



**BLOOMINGTON  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
1917-2017

# SCHOOL PAGES

Winter 2016-17

## Save the Date

Bloomington Public Schools  
**100<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party  
and All-School Reunion**  
Friday, May 19, 2017

Bloomington Doubletree Hotel  
bloomingtonschools.org/centennial



A Message from Superintendent Les Fujitake

## SCHOOL FUNDING A PRIORITY IN NEW LEGISLATIVE SESSION



*Superintendent Les Fujitake and Stephanie Sunnarborg, Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs board member and BPS parent, spoke at the One Bloomington Summit meeting in December. The session provided an opportunity for community leaders to brainstorm how to effectively promote the many amenities Bloomington has to offer.*

**A**s we ring in the new year, some of our leadership focus turns to the Minnesota legislative session and, specifically, to our Bloomington legislators who have long advocated for Bloomington schools and public education.

Our state legislative leaders include incumbent Senators Melisa Franzen and Melissa Halvorson-Wiklund, and Representatives Paul Rosenthal and Linda Slocum, and newly elected Andrew Carlson, a former Bloomington City Council member.

Legislators returned to the State Capitol earlier this month and face a number of challenging issues. The Legislature also starts its session with a projected \$1.4 billion surplus. There will be no shortage of requests for state funding. It is noteworthy that to fulfill the state's constitutional mandate to establish a public school system, the largest piece of the state budget is education spending, about 41 percent of the total.

Minnesota's education funding system has not provided adequate and stable resources for public schools, which has resulted in an underfunding gap.

The state's per-student funding amount would be \$550 per student higher today if state funding had kept pace with inflation since 2003.

An adequate and stable funding system for our schools and our students is essential to ensuring successful academic outcomes for our students. For this reason, one of the School Board's legislative platform priorities this year is to endorse an increase in the state's per-student funding amount by at least 2.5 percent per year and the indexing of that amount to inflation.

The increase will start to close the underfunding gap, and the indexing will help to stabilize future funding. This support will help ensure our district and the state achieve the shared goal of every student graduating career and college ready.

As we welcome 2017, we remain committed to fulfilling our Pathways to Graduation vision for all students. We also remain hopeful and optimistic that the state will continue to provide for a high-quality education for every student in Bloomington and Minnesota.

## Teachers lead improvement efforts

**W**e believe there is value in supporting and empowering teachers who wish to share the responsibility of leading improvements in our classrooms, schools and district programs. We are also committed to transforming Bloomington Public Schools into an organization in which administrators and teachers share responsibility for planning and decision-making.

Earlier this year, the district replaced three administrators with two teachers to lead our Curriculum and Instruction department, with additional support from other teachers on special assignment (TOSAs) to guide the work of instructional improvements and learning supports.

These teams employ a representative model to ensure teachers have a strong voice in matters related to curriculum, instruction and professional development.

This fundamental change in our organizational culture is based on valuing the central role teachers play in the improvement of our educational system.

### Teacher Leaders

Who are teacher leaders? Classroom teachers who leave the classroom for a period to share their expertise on important projects and initiatives on behalf of all staff. They are deans, technology coordinators, QComp coaches, curriculum specialists and project coordinators.

# Teachers, students thrive with new tech tools

The initial phase of our Next Technologies for Learning plan is now complete. Since voter approval of the 2013 referendum, the district has equipped students in grades 3-12 with Chromebooks and Internet access at school and home. Students in early childhood through grade 2 have access to a classroom set of iPads during class. This new toolset has led to expanded learning opportunities for students.

Stephanie MacPhail and the Jefferson High School Algebra 2 team are two of many examples of outstanding teachers who continue to blend their teaching skills with technology to help students grow.

**Stephanie MacPhail**, a fifth grade teacher at Washburn Elementary School, joined a Flexible Learning Cohort with 16 other fifth grade math teachers last year. With her colleagues, she worked over the summer to design a blended learning program to allow students to control the path and pace of their learning in math. The teacher team created learning materials that are aligned with math standards, including videos, projects and practice materials. Implemented this year, students are guided through the materials, which offer flexibility to move faster or slower, with more or less support from the teacher as needed.

