

BLOOMINGTON



Public Schools

SCHOOL PAGES

Spring 2015-16



A MESSAGE FROM SUPERINTENDENT LES FUJITAKE

SCHOOL-CITY COLLABORATION STRENGTHENS COMMUNITY



Superintendent Les Fujitake engages with Oak Grove Middle School sixth graders about their social studies projects on the Civil War.

In late March, we hosted the fourth joint meeting in the past 18 months of the Bloomington City Council and School Board, along with Mayor Gene Winstead and City Manager Jamie Verbrugge. It is part of an ongoing collaboration - along with Hennepin County, Normandale Community College and business leaders - to enhance the social, economic and academic well being of our community.

As important as it is for our elected officials to be engaged with the community on a wide range of issues, it is equally symbolic and important that these two governing bodies continue to engage with each other to model collaboration and build on the social capital for the good of our citizens.

When civic and educational leaders work together to make children and youth the focus, great things happen.

Together we are partnering on initiatives and programs to close the opportunity gap and create educational pathways for all students to graduate career and college ready. Together we are exploring strategies to identify all children from birth to age 3 in order to offer targeted early childhood programs and prepare them

for kindergarten. Together we are leveraging efforts across housing, education and regional planning to attract families and young adults to make Bloomington their home. Together we are providing educational, recreational, creative and performing arts opportunities year 'round to enhance opportunities for experiential learning and leverage the exploratory nature of children and youth.

When schools and community leaders work together, learn from each other, share resources and best practices, as we have, collectively we improve the educational opportunities for all children, and the quality of life for all residents.

While our focus as a school system is to prepare all students for future success, we are keenly aware of the importance of helping our community. As labor leader and noted civil rights activist Cesar Chavez once said, "We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community."

By supporting one another across racial, political, socioeconomic and neighborhood boundaries, we are building a brighter future for all.

Personal Growth Plans provide student roadmaps

As the end of the school year nears, a major initiative milestone will be reached with the implementation of a Personal Growth Plan (PGP) for every high school student. Freshmen students were the first group to pilot the PGP tools and activities during the first and second trimesters, followed by 10th-12th graders in trimester 3.

Full implementation at both high schools will carry over in the 2016-17 school year, including a slate of PGP-related tools in the Hub for all students and parents, PGP site leads and teams at each school and a PGP curriculum. High school students will participate in 12 PGP activities per grade level as part of the curriculum during homeroom or advisory periods next year, according to Natalie Golberg, a former high school counselor and now PGP development specialist.

Background

A Personal Growth Plan is a tool to support students in identifying and successfully navigating a pathway through graduation. Each student's PGP consists of three areas:

- **Academic indicators** like grades, test scores and academic goals
- **Life and social skills**, like attendance data and skill inventories
- **College and career planning** (grades 6-12), like career interest inventories, resume tools and course planning.

What's Next

Personal Growth Plans will expand to all students using a phased approach. In addition to the high schools, all Under 21 adult diploma students will have a PGP next school year. PGPs will be implemented for middle schools in 2017-18, followed by elementary, adult education and early childhood sites in 2018-19.

As more students gain access, the district will continue to develop and assess the features and activities that best serve students at each level, said Golberg.

Gearing up for summer fun!

Elementary and Middle School Programs

SLAM (formerly Summer Spectrum): Community Education and Bloomington Center for the Arts program offering sports and recreation camps and classes for pre-K to grade 9 students. Call 952-681-6007.

GRASP: Reading and math correspondence lessons for students in grades 1-8. Register by April 15. Call 952-681-6125.

Early Camp SAFARI: Early Learners Academy summer program for four- and five-year-olds. Open only to current ELA families. Call 952-681-6125.

Camp SAFARI: Full-day childcare services for families offering thematic programming and two field trips per week with breakfast and snack daily. For pre-K to grade 6 students. Call 952-681-6125.

Super SAFARI: Week-long child care services for kindergarten to grade 6 students. Extended field trips, breakfast and snack daily. Call 952-681-6125.

Camp Invention: Fun, hands-on science and creativity day camp for students in grades 1-6. Call 1-800-968-4332.

Galaxy Youth Center: Drop-in center offering a variety of youth leadership activities and service learning opportunities for students in grades 6-7. Call 952-806-8606.

