BLOOMINGTON
Public Schools

SchoolPages

www.bloomingtonschools.info   **Winter 2013**

Truly thankful for community support

A MESSAGE FROM SUPERINTENDENT LES FUJITAKE

We at Bloomington Public Schools wish to sincerely thank our community for supporting the Capital Projects Levy for safe and secure schools and the Next Technologies for Learning plan.

These resources will allow us to better prepare for, protect against and respond to school emergencies, and to provide educational technology that will transform learning and facilitate personalized learning experiences for all students. In this issue, and subsequent issues of School Pages, we will take the opportunity to share how the resources you approved will be spent. It is our promise of accountability that we will do what we said we'd do if the referendum were approved.

We are truly honored by the trust and continued support of our school district by a community that believes in strong schools focused on academic achievement for all children. We work hard to maintain your confidence in how we manage our financial resources, which has allowed us to maintain property tax levels over time and to show results with your investment.

The referendum outcome reinforces what we have long known: Bloomington residents are deeply committed to providing the best education possible to the young people in our public schools, and they, like us, wish to make our schools safer and more secure.

As we begin the process of implementing more safeguards to our schools, it is important to note that we will need parents' cooperation and understanding. The physical and procedural changes will create some inconveniences. We will continue to work hard to find the right balance between school safety and ensuring we have a welcoming environment for parents and visitors.

Finally, let me offer thanks and appreciation to all those who did so much to lead the Citizens for Safer, Smarter Schools Committee—tri-chairs Dennis Kane, and Dick and Gini Bergstrom—and dedicated parent, staff and community volunteers who gave of their time and talents to get out the vote for the referendum.

Now the work begins, and I am happy to be part of something that will have a positive impact on our students and staff for many years to come. ❏

School Registration Events

The transitions to elementary, middle and high school can present parents and students with many questions. The following events are intended for incoming kindergarten, 6th and 9th grade students. Welcome to our award-winning schools.

INCOMING KINDERGARTENERS

Thursday, Jan. 23, 2014
▶ Ridgeview Elementary School at 6 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2014
▶ Hillcrest Community School at 4 p.m.
▶ Normandale Hills Elementary School at 6 p.m.
▶ Oak Grove Elementary School at 6 p.m.
▶ Poplar Bridge Elementary School at 5:30 p.m.
▶ Washburn Elementary School at 5 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 30, 2014
▶ Indian Mounds Elementary School at 5 p.m.
▶ Olson Elementary School at 6 p.m.
▶ Westwood Elementary School at 6 p.m.

Thursday, March 27, 2014
▶ Valley View Elementary School at 6 p.m.

INCOMING 6TH GRADERS

Monday, Feb. 3, 2014
▶ Oak Grove Middle School at 6:30 p.m.
▶ Olson Middle School at 6:30 p.m.
▶ Valley View Middle School at 6:30 p.m.

INCOMING FRESHMEN

Thursday, Jan. 9, 2014
▶ Kennedy High School Honors/AP Info Session at 6 p.m.
▶ Kennedy High School General Registration at 7 p.m.

Monday, Jan. 13, 2014
▶ Jefferson High School Honors/AP Info Session at 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 16, 2014
▶ Jefferson High School General Registration at 6:30 p.m.

Voters support change in school board race

Bloomington Public Schools will welcome four new members to its Board of Education: **Tom Bennett, Ric Oliva, Jim Sorum** and **Dawn Steigauf**.

The four were the top vote-getters in November's general election from a pool of seven candidates, including incumbents Lyle Abeln, Arlene Bush and Tim Culver. Mark Hibbs, whose term is also up at the end of this year, did not seek reelection.

The four new members begin their terms on Jan. 6, 2014. They will join current school board members Maureen Bartolotta, Dick Bergstrom and Nelly Korman.