On a typical day in MacPhail's classroom, one might see students viewing or re-watching a math video on their Chromebooks while others practice math concepts with each other through games or hands-on activities. MacPhail



Stephanie MacPhail (left) and Scott Cater (right) are this year's TIES Minnesota Technology Leader Award winners. See page 4, Points of Pride.



and her colleagues use technology to give students control over their learning while also ensuring all students learn. Most students have responded positively; some have commented that they enjoy having choice in their learning and that this model has helped them feel successful at math.

Jefferson math teachers **Scott Cater, Jon Anderson** and **Ryan Meyering** collaborated to improve their use of technology in the classroom. They've built a library of digital content for Algebra 2 courses, including self-grading practice problem sets, videos, quizzes that provide instant feedback and more.

Last year, they tried a new approach by allowing students who were successfully

learning to have some choice in the place they worked. Some students elected to work in the classroom while others opted to work independently or in small groups in the school's media center. Students needing more support worked in the classroom, which allowed them to receive face-to-face instruction with the teacher.

In praising this new approach, Cater said, "I knew I was working with the 10-12 kids every day that had extra questions or needed extra processing time to really solidify their understanding." This year, the team expanded this instructional strategy. The three agree that their success is due to the collaboration and drive to improve, and students continue to benefit from their innovation.

## Personal Growth Plans guide student goals



Students from Jefferson and Kennedy high schools discuss Personal Growth Plans among other topics during a School Board Student Advisory Council meeting.

Personal Growth Plans (PGPs) continue to be developed for all high school students following the project's launch last fall. Students complete activities with the support of their advisory teachers throughout the year.

So, what are students learning from the PGP activities? The activities are designed to supplement academic content by helping students:

- Develop goals and action plans for their high school careers as well as life after high school.
- Select high school courses that prepare them for the expectations of higher education academics.
- Plan for and navigate postsecondary education application and financial aid processes.
- Identify resources in school and the community that are helpful for the development of career and postsecondary education readiness.
- Take career assessments, which help to identify careers that might be a good fit for their interests and strengths.
- Develop transitional skills to ensure success as they enter and leave high school.

### A New Tool

In November, Naviance Family Connection was implemented at Jefferson and Kennedy high schools. Naviance serves as a centralized system housing student learning targets, instructions and a planner tool for students to monitor their activities. Parents are encouraged to log in with their students to review their progress.

As students further develop postsecondary education and career goals in Naviance, they are encouraged to add them to their Personal Growth Plan in the Hub. Parents and students can then monitor academic progress toward these goals.

### Middle School Planning

A middle school team is currently developing implementation plans for later this year. By taking a developmental approach to helping students prepare for postsecondary education and career options, we aim to give students and their families the time and resources needed to make informed choices about their future goals and dreams.

# Bloomington teacher returns to his roots



Rasmussen with the iconic Bears design, still present in the floor of the Community Education Center, formerly Lincoln High School.

recalled. Queen Avenue was a dirt road, and what is now Interstate 494 was largely residential. In those boom years, the city could barely keep up with the growing population. Schools were popping up throughout the city. Bloomington once boasted 22 elementary schools!

Rasmussen's mother was a Bloomington teacher during the 1950s and a member of the planning committee for Lincoln High School, originally named Bloomington High School. Bill was five years old when the new high school opened in 1957.

"Because of the fast growing city, there wasn't enough building space for all of the students. So I went to school part time from first to fifth grade. In second grade, I went to Bloomington High School. This would have been around 1959.

Even as a young boy, I was in awe of the building and the school spirit that was so noticeable. I looked forward to getting older so I could attend BHS."

