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## Rounding out 2021

As we find ourselves in the final month of the calendar year, we celebrate the first half of the school year and look forward to what 2022 will bring.

For our students, we hope the turning of the calendar page will bring time outside in the snow, a cozy place to curl up with a good book, and meaningful time spent with friends and family. For our families and community members, we hope January affords the time to look back on the last months with a sense of accomplishment for finding the internal resilience these days have required of all of us.

This issue of Bear's Bulletin contains pages dedicated to the 2021 Annual Update, including student proficiency and growth, opportunities afforded to students, finance information, and a snapshot of our district community.

We are proud of our students, families and community for the resilience shown in uncertain times. Even when new situations are presented, our students and families continue to rise to the challenge and celebrate their successes.

Thank you for your part in helping us successfully complete 2021, and please join me in welcoming the days ahead in 2022.

Dr. Wayne A. Kazmierczak  
Superintendent  
White Bear Lake Area Schools

### Translations:

Para Español por favor llame al 651-407-7625

Xav tau ntwav Hmoob hu rau 651-407-7623

Flip book to see  
Community Services &  
Recreation Catalog

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# STUDENT GROWTH & PROFICIENCY

## Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA)

Student proficiency is measured by the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) tests, Minnesota's state requirement for testing under the Federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Due to ongoing challenges with the COVID-19 pandemic, the participation rate for the MCA in spring 2021 was significantly lower than in previous years, when White Bear Lake Area Schools typically has seen more than a 95% participation rate for both assessments. Math had a 70% participation rate and Reading had a 76% participation rate. The state-level participation rate was similarly lower than it has been in the past.

## Early Childhood

All of the District's preschools have a Parent Aware rating of four stars, the highest possible rating. Teachers assess the growth of children and take appropriate measures to ensure they are kindergarten-ready.

## Elementary

Students in our elementary programs are assessed by teachers using a range of grade-appropriate assessments in reading, math and science to measure progress toward local and state standards. Student proficiency is measured using MCA assessments. Instructional support is personalized so students who test below grade level receive extra intervention and support, and students who already exceed standards are challenged through our comprehensive Gifted and Talented program.

## Middle School

Our middle school students take the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA). Teachers and counselors use these assessments along with other data to help students select courses. Intervention support is provided for students who test below grade level. Accelerated and enriched class options ensure each student is challenged.

## High School

High school teachers assess students through common assessments in each subject. Nationally-normed assessments include the PreACT offered to tenth graders in the fall and the PSAT and ACT offered to eleventh graders. Counselors and teachers use these data, along with an understanding of student motivation and goals, to help students select from more than 250 course offerings, including 50 college-level courses and seven career pathways areas.

2020-21 WBLAS MCA COMPARISON TO STATE AVERAGES

	State	WBLAS	WBLAS % above state
Reading	52.5%	56.6%	+4.1%
Mathematics	44.2%	45.1%	+0.9%

Source: Minnesota Department of Education's "Minnesota Report Card"

## Responding to student needs

Anticipating challenges and disruption to student learning being created by COVID-19, staff members had begun conversations and plans during the 2020-21 school year that focused on learning recovery and targeted support for each of our students. Throughout the year, building and district teams worked to adjust instruction and intervention to meet the needs of students who were learning at home and/or returning to in-person learning.

The district coordinated and implemented a robust set of summer programming for a wide variety of students in grades K-12. Over the summer of 2021, teams of teachers and administrators worked together to plan for content, credit, and grade recovery, particularly at the high school level.

The complete picture of each student has informed instruction in the 2021-2022 school year, which has been delivered in an in-person format with the option for those families who choose online learning to enroll in the district's Distance Learning Academy.

In addition to MCA data, White Bear Lake Area Schools has utilized local academic measures that include data such as academic and social-emotional screeners, Pre-ACT and ACT, academic grades and credits.

# HIGH EXPECTATIONS & ENRICHMENT

**90%** White Bear Lake Area Schools 4-year graduation rate for Class of 2020 was 90.1%, 6.3 percentage points above the state average.  
*Graduation rate calculations follow one year behind the current graduating year.*

**WBLAS continues to be a recognized leader for developing Career Pathways aligned to workforce needs.**

Launched in 2015, our pathway programs allow students to take one or two courses, or a series of courses. They also allow students opportunities for job shadowing, industry site visits, and credentials or certifications recognized in the field.

