

School Pages

Back-to-School 2023-24



A Message from Superintendent Eric Melbye

A New Year of Hopes, Dreams and Achievements

Ahhhh ... that back-to-school feeling. It's a vibe we educators and school support staff feel at this time of the calendar year. A fresh start, a chance to renew and pick up on last year's progress. And dream about the possibilities.

When we dream, we create a vision. That vision is often a picture of the result or the impact of the dream. While I envision a safe, healthy, and wondrous return to school, it is also my responsibility to inspire our leaders and employees to create a collective vision for the new school year.

Last year's development of a bold, new strategic plan is the roadmap to our future, and the journey begins now leading up to the first day of school. A journey toward the future of Bloomington Public Schools. A future where we make good on our mission to empower and equip each learner to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

In my two years leading this wonderful school district, I'm in awe of our collective accomplishments, supported by a school board and community that places hope and faith in us.

So as the new journey begins we welcome all - parents, caregivers, community and business

leaders and residents - to walk together in a spirit of partnership, with a sense of purpose and optimism.

The journey is not always easy, nor without bumps and challenges. We must persevere with courage. Push through the challenges, and aside those who question the merit and value of public education, where our vision is clear, and where we never lose sight of the belief that excellence, equity and innovation exist for ALL students.

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Our students are our greatest hopes and our greatest dreams. We are their champions. Our exceptional teachers, paraprofessionals and school leaders endeavor to amplify the potential of every student, and accept the responsibility to motivate, inspire and lead with passion. As district leaders and support staff, our role is to support those who directly impact students.

Over this next school year, we look forward to providing our students with everything they need to become capable, confident and successful in life. Whether a student is attending a specialized program or one of our neighborhood schools, they will find caring and dedicated educators and staff who are skilled in knowing each student and bringing out his or her potential.

To me, there is never more hope than at the start of a school year. Welcome back.



Board Approves New Strategic Plan

Culminating a months-long interactive planning process, the School Board approved a new five-year Strategic Plan in June.

The district partnered with Catalyst for Educational Change to guide the strategic plan process with 90 stakeholders representing students, staff, parents, business partners and community residents. The Strategic Plan Development Team met for three full-day interactive sessions throughout the spring to review extensive data, reflect on the existing mission and vision, and draft a vision for the future.

The approved Strategic Plan includes new mission and vision statements, core values and five goals, along with the characteristics our students, staff and system exemplify. All documents and meeting materials are available on the Strategic Plan page of the district website.

Throughout the summer district leaders have continued to refine the plan and supporting documents. Ongoing work this year will include the formation of action and implementation teams to write strategies for each of the goals, and a comprehensive plan to bring the strategic plan to life.

Community feedback is always welcome via the Let's Talk platform on the district's Contact Us page: bit.ly/bps-contactus



A commitment to school safety

The safety of our students and schools is an ongoing priority that goes beyond physical security measures to include training all staff to identify and respond to potential threats.

Funded in part by a safety and technology levy originally approved by Bloomington voters in 2013 and renewed last fall, we've invested in structural enhancements, equipment and best practices to help us prepare for school emergencies.

Additionally, we put a lot of emphasis on emergency preparedness, training and drills. Training focuses on improved situational awareness, recognizing abnormalities and patterns - things that aren't normal day to day - then making decisions.

State required drills - lockdown, fire/evacuation and severe weather - along with the district's shelter- and hold-in-place are designed to create the cultural condition to know what to do when real-world incidents occur.

Parents play a critical role in keeping their children safe at school. Talk to them about what to do in an emergency, and if they see something or hear something, tell an adult.

For more on BPS school safety, visit bit.ly/bps-school-safety

Schools Welcome New Leadership

We're excited to welcome the following new leaders, many of whom are familiar faces taking on new assignments.



LIZ LODERMEIER
Principal
Indian Mounds Elementary

Lodermeier, a former IM teacher (11 years), served the last four years as dean of students at Valley View Elementary.



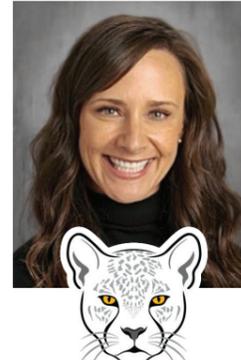
CRISTIN CARUSO
Principal
Normandale Hills Elementary

Caruso has been in BPS for 20 years as a teacher, peer coach, technology integrationist, and most recently Director of Digital Learning and Data.



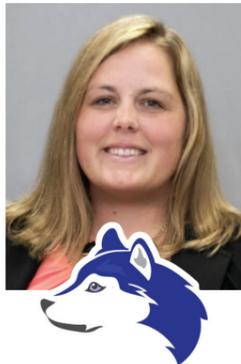
BRIAN INGEMANN
Interim Principal
Ridgeview Elementary

Ingemann, a former elementary teacher, is moving over from Oak Grove Middle School where he has been principal since 2008.