For more information on the Bloomington Public Schools Board of Education, visit www.bloomington.k12.mn.us/about-us/school-board. ❏

Tom Bennett

Ric Oliva

Jim Sorum

Dawn Steigauf

Next Technologies for Learning Plan Implementation

Middle school students to begin using digital devices next year

Next Technologies for Learning (NTL) is the vision for personalizing learning to support students along their pathways to college and career readiness. The implementation plan for the first few years of this vision includes digitizing content; supporting anytime, anywhere learning; and communicating personalized data. Bloomington staff have already begun to prepare and implement the first steps of the NTL plan.

Digital Content

Digital content can be the gateway to student learning: teachers are provided a wider array of resources to facilitate learning to diverse learners in different ways. Personalized devices (e.g., laptops, tablets, etc.) can best facilitate that access to digital content.

The rollout of personalized devices for students will start at the middle school level. In October, middle school teachers began collaborating to create and organize digital learning resources for students and will continue this work over the next few years.

The following is the expected rollout timeline:

✔ **February 2014:** All district 6th graders will begin carrying a Chromebook at school and at home.

✔ **Fall 2014:** All middle schools students will begin carrying a Chromebook at school and at home.

✔ **Fall 2015:** All high school students will begin carrying a personal device at school and at home.

✔ **Fall 2016:** All students in grades 3-5 will have access to a personal mobile device at school. Take-home policies will be established by district elementary staff.

In addition, K-2 classrooms will have access to shared sets of devices.

This staggered rollout allows for infrastructure improvements and focused professional development for staff. It also staggers resources to create a sustainable cycle of replacement over time.

Anytime, Anywhere Learning

Bloomington teachers have had success over the last few years through teaching strategies that work inside and outside the classroom made possible through technology. One of these models is hybrid courses, where students experience the best of online and traditional face-to-face classrooms. The flipped instruction model uses videos, often coupled with an assessment, to replace traditional homework. Classroom time is then spent on applying the knowledge gained at home through practice, labs and project based learning.

To ensure all Bloomington students have access to digital content, the district has cellular hotspots available for check-out, reduced price internet for families, and partnerships with the Hennepin County Library and other community organizations. Middle school students can currently check out cellular hotspots, also known as wireless pucks, from their school media centers.

Personalized Data

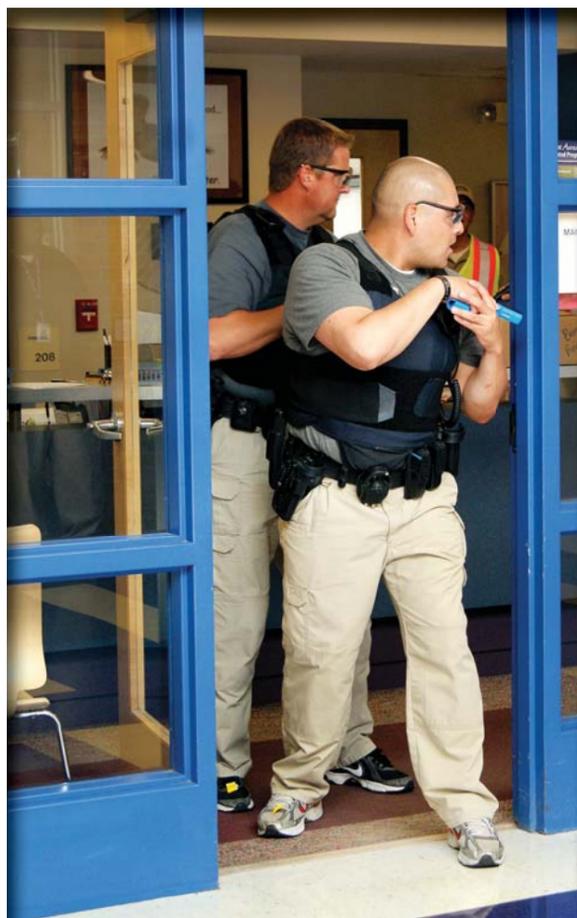Staff and parents use data as one way to understand how well students are progressing in school and how to best support students on their pathways to graduation. Bloomington Public Schools uses The Hub to communicate student information about attendance, grades, visits to the health office and some assessment data. Over the next few years, features will be added to continue to help teachers and parents communicate around student academic and assessment information, goals and progress at school.

