

A Message from Superintendent Les Fujitake



Innovative thinking at a time of budget cuts



Our school board recently made a series of extremely difficult decisions to right-size the district's budget. It will bring our spending in line with revenues, resulting in a balanced budget for the 2020-21 school year.

The board's decision to reduce spending by \$3.3 million came after months of reviewing school- and district-developed proposals and hearing from stakeholders - employees, parents and students.

There are no winners in this process. We'll all feel the brunt of these and future budget cuts. Sadly, we will lose talented individuals, and the value they brought to our organization. We wish them well in their future endeavors.

Yet, innovation and change should not cease in these times of economic austerity. If innovation is the conversion of knowledge and ideas into a benefit, then now is the time to think more creatively about how we prepare all students to be college and career ready.

How do we foster innovation and change?

The answer lies in seeking out problem solvers and allies invested in educating and preparing our future workforce and leaders to advocate for public schools. When we foster engagement with our employees and stakeholders and speak with one clear voice, we are heard.

Collaborative advocacy has proven to be effective in the past. We're hopeful our legislators and Governor Walz will support the important and remarkable return on investment that adequate public school funding represents for our state's economy, our students and our families.

In the spirit of public value, we must continue to leverage partnerships with our community, its citizens and leaders, along with private enterprises to access more resources and ideas. In doing so, we can continue to deliver and improve upon results of graduating every student with a plan, a focus and a passion for their future.

We will continue to seek creative and innovative ways to do more with less. Our students deserve this.

District welcomes new leadership

Community Education Director Jake Winchell



Jake Winchell is the new Bloomington Community Education director. Winchell is currently serving the dual role of

community education director for Cannon Falls Area Schools, a position he's held since 2009, and student athletics and activities director for Cannon Falls High School.

Winchell holds an undergraduate degree from Gustavus Adolphus College and a graduate degree in educational leadership from Minnesota State University-Moorhead. His community education license was obtained from MSU-Moorhead.



Hillcrest Community School Principal Don Gramenz



Don Gramenz has accepted the permanent principal position at Hillcrest Community School.

Gramenz was selected as the interim principal through a hiring process carried out in fall 2019. That process attracted a strong field of candidates and included interviews with parents, teachers and other district staff.



Schools, programs to feel impact of \$3.3 million reduction

The Bloomington School Board approved a series of recommendations to trim more than \$3.3 million from its budget for the next school year to avoid shortfalls that could jeopardize the district’s fiscal stability.

The budget cuts include increases in class size, program changes, elimination of non-required courses, the loss of approximately 23 full time positions, and funding shifts. A breakdown of the reductions by level are shown in the chart below.

District and school teams drafted options for the School Board to consider to meet the original target of \$3.5 million in reductions.

“Our current financial picture of costs exceeding

revenue is unsustainable for the District to remain financially solvent,” said Rod Zivkovich, executive director of finance and support services.

The district continues to face short- and long-term budget challenges, despite the increase in state funding approved by legislators in last year’s session.

“State funding is tied to student enrollment, and while we saw a slight increase in enrollment over projections, flat to declining enrollment in prior years coupled with inflationary costs increasing by more than two percent each year resulted in the need to make reductions in next year’s budget and beyond,” said Zivkovich.

Right Sizing the Budget (RSB) is a multi-year process to restructure, reorganize and reduce expenses to bring the district’s spending in line with revenues. While there are several factors contributing to a structural deficit, meaning expenses are outpacing revenue, the district has reached the point that it must make significant budget reductions in order to ensure a balanced budget next year.

It is anticipated the district will need to make an additional \$2.5 million in budget reductions for the 2021-22 school year.

