

Spotlight

Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools



DISTRICT196
One District. Infinite Possibilities.

Summer 2020 | Volume 60 • Number 4

At District 196, the sky's the limit. That's because our committed team of educators is dedicated to helping learners explore the outer limits of their vast potential.

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Parades of positivity

Red Pine Elementary second-grade teacher **Kelly Robertson** waves to students and parents during a parade of Eagan neighborhoods May 2. More than 40 Red Pine teachers and staff joined the parade to spread cheer and positivity to students and their families. Schools across District 196 and the country participated in similar events this spring to show their support and stay connected during school closures and distance learning caused by the novel coronavirus pandemic. See more photos on pages 8-9.

Graduates to experience socially distanced celebrations

More than 2,100 seniors will graduate from District 196 high schools the first week in June. The ever-resilient Class of 2020 and their families will take part in an in-person experience featuring some of the key moments that define graduation, done in a very different and appropriately distanced way due to the pandemic.

The three-part optional experience begins with individual diploma cover presentations and photo opportunities. On graduation day at each school, there will be a parade of seniors in separate vehicles held a few hours before graduation. Shortly after the parades, at the scheduled graduation times, commencement ceremony videos will premiere online recognizing members of the Class of 2020 at Apple Valley, Eagan, Eastview and Rosemount high schools, and the School of Environmental Studies.

A committee of district and high school administrators, working in cooperation with local police departments, began meeting in March to develop options for graduation. In early May, the state released guidance prohibiting ceremonies in gymnasiums and stadiums, and provided parameters for holding events outside the home such as a parking lot ceremony or graduate parade. When Governor Walz announced the stay-at-home order would expire May 18, the committee finalized its plan and schools started sharing site-specific details with families.

"This plan honors our incredible graduates as we strive to provide a safe experience for them and their families," Superintendent **Mary Kreger** said. "The most important thing is to share our appreciation and pride for the Class of 2020. Our entire community celebrates their success. We are incredibly proud of their strength and resilience, and we know they will continue to make the world a better place."

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Teachers use fab labs to make PPE for local health workers

Teachers at two of District 196's STEM education schools put their expertise into action this spring to help equip local health care workers with much-needed personal protection equipment (PPE) to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Early in the spread of COVID-19, medical facilities were experiencing shortages of PPE, especially masks and face shields. Days before Minnesota first enacted its stay-at-home order, STEM teachers **Chris Lee** of Apple Valley High School and **Brian Martin** of Valley Middle School of STEM were already exploring ideas on how they could use equipment in their schools' fabrication labs to help protect local health care workers.



Chris Lee

"Chris went to work on a design for a face shield he found online and had an initial prototype completed in a few hours. Fast forward 48 hours and he'd already

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Infinite Possibilities

District 196 is nationally recognized for providing boundless opportunities in which students can learn and grow. Whether they have an affinity for academics, arts or athletics, our goal is to expose students to the infinite possibilities within the district and throughout our communities. Together, we encourage them each day to pursue excellence as they experience their exciting journey along the road of life.

Spotlight Newsletter

This quarterly publication is mailed to every household in District 196 to inform parents and other residents about district news.

Send comments on **Spotlight** to tony.taschner@district196.org

NONDISCRIMINATION

NOTICE: District 196 does not discriminate in employment or in any of its programs and activities, including vocational opportunities, on the basis of sex, race, religion, color, creed, national origin, marital status, familial status,* disability, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, membership or activity in a local human rights commission,* age or genetic information.* District 196 provides equal access to designated youth groups.

The Director of Human Resources, Tom Pederstuen (651-423-7859 – tom.pederstuen@district196.org) has been designated to respond to employment-related inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies including Title IX. The Director of Elementary Education, Sally Soliday (651-423-7782 – sally.soliday@district196.org) and the Director of Secondary Education, Michael Bolsoni (651-423-7712 – Michael.Bolsoni@district196.org) have been designated to respond to student-related inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies including Title IX. The Director of Special Education, Janet Fimmen (651-423-7629 – janet.fimmen@district196.org) has been designated to respond to inquiries concerning the rights of a student with a disability including Section 504. The mailing address for all directors is 3455 153rd Street W, Rosemount, MN 55068.

*Asterisked categories are limited to employment-related discrimination and harassment.



Construction started at Eagan High School May 11 with removal of the track and excavation of the field.

Artificial turf projects started at Eagan and Rosemount

The District 196 School Board approved financing and awarded bids for construction of artificial turf fields at Eagan and Rosemount high schools in April and work started on both projects in mid-May. The fields are expected to be ready by the start of the school this fall.

Eagan and Rosemount are the first two of four artificial turf projects that will be completed over the next 16 months. Separate financing and bids will need to be approved for projects at Apple Valley and Eastview high schools next year. Each high school will get two artificial turf fields, one stadium field and one practice field with lights. Total project costs are estimated between \$17 million and \$19 million.

At its April meeting, conducted by videoconference, the board approved the sale of \$8,960,000 in certificates of participation to low bidder Northland Securities, Inc., of Minneapolis, at a rate of 1.9685 percent per year. Debt service on the certificates will be paid off over the next 10 years through the district's annual property tax levy. Director of Finance and Operations **Mark Stotts** said the project will increase the district's total levy by approximately 1 percent next year.

"It was nice, tight bidding," said **Jodie Zesbaugh** of Ehlers and Associates, the district's financial consultant. "We are really happy to see a rate under 2 percent."

After approving financing, the board awarded bids for both projects. Peterson Companies of Chisago City was lowest of three bidders for the Rosemount project, at \$3,857,500. G.L. Contracting, Inc. of Medina was lowest of four bidders for the Eagan project, at \$3,608,850. Stotts said both projects are slightly under budget.

"It was a competitive bid day and we got a good purchase," said **Scott McQueen** of Wold Architects and Engineers, the district's architect.

District administration proposed artificial turf fields in December in response to growing concerns about safety and playability issues on sod fields at the district's four high schools. The situation reached a breaking point last fall when a wet season and failed drainage tile system caused Rosemount to shut down its stadium field. All four schools limit play on their stadium fields and have had to reschedule events because of unplayable fields.

"It has changed from being an extra to an expectation," Superintendent **Mary M. Kreger** said about artificial turf fields. District 196 high schools are part of a shrinking minority of metro-area high schools (24 of 76), and the only member high schools in the South Suburban Conference and Region 3AA, that do not currently have artificial turf fields.

In addition to providing a more consistent and reliable surface for high school athletic teams and marching bands, artificial turf fields will provide additional teaching stations for the schools' physical education classes and will be valuable new resources for athletic associations that offer programs for youth in the communities District 196 serves.