For more information about the NTL plan, visit bloomingtonschools.info/NTL. ❑

TECHNOLOGY
NEXT TECHNOLOGIES FOR LEARNING
Bloomington Public Schools

Why Chromebooks?

Google Chromebooks are small laptop-like devices designed to support applications that reside on the Web, rather than traditional applications that reside on the machine itself.

Chromebooks are compatible with the district's core operational tools including Google Apps, Moodle and The Hub. Chromebooks allow students to create videos, websites, presentations, and documents, and access many different types of media.

Another benefit to using Chromebooks is their ease of use and little training required for both students and staff. "We want teachers to be able to spend their time figuring out how to help kids learn, not how to use a device," said Katrina Mezera, technology project coordinator for the district.

The district's Group for the Application of Innovative Technology (GAIT) is charged with evaluating the effectiveness of new tools.

School Safety Plan Implementation

Elementary schools targeted for first of security upgrades

A master plan is currently under development that will outline the implementation schedule for the school safety and security measures approved by voters last month. The Capital Projects levy will provide $10 million for security improvements over 10 years.

School security recommendations include the following:

▶ **Access Management System:** All main entrances will be renovated to limit school access by funneling visitors into the main office once school is in session. Other high-traffic points of entry, such as access to the playground, athletic fields or staff parking lots, will be equipped with electronic access control units. The exterior doors will also be integrated with the school's alarm system in the event a door is left ajar or an attempt is made to pry the door open.

▶ **Visitor Management System:** Schools currently employ an "honor system" by expecting visitors to check in at the office. The new computerized system will screen and authenticate all visitors before accessing the school, and will require visitors to display an ID badge while inside the school. Among the benefits of using a visitor management system are screening visitors against sex offender databases; monitoring who has custodial responsibility for students; keeping track of students who are allowed to leave school grounds; and the recording time and attendance of volunteers and other staff members.

▶ Upgrading all classroom doors with keysets that lock from the inside.

▶ Upgrading and installing video surveillance in schools.

▶ Installing alarm activation devices, commonly called duress or panic buttons, for use in emergency situations to put schools in a safe condition.

▶ Installing color-coded strobes in high-traffic areas such as gyms and cafeterias, where PA announcements in emergency situations are ineffective due to noise levels.

While the master plan is expected to be finalized early next year, district officials are targeting elementary schools in the first phase of security upgrades.

Training of district and school emergency response teams has been underway since early fall and includes the adoption of an Incident Command System used by police, fire and emergency responders. School crisis plans are also being revised to be aligned with the National Incident Management System.

Two task forces are currently meeting to address after-school program safety and a review of the district's current mental health staffing, identification and interventions for students with mental health needs. Recommendations from these groups are expected to be compiled before the end of the school year. ❑

EMERGENCY REPONSE TRAINING
Bloomington police conduct active shooter drills for school personnel as part of a comprehensive training plan.

SAFETY TIP
Winter weather has arrived! Now is a great time to make sure your contact information is up-to-date with your child's school. Visit www.bloomingtonschools.info/emergencies for more information about weather-related school closings.

Test Results

> These are some of the **BEST** test results I've ever seen. Not just in **BLOOMINGTON**, but **anywhere.**
>
> – Dr. David Heistad,
> Director of Research & Evaluation

12% Bloomington students are still learning English when they come to school.

42% Bloomington students are in poverty.

44% Bloomington students are Hispanic, Black, Asian and American Indian.

88% of Bloomington students are prepared for success in Kindergarten largely due to early childhood programming.

Kindergarten Ready · Students Behind

Bloomington has the **highest growth in MATH** and is among the **highest in READING** of comparable districts.

