

School Pages

www.bloomingtonschools.info

Winter 2012-13

Community responds favorably to District's efforts

A message from Superintendent Les Fujitake

I've often heard schools are a microcosm of society and reflect the characteristics of the community it serves. We not only have an obligation to provide a quality education for every child to realize his or her dream, but to also nurture and protect the values of our community.

Bloomington Public Schools has a long history of seeking parent and resident feedback through a variety of sources — focus groups, listening sessions, forums, and surveys — as a means for public involvement in decision making, evaluation and educating people about our issues and efforts.

In this issue of *School Pages* we dedicate Page 3 to highlighting the results of the recent Community Survey, conducted by Decision Resources, a Minneapolis-based research firm that has been seeking public perceptions on the quality of our schools for more than 20 years. The random survey of 400 residents, and an additional 250 parent sampling, provides an excellent way of checking the pulse of the community and getting specific and current information from a cross-section of residents in a timely manner.

Specifically, the survey results will be used to establish benchmarks to develop a new Communications and Family Engagement Plan. I found the survey results to be very rewarding. They have helped us to identify a few areas that we need to address. For the most part, however, they showed that Bloomington's adult citizens — parents and non-parents alike — appreciate and support our efforts and focus on student achievement.



Superintendent Les Fujitake greets students and families at Ridgeview Elementary School's annual family breakfast last month.

Our periodic surveys mirror national studies that show the more parents and other citizens are familiar with their public schools, the more likely they will be to support those same schools. These survey results confirm the value of our public schools on the community as a whole.



EARLY LEARNING, CHILDCARE OPPORTUNITY

Registration for the 2013-14 school year is currently open for Early Learners Academy — the District's full-day childcare and early learning program for three, four, or five-year-old children. The Academy has a team of highly qualified instructors who focus on preparing children for success in kindergarten.

Early Learners Academy is housed in three award-winning elementary schools — Hillcrest Community School, Poplar Bridge and Westwood. Children can attend between 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Families can choose between two-day (Tuesday, Thursday) or five-day (Monday-Friday) options.

Reserve your space now at <http://br.thatscommunityed.com/> or call Diane Simkins at 952-681-6125 to express your interest.

Middle schools to host parent info night

Incoming fifth graders can learn about school, programs

Bloomington's three middle schools will host orientation meetings for parents of current fifth grade students on **Monday, January 28, 2013.**

The parent orientation programs at **Oak Grove, 1300 W. 106th St., Hubert Olson, 4551 W. 102nd Ave., and Valley View, 8900 Portland Ave.,** will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Parents and students will learn about the middle school

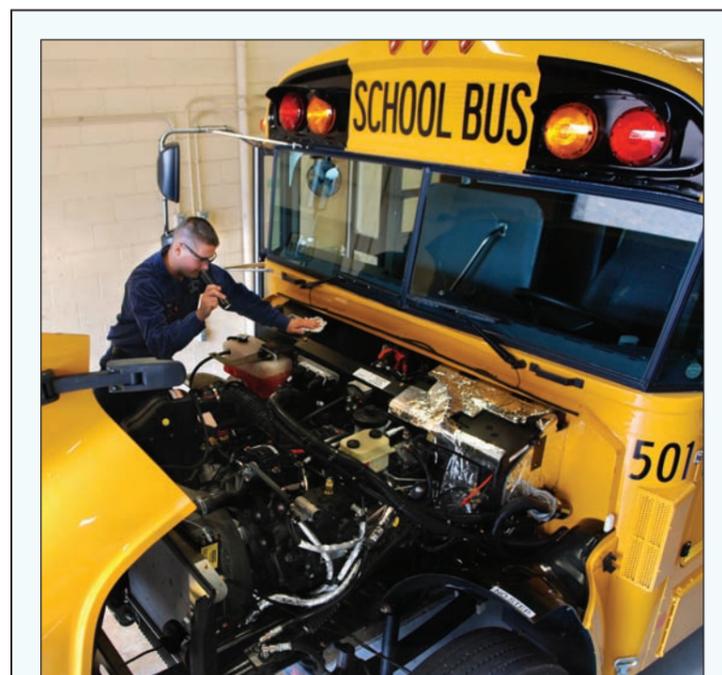
experience and see examples of the opportunities middle schools in Bloomington offer, including class offerings, how technology and careers are integrated into the curriculum, clubs, and music and athletic offerings. Each of the schools will also provide information on the sixth-grade student orientation camps held in August each year.