In 1967, Rasmussen entered Lincoln as a sophomore. He learned the tradition that only upperclassmen were allowed to walk on the Bloomington Bears logo that was inlaid on the school's foyer floor. The floor design remains intact today and evokes vivid memories of those days.

"I am proud of the fact that I grew up in Bloomington. The illustrious history of the city, the great education I received, the wonderful people here and all the positive experiences I had growing up are something that will stay with me the rest of my life," said Rasmussen. "Every time I walk into the building today as a teacher at Metro South, I am reminded of what a great school Lincoln High School was."

**B**ill Rasmussen teaches Adult ESL classes in the same building he attended both second grade and high school, the former Lincoln High School. Today, the facility is home to the district's Community Education Center and Metro South Adult Basic Education program. He also grew up a few blocks from the school.

Rasmussen has fond memories of playing in the woods that covered much of Bloomington at the time. He said it was "normal to hear cows and chickens during the day" from the many farms that dotted the landscape.

In fact, Lincoln High School was built on a farmstead, one of many along Penn Avenue, Rasmussen

## Cosmetology pathway offers hands-on skills lab

**T**he new Bloomington Career and College Academy (BCCA) Cosmetology pathway provides high school students with a first-hand look at the skills and services required for a career in this in-demand field. Students spend about 80 percent of their class time in an on-site cosmetology lab.

Students learn about hairstyling, haircutting, coloring and perming, then practice on mannequins in the lab. The lab is designed to replicate a salon setting, with stations, sinks and styling equipment. As students progress, services such as facials, manicures and makeup applications can be practiced on other students in the program.

A cosmetology license program requires 1,550 hours of training within 10-12 months, along with service quotas to complete during the program. BCCA students earn up to 90 hours per trimester class toward the training and service quotas.

Pathway instructor Georgina Davis has worked and taught in the field for more than 20 years. She praises the flexibility and opportunity the field offers: "Cosmetologists, nail technicians and estheticians can make very livable wages. Schedules are flexible and the salary range is \$20-\$35 per hour including tips depending on the experience level. This industry offers endless opportunities!" Options for licensed cosmetologists include salon owner, makeup artist, manager, instructor, manufacturer sales representative, educator for a product line, platform artist, exam writer or proctor, artist director, school manager, celebrity stylist and more.



Davis said students tell her this is their favorite class of the day. "They look forward to coming every day, they work well together, and they learn extremely fast."

The class roster is a mix of students who are exploring a cosmetology career, starting toward their licensure or taking the class as an interesting elective. "Even if a student plans to attend a four-year college, this could someday be a part-time job during college or a backup if they are laid off or change careers later in life," said Davis. "We teach life skills—hygiene, self confidence, patience—and make the hard stuff—anatomy, physiology, laws, rules—fun to learn."



# IN THE KNOW

## Middle School Open House Events

Bloomington's three middle schools will host information and preview nights for incoming 6th graders at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 6. Current 5th grade students attending public, private or charter schools and their parents/guardians are invited to learn more about the academic focus, student clubs, and music and athletic programs:

- Oak Grove Middle School, 1300 W. 106th St.
- Olson Middle School, 4551 W. 102nd St.
- Valley View Middle School, 8900 Portland Ave.

## New School Board Officers

Ric Oliva will serve as the chair of the seven-member Bloomington Board of Education this year. Oliva is in his fourth year as a member of the school board. Other officers are Tom Bennett, vice chair; Nelly Korman, clerk; and Jim Sorum, treasurer.

## School Board Advocacy Council

The Bloomington School Board approved the formation of a Bloomington Advocacy Council (BAC) to develop a legislative plan of action and advise on legislative matters. The plan will include proposed legislative advocacy for the district's legislative platform. The BAC will also coordinate informational events, visits to the capitol and professional development sessions.

## Bloomington-Richfield Partnership

Richfield and Bloomington public schools have partnered to share community education and early childhood programs for more than 14 years. While the partnership has been effective, the Richfield School Board approved a plan to dissolve the partnership to start its own independent community education program beginning July 1, 2017. This does not affect the collaborations Bloomington has with Eden Prairie, Edina and Richfield for Adult Basic Education and Adults with Disabilities programs.