MCAIII Math Growth	Students with Low Growth	Students with Medium Growth	Students with High Growth
Bloomington	21.4%	39.3%	39.3%
Roseville	24.2%	39.1%	36.7%
Hopkins	24.9%	39.3%	35.6%
Robbinsdale	28.9%	39.1%	32.0%
No. St. Paul	28.3%	41.2%	30.5%
So. St. Paul	27.8%	42.4%	29.9%
St. Louis Park	29.3%	39.5%	31.2%
Burnsville	29.7%	39.5%	30.7%
STATE AVERAGE	27.4%	40.5%	32.1%

MCAIII Reading Growth	Students with Low Growth	Students with Medium Growth	Students with High Growth
Bloomington	26.3%	41.8%	31.8%
Roseville	24.9%	40.1%	34.9%
Hopkins	23.1%	40.6 %	36.3 %
Robbinsdale	30.4%	40.7%	28.9%
No. St. Paul	30.1%	42.6%	27.2%
So. St. Paul	30.4%	42.7%	26.8%
St. Louis Park	28.1%	40.9%	31.0%
Burnsville	29.2%	40.5%	30.3%
STATE AVERAGE	27.9%	40.8%	31.3%

Ethnic and economic **gaps are closing** for growth on CALT/MAP

4.0% ETHNIC gap on **Reading** test.

2.7% ECONOMIC gap on **Reading** test.

-10.7% ETHNIC gap on **Math** test.

-10.4% ECONOMIC gap on **Math** test.

LEARN MORE More detail on Bloomington Public Schools' test results can be found at **www.bloomingtonschools.info**

District's success measures show high performance, growth

Bloomington Public Schools shows high growth rate and narrowing of the achievement gap, according to 2013 test data from the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) III, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) and Multiple Measurement Rating (MMR).

Among a selection of comparable Minnesota school districts, Bloomington posted the highest percentage (39.3 percent) of students who showed high growth on the MCAIII math, compared with the state average of 32.1 percent. The district also saw the lowest percentage of low growth students among the same group of districts at 21.4 percent, compared to the state average of 27.4

percent. See MCAIII Math Growth and MCAIII Reading Growth charts.

In MCAIII reading, Bloomington is among the highest in percentage of high growth students with 31.8 percent compared to students statewide at 31.3 percent.

The MCAIII and MAP results also show that Bloomington narrowed the ethnic and economic gaps in performance from the 2011-12 to 2012-13 school year.

In the state's MMRs, 12 of 15 Bloomington schools improved on their ratings from the previous year. The MMRs consider the proficiency, growth, achievement gap reduction and graduation rates of schools in calculating the ratings.

Bloomington's early childhood students also showed high rates of kindergarten readiness and a decrease in ethnic gaps in learning readiness. Over the last three years, 88 percent of kindergarten students have demonstrated learning readiness in both literacy and numeracy skills.

"These are some of the best test results I've ever seen," said Dr. Dave Heistad, director of research, evaluation and assessment for the district. "Not just in Bloomington, but anywhere." ❑

JEFFERSON THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS PETER PAN
Jefferson High School's production of *Peter Pan* had a successful run this month, and featured actors using suspension and other techniques to capture the illusion of flight for the performances.

Volunteers provide quality support for students, staff

Bloomington Public Schools volunteers are a vital part of our district. Whether it's reading with students, helping with homework or serving school lunches, volunteers provide needed support to our students and staff.

With the help of our community, our schools are able to provide many services to students. For example, students get after-school homework help through Homework Connection, where volunteers assist students to successfully complete homework and reinforce classroom learning. This program is in place at Indian Mounds, Normandale Hills, Olson, Poplar Bridge, Washburn and Westwood elementary schools, where volunteers assist students from 3-4 p.m. one or two afternoons a week. Valley View Elementary School has dedicated Rocking Readers who read to kindergarten students each week. Westwood Elementary School's Reading Buddies connects volunteers with a student buddy on a weekly basis to support reading skills.