Eastview High School Athletics Director **Matt Percival** said he currently limits usage of the school's stadium field and adjacent field to fewer than 70 events per year in order to protect the sod. Once artificial turf is installed, that number will jump to more than 1,200 event/game opportunities each fall and spring, not including summer.

Pandemic will shape future of education for the better

By **Mary M. Kreger**, superintendent

There are moments in history when you can recall where you were and what you were doing when you learned about it. These life-changing events have long-lasting, far-reaching effects across our state, country and world.

Sunday, March 15, 2020 was one of these moments in history for me and other Minnesotans, listening to Governor Walz issue his first executive order closing schools to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus. The decision to close schools is not one any governor or superintendent makes lightly, so we knew the importance of putting public health first in every decision my administrative team made later that day, and every day since.

On Monday, March 16, the day after the governor's executive order, we were providing free daily meals to children at several sites. At two of those schools, YMCA staff were providing socially distanced child care for the children of health care and other essential workers who have been so critical in the fight against COVID-19. Food and child care are two of the three expectations for schools in the governor's initial order. The third is to provide an equitable distance learning experience for our students. The state gave districts just days to accomplish this. With the benefit of a working spring break that following week, we launched distance learning districtwide on Monday, March 30, and took over responsibility for providing child care using district staff.

While there have been some bright spots, distance learning has impacted students in very different and some predictable ways. Inequities with access to food, child care, technology/ internet and adult support have magnified gaps in attendance, achievement and engagement among students who are most in need of the support that an in-school experience

provides. Some students, thankfully very few, have not been engaged in learning at all since distance learning began, despite repeated attempts from school staff to reach their families. Conversely, I've had parents tell me their child struggled before but is engaged and thriving in distance learning.

Our amazing teachers have done an outstanding job staying connected, supporting parents and giving students opportunities to continue learning and growing during these unusual and uncertain times. The quality of the experience and breadth of opportunities we provide students when they are in our school buildings cannot be replicated through distance learning. However, distance learning will be a part of our plans for this fall, which we hope to be able to share with families in July.

Our task as district leaders is to use the things we already knew, along with the things we've learned the last three months, and use this opportunity to improve the daily educational experience we provide to students and their families.

I am meeting daily with district and school leaders, teachers and other staff to discuss options for the 2020-21 school year. Soon we will be surveying parents, students and staff to get their input about concerns and expectations for next school year. Using this input and following guidance from the state departments of education and health, our goal is to set up learning spaces to allow some in-person, socially distanced learning next school year. This will require many changes, possibly schedules, calendars, start times, class sizes and other things. We will continue to be in a time of change and adjustment heading into the school year.

I want to thank the creative and hard-working employees of District 196 for their "get-it-done" attitude throughout this experience. In addition to teachers, our unsung heroes include custodians, food service workers, transportation employees, clerical staff, administrators and others who've done everything we asked to keep serving students and families the best we can.

I want to thank the families of District 196 for their patience and grace in learning new ways of doing things, and for supporting their child's education in a more time-intensive way.

Most importantly, I want to thank the incredible students of District 196 for their tenacity, patience and perseverance these past few weeks. They engaged in learning and did their best despite missing the people, structure and joy of going to school every day. I am especially grateful for the Class of 2020. They endured hardship and sorrow at missing so many of the important milestones of a senior year. I know they will learn and be stronger from this experience.

Students (and some adults) cheer when they get my early morning phone calls canceling school for weather. I can imagine the cheers on the day we announce we are going back to school. I look forward to that day.



Mary M. Kreger

PPE << continued from front page >>

completed two prototypes,” said Apple Valley Principal **Drew Mons**.

To ensure it would work, Lee reached out to **Jena Wirt Anderson**, an intensive care unit doctor at Abbott Northwestern Hospital and 1994 graduate of Apple Valley. Lee sent her a face shield prototype to be tested. She reported back that not only did the face shield work properly, it also withstood the sanitation process, so it could be reused.

At Valley Middle, Martin had the school’s 3D printers churning out face shields and face masks using designs he found online and even enlisted the help of his two children. “I thought this would be a good learning experience for them to see how important it is to support our community and take advantage of this equipment we are fortunate to have,” Martin said.

Soon, Lee and Martin were collectively printing over 40 masks per day.

Both took their projects public and shared updates on social media. It wasn’t long until their inboxes were flooded with support and requests to donate funds and materials. Makerbot, the company that produces 3D printers, provided filament and extruders. Local business such as Park Chrysler Jeep, Collins Aerospace,



Valley Middle School STEM teacher **Brian Martin** gets help from his two children packing face masks and face shields for medical facilities in need. He printed the PPE using the school’s 3D printers and material donations.



Staff at the Cancer Center in Burnsville don the face shields provided by Apple Valley STEM teacher **Chris Lee**.

Apple Valley Rotary and the Apple Valley Arts Foundation provided generous donations for supplies to make the shields. The schools’ STEM business partners also provided support for the project.

With designs and funding in place, Lee and Martin reached out to local health care organizations and began collecting orders. As of mid-May, Lee has distributed more than 2,100 face shields and Martin has completed 600 pieces of PPE. All of the equipment was donated to local hospitals, clinics and long-term care facilities, as well as to district food service personnel.

Jennifer Litchke, a nurse manager at a local mental health treatment program, shared her struggle with finding vendors who stock enough PPE to protect her colleagues. She said the 160 face shields donated to her clinic have provided an “incredible amount of relief.”

Having a reliable source of necessary PPE remains a challenge for health care facilities. An early estimate provided to Lee from one hospital conglomerate shows a need of 20,000 face shields in just one month. He said they are working on a plan to produce masks and shields at a higher volume as the need continues to rise.

“This continues to be an amazing, truly life-changing and life-saving project,” Lee said. “To see how this has expanded, been supported by so many others and impacted people throughout our community is amazing. I am glad that our fab labs can help support the medical industry in its efforts to save lives.”



Twins **Lisa and Isaac Johnson**, Class of 2004, worked with Apple Valley to create face shields. Issac helped build them and Lisa distributed them to her colleagues in the medical field.

District 196 graduation rate increases to 91.2 percent

The four-year graduation rate for District 196 high schools increased to 91.2 percent in 2019 compared to 83.7 percent statewide, according to data released by the Minnesota Department of Education March 5.

Of the 2,165 District 196 seniors included in the 2019 graduation data, 1,974 or 91.2 percent graduated in four years. That is 0.7 percent higher than the district's four-year graduation rate of 90.5 percent in 2018. Of the District 196 students who did not graduate in 2019, 5.6 percent are continuing school, 1.9 percent dropped out and the graduation status of the remaining 1.3 percent is unknown because they may have moved out of the district.