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2020-21 Budget Adjustments Approved: \$3.3 million

High Schools Reductions				\$691,000
Description	FTE*	Savings**	Notes/Implications	
Increase Staffing Ratio (1.0)	2.25/site	\$ 472,500	Reduction in staff, increase in class size	
Media/Tech Integration	1.0	\$115,500	Reductions as part of media/tech integration restructuring	
Increase Athletic Fees		Revenue \$83,000	Increase of \$50/sport. Current Avg: \$160/sport.	
Increase Activities Fees		Revenue \$20,000	Increase of \$40/activity. Current Avg: \$55/activity	
Middle School Athletics		TBD	TBD	
Middle Schools Reductions				\$690,000
Description	FTE*	Savings**	Implications	
Modified middle school model	6.57	\$690,000	Reduction in staff will vary by site. Increase in class size	
Elimination of 2 of 4 non-required (exploratory) courses: World Language and Reading	Reflected in the FTE and savings above		Elimination of non-required courses is necessary to move to a modified middle school schedule. Reduction in staff.	
Elementary Schools Targeted Reduction				\$652,000
Description	FTE*	Savings**	Implications	
Increase Staffing Ratio (.5 at Gr. 4-5) Increase Staffing Ratio (1.0 at Gr. 1-3)	2.0	\$210,000	FTE reduction is an average per site; some sites will experience a reduction, others may not.	
Media/Tech Integration	4.3	\$450,000	Reductions as part of media/tech integration restructuring	
Media/Tech Integration Shift				\$800,000
Description	FTE*	Savings**	Implications	
Media/Tech Integration Restructure		\$800,000	The restructuring plan is reflected in the staff reductions or budget shifts at each school level. Additional cuts/shifts include an extension of tech replacement cycles, reductions in professional development and furnishings in flex learning spaces.	
Administration Targeted Reduction				\$500,000
Description	FTE*	Savings**	Implications	
Staffing	4.5	\$319,000	Positions eliminated from the departments of Custodial Services, Health Services, Human Resources, Learning & Teaching, Learning Supports, and Special Education.	
Controllable Budgets (printing, postage, supplies, travel, fees for services, etc.)		\$108,000	Controllable budgets reduced from departments of Community Relations, Human Resources, Learning & Teaching, and Research, Evaluation & Assessment.	
Shift of Expenditures to Other Funds		\$74,000	General Fund shifts to Community Education and Alt Facilities	

NOTE: Staffing budget for a site is based on projected enrollment divided by a staffing ratio. An increased staffing ratio results in a smaller staffing budget. A staffing ratio of 1.0 would be an increase of 1 student per class.

* FTE: Full Time Equivalent

** Savings account for salaries and benefits of identified positions



Computer Science Immersion unlocks creative thinking

Starting in kindergarten, students at Indian Mounds and Poplar Bridge elementary schools are learning the building blocks of computer science: problem-solving, persistence, logic, patterns, writing steps and rules and more.

Computer science immersion doesn't simply mean kids have more screen time or are only learning to code. Students are learning through hands-on experiences with computer science fundamentals, like "programming" their friends as "robots" and making "computers" out of paper to understand how computers work.

Creativity and design is also present throughout the program. Students tell stories by coding on screen, use robots to help solve problems and complete real-world design challenges. Developing creativity helps students now with reading, writing and math and is the foundation for creative computing, design thinking, robotics and coding.

Collaboration is at the core of how our students are learning about computer science. Working in small groups, they collaborate to program a robot or on-screen character to perform a simple sequence of group-directed instructions.

Perseverance, communication and critical thinking are skills that can help students be successful in school and in life.

The computer science curriculum was designed in partnership with the University of Minnesota and Code Savvy.

Expanding Opportunities

Introducing computer science concepts in the early grades expands opportunities for all learners, especially girls, lower income youth and students of color who are typically under-represented in STEM fields.

Our elementary immersion program is aligned with computer science education in middle school and AP computer science in high school.

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See computer science in action:

bit.ly/BPS-CS

Personal Growth Plans help students achieve their dreams

At Bloomington Public Schools, our vision is that every student graduates high school prepared for the education or training needed to pursue a career in their area of interest. We challenge students and families to shift their thinking about career and college readiness. We're not just preparing students for college; we are preparing them to make informed choices about the steps they take after high school.