Principals and teachers always appreciate dedicated volunteers who can work one-on-one or with small groups of students in their classrooms.

Principals and teachers always appreciate dedicated volunteers

"The volunteers are always friendly and positive," said Paul Meyer, principal at Olson Elementary School. "They are wonderful role models for our students, and it's great for them to see people from the community giving back."

Those interested in volunteering in Bloomington Public Schools are invited to a community event at 9:30 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2014, at the district's Educational Services Center, 1350 W. 106th St. Contact the Bloomington Public Schools Volunteer Connection at 952-681-6292 with questions about the event or volunteering opportunities. ❏

Volunteer Sarajane Myers works with Indian Mounds Elementary student Matthew Kusinski in the school's Homework Connection program.

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www.twitter.com/District271   @District271
www.youtube.com/ISD271

Points of Pride
STUDENT AND STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

Jefferson High School's speech and debate program has earned a spot in the National Forensic League's 100 Club, placing it in the top 10 percent of programs nationwide.

Bloomington high school students selected as semifinalists in the 59th Annual National Merit Scholarship Program include Jefferson High School's **Elizabeth Alonzi, Allison Bramanti, Rilyn Eischens, Alexa Groenke, Emily McGivern, Jonathan Newinski** and **Bailey Plaman**, and Kennedy High School's **Nicholas Erickson.** National Merit Commended Students are Jefferson's **Alexander Claycomb** and **Emma Eckberg,** and Kennedy's **Catherine Landrum.**

Jefferson High School student **Wyatt Anderson** participated in Camp Rising Sun, an international leadership program in Rhinebeck, NY. The program selects 60 boys and 60 girls from across the U.S. each year to attend the program, which encourages compassionate, responsible leadership, intellectual and artistic growth, valuing diversity and developing a spirit of giving.

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Jefferson High School's **Timothy Larson** was selected the Wendy's High School Heisman winner from Minnesota. The award recognizes excellence in academics, athletics and community involvement.

Bloomington student-athletes signing national letters of intent to participate in Division I or II athletics next year include Jefferson's **Gabrielle Smith** (basketball, University of Minnesota - Crookston) and **Oralee Hespenheide** (lacrosse, Duke University) and Kennedy's **Isieoma Odor** (basketball, University of Minnesota - Crookston), **Tonia Wade** (basketball, St. John's University, New York) and **Kenisha Bell** (basketball, Marquette University).

IN THE KNOW

Internet Safety
According to the U.S. Attorney's Office, child Internet use has increased dramatically:

- 93 percent of teenagers are online.
- Approximately one in three teens have experienced online harrassment.
- One-in-25 youth receives an online sexual solicitation where the solicitor attempts to make offline contact.

The District is committed to the safety and well-being of all students. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to talk with children about topics such as cyberbullying, gaming, sexting, and other smartphone and online safety tips. Resources are available at www.netsmartz.org, or www.justice.gov/usao/mn.

2013 Enrollment Report
The District's 2013 Enrollment Report is now online at www.bloomington.k12.mn.us/departments/technology-and-information-services/informationservices. The report includes data on:

- actual vs projected enrollment comparisons
- enrollment by school and grade
- demographics by school
- student diversity profile
- enrollment, ethnic diversity and free & reduced eligibility needs

Family STARS University
Family STARS University is a program designed for parents and guardians to learn how to navigate the school system and collaborate with schools for student success. The next session meets every Tuesday evening from Jan. 28-March 25, 2014. To learn more, visit www.bloomington.k12.mn.us/family-engagement/family-stars-university.

New HR director hired

Mary Burroughs recently began her duties as the new Director of Human Resources. She will replace current director Bruce Pappas, who is retiring this month after seven years with the district. Burroughs most recently served in the same capacity with Austin (MN) Public Schools.