The state goal is for school districts to have a graduation rate of at least 90 percent for all students, with no student group below 85 percent graduating in four years. In 2019, District 196 met the state goal for all students, Asian, Black, White, and students of two or more races.

The four-year graduation rates for individual groups of District 196 students in 2019 were as follows:

- 92.3 percent of Asian students graduated compared to 87.6 percent statewide;

- 85.2 percent of Black students graduated compared to 69.9 percent statewide;
- 78.6 percent of Hispanic students graduated compared to 69.9 percent statewide;
- 93.7 percent of White students graduated compared to 88.7 percent statewide;
- 93.9 percent of students who are of two or more races graduated compared to 72.3 percent statewide;
- 75.8 percent of students receiving English Learner services graduated compared to 67.2 percent statewide;
- 66.0 percent of students receiving special education services graduated compared to 63.0 percent statewide, and
- 80.6 percent of students eligible to receive free or reduced-price school meals graduated compared to 71.0 percent statewide.

Graduation rates for American Indian/Alaskan Native were not reported for District 196 because there were fewer than 10 students in the group. Statewide, the graduation rate for American Indian/Alaskan Native students was 50.8 percent.

District 196 high schools earn high rank in *U.S. News* report

All four, four-year high schools in District 196 are in the top 60 high schools in Minnesota in *U.S. News & World Report's* 2020 ranking of the nation's Best High Schools.

Eastview and Eagan are both in the top 10 among Minnesota high schools, ranking fourth and ninth, respectively. At No. 4, Eastview is the highest ranked public high school in Minnesota. Rosemount is 21st and Apple Valley is 57th in the magazine's ranking of 879 Minnesota high schools, published in April. The School of Environmental Studies magnet high school for juniors and seniors is 142nd in the Minnesota ranking.

The criteria for the rankings include performance on state reading and math assessments, the performance of historically underserved groups of students, curriculum breadth, graduation rate, and college readiness measured by the percentage of students who took and passed at least one Advanced Placement exam. To review the rankings, go to <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools>.



Coulson is finalist for 2020 Minnesota Teacher of the Year

From her early days as a student in District 196, **Katie Coulson** knew she wanted to be a teacher. In fact, she came home from her first day of kindergarten and told her parents that education was her calling. It's this lifelong passion for learning that earned her selection as a finalist for 2020 Minnesota Teacher of the Year.



"My passion for school, learning and books is something I want to share with students," she said. "Building a strong community and having those relationships is the most important thing you can do to help a child."

Coulson joined the Thomas Lake Elementary School team six years ago as a second-grade teacher and has taught fourth grade the last two years. She is active in the school community and serves as a teacher representative on the Native American Parent Advisory Committee.

Coulson has stayed focused on supporting her students during the disruption of school closures and the challenges the pandemic is creating for many families.

Coulson is one of 10 finalists for Minnesota Teacher of the Year. The recipient was supposed to be announced in May at the annual Teacher of the Year banquet, which was postponed. A selection is tentatively scheduled to be announced in June.

Board meetings via video

The District 196 School Board is holding all meetings by videoconference until further notice due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Members of the public can watch the meetings live on the district's YouTube channel. To submit a question or comment in advance or request an invitation to participate in the meeting, email caley.jorgensen@district196.org.

Kusch selected next Black Hawk principal

Apple Valley High School Assistant Administrator

Anne Kusch was selected to be the next principal at Black Hawk Middle School in Eagan during an interview process in May.



Kusch will officially take over July 1 for **Rich Wendorff**, who is retiring at the end of this school year after 27 years of service in District 196, including the last 19 as principal at Black Hawk.

Since 2013, Kusch has been an assistant administrator at Apple Valley High, where she is responsible for overseeing student affairs and special education staff and services. Kusch began her career in District 196 in 2000, as a teacher at Dakota Hills Middle School and Eagan High School. In 2002, she started working full time at Dakota Hills as a special education teacher and case manager. Kusch earned her first administrator position in 2009, when she was hired as a district special education coordinator working with secondary students, families and staff. She held that position until 2013, when she was hired at Apple Valley High.

"I am thrilled to be returning to the middle level and humbled by the opportunity to be the next principal of Black Hawk Middle School," Kusch said. "I look forward to building relationships with students, families and the staff, and collaborating with these stakeholders to build on Black Hawk's successes and further expand possibilities for all of our students."

Kusch earned a bachelor's degree in English from the University of St. Thomas; a master's degree in education, as well as principal and special education director licensure from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, and is working toward a doctorate in educational leadership from Minnesota State University, Mankato.

High schools select Students of the Year for 2019-20

Students of the Year for 2019-20 were selected by teachers and administrators at all four, four-year high schools in District 196. Students were selected based on their academic performance and participation in the given subject area during their high school career. The 2019-20 Students of the Year in District 196 are listed below by school and subject.

APPLE VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL
Guadalupe Castellanos Padilla, art; **Elliot Ewald**, business; **Isaiah Sims**, dance; **Sydney Wilson**, English/language arts; **Crisllanely Vargas Hernandez**, English language learner; **Aisha Warmahayye**, family and consumer sciences; **Whitney Chung**, mathematics; **Julia Lee**, instrumental music; **Christina Mosen**, vocal music; **Cieran Searson**, physical education and health; **Nora Bengtson**, science; **Brooke Kierzek**, social studies; **Jaqueline Montenegro Andriano**, special services; **Thor Oase**, technology, engineering and manufacturing; **Jacob Holmgren**, work experience, and **Racquel Scott**, world languages.

EAGAN HIGH SCHOOL
Brianna Wilkins, art; **Britney Chey**, business; **Anne Koslowski**, counseling; **William Altier**, English/language arts; **Angela Nieto-Galicia**, English language learner; **Sarah Thissen**, family and consumer sciences; **Evan Blom**, mathematics; **Jacob Berran**, instrumental music; **Mia Scott**, vocal music; **Cole Gibson**, physical education and health; **Luke Anderson**, science; **Maxwell Meekin**, social studies; **Andrew Ellingson**, special

services; **Braydon Jones**, technology, engineering and manufacturing; **Grace Falteysek**, work experience, and **Tatiana Pereda**, world languages.

EASTVIEW HIGH SCHOOL
Jiayang Tang, art; **Brianna Cairns**, business; **Morgan Peterson**, dance; **Kendyl Green**, English/language arts; **Maria Diaz Castro**, English language learner; **Any Brown**, family and consumer sciences; **Brendan Wilhelm**, mathematics; **Kyra O'Malley**, instrumental music; **Abigail Reis**, vocal music; **Delaney Cashin**, physical education and health; **Anushri Tiwari**, science; **Eva Lundgreen**, social studies; **Kenton Ladoux**, special services; **Jonah Behnke**, special services center-based; **Max Gouette**, technology, engineering and manufacturing; **Cloe Kraus**, work experience, and **Sarah Zipf**, world languages.