Starting in middle school, BPS students develop a Personal Growth Plan (PGP) to explore interests, learn about careers, set goals and monitor progress.

Through the PGP, staff are matching students with opportunities in their career area, including

speakers, visits to local businesses, mentors and scholarships.

Hundreds of students have attended presentations by professionals from all career cluster areas and visited local business partners to learn about a variety of careers. Last year, 68 Kennedy and Jefferson seniors received \$52,670 in scholarships based on their PGP.

We encourage parents and community members to ask our students about their PGP. Connecting their learning to real-world experiences with career and college choices can help inspire and motivate students to continue to work toward their goals.

OLD THINKING

College for all

Choose a college

Pick a major

Find a job in your major

NEW THINKING

Not all jobs require college

Choose career field based on interests, talents

Learn what education or training is required

Attend college or training based on program



PGP led to career path and scholarship

Natalie Johnson, a 2019 graduate of Kennedy High School, is pursuing a career as a professional welder. In high school she took several career and technical education electives and Bloomington Career and College Academy (BCCA) classes.

Through Natalie's PGP, the Kennedy career coordinator could see she was interested in the trades and told her about a scholarship and programs in the Twin Cities area.

Natalie received a \$2,500 Workforce Development Scholarship from Minnesota State and is in the welding technology program at Dakota County Technical College.

"I really appreciate the scholarship," Natalie said. "The funds will help pay for my schooling and pave the way to my career in the welding field."



IN THE KNOW



New Year, New Website

We introduced a new district website in January to better meet the needs of our families, staff, students and community. The new site features streamlined navigation and content and a fresh design. We kept feedback from families and staff at the center of our redesign process.

With feedback or questions about the new website, contact the Community Relations Office at commrelations@isd271.org.

bloomingtonschools.org

Bloomington Bookfest Feb. 29

Families are invited to the Second Annual Bloomington Bookfest, Saturday, Feb. 29 from 9 a.m. - Noon at Oak Grove Middle School. Join us as we promote reading with reading activities, snacks, costumed characters and local children's authors.

Volunteers are still needed to make this event a success! Sign up to volunteer.

bit.ly/bookfest-volunteers

District-wide Food Drive

The 12th Annual District-wide Food Drive is scheduled the week of March 16-20. All food and cash donations will be donated to Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People (VEAP), a Bloomington non-profit agency serving low-income families.

Coordinated by the School Board's Youth Leadership Council and Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) Council, the annual event has collected more than 539,646 pounds since its inception in 2009.

Save the Date: Chip in for Schools

The 2020 Chip in for Schools Golf Classic will be Wednesday, July 29 at Dwan Golf Course. Tournament proceeds benefit Education Foundation of Bloomington (EFB), which helps Bloomington students through Children's Food for Thought, student success stipends, classroom innovation grants and other programs and scholarships.

efbm.org

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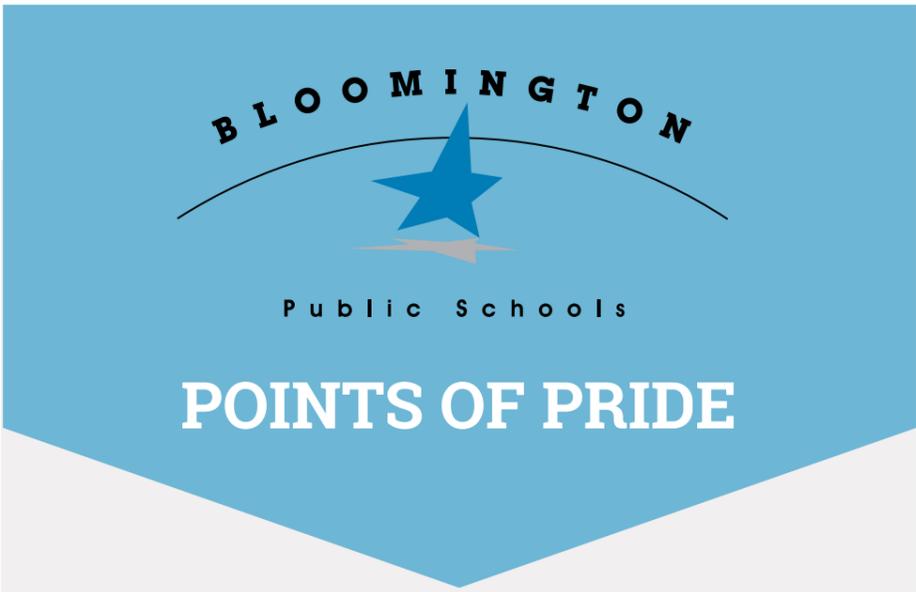
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Valley View Middle School students **Simon Katan**, **Alvaro Lopez Perez** and **Arianna Johnson** received awards for their essays in the Everett McClay VFW Post 1296 Patriot's Pen Writing Contest.



