to "Dream, Believe, and Achieve."*

Every great achievement starts with a dream. That's why we are committed to providing an environment where those dreams can take root and flourish.

Belief is the spark that ignites potential. We strive to instill a deep sense of self-belief in our students, empowering them to face challenges

with confidence and determination. Working together - our dedicated staff, supportive families, and vibrant community - creates a culture of trust and encouragement, where every child feels valued and capable.

And when dreams are nurtured and belief instilled, achievement is the natural culmination of these collective efforts. Together, let us celebrate the unique talents and successes of our students, knowing their achievements are a testament to our shared commitment and hard work.

As we embark on this new school year, join me in embracing the spirit of "Dream, Believe, Achieve" with open hearts and minds, ready to inspire and be inspired.

Here's to a year filled with growth, discovery, and remarkable achievements.

**Editor's Note: You'll start to see this new motto in our publications, flyers and other district materials as we update our branding.*

We look forward to a year filled with growth, discovery, and remarkable achievements.

Welcome New Leaders

We are excited to welcome new leaders to start the 2024-25 school year.



Megan Ahlberg is an interim assistant principal at Jefferson High School following the departure of Mariah Pringnitz.



Kris Krenz is a new assistant principal at Olson Middle School, following the retirement of Brenda Becker.



Casey Van De Laarschot is a new assistant principal at Valley View Middle School.



Jackie Johns, LSN is the new director of health services.



Mark Paulsen is the new principal of Jefferson High School following the departure of Dr. Jaysen Anderson.



Darryl Stinson is the new manager for Building Reservations and the Jefferson and Kennedy Activity Centers.



Josh Wenzel is a new assistant principal at Kennedy High School.



Darrell Young is the new director of Community Education.



Gifted and Talented Turns 20

Bloomington Public Schools is celebrating 20 years of gifted and talented programs. As one of the first districts in the state to adopt these programs, we have served thousands of highly academic and creatively gifted students from Bloomington and across the Twin Cities area. Dimensions Academy was first to offer programs for grades 4-5 and 6-7 in 2004. Since then we've expanded to include six unique programs containing 45 gifted class offerings for students in grades 2-12. Gifted and talented also supports enrichment clubs and teams, summer acceleration opportunities and collaboration with K-12 teachers across the district. Watch for highlights throughout the school year as we celebrate these programs and services.



Summer internship provides teens with real-world experiences

Tech-savvy teens are laying the foundation for the future by gaining valuable knowledge and experience as interns through our Technology Internship program.

During the six-week paid internship, seven interns ages 16-18 spent 16 hours a week with the Technology Department, repairing and preparing Chromebooks and other devices for the upcoming school year. Interns also toured local companies, including U.S. Bank in Hopkins and Jamf in Minneapolis to learn how each company utilizes technology.

The internship program is a wonderful way for students and recent graduates to establish themselves in the technology world, and for some, it results in a full-circle experience, eventually returning to BPS as employees.

"Past interns have gone on to work for the BPS Technology Department, Jamf, and Apple," said internship coordinator Sam Rath.

Attendance Matters



Successful Futures Start Here

We are preparing students with future-ready instruction and building inclusive environments to give students the best chance for academic success. Every day students attend school and class, they are building their futures. That is why attendance matters.

When a student misses a day of school, they miss a day of learning. When a student misses two days a month, they will miss 20 days a year, 30 hours of math and 60 hours of reading and writing over the school year. Multiple days out of school add up fast and prevent students from learning or maintaining skills during this important developmental time in their lives.

"We know regular school attendance is linked to academic success," explains Brian Ingemann, principal of Ridgeview Elementary. "Students gain social skills, establish good habits, and establish stronger connections with their teachers when they're in school every day."

We encourage parents, caregivers and our community to help promote regular school attendance and a positive mindset about being at school every day.

La asistencia importa

La asistencia es importante. La asistencia regular a la escuela está directamente relacionada con el éxito académico del estudiante. Cuando un estudiante falta un día a la escuela, pierde un día de aprendizaje. Las faltas de varios días pueden acumularse rápidamente e impedir que los estudiantes aprendan o mantengan sus habilidades. Cuando los estudiantes asisten a la escuela todos los días, adquieren habilidades sociales, establecen buenos hábitos y establecen vínculos más fuertes con sus maestros.