ROSEMOUNT HIGH SCHOOL
Ashley Stock, art; **Mariana Pliego Cuautle**, AVID; **Olivia Gernandt**, business; **Ellie Ackland**, dance; **Kate Beckwith**, English/language arts; **Anab Mohamed**, English language learner; **Morgan Heck**, family and consumer sciences; **Elizabeth Benke**, technology, engineering and manufacturing; **Brenna Buck**, mathematics; **Jenna Gillich**, instrumental music; **Matthew Bell**, vocal music; **Amanuel Kiros**, physical education and health; **Charlie Huang**, science; **Jared Flannery**, social studies; **Jared Flannery**, social studies; **Mark Bukovich**, special services; **Gabriela Sheppard**, work experience, and **Tanner Morrison**, world languages.

Homeschools are required to report to the district

Families living in District 196 who plan to homeschool their children for the 2020-21 school year must submit a completed Compulsory Instruction Report to the director of Community Education by Oct. 1.

Information about the report and other programs and services will be addressed at a virtual meeting Aug. 12 at 6:30 p.m. Currently registered homeschool families will get an email invitation to participate in the meeting. Others can request an invitation by calling 651-423-7722 and providing contact information for the invitation.

Homeschool information is available on the district website at www.district196.org/academics/homeschool. For more information, call 651-423-7722.



First-grade teacher **Mark Fehandt** shared information with his students while learning in the Oak Ridge School Forest earlier this year.

Focus on nature earns Oak Ridge 'School Forest' designation

Learning at Oak Ridge Elementary School of Leadership, Environmental and Health Sciences in Eagan often takes place outside of the traditional classroom. Surrounding the school grounds is a lush, three-acre wooded area in which students soak up hands-on lessons in all varieties of subject areas. It's this commitment to combining education with an appreciation for nature that earned Oak Ridge the designation of School Forest.

"This is an incredible recognition of the work we're already doing to extend our classrooms into the woods around our school," Technology Clerk **Amy Kupinski** said. "This is a chance to partner with the DNR Forestry Division

to provide even more opportunities for outdoor learning, stewardship and management of our forest."

The designation provides assistance from the DNR to implement relevant curriculum, boost teacher training around school forestry and future grant writing opportunities. **Angie Schlede**, Oak Ridge educator and a leader of the school's sustainability initiatives, said fostering both an understanding of and appreciation for nature is an important part of the Oak Ridge mission.

"Not everyone comes with a love or appreciation of nature, and we want to foster that," Schlede said. "We try to get outside as much as we can, and there's a lot of just observing nature."

Deerwood students post top score on FBI safe surfing test

Fourth-grade students at Deerwood Elementary School scored highest in the nation on a test about online safety this spring. The top score earned them the FBI's Safe Online Surfing Award for their grade.

Media Specialist **Dawn Lyons** uses the Safe Online Surfing program to teach digital citizenship skills to students in all grades at Deerwood. The culminating event of the curriculum is the online test and the FBI's monthly awards.

The program teaches students about web terminology, how to recognize secure and trustworthy sites, protecting personal details online, creating strong passwords, avoiding viruses, scams and strangers, and being a good digital citizen.

Teachers manage their students' participation in the program and the FBI does not collect or store any student information. For more information about the program, go to <https://sos.fbi.gov>.

Echo Park assistant Logan Schultz selected school's next principal

Echo Park Elementary School of Leadership, Engineering and Technology Assistant Administrator

Logan Schultz

was selected to be the school's next principal during a hiring process in May.



Schultz will fill a vacancy created with the resignation of current Echo Park Principal **Scott Thomas** at the end of this school year. He will officially take over as principal July 1.

Schultz has been Echo Park's assistant administrator for the last two years. Prior to that he was a teacher leader at Southview Elementary School in Apple Valley from 2015 to 2018. After growing up in Perham and graduating from The College of Saint Scholastica in Duluth, Schultz spent the first three years of his teaching career at an elementary school in Florida serving a high percentage of students with a variety of needs. He said the experience shaped his passion for an advocacy and student-first leadership approach.

"I am humbled by the opportunity to be the next principal at Echo Park and honored to be a leader in such a caring and committed school community that puts students first," Schultz said. "During my time at Echo Park, I have been in awe of the school and family partnership and look forward to continuing this culture of care and collaboration."

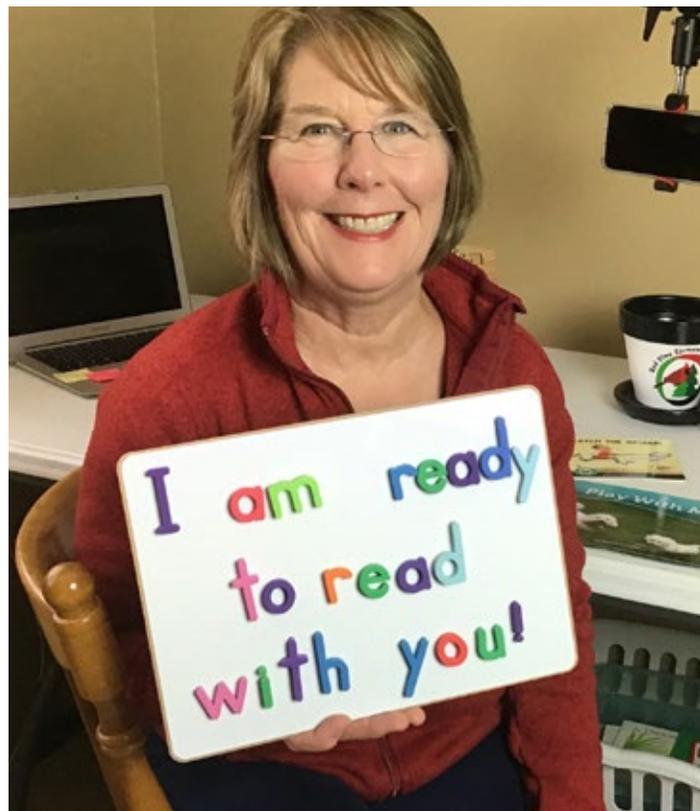
Schultz has a bachelor's degree in elementary/middle education from The College of St. Scholastica, a master's in educational leadership from Saint Leo University in St. Leo, Florida, and a doctorate in educational leadership from Concordia University, St. Paul.