The Bloomington School Board earned a District Award of Distinction from the Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA), with a majority of board members completing 100 to 299 hours of MSBA training or advocacy credits. Board Chair **Nelly Korman** was one of 15 board members from across the state to earn the President's Award for attending 300 hours of MSBA training.



Seniors **Abigail Swan** (Jefferson) and **Ingrid Anderson** and **Corey Boerner** (Kennedy) are this year's Triple "A" (Academics, Arts and Athletics) Award nominees for their participation in Minnesota State High School League sponsored arts and athletics while maintaining high academic standing.

The **Bloomington Bookfest** event was recognized by the Minnesota Community Education Association (MCEA) as an outstanding project.

Jefferson High School girls tennis coach **Lynn Larson** was named Section 6AA Girls Tennis Coach of the Year for the second consecutive year.

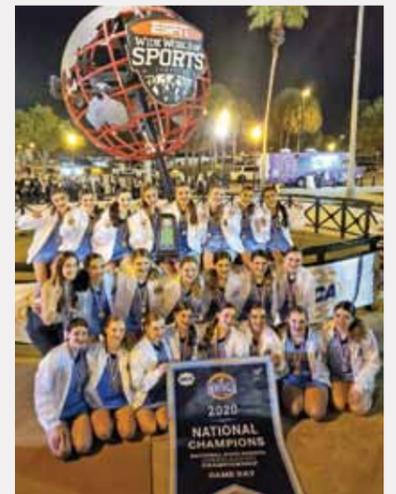


Juniors **Isabelle Lynch** and **Carter Hanson** (Jefferson) and **Chase Beacom** and **Mya Tyler** (Kennedy) are this year's ExCEL Award nominees for their participation in activities, leadership qualities, volunteerism and academic excellence.

Teachers **Jeffrey Levine** (Jefferson), **Katrina Van Ruyven** (Valley View Middle) and **Sarah Weber** (Kennedy) are candidates for Education Minnesota's 2020 Minnesota Teacher of the Year.

Students receiving awards in this year's Minnesota Scholastic Art Competition include the following:

- GOLD KEY:** Kennedy's **Hannah Butala**, **Steven Chand**, **Clara Johnson**, **Ava Katz**, **Phoebe Sinner** and **Mae Yurecko**; Jefferson's **Kelsey Johnson**, **Samantha Ouellette** and **Sam Wallace**; and Oak Grove Middle School's **Synnové Erickson**
- SILVER KEY:** Kennedy's **Julia Ohm**, **Ally Palmquist** and **Phoebe Sinner**; Jefferson's **Kelsey Johnson** and **Serena Ben-Avraham**; and Oak Grove's **Michelle Sarpong**
- HONORABLE MENTION:** for their works include Kennedy's **Hannah Butala**, **Dulce Gomez**, **Ava Katz**, **Ally Palmquist**, **Joy Quach** and **Jessie Thomson**; and Jefferson's **Serena Ben-Avraham**, **Kelsey Johnson**, **Samantha Ouellette** and **Sam Wallace**.



The **Jefferson Cheer Team** are national champions, taking first place in the large varsity game day division I National High School Cheerleading Championships in Orlando, Fla.