

Eastern Carver
County Schools

Exceptional, personalized learning

★

school
report

CARVER, CHANHASSEN, CHASKA, AND VICTORIA, MN



SUMMER 2020

MESSAGE FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD

Together, we’ve got this

★ THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR IS ALWAYS A TIME FOR CELEBRATION. It’s a time to acknowledge the growth of students, academically and emotionally, mark transitions, and greet the coming of summer. This year, those celebrations looked and felt very different. With the outbreak of COVID-19, our students left school a few days shy of spring break and never returned to their buildings. They learned from—and connected with—their teachers and their friends via screens. They said goodbye virtually, or from the edge of their driveways, waving as a parade of teachers drove past.

The global health crisis wasn’t the only challenge faced by our district this year. A much-needed referendum failed in the fall, resulting in millions of dollars of budget cuts and the loss of many outstanding educators and staff. As a Board, we feel the responsibility and grieve the impact of these departures with our community. Superintendent Clint Christopher announced he was leaving, returning to Iowa to be closer to his family. Individually these were all significant hurdles. Combined, they could well have been overwhelming.

It’s a testament to the students, staff, families and this community that they didn’t. The attention of our staff every day was focused on serving our students. This is the heart of who we are and what we do as a school district. No matter what was going on outside the classroom, our teachers and staff continued to deliver the excellent education our students deserve and our community expects.

In March, with little warning, this same team pivoted to a distance learning model in a matter of days. Was it perfect with such short notice? No. But as the weeks progressed they adapted, finding ways to connect with students to make sure they had the support they needed not just for academic growth, but also that much-needed human connection.

Last month, the School Board completed its search for the next superintendent of Eastern Carver County Schools. We couldn’t be more excited or proud to name Lisa Sayles-Adams as our unanimous choice, selected after a rigorous interview process from a strong slate of candidates. Lisa’s background, her commitment to academic excellence, and her vision for a community growing stronger together made her the obvious choice. We can’t wait for you to meet her in the days and weeks ahead.

Of course, the big question on everyone’s mind is what school will look like in the fall. District teams are hard at work planning for multiple scenarios pending the Governor’s recommendations, which he will announce in late July. Once those are announced we will communicate district plans so everyone is ready to go once school starts.

Continued on next page

Lisa Sayles-Adams named ECCS Superintendent

At a special meeting on June 8, 2020, the Eastern Carver County School Board voted unanimously to approve the contract of **Lisa Sayles-Adams** as the district’s next superintendent. Sayles-Adams’ selection came after a rigorous interview process that included interviews with students, staff, and the community.

“This has been a challenging year for our district,” Board Chair Jeff Ross, Ph.D., said. “We knew we needed a dynamic, strong leader, not just to raise the already high quality of education for our students, but to help bring together our community. In Lisa, we have found a truly outstanding leader with the skills and background to deliver the excellence we all expect. She showed tonight she’s ready to hit the ground running, has the complete skill set we were seeking, and we are excited for what her leadership will accomplish for our students, staff, and community.”

During her interview, Sayles-Adams talked about the district’s academic strength and commitment to personalized learning as exciting areas for growth. As a student-centered leader, her decision-making process is grounded in what will best meet the needs

of students. She also spoke passionately about the importance of engaging the community in student success.

“I am so excited to begin this journey with the Eastern Carver County Schools communities,” Sayles-Adams said. “We are all united in wanting what’s best for our children—the best possible education that prepares them for wherever their life’s journey takes them. Working in partnership, we will grow stronger—and succeed—together.”

Sayles-Adams has over 24 years of experience in public education. She served most recently as assistant superintendent at North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale Public Schools, prior to which she held the same position with St. Paul Public Schools. She has also been a principal at the middle and elementary levels, and started her career as a middle school teacher. Her first official day with the district is July 1.



