HOW YOUR VOICE MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN EDEN PRAIRIE SCHOOLS

Over the last 10 years, Eden Prairie Schools has continued to provide unrivaled opportunities as one of Minnesota’s top school districts.

The inspiring opportunities we provide our students are due to the strong connections throughout Eden Prairie. We are a school district that listens closely to the public in many different ways, and we value the input of our diverse residents, civic organizations and business leaders.

This school year, Central Middle School (CMS) and Eden Prairie High School have new classes that inspire students to explore their interests and potential careers. These Pathways courses directly result from an extensive community input process in 2015 called Designing Pathways. This fall, we opened CMS newly-renovated and expanded with funding from a bond referendum approved by voters in 2019. These renovations are central to realizing the academic vision defined by our community in Designing Pathways.

At the start of this school year, we again conducted an engagement process across our school community to identify priorities for federal coronavirus relief funds. These are one-time funds available only during a specific window of time. Our community’s voices were clear: Provide mental health support for students, expand opportunities for academic support, and make operational improvements for air quality and outdoor learning environments.

Over the rest of this school year, our staff will have opportunities to learn from mental health experts. Students will have more access to mental health counseling. Our elementary schools have enhanced daily routines to build strong social connections and classroom community. This has been especially important after the isolation so many experienced in 2020. A number of academic supports are being added, including Power Reading which provides elementary students with daily, individualized reading practice with an adult. These are just a few of the ways community input has a direct effect on our schools.

Listening carefully to our public is part of how we conduct our work in Eden Prairie Schools. There will be more opportunities to share your ideas and inspiration about Eden Prairie Schools. Thank you for your continued support of our students, staff and schools.

NAME: Shirin Noahshah Dick Abdullah  Gender: B  School: Central Middle School

My Wings: I am on the Principal Advisory Leadership Council at CMS, which makes me feel like I have the chance to shine and show what I am talented in. Before I came to this school, I didn’t feel very included with my other classmates. Everyone at CMS treats me the same though, even if we don’t look like each other. The school spirit and caring and supportive environment inspire me to come to school and be myself.

SHOW YOUR WINGS

EP Wins Niche Best Schools Award

Niche, a web-based tool that helps students and families find schools, named Eden Prairie Schools among its 2022 Best Schools.

The district was also ranked in the top three places to teach in Minnesota.
Since the beginning of 2020, many in our community have faced challenges and experienced loss. We have all been reminded that how we respond to adversity matters a great deal. The Eden Prairie School Board is incredibly grateful for and proud of how our community has and continues to respond to adversity.

- School district staff have shown incredible creativity, flexibility, and, above all, unwavering dedication to students and families.
- Students have focused on their education and shown care and concern for their peers.
- Community members have supported each other in countless ways.
  
  The achievement of our students demonstrates the impact of our collective response to adversity. The 2020-2021 goal for our third-grade students to be reading at grade level, which was set before the pandemic and assumed an in-person learning model, was missed by a mere 2.8 percentage points. The goal for fourth-grade students was exceeded by 1.3 percentage points. Final scores and other district departments are now analyzing what they ordered. Staff members are pitching in daily to support and cover for each other. Teachers are working to identify gaps in students’ learning that exist as a function of non-traditional learning models during the past year. Eden Prairie School District staff has gone above and beyond for almost two years and the end is still not clearly in sight. Delivering a quality education is no small task but it’s never been more difficult than it is right now. Please say thanks to Eden Prairie’s staff when you can.

Eden Prairie School Board is incredibly grateful for and proud of how our community has addressed each of these areas with special emphasis on family engagement and student mental health. These two areas align directly with our Strategic Plan. Read more in Superintendent Dr. Josh Swanson’s message about specific ways these funds are being used.

**NEW SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS**

The Eden Prairie School Board welcomed two new board members in November - Francesca Pagan-Umar and Steven Bartz. Eden Prairie voters elected Steven Bartz in November 2 special election and the School Board appointed Francesca Pagan-Umar at the November 8 meeting to fill Beth Fletcher’s seat until a special election in November, 2022. We are happy to have you both with Eden Prairie Schools!

**EDEN PRAIRIE PROMOTES STUDENT WELL-BEING AND MENTAL HEALTH:**

This summer, Eden Prairie Schools received notice from the federal government that coronavirus relief funds would be available on a one-time basis for a limited period of time. We used an online tool called Thought Exchange to ask our community for ideas on how to use these funds. The following key themes were formed from hosting this question:

- Improve air circulation & ventilation
- Increase access to outdoor spaces
- Prioritize student mental health
- Offer accelerated learning

Eden Prairie Schools is addressing each of these areas with special emphasis on family engagement and student mental health. These two areas align directly with our Strategic Plan. Read more in Superintendent Dr. Josh Swanson’s message about specific ways these funds are being used.

**IN CLASSROOMS**
- Enhance how teachers promote personal/making relations and build that promote shared community
- Incorporate tools to support mental health and learning throughout their day
- Ensure all students participate in daily physical activity
- Students use learning data to identify and support individual learning gaps
- Students have access to mental health learning experiences that support understanding of self and safety

**OUTSIDE OF CLASSROOMS**
- Access to community social workers and school psychologist for responding to community needs
- Support for teachers to be located in and around districts to make school environments for students
- Access and programs to address work-life balance of staff during the pandemic period
- Staff Chaplains and individual counselors for extended school learning

**WIDEST OFFERINGS**
- Free counseling to students, families, and staff
- Student leadership opportunities and advisors who value wellness
- Free counseling to students and staff

**ON THE COVER:** This student is participating in PBIS, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, a process that highlights our commitment to providing safe and kind way. Every elementary school participates in PBIS.