AMANDA TVEITBAKK
Assistant Principal
Valley View Elementary

Tveitbakk has 13 years experience as an elementary teacher in St. Paul Public Schools and BPS, four years as a peer coach, and the last two years as a dean of students.



ANNE GRANER
Interim Principal
Oak Grove Middle

A former OGM teacher, intervention support specialist, and the last four years assistant principal, Graner takes the helm as the school's new interim leader.



JOHN POLHILL
Interim Assistant Principal
Oak Grove Middle

A former teacher in the Chicago Public Schools, Polhill joined BPS in 2015 as an elementary teacher, and the last four years as dean of students at OGM.



PAUL COLLIER
Assistant Principal
Kennedy High School

Collier served the past three years as an elementary assistant principal in ISD 196, and previously was a social worker for eight years in the Bloomington, Minneapolis and St. Paul school systems.



LATIESHA BOGAR
Administrator on
Special Assignment
Valley View Middle School

An assistant principal last year at Kennedy High School, Bogar will become a student behavior specialist.

Other new leaders include: Deans of students **Sarah Mazzoni** (Oak Grove Middle), **Stephanie Schifsky** (Olson Middle), and **Ashleigh Miller** and **Brad Nelson** (Kennedy High School). **Jae Salaski** is the district's new Information Security Manager.

See your child thrive in preschool!

Find out how we're preparing all children to achieve their hopes and dreams. Half-day options for 3- and 4-year-olds. Sliding fee scale for tuition assistance available, no fee for qualifying families, with transportation available for eligible students.

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MN Legislative Session

Unpacking how schools fared

The 2023 education bill provided historic funding increases for schools, including:



Ongoing increases to the per-student formula with a new provision linking future funding hikes to inflation, subject to a two percent floor and three percent ceiling. The increase in funding is four percent in fiscal year 2024 and two percent the following year.



Addressing the cross-subsidies in special education and English learner programs, Bloomington Public Schools (BPS) can expect \$6.7 million. These programs have been underfunded for more than a decade, while the number of students being served has increased. Although the funding is still less than the district's costs to provide services, the increase means fewer funds need to be diverted from the general fund.



A one-time renewal of an existing operating referendum by a vote of the school board, after holding a public meeting and allowing public testimony.



Students entering high school in 2024 will have to pass classes in civics and personal finance in order to graduate, and school districts must offer courses in ethnic studies by 2026.

At the same time, a combination of factors have created a challenging fiscal environment for many school districts, including BPS. Here's how:



The education bill includes historic new expectations and requirements for school districts. New requirements come with increased costs, some which were funded while others were not.



Major changes were adopted to the Public Employment Labor Relations Act. The full impact of these changes is yet to be determined but could lead to increased costs for school districts.



Historic inflation and staffing shortages. The most recent reports show inflation dropping to around three percent, but a year ago inflation was nine percent. Additionally, school districts significantly increased salaries in a number of job categories in response to staffing shortages.



Federal resources approved in response to the global pandemic are winding down over the next year.



Demographics and the pandemic have caused wide enrollment fluctuations. With state education funding largely distributed through per pupil formulas, this will have a dramatic impact on the district's revenue.

More than 270 pieces of legislation were included in this year's education bill (H.F. 2497) covering broad areas in curriculum, discipline, finance, teachers, and special and general education. District leaders continue to review the legislation and its impact. Look for more stories on new legislation impacting BPS in future School Pages.

Advocating for Education

The Bloomington Public School Advocacy Council (BPSAC) supports the School Board in its charge to provide the highest quality, most meaningful public education to its community.

BPSAC members were actively engaged throughout the legislative session, participating in advocacy days at the State Capitol and engaging with legislators to advance the Board's legislative priorities. Their efforts helped shape one of the most significant education funding bills in recent history.

BPSAC meets monthly throughout the school year. Members include parents, residents, student representatives and staff.

To learn more visit bit.ly/bps-volunteer



Back-to-School Events and Calendar

Major School Year Dates

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL:



AUG. 28
Grades 6-12



AUG. 29
Grades K-5



AUG. 30 or AUG. 31
2-, 3-, or 5-day Preschool

NOV. 22-24

Thanksgiving Break

MAR. 25-29

Spring Break

DEC. 18-JAN. 1

Winter Break

MAY 30

Last Day of School

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

Elementary Schools

The first day of school for elementary students is **Tuesday, Aug. 29**.

All elementary schools have two scheduled student assessment days on **Wednesday, Aug. 23** and **Monday, Aug. 28**. K-5 teachers meet one-on-one with students to help teachers determine each student's reading level, set academic goals, and design personalized instruction.

