

Spotlight

Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools



DISTRICT196
One District. Infinite Possibilities.

Fall 2023 | Volume 64 • Number 1

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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Fall football fun

It was a sure sign of fall when high school students returned to the fields, courts and courses for the start of the fall sports season in mid-August. Rosemount High School enters the fall 2023 season as the defending Class AAA state champion in girls' soccer and their football team (pictured) finished state runner-up last year. There are new requirements for students who wish to attend varsity football games this season. High school students need to show their student ID card and purchase a ticket. Students younger than high school age will need a ticket and must be accompanied by a parent/guardian/adult caretaker who is responsible for them. See story on page 6.

Twelve candidates seek four open School Board seats

Twelve residents of Independent School District 196 filed candidacy for the School Board during the two-week filing period that ended Aug. 15. They will vie for four open seats in the Nov. 7, 2023 School Board election.

The 12 candidates (in alpha order) are **Craig Angrimson** of Apple Valley, **Kim Bauer** of Apple Valley, **Melissa Field** of Lakeville, **Leah Gardner** of Eagan, **Sachin Isaacs** of Burnsville, **Cory Johnson** of Eagan, **Jackie Magnuson** of Rosemount, **Charles McCready** of Apple Valley, **Teressa Schlueter** of Apple Valley, **Gina Swaney** of Apple Valley, **Lori Urkiel** of Rosemount, and **Anna Williams** of Eagan.

The terms of current board members Isaacs, Johnson, Magnuson and **Joel Albright** expire Jan. 1, 2024. The term of all four open positions is four years, from January 2024 to January 2028. Before the filing period opened, Albright announced that he would not be seeking election to another term after serving on the board the last 20 years.

The League of Women Voters of Dakota County will hold a candidate forum Sept. 13 at Rosemount City Hall. The forum will be recorded and available to view afterward on the District 196 YouTube channel and other locations.

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Understanding is the goal of Standard Response Protocol

This summer, district and school staff implemented Standard Response Protocol (SRP) actions to ensure everyone is using the same language and responses to the different situations that may occur at schools during the school day.

The Standard Response Protocol is being used in school districts across the nation. It was developed and is provided free of charge by the I Love U Guys Foundation. Representatives from local police departments attended training with district staff last school year and have helped with implementation of the SRP actions and language this year.

The five SRP actions are HOLD, SECURE, LOCKDOWN, EVACUATE and SHELTER.

HOLD is used when hallways need to be kept clear, possibly for a medical emergency or other situation. The announcement over the school speaker is to "HOLD, in your room or area. Clear the halls." The hold continues until ended by another announcement.

SECURE is used to keep people safe inside the building from a possible threat outside. The directive is to "SECURE. Get inside. Lock outside doors." Teachers and

<< continued on page 5 >>

SRP ACTIONS



HOLD
In your room or area.
Clear the halls.



SECURE
Get inside.
Lock outside doors.



LOCKDOWN
Locks, lights,
out of sight.



EVACUATE
To the announced
location.



SHELTER
Using the announced
hazard and strategy.

Copyright 2020. All rights reserved. The "I Love U Guys" Foundation Standard Response Protocol (SRP)

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.

Strategic roadmap guides district's operational planning process

This summer, the School Board approved a strategic roadmap that is guiding work identified in a three-year operational plan the district began implementing last year. The roadmap shown below includes a new mission statement, core values, vision and four strategic priorities in the areas of wellbeing, achievement, equity and resources that are outlined in the plan. "Educating, developing, and inspiring our students for lifelong success" replaced "Educating our students to reach their full potential" to better define the district's mission.



DISTRICT 196

STRATEGIC ROADMAP

ADOPTED JUNE 26, 2023



MISSION

OUR CORE PURPOSE WITH DISTINCTION

Educating, developing, and inspiring our students for lifelong success.



VISION

WHAT WE INTEND TO CREATE

District 196 provides the experiences that our students, families and employees desire by:

- Developing the whole student and honoring diverse needs and cultures;
- Engaging students with opportunities in academics, arts and athletics, and
- Living our mission and core values to prepare students, families and employees for lifelong success.