**Career PATHWAYS at ISD 624**

**Pathways Currently Offered**

-  **Automotive**
-  **Business**
-  **Construction Skilled Trades**
-  **Education**
-  **Healthcare & Wellness**
-  **Information Technology**
-  **Manufacturing & Engineering**

**50** **Colleges and Universities on campus**  
 During the 20-21 school year, 50 college level courses were offered at WBLAHS: 21 Advanced Placement (AP) classes, 25 College in the School (CIS/CitHS) courses, and 4 Project Lead the Way (PLTW) courses. Students also took advantage of Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO).

**More than half** of the 10th-12th grade students at WBLAHS enrolled in potentially college credit-bearing courses in the 2020-21 academic year.

<b>PLTW</b>	36 students earned 125 credits
<b>CIS</b>	358 students earned 1037 credits
<b>AP</b>	524 students earned 2425 credits
<b>PSEO</b>	85 students earned 777 credits

**\$2.3 mil**  
 Total value of credits earned by WBLAHS students in college-level courses during 2020-21.

*All tuition calculations except concurrent enrollment based on U of MN tuition rate of \$520.50 per credit. Concurrent enrollment based on Century College tuition rate of \$196.89. PLTW grade cutoff B-, all others C-. Students may be counted more than once if they participated in more than one program. AP credit calculations based on U of MN score acceptance.*

**RISING TO THE CHALLENGE**  
 Percentage of 10th-12th graders who enrolled in potentially college credit-bearing courses 2020-2021:

- ASIAN: 63.9%
- BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN: 34.7%
- HISPANIC/LATINX: 38.9%
- MULTI-RACIAL: 44.9%
- WHITE: 53%

**99**  
**Advanced Placement Scholars**

**2021 Advanced Placement Scholars**  
 58 AP Scholars  
 16 AP Scholars with Honors  
 25 AP Scholars with Distinction

**3** students were recognized in the National Merit program. Two received Letter of Commendation and one was a Semifinalist.

**Student Support Services**

White Bear Lake Area Schools have high expectations for all students and offer a continuum of specialized instruction for students with special needs. Our programs are individualized and comprehensive.

**AVID**  
 Our high school and middle school students have the opportunity to participate in the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program. AVID offers rigorous instruction to students in the academic middle who have the individual determination to prepare for a four year college. In AVID classes, students collaborate, engage in inquiry, and learn college-level reading, writing and study strategies. Lakeaires Elementary also offers elementary AVID strategies to students.

**International Baccalaureate**  
 Matoska International IB World School has been an elementary IB option for all families since 2010.

# FINANCE

## Financial management

To help the District meet its educational goals, White Bear Lake Area Schools remain committed to fiscal responsibility to ensure that maximum resources reach our classrooms.

## Stewardship:

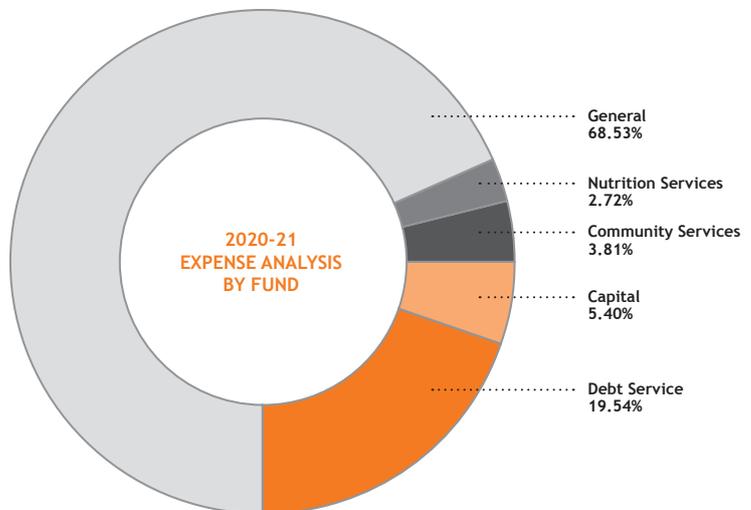
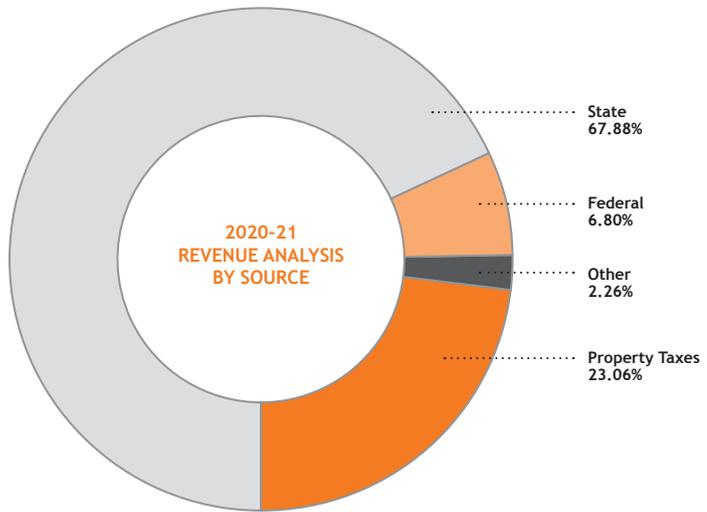
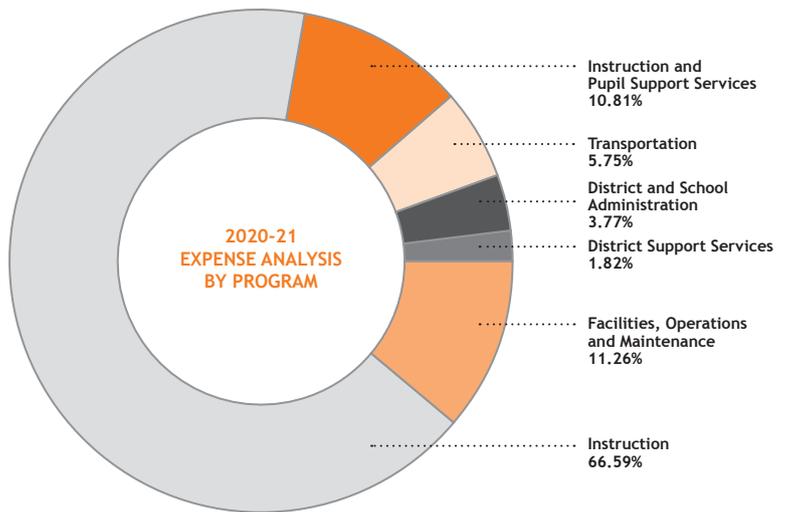
White Bear Lake Area Schools continues to demonstrate strong stewardship to our communities.

- » We have been recognized for excellence in financial reporting by the Association of School Business Officials and Government Finance Officers Association for 21 consecutive years.
- » The district refunded one outstanding debt issue during 2021, which will save district taxpayers a total of \$286,543 over the next three years. The outstanding debt was related to alternative facilities bonds that were issued in 2012 to finance several major HVAC renovation projects throughout the district.
- » Facilities across the district continue to be constructed and renovated, due to a \$326 million bond referendum approved by area residents in November of 2019.

We have been recognized for excellence in financial reporting for 21 consecutive years

by the Association of School Business Officials and Government Finance Officers Association.

The District refunded debt issue *saving taxpayers a total of \$286,543 over the next three years.*



## Partnerships

The district has many innovative partnerships with the White Bear Center for the Arts, White Bear Area YMCA, MacPhail Center for Music, Tamarack Nature Center and many others.

# 2021-22 DISTRICT PROFILE

The White Bear Lake Area School District serves all or parts of Birchwood, Gem Lake, Hugo, Lino Lakes, Little Canada, Maplewood, North Oaks, Vadnais Heights, White Bear Lake and White Bear Township.

## Core Values

The White Bear Lake Area School District builds quality lives and strong communities through compassion, integrity, respect, responsibility and service.

## District Mission

The mission of the White Bear Lake Area School District, the community at the forefront of educational excellence, honoring our legacy and courageously building the future, is to ensure each student realizes their unique talents and abilities, and makes meaningful contributions with local and global impact through a vital system distinguished by:

- Students who design and create their own future
- A culture that respects diverse people and ideas
- Safe, nurturing, and inspiring experiences
- Exceptional staff and families committed to student success
- Abundant and engaged community partners

## Equity Commitment

To nurture the whole student, we disrupt systemic inequities by recognizing, honoring, and embracing all cultures with humility and respect.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT 2021-22	
Pre-K <i>Pre-K includes all District programs including preschool, early childhood, and Bear Fundamentals at all District locations.</i>	524
Elementary (Grades K-5)	3767
Middle School (Grades 6-8)	1981
High School (Grades 9-12)	2498
Transition Plus (Special Ed - ages 18-24)	36
<b>DISTRICT TOTAL K-T+</b>	<b>8282</b>
<b>DISTRICT TOTAL BIRTH-T+</b>	<b>8806</b>

Source: Minnesota Department of Education and District data

K-T+ STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS 2020-21	
Free/Reduced Price Lunch	20.68%
English Language Learner	3.99%
Special Education	17.16%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.44%
Asian	7.46%
Black/African American	6.68%
Hispanic/Latinx	7.67%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.12%
Two or more races	5.98%
White	71.66%

Source: Minnesota Department of Education

In addition to English, students in our district



- Afaan/Oromo/Oromiffa
- Afrikaans
- Akan
- Amharic
- Anauk
- Arabic
- Azerbaijani
- Bengali
- Bosnian
- Burmese
- Cambodian
- Chinese, Mandarin
- Czech
- Danish
- English
- English Creole
- Fanti
- Farsi
- French
- German
- Gujarati
- Harari
- Hindi
- Hmong
- Igbo
- Japanese
- Karen
- Kiswahili, Swahili
- Kom
- Lao, Laotian
- Latvian
- Lithuanian
- Mandar
- Marathi
- Nepali
- Pilipino, Tagalog
- Portuguese
- Punjabi
- Romanian
- Russian
- Rwanda
- Sign Language/ASL
- Somali
- Spanish
- Thai
- Tigrinya
- Turkish
- Turkman
- Twi
- Ukrainian
- Urdu
- Vietnamese
- Yoruba

## 2021 Building Our Future Update

The White Bear Lake Area Schools facilities projects to address building needs across the district are well underway, with construction crews digging in and making headway at sites across the district.

Our students, staff and community members are seeing first-hand the phases of construction we talked about at length with the community in the fall of 2019. We are grateful to district residents for seeing both the need and the vision, and for supporting the bond referendum. Much has been planned and built in the two years since that time, and we are excited to successfully complete all of the construction phases in the summer of 2025.

The first project to be completed in the fall of 2020 was the creation of a secure office and vestibule area at the district's Area Learning Center (ALC). The second phase of the ALC projects, which are scheduled to be completed during the summer of 2023, will include renovations to create a learning commons/flexible learning space, kitchen improvements and mechanical upgrades.

Elementary school projects that were constructed last year and completed before the school year began this fall included renovations to the media center, the addition of specialized learning spaces and upgrades to safety/security at Lincoln Elementary, Matoska International IB World School, Vadnais Heights Elementary and Willow Lane Elementary. A small classroom addition was added to Matoska International and a new full-size gymnasium addition was included in Lincoln's construction project.

Construction crews also completed the Transportation Department's new home, a facility that houses transportation staff and the district's fleet, just before the school year. District vehicles are maintained and managed at the new site, located in Hugo. Moving to this new location allows for expansion of the unified high school campus onto the former bus garage site.

Additionally, the WBLAHS - South Campus Phase 1 addition of a new gymnasium was completed before students came back in September. This gym, along with the one newly built at Lincoln, helps to address the need for community gymnasium space. The project also features a new entrance, vestibule, storage and walk-in freezer in the kitchen. Additionally, the new space includes privacy restrooms that are open during home events at the WBLAHS Stadium.