Bloomington Youth Enrichment and Sparks Music and Dance: Variety of enrichment, dance, recreation, self-defense programs and voice and instrument lessons, for students pre-K and older. Call 952-681-6108.

Summer Musical—Willy Wonka Jr.: Performing opportunity for students in grades 3-7. Auditions in May; performances July 21-23. Call 952-681-5307.

Summer School: Four-week remedial math and reading program for students in grades 1-6. Eligibility is determined by mid-year report card and teacher recommendation. Call 952-681-6506.

Extended School Year, Special Education: Provided for eligible students with disabilities to maintain skills learned during the school year. Eligibility determined by IEP teams. For early childhood through grade 12 special education students. Call 952-806-8950.

Secondary Programs

Operation Adventure: Trip for students in grades 7-8 to explore geology, social studies, camping and canoeing in Minnesota and Wisconsin state parks and forests. Call 952-681-6559.

Summer Musicals—Cinderella: Performing opportunity for students in grades 7-12. Auditions in May; performances July 27-30. Call 952-681-5307.

Staff In Training: On-the-job training program for students in grades 8-12. Call 952-681-5807.

Drivers Education: Two-week class including 30 hours of classroom training for students ages 15 and older. Call 952-681-6111.

BEACON Alternative Learning Program: Offering high school credit recovery, credit completion and other programs for Jefferson and Kennedy students. Call 952-681-5058.



Commitment + Hard work = Success for AVID grads

For more than four years, a group of Kennedy High School seniors elected to take a college-readiness program designed to improve school-wide learning and performance. With graduation on the horizon and thoughts of their futures beyond high school, these determined students are confident they made a wise choice.

Advancement Via Individual Determination, or AVID, prepares all students for college readiness and success. It's an elective course that helps students develop strong writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization and critical reading skills. Students also form strong bonds with their peers who share the goal of obtaining a four-year college degree.

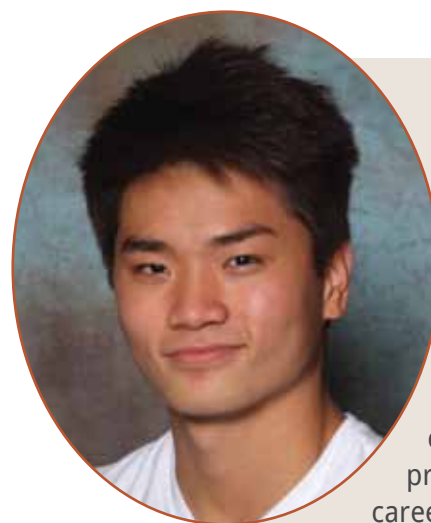
Many of Kennedy's AVID seniors were the first students to take the elective course when it was introduced during their final year at Valley View Middle School. Others have joined over the past few years. All agree that their AVID mentors and teachers have helped them achieve things they never dreamed possible.

"AVID encouraged me to aim for leadership positions in my school and prepared me to manage my time so I don't feel too overwhelmed. AVID has been one of the best things that has happened to me academically." — Brittney L.

"AVID has given me the organizational skills to stay on top of my work and be responsible with my assignments. Through AVID I also developed a drive to become the best possible me, in whatever I choose to do." — Brianna Z.

Kelly Killorn, district AVID coordinator, said AVID targets students "in the academic middle who have the desire to go to college and the willingness to work hard; students who are capable of taking on rigorous courses but are not aiming for their full potential." The students, she said, are encouraged to take more challenging courses throughout high school.

AVID is currently offered at Valley View elementary and middle schools, and Kennedy High School. Indian Mounds Elementary School will offer AVID to 4th and 5th graders beginning this fall.



Meet Kennedy High School AVID Senior Phat (Peter) Nguyen.

Years in AVID: 4

Takeaway: Exploring education options and careers in class helped prepare him for college and career.

Phat will attend the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities, where he is a semifinalist for a Dell scholarship. He was accepted to Augsburg College, Hamline University, University of St. Thomas, The College of St. Scholastica, Gustavus Adolphus College, Minnesota State University-Mankato, and all University of Minnesota campuses: Twin Cities, Duluth, Rochester, Morris and Crookston.

Students thrive in mastery-based classroom

What began as an effort to digitize lesson plans has become a unique way for Bloomington teachers to teach and students to learn.