The District's middle schools share a vision to prepare today's

sixth through eighth grade students to be tomorrow's leaders. The schools apply high expectations for all, employ excellent teaching staff, use rigorous curriculum including Project Lead the Way engineering courses, embrace family and community partnerships, and create a positive school climate where students can learn and grow.

For more information about each school, please contact the following:

- ▶ **Oak Grove Middle School:**
Principal Brian Ingemann,
952-681-6600
- ▶ **Hubert Olson Middle School:**
Principal Tom Lee,
952-806-8600
- ▶ **Valley View Middle School:**
Principal Ben Magras,
952-681-5800



PROPANE BUSES ENTER TRANSPORTATION FLEET

The District has introduced two new propane buses to its fleet this year. The buses are a greener form of transportation for the District. Transportation Director Tom Oestreich reports the District is monitoring the cost savings of using the new buses. Propane fuel costs are currently \$1.86 per gallon versus \$3.55 for diesel.



**PERFORMING ARTS
PRODUCTION
CALENDAR**

- January 12
JHS Choir Spaghetti Dinner, 5 pm
 - January 14
VVM Orchestra Concert, 6:30 pm
 - January 15
VVM Band Concert, 6:30 pm
 - January 17
KHS Winter Orchestra Concert, 7:30 pm
 - January 24
JHS Orchestra Concert, 7 pm
 - January 25
KHS/JHS One Act Play at Kennedy, 7 pm
 - February 7
OLM Jazz Band Concert, 7 pm
 - February 7, 8, 9
VVM *Alice in Wonderland*, 7 pm
 - February 10
VVM *Alice in Wonderland*, 3 pm
 - February 21
KHS Mid-Winter Choir Concert, 7 pm
 - February 22-23
JHS Band Pop Concert 22nd, 7 pm – 23rd, 6 pm
 - February 28
JHS Orchestra Concert, 7 pm
KHS Band Concert, 7 pm
OLM *The Music Man* Senior Preview, 9:30 am Public, 7 pm
 - March 1
OLM *The Music Man*, 7 pm
 - March 2
OLM *The Music Man*, 1 pm and 7 pm
- JHS: Jefferson High School
KHS: Kennedy High School
VVM: Valley View Middle School
OLM: Olson Middle School



**TRIBUTE TO
VETERANS**

Minnesota Army National Guard members Sgt. Carleton, Spc. Bock and Staff Sgt. Delgado perform a flag raising ceremony at Indian Mounds Elementary School. The Bloomington-based National Guard led ceremonies at the schools on Veterans Day.

**‘Flipped classrooms’
turn around teaching**

Bloomington Public Schools is turning learning on its head by replacing traditional classroom lectures with video tutorials, an approach popularly referred to as a “flipped classroom.”

Traditionally, teachers lecture during class time and students complete assignments at home. In the flipped classroom model, students view videotaped lectures at home and work on assignments at school. The teacher helps students stay on task, answer questions, and create interactive learning activities between pairs or groups of students during class time.

Kennedy High School math teachers Jessica Rice and Megan Ahlberg were the first to introduce the concept in Bloomington. Their venture got the attention of the District’s Group for the Application of Innovative Technologies (GAIT) Committee to fund a larger cohort of teachers. GAIT is charged with supporting innovative technologies through the District’s successful 2007 Referendum Levy.

After professional development and time to develop their video lectures, 25 teachers launched the flipped classroom model across the District this fall. Teachers at Ridgeview and Normandale Hills elementary schools, and all of the secondary schools are piloting the model this school year.