CORE VALUES

DRIVERS OF OUR WORDS AND ACTIONS

- Student-Centered** • All decisions are centered on what is best for students.
- Empathy** • Seeking awareness and understanding of the perspectives and experiences of others.
- Wellness** • Support the emotional, social and physical wellbeing of the whole person.
- Integrity** • Act with respect, honesty and responsibility.
- Achievement** • Provide learning with high expectations, rigor and resiliency for all.
- Collaboration** • Learn and engage together for a shared purpose.
- Community** • Foster an environment of inclusivity, engagement and belonging.
- Lifelong Learning** • Inspire a love of learning for all ages.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

FOCUS OF OUR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- Wellbeing** • Increasing capacities, skills, structures and experiences in social-emotional wellbeing.
- Achievement** • Strengthening and aligning curriculum and instructional practices across all classrooms to improve student outcomes and staff efficacy.
- Equity** • Supporting equity as a core competency through practices, structures, beliefs, resources and staffing.
- Resources** • Providing staffing, facilities, technology and equipment needed to support a safe, sustainable and dynamic learning environment for all students.

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A transformational shift in literacy

By **Mary M. Kreger**, superintendent

Reading is the most important skill for students to learn when they are young. It is a foundational skill for learning and for life. Unfortunately, too many of our students are not meeting proficiency in reading. Overall, 57 percent of students reached proficiency on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments in spring 2023. The results are even more concerning for some groups of students. District 196 leaders, teachers and community members find these results unacceptable and are unified in the need for change.

Last year, we gathered information from students, families, teachers, staff and administrators that led us to consider a different approach to literacy. Then, earlier this year, the state stepped up to provide leadership aimed at improving the literacy skills of students across Minnesota. The Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act, known as the READ Act, is just one of many new laws affecting education to come out of the 2023 legislative session, but it has the potential to make the greatest impact on the lives of current and future students by making sure they can read. For District 196, the components of the READ Act require us to shift from a balanced literacy approach to a structured literacy approach in teaching reading. This requires us to purchase curriculum and train our teachers in line with this method.

We have worked with urgency and commitment to begin this transformational shift in literacy. This summer, teachers attended training to learn Fastbridge, our new assessment tool that will provide critical information about each student's strengths and needs. By July 2024, teachers of literacy must be trained in evidence-based reading instruction that is approved by the Department of Education. Another critical component of this transformation is the curriculum we use to teach. The Department of Education will release new curriculums in January 2024 that have been vetted to ensure they meet the components for evidence based, structured literacy.

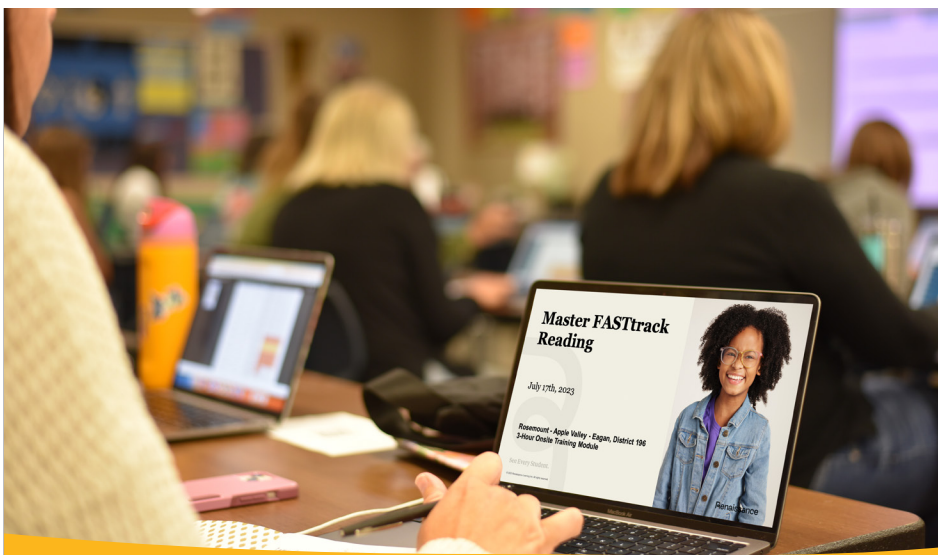
In discussions about literacy, parents, teachers and administrators found three common themes. First, we have a deep belief in the ability to teach all students to read and write. Second, we share a great concern that we are not achieving the results we know are possible. And third, literacy is an important part of equity work; the opportunities for students who can read are indescribably greater than for those who cannot.