Distance Living and Learning

Education changed drastically on March 18 when all schools in Minnesota were ordered to close in an effort to help slow the spread of the novel coronavirus. Seemingly overnight, kitchen tables and living rooms were transformed into learning spaces. Students and teachers in District 196 and across the state embraced distance learning and adjusted to their new virtual classrooms.

Zoom meetings connected **Laura Johnson** with her Glacier Hills School of Arts and Science kindergarten students. Shannon Park Elementary third-grader **Lukas Middleton** worked on his architectural drawing skills. Reading Recovery specialist **Jill Johnson** continued to see progress in her students. And our food and nutrition services personnel packed hundreds of grab-and-go meals to keep students' brains fueled.

Our district has come together like never before to ensure students remain successful and all are supported during this unprecedented time.





In This Together, District 196!

Pursuing Infinite Possibilities: Dan Myers, Eastview High School Class of 2003

Dan Myers had high hopes that his passion for writing and love of hockey would one day lead him to his dream career. In 2016, that dream became a reality when the 2003 Eastview High School graduate landed a job with the Minnesota Wild.

As coordinator of digital content for the team, he curates and shares stories with Wild fans and connects them to the sport like never before. In his role, Myers travels with the team and provides in-depth and up-to-the-moment information. The job has taken him all over North America.

However, following the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, hockey rinks across the NHL shuttered and seasons ended abruptly.

"This has completely re-shaped how I'm doing my job," he explained. "I work from home every day, as the Wild shut down team headquarters when Minnesota's stay-at-home orders were first issued. Right now, we're just trying to find fun ways to provide content that is also cognizant of the events taking place in the world."

"I attended world-class schools every step of the way... with great teachers and staff that prepared me well for the next step in my life."

Myers said sideline reporting changed overnight because of COVID-19, but added that working in the world of sports is never dull.

"Everyone in my position is looking forward to the day when we can get back to sports and be a small part of helping to bring the spirit of the nation back to life," he said. "We will get there."

Stats

A 2003 graduate of Eastview High School; studied journalism at Minnesota State University, Mankato, and is the coordinator of digital



2003 graduate **Dan Myers** began his journalism career at Eastview High School and is now the digital content coordinator for the Minnesota Wild. He credits his first exposure to writing in high school as the catalyst for his success.

content for the Minnesota Wild. Lives in Hudson, Wis., with wife Jen and beagle Kato.

Fun fact

Myers recently released his first major book, "100 Things Wild Fans Should Know and Do Before They Die." It's the ultimate guide for Wild and hockey fans alike, including traditions and facts, trivia and a must-do activity list ranked from 1 to 100. The book is available on Amazon and in all Minnesota Barnes and Noble locations.

Parents and guardians can opt-in to receive text messages

District 196 parents and guardians can opt-in to receive text messages from the district and individual schools. The texts are delivered via the SchoolMessenger mass notification service the district also uses to send phone calls and email messages.

Parents must opt-in to receive text messages by texting "Y" to 67587, and will receive a confirmation message stating that they are registered to receive SchoolMessenger notifications via text. If the sender does not receive a confirmation message or what appears to be an error message, it most likely means that short code texting is not enabled on their wireless plan.

To receive texts, parents must also make sure their cell phone number is included with their child's contact information in the Infinite Campus student information system. Parents can check this and add the number, if needed, by using their Campus portal account or contacting the office at their child's school.

Standard message and data rates may apply. To unsubscribe at any time, simply text STOP to 67587, or HELP to request assistance.

What do you remember most fondly about your time in District 196?

"I attended world-class schools every step of the way. I was blessed to attend Oak Ridge Elementary, Black Hawk Middle and Eastview High School, all of which were newer facilities at the time with great teachers and staff that prepared me well for the next step in my life."

Which District 196 teachers made the biggest difference in your education?

"Two of my coaches at Eastview, **Troy Swanson** and **Kelly Sherwin**, were positive influences that challenged me to be a better athlete and a better person off the field. In the classroom, **Kellie Sagmoen Scales** was my first school newspaper advisor and gave me a chance to get my first byline. Two decades later, here I am."

How did District 196 prepare you for your future?

"Starting my writing career as a reporter at the *Lightning Press*, my high school newspaper was my first big break. I worked my way up to sports editor, then editor-in-chief as a senior, an experience that prepared me to work at my college newspaper. That opened many doors for me once I graduated from college and began my career. None of it would have been possible without my first experience at Eastview High School."

New School of Environmental Studies wind turbine dedicated to the Class of 2020

In 1999, a wind turbine was erected on the grounds of the School of Environmental Studies (SES) as part of an ambitious project that included displays about wind energy and the turbine. Three years ago, the head of that turbine fell unexpectedly. It was a total loss, but thankfully no one was injured.

Since 2017, SES students and staff have been talking about how to replace the turbine. It happened on May 13 in front of a small group of invited students and staff who maintained proper social distancing while witnessing a crew install a new turbine thanks to a partnership with Kettle View Renewable Energy of Sheboygan, Wis.

Kettle View owner **Randy Feller** showed students and staff the technology that enables them to monitor the power generated by the turbine and shared information about careers in the renewable energy field.

Next school year, students will be able to log into a dashboard from the school website and observe in real time wind speed and direction, how much energy is being produced and how the turbine is functioning.



A technician from Kettle View Renewable Energy installs the head of the new SES wind turbine on May 13.

A drone view of the SES campus and the new wind turbine. SES opened in 1994 as an environmentally themed magnet high school for juniors and seniors.



The information will be used as part of class curriculum and to maintain the school's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Certification.

"I am so proud to lead a school where kids put their beliefs into action," said Principal **Lauren Trainer**. "I think we live in times where action, empowerment and contribution to community are vital."

Feller told the group it's tradition for

his crew to sign their initials on the nose cone of each newly-erected turbine. Along with his initials, SES Technology Specialist **Jacob Rylander** added, "SES CLASS 2020."

"This was supposed to be a schoolwide event, and it's sad that students weren't able to participate as planned," Trainer said. "But now we know the turbine was dedicated to the Class of 2020 and they will always be remembered."



The nose cone of the turbine was initialed by those who witnessed the installation and dedicated to the "SES CLASS 2020."

Hughes hired as next Thomas Lake principal

Rachel Hughes, the current principal of Sioux Trail Elementary School in Burnsville, was hired in May to be the next principal at Thomas Lake Elementary School in Eagan.



Hughes will fill the position currently held by **Mary Jelinek**, who is retiring at the end of this school year following a 29-year career in District 196, the last 23 as principal of Thomas Lake. Hughes will officially take over as principal July 1.

Hughes is completing her second year as principal at Sioux Trail Elementary, one of two elementary schools and one middle school being closed by the Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School District at the end of this school year. She was scheduled to be moving to Gideon Pond Elementary School next year.