Lisa Sayles-Adams



Eastern Carver
County Schools

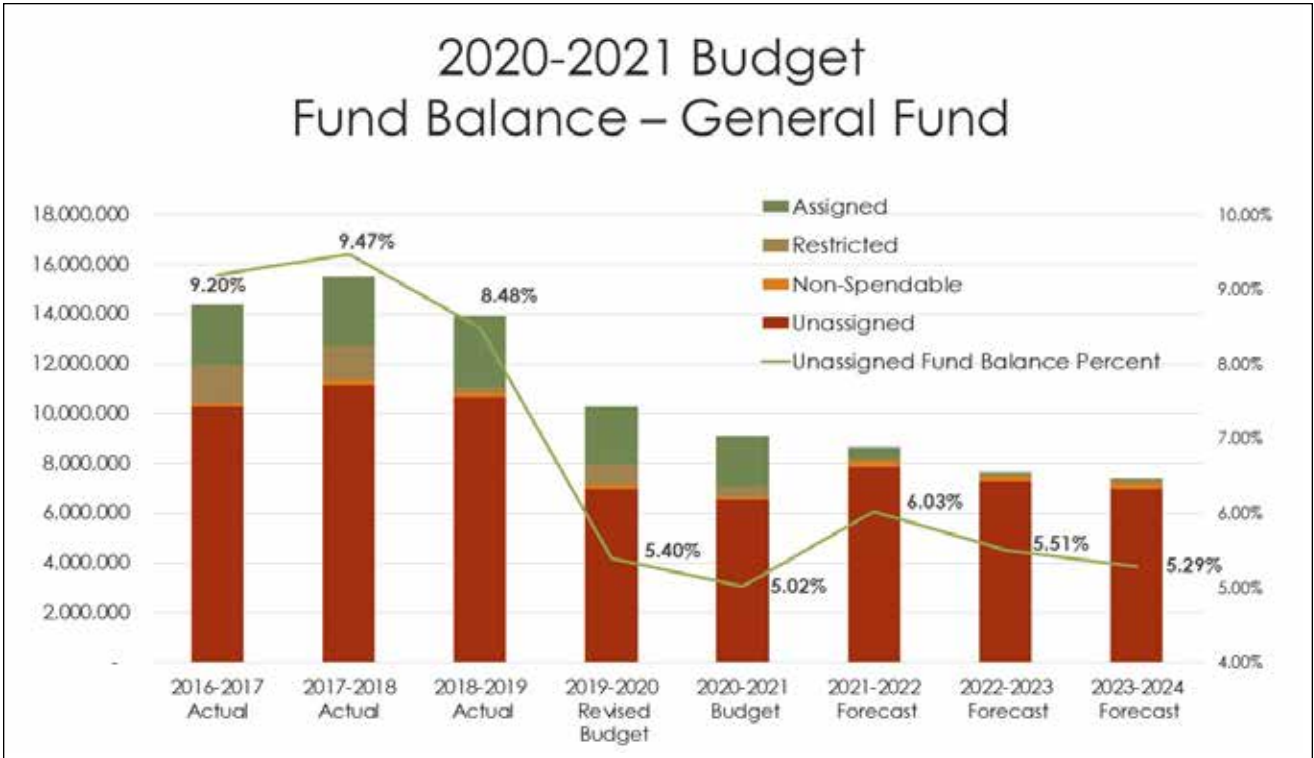
Exceptional, personalized learning

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Budget includes \$10 million in cuts over the next three years



The chart above shows how the Fund Balance for the General Fund will decrease in FY 21 and the predicted fund balances for the years ahead. In February, the Board approved \$10 million in budget cuts over the next three years which will allow the district’s unreserved fund balance to stay above the Board’s required 5% mark.

Eastern Carver County Schools has made a concerted effort over the years to implement fiscally-responsible budgets. Over the last 10 years, the district has made over \$10 million in cuts while minimizing impacts on students and the classroom experience. For years, state funding has not kept pace with inflation or increasing operating costs, and does not close the funding gap for our special education services.

The 2019 Referendum asked voters for an operating levy increase of \$550 per student, or approximately \$5.6 million per year to continue the strong academic preparation of our students, prevent cuts to programs and services, maintain class sizes and manage growing enrollment in our district. The operating levy was not approved by voters. As a result the school district needed to make over \$10 million in cuts over the next three years.

At its Feb. 24 meeting, the School Board approved final budget reductions for FY 2020-21, FY 2021-22, and a two-phased reduction plan for the following year. The approval for these budget reductions came after months of planning by district leadership and building teams, and took into account feedback collected from staff, parents and community members.

Budget cuts for the 20-21 school year total \$6,033,035 and include the following items:

- ▶ A soft freeze in pay, pending negotiations, for all non-teaching staff
- ▶ Change to a six-period day for high school
- ▶ A restructured teaching schedule for middle school
- ▶ An increase of 1.5 students in elementary classroom size (on average)
- ▶ Other restructuring and reductions in support staff

Approved cuts for the 21-22 school year total \$2,652,952.

This was an incredibly difficult decision for the Board, who before this process had been able to keep cuts from affecting students, teachers, support staff, and the broader ECCS community. Losing staff, program cuts, and reduced opportunities impact every part of our district, but were no longer avoidable.

Details for the 2020-21 Budget will be presented to the School Board at its meeting on June 22. All district budget documents can be found on the Finance Department webpage at www.district112.org.