Our dedication to teaching kids to read is resolute, driven by the belief that literacy is the cornerstone of their lifelong success.

Sincerely,



Mary M. Kreger



Fast-tracking literacy changes

More than 1,100 District 196 elementary school teachers completed training this summer on how to use a new screening platform that will help them assess students in reading and other subjects. Teachers learned how to use the Fastbridge platform, administer the FASTtrack Reading Measures for each grade level, and access reports to be able to respond to student needs based on data. Students will be assessed three times each year, in the fall, winter and spring. If implementation goes well this year, the district plans to expand use of the Fastbridge platform next year by adding universal screeners for math and social emotional wellbeing.

Survey seeks input on new Indigenous Education for All law

The Minnesota Department of Education is seeking input from all Minnesotans about new legislation that will educate all students in the state about the 11 Tribal Nations with whom we have geography in common.

The survey is available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/IEFASurvey/> and will remain open through Sept. 22.

Connect with School Board members at a community listening session this year

District 196 stakeholders can share their experiences, comments and concerns directly with up to three School Board members at community listening sessions held monthly during the school year at different schools throughout the district.

Community listening sessions are open to the public. Up to three board members (less than a quorum of the board) attend each community listening session, along with the superintendent and other invited staff. Each district stakeholder has up to five minutes to speak and any remaining time may be used by board members or administrators to ask clarifying questions.

Stakeholders are limited to district residents, district property or business owners, district employees, current students and their parents/guardians, district contractors, bidders on district contracts that are open for bidding or awarded but not completed, and authorized representatives of these stakeholders.

Up to 10 school district stakeholders may sign up in advance to speak at the next scheduled community listening session. To sign up to speak, speakers must complete 801.7P, Request to Speak at Community Listening Session, and submit the completed form to the Superintendent's Office no later than 3 p.m. on the Friday before the community listening session. If more than 10 speakers submit a timely request, a lottery will be conducted to determine the 10 speakers.

If at least one speaker signs up in advance and speaking spots remain at the time the community listening session is scheduled to begin, stakeholders may sign up for the remaining spots on a first-come, first-served basis at the beginning of the community listening session and must complete 801.7P, Request to Speak at Community Listening Session. The community listening session will adjourn after the last speaker.

Community listening sessions in 2023-



School Board members are (back row, from left): **Sakawdin Mohamed**, clerk; **Bianca Virnig**, director; **Art Coulson**, director; **Joel Albright**, director; (front row) **Sachin Isaacs**, vice chairperson; **Jackie Magnuson**, treasurer, and **Cory Johnson**, chairperson.

24 are scheduled from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., on the following dates and locations:

- Sept. 21, 2023, Woodland Elementary School
- Oct. 17, 2023, Deerwood Elementary School
- Nov. 20, 2023, Pinewood Community Elementary School
- Dec. 14, 2023, Shannon Park Elementary School
- Jan. 17, 2024, Rosemount Elementary School

- Feb. 26, 2024, Greenleaf Elementary School
- March 19, 2024, Highland Elementary School
- April 22, 2024, Southview Elementary School
- May 28, 2024, Parkview Elementary School

More information about the structure of listening sessions and how to participate is available on the School Board webpage at District196.org/about/school-board/.

Regular board meetings streamed live on YouTube

The School Board holds regular meetings on Mondays at least once each month according to a schedule approved by the board. Regular School Board meetings begin at 6 p.m. at Dakota Ridge School, 4629 144th St. W. in Apple Valley.

The remaining regular board meetings for the 2023-24 school year are scheduled on the following Mondays:

Sept. 11, Sept. 25, Oct. 9, Nov. 13, Dec. 11, Jan. 8, Feb. 12, March 11, April 8, May 6, June 10 and June 24.

Regular board meetings are streamed live on the District 196 YouTube page and are available to stream the day following from the District 196 TV webpage. Materials for agenda items for regular board meetings are available on the School Board webpage.

District 196 stakeholders may participate at regular board meetings by addressing items on the agenda after being recognized by the board chair, or by submitting a special communication request form no later than five days before the board meeting at which they wish to speak.

