

School report



CARVER, CHANHASSEN, CHASKA, AND VICTORIA, MN

SCHOOL'S OUT EDITION 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Grateful for students, parents, staff and community



There have been a lot of words used to describe this past school year, among them: unprecedented, challenging, difficult. I would like to add a few more as I reflect on the 2020-21 school year and my first year as Eastern Carver County Schools superintendent: community, strength, and resilience. Of course, no reflection would be complete without a word that unifies it all: gratitude.

I am ever grateful for this community. I am grateful for our students, whose grace and resilience were a driving motivation throughout the year. I am grateful for our parents, who invested so much time and effort in supporting students as we shifted between learning models. I am grateful to our staff who shifted on a dime to continue to deliver quality education to our students from a distance, in hybrid models, and in-person. I am grateful to our broader community, who showed up in countless ways over the year to support our learners.

There is much to celebrate: a return to fully in-person learning, state championships in athletics and activities, thousands of books read and lessons learned, victories large and small in every classroom across our district. Our seniors will graduate together after a hard year, and I cannot wait to see what they will accomplish in the years ahead. The talented staff in the district will help us continue to grow, evolve, and deliver the quality education our students deserve and our community expects.

As we look to the fall, we all hope for a return to normalcy. It is also clear that even as we have successfully navigated teaching and learning in a pandemic, there are still challenges ahead. Over \$9 million dollars has been cut from the budget in the last two years, much of that due to the failure of the 2019 referendum. Without additional funding,

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CELEBRATING WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

A group of high school seniors recently visited Clover Ridge Elementary where their educational journey began 13 years ago. More than 750 students received diplomas from Chaska and Chanhassen High Schools and the Integrated Arts Academy this month.

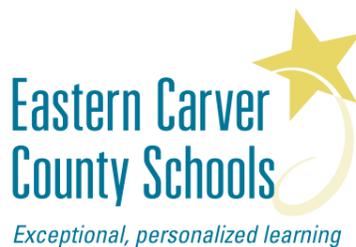
Board reviews need for 2021 Operating Referendum

While no final decisions have been made, the Eastern Carver County School Board has been gathering information and reviewing options for a potential 2021 Operating Referendum.

The failure of the November 2019 Operating Referendum, along with inconsistent state and federal funding, continue to impact the district's budget. In addition to the \$6 million cuts to the budget for the 2020-21 school year, the Board approved an additional \$3.1 million in cuts and revenue enhancements for the 2021-22 school year. Without additional future funding, the district has proposed cuts totaling \$5.7 million dollars for the 2022-23 and 2023-2024 school years.

The Board's timeline for this important decision has included review of detailed Facility Task Force recommendations, enrollment data, community survey results, as well as budget and financial forecasts for the next three years. The Board is expected to make a referendum decision at its June 28th meeting.

Learn more and find documents reviewed by the Board at www.district112.org.



11 Peavey Road
Chaska, MN 55318
952-556-6100
www.district112.org

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Eastern Carver County Schools is committed to creating a school environment where everyone feels welcome, safe, and included and where every child has access to the tools and opportunities they need to succeed. Learn more at eccs.mn/equity.

ECCS STUDENT PERSPECTIVES



ECCS Teacher of the Year Eric Songer, Music and Band teacher, Chaska Middle School West

Preschool – Parent Kacey L. and Hank

“Each of our three children have attended full-time preschool at the Family Learning Center. We are so thankful for Ms. Lindy and how the program has prepared our children for the transition to kindergarten. They have received a well-rounded, balanced preschool education with activities including arts, music and playground time.”



5th grader – Carver Elementary – Julia M.

“Even though there have been a lot of ups and downs this year, I’ve had a really good year at Carver Elementary. I really liked Mrs. Leigh and all of the friends I made. I’m excited and a little scared for middle school. But I’m really looking forward to different food choices, meeting more people, new teachers, and having a locker.”



8th grader – Chaska Middle School East – Annaliese N.

“Chaska Middle School East has helped me learn the importance of advocating for myself and knowing how to get help when I need it. I can’t wait to get to high school in the fall!”



Graduating Senior – Integrated Arts Academy – Brock T.

“I wouldn’t have graduated if it weren’t for the Integrated Arts Academy. This place has given me so many opportunities that I thought I would never be able to have. I’ve made so many friends and have had amazing, inspiring teachers. I’m so excited about my future now and can’t wait to pay it forward.”



★ Eric Songer named Teacher of the Year

Second award for Chaska Middle School West music and band teacher

Eric Songer was named 2021 Teacher of the Year by the District 112 Foundation as part of its Excellence in Education Awards.