Teachers Kelsey Nash and Holly Skadsem developed the idea of mastery-based learning when they saw success with a classroom strategy they were using at Normandale Hills Elementary School known as flipped instruction. In flipped instruction, the typical lecture and homework elements of a course are reversed; students learn new concepts in a digital or video format, then use in-class time for discussion, exercises or projects.

Nash, who teaches fifth grade at Normandale Hills, and Skadsem, a former fifth grade teacher who has become one of the district's digital learning coordinators, piloted the mastery-based learning model at Normandale Hills over the last two years and will expand it to five additional Bloomington schools this fall.

The mastery-based model builds on students working at their own pace until they master a particular concept or skill. According to Skadsem, it is a very individualized approach that easily applied to math.

"Math ability groups were already learning at different levels. We took the idea of working at your own pace, and the technology allowed it to be more individualized," said Skadsem. "It's like an individual, personal learning plan for every student."

Nash said it was "a very natural evolution. We were seeing great things with the flipped model, and we began to wonder, why not let students go? They were so eager, asking, pushing. And when we

"When we loosened the reigns, students soared."
— Kelsey Nash



loosened the reigns, students soared. At all levels, growth exploded."

Parents are embracing the idea, too. "Once we explain how it works and parents see how it works for their child, they are very positive," explained Nash.

Students are the big winners, says Nash, who loves that her students now have more time to collaborate with one another while applying their thinking to real world projects and engaging games and activities. When a student needs more traditional instruction, teachers have the time to work with the few students one-on-one every day



Holly Skadsem



Kelsey Nash

if needed. "Students enjoy taking ownership of their learning and thrive when given the specific skills and tools that they need to succeed," said Nash.

Elementary schools expected to use the mastery-based learning model this fall include Hillcrest, Indian Mounds, Normandale Hills, Washburn, Olson and Poplar Bridge.

Retiring principals reflect on leadership careers

After distinguished careers in education and a combined 28 years with Bloomington Public Schools, Jefferson High School Principal Kevin Groebner and Westwood Elementary School Principal Carolyn Hartwigsen will retire at the end of the current school year.



Kevin Groebner

Groebner has been Jefferson's principal for the past three years, and spent 15 years prior as an assistant principal at the high school. Groebner worked as a dean of students in Lakeville, an assistant principal at St. Louis Park Junior High School, and taught social studies for 16 years at Mounds Park Academy, and Randolph, Rosemount and Cambridge high schools.

Groebner said his favorite part of the job has been working with the excellent staff at Jefferson to provide a warm, welcoming and academically focused learning environment for all students. "I'll definitely miss the daily interactions and relationships with students, faculty, staff, parents and families," said Groebner.



Carolyn Hartwigsen

Hartwigsen is retiring after 10 years as Westwood's principal. She was a principal in West St. Paul for 10 years prior to coming to Bloomington, and has taught elementary grades in Texas, Colorado and Minnesota.

Hartwigsen said the most rewarding part of her job "has been the relationships with the children, staff and community." She takes tremendous pride in Westwood earning the U.S. Department of Education's School of Excellence designation. She also cited programs she had a hand in implementing, including Reading Buddies and Bucket Enrichment, and partnerships with Transfiguration Lutheran Church, Breadsmith Bakery and SHIP. "I love the people in this building,

Adults and children. I'm honored to have been a part of Bloomington's administrative team and will miss all my coworkers across the district," she said.

REFERENDUM 2013 FUNDING UPDATE

School safety work continues

The final four school sites to be equipped with an Access Management System (AMS) and other safety improvements will be completed this summer. Schools include Pond Family Center, Southwood Center, Washburn Elementary School and Oak Grove Middle School, which also houses the district's Educational Services Center (ESC).

The new entrances will limit school access by funneling visitors to the main office once the school day begins. School entrance doors are open before and after school to allow for easier flow of students, parents and staff.

Project work gets underway at all the sites immediately following the last day of school in June. Washburn will be closed for the summer for both the safety enhancements and a comprehensive school maintenance project.

The other facilities will have alternate access doors, including the ESC. Visitors to the district offices are encouraged to park behind Oak Grove Middle School (east side) and enter door 17. Staff parking is in the front of the school (west side) and entry will be through door 9. Signage will direct visitor traffic to all temporary entrances.

Projects will be completed in early- to mid-August.

Additional school safety enhancements will be made in future years as part of the School Safety Plan approved by voters in 2013.



IN THE KNOW

District-wide food drive

The Eighth Annual District-wide Food Drive is April 25-29. Students, families, staff and community members are invited to donate non-perishable food items or cash to their schools throughout the week.

All food and cash donations are presented to VEAP (Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People), a Bloomington non-profit agency serving low-income families. Last year, food and cash donations totaled 53,168 pounds of food. The goal this year is 60,000 pounds.

The School Board's Youth Leadership Council and Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) Council coordinate this annual event, which has collected more than 267,000 pounds since its inception. The school collecting the most pounds (food and cash combined) earns the We Believe Alliance's "World Record Program" traveling trophy.

Bloomington schools seek literacy tutors

The District is seeking literacy tutors for its pre-kindergarten programs and elementary schools. Positions are offered through the AmeriCorps program Minnesota Reading Corps.

Literacy tutors help students develop early reading skills and ensure they are on track to read by the end of third grade. Kindergarten students served by Minnesota Reading Corps volunteers have shown significant growth in literacy.

Literacy tutors must commit to 11 months of service beginning in August 2016. Tutors will receive training and earn a monthly stipend, as well as up to \$5,550 to pay for school or student loans. For more information or to apply online, visit www.minnesotareadingcorps.org.

District recycling efforts a success

Results from a Hennepin County survey show Bloomington Public Schools is doing a great job diverting materials from the trash. Estimates show that about 67 percent of waste generated by the district's schools is going into recycling and organics.



Hillcrest students perform Indonesian gamelan and dance under the instruction of teaching artists Joko and Tri Sutrisno of COMPAS.

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POINTS OF PRIDE



■ Kennedy High School's **Sara Aamot's** entry, Hosana (above), earned a Gold Key in the Minnesota Scholastic Art Competition, and her entire portfolio earned a Silver Key. Other Silver Key recipients were Nicole Osinde and **Nathan Robertson** (Kennedy) and **Samantha Tarnowski** (Jefferson). Honorable mentions went to **Robertson, Alyssa Angeles, Dora Deak** and **Katie Weston** (Kennedy), and **Makayla Grant** and **Jackie Lucking** (Jefferson).

■ Winners of Bloomington United for Youth (BUY) volunteer awards are **Gloria Arpellet, Ginny Becket** and **Michelle Nguyen** and **Kennedy's National Honor Society**.

■ **David Johnson, Jr.**, world languages teacher at Jefferson, is one of 114 candidates for Education Minnesota's 2016 Minnesota Teacher of the Year.

■ Olson Middle School eighth graders **Madeline Niziolek, Jenna Pederson, Tasha Pizel** and **Clara Seltzer** qualified for the national Future City competition in Washington D.C. They took first place in the regional competition, which included over 40 Minnesota middle school teams.

■ The **Jefferson cheer team** placed second in its division at the National High School Cheerleading

Championships in Orlando, FL. The team qualified for the national competition after earning its third consecutive state championship at the 2016 State Cheerleading Competition.

■ **Jefferson's one-act play, "Suddenly, Last Summer"** placed first at the Metro West Conference Fine Arts Competition.

■ Team Tec Man, a robotics team of sixth grade students, took first place in the head-to-head competition at the Minnesota State FIRST Lego League (FLL) Competition and second in robot performance score. Team members include **Andrew Barton, Christopher Bastian, Nate Ernst, Max Johnson, Tunde Olofinboba, Erik Teder** and **Max Theroux**.

■ Early Learners Academy teacher **Ann Hanson** was named a WCCO Excellent Educator.



■ **Science Olympiad** teams from Jefferson and Kennedy advanced to the Minnesota Science Olympiad competition after placing in the top 10 at the regional level.

■ Two Jefferson Academic WorldQuest teams placed in the top 10 at the 2016 WorldQuest competition: **Delaney Loken, Elise Longley, Daniela Kunkel, Genevieve Lund, Henry Hellstrom, Connor Meany, Nathan Glenna** and **Ian Klein**.

■ **Cheryl Martin**, Kennedy business education and AVID teacher, has been selected for a Teacher of Excellence Award by BestPrep.



Students at Poplar Bridge Elementary School take a virtual field trip with the help of Google Expeditions using Google Cardboard virtual reality goggles.