

Spotlight

Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools



DISTRICT196[®]
One District. Infinite Possibilities.

Summer 2023 | Volume 63 • Number 4

At District 196, the sky's the limit. That's because our committed team of educators is dedicated to helping learners explore the outer limits of their vast potential.

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Get ready, world!

School of Environmental Studies graduate **Emily Bauer** captured the moment with her classmates during commencement ceremonies June 1 at the Minnesota Zoo Amphitheater. Diplomas are issued by the district's four comprehensive high schools, which held ceremonies June 3. All totaled, more than 2,100 students graduated from District 196 this spring, including 453 from Apple Valley, 495 from Eagan, 587 from Eastview and 637 from Rosemount. See more graduation photos on pages 8-9.

Voters approve investments in schools and the future

District 196 voters approved both questions of a bond referendum special election May 9 to address current and future facilities and equipment needs in the state's third largest school district. Both questions were approved in all 14 school district precincts, each by a roughly two-thirds margin overall.

The \$493 million total for both questions represents the largest successful bond referendum in Minnesota history, topping the \$326 million bond referendum in White Bear Lake Area Schools in 2019.

Question 1 was approved by a margin of 7,576 yes votes (69%) to 3,446 no votes (31%). Question 1 improvements cost \$374 million and include safety and security improvements at all schools; a new elementary school; a new Rosemount Middle School and repurposing the current Rosemount Middle building; additions to Scott Highlands Middle School and Dakota Ridge School; completion of Rosemount High School renovation, with an addition; renovation of Transition Plus; science lab and performance space improvements at secondary schools, and furniture replacement where needed.

Question 2, which was contingent on passage of Question 1, was approved by a margin of 7,233 yes votes (66%) to 3,781 no votes (34%). Question 2 improvements cost \$119 million and will provide an activity center addition at each of the district's four comprehensive high schools.

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Students continue district's winning tradition in speech

District 196 students won three of 13 state championships and 28 of the 104 total medals awarded at this year's Class AA state speech tournament held at Eastview High School in April.

Medals are awarded for places one through eight in the final round of each of the 13 categories of competition at the state tournament. In the team sweepstakes, Apple Valley High School finished runner-up to Moorhead High School and Eastview and Eagan high schools finished in third and fourth, respectively, among all Class AA schools with students participating in the tournament.

Apple Valley students won 12 total medals, including state champions **Lydia Voss** in original oratory and **Sophie Green** in informative speaking. Eastview students won eight total medals, including state champion **Sahiti Atluri** in creative expression, and Eagan students won eight total medals.

In the history of state speech through this year's tournament, Apple Valley ranks first in the number of state champions all time, with 92 in its 47-year history (opened in 1976); Eagan is second with 70 state champions in its 33-year history (opened in 1990), and Eastview is in the top 10 schools with 30 state champions in its 26-year history (opened in 1997). Since 1976, students from these three District 196 schools have won nearly one-third of all state championships awarded in speech (188 of 611 total state champions in 47 years, with 13 events per year).

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Infinite Possibilities

District 196 is nationally recognized for providing boundless opportunities in which students can learn and grow. Whether they have an affinity for academics, arts or athletics, our goal is to expose students to the infinite possibilities within the district and throughout our communities. Together, we encourage them each day to pursue excellence as they experience their exciting journey along the road of life.

Spotlight Newsletter

This quarterly publication is mailed to every household in District 196 to inform parents and other residents about district news.

Send comments on **Spotlight** to tony.taschner@district196.org

NONDISCRIMINATION NOTICE:

As required by Title IX and other state and federal nondiscrimination laws, District 196 does not discriminate in employment or in any of its education programs and activities, including vocational opportunities, on the basis of sex, race, religion, color, creed, national origin, marital status, familial status,* disability, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, gender identity, membership or activity in a local human rights commission,* age or genetic information.* District 196 provides equal access to designated youth groups.

The Director of Human Resources, Shelly Monson (651-423-7859 - shelly.monson@district196.org) is the designated Title IX Coordinator and has also been designated to respond to employment-related inquiries regarding the district's non-discrimination policies. The Director of Elementary Education, Jeremy Sorenson (651-423-7782 - jeremy.sorenson@district196.org) and the Director of Secondary Education, Michael Bolsoni (651-423-7712 - michael.bolsoni@district196.org) have been designated to respond to student-related inquiries regarding the district's non-discrimination policies. The Director of Special Education, Janet Fimmen (651-423-7629 - janet.fimmen@district196.org) has been designated to respond to inquiries concerning the rights of a student with a disability. The mailing address for all directors is 3455 153rd Street W, Rosemount, MN 55068. Title IX inquiries may also be referred to the Assistant Secretary of the US Office for Civil Rights.

*Asterisked categories are limited to employment-related discrimination and harassment.

Four School Board seats up for election, filing period is August 1-15

Four of the seven at-large positions on the District 196 School Board are up for election in the Nov. 7, 2023 School Board election. The terms of **Joel Albright**, **Sachin Isaacs**, **Cory Johnson** and **Jackie Magnuson** expire Jan. 1, 2024. The term of each open position is four years, from January 2024 to January 2028.

The two-week filing period for School Board candidates will open Tuesday, Aug. 1 at 7:30 a.m. and runs through Tuesday, Aug. 15, at 5 p.m. All candidates must file during this two-week period in order to be placed on the ballot.

The School Board is responsible for developing policy to ensure the proper care, management and control of district affairs, and supporting the district's mission.

Any individual may be a candidate who:

- is eligible to vote;
- would be at least 21 years old upon assuming office (Jan. 1, 2024);
- is a resident of the school district for at least 30 days before the election, and
- is not registered as a convicted sex offender.

Affidavits of candidacy are available during office hours (7:30 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday through Friday) in the Superintendent's Office of Independent School District 196, 3455 153rd St. W., Rosemount. Completed affidavits of candidacy must be filed at the Superintendent's Office by 5 p.m. Aug. 15, along with a \$2 filing fee or a petition with at least 500 signatures of eligible voters in place of the filing fee.

An application signed by at least five voters and filed on behalf of an eligible candidate will also be accepted, if service of a copy of the application has been made on the candidate and proof of service is endorsed on the application being filed. The same filing fee requirements and timeline apply.

Persons considering running for one of the four open positions may call the Superintendent's Office at 651-423-7736 for more information or to schedule a meeting.

Calendars are set for next two years after board approves 2024-25

In June, the School Board approved the calendar for the 2024-25 school year, making district calendars available for the next two school years.

The board typically approves calendars every other year, for two years at a time. The board approved the calendar for the upcoming 2023-24 school year last fall, but members of the committee wanted additional time to get input from students, parents and staff about start dates for the 2024-25 school year.