The board also occasionally holds special board meetings. Notice of all School Board meetings are posted in district buildings and on the website. Special board meetings are not videotaped.

For more information about board meetings or special communication requests, visit the School Board webpage at District196.org/about/school-board/.

Favorable bond sale rate reduces projected debt service payments by \$40 million

At a special meeting Aug. 22, the School Board approved the sale of \$300 million in general obligation facilities maintenance and school building bonds to raise funds to pay for construction of facilities improvements that were approved by district voters in a bond referendum special election in May.

Eight companies submitted bids to purchase the bonds. Jefferies of New York submitted the low bid of 3.94%, which is less than the 4.75% rate that was estimated in January when the board called for the two-question bond referendum election. The lower-than-expected rate reduced the number of annual debt service levies on the bonds from 25 years to 24, and results in estimated debt service payments being approximately \$40 million less than projected.

“This is good news all around,” said **Jodie Zesbaugh**, senior municipal advisor for Ehlers, the district’s financial advisor. She said the lower rate means the district will be able to pay down the principal amount more quickly and the total cost over the life of the bonds will be less than expected. Zesbaugh also commented on the district’s favorable Aa2 rating from Moody’s Investor’s Service, which served as an underlying rating, and the MN Credit Enhancement Rating of Aa1.

The sale of the bonds included a reoffering premium of nearly \$12 million, some of which will increase the amount of funds the district receives from the sale to be used for the facilities improvements.

“The district will be getting more than expected from this sale and the impact

for taxpayers will be less than we told them during the referendum,” Board Member Joel Albright said after the meeting.

This was the first of two bond sales the district will have to pay for the \$493 million in improvements, which among other things include a new elementary school, new Rosemount Middle School, renovation and addition to Rosemount High School, and an activity center addition to all four comprehensive high schools in the district. The second bond sale will be slightly smaller and is scheduled for November 2025. Proceeds from the second bond sale will pay for construction of the remaining facilities improvements. All improvements from the 2023 bond referendum are expected to be completed by 2028.

Safety

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students continue classes as usual inside the building, but are not allowed to go outside until the secure is ended by another announcement.

LOCKDOWN is used to secure individual rooms and keep people in place, quiet and hidden from a possible threat inside the building. The announcement is to “LOCKDOWN,” followed by “Locks, lights, out of sight.” Teachers and students hide inside rooms and wait quietly to listen for additional directions or cues on how they should respond.

EVACUATE is used to move occupants to a different part of the building or out of the building if there was a fire, for example. The “EVACUATE” directive may be followed by a location as part of the announcement.

SHELTER is used for an external hazard or threat like a tornado or flooding. The announcement is to “SHELTER for hazard using a safety strategy.” Students and staff would move to a predetermined area of the building.

Signs showing the five SRP actions are posted in schools throughout

the district. Students will practice their responses to the actions by participating in drills during the school year. State law requires schools to conduct 11 drills during the year, including five evacuation (fire) drills, with one in the first 10 days of school; five lockdown drills, and one shelter (tornado) drill.

In years past, district schools had similar responses to situations, but language used for the announcements was different and there were different names for lockdowns that all meant essentially the same thing in terms of the response. Going forward, when there is a drill or situation at a school, the first announcement will identify the action and communicate the response, and additional information will be shared in subsequent announcements.

“Implementing the Standard Response Protocol gives us simple, clear communication and shared understanding in an emergency situation,” Superintendent **Mary Kreger** said. “The safety of students and staff is our top priority every day,”

Candidates

<< *continued from front page* >>

Absentee voting for the Nov. 7 School Board election will begin Sept. 22. Voters do not need a reason to vote by absentee ballot. Absentee ballots can be completed by mail or in person at the Dakota County Western Service Center in Apple Valley, the Dakota County Northern Service Center in West St. Paul, and the Dakota County Administration Center in Hastings. District residents who do not live in Rosemount or Apple Valley may also vote absentee in person at the District Office. Because Rosemount and Apple Valley are having city elections, Rosemount voters may vote absentee at Rosemount City Hall and Apple Valley voters may vote absentee at the Apple Valley Municipal Center. To absentee vote by mail, voters may download an application from the district website and mail the completed application as directed. Direct balloting (early voting) will be offered at the three Dakota County buildings starting Oct. 20.

