

# SIX TIMES

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 6

RECAP OF THE SCHOOL YEAR | SUMMER 2017



Join us in our social circles!



Minnesota's First K-12  
IB World Schools District

South St. Paul  
Public Schools





# ... AND THAT'S A WRAP!

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2017



On Thursday, June 8, friends and families gathered at Ettinger Field as 184 South St. Paul seniors took the stage and received their high school diploma. Senior Grace Gohman represented the Class of 2017 and Humanities Teacher Peter Schultz were the honored speakers at this year's commencement.

This year, there are 10 International Baccalaureate (IB) Certificate candidates and 21 IB Diploma candidates. These students have fulfilled or surpassed the requirements for IB Honors.

On Tuesday, June 6, the Community Learning Center and the South St. Paul Online Learning Academy celebrated the

graduation of 23 seniors. Visit [www.sspps.org/alternativeprograms](http://www.sspps.org/alternativeprograms) to learn more about alternative programs at our district.

### What is an IB Education?

The focus of the IB curriculum is cross-disciplinary and is based on the inquiry method of instructional practice. IB is not a gifted education program, but it does provide a model for high standards in education for all students. Visit [www.sspps.org/ib](http://www.sspps.org/ib) to learn more about the IB program at South St. Paul.





# SCHOOL YEAR HIGHLIGHTS



## Free Preschool at Kaposia

Governor Dayton and the Minnesota Department of Education awarded Kaposia Education Center free Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten for 102 children. Four-year-olds at Kaposia can now attend pre-school for free.

With this additional funding for early learning, our district is able to:

- provide reduced tuition prices and increased scholarships for Lincoln Center preschool families
- offer more options and more learning time for all preschool aged children



4-H Members from the High School Key Club receive 2017 Dakota County Public Health Achievement Award



2017 Roxanne Bliss Silver Apple Award Recipients:  
- Patrick Kugmeh  
- Linda Nygaard  
- Katherine Pettit



## 4th Graders Earned Highest Honors in WordMasters Challenge

The Kaposia fourth grade team placed first in the nation in the last of three meets this year. The team also placed fifth nationally in the overall competition. Students were coached by Lynell Vandermeer.



The South St. Paul Educational Foundation awarded \$373,150 scholarships to 139 seniors.

Rebecca Steffen and Maeve Mellen Named Commended Students in the 2017 National Merit Scholarship Program

Ryan Duffy receives Downtown St. Paul Lion's Club Male Athlete of the Year Award



## Mrs. Siebenahler named 2016 Region III Teacher of the Year

The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) recognized Callon Siebenahler for demonstrating innovation in the classroom, commitment to their students and dedication to the improvement of CTE in their institutions and communities.



Mesfin Teklu awarded Vikings Community Captain Award

Kristin Johnson, Social Studies teacher, named 2017 TIES Exceptional Teacher Award recipient



Connie Garling-Squire Receives 2017 Dakota County Public Health Achievement Award

for her work in the Food+You, free dental care and winter gear exchange programs. More info on Page 4.

Liam Dawson, 4th grade teacher, receives TIES Exceptional Teacher Award

# PARTNERING WITH OUR COMMUNITY

## Food+You: Free Food for Our Families

SSPPS partnered with Second Harvest to provide 13-pound box of free food each month to families with children enrolled at our elementary schools, with no income guidelines. Food Boxes contain dry goods such as cereal, rice, pasta, peanut butter, canned chicken, tuna, soup and more.

**NEW!** Second Harvest will be extending this to the Secondary building during the 2017-18 school year.

**NEW!** We partnered with local organizations to create a calendar. Visit [www.sspps.org](http://www.sspps.org) for a calendar with dates and locations of local food distribution sites.



## Free Dental Services to Qualifying Students

We partnered with Children's Dental Services (CDS) to provide on-site dental care to students at Kaposia Education Center. CDS provided assessment and restorative services to 16 students.

## Winter Gear Exchange

Our District hosted a Winter Gear Exchange program for South St. Paul families to trade out-grown winter clothing to prepare for the winter season. Hundreds of jackets, boots, snow pants, hats and mittens were collected and given to families in need.

## Student Meal Support

Many families may experience financial difficulties and cannot afford to keep money in their student's school lunch account. This fund is created so that families and community members could donate and help a student in need pay for a school meal.

## Safe Place Youth Program

Luther Memorial Church provided free youth programs for our students on days when there is no school. This 8-hour program includes snacks, lunch, games, homework help, movies and exploring new activities like painting, cooking, music, etc.

## Free Summer Meals

Thanks to funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), SSPPS is able to provide summer meals too all children age 18 and younger at no cost. Summer meals are available at Lincoln Center Elementary, Kaposia Education Center and the Secondary Building, from June through early August. Visit [www.sspps.org](http://www.sspps.org) for details.

## Mr. Otto's Way

For 33 years, Wayne Otto served children and families of South St. Paul as a teacher, principal and active leader. His dedication and passion touched the lives of all students as Wayne strived to provide education for all. He knew his students and their families, valued their potential and provided them with a role model for life.

Wayne believed that "each child has a right to a safe and successful school life"

A fund has been created with memorial gifts in honor of Mr. Wayne Otto. This fund will be called "Mr. Otto's Way" and it will support elementary school children by providing articles of new clothing, shoes, boots, and winter apparel for all students in need.

Please consider donating any amount to help sustain this important fund into the future. Your donation honoring Wayne Otto's memory will help us continue his legacy of supporting all South St. Paul elementary students.

Please contact the SSP Educational Foundation office at (651) 457-9440 for details.



# OUR COMMUNITY SUPPORTS STRONG SCHOOLS

A recent random sample phone survey of 400 South St. Paul residents indicated overwhelming agreement with the statement “Maintaining strong schools builds strong communities,” attesting to the critical role our schools play here in South St. Paul.

## Other survey findings include:

**72%**  
of respondents

gave our schools an A or B grade, which is higher than how respondents nationally grade their local schools.

*The majority based their grade on their own experience as a student, their children's experience or what they heard from friends and neighbors.*

**2/3**  
of respondents

consider the district's quality of financial management as average or better than average.

**1/2**  
of respondents

were either very or somewhat aware of the district's ongoing challenge to provide adequate, stable and fair funding for its schools.



The vast majority of respondents are supportive of district efforts to keep computers up-to-date, give students exposure and access to technology tools, and provide teachers with technology training.



The vast majority of respondents are supportive of increased funding to help students who struggle academically, minimize future budget cuts, retain quality teaching staff and focus on personalized learning.



## MAINTAINING STRONG SCHOOLS BUILDS STRONG COMMUNITIES

District leaders and board members are using the survey findings to help with long-range academic and financial planning.





# LEGISLATIVE SESSION A MIXED BAG



After a long and difficult legislative session, the state legislature finalized several decisions that impact our schools and the funding we receive. Two key outcomes:

- There was a modest funding increase for schools, but not enough to make up for funding that has not kept pace with inflation or cost increases for the last several years. Due to inadequate state funding, South St. Paul has cut nearly \$6 million over the past ten years.
- Unfortunately, the state did not change the unfair state property tax system that results in our residents paying more in school taxes for the same amount of funding as our neighbors. We, along with several other school districts, have been advocating unsuccessfully for this important policy change for the past few years. We will continue to fight for it on behalf of our community.

The state provides the vast majority of funding to operate our schools and provide a quality education to students, supplemented by local funding approved by our residents. However, South St. Paul Schools currently receives \$450 less in per-student voter-approved funding than the average of Dakota County school districts.



*South St. Paul junior Andres Fernandez Alvarez testifying at the Capitol to support the bill to equalize the unfair school tax system*

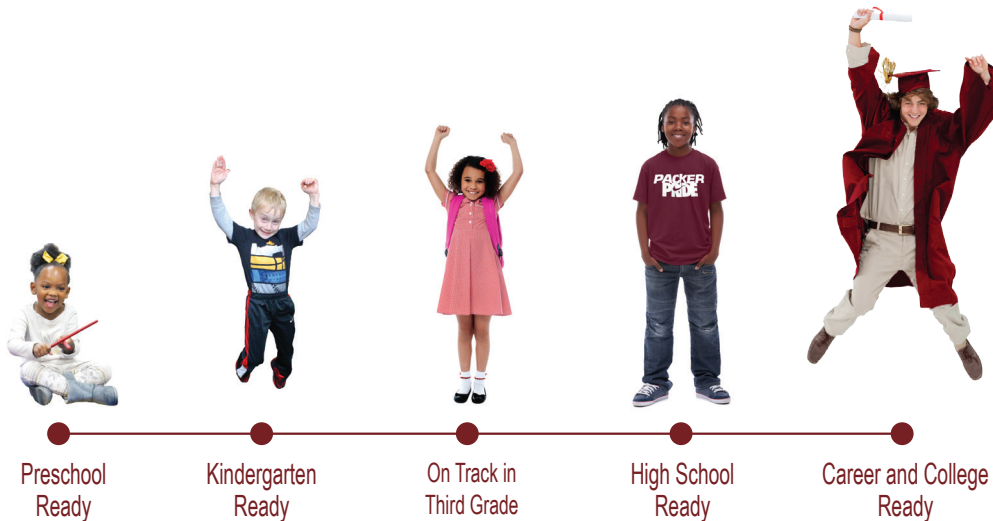
Because we need additional funding to provide the education our students deserve, our School Board is considering asking residents to increase their property taxes to support our schools. More funding would help us better meet students' needs by providing the learning environment they need to succeed. A decision will be made this summer with any funding requests on a November 7, 2017 ballot.

Learn more about funding issues facing our school district and read our *Facts about Families, Fairness and Funding* booklet at [www.sspps.org/stateofthedistrict](http://www.sspps.org/stateofthedistrict).



# STRONG SCHOOLS STRONG COMMUNITY

We are committed to making decisions that strengthen our schools, our students and our staff. Our vision is to prepare each and every student for their next step:



**However,**  
achieving our vision is increasingly challenging because:



State funding is not keeping pace with increasing educational costs, nor with inflation



Our state property tax system penalizes South St. Paul for having low levels of commercial property - *meaning our homeowners pay more than our neighbors to support schools*

## BACK TO SCHOOL INFO

### August 14, 2017

Opening Day: Football 9-12, Boys' Girls' Soccer 9-12, Volleyball 9-12, Girls' Swimming 7-12, Girls' Tennis 9-12, Cross Country 7-12

### August 17, 2017

Secondary Registration  
12:00-3:00 PM; 4:00-7:00 PM

### August 21, 2017

Secondary Registration  
12:00-3:00 PM; 4:00-7:00 PM

### August 29, 2017

Gr. 6-8 Open House | 6:00-8:00 PM

### August 30, 2017

Gr. 9-12 Open House | 6:00-8:00 PM

### August 31, 2017

LC & KEC Family Connection Day (Gr. 1-5)  
LC & KEC Kids' Choice Open House | 12:00-6:00 PM

### September 5, 2017

First Day of School (Gr. 1-12)  
Kindergarten Parent-Teacher Meetings

### September 6, 2017

Kindergarten Parent-Teacher Meetings

### September 7, 2017

First Day of Kindergarten  
ECFE Open House | 5:30-7:00 PM

### September 11, 2017

First Day of Preschool

**NEW!** We are excited to announce that the new **South St. Paul Family Education Center** will be located at 102 5th Ave South. More information coming soon!



South St. Paul's local operating levy is over \$450 per student less than the average of the 8 school districts in Dakota County



We have the highest level of family poverty in Dakota County





## South St. Paul Public Schools

### District Office

104-5th Avenue South

South St. Paul, MN 55075

[www.sspps.org](http://www.sspps.org) | (651) 457-9400

Email: [sspdirect@sspps.org](mailto:sspdirect@sspps.org)

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# SUMMER LEARNING & ACTIVITIES

It's been busy at South St. Paul Public Schools this summer! There is learning and lots of fun summer programs for students of all ages! Here are a few:

## 4-week Summer Learning Program

More than 400 students are participating in the elementary Summer Academy and ready to practice literacy and math skills through experiential learning.

## Kids' Choice Summer School-Age Care

Students participate in fun indoor and outdoor activities, go on field trips and socialize with friends, all in a safe engaging atmosphere. Activities include, theatre, cooking, sports, service learning opportunities, and more.

## Packer Preview for Incoming 6th Graders

This program is designed to help students with the transition to the Secondary building and strengthen their social skills.

## Packer Pad Summer Program

We provide a safe place for junior high students to hang out with peers. Activities include going to the pool, field trips, doing crafts and more. This year, students are building a canoe from scratch!

## Summer Strength and Conditioning Camp

Student-athletes learn proper technique for the core lifts of strength training, improve speed/agility, and develop confidence through challenging drills and competitions.

## Free Summer Meals at Schools

Thanks to funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), SSPPS is able to provide summer meals too all children age 18 and younger at no cost.