Imaanshaha ayaa muhiim ah

Guusha waxbarashada ee ardayda waxay si toos ah ugu xiran tahay in ay si joogta ah iskuulka u yimaadan. Hadii ardaydu iskuulka hal maalin ay ka maqnaadan, waxay halkaas ku seegayaan waxbarashada maalintaas ee ardayda la baray. Dhowr maalmood oo ay iskuuka ka maqnaadan ayaa ku keeni karta ardayda in ay ku seegaan waxbarashada ama ay sii kordhistaan xirfadaha waxbarasho. Ardayda marka ay si toos ah maalin walba iskuulka u yimaadan, waxay heystaan fursad ay ku bartaan hab la dhaqanka bulshada, inay yeeshtaan caadooyin dhaqan wanaagsan iyo inay xiriir wanaagsan la samaystaan macalimiintooda.

Free Preschool for Four Year Olds

Learn and Grow with us

We are pleased to offer preschool for all Bloomington 4-year-olds at no cost to families. The year before kindergarten is an exciting time. Our Preschool for Fours program focuses on building a foundation for lifelong learning and social skills. Classes include large and small group learning in literacy, writing, math, music, art and science, with learning targets aligned to kindergarten standards.

Our research shows that kindergarten students who attended BPS preschool are better prepared for school than those who didn't. Additionally, students who attend our early childhood programs outperform their peers enrolled in non-BPS programs in both literacy and number skills.

Funding from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) supports the expanded number of preschool openings, allowing us to offer four-year-old preschool to all eligible Bloomington resident students who turn four years old on or before Sept. 1, 2024.

Bloomington Early Learning Services also offers early childhood education classes and preschool for 3-year-olds.

Register for Preschool and Early Childhood classes: bit.ly/bps-preschool




➤ Share Your Photos on the First Day! ⚡





#BPSFIRSTDAY

Connect With Us

There is so much learning, growth and fun we share throughout the year. Follow us on social media for photos, videos and news - or subscribe to our ChalkTalk e-newsletter to catch the superintendent's award-winning Melbye Monthly video blog.

 @bloomingtonpublicschools

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 Subscribe at bit.ly/bps-chalktalk

Right Sizing the Budget 2025-26

Fluctuating state funding that lags behind inflation, evolving student needs, declining or flat enrollment, and rising operational costs continue to challenge school systems across the metro area, including Bloomington Public Schools.

In an effort to reassess and realign its financial strategies, Bloomington Public Schools is expected to propose a \$5-\$6 million reduction for the 2025-26 school year, as part of a multi-year right sizing the budget (RSB) process. This year's operating budget includes a \$4 million reduction in expenses that were approved last year.

Bloomington's RSB process is an ongoing careful analysis of current expenditures to ensure resources are directed where they have the greatest impact on student success and overall educational quality, according to Rod Zivkovich, executive director of finance and support services.

"By aligning budget allocations with both immediate needs and long-term goals, we can enhance our operational efficiency, support innovative programs, and ensure equitable opportunities for all students while maintaining fiscal responsibility," Zivkovich said. "Our strategic approach stabilizes financial health to adapt to future enrollment challenges."

District leadership is exploring every option to find efficiencies and cost-saving measures that align with the district's new strategic plan and mission, including school or program consolidation, increase in class size, reductions in staffing and administrative expenses, revising transportation routes, and seeking additional funding opportunities.

BPS rolls out new safety system

In an ongoing effort to enhance the safety and security of our students and staff, BPS is rolling out the Raptor Visitor and Volunteer Management System in all school buildings this fall. The Raptor system allows us to screen all visitors and volunteers to ensure they do not pose a threat to the safety of our building occupants.

A kiosk with an iPad will be located in the vestibule of each school or front office. All visitors are required to present a valid government issued ID, which will be scanned to instantly check for potential security threats. Raptor does not store any personal information following the visit. The system is designed to protect the privacy of all individuals while ensuring a safe environment for our schools.

We appreciate your patience and cooperation as we work together to create a safer environment for all.



Back-to-School Calendar

Key Dates

FIRST DAYS OF SCHOOL:



SEPT. 3
Grades 6-9



SEPT. 4
Grades K-5, 10-12



SEPT. 5
2- and 5-day
Preschool



SEPT. 6
3-day
Preschool

SCHOOL BREAKS:



OCT. 16-18
MEA Break



NOV. 27-29
Thanksgiving
Break



DEC. 23-JAN. 3
Winter Break



MAR. 31-APR. 4
Spring Break

LAST DAYS OF SCHOOL:



MAY 29
2-day Preschool



MAY 30
3- and 5-day
Preschool



JUNE 5
Grades K-12

See the full calendar at
bit.ly/bps-calendar



NOTE: PreK and Elementary students have additional no school days for staff professional development as part of the new state-mandated READ Act. See the full calendar on the district website for specific dates.