Voters can also cast their ballot on Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 7, 2023, at their designated polling location between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. To find out where you vote, go to www.mnvotes.org.

Second Step will support students' social-emotional wellbeing and development

Beginning this year, District 196 elementary and middle school teachers will be engaging students with the lessons and concepts of Second Step as part of the district's commitment to support students' social-emotional wellbeing.

Published by the Committee for Children, Second Step is a social-emotional learning curriculum that helps students build social-emotional skills like nurturing positive relationships, managing emotions and setting goals so they can thrive in school and in life after school.

Student Support Coordinator **Stephanie Ochocki** said, "We believe the knowledge our students will acquire by engaging with Second Step lessons will support them to internalize positive perceptions and emotional management skills essential for fostering prosocial behaviors essential for their lifelong success."

Educational Benefits applications support students and schools

All families, regardless of income, are encouraged to complete an Educational Benefits Program application. Eligible applicants receive discounted cocurricular participation fees, academic testing fees (ACT, AP, PSAT, SAT), college application fees and Community Education course fees.

In addition to assisting eligible students, the program provides direct funding for their schools. The more families that apply, more eligible students receive support and their schools receive more funding.

Apply today at [District196.org/edubenefits](https://www.district196.org/edubenefits).

Only one application is needed per household, but a new application must be submitted each year.



Getting back to nature

These students explored the great outdoors around their school and charted data as they learned about plants, animals, insects and more in Back to Nature Camp, which was offered at two elementary schools. Thousands of students continued their learning this summer by attending the many camps, classes and activities that were offered by district schools, programs like English language development, and through District 196 Community Education.

Students need high school ID or an adult to attend football

District 196's four comprehensive high schools are implementing new requirements to attend varsity football games this year to help ensure a safe and fun environment for teams, officials and fans.

High school students will need to purchase a ticket and show their student ID to attend. Only students from the home team will be allowed to sit on the home side of the stadium. High school students from the visiting team or any other high school must sit on the visitor side of the stadium.

Students younger than high school age will need a ticket and must be accompanied by a parent/guardian/adult caretaker who is responsible for them for the duration of their time in the stadium. Some district high schools have designated seating areas for middle school students.

There will be no entry into varsity football games after halftime and no re-entry after leaving a game. There

will be additional support from school and district administrators at all home football games to implement the new requirements and provide increased supervision.

District 196 School Safety and Climate Coordinator **Reshard Saulter** said other metro-area high schools already have or will be implementing similar requirements to attend varsity football games in their stadiums. Saulter, a former police officer, said the local police departments will continue to play an important role in helping maintain a safe environment at home football games in District 196.

"We believe the changes are necessary to help manage these large community events with thousands of people and keep people safe," said Director of Secondary Education **Michael Bolsoni**, who oversees the district middle schools and high schools. "We tolerate much greater security to attend a large concert or professional sports game."

Tyra Raasch is the new principal at Deerwood Elementary

Tyra Raasch is the new principal of Deerwood Elementary School in Eagan this year. Raasch had been the assistant administrator at Highland Elementary School in Apple Valley for the last four years.



At Deerwood, Raasch replaces **Jeremy Sorenson**, who was hired to be the district's director of elementary education.

Prior to joining District 196 in 2019, Raasch worked for South Washington County Schools, first as an elementary special education teacher for six years, then an administrative intern at an elementary school for two years and one year as special services coordinator at Woodbury High School. As assistant administrator at Highland, Raasch provided support to

students and teachers, offered staff professional development, ensured a safe and positive learning environment, and coordinated building assessments.

"Deerwood has a strong reputation as a welcoming and inclusive school that meets the needs of the whole child and I am excited for the opportunity to continue this great work as Deerwood's next principal," Raasch said. "I look forward to meeting with students, families and staff, and partnering to best meet the needs of each student. Highland will always hold a special place in my heart and I know they will continue to do great things."

Raasch has a bachelor's degree in special education from Winona State University, and earned her master's of education, education specialist degree and principal licensure from Saint Mary's University of Minnesota.

Amanda Schiltz hired as new special education coordinator

Amanda Schiltz was hired this summer to be a coordinator in the district's Special Education Department.