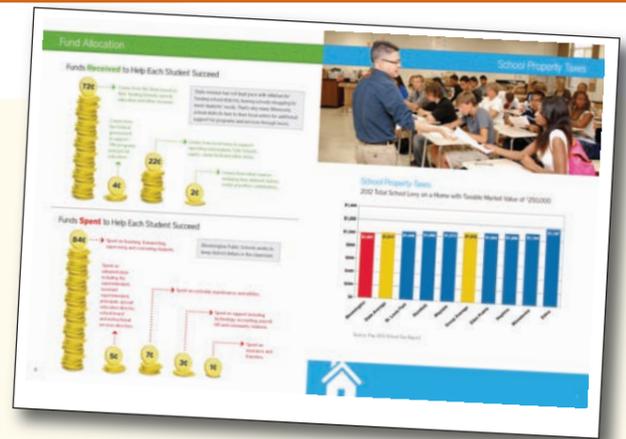
“When I started teaching as a flipped instructor it was simply a means to deliver content, but I have learned it is more powerful than that,” says Rice. “I now create ways to explore and apply math in the classroom, and use videos to summarize what students should learn. Students come to class having done an online assessment after each video, which allows me to adapt how I teach that day.”

Of course, every new venture has its challenges. Secondary Technology Coordinator Sean Beaverson acknowledges there has been some hurdles including getting students to watch the videos on their own time.

“One effective approach is to include a question about the content in the middle of the video,” says Beaverson. “Students record their answer online so teachers know who watched the video and how they understand the content presented.”

Access to the videos was also a potential barrier that has been overcome thus far. Students can check out laptops, iPods, flash drives or a DVD with the video pre-downloaded on them.

The GAIT committee is monitoring the success of the cohort group and may expand to a larger teaching group next year.



Annual Report Available Online

The state-required 2011-12 Annual Report on Curriculum, Instruction and Student Achievement is now available online.

The Annual Report is a snapshot of the District’s progress, including test results, student achievement, parent survey results, budget facts and figures, property tax comparisons and more.

Special Note: Bloomington Public Schools acknowledges the diverse population of its readers, and has provided Spanish, Vietnamese and Somali versions of the Annual Report. The translated reports are currently available on the District’s website or through the Office of Educational Equity.

Please visit www.bloomington.k12.mn.us/about-us/annual-report to read the report.

POINTS OF PRIDE

Bloomington/Richfield Family Center’s preschool programs earned a four-star rating on the state’s new Parent Aware star rating system. The awarded preschool programs include **Kinderprep, Kids Count** and **Bright Beginnings**. The Parent Aware star rating system measures the best practices that are most predictive of school readiness. Bloomington/Richfield Family Center is one of the first in Minnesota to earn the top rating administered by the MN Department of Human Services in coordination with the MN Office of Early Learning.

Jefferson High School seniors **Michael Blazanin, Nathan He, Kangqiao Peng,** and **Samuel Wagner** are semifinalists in the 58th Annual National Merit Scholarship Program for 2013. Another four high school students earned National Merit Commended Student status, which recognizes exceptional academic promise, including Jefferson’s **Rothanna Fricke, Trevor Poonai** and **Joshua Punnoose,** and Kennedy’s **Grant Terrien.**

Jefferson and **Kennedy** high schools earned *Division Star of Innovation* awards for their Homeroom/Academic Seminar program, a class designed for students needing extra study time or one-on-one help. The program was recognized for its positive impact on education and advocacy for children by the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals.

Westwood Elementary School is a MN School of Excellence designee for the 2012-13 school year. Westwood becomes the sixth Bloomington school to have a current MN School of Excellence validation by the MN Elementary School Principals’ Association.

Teachers **Holly Skadsem** (Normandale Hills Elementary) and **Todd Walsh** (Oak Grove Middle) are this year’s TIES Exceptional Teacher award honorees. The award recognizes educators who model best practices using technology in the classroom and engaging students in learning.

Jefferson High School sophomore **Jackson Haas** participated in the National Youth Leadership Forum on National Security in Washington, D.C. The NYLF provides a stimulating exploration of the field of government service for high school students.

More Points of Pride can be found on the District’s social media sites: www.facebook.com/BloomingtonSchools and twitter.com/District271

BLOOMINGTON STADIUM FIELD RENOVATIONS UPDATE



The home of the Jefferson Jaguars and Kennedy Eagles is undergoing a field renovation to address a number of safety issues, including a new grass playing surface and drainage system. Fieldwork included the removal of the existing grass and topsoil that will eliminate the crown and uneven playing surface after years of use by football, soccer and lacrosse teams. The old gravel surface track around the field was also removed to improve safety. A new irrigation system is replacing the outdated and broken pipes that resulted in uneven grass growing conditions. The field will be ready for the first football and soccer games next fall.

Survey: Parents, residents praise District and staff

Quality ratings highest among metro area schools; Results improve over 2007 survey

Bloomington parents and residents uniformly praised the District's quality educational programs, staff, governance, fiscal responsibility and communication efforts in the latest community survey.

The survey findings were the strongest results since the 1980s when the District began polling parents and community residents, said Dr. Bill Morris, president of the Minneapolis-based Decision Resources, which has administered the surveys.

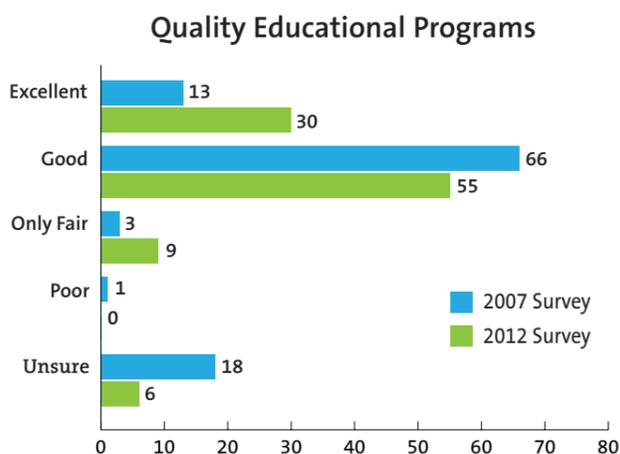
"The results are very, very good news. The perceptions of the school district on a

host of indicators are among the highest we've seen in any school district over the past seven years, and show considerable improvement since the last community survey in 2007," said Morris, a noted researcher and adjunct professor.

The overall results of the community survey point to a "better and more connected community to its public schools than we've seen in the past, and when compared to most suburban school districts," said Morris.

Quality Educational Programs

► 85 percent of respondents rated the quality of education as Excellent (30%) or Good (55%), up from 79 percent in 2007. Morris: *The quality rating of 'Excellent' has been in the teens or low 20s in previous surveys, the District has now broken out of that pattern conclusively.*



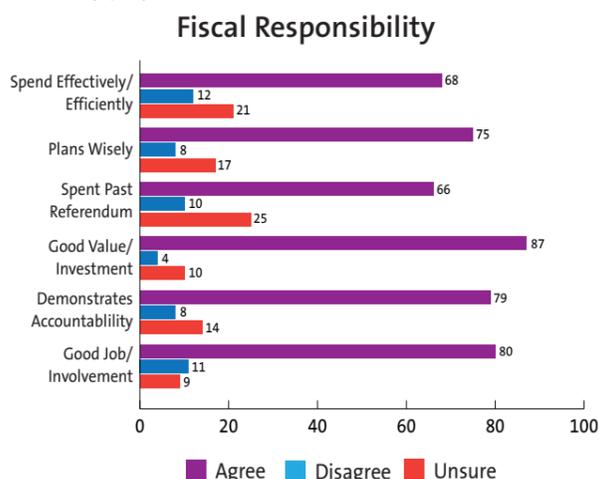
► 94% of respondents believe the District is meeting the learning needs of All (42%) or Most (45%) students. Morris: *Previous surveys indicated the 'average' student wasn't being served. That is not the case anymore. Unlike other school districts, Bloomington is not focusing its efforts on one group of students.*

► Educational choices most favored by residents and parents were Balanced Education, Personalized Learning, Emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), and Teaching to Pass Tests. Morris: *Bloomington is the only district in the suburbs where parents and residents favored 'personalized learning' over bringing all students to a minimum level of education. Bloomington is very test conscious. Parents and residents put a premium on those test results, more so than found in other districts.*

► 68 percent of all parents with pre-school age children enroll them in the District's early childhood programs. Morris: *This is off the charts. No other school district in the state is enrolling that high of a percentage of pre-schoolers.*

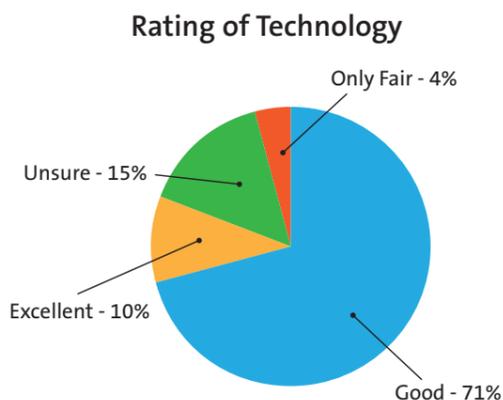
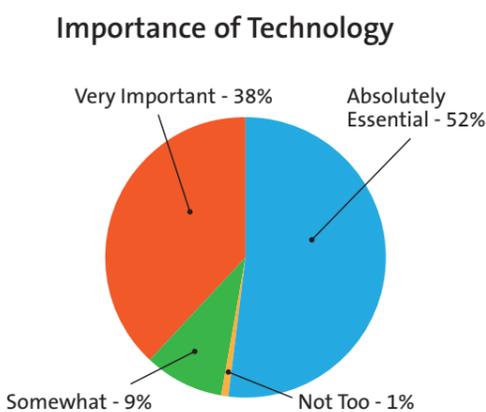
Fiscal Responsibility

► Respondents gave high marks for the District's fiscal credibility, including Spending Tax Money Effectively and Efficiently (68% strongly agree/agree), Plans Wisely for Future Needs (75%), Spending Past Technology and Operating Referendum Funds Responsibly (66%), and Community Receives a Good Value from its Investment in BPS (87%).



Technology

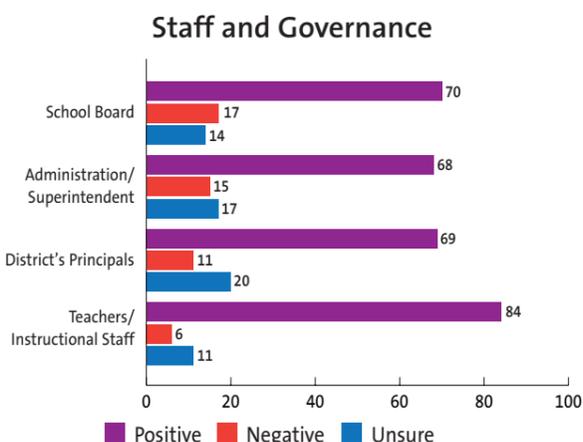
► 81% of residents rate the District's technology as Excellent (10%) or Good (71%), while 90% agree technology is very important to education. Morris: *The use and importance of technology in the classroom is strongly supported by parents and residents. These ratings are exemplary.*



Staff and Governance

► The overwhelming reason parents chose to send their children to Bloomington Public Schools is Dedicated/ Talented Teachers. Morris: *Teachers and instructional staff are clearly seen as Bloomington's most valuable asset. They are the primary reason for sending kids to the District, and the most important aspect of public education or education in general. Ratings for Bloomington's teachers have always been very strong, and they remain so.*

► When it comes to governance, the job performance ratings improved dramatically for all employee groups, including School Board (70% positive rating), Administration (68%), Principals (69%), and Teachers/ Instructional Staff (84%). Morris: *The favorable ratings for the school district's governance reflects major improvements in the last five years, and are among the highest of all suburban school districts.*

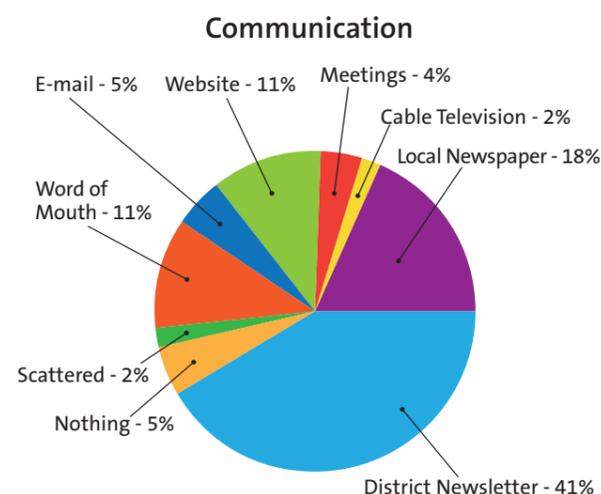


Communication

► 97% of parents indicated they were Very Satisfied (46%) or Satisfied (51%) with opportunities to participate in school issues and provide feedback. Morris: *The 'very satisfied' rating is twice as high as the metro area norm. Parents feel they have the right mix of opportunities to participate and provide feedback.*

► A majority felt they were Very Informed (9%) or Somewhat Informed (48%) about District issues. Morris: *Bloomington is running 12 percent ahead of the metro area norm of 45 percent, and this is somewhat higher than in 2007.*

► Principal source of information about the District comes from its newsletter, *School Pages* (41%), followed by the *Sun Current* newspaper (18%), Website (11%) and Word of Mouth (11%).



► Respondents were satisfied with the amount (84%) and quality (85%) of information they received about the District.

► The use of social media as a communication vehicle is strongly supported by residents and parents alike, with Facebook, You Tube, Twitter, Linked In and Google Plus among highest rated.

Survey Methodology

The results are based on telephone interviews administered by Decision Resources, Inc., between Oct. 11-14, 2012, of 400 random sample district households, and a 250 random over-sample of parents. Sample results are projected to within +/- 5% (district households) and +/- 6.3% (parents) in 95 out of 100 cases respectively.

Respondent Demographics:

Female (51%); Male (49%)

Age Range: 65 and Over (25%), 35-44 (23%), 45-51 (21%), 18-34 (16%), 55-64 (15%), Refused (1%).

Race/Ethnicity: Respondents were first asked if they were of Hispanic origin or descent, of which 9 percent indicated "yes." Of the 91 percent non-Hispanic respondents, the race/ethnicity breakdown: White (82%), Black (8%), Asian (5%), Other/Mixed Race, Bi-racial or Native American (4%), Refused (1%).

Highest level of formal education: College graduate (33%), Some college (21%), High school graduate (17%), Vo-tech school/technical college (16%), Post-graduate (10%), Less than high school graduate (3%), Refused (1%).

Bloomington's state test results show promise

Washburn Elementary School receives Celebration designation

Bloomington students' test results held steady or showed improvements in 2012, with reading scores showing significant gains under the state's new Multiple Measurement Rating (MMR).

Washburn Elementary School became "celebration eligible" after its test results improved enough to push the school into the second tier of Title I schools with the highest MMR ratings.

"Washburn Elementary School's designation as a Celebration School is great news," says Dr. David Heistad, executive director of Research, Evaluation & Assessment. "Washburn students are showing significant progress and closing the achievement gap."

Testing Breakdown:

■ Graduation Required Assessments for Diploma (GRAD)

The GRAD assessment is required for graduation. It measures basic reading and math skills. The 2011-12 test results were generally very high: 96% of students passed the state standard in grades 9-12 on

the writing assessment, while 88% passed the state standard in grades 10-12 on the reading assessment. Math scores were lower with an average of 66% students passing between grades 11 and 12.

■ Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA)

The MCA's measure what students should know to perform well at each grade level. Students do not pass or fail, but are considered "proficient" if they have met the standards. Grades 3-8 take the reading and math tests. Grade 10 students take a reading test and grade 11 students take a math test. Grades 5 and 8-12 take the science test. The 2011-12 reading, math and science proficiency rates were consistent with state averages at all grade levels.

■ Computerized Achievement Level Tests (CALT)

The District uses CALT scores to measure how students' reading and math skills improve from one year to the next compared to what is typical for students across the nation with similar achievement levels. Bloomington's 2011-12 scores in

School	MMR	MMR Designation
Hillcrest Community School	77.07%	None, Not Title I
Indian Mounds Elementary School	10.65%	Continuous Improvement*
Normandale Hills Elementary School	45.22%	None, Not Title I
Oak Grove Elementary School	11.29%	Continuous Improvement*
Olson Elementary School	55.74%	None, Not Title I
Poplar Bridge Elementary School	75.22%	None, Not Title I
Ridgeview Elementary School	85.23%	None, Not Title I
Valley View Elementary School	26.39%	Focus**
Washburn Elementary School	69.88%	Celebration Eligible**
Westwood Elementary School	51.98%	None, Not Title I
Oak Grove Middle School	52.48%	None, Not Title I
Olson Middle School	73.35%	None, Not Title I
Valley View Middle School	22.60%	None, Not Title I
Jefferson High School	60.18%	None, Not Title I
Kennedy High School	28.08%	None, Not Title I

reading and math were all above national averages. Students show better than average growth at all levels, while the District's math scores are better than similar achieving districts in all grades.

■ Multiple Measurement Rating (MMR)

Minnesota's *Multiple Measurement Rating* measures proficiency, student growth,

achievement gap reduction, and graduation rates in assigning a school rating. The MMR is part of the state's approved waiver plan that replaces the Adequate Yearly Progress ranking under the federal No Child Left Behind Law. The new measurement also assigns specific rating designations to schools that receive Title I federal supplementary funding for at-risk and low-

income children. Bloomington had four Title I schools during the 2011-12 school year.

Under the MMR, Bloomington students demonstrated significant gains in reading, while individual student growth measurements in math remained stable.

The above table provides the 2012 MMR Designation by School.

* Continuous Improvement schools are the lowest 25% of Title I schools.

** Focus schools are the 10% of Title I schools making the biggest contribution to the state's achievement gap.

*** Celebration Eligible schools are the next 25% of Title I schools with the highest MMR ratings in the state after Reward Schools. Reward Schools are the top 15% of Title I schools.



SEN. FRANKEN PRAISES STEM EDUCATION AT KENNEDY HIGH SCHOOL

U.S. Senator Al Franken visited Kennedy High School to discuss the importance of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education in preparing students for 21st Century jobs and Career Technical Education programs. During his visit, students and staff showcased a robot built by the school's award winning FIRST Robotics team, and visited a motorcycle building class.



Minnesota Student Survey

The District will be participating in the 2013 Minnesota Student Survey next month (January 2013).

Students in 5th, 8th, 9th and 11th grades will be taking the survey, which asks youth about health and social factors that affect their learning, growth and development.

The MN Department of Education survey is anonymous, confidential and voluntary, and at no time is personal information asked that could identify students or their families.

Parents may opt to excuse their child from taking the survey. Parents of 5th, 8th, 9th, and 11th grade students will be receiving a letter in the mail this week with more information about the survey.

Schools Host Kindergarten Registration Event

All District elementary schools will host a kindergarten registration event to provide families with an opportunity to meet their child's potential teacher and classmates, tour of the classroom and school, and learn how each school supports success in kindergarten and beyond. For more information, please call 952-681-6478 or visit www.bloomingtonschools.info

2013-14 Kindergarten Registration

Hillcrest Community School	Tuesday, January 29	4:00 p.m.	952-681-5300
Indian Mounds	Tuesday, January 29	5:00-7:00 p.m.	952-681-6000
Normandale Hills	Tuesday, January 29	6:00-7:30 p.m.	952-806-7000
Oak Grove Elementary	Tuesday, January 29	6:00-7:30 p.m.	952-681-6800
Olson Elementary	Tuesday, February 5	6:00 p.m.	952-806-8800
Poplar Bridge	Tuesday, January 29	5:30-7:30 p.m.	952-681-5400
Ridgeview	Thursday, January 24	6:00 p.m.	952-806-7100
Valley View Elementary	Thursday, April 11	6:00-7:30 p.m.	952-681-5700
Washburn	Tuesday, January 29	5:30-7 p.m.	952-681-5500
Westwood	Thursday, January 31	6:00 p.m.	952-806-7200

School Pages

is published by
Bloomington Public Schools
1350 W. 106th Street
Bloomington, MN 55431-4126
www.bloomingtonschools.info

School Pages is printed and delivered by mail to 38,000 Bloomington households at a cost of 16 cents to inform Bloomington residents about their public schools.

Editor: Rick J. Kaufman, APR
Executive Director of
Community Relations
952.681.6403

Writer: Jaclyn Swords,
Communications Specialist

Copy Reader: Nancy Eidem

Photos: Jeff Olson

2012 Bloomington Board of Education

Melissa Halvorson Wiklund,
Chair
Mark Hibbs, *Vice Chair*
Tim Culver, *Clerk*
Arlene Bush, *Treasurer*
Maureen Bartolotta, *Director*
Nelly Korman, *Director*
Dick Bergstrom, *Director*
Superintendent Les Fujitake,
Ex Officio