What does *Equity* mean for Eastern Carver County Schools?

There have been a lot of conversations—and a lot of confusion—about what equity means in our district. At Eastern Carver County Schools, equity means a student’s identity—their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, immigration status, religion and/or disability—does not predict their success. All students are provided the tools, resources, and support they need to achieve their personal best.

What does that mean? Our vision at Eastern Carver County Schools is a safe, welcoming, and inclusive district where every student feels heard, seen, and valued. Our district celebrates students for who they are, their unique personal story, and provides students with a personalized, exceptional education that will help prepare them for who they want to become.

MESSAGE FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD
Continued from cover
In times of adversity, true character is revealed. This community has rallied behind its schools, its teachers, its students. Whether it was finding new and creative ways to celebrate our amazing Class of 2020, supporting the district Angel Fund to continue to provide meals for children in need, or showing love to staff on social media, it’s clear you care. As we look to an uncertain fall, that community spirit and care will be needed more than ever. Together, we’ve got this.

Jeff Ross, Ph.D., Board Chair
on behalf of the ECCS Board

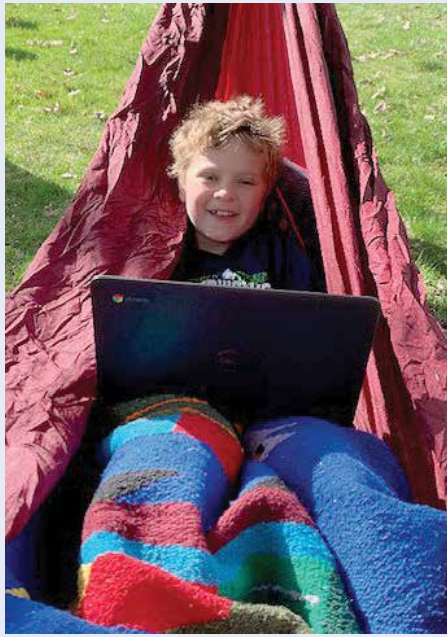
New to the area?
Help us update our census
If you live in the Eastern Carver County Schools district and have children in your home, age birth through 5 years old who are not yet enrolled in kindergarten, we need to confirm your child’s census information. We use this information to plan for future enrollment. Please contact us using one of the following methods:

▶ Visit apps.district112.org/censusinfo to submit the information electronically.
▶ Leave this information on our census voicemail at **952-556-6137** (available 24/7)



CELEBRATING THE END OF ANOTHER SCHOOL YEAR DURING THE ‘NEW NORMAL’

After nearly three months of distance learning, students didn’t have the chance to celebrate the end of the school year the way they normally would with their classmates in their classrooms. Instead, several elementary schools organized school bus parades and teachers waved to students cheering from their driveways.



This spring, students stayed connected with their teachers and classrooms through distance learning. Important hands-on learning took place in elective courses like Family And Consumer Science (FACS), Art and Music classes. Students found some creative spaces to learn from home. And even the youngest preschool learners were able to keep in touch with teachers using *Google Meet* and other online learning tools.

Staying connected and learning from a distance

We are so proud of how our students, families, and teachers partnered together for success in the ten weeks of distance learning that closed the 2019-2020 school year. Relying strongly on the technology systems we already utilized like Google Classroom and Seesaw, teachers were able to organize lessons, assignments, and distribute learning resources to students each day. Some subscription-based tools like IXL and BrainPop were used to supplement the instructional lessons that teachers were creating and sharing via video and presentation. Students had the chance to practice, share, and demonstrate their learning through tools like Flipgrid, Padlet, slide shows, and videos.

There was a lot happening away from technology, too. In many classes, students used their kitchens, backyards, and neighborhoods to practice science experiments, FACS cooking lessons, and personal wellness (physical education) activities. Teachers infused choice into how students could demonstrate their progress in learning.

Keeping students engaged and connected with teachers and peers was a critical goal during distance learning. Teachers were able to host Google Meet sessions for classes to virtually gather together as well as one-one and small group sessions. These meetings were the highlights of distance learning for both students and teachers who craved “seeing” each other.

While it is unknown exactly what school will look like in the fall, district teams are hard at work planning for multiple scenarios. A recommendation is expected from the Governor in late July. Visit www.district112.org for updates.

Distance Learning By The Numbers

49 Number of days students engaged in distance learning

41,713 Meals and snacks distributed or delivered to kids during school closure

40-50 Preschool- and elementary-aged children attended child care for essential workers each day during school closure

Four Eastern Carver County Schools named Sustaining Exemplar Schools

District recognized for excellence in PBIS Program

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has recognized 67 public schools and six school districts for their successful work using **Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS)**, a data-driven program that provides schools and districts with training and support to promote positive student behavior, especially for students facing challenges inside and outside of the classroom. Through evidence-based practices, this national program aims to make schools more responsive to the cultures and communities they serve. One important area of focus for the program is on decreasing disparities in discipline, which have historically had negative impacts on educational outcomes for students of color, American Indian students and students with disabilities.