Schiltz has more than 25 years of experience in education, including 19 years in District 196. Most recently, Schiltz served as a lead interventionist and comprehensive intervention model coach, where she worked with a district team to train teachers on the comprehensive intervention model. In her new role as coordinator, Schiltz will be responsible for supporting students, families and special educators in the district's 19 elementary schools, as well as

supporting continuous improvement for all special education programs.

"I am honored and excited to join the special education coordinator team," Schiltz said. "I am passionate about supporting students and staff to reach their greatest potential within special education. I look forward to building collaborative partnerships with staff, parents and students to advocate for high-quality practices and inspire lifelong learners."

Schiltz has a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Iowa State University, a master's in reading and literacy from City University and is working to earn a director of special education license.

District doesn't provide accident insurance

District 196 does not provide accident insurance for injuries that happen to students at school or during school activities, nor does the district provide insurance protection for student property that is lost, stolen or damaged at school or at school activities. Families that wish to have accident or property protection are encouraged to contact an insurance company.

Join the district and help our students pursue their infinite possibilities

District 196 is a Forbes Best-in-State Employer with opportunities for individuals who enjoy working with children. There are immediate openings for paraprofessionals, custodians, bus drivers and nutrition services associates (see below). For more information and to apply online, visit the Employment page at www.District196.org/employment, then select "current openings."

Paraprofessionals earn \$20.76 per hour (\$16.00 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-\$23.73 per hour (\$18.03 per hour for substitutes). Typical hours are 3-11:30 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 (same for substitutes). 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 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 transports 22,000 students with state's largest school bus fleet

District 196 provides transportation to and from school at no charge to elementary school students who live one mile or more from their school, and middle school and high school students who live 1.5 or more miles from their school. Students living within those distances to school who would have to cross railroad tracks or a road defined as a hazardous crossing by the Transportation Department also receive transportation from the district.

With more than 200 buses, District 196 operates the largest district-owned school bus fleet in Minnesota, transporting more than 22,000 students to and from school each day.



Kindergarteners rule the schools

Chelsea Sander of Apple Valley captured the moment as her daughter **Ava Sander** boarded the bus to attend the first of two Kindergarten Transition Days Aug. 28 and 29. These half days of school are designed to give kindergarten students the opportunity to learn about their school and daily routines from their teacher when they are the only students in the building. Also pictured are Bus Driver **Rosean Tompkins** and Payroll Supervisor **Francisca Blackman**, who volunteered as a bus chaperone the first day.

District 196 bus drivers earn a starting hourly wage of \$22.62 and are eligible for benefits at 23 hours per week. Training is provided. To become a bus driver or chaperone, apply online at District196.org (click on "Employment" in the black bar at top) or call 651-423-7685 if you have questions.

Bus stop information mailed

Postcards were mailed August 14 to families of students eligible to receive transportation to and from school during the 2023-24 school year.

The postcard includes information about bus stop locations and pick-up/drop-off times. Parents and guardians who do not receive a postcard and believe their child is eligible to receive transportation can call the Transportation Department at 651-423-7685. Bus stop information is also available through the Infinite Campus parent portal. Click on "More," then "Transportation." This information is updated nightly to reflect any changes to bus routes and stops.

Bus tracking app

Students, parents and guardians can track their school bus to their stop using the smartphone application "Here Comes the Bus."



Users of the app can establish a perimeter around their stop and it sends an alert when the bus enters the perimeter. Here Comes the Bus also sends a notification message if a bus is running late or if a different bus has been substituted for a child's usual bus.

The app uses HTTPS, or Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure, which encrypts all communication between the web browser and the app for security. The app tracks district buses using GPS, it does not track students. The Here Comes The Bus app is available to download free on the Google Play Store for Android and App Store for iPhone.

To set up an account, users will need the school district identification number (73500) and the student's meal account number. Parents can monitor buses for multiple children from a single account. Parents of children in early childhood education programs can call the Transportation Department at 651-423-7685 to get a temporary meal account number.

Bus service for a fee

Optional transportation service for a fee is available to families whose children are not eligible for free transportation based on current service distances. The annual cost is \$300 per student, with a \$600 family maximum. Families whose children qualify to receive free or reduced-price educational benefits receive the service for a discounted rate. For more information, visit the Transportation Department page at District196.org or call 651-423-7685.