The 2024-25 calendar approved by the board is very similar to the calendar for 2023-24, with start dates the week before Labor Day, 171 student days for middle school and high school, 169 for elementary school, spring break the last full week of March and the last day of school is the same for all three levels.

2023-24 Calendar

- Kindergarten - Transition half days Aug. 28 and 29, first full day of classes Sept. 6;
- Elementary grades 1-5 - Assessment days Aug. 30 and 31, first day of classes Sept. 5;
- Middle school and high school - First days of classes Aug. 30 and 31, and continuing Sept. 5, and
- Winter break is Dec. 23-Jan. 2, and the last day of school is June 5 for all levels.

2024-25 Calendar

- Kindergarten - Transition half days Aug. 26 and 27, first full day of classes Sept. 4;
- Elementary grades 1-5 - Assessment days Aug. 28 and 29, first day of classes Sept. 3;
- Middle school and high school - First days of classes Aug. 28 and 29, and continuing Sept. 3, and
- Winter break is Dec. 23-Jan. 1, and the last day of school is June 5 for all levels.

Graduation ceremonies at Apple Valley, Eagan, Eastview and Rosemount high schools are typically held the Saturday before the last day of school.

Reflecting on a year of connections, collaboration and celebrations

By **Mary M. Kreger**, superintendent

When the 2022-23 school year began last fall, our guiding theme was “connect, collaborate and celebrate,” as we looked to start anew following two very challenging years of change and disruptions in learning. In reflecting on this past year, I am grateful for our students and the many connections they made to reestablish routines and relationships with peers and adults at school, for our staff and their collaborative efforts to safely transport, care for and educate nearly 30,000 students each day, and for our parents, guardians and other members of the District 196 community for the support that made so many celebrations possible throughout the year.

CONNECTIONS

Connections are the essence of creating community, and I could share many examples of the connections students made this year and the impact it had on their learning. Unified is one of them. Across our district, Unified programs brought students with disabilities together with their peers. Through sporting events and social activities such as prom, our students with disabilities connected with their peers in powerful ways. Sophomore **Brooklyn Evans** said it best, “I have never felt closer and more connected with my peers. As long as the club keeps moving forward, we get closer to becoming a more unified high school.” Pictured at the right are members of the Eagan High School Unified bocce ball team with a trophy they won during a Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools competition this year.



COLLABORATION

Collaboration is fundamental to our learning process and critical to providing the services that each student needs to be successful. From bus drivers to nutrition services employees, custodians to office staff, our operations teams work together to ensure things run as smoothly as possible. Our team of teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals and support staff collaborate to support learning for the whole child, both in and outside the classroom, as students pursue their interests and infinite possibilities in academics, arts and athletics. Pictured to the left is Nutrition Services Associate **Bunny Jamison**, who collaborated with coworkers at Thomas Lake Elementary School to keep students feeling good, well fed and ready to learn this past school year.

CELEBRATIONS!

Commencement ceremonies are our most significant and formal celebrations each year. We recognize our graduates for their hard work and determination, along with everyone and everything it took for them to achieve this milestone. In District 196, we are fortunate to have much to celebrate throughout the year, thanks to the achievement and performance of our students and staff. In addition to the state championships in athletics and speech, this year we also celebrated the School of Environmental Studies for earning Platinum LEED status from the U.S. Green Building Council for its sustainable building practices. Pictured at right are student leaders celebrating the achievement during an Earth Day assembly, along with Teacher **Brooks Autry** and **Steph Leonard** of the U.S. Green Building Council.



Retirements and bond vote bring three different directors to superintendent's cabinet

Superintendent **Mary Kreger's** cabinet will have three new but familiar faces July 1 due to two retirements and a temporary special assignment position created to oversee construction of the nearly \$500 million in capital improvements that district voters approved in the May 9 bond referendum special election.

Director of Finance and Operations **Mark Stotts** will serve in the director on special assignment role and Coordinator of Finance **Christopher Onyango-Robshaw** will



Onyango-Robshaw

join cabinet as the interim director of finance and operations. Onyango-Robshaw has 15 years of experience working in school finance in Minnesota and has led the District 196 Finance Department since joining the district in 2017. As director, Onyango-Robshaw will oversee the district's facilities, finance, nutrition services, receiving, technology and transportation departments.

Monson gets top HR spot

In May, **Shelly Monson** was hired to be the new human resources director to replace **Tom Pederstuen**, who retired after serving District 196 for 28 years.



Monson

Monson has more than 20 years of experience working in the district's Human Resources Department. After serving in a variety of human resources positions at The Boeing Company and AAA Minnesota/Iowa for the first 15 years of her career, Monson joined District 196 in 2002 as a supervisor and became department coordinator in 2012.

As coordinator, she was responsible for negotiating contracts with bargaining groups representing employees in the Transportation and Nutrition Services departments, and assisted with all aspects of teacher negotiations, which she will now lead.

"I'm excited for the opportunity to lead

the Human Resources Department and look forward to serving employees and the district in this role," Monson said. "I am so proud to work for and live in this amazing school district."

Monson has a bachelor of science degree in business management from the University of Idaho.

Sorenson to lead elementary

Deerwood Elementary School Principal **Jeremy Sorenson** was hired to be the district's next director of elementary education in late May. He replaced **Sally Soliday**, who retired after 40 years working for District 196, including the last eight years leading the Elementary Education Department.



Sorenson

Sorenson had been principal of Deerwood Elementary in Eagan for the last six years. Prior to joining District 196, he was an elementary principal for the Red Wing Public Schools for three years and also had two years of administrative experience with Minneapolis Public Schools as a school improvement specialist and elementary school assistant principal. Sorenson started his career in education as a special education teacher, working for the Hastings Public Schools, District 196 and South Washington County Public Schools for five years before accepting an administrative position in Minneapolis.

"I will miss the students, families and staff of the Deerwood community greatly," Sorenson said, "but I am equally honored and excited for the opportunity to serve the district as director of elementary education."

Sorenson has bachelor's degrees in psychology from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and education from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, a master's in educational leadership from Concordia University, and principal and superintendent licensure from Hamline University.



Dakota United Hawks finish first and second in adapted softball

The Dakota United Hawks won the physically impaired division of the adapted state softball tournament in June, defeating Robbinsdale 13-6 in the championship game. Members of the team are **Dominik Albus, Jae Bahma, Amisha Etter, Liv Grossbauer, Bennett Herrmann, Sam Holland, Jordan Johnson, Sammy Jordheim, Tommy Juberian, Thomas Klobe, Reece Martin, Cayden Needham, Chloe Shibata** and **Fiona Sitzmann**. Coaches are **Brett Kosidowski, Scott Kunze** and **Doug Wattson**. The Dakota United Hawks CI team took second place in their tournament, falling just short against Burnsville/Farmington/Lakeville in the championship game.

High schools honor students enlisting for military service

All four comprehensive high schools in District 196 held ceremonies in May to recognize 50 seniors listed below who have enlisted in the United States military branches and have or will be departing for service.

At most of the ceremonies, each of the students shared what branch of the military they will be serving and their reasons for joining the military. The reasons cited most frequently included commitment to serve their country, earning opportunity for college, continuing a family tradition and strengthening their personal discipline.

Apple Valley High School seniors entering the military include **Willie LeMaster III**, Army; **Pierre Gehlhar** and **Adan Linares**, Marine Corps; **Bryan Briones** and **Joshua Martinson**, Air National Guard, and **Luis Rios Solares**, Navy.

Eagan High School seniors entering the military include **Allie Mackinac** and **Matthew Moore**, Air Force; **George Esser**, Air Force ROTC; **Emmet Johnson-McPherson**, Coast Guard; **Greyson Klein**, Army, **Cole Kottke** and **Cooper Paquette**, Air National Guard, **Amelia Pierce** and **Mari Williams**, Navy; **Tess Peterson**, Navy ROTC, and **Salina Mercil**, a junior enlisted in the Army National Guard who will be attending her senior year at Eagan next year.

Eastview High School seniors entering the military include **Jacob Rossman**, U.S. Merchant Marine Academy; **Beti Haile** and **Rohan Sachdeva**, Army; **Damon Norberg**, Army Reserves; **Veronica Ortega**, Army National



Rosemount High School graduate **Allan Uitdenboger**, Naval ROTC-Marine Option, was congratulated by his recruiter, Captain **Evan Reineman**, during Rosemount's ceremony.

Guard, and **Justin St. Onge** and **K.G. Suzuya**, Navy.

Rosemount High School seniors entering the military include **Jordan Hecht**, U.S. Military Academy; **Allan Uitdenboger**, Naval ROTC-Marine Option; **Cameron Harvey**, Army ROTC; **Rosselyn Cuatro Velasquez** and **Arianna Massina**, Army; **Brian Bachman**, **Destany Borchardt**, **Raquel Dean**, **Trevor Good**, **Jake Grudzinski**, **Logan Kirchner**, **Emma Omany**, **Avrora Nikolaeva**, **Eva Nikobleva**, **Mason Swanson**, **Quinlan Taflin**, **Elizabeth Udermann** and **Demetrius Williams**, Army National Guard; **Rebekah Drehmel**, **Skyler Freese**, **Andrew Mooney** and **Jermaine Richardson**, Marine Corps, and **Glory Anderson**, **Maddie Howard**, **Nicholas Robinson** and **Hannah Yost**, Navy.

YMCA offering free summer memberships for teens

The YMCA is offering a "Get Summer" program that allows teens to obtain a free membership at their local YMCA. Nineteen YMCA of the North locations offer this program, which includes access to basketball, swimming pools, splash decks, fitness centers, group exercise classes, free Wi-Fi and more!

Free membership is available June 5-Aug. 31, 2023 for teens entering

grades 9-12 who have not had a YMCA membership within the past 60 days. Limited memberships available per location.

To register, visit your local YMCA or join online at ymcanorth.org/getsummer/.

Jill Jensen is a finalist for Presidential Award for Science Teaching

Scott Highlands Middle School Science Teacher

Jill Jensen is one of four Minnesota teachers to be named finalists for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.



Jensen

The awards represent the nation's highest honor for K-12 science, technology, engineering and mathematics teachers. They are administered by the National Science Foundation on behalf of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

"The finalists represent the most outstanding teachers Minnesota has to offer," Minnesota Commissioner of Education **Willie Jett** said in announcing the finalists. "(They) demonstrate expertise and dedication in their classrooms and are exemplary of the work being done by teachers throughout the state to engage students in learning about STEM."

Jensen and the three other Minnesota finalists will be recognized informally during STEM Day at the 2023 Minnesota State Fair and formally during the Minnesota Council of Teachers of Mathematics conference and the Minnesota Science Teachers Association conference in November.

Teachers who are eventually selected to receive the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching will receive a trip to Washington, D.C., where they attend a series of recognition events and professional development opportunities. Recipients also receive a \$10,000 award, a Presidential certificate and they join an elite cohort of award-winning science and mathematics teachers.

Join the district, make a difference in students' lives

District 196 has employment opportunities for individuals who enjoy working with children. There are immediate openings for paraprofessionals, custodians, bus drivers and Nutrition Services associates, as detailed below. For more information and to apply online, go to District196.org and click on "Employment" on the top right.

Paraprofessionals earn \$19.65 per hour (\$16 per hour for substitutes). Work 6.25 to 6.75 hours per day. Must pass a pre-employment physical and background check; complete online Personal Care Assistant training, two years of college or passing score on para test (not required for substitutes).

Custodians earn \$20.41 per hour (\$15.50 per hour for substitutes). Typical hours are 3 to 11:30 p.m.; must be able to perform custodial duties, including lifting up to 50 pounds on a regular basis, and pass a pre-employment physical and background check. Previous custodial experience is preferred.

Bus drivers earn \$22.62 per hour. The district prefers individuals who are available for both morning and afternoon routes. Applicants must enjoy working with children, have a Minnesota driver's license with a good driving record and be able to lift/drag up to 125 pounds. The district provides training to obtain necessary licensure. Benefits are available to employees who work 23 or more hours per week.

Nutrition Services associates earn \$18.70 per hour (\$15.50 per hour starting wage for substitutes) plus a complimentary meal each shift. Regular and substitute positions are available, three to five hours per day. Applicants must have basic math, reading and writing skills, and be able to safely lift up to 40 pounds. Responsibilities include food preparation, meal sales and service, cashiering and clean-up.

District 196 ranked fourth of 50 Minnesota employers that made Forbes' list of Best-In-State Employers in 2022.

Pursuing Infinite Possibilities: Matt Allen, RHS Class of 2009

Matt Allen is one of the fastest rising stars in the Minnesota music scene. The 2009 Rosemount High School graduate is a Minneapolis-based hip-hop artist, community organizer and mutual aid worker that uses the moniker "Nur-D" on stage.



Allen

As an artist, Allen describes his music as "hip-hop for everyone who has ever felt a little different." As a philanthropist, he applies a people-first approach to redistribute resources to support and empower the community.

Allen's high-energy performances earned him *City Pages*' Best New Minnesota Artist in 2019, a headline spot in First Avenue's Best New Bands show in 2020 and he was voted Best Live Concert in 2021 (*City Pages*).

Allen enjoys volunteering time giving back to the community. This spring, he gave a rap workshop for elementary students, teaching them how to compose a song and encouraging them to think creatively in writing their lyrics. The workshop ended with Allen rapping alongside 5th grade band students at Oak Ridge Elementary School of Leadership, Environmental and Health Sciences as they played one of his hit songs.

What do you remember most fondly about your time in District 196?

"The fondest memories of my time in 196 were the days I spent in the choir room," Allen says. "Choir was by far my favorite subject and our Fine Arts Department was beyond compare.

Whether it was singing in class, getting ready for a concert, or simply sitting in the practice room ... that room felt like a home away from home for me."

Which District 196 teachers made the biggest difference in your education?

"Without a doubt, the teacher with the biggest influence in my life both professionally and personally was my choir teacher, Steven Albaugh," Allen said. "Mr. A stood as a pillar throughout some of the hardest parts



Matt Allen (a.k.a. Nur-D) signed autographs for excited students at a rap workshop at Oak Ridge Elementary School of Leadership, Environmental and Health Sciences this spring. Allen remembers the choir room at Rosemount High School as a "home away from home for me" and how "Mr. A." showed him how music could be a foundation for his life.

of my life and showed me how music could be a foundation for all of it. He showed me a way to look at things differently, allowed me the opportunity to showcase what made me special, and pushed me to be great when I was just fine being good."

How did District 196 prepare you for your future?

"District 196 prepared me for life by showing me the ups and the downs that exist in the real world. Even in dark times, I was able to find like-minded students and compassionate teachers who showed me I could be something special if I truly wanted to be. The skills I learned both in and out of the classroom in my time at 196 are something I carry with me every day."

Did You Know?

The Eagan High School Summer Community Musical Theatre will present "**The Wizard of Oz**" July 13-16, 20-23 and 27-29. Tickets are \$12 and \$19, and can be purchased online at District196.org/ehs/.



Bond improvements that add capacity will take first priority on construction timeline

Less than a week after voters approved the bond referendum, the first committees of district and school staff were already meeting to develop priorities, timelines and processes for designing and constructing \$493 million of improvements included in the approved bond questions.

Director of Finance and Operations **Mark Stotts** was selected to lead the effort for the district in a special assignment role, working with representatives of the district's architect, Wold Architects and Engineers, and Knutson Construction, which the district selected to be construction manager.

Managing expectations will be one of the biggest challenges early in the process. "People are excited about new and improved spaces and want everything to happen right away,"

Stotts said. "But it can't, for a number of reasons, due to the size and scope of the projects."

Projects that add capacity for additional students are first priority. These include the new elementary school, a new Rosemount Middle School, completing the renovation of and 300-student addition to Rosemount High School, and additions to Dakota Ridge School and Scott Highlands Middle School.

Safety and security improvements will also begin this year and will continue throughout the approximately five years it will take to complete all of the bond projects. For efficiency and scheduling, and to minimize disruptions from construction, all of the work to be completed at each site will be done within a single timeframe.

Each project will have one or more

committees to get input on design and function from teachers and other staff who will be using the space.

This fall, a districtwide committee will start meeting to determine what elements should be included in all four of the high school activity centers and what decisions can be made at the site level. Construction of the activity centers will happen two at a time, starting in successive years, with Apple Valley and Eastview going first, then Eagan and Rosemount. That is the reverse order in which the high schools received turf field improvements in the last three years. The design phase for activity centers at Apple Valley and Eastview will begin in spring 2024, with completion in fall 2026. The process for Eagan and Rosemount will begin in 2025 and be complete in 2027.

May 9, 2023 Bond Referendum: Official Results By Precinct

	Burnsville	Lakeville Empire Farmington	Apple Valley					Rosemount Coates Vermillion	Eagan Innver Grove Heights					Totals	
PRECINCT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
BALLOTS CAST	389	838	607	725	567	786	611	930	1,603	663	921	724	541	1,132	11,037
QUESTION 1															
YES	266	568	365	506	388	509	420	630	1,174	444	670	504	358	774	7,576
NO	122	269	242	217	178	275	190	296	429	219	251	218	182	358	3,446
QUESTION 2															
YES	250	531	355	488	372	480	388	602	1,123	431	644	494	339	736	7,233
NO	138	307	252	233	194	305	221	323	478	232	275	228	199	396	3,781
% Turnout	4.8%	9.54%	8.38%	10.55%	6.05%	11.57%	12.43%	13.10%	15.05%	10.76%	13.43%	9.59%	7.54%	14.26%	

Bond referendum

<< continued from front page >>

"We are pleased with the results and thankful for our community's trust and continued investment in quality schools and building for our future," Superintendent **Mary M. Kreger** said. "This referendum will provide safety and security improvements at all of our schools, additional space we need now and for future growth, and a more consistent experience for students and families across the district. Quality schools are at the core of our thriving communities."

The bond referendum election was

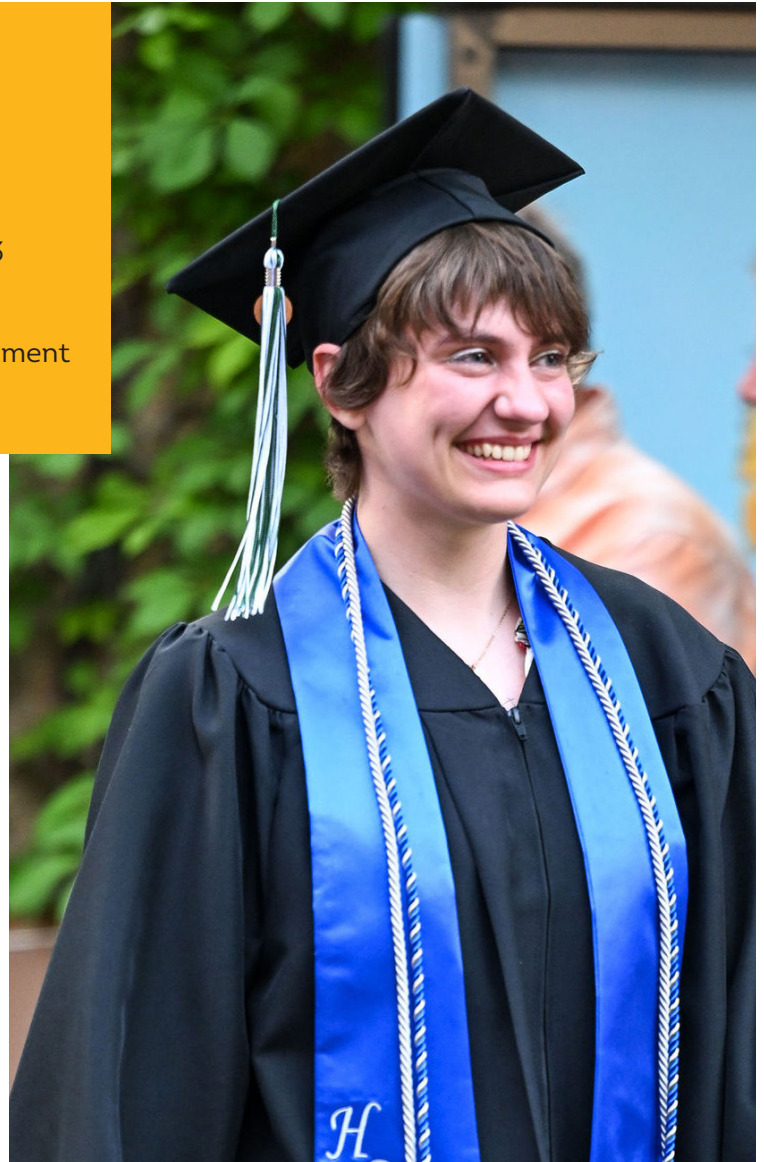
the culmination of a process that started two years ago, in June 2021, when a group of district and school administrators began meeting to conduct a comprehensive review of the district's facilities and equipment needs. The committee studied enrollment projections, building capacities and facilities needs in a range of areas to develop a phased facilities master plan. All phases of the plan address needs in the areas of safety and security, space for growth, and providing a more consistent experience. Phase one recommendations were presented

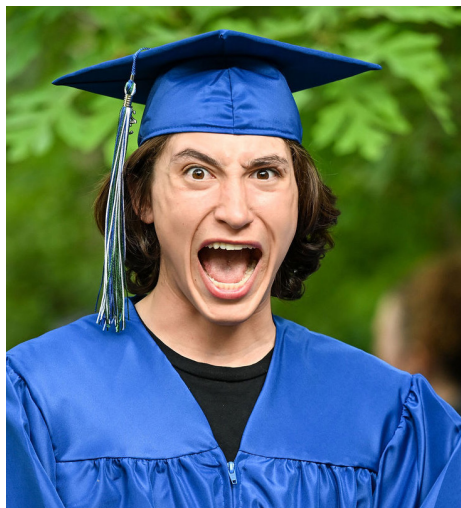
for input at public meetings last November and more than 1,600 comments were submitted online. As a result of that input, the School Board ultimately agreed with the committee's revised recommendation to add a second question for activity center space at the high schools, making its passage contingent on passage of the first question.

The 11,022 voters who cast ballots on the May 9 bond referendum represent just over 10% of the 105,521 registered voters in District 196 at the beginning of election day.

CONGRATS, class of 2023!

Commencement ceremonies for the Class of 2023 recognized the grit and determination of the more than 2,100 students who achieved this important milestone in District 196 this year. This accomplishment is a testament to our collective mission of seeing students achieve their infinite possibilities.





RELIVE THE EXCITEMENT!

The commencement ceremonies were streamed live on graduation day and are available to watch on the district's YouTube channel. Visit youtube.com/district196tv to relive the pomp and circumstance.

SES partnership with United Nations gives students inside access to worldwide issues

Students interested in opportunities to attend international events with firsthand access to discussions about real-life issues impacting our world should consider enrolling in District 196's School of Environmental Studies (SES), an optional high school for juniors and seniors located at the Minnesota Zoo.

Two times this past school year, a small group of students and staff represented SES at major events conducted at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. One was the United Nations (UN) Commission on the Status of Women, and the other was the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

These opportunities are the result of a partnership with the School of Environmental Studies Education Foundation (SESEF), which began in 2007. The partnership gives SES students and staff the opportunity to attend any of the permanent UN forums under the umbrella of the SESEF's "foundation consultative status" with the UN. Teachers say the goal in attending is always to support the curriculum and the SES students as future leaders.

In 2012, SES created a Model United Nations short course as a prerequisite for attending UN conferences. The course offers an in-depth analysis of the workings of the United Nations. Students learn how to negotiate and develop a stronger awareness of global issues, as well as UN processes and protocols.

"Visiting the United Nations is a life-changing opportunity to



SES students and staff who attended the Commission on the Status of Women earlier this year included, from left: **Nico Gonzalo Mullenix**, **Joe Colburn**, **David Melvin** (teacher), **Sam Bigalke**, **Bethany Duppong**, **Jayna Anderson**, **Sigrid Froehlig**, **Paige Forsman**, **Stella Keller**, **Samantha Rudoy**, **Madeline Chere** and **Molly Sheeley Melton** (teacher).

collaborate in authentic ways with people from all over the planet," said SES Teacher **Patrice Callahan**. Students gain valuable information from conference presentations and are able to network, develop their communication skills and learn to navigate a professional environment with passionate leaders, she added.

SES student **Samantha Rudoy** attended the Conference on the Status of Women this year, sharing that the trip impacted her world view. She called it "an amazing opportunity for students" and she hopes to see it continue for years to come.

"As the School of Environmental Studies, it is important to empower our students with a variety of ways they can take action to address issues that are important to them," Principal **Lauren Trainer** said. "Being able to send students to the UN is one crucial way we do that."

Twenty SES students attended UN events in 2022-23 and Trainer said they look forward to expanding the program going forward. For information about enrolling at SES, call the school at 952-431-8750.

Dakota Electric selects six district students to attend summer Youth Tour trip to D.C.

Dakota Electric selected six District 196 high school students to travel to Washington, D.C., this summer to participate in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Youth Tour.

The students, all but one high school juniors this past year, are **Brooke Ayano** of Rosemount High School,

Morgan Becker of Eagan High School, **Sahasra Molleti** and **Sneha Narra** of Eastview High School, and **Theo Pollock** of Apple Valley High School, grade 10. **Tanisha Senapati** of Eastview was selected as an alternate.

Students receive an all-expenses-paid trip to learn about the cooperative business model, meet elected officials,

visit monuments and museums, tour federal agencies and discuss issues that are most important to them. Dakota Electric has provided funding to send approximately 155 students to Youth Tour since 1967.

District's overall graduation rate tops state average, but gaps between groups persist

The four-year graduation rate for District 196 students as a whole stayed the same in 2022 at 88.5% and remained almost 5% higher than the statewide rate, according to graduation data released by the Minnesota Department of Education in April. The data also shows that gaps persist in District 196 and statewide between the graduation rates for White students and other groups of students.

Of the 2,183 District 196 seniors included in the 2022 graduation data, 1,993 (88.5%) graduated in four years, the same as the district's four-year rate in 2021. Statewide in 2022, the graduation rate for all students increased 0.2% to 83.6%.

The state goal by 2025 is for all school districts to have a graduation rate of at least 90% for all students and at least 85% for each group of students. In 2022, District 196 exceeded the state average for each of the student groups and met the state goal for Asian and

White students, and students who are two or more races.

In District 196 in 2022:

- 70.8% of American Indian/Alaskan Native students graduated compared to 61.1% statewide;
- 90.8% of Asian students graduated compared to 87.3% statewide;
- 84.2% of Black students graduated compared to 73.5% statewide;
- 70.6% of Hispanic students graduated compared to 69.3% statewide;
- 92.2% of White students graduated compared to 88.5% statewide;
- 89.7% of students who are of two or more races graduated compared to 79.2% statewide;
- 66.7% of students receiving English Learner services graduated compared to 65.0% statewide;
- 67.3% of students receiving special education services graduated

compared to 65.6% statewide, and

- 73.3% of students eligible for free or reduced-price school meals graduated compared to 71.1% statewide.

The 2021-22 school year was the second full school year impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Students who graduated in the Class of 2022 were in 10th grade when the pandemic started in spring 2020 and were juniors in 2020-21, the school year most disrupted by shifting learning models and limited in-person learning. A larger-than-normal number of high school students struggled during the pandemic years and fell behind on credits needed for graduation. Director of Secondary Education **Michael Bolsoni** said District 196 high schools increased focus on credit recovery work during the pandemic and continue to support students who need to make up credits to get back on track for graduation.

State speech

<< *continued from front page* >>

Runners-up at this year's state tournament were **Mfaz Mohamed Ali** of Apple Valley in original oratory, and **Cailin Mayotte** of Eastview in prose reading.

Third-place medals were awarded to Eagan students **Olma Wakjira** in poetry reading and **Lauren Steenberg** in storytelling; **Allie Nathan** of Eastview in extemporaneous speaking, and **Wayne Southwell** of Apple Valley in prose reading.

District 196 students who medaled in places four through eight are as follows:

- 4th Place – Three medals: Apple Valley students **Lucinda Standafer** in dramatic interpretation and **Emily Melville** and **Hibaq Hassan** in duo interpretation, and **Faye Zhang** of Eastview in extemporaneous speaking.
- 5th Place – Nine medals: Apple Valley students **Connor Smith**

in dramatic interpretation, **Ellie Stumbo** in informative speaking, **Hoda Husen** in original oratory, **Fadumo Dolal** in poetry reading and **Lane Dehnel** in prose reading; Eagan students **Beau Williams** and **Pierce Brown** in duo interpretation, and **Jada Lapastora** in storytelling, and Eastview students **Ava Violette** in extemporaneous reading and **Rhea Saarang** in great speeches.

- 6th Place – Three medals: Eagan students **Anastasia Koch** in extemporaneous speaking and **Jeune Hagape** in prose reading, and **Neal Rajvansh** of Eastview in informative speaking.
- 7th Place – Two medals: **Sophie Todaro** of Apple Valley in humorous interpretation and **Zoe Champ** of Eastview in storytelling.
- 8th Place – Two medals: Eagan students **Adelaide Adu-Gyamfi** in dramatic interpretation and **Hadassah Owens** in original oratory.



Eastview's **Sahiti Atluri** showed off her state champion medal and award in the creative expression category during the Class AA state tournament awards ceremony.

A total of 54 District 196 students qualified for 49 spots at this year's state tournament and 30 advanced to the final round in their category to earn medals. Apple Valley and Eagan rank first and second in total state tournament speech medals won all time, with 429 and 340, respectively, and Eastview ranks fifth with 168.

New student rights handbook includes changes recommended from review process

In June, the School Board approved changes to the *Overview of Student Rights and Responsibilities* handbook for the 2023-24 school year.

The handbook is reviewed and updated annually to ensure compliance with state and federal notification requirements and school district policy. Suggestions for revisions to the handbook are solicited from schools, district departments and district administrators. This year, the changes were also informed by the recommendations of a districtwide committee that began meeting in fall 2021 to examine the district's discipline policy, review disciplinary data and obtain additional public input.

The *Overview of Student Rights and Responsibilities* includes summaries of student regulations and responses for different student behaviors, which vary depending on the severity of the behavior, the student's grade level and previous violations. The 2023-24 handbook will include the changes noted below and will be mailed in August to parents and guardians of students enrolled in District 196 schools, one copy per household.

- Changes were made to make translated information more readily available for families for whom English is not their primary language.
- A reference to the district's gender inclusion regulation was added.
- Updates were made to the section of the handbook titled Special Education Records to mirror similar language used by the Minnesota Department of Education.
- Updates were made to the section of the handbook titled Health and Safety Notices to better describe the district's practices with respect to pest management, asbestos and indoor air quality.
- Updates were made to the section of the handbook titled Student Nutrition to reflect changes made by the Minnesota Legislature pertaining to free school meals.



- A section titled Digital Tools and Digital Citizenship was added to comply with a 2022 law requiring parents and guardians be notified of certain digital tools used with students and also to provide other important information regarding technology use and internet access.
- Language was added to the disciplinary section of the handbook to emphasize opportunities for conflict resolution and skill building.
- Elementary disciplinary responses were added for all categories of student behavior. In previous years,

some categories did not have listed responses for elementary students.

- Revised disciplinary responses and/or language revisions were made to 16 different categories of student behavior.
- The Cyberbullying category was deleted because it is fully covered under Bullying and other categories.
- A new category was added for Physical Contact, Student, which addresses unwanted or disruptive physical contact between students that does not rise to the level of fighting or assault.

The 2023 Minnesota Legislature passed a variety of bills that impact various sections of the *Overview of Student Rights and Responsibilities*. The district will enforce the new laws as they become effective, as noted in the 2023-24 handbook, and will incorporate changes into the printed handbook for 2024-25.



AVHS Esports team victorious in Valorant

Members of the Apple Valley High School Esports team posed with their championship trophy after winning the competition in Valorant at the Minnesota Varsity League spring state tournament in May at the Mall of America. Members of the team are **Jack Hanson** (coach) and **Tony Ma, Nate Junker, Anton Chung, Santiago Lala** and **Devin Vichaiyarth**.

Apple Valley graduate Samuel Streeter is well on his way to a professional music career

Even before **Samuel Streeter** graduated from Apple Valley High School in June, he was already a well-known trombone player and composer. His composition "Ambivalence" is the 2023 winner in the Original Composition–Large Ensemble category of *DownBeat* magazine's Student Music Awards.

Established in 1976, the *DownBeat* awards are considered the most prestigious in jazz education. Hundreds of musicians, music educators and music industry professionals received their first international recognition as *DownBeat* Student Music Award winners. "It's a really amazing honor and it feels great to have the work you put in acknowledged like that," Streeter said in a recent interview in the AVHS Theatre, where he performed many times during his high school career.

Streeter composed "Ambivalence" for a large ensemble of 17 instruments. He said he wrote the music for all of the parts by hand, using "old fashioned pen and paper," something Apple Valley Instrumental Music Teacher **David Scalise** says is very unusual for young

composers. The Apple Valley Jazz Ensemble performed Streeter's song in May. Scalise said the piece is "very challenging and technical."

In addition to the *DownBeat* award, Streeter is also a two-time merit winner in the YoungArts national arts competition, in classical and jazz. His compositions have been performed professionally in the Twin Cities and Los Angeles. Beginning this fall, Streeter will attend the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York on a scholarship to pursue a career as a professional musician.

Earlier this year, Streeter broke his elbow and had to take a break from playing. The injury required the addition of a metal plate and eight screws in his arm. Streeter said the time away from playing allowed him to realize how grateful he is to have music in his life. He attributes his success to passion, practice and hard work, some days practicing for more than six hours, and to the support he has received from his family and incredible teachers in District 196.



Apple Valley High School Class of 2023 graduate **Samuel Streeter** attributes his success to passion, practice, hard work and support he has received from his family and incredible teachers in District 196.

High schools select Students of the Year for 2022-23

ROSEMOUNT HIGH SCHOOL

Ava Schlegel, Hafsa Haji, Emily Moerke, Isabel Aalberg, Ada Vanderwiel, HaoPeng Xie, Grace Hanson, Zack Sickmann, Chloe Moeller, Serenna Leach, Gabriella Lamoreaux, Austin Devnich, Abid Alam, Rudy Amezcua-Shoeman, William Harder, Josie Kotsmith, Zach Thureen, Jonah O'Leary, Travis Mallan, and Grantham Green.

APPLE VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Madelyn Mortinson, Riley Vander Esch, Ayden Reuss, Madeline Rock, Fabiha Yavi, Ariana Monnens, Bryson Flake, Logan Rasmussen, Tyler Collins, Kennedy Johnson, David Ford, Gabriel Wiegrefe, Nathan Lenzen, Mya Ford, Apollo Oase, Adan Linares, and Aaron Connors.

EAGAN HIGH SCHOOL

Bao Nguyen, Prasithan Ganeshkumar, Rowan Swirtz, Emily Teigland, Nehemya Assefa, Samantha Jaedike, Ava Schulz, Daniel Wochnick, Alysha Onwuneme, Shaddai Redmon, Peter McGivern, Harshita Nandyala, Maddie Bartlow-Sibley, Peter Dang, Benjamin Picha, Makayla Petri, and Markus Maas.

EASTVIEW HIGH SCHOOL

Hannah Zacher, Fionna Liew, Peyton Arntz, Bahja Cumar, Samsam Nuure, Emma Longacre, Nathan Elango, Mary Kotrba, Wesley Granger, Tyler Wanous, Deshawn Collins-Bascomb, Sami Tesfaye, Allison Nathan, Karen Rodriguez, Thomas Christopherson, Madysen Leick, Jordan Johnson, and Walter Barlow Jr.

Homeschools must report

Families living in District 196 who plan to homeschool their children for the 2023-24 school year must submit a completed Compulsory Instruction Report to the director of Community Education by Oct. 1, 2023.

Information about the report and other programs and services will be addressed at a virtual meeting Aug. 15, 3:30 p.m. Families who are already registered as a homeschool will get an email invitation to participate. Please call 651-423-7722 with contact information if you are not already registered as a homeschool and would like to be invited to the meeting.

Homeschool information is available on the district website at www.district196.org/academics/homeschool. For more information, call 651-423-7722.

Congratulations!

A sampling of recent student and staff achievements in academics, arts and athletics

Rosemount High School won the team state title of the Minnesota State High School League's Class AAA boys' track and field tournament in June.

Hayden Bills won individual state titles in both shot put and discus throw,

Grantham Green took second place in the 110-meter hurdles and

Maki Whelan finished runner-up in the 300-meter hurdles. Other

members of the state championship Rosemount team are

Noah Lindsay, Will Riddel, Jayvon Maternowski,

Noah Rodenwald, Ryan Mulrooney,

Will Harder, Chance Swanson,

Riddik Collier, Jackson Ganser, Kade

Gilbertson, Joey Downs, Patrick

Grunklee, Rudy Amezcua-Shoeman,

Diego Hernandez, Joe McNeil, George

Edgar, Quintin VeDepo, Ethan Baiel

and **Levi Cinnamo**.

Dwyne Smith Jr. of Apple Valley High School took third place in the 400-meter dash at the Class AAA boys' track and field state tournament.

Parker Faul, Brooklyn Evans, Peter McGivern and **Blake Koenen** of Eagan High School were state champions in the 4x200-meter relay and Rosemount High School's **Jordan Hecht** won the shot put competition and placed third in discus throw at the Class AAA girls' track and field state tournament in June. Other top finishers included Eagan's **Alysha Onwuneme**, second



Rosemount goes unbeaten in softball

The Rosemount High School girls' softball team capped a perfect championship season by defeating Forest Lake 6-1 in the Class 4A title game June 9. Rosemount gave up just that one run in their three games at the tournament, outscoring their opponents 26-1. Members of the championship team are **Bryn Anderson, Kayla Bartol, Peyton Benson, Sydney Erickson, Jorey Fry, Macy Fry, Isabel Guggenberger, Cecilia Hanson, Ella Henderson, Morgan Honeycutt, Analeigh Nock, Grace Nosan, Isabelle Nosan, Ariana Princl, Jessa Snippes, Rachel Stone, Emersyn Yahr** and **Paige Zender**, and the student manager is **Sophie Stramel**. The head coach is **Tiffany Rose** and assistant coaches are **Kelly Wuensch, Jeremy Abbott** and **Craig Esselman**.

place in discus, and the relay team of **Josie Seehafer, Ella Walters, Norah Sjerven** and **Ava Ligtenberg**, third in the 4x800-meter relay, and Rosemount's **Cassandra Gospodarek**, second place in long jump, and **Taylor Heimerl**, third in the 800-meter run.

Four Rosemount High School students (pictured at left) placed in the top 20 at the 2023 DECA International Career Development Conference in Orlando in April. **Julia Alex** and **Kate Reed** placed in the top 10 in the Hospitality Team Decision-Making event with their marketing strategy for a hotel loyalty program, and **Elliot Stone** and **Noah Srenaski** placed in the top 20 in the Sports and Entertainment Marketing Team Decision-Making event with their innovative ideas about rebranding a sports team.

Students from three District 196 schools had top-three finishes at the Business Professionals of America

National Conference in May. **Nikhil Athmaram, Aadith Balaji, Anivrin Iyer** and **Eshaan Jay** of Eastview High School took first place in the Financial Analyst Team event; **Michael Darmody** and **Prasithan Ganeshkumar** of Eagan High School took second place in Small Business Management Team, and **Anushka Aravindan** of Eagan took third place in Health Administration Leadership, and **Jalen Freeman** of Rosemount High School placed third in Marketing, Management and HR Concepts.

Rosemount High School sophomore **Savanna Jensen** applied for and was selected to attend Disease Detective Camp at the CDC Museum in Atlanta in June.

Eastview High School finished third in the team competition of the Class AAA state boys' golf tournament in

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Black Hawk Middle students share their voices in podcasts

Black Hawk Middle School added a podcasting studio this year for students to learn, explore and record their own podcast episodes. Topics included Ramadan, middle school life, scary stories and things to do in the summer. "I learned a new way to share my voice and the power my voice has," one student shared. Principal **Anne Kusch** added, "We love having students be able to share their interests, experiences, thoughts, opinions and research in a format that is relevant and engaging."

Congratulations

<< continued from page 14 >>

June. Members of the team are **Jack Hanson, Joey Rohlwing, John Kisch, Sam Wooten, Tyler Cords** and **Tyler Wanous**. Rohlwing was the top finisher from the district in the individual competition, taking sixth place, and was named Minnesota's Mr. Golf for 2023.

The **Eagan High School boys' tennis team** qualified for and competed in the Class AA state tournament in June.

Nineteen District 196 students are among the 110 young women selected to receive a 2023 Minnesota Aspirations for Women in Computing Award from the Minnesota State Information Technology Center for Excellence and the National Center for Women and Information Technology. The annual award celebrates the efforts of young high school women in their pursuit of technology education and career opportunities. They are **Lily Cordina, Clare Dixon, Kai Meilahn-Kinard, Arya Nair, Lindsay Siu** and **Angela Wohletz** of Eagan High School; **Dagmawit Abate, Nimisha Bora, Shruti Chandrasekar, Advika Chaudhari, Tanisha Senapati** and **Harini Vinod** of Eastview High School, and **Brooke**

Ayano, Lily Espinoza, Norah Haque, Emily Hopke, Laila Karimi, Mae Leppones and **Hasini Tallapaka** of Rosemount High School.

Ian Machalek of Eastview High School took third place in the high school division of the 2022 Escape the Vape video contest. Machalek's 30-second video is titled "The Change Smoker."

Six District 196 employees were selected by an employee committee to receive Outstanding Service Awards in 2022-23. They are: **Jim Becker**, social studies teacher, Eagan High School; **David Evenocheck**, grade 3 teacher, Shannon Park Elementary School; **Tom Idstrom**, principal, Rosemount Elementary School; **Jackie Preble**, receptionist, Apple Valley High School; **Chad Ryburn**, principal, Highland Elementary School, and **Jorja Valandra**, cultural family advocate, districtwide.

Eagan High School senior **Samrug Narayanan** earned the title of Minnesota's state chess champion in March, becoming the third person in state history to simultaneously hold both the K-12 school and overall state chess championships.

Eagan Rotary clubs recognize outstanding education professionals

The Rotary Club of Eagan and Eagan Kick-Start Rotary Club recognized 16 outstanding education professionals, one from every public and private school in Eagan, at their 35th annual recognition luncheon May 10.

The list includes 11 District 196 employees who were nominated for the recognition by their principals: **Megan Thompson** of Black Hawk Middle School; **Toni Knudson** of Dakota Hills Middle School; **Liz Odegard** of Deerwood Elementary School; **Bill Wirsbinski** of Eagan High School; **Christine Mulcare** of Glacier Hills Elementary School of Arts and Science; **Chad Nelson** of Northview Elementary School; **Laura Ross** of Oak Ridge Elementary School of Leadership, Environmental and Health Sciences; **Zoe Weller** of Pinewood Community Elementary School; **Jennifer Skalski** of Red Pine Elementary School; **Alyssa Milliren** of Thomas Lake Elementary School, and **Diane Smith-Tolan** of Woodland Elementary School.

Eagan on *Fortune's* list of Best Places for Families

The City of Eagan is number 11 of the 50 U.S. cities to make *Fortune Magazine's* 2023 list of Best Places to Live for Families. This year's ranking has a focus on multigenerational families.

Fortune evaluated nearly 1,900 cities across the country, reviewing multiple data points across five broad categories: education, aging resources, general wellness, financial health and livability. The article said "Eagan offers parents and caretakers an ideal environment, with its low crime rates, solid public schools" and access to highly rated doctors and assisted living facilities.



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Community Education

REvolution for competitive swimming

Join our new coaches and focus on skill development and conditioning. This is an ideal experience for first-time competitive swimmers as well as experienced swimmers.

Swimmers grades 5 through 12 with successful completion of Red Cross Level 4 are welcome. Swimmers grades 3 and 4 may join after a swim evaluation. To learn more, visit ce.district196.org/swim, email aquatics@district196.org or call 952-431-8777.



Celebrate summer with Early Childhood Family Education | ECFE

We offer a variety of classes designed to help strengthen families through interactive play and relevant, research-based parent education. Our summer schedule provides a sample of the classes available throughout the year, including age-specific and one-time events.

Visit ce.district196.org/ecfe to learn more or email ECFE@district196.org.



Babies: Birth Through 11 Months (Non-Separating, Parents with Babies Only)

Babies bring big changes to every family! Join other parents of infants and learn how to make the adjustment to 'being a family'. Ask your questions and we will share ideas about building a solid base for your family. Sing songs and play some games, too!

Tue. | July 11-Aug. 1 | 8:30-10 a.m. | 4 sessions | Free | DVLC

Tue. | July 11-Aug. 1 | 5:30-7 p.m. | 4 sessions | Free | DVLC

Note: Baby classes are free to District 196 families.

Self Defense Fundamentals (18+)

Find strength and confidence in learning self-defense fundamentals. Learn effective responses to practical situations, experience hands-on exercises, and unlock what you are capable of in order to defend yourself.

Mon. | July 24 | 6-8 p.m. | \$55 | BHMS

Adult graduates

More than 90 adults have earned their high school diploma or successfully completed the GED exam this year! You, too, can begin to achieve your educational goals with the help of our caring and patient teachers. Summer session begins July 10. Visit ce.district196.org/abe, call 952-431-8316 or email abe@district196.org to learn more.



We need your help!

Help ensure students are ready to learn when school starts! Monetary donations will be used to purchase school supplies for students in District 196. Visit bit.ly/3WDAuma. You may also drop off new school supplies. Items will be distributed to students in need through their schools.



Back to School Supply Drop-Off

Sat | Aug. 5 | 10 a.m.-1 p.m. | FRMS Lower Level Door #7



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