Hughes started her career at Oltman Middle School in St. Paul Park, where she was a science teacher and dean of students for seven years. In 2013, she moved to Lakeville South High School to be an assistant principal and dean of students. Three years later, Hughes took her first job in Burnsville, as associate principal at Nicollet Middle School, and was hired to be principal at Sioux Trail Elementary in 2018.

"I am excited to join District 196 and the opportunity to be part of the Thomas Lake school community," Hughes said. "I look forward to meeting everyone and working together to continue the tradition of excellence at Thomas Lake of providing our children the best education possible."

Hughes has a bachelor's degree in secondary education and earth science from St. Cloud State University, a master's of education from Hamline University and earned her administrative licensure from St. Mary's University.



AVHS makes good argument but falls short at mock trial state

The Apple Valley High School mock trial team came up just short of defending its state title at this year's state tournament March 6 in St. Paul against Nova Classical Academy. In mock trial, each team consists of three attorneys and three witnesses, and must be prepared to argue both sides of the case. All teams receive the same case, which is used throughout the season. Members of the team are pictured with **Justice David Lillehaug** at the state tournament. They are (left to right): **Maya Gort, Taylor Garrison, Sam Hubley, Justice Lillehaug**, coach **Eric Strauss, Jack Bauer, Noah Becker, Marcello Christ** and **Bobby Smith**.

Graduations << continued from front page >>

Kreger stressed that public health and safety will be top priorities during the diploma cover presentations and graduate parades. The diploma presentations will be highly controlled, with scheduled time slots, one-way movement and minimal interaction with others. The schools will offer a similar opportunity later this year for anyone who cannot or chooses not to participate now.

The Apple Valley, Eagan and Rosemount police departments will be present to ensure the parades are orderly and only involve invited participants who remain inside their vehicles. The only people allowed outside of vehicles will be teachers and school staff appropriately distanced along the route to cheer the graduates as they ride by in vehicles with family members only.

The commencement ceremony videos will premiere on the District 196 YouTube channel and other online sites on the following dates and times:

- Thursday, June 4, 7 p.m. – **School of Environmental Studies**
- Friday, June 5, 7 p.m. – **Rosemount High School**
- Saturday, June 6 – **Eagan High School (2:20 p.m.), Apple Valley High School (6 p.m.) and Eastview High School (7 p.m.)**

The committee considered postponing graduations until later this summer, but did not like the ongoing uncertainty of that option. The new "Stay Safe Minnesota" guidance limits gatherings to no more than 10 people.

District 196 students win 13 of 21 video production awards

Students representing the journalism and video production programs at Apple Valley and Eastview high schools won 13 of 21 Crystal Pillar Awards presented during a special video ceremony on Friday, April 3. The video ceremony was dedicated to students and educators who missed events and activities this spring due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Student Production Awards are sponsored by the Upper Midwest Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. The award winners from Apple Valley and Eastview are listed by category.

- Newscast: Apple Valley High – EagleEye, “Newscast #189;” **Gabriel Peña** and **Faith Johnson**, anchor/producer.
- General Assignment-Serious News: Apple Valley High – EagleEye, “Jordan Bolton – One of Ours” **Hunter Bertram**, talent, and **Jarett Huard**, videographer.
- General Assignment-Light News: Apple Valley High – EagleEye, “iPad Possibilities,” Hunter Bertram, talent, and **Drew Carruth**, camera.
- Arts & Entertainment/Cultural Affairs: Eastview High – The Flash, “Cinco de Mayo Parade,” **Olivia Cuoco**, reporter, and **Jill Lamkins**, videographer.
- Short Form Non-Fiction: Eastview High – The Flash, “Addiction Adversity,” **Abby Lindgren**, reporter.
- Public Affairs/Community Service: Eastview High – The Flash, “Youth Climate Change,” **Iqra Ismail**, reporter, and **Kyle Hoang**, producer/videographer.

Reimbursement available for nonpublic transportation

District 196 residents may request reimbursement for a portion of their costs for having transported their child during the 2019-20 school year to a nonpublic school to which the district does not provide transportation and does not have a comparable nonpublic school available within its boundaries.

Requests for reimbursement for nonpublic transportation must be submitted prior to June 30, 2020 to: Independent School District 196, Director of Finance and Operations, 3455 153rd St. W., Rosemount, MN 55068. For more information or to obtain a reimbursement form, call 651-423-7715 or go to District196.org and search “reimbursement for nonpublic transportation.”



Apple Valley High School senior **Hunter Bertram** is pictured at the 2019 Student Production Awards ceremony, which was held in Bloomington.

- Magazine: Apple Valley High – EagleEye, “Show #179,” **Sara Abourjeily**, Gabriel Peña and **Rapheall Davis**, anchor/producer.
 - Animation/Graphics/Special Effects: Eastview High – The Flash, “Star Wars,” **Parker Hagebock**, animator, and **Jack Singer**, editor.
 - Editor: Jarett Huard, Apple Valley High.
 - Photographer: Jarett Huard, Apple Valley High.
 - Talent: Hunter Bertram, Apple Valley High.
 - Video Essay: Eastview High – The Flash, “What is Love,” **Emma Rae**, reporter.
 - Writing: **Hannah Robinson**, Apple Valley High.
- Cliff Dodge** and **Drew McCluskey** are the staff advisors at Apple Valley and **Nick Fornicoia** is the advisor at Eastview.

Sixteen seniors named National Merit finalists

The 16 District 196 seniors selected semifinalists in the 2019-20 National Merit Scholarship Program last fall were all named finalists and were eligible for one of the approximately 7,600 merit scholarships totaling more than \$31 million awarded this spring.

The National Merit finalists from District 196 are **Christina Monsen** of Apple Valley High School; **Luke Anderson**, **Jake Berran** and **Joseph Rollie** of Eagan High School; **Sanat Iyer**, **Ian Kenney**, **Benjamin Kupinski**, **Jiayang Tang**, **Rohan Vij** and **Margaret Wang** of Eastview High School, and **Cecilia Ellis**, **Regan Hansen**, **Charlie Huang**, **Tanner Morrison**, **Ryan Niedenthal** and **Akash Shiri** of Rosemount High School.

Post-secondary scholarships are awarded by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, businesses and colleges and universities nationwide.

Students are selected for the National Merit and Achievement programs each fall based on their scores on the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), which they take as juniors. Approximately 1.5 million students at 21,000 U.S. high schools took the qualifying test last school year. Students who score in the top 1 percent nationwide are selected semifinalists and can submit additional information to become a finalist. Students who score in the top 5 percent of students nationally are named commended students; 26 District 196 students earned commended status last fall.