Parents asked to review family information and update

Each year, District 196 asks parents and guardians to review and update information currently on record with the district, including contact information, emergency contacts, student health records and more. It is important for the district to have current information **in order to notify families in case of** emergency, changes in the school schedule and to receive regular communication from the schools and district.



Parents complete this annual review online through the Infinite Campus parent portal known as Campus Parent. The first time parents and guardians log into an existing account this year, they will be prompted to complete the online review process before proceeding. (Note: This process is not supported via the Campus Parent App and should be completed via an internet browser. For the best user experience, a desktop or laptop computer is recommended.)

The review includes a question on "preferred communication language" that all parents and guardians should answer. The data from this question is used by staff to make decisions about which families should be offered interpreter services and translations of certain materials.

This is the one time each year the district asks parents to complete the review to ensure schools have the most up-to-date information. Parents can also make updates any time during the year through Campus Parent or by contacting their child's school.

All District 196 parents and guardians are encouraged to have a Campus Parent account of their own to stay involved in their child's education, to access end-of-term report cards, transcripts, attendance and other information. Parents who do not have their own Campus Parent account can request an activation key from the office at their child's school.

Directions for setting up a Campus Parent account and completing the annual online review process is available at www.district196.org/community/families/.

Parents must decide on optional iPad Protection Plan

District 196 offers an optional Protection Plan to families for \$20 per iPad to cover the cost of potential theft and damage throughout the school year. The plan is free for students eligible for the Educational Benefits Program, so it is recommended that parents and guardians complete that application first. The Educational Benefits application is available at District196.org; select Services from the main menu, then Nutrition Services.

All families are asked to review and acknowledge the iPad Student User Agreement and either accept or decline the optional Protection Plan by Sept. 18, 2023. Until that date, the district will cover damages (not loss) to allow families time to complete the review and sign-up process. After Sept. 18, until the Protection Plan is accepted, the family is responsible for any costs associated with loss or damage of the iPad as defined in the Protection Plan details. Families can accept the Protection Plan at any time throughout the school year by logging into their MyPaymentsPlus account, searching for "iPad" and selecting the desired option to accept or decline the protection plan. Both options ask to review and acknowledge the Student User Agreement. For directions on using MyPaymentsPlus or creating an account, go to District196.org, select Community from the main menu, then Family Resources. For assistance, families should contact their child's school.

Cell phones must be 'off and away' for all middle school students

Middle school students who bring their cell phones to school this year will be required to have them powered off and kept in their locker or backpack during the school day to reduce the distractions and disruptions to learning that phones can cause.

Last year, principals of the district's six middle schools agreed to take a consistent, districtwide approach to managing cell phones and cell phone use by their students this year. They call it "Off and Away" for powered off and put away from your person.

When a parent or guardian needs to reach their student during the school day, they should call the school office and staff will get the message to their student. Before and after the school day, students will be able to use their cell phones inside the building to call a parent and/or review messages received during the day.

"Managing cell phone use is an increasingly important challenge for all of us," said Director of Secondary Education **Michael Bolsoni**. "Staff at our middle schools and high schools are working to develop clear and consistent cell phone policies that teach age-appropriate use and support a safe and productive learning environment." High schools use varying practices to manage student cell phone use.

Cell phones provide access to tools that benefit learning, but students do not need cell phones to access learning tools during the school day. All students have a district-issued iPad to use for learning at school, as well as other digital tools.

Research shows student access to cell phones distracts from the learning environment and creates a barrier to the interactions and connections crucial to relationship-based learning. By keeping cell phones "off and away" during the school day, middle school principals believe it will minimize the distractions of social media when students should be focused on learning.

Multilingual students can earn recognition and college credits

High school seniors who can demonstrate proficiency in a language other than English can earn recognition on their transcript and credits at a Minnesota state college or university as part of the state's Bilingual/Multilingual Seals and World Language Proficiency Certificate program.

The program was established to recognize the unique advantages of being a bilingual or multilingual speaker. Students who are bilingual are more culturally and linguistically competent and better prepared for a college or career experience with a global perspective.

To earn this recognition, