

RESIDENT DISTRICT 282



The SAVHS speech team claimed the Tri-Metro championship in March.  
Congrats to the entire speech team and their coach Joan Nelson!

Spring 2023



# Welcome to spring!

SCHOOL BOARD CHAIR BEN PHILLIP

Welcome to spring.... I hope! As chair of the St. Anthony - New Brighton School Board and parent to three students, I am lucky to be involved in our school community, with some of the most caring, kind teachers. What excites me as a board member is when we see how our high-level responsibilities align with the good work our administration and teachers are doing to make our district and students Ever Brighter. An example is when the board spent time at a professional development meeting discussing success metrics, the profile of a St. Anthony-New Brighton student. One way of measuring "success" is through our expanding use of proficiency-based grading, which you will read more in this newsletter.

Recently, 8th grade science teacher Kristine Schwintek discussed proficiency-based grading in the teaching and learning community meeting. She showed us how she changed her assessments so she could understand each student's level of knowledge. We received handouts to view the difference between the two assessments, which I then showed my 8th grader, Linden, who is a student of Ms. Schwintek.

I could tell Linden understood the content at a deeper level by the way she was analyzing the test. She wasn't simply reciting facts or using her process of elimination skills. Instead, she was showing true knowledge of the content.

By changing the assessment from a typical, standardized test to one that assesses proficiency, Ms. Schwintek helps students know where they might need more assistance and provides her the appropriate guidance to allow students to succeed. When we talk about "supporting each learner through innovation and collaboration," this is what we mean. We strive to see the brilliance of each student, and I'm thankful to witness it everyday.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*Check out what's happening with St. Anthony - New Brighton School District!*

### April 7

No school

### April 14, 15 and 16

Our Town – a SAVHS-sponsored play

### April 18

School board work session

### April 21

No school

### May 2

School board meeting

### May 5

8th grade symposium and capstone projects presentation

### May 15

No school

### May 29

No school

### May 30

SAMS and SAVHS choir concert

### Senior Citizens:

We'd love to see you at the Huskies fine arts and sporting events! Admission to SAVHS-hosted events is free for St. Anthony - New Brighton school district residents 65 and older.

For a complete list of athletic events and activities, please visit [letsgohuskies.com](http://letsgohuskies.com).



## AWARD WINNING COACHING

### Joan Nelson, SAVHS speech team coach, wins the Donus D. Roberts Coaching Excellence Award!

The award is given to coaches whose students have earned points through competition, service, and leadership activities. Joan has earned 10,000 points! Each point represents hours of practice, revision, and growth for her students.

*We're proud of you, Joan!*





## Our district's roadmap for increasing our student's ability to thrive

Proficiency-based grading is a system that focuses on student learning, growth and mastery of skills rather than traditional letter grades. Many educators have embraced proficiency-based grading as an effective way to assess and track student progress, and it has numerous benefits for students and families alike. At St. Anthony - New Brighton Schools, we are in a multi-year adoption of proficiency-based grading, with full implementation by fall 2025.

One of the primary advantages of proficiency-based grading is that it provides students, families and even colleges with a more accurate reflection of their abilities and knowledge. Unlike traditional letter grades, which are often subjective and include measures unrelated to specific learning objectives (like extra credit and turning in work late), proficiency-based grading measures what a student can do and how well they can do it. This system allows students to see where they excel and where they need to focus their efforts to improve.



**Learn more about this change coming to our district by scanning the QR code.**



**Scan to read more!**

### | RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

## Building community through service

In our small, caring community, it's usually been pretty straightforward finding student engagement opportunities. However, St. Anthony Village High School student engagement and community service projects have had low attendance for a few years, the pandemic partially intensifying the situation. That is, until a group of determined senior students – Andrea Suhyouun, Alana McGrath and Violet Urdahl – decided to take matters into their own hands.



**Looking for even more news?**

Check out our Facebook page and website for current events and information on district and school-wide activities! Visit [isd282.org](http://isd282.org) to access the district homepage.

**SCAN TO FOLLOW US**





## Work at St. Anthony - New Brighton Schools

Our staff – a team of about 350 people – take great pride in the work they do. We have a number of open positions including substitute teachers, bus drivers and a health aid substitute. Support the great work of St. Anthony - New Brighton Schools and apply today.

SCAN TO  
LEARN  
MORE



## Coffee and Chat with the Superintendent

We want to hear from you! The district is hosting a series of Coffee and Chat events, where Superintendent Dr. Renee Corneille and a member of the school board will give the community a space to share about anything district-related. We'll provide the coffee, you provide the conversation!

### Interested? Please join us on any of these dates:

April 6: 9:30 - 11 a.m.

April 20: 9:30 - 11 a.m.

### Location

The Legacy of St. Anthony located at 2540 Kenzie Terrace, St. Anthony, MN 55418

COFFEE  
AND CHAT



## NEW FACES AT SAVHS



### Paul Ruble:

Paul Ruble, new assistant principal at St. Anthony Village High School, brings years of experience working in education, most recently St. Paul Public Schools as an instructional coach. Prior to being an instructional coach, Paul was a building coach/lead, and a secondary social studies teacher. Paul is looking forward to attending the abundance of extracurricular activities offered and building positive relationships with students, staff and the community. He is excited to create a supportive community that sees each student thrive.



### Dr. Tim Anderson:

Dr. Tim Anderson, our new executive director of operations, comes from Edina Public Schools where he has been a middle school principal for the past seven years. Dr. Anderson has experience as an executive director of teaching and learning. We are excited to hire someone to join our team, build relationships, create a robust recruitment and retention plan and continue the excellent management of our operations.



Looking for even more stories on our students and staff? Visit [isd282.org/news](https://isd282.org/news)



# CHALLENGING TRADITION INVITING BRILLIANCE

It's a routine that never fails. John Mitsch, 6th grade math teacher at St. Anthony Middle School, starts each class with levity and fun, cushioned by words of care and support.

*"Every day I give them my promises and tell them why I teach. Of course, there are dad jokes and videos in there, which they love. But I keep telling them 'You can always hold me true to my promises to you this year,'" John said.*

John, who's been teaching for over 21 years, truly believes staff can be a positive influence on students' lives. His relationships with students drive everything, and in these moments he's able to show his students that we're in this together. By shifting his mindset and implementing instructional strategies, John is a shining example of how we can recognize the brilliance of all students to let them be Ever Brighter.

A beloved math teacher, former math interventionist and Minnesota-native, John has witnessed the rapid changes in the world of Minnesota education. Test scores, state testing and traditional methods of teaching are being challenged as schools rediscover what it means to support and care for children beyond academics.

*"I'm not just an academic teacher. I now have to be thinking through all the social, emotional and mental aspects of my students daily, too," John said.*

After working in middle school intervention for five years, John worked with students who were struggling with math in small groups. He listened to them think and problem-



solve and saw they were unbelievable at solving complex problems, but that gaps in our teaching system would stop them from reaching their full potential.

He knew something was wrong after seeing that each student had different needs, and that as a district, we were struggling to ensure students were actually learning, rather than mimicking.

*"What's crazy is that there are some kids who can pay their parent's bills but fail every class. I saw then that we were doing something wrong," John said.*

When he stopped to really reflect on his past teaching practice and the system as a whole, he came to the conclusion that the district valued the student who could mimic the teacher, focusing on the deficiencies rather than their strengths. Which makes him all that more excited about SANB shifting its focus to proficiency-based learning to let all students' brilliance shine.

## Math teacher John Mitsch promotes *a love of learning*

### Leaning into learning, not mimicry

The idea of getting students to help other students, which promotes a greater love of learning and relationship-building, is the goal of proficiency-based learning. Families may have already heard our district talk about this new system of learning and grading, but seeing John's class in action really puts it into perspective.

John starts his classes by removing himself as the center of attention, shifting it towards the students. Then, in small groups of 2-3 students, they problem-solve and make conclusions in fast-paced games or activities. The reward isn't how fast a group can solve the problem. The reward is if connections to concepts are reached, without feeling the risk of falling behind since his class is self-paced. He doesn't stand up at the front of the classroom and lecture, he lets the students lead their learning.

*"To get rid of the old system feels good because kids aren't identifying as an 'A' student anymore," John said. "I no longer receive questions about how to get grades up. It's how do I learn this and how do I do better? Students used to be chasing their grade and not learning. We're finally getting them to chase the learning."*

The shift to proficiency-based grading began a few years ago when Superintendent Dr. Renee Corneille formed the Teaching and Learning team. The goal was to develop a system that evaluated students without the use of letter grades – a system that was already in existence and used widely across the east coast in Ivy League schools.

Parents are encouraged to learn more about this new style of learning and grading and what it means for their students. John and other teachers are available to explain how it works and where their student is at in their progressions.

*"When I explain proficiency-based learning to parents, they get excited when they connect that their student is becoming an independent learner who can problem solve, think for themselves and identify their strengths and weaknesses," John said.*

### SANB's roadmap for bringing the brilliance

Our students are already incredible. In Bringing the Brilliance, our own campaign to introduce proficiency-based grading and its rollout, we acknowledge our students' strengths encouraging them to thrive and letting them shine.

But creating these transformational learning experiences for students doesn't happen overnight. If we expect students to thrive in a world that is not yet fully known, when traditional methods continue to give us the same predictable results, we are failing the full potential of our students.

This is what proficiency-based grading hopes to address. By 2025, all three SANB schools will transition to this new type of grading and learning and we couldn't be more excited about it.

John and his math team made the shift over to proficiency-based grading two years ago and he's already noticing big shifts in student learning and ability.



**I realized that every kid that comes in here has brilliance and is gifted. It's my responsibility to help facilitate that and produce abilities that use their brilliance.**

- John Mitsch