The schools receiving recognition are leaders in supporting positive behavior, improving school climate and increasing student achievement.

To be identified as a Sustaining Exemplar School, staff needed to submit an application that documented their work with PBIS, including professional outcomes, a plan for sustaining the program, and how they are giving back and sharing their practices with other schools throughout Minnesota. Schools must also have been implementing PBIS for at least three years.

...this national program aims to make schools more responsive to the cultures and communities they serve.

Four Eastern Carver County schools were named Sustaining Exemplar Schools: **Bluff Creek Elementary, Chanhassen High School, Clover Ridge Elementary and Pioneer Ridge Middle School.**

In addition to individual school recognition, districts that are coordinating and supporting their PBIS schools throughout the district can apply for district recognition. To be identified for PBIS District Recognition, districts must demonstrate capacity for coordination, training, coaching and evaluation to support schools implementing PBIS.

Eastern Carver County Schools was among six Minnesota districts recognized for excellence in positive school climates and student supports. Other districts include: Burnsville-Eagan-Savage, Cambridge-Isanti Schools, Osseo Area Schools, Saint Paul Public Schools, and St. Cloud Area School District.



2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

- September 1-2
Connect & Assess Days (K-5)
- September 7
Labor Day (No School)
- September 8
School Opens (K-12)
- October 8
2-Hour Late Start
- October 15-16
Education MN (No School)
- November 25-27
Thanksgiving Break (No School)
- November 30
Conference/Workshop Day (No School)
- December 10
2-Hour Late Start
- December 23 - January 1
Winter Break (No School)
- January 18
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (No School)
- January 25
Conference/Workshop Day (No School)
- February 11
2-Hour Late Start
- February 15
President's Day (No School)
- March 5
Conference/Workshop Day (No School)
- March 29-April 2
Spring Break (No School)
- May 13
2-Hour Late Start
Kindergarten Sneak-a-Peek
- May 31
Memorial Day (No School)
- June 8
Last Day of School (Grades K-5)
- June 10
Last Day of School (Grades 6-12)
- June 11
Graduation

school report

Published by the Eastern Carver County Schools' Community Relations Department.

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Nate Gorder	Kathryn Moe
Elizabeth Guenther	Connie Nuss
Kathleen Hall	Constance Palmer
Krista Hammann	Sarah Peterson
Joel Hammers	Jodi Potter
Catherine Henderson	

CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS YEAR'S RETIRING STAFF MEMBERS

Thank you for your combined 896 years of service to Eastern Carver County Schools.

You will be missed!

Janet Severns
Jeffrey Theis
Sharon Tupper
Dick Ungar
Kathryn Williams
Walter Wittwen
Abraham Ybarra
Michelle Young

Eastern Carver County Schools

Community Education

summer 2020

Youth Enrichment
Summer Sports
Adult Opportunities

ce4all.org

COMMUNITY EDUCATION offers in-person and virtual programs and classes this summer for people of all ages. We've modified our activities to follow health and safety guidelines from the MDH and CDC. Browse the summer catalog and view our summer safety guidelines at ce4all.org.

District Music Program Earns Award

Proud BCME District

Investing in our kids and working with you to fill the gaps.

The District 112 Foundation advances innovation and excellence in education serving Eastern Carver County Schools by funding:

- Grants to help fund innovative classroom projects
- Recognition programs focused on teachers and staff to celebrate their dedication and encourage a commitment to excellence
- Scholarship & nutritional support to help cover the basics like food security and provide opportunities for all our learners

With your help, we can do even more!

DISTRICT 112 FOUNDATION
Serving Eastern Carver County Schools

Visit eccs.mn/foundation to learn more

Eastern Carver County Schools
Exceptional, personalized learning

— CONGRATULATIONS —

Class of 2020

THE CLASS OF 2020 ARE EXCEPTIONAL YOUNG PEOPLE IN AN EXTRAORDINARY TIME.

YOUR GRACE, RESILIENCE, COMPASSION, AND COURAGE SHINE A BRIGHT LIGHT ON OUR COMMUNITY, AND LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY.

Eastern Carver County Schools Board of Directors, administrators, and staff salute you as you close this chapter of your lives and move on to the next.

BEST OF LUCK, AND CONTINUE TO MAKE US PROUD!