We have been grateful to be able to continue work on projects despite the challenges of COVID-19 and employment shortages. Our construction crews have been terrific at staying on schedule and on budget. Even in these times of building supply shortages, their efforts and partnership have kept us on track.

Cranes and strategically placed piles of dirt adorn other district sites currently under construction, especially at projects that broke ground this summer. Preparatory work for the additions and renovations that will create a unified White Bear Lake Area High School at the current WBLAHS - North Campus site are going strong. The extensive excavations for the field house, the stadium and activities areas, and the classroom additions are impressive.



Groundbreaking also took place recently for the Phase II project at South Campus, which will be converted to a middle school when the new unified WBLAHS on the current North Campus site holds all students grades 9-12. The project includes new classrooms, renovations to some areas of the current building to include flexible learning spaces and mechanical and security upgrades. Additionally, a new front office space addition will accommodate a change to make the front entrance of the building open to McKnight Road rather than to the parking lot on the south side of the building.

Construction on the new elementary school, just north of the Hugo Post Office along Highway 61, has been moving along nicely as well. The building, which will have the capacity to house 720 students in grades K-5, broke ground in the spring of 2021 and is on-track to be completed in time for students to attend in the fall of 2022. At that time, Oneka Elementary will also have a change in grading structure to serve students in grades K-5. The facility plan calls for Hugo Elementary to be converted to a northern Early Childhood Center in the future.

During the 2021-22 school year, projects will continue through the design and construction process and be finished before the fall of 2022 at Birch Lake, Lakeaires and Otter Lake Elementary Schools. Projects at the three elementary buildings include small additions, updated classrooms and media centers, and safety/security upgrades.

Knowing all of our students learn differently, we are being purposeful about building learning spaces that are versatile. We're able to create adaptable learning environments through both creative design and flexible furniture. That design principle of 'space adaptability and flexibility' is the catalyst to create a culture where students co-design their learning spaces supporting the district's vision of student agency.

When the facilities plan is complete, every elementary classroom in the district will have benefitted by the addition of new flexible furniture. Three elementary buildings were slated in Phase I of the furniture project and are currently experiencing the flexibility and choice it affords students in their learning. Phase II will include the remainder of elementary schools who will receive their new furniture next summer. Moving forward, flexible furniture will be added to classrooms in the district's early childhood, middle school and high school programs as items are needed.

The referendum projects that remain on the docket include classroom additions at Oneka Elementary and renovation of the current District Center to create additional classroom space for Central Middle School. Both school buildings will also see updated classrooms and media centers and safety/security upgrades.

The final piece of the comprehensive facilities plan will be completed in 2025 when the current Sunrise Park Middle School is renovated and converted for use as a home to the district's Early Childhood Center, District Office, Senior Center and Transition Education Center. This construction project will begin after the middle school has moved to the current South Campus site in 2024.

Follow along with our progress virtually. Project updates, detailed project presentations and photo/video footage of the projects are available on the Building Our Future page of the district's website, [isd624.org/BuildingOurFuture](https://isd624.org/BuildingOurFuture).



Scan QR code to see  
"Building Our Future  
2021 Update" video.

## PROJECT TIMELINE

### Ready for Fall 2021

- Area Learning Center Phase 1
- Lincoln, Matoska, Vadnais Heights and Willow Lane Elementaries Updates
- New Transportation Facility
- WBLAHS - South Campus Phase 1 Gym Addition

### Ready for Fall 2022

- Birch Lake, Lakeaires, Otter Lake Updates
- New Elementary School
- WBLAHS - South Campus Phase 2 Addition

### Ready for Fall 2023

- Area Learning Center Phase 2
- Oneka Elementary Updates

### Ready for Fall 2024

- Unified WBLAHS opens to grades 9-12
- Current WBLAHS - South Campus opens as middle school
- Central Middle School Phase 1 updates

### Ready for Fall 2025

- Central Middle School Phase 2 updates
- Current Sunrise Park Middle School becomes District Services Center housing Early Childhood Center, District Office, Senior Center and Transition Education Center

# OUR MISSION

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- Students who design and create their own future
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## Brosious Grants awarded

The White Bear Lake Area Educational Foundation (WBLAEF) recently awarded teachers in the district with Brosious Teaching grants to “enhance the rigor of the curriculum or instruction,” according to Mr. Brosious’ wishes. This year, 11 grants were awarded in the amount of \$22,967.30.

Brosious Grants are one of a variety of grants made available each year by the Foundation, all of which are intended to enrich existing curriculum and support the School District’s goal of achieving excellence in education.

Since its inception in 1993, the WBLAEF has supported the district in the following ways:

- Awarded more than \$300,000 in teaching grants, encouraging creative and innovative ways to enhance curriculum.
- Granted over \$150,000 for teacher professional development.
- Presented \$330,000 in scholarships to graduates of our schools.
- Touched hundreds of families by providing over \$70,000 in financial assistance through the Angel Fund.
- Granted over \$22,000 fostering elementary art education.
- Incorporated the White Bear Lake Area Alumni Association to help alumni stay connected.
- Since 2014, provided \$30,000 to community members, staff and students, encouraging initiatives around innovation, creativity, community and global projects.
- Awarded \$30,000 in grants to teachers, enhancing environmental experiences and awareness for students.

Additional information at [www.wblaef.org](http://www.wblaef.org).

## WE ARE HIRING!

Find Employment info at [isd624.org](http://isd624.org).

- Substitute Teachers
- Bus drivers

- Extended Day staff
- Paras

- Nutrition Services staff
- MORE!

651-407-7500  
[isd624.org](http://isd624.org)

**Equity Commitment:** *To nurture the whole student, we disrupt systemic inequities by recognizing, honoring, and embracing all cultures with humility and respect.*

### 4-Way Equity Decision Making Protocol

- 1 How does this help to provide opportunities to students who have been marginalized within the system in the past?
- 2 How does this help to ensure equitable access for all?
- 3 How does this help to eliminate barriers based on race/ethnicity, gender, disability, age, or other protected groups?
- 4 How does this ensure that the same rigorous standards for academic performance exist for all students?

## Requesting an Interpreter

Families can request that a district staff member call them through the use of an interpreter who speaks the language they speak.

Information about how to make the request can be found in text and audio translations, in all languages spoken by students in the district, on the district website or at the QR code at right.



## Coffee with Dr. K

Community members have been invited to stop by throughout the 2021-22 academic year for an informal chat with Superintendent Kazmierczak over a cup of coffee.

Upcoming events:

- 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
Thursday, February 10
- 4-5 p.m. Tuesday, May 10

Events are planned to take place at Caribou Coffee in Downtown WBL, but final event details will be shared on the district website as the events approach.

## School Board Meetings

Jan. 10.....Regular Mtng  
Jan. 24..... Work Session  
Feb. 14 .....Regular Mtng  
Feb. 28 ..... Work Session  
March 14.....Regular Mtng  
March 28..... Work Session  
April 11 .....Regular Mtng  
April 25 ..... Work Session

- » All Board meetings take place in the Community Room 112 at District Center (4855 Bloom Ave).
  - Both Regular and Work Session meetings begin at 5:30 p.m.
- » Agendas, Board Packets, Minutes, Highlights and Video links are posted on the District's website as they become available.
- » Regular School Board meetings are re-broadcast on Cable Channel 20 in the local viewing area the week of a regular business meeting:
  - Wed. at 2 p.m., 6 p.m. & 9 p.m.
  - Thurs. at 10 a.m.

## FREE Senior Activity Pass

Senior community members (age 65+) who live in the District are invited to participate in the Senior Activities Pass program and enjoy complimentary admission to school activities. Find the application on the district's website at [isd624.org](http://isd624.org) or call 651-407-7563 to request one be mailed to you.

 <b>Senior Community Member Lifetime Activity Pass</b>
<small>This Senior Community Member Activity Pass grants free admission into home activities* for</small> <b>YOUR NAME</b>
<small>Validated by Dr. Wayne A. Kazmierczak, Superintendent</small>



## Digital Backpack

The Community Services Department distributes electronic flyers on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month. Flyers include announcements from the school district, as well as local organizations that offer opportunities for youth.