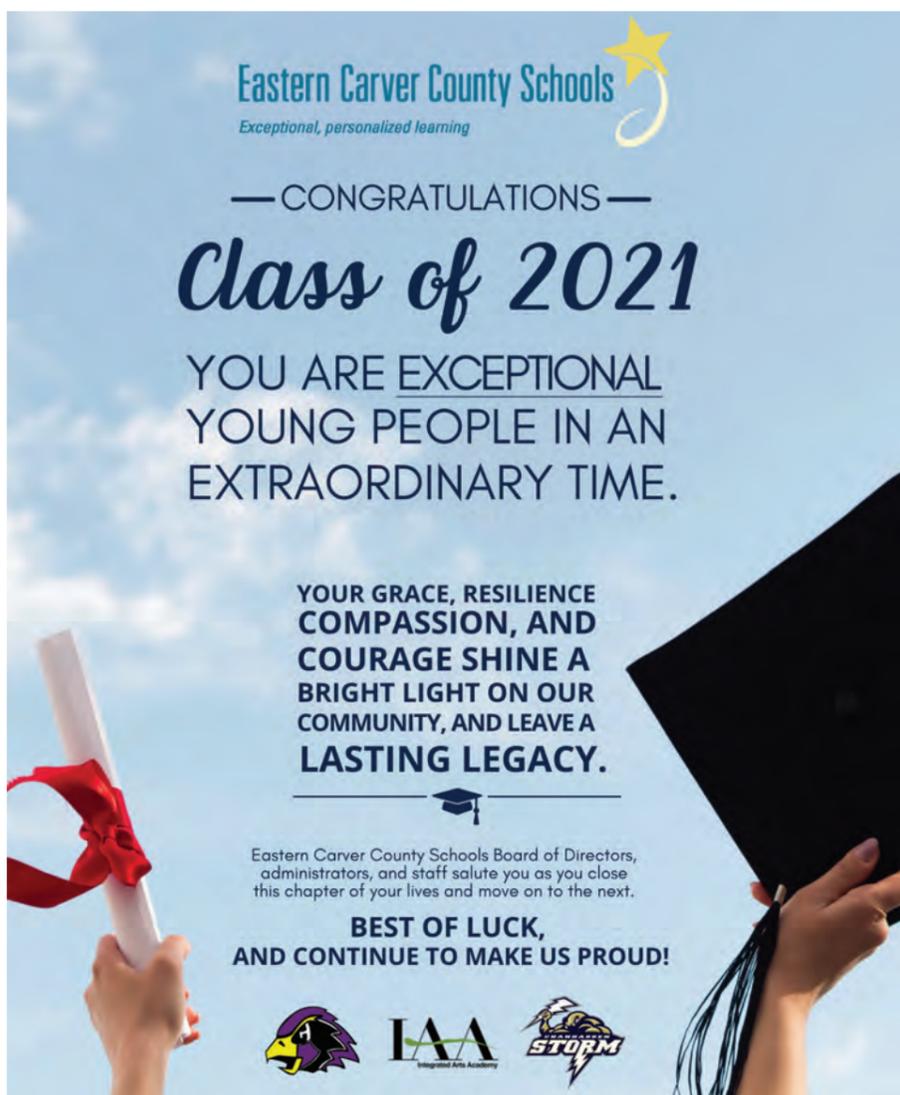
His enthusiasm and creative approaches to teaching music and band to students at Chaska Middle School West haven’t gone unnoticed as this is the second time Songer has won the award.

Four other finalists for this year’s Teacher of the Year award included: **Jen Carlson** (Clover Ridge Elementary), **Margaret Cassett** (Chaska High School), **Leeann Sit** (La Academia), and **Andrew Waller** (Chaska Middle School East).



CONGRATS TO THE CLASS OF 2021!

More than 750 Chanhassen and Chaska High School graduates received their diplomas at the June 11th ceremonies this year. Graduates are heading coast-to-coast to continue their post-secondary education and plans. Four graduates from the Integrated Arts Academy will attend the prestigious Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD) in the fall of 2021. Integrated Arts Academy (IAA) is one of the district’s three high schools. MCAD is a strong national leader in fine arts, design, and entrepreneurship education. The IAA curriculum uses a project-based learning model integrating visual arts, horticulture, and culinary arts into the core curriculum for a high school diploma. (IAA graduates: Brock Thalhuber, Sam Nuteson, Ethereal Davis, and Julia Meles.)



District welcomes new leaders

Eastern Carver County School District is pleased to announce a new slate of leaders in the district. **Shaun Walsh** has been named the new Director of Community Education, **Beth Holm** as the new Principal of Bluff Creek Elementary, **Ryan Finke** as the new Principal of Carver Elementary, **Peter Morse** as the new Principal of Jonathan Elementary, and **Dr. Greg Martin** as the new Principal of Chaska Middle School East. All five were selected after thorough interview processes involving multiple rounds of interviews with various stakeholders. They will begin their positions this summer. They are assuming their new roles after the retirements of Jackie Johnston, Joan MacDonald, June Johnson, and Nancy Wittman-Beltz. Martin replaces Beth Holm at Chaska Middle School East.

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION



Shaun Walsh

Shaun Walsh comes to the district with over 20 years in youth and community program development. She is currently the Community Education Program Supervisor with St. Paul Public Schools. She has served in other community education capacities in the district, as well as with Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys, the Blake School, and YWCA of Minneapolis. Walsh received her bachelor degree from Macalester College, her master's from San Diego State University, and is currently pursuing her doctorate in Education, Organization Leadership, Policy and Development from the University of Minnesota.

CHASKA MIDDLE SCHOOL EAST PRINCIPAL



Dr. Greg Martin

Dr. Greg Martin has over a decade of experience in education, serving most recently as an associate principal at Mounds View High School and Elk River High School. Prior to that, he worked as a middle and high school teacher, coach, and student management specialist within Osseo and Watertown Mayer Public Schools. In addition to his secondary education experience, Martin has served as an adjunct faculty member at the University of St. Thomas and Saint Mary's University since 2015. He earned his bachelors and master's degrees from the University of Minnesota and his educational specialist and doctorate of education degrees from the University of St. Thomas. In summer of 2021, Martin will receive a certificate in School Management and Leadership from Harvard University

BLUFF CREEK ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL



Beth Holm

Beth Holm has over 15 years experience in education, serving in both school counselor and administrative capacities over the course of her career. She is currently principal of Chaska Middle School East. She has been a counselor, dean, and assistant principal in the district previously, as well as an elementary school counselor in the Hopkins and Mankato school districts. Holm received her bachelor, master's, and specialist degrees from Minnesota State University Mankato.

CARVER ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL



Ryan Finke

Ryan Finke has almost 15 years of experience in education. He currently serves as the Assistant Principal at Richfield Middle School. He has also been a dean, instructional coach, targeted services and summer school coordinator, and an English and Language Arts teacher at the middle level. Finke received his bachelor degree from St. John's University, his master's from St. Mary's University, and his specialist degree from St. Thomas University.

JONATHAN ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL



Peter Morse

Peter Morse has almost two decades of experience in education and youth program development. He is currently the Administrative Dean at Victoria Elementary School. He was a science and math teacher at Pioneer Ridge Middle School before joining the Victoria team, and an elementary teacher and dean in other districts prior to joining Eastern Carver County Schools. He received his bachelor degree from St. Olaf, and his master's from the University of Minnesota.

One-time federal funding used for costs associated with pandemic

Eastern Carver County Schools received one-time federal funding to be exclusively used to cover costs caused by the hardships associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Congress has passed three stimulus bills, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA), and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP), that provided nearly \$190.5 billion nationally to the Elementary and Secondary Emergency Education Relief (ESSER) Fund.

ECCS currently has been allocated over \$5.7 million in COVID relief funding. The district is allowed to spend the special funding on a range of things including:

- ▶ Upgrades to enhance indoor air quality, and ventilation in buildings
- ▶ PPE for staff (masks, face shields, etc.)
- ▶ Plexiglass dividers in school spaces such as office reception areas
- ▶ Technology and internet hotspots for distance learning
- ▶ Additional cleaning and sanitation products required during COVID-19
- ▶ Mental health support
- ▶ Summer school programming
- ▶ Some staff salaries as they related to teaching during COVID-19 such as additional substitute teachers
- ▶ Meeting the needs of underserved students

ECCS allocates these funds responsibly with the health and safety of our students and staff in mind, and with the priority to preserve in-person learning. These funds cannot be used to address the issue of enrollment loss due to COVID-19.

ECCS —WE DID IT!

In a year with so many things that couldn't be done, our students and staff members still managed to do so much. Scan this QR code to watch a video highlighting what Eastern Carver County Schools did this year.





2021-22 DISTRICT CALENDAR

- September 7
First day of school
- October 6
Late Start Day
- October 21-22
MEA Break
- October 25
Conference/Workshop (no school)
- November 24-26
Thanksgiving Break
- November 29
Conference/Workshop (no school)
- December 8
Late Start Day
- December 23-31
Winter Break
- January 17
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- January 24
Conference/Workshop (no school)
- February 9
Late Start Day
- February 21
President's Day
- March 4
Conference/Workshop (no school)
- March 28-April 1
Spring Break
- April 15
Late Spring Break
- May 11
Late Start Day
- May 30
Memorial Day
- June 7
Last day of school (grades K-5)
- June 9
Last day of school (grades 6-12)
- June 10
Graduation Day

Countdown to Kindergarten

Getting your child ready to attend school

BIRTH	1-2 YEARS OLD	3 YEARS OLD	4 YEARS OLD	5 YEARS OLD
Congratulations on your new child	Learn and grow	Time for screening and preschool	Learn and grow	Time for kindergarten
1. Let us know about your new child at eccs.mn/census 2. Learn about Early Child Family Education programs at eccs.mn/ecfe	1. Let us know about your toddler at eccs.mn/census 2. Enroll in a Early Child Family Education offering at eccs.mn/ecfe	1. Schedule the early childhood screening at eccs.mn/screening 2. Visit eccs.mn/preschool to learn more about preschool choices	1. Tell us about your child at eccs.mn/census 2. Schedule the early childhood screening at eccs.mn/screening 3. Check out eccs.mn/preschool	1. Visit eccs.mn/kindergarten to learn more and enroll 2. Complete the early childhood screening: eccs.mn/screening , if you haven't yet



Weekly Summer Meal Kits offered to children

Free meals must be pre-ordered

Thanks to an extension in federal funding, Eastern Carver County Schools Nutrition Services is able to provide free meals this summer to children (up to age 18) in our community this summer.

Weekly meal kits are free but must be pre-ordered. Learn more at eccs.mn/nutrition.

If you have any questions, please contact the Nutrition Services office at 952-556-6150 or Nutrition@district112.org.

SCHOOL BUS

NOW HIRING

\$21.11/hour
(after 90 days)

Benefits eligible

On-the-job training

eccs.mn/busdrivers

school report

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

We welcome questions or comments

Celi Haga, *Communications Director*
952-556-6121 | hagac@district112.org

Lisa Sayles-Adams, *Superintendent*
952-556-6110

2020-21 District School Board

Jeff Ross, Ph.D., *Chair* | 763-458-8801

Lisa Anderson, *Vice-Chair* | 952-361-4267

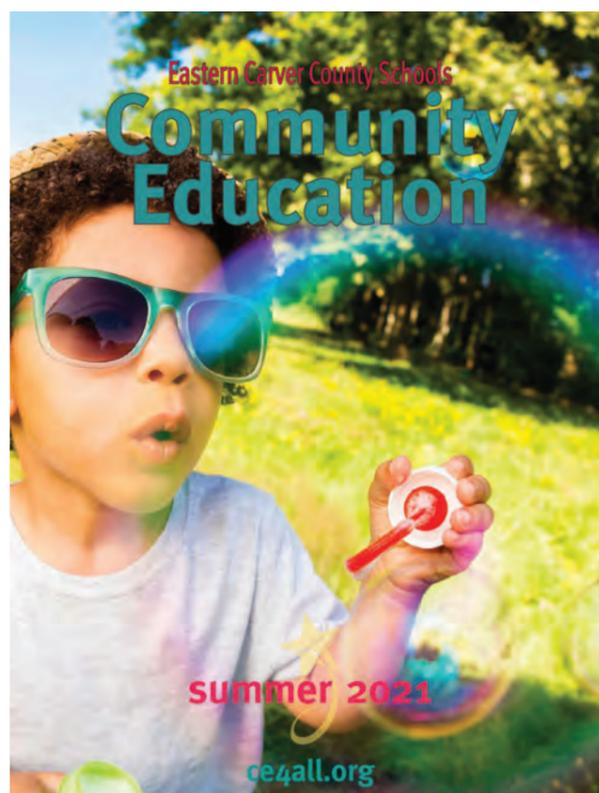
Jenny Stone, *Treasurer* | 952-220-4136

Fred Berg, *Director* | 952-474-8394

Angela Erickson, *Director* | 320-491-9451

Tim Klein, *Director* | 952-513-8767

Sean Olsen, *Director* | 952-221-7745



COMMUNITY ED offers summer programs and classes for people of all ages. Check out all the latest offerings and enroll online at ce4all.org.

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Continued from cover

an additional \$5.7 million dollars in cuts are proposed for the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years.

The School Board is also determining whether to pursue an operating referendum this fall. Over the past several months they have thoughtfully reviewed the work of the Facilities Task Force, reviewed the district budget and finances, and on June 28th they will make their decision. Look for more information in the days and weeks ahead about the results of that decision and what that means for the fall.

As I look back on this year, I am so proud of the work we have done together as a district community. We have outstanding students, an amazing staff, and a caring and supportive community. The pandemic has kept me from being out in person but I look forward to engaging with you face to face soon. It is a privilege to serve you, and I know working in partnership we will continue to do great things with and for our most precious resource: our students.