We're happy to help



CALL FOR ASSISTANCE:

Community Education	681-6100
Early Learning Services	681-6200
Enrollment	681-6400
Educational Services Center/ District Offices	681-6400
Food Services	681-6570
Metro South Adult Education	681-6170
Transportation	681-6300



Kennedy High School graduate **Dulce “Camila” Pineda Ruiz** won second place in the Third Congressional District Art Show for her marker drawing, “My Bedroom.” Congressional districts annually host an art competition for students with the winning pieces displayed in the U.S. Capitol for one year. See her drawing online at: bit.ly/khs-congress-art-24



Steven Koutroupas (Olson Middle School) finished third at the National History Day competition in the Junior Individual Website category with his Life is a Highway website. **Gabe Desroches** and **Josiah Brecheisen** also competed. The three students are the first to represent the district at this national competition. bit.ly/olm-nat-history-day



The **BPS Community Relations** team earned top awards from the National School Public Relations Association, including a Golden Achievement Award for the special communication project, ‘Elevating K12 Computer Science,’ and a Digital Media Excellence Award for its ‘Let’s Be Honest’ video highlighting the impact of drug and alcohol use on teenage brain development and the district’s efforts to address the issue. bit.ly/bps-24-nspra-awards



Kennedy High School’s **Addison Wendt**, a senior this year, is the school’s first student to qualify for nationals in debate. Wendt, **Angelica Mey** (Kennedy HS) and **Kailey Tan** (Jefferson HS) competed at the National Speech and Debate Association’s national tournament in June. bit.ly/bps-nsda-2024

For the fifth consecutive year, **Bloomington Transition Center (BTC)** was recognized as a Sustaining Exemplar school by the Minnesota Department of Education for its successful implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). BTC also graduated its largest class ever in May, with 39 students earning their diplomas. bit.ly/btc-pbis-24

Jefferson boys lacrosse head coach **Scott Cater** received two Coach of the Year honors this season. The MSHSL Coaches Association selected Cater as a Section 6 and statewide coach of the year. Cater led the team to its first Metro West Conference championship since 2016. bit.ly/jhs-lacrosse-coach



Jenny Wen (Jefferson HS) is among 11 high school students statewide honored with a MDE Scholars of Distinction award. Wen was selected for a computer science project using AI to generate dialogue responses for video game characters that players interact with. bit.ly/bps-wen-state-scholar



Four Jefferson and Kennedy High School students placed in the top 10 at the Class AAA State Track and Field meet: Junior **Daphne Such** (Kennedy HS) finished fourth in the girls pole vault, senior **AJ Wendlandt** (Kennedy HS) finished eighth in the boys long jump, senior **David Schiller** (Jefferson HS) placed sixth in the boys discus throw, and junior **Evan Feller** (JHS) finished ninth in the boys 100 meter dash. bit.ly/bps-state-track-2024

Social studies teacher **Grace Díaz** (Valley View Middle) was named the 2024 Minnesota History Teacher of the Year by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. The state-level honor qualifies Díaz as one of 53 finalists for National History Teacher of the Year, to be announced at a ceremony in New York City in October. bit.ly/mn-history-toy24



Maisy Hoffman (Jefferson HS) is a Minnesota State Merit Winner in the 3M Young Scientist Challenge. She was recognized for a “daily task reminders” app idea to help students, like her, with ADHD. bit.ly/bps-young-scientist



In the Know

Stadiums Approved

New stadium facilities are coming to Jefferson and Kennedy high schools in the fall of 2025 following unanimous approval by the Bloomington City Council. The new stadiums will replace Bloomington Stadium, which the two schools have shared for more than 50 years, allowing teams to play their home games at their school campuses. Construction work will begin late this fall, with a projected completion by the end of next summer.

Cell Phone Policy

Earlier this year, the state legislature passed a law requiring all school districts and charter schools to adopt a policy on students’ possession and use of cell phones by March 15, 2025. BPS is in the process of creating its policy, but we will start the school year using current language in student handbooks regarding cell phone use: *Cell phones and personal devices must be turned off, stored in students’ lockers, bags, or not visible to staff during school hours. Any such device that is visible will be confiscated and may be held until the end of the class period, until the end of the school day, until a parent or guardian picks it up, or it may be held overnight, or longer, by the student’s administrator.*

Chip In For Schools

The Education Foundation of Bloomington’s annual Chip in for Schools Golf Classic raised more than \$55,000 thanks to sponsors and participants. Proceeds support Bloomington students through programs and scholarships.



BEC-TV: Don’t Miss a Thing

Bloomington is home to an award-winning team of student broadcasters who bring the community live and on demand sporting events, concerts, plays, school board meetings and more throughout the school year. Watch Bloomington Educational Community Television at bectv.org, Roku, Apple TV, and Bloomington Comcast Cable Ch.15 (SD) / 799 (HD).

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