Those who wish to request distribution of a flyer should email the files to Director Tim Maurer at [tim.maurer@isd624.org](mailto:tim.maurer@isd624.org).

## Early Childhood Screening - Screen at 3

Early Childhood Screening is required by the state of Minnesota for all children prior to entering kindergarten.

The best age at which to screen is age three. The White Bear Lake Area School District provides this screening at no charge.

### 3 REASONS TO SCREEN AT 3:

- Screening can ensure school success
- If health or developmental concerns are identified, educational services are available
- It is fun and provides parents/guardians with valuable information regarding child development



Register for Early Childhood Screening online at <https://whitebear.ce.eleyo.com> or 651-653-3100

Early Childhood Screening takes place at:  
Normandy Park Education Center, 2482 East County Road F, WBL

## Send Us Your Bear Wear Pics!

We are looking for photos of little ones in their “Born to be a Bear” onesies and “I’m a Bear” shirts!

Email photos to [communications@isd624.org](mailto:communications@isd624.org) and you may find your little one(s) featured in a District publication!

Onesies are sent to families who live in the district upon the arrival of a little one, and shirts are sent to households with toddlers



## Important Dates

- » **DEC. 22-31**  
WINTER BREAK  
School resumes Jan. 3
- » **JANUARY 10**  
SCHOOL BOARD REGULAR MEETING  
5:30 p.m. at District Center
- » **JANUARY 24**  
SCHOOL BOARD WORK SESSION  
5:30 p.m. at District Center
- » **FEBRUARY 10**  
COFFEE WITH DR. K  
11:30-12:30 p.m.
- » **FEBRUARY 14**  
SCHOOL BOARD REGULAR MEETING  
5:30 p.m. at District Center
- » **FEBRUARY 28**  
SCHOOL BOARD WORK SESSION  
5:30 p.m. at District Center
- » **MARCH 7-11**  
SPRING BREAK  
School resumes March 14
- » **MARCH 14**  
SCHOOL BOARD REGULAR MEETING  
5:30 p.m. at District Center
- » **MARCH 28**  
SCHOOL BOARD WORK SESSION  
5:30 p.m. at District Center
- » **APRIL 11**  
SCHOOL BOARD REGULAR MEETING  
5:30 p.m. at District Center
- » **APRIL 25**  
SCHOOL BOARD WORK SESSION  
5:30 p.m. at District Center
- » **MAY 9**  
SCHOOL BOARD REGULAR MEETING  
5:30 p.m. at District Center
- » **MAY 10**  
COFFEE WITH DR. K  
4-5 p.m.



# White Bear Lake Area Schools

Leading minds to learning, hearts to compassion,  
and lives to community service.

Serving the communities of Birchwood, Gem Lake, Hugo, Lino Lakes, Little Canada, Maplewood, North Oaks, Vadnais Heights, White Bear Lake, and White Bear Township.



## Join us!

Choose from 2 options:

- Traditional in-person school
- Distance Learning Academy

Enrollment  
information at  
[isd624.org/enroll](http://isd624.org/enroll)

**Translations:**

Para Español por favor llame al 651-407-7625  
Xav tau ntawv Hmoob hu rau 651-407-7623

## Why Be a Bear?

Our students benefit from:

- Safe, nurturing and challenging environments.
- Differentiated instruction.
- Hands-on learning.
- World language experiences.
- Focus on academic, social and personal development of each student.
- College-level courses and Career Pathways opportunities.

## Stay Connected

• **E-NEWSLETTER**

The Community e-Newsletter is sent out each week, with alternating text and video editions. The text editions cover student and staff successes, school and Community Education offerings, and School Board proceedings. Those who wish to be added to the Community e-Newsletter list may contact us at [communications@isd624.org](mailto:communications@isd624.org).

• **STAY SOCIAL**

Join White Bear Lake Area Schools' social media circles - Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

[www.isd624.org](http://www.isd624.org)



651-407-7500



[/isd624](https://www.facebook.com/isd624)