Budget information online

Budget information for the 2019-20 school year and previous nine years is available on the Finance Department page of the district website at District196.org. The 2019-20 final budget features an introductory section that summarizes the district budget in user-friendly language.

Congratulations!

A sampling of student and staff achievements from before the COVID-19 pandemic

The cast and crew of Apple Valley High School's one-act play, "The Revolutionists" earned a starred-performance rating at this year's state One-Act Play Festival at O'Shaughnessy Auditorium in early February. The starred rating is the highest award given to a one-act play and, as such, is the equivalent of a state championship. This was Apple Valley's 13th trip to the state festival and 10th starred-performance rating.

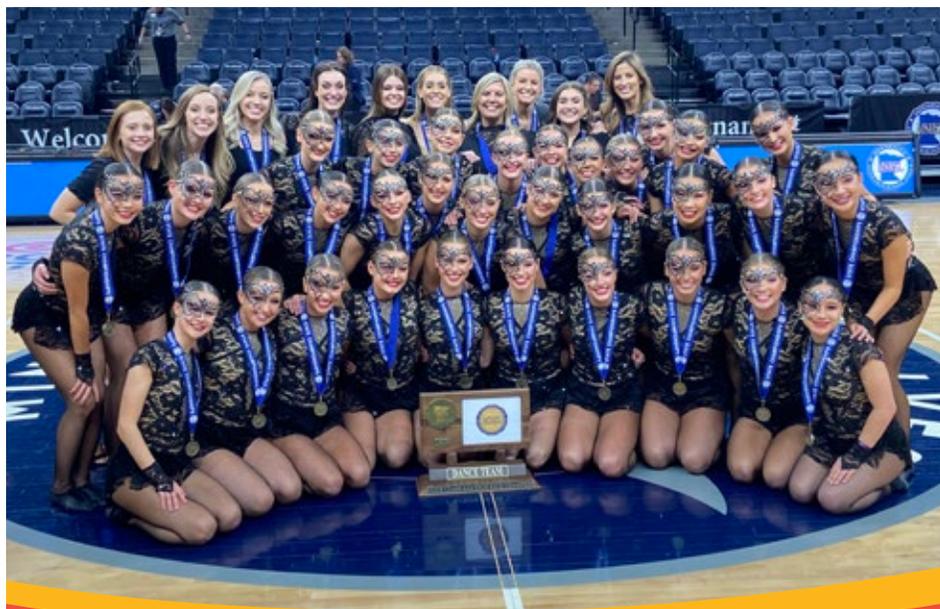
Noah Daniel of Dakota Hills Middle School, **Zuber Mohamed** of Falcon Ridge Middle School and **Achyuth Kasthoori** of Scott Highlands Middle School won their school-level geography bee with scores that placed them in the top 100 students statewide and qualified them for the state geography bee, which was later cancelled.

Kartik Saravanapandi of Black Hawk Middle School, **May Tang** of Falcon Ridge Middle School and **Rasin Hussain** of Scott Highlands Middle School each won their school's spelling bee and qualified for the metro spelling bee.

Shannon Park Elementary School Food Service Manager **Michelle**

Durenberger was named the state and regional Manager of the Year by the School Nutrition Association in May. A coworker nominated Durenberger for her management style, leadership skills, professionalism and knowledge. Durenberger has worked in the district's award-winning Food and Nutrition Services Department since 1996.

Thirteen teams from six District 196 schools had top finishes at metro-area tournaments in February to qualify for the Destination ImagiNation state tournament, which was scheduled to be held March 21 but was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools with teams that qualified for state are Cedar Park, Greenleaf, Southview and Woodland elementary schools, and Dakota Hills and Rosemount middle schools.



Eastview dance sweeps state titles in jazz and high kick

In February, the Eastview High School Lightning Dance Team swept the Class AAA state titles in both jazz and high kick (pictured) for the fourth time in school and state history. The team's final round performance capped a perfect season and earned them a standing ovation from the Target Center crowd. This is Eastview's 12th state title in high kick and fifth in jazz. Eastview is the only Class AAA school in Minnesota to qualify for state in both events every year since section qualifying tournaments started in 2002. They've also advanced to the state finals in both events all 18 years.

Seniors **Sydney Johnson** of Apple Valley High School, **Lara Mitchell** of Eagan High School, **Claudia Dougan** of Eastview High School and **Taylor Janssen** of Rosemount High School were selected by their schools as 2019 Athena Award recipients. The awards are given each year to the outstanding senior female athlete at more than 50 Twin Cities-area high schools for their excellence and achievements in individual and/or team sports.

Twelve District 196 high school students had top finishes at state business competitions in early March to qualify for national competitions that were later canceled. Rosemount High School led with seven qualifiers, Eastview High School had four and Eagan High School had one in the DECA- and BPA-sponsored events.

The following six District 196 employees were selected Outstanding Service Award recipients this year: **Alyssa Bartosh**, assistant administrator at Glacier Hills School of Arts and Science; **Maureen Bechard**, school counselor at Dakota Hills Middle School; **Pete Buesgens**, assistant principal at Apple Valley High School; **Steve Casey**, district maintenance chief; **Mark Lovmo**, English Learner teacher at Westview Elementary School, and **Laurie Wendel**, 12-month secretary at Rosemount Elementary School. These six, along with many retiring employees, were scheduled to be recognized at the district's annual Partners in Education banquet in April. The event was postponed until later this year.

District supports state bonding request to fund proposed Diffley Road improvements

In April, the School Board unanimously approved a resolution supporting Dakota County's request to include Diffley Road safety improvements in this year's state bonding bill, which the Legislature failed to approve during regular session that ended May 18.

The county's request is for \$4.62 million to fund several proposed pedestrian and vehicle safety improvements on Diffley Road, Braddock Trail and the adjacent campuses of Northview Elementary School, Dakota Hills Middle School and Eagan High School.

Leaders from Dakota County, the city of Eagan and District 196 have been working together to identify

possible safety improvements to the roads and school campuses. Public meetings were held in December to get input on the full spectrum of possible improvements, which were developed and presented by engineers from Bolton & Menk. Another public meeting was held in February to get input on a narrowed list of possible improvements.