Middle & High Schools

The first day of school for middle and high school students is **Monday, Aug. 28**.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL EVENTS:

- **Oak Grove, Olson and Valley View Middle Schools**
- Open House: Aug. 24, 3 p.m.

JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL

- Jumpstart: Aug. 16, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
- Back-to-School Night: Aug. 22, 6-8 p.m.
- Freshman Orientation: Aug. 24, 8 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

KENNEDY HIGH SCHOOL

- Freshman Orientation: Aug. 14, 6-7 p.m.
- Kennedy Connect Day: Aug. 16, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
- Fall Kick Off: Aug. 22, 7-8 p.m.

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

Points of Pride



Read full details at
bit.ly/BPS-News



Jefferson High School juniors **Matthew Ouellet**, **Shane Ross** and **Paul Wakeham** earned a top score of 36 on the American College Test (ACT). Out of the nearly 1.4 million students who took the test last year, less than three-tenths of one percent achieved a perfect score. bit.ly/perfect-act-scores

Bloomington Transition Center earned recognition by the MN Department of Education for successfully implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). PBIS is a framework for meeting the social, emotional and behavioral needs of students, promoting positive behavior, and improving student outcomes. bit.ly/btc-state-recognition



Executive Director of Community Relations and Emergency Management, **Rick Kaufman**, APR, was honored with the Presidents Award by the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA). It is the organization's highest award recognizing leaders who've made outstanding contributions to the field of educational public relations. bit.ly/bps-kaufman-award

Recent graduate **Aiden Shermak** is the first Jefferson High School swimmer to earn all-state since 2001. Swimmers and divers who place in the top eight at the state meet earn the honor. Shermak finished seventh in the 100-yard freestyle.



BEC-TV won two Student Production Awards from the Upper Midwest Emmy Foundation for Best Live Sports Production. Productions of football and girls hockey were led by student producers **Malachi Martichuski** (Kennedy), and **Sofia Pehrson**, (Jefferson). bit.ly/bec-tv-award



Olson Middle School eighth grader, **Sylvan Redish**, won a national competition showcasing the use of digital mapping technology to teach viewers about a researched topic. Redish's entry in the National ArcGIS Online Student Competition maps and presents data on homeless camps in Minneapolis, and advocates for the conversion of hotels to homeless shelters. bit.ly/OMS-mapping

Five student athletes from Kennedy and Jefferson high schools placed in the top 10 at the State Track and Field meet in June. Kennedy seniors **Deshawna Neal** (3rd in girls high jump and tied the school record), **Masie Pederson** (3rd in girls 400 meter dash), and sophomore **Daphne Such** (8th in girls pole vault). Jefferson seniors **Adam Lueth** and **Megan Lee**, 7th and 9th in the boys and girls 3200 meter run, respectively. bit.ly/bps-state-track-2023

Jefferson's chess team placed third in the MN High School Chess Championship. Three students placed in the top 20 statewide: National Master **Troy Cavanah** (2nd), **Jack Bellinger** (15th) and **Joseph Gaul** (17th): bit.ly/jhs-chess

Jefferson students competing in the National Speech and Debate Tournament this summer included **Will Moen** and **Kailey Tan**, each placing in the top 60 of their categories. **Kehan Chen** and **Darian Whitten** also competed. bit.ly/jhs-speech-debate



Jefferson Theatre Company's production of "**Les Misérables**" received six outstanding recognition awards and six honorable mentions from Spotlight Education, a program of the Hennepin Theatre Trust. bit.ly/jtc-lesmis-spotlight

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In the Know

CHIP IN FOR SCHOOLS

The Education Foundation of Bloomington's annual Chip in for Schools Golf Classic raised \$50,000 thanks to sponsors and participants. Proceeds support Bloomington students through programs and scholarships.



EXPLORING SCHOOL STADIUM OPTIONS

Jefferson and Kennedy high school leaders, coaches and student athletes are proposing on-site stadium facilities to improve access and game-day experiences. High school planning teams are assisting in designing upgrades to the schools' existing turf fields to create a stadium setting.

Bloomington Stadium - currently used by the high school outdoor sports teams - is in need of significant repairs of damage caused by a half century of weathering and to correct functional deficiencies of the facilities. Funding for upgrading the high school stadium sites will come from existing funds dedicated for deferred maintenance and construction projects.

PERFORMING ARTS CALENDAR

Each year our schools put on spectacular music and performing arts programs featuring talented students and musicians. From theater, band, orchestra, and traditional choir and show choirs, the performances have earned regional, state and national awards. We invite you to make plans to attend a show or performance to support the performing arts and our students.

Performances, dates and times can be found on district or school websites. Check back often as schools finalize their performance schedules.

bit.ly/bps-performing-arts

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