## Peachjar Opt-in

Parents are now receiving school and district flyers via email following the launch of the district's new Peachjar e-flyer management system. The system sends weekly emails with new flyers to the primary email address for each household. Parents who wish to subscribe an additional email address, or staff members and others who wish to receive school and community flyers can sign up at peachjar.com using the following steps:

1. Click on "sign up" in the upper-right corner.
2. Enter your email address and choose the appropriate account type.
3. Enter user information.
4. Accept Peachjar's Terms of Use.
5. Click "submit."

## Early Learners Academy Registration

Early Learners Academy (ELA), an all-day early education program for children ages 3-5, is now enrolling students for the 2017-18 school year. ELA is offered at Hillcrest Community, Poplar Bridge and Westwood elementary schools and prepares students for kindergarten with a curriculum that aligns with the district's elementary curriculum. ELA offers a five-day-per-week program at all three schools, as well as two- and three-day options at Westwood. The program is open from 6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. (including winter and spring breaks and other non-school days).

For more information, visit [earlylearnersacademy.org](http://earlylearnersacademy.org) or contact Diane Simkins at [dsimkins@isd271.org](mailto:dsimkins@isd271.org) or 952-681-6125.

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### 2017 Bloomington School Board

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B L O O M I N G T O N



P u b l i c S c h o o l s

# POINTS OF PRIDE



Jefferson High School senior **Danny Boie** was elected Minnesota DECA president at this year's Minnesota State Fall Leadership Conference. Candidates must complete a DECA test, participate in a panel interview, give a speech to voting delegates and initiate a campaign strategy. Boie bested 11 other candidates for the opportunity to lead his peers.



Jefferson High School senior **Ian Klein** will compete at the National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA) 2017 National Tournament in Birmingham, Ala. June 18-23. Klein qualified at the district tournament in Congressional Debate. This is Klein's second year qualifying for the national tournament and Jefferson's sixth consecutive year sending one of its students to the national tournament in Congressional Debate.

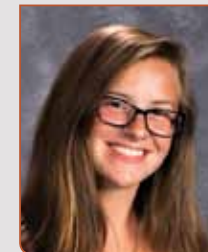
- Teachers **Stephanie MacPhail** (Washburn Elementary) and **Scott Cater** (Jefferson High) are this year's TIES Minnesota Technology Leader Award winners. The award recognizes teachers who integrate technology in the classroom to improve E-12 education.



Bloomington's Triple "A" Award winners are **Chloe Larons** and **Brandon Barrientos** (Kennedy) and **Ingrid Koester** (Jefferson). The award recognizes

students who excel in academics, athletics and the arts, and winners are eligible for a four-year \$1,000 scholarship.

- Jefferson's **Kieran Oakley** was named a Silver Key Award winner at the 2017 Scholastic Art Show for her sculpture "The half life of what we know." Students receiving honorable mentions include Jefferson's **Hanna Brua**, **Fiona Forster**, **Jordan Johnson**, **Ingrid Koester**, **Kieran Oakley**, **Nicole Osinde**, **Haley Pinette**, **Cheri Wang** and **Miranda Welte** and Olson Middle School's **Andrew Taylor**.



- **Elena Hayday** and **Josh Lueth** (Jefferson) and **Julia Monson** and **Ethan Skophammer** (Kennedy) are this year's ExCEL Award winners, presented each year to juniors who participate in Minnesota State High School League-sponsored activities and demonstrate leadership qualities, volunteerism and academic excellence.



*Ridgeview kindergarten teacher Andrew Bassani and his daughter Mem, a kindergartener at Ridgeview, excited for a visit from Koo Koo Kanga Roo. The interactive band performed several songs for the school, including "You Are The Best" and "Dinosaur Stomp."*

Photo by Erin Halloran