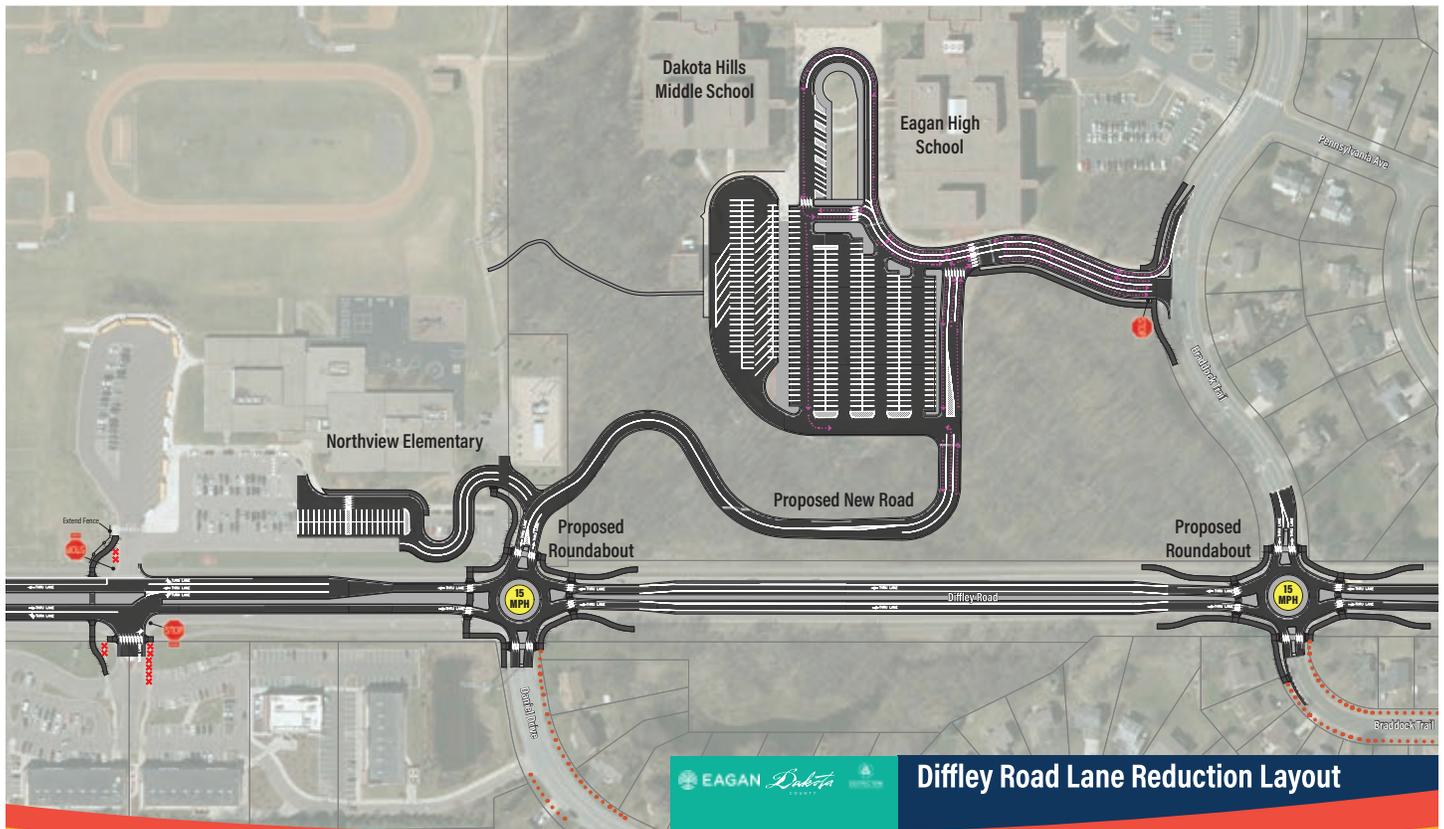
The improvements detailed in the county's bonding bill request include:

- Reconstruct Diffley from a four- to a two-lane road between Lexington Avenue to 2,000 feet east of Braddock Trail;
- Install roundabouts on Diffley at the intersections of Daniel Drive and Braddock Trail;

- Modify parking lot entrances/exits on Braddock Trail, and
- Construct a new road from the north side of the Daniel Drive roundabout into the high school south parking lot.

Board member **Cory Johnson** said he is impressed with the proposed solution and how it was shaped by public input throughout the process. "I'm really hoping this bonding request is successful because I feel they did a very good job to find a solution for our schools."

District Director of Finance and Operations **Mark Stotts** said the project will not be able to move forward without state funding.



The proposed improvements are shown in this graphic from Bolton & Menk. Diffley is the road running horizontally (east-west) at the bottom and Braddock Trail is the road running vertically on the right. Lexington Avenue to the west is not shown.



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Community Education



Fire Sale! May 29-June 3

Keep your child engaged in learning this summer! A limited number of CAHOOTS workbooks, a summer math and language arts program for K-5 students, will be available for \$47 each! Join more than 700 students who are already enrolled and ready to correspond directly with CAHOOTS buddies through the summer. Visit our online catalog (www.district196.ce.eleyo.com), May 29 - June 3, and search for CAHOOTS - Fire Sale, select the grade level for fall 2020 (1-6; 1=entering 1st grade, 2=entering 2nd grade, etc.). The book will be mailed to your home the week of June 8.



Youth Engaged and Inspired

Hundreds of District 196 youth, in the safety of their own homes, are getting fit in a yoga bootcamp, exploring how to relax and be mindful, preñdendo a hablar español, painting on a canvas, creating a clay mosaic, and much more. We are adding new learning opportunities frequently. Visit www.district196.org/ce for current course offerings.

Starry Night Dance Party was a Hit!



During the fourth week of our stay-at-home order, more than 900 families tuned into a District 196 Facebook LIVE event and enjoyed an evening of DJ, Bruce Karnick, playing popular hits, and Anna from *Frozen* hosting movie trivia. Many families already had the annual parent/child event on their calendar, which raises money for youth scholarships. That in-person event, like hundreds of others, was canceled due to COVID-19. However, that did not stop many from dancing the night away! Although we missed seeing all the participants at the gala, we enjoyed the comments and photos posted after the virtual event. To see more photos, visit the District 196 Community Education Facebook page.



Adult Lifelong Learners

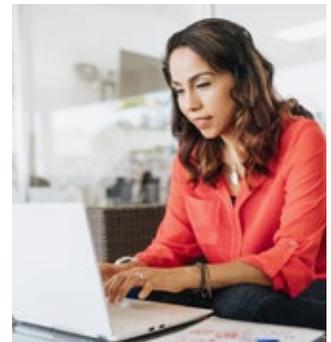
Adult Basic Education (ABE) is currently engaging more than 230 adult students to **learn English** and **prepare for the GED exam**, and another 130 adult students are **earning high school credits** in distance learning! Visit www.district196.org/abe to learn more.

Other adults are enjoying a variety of online enrichment classes, including **fitness**, **cooking**, **arts and crafts**, **money management**, **health and safety**, and more! Visit www.district196.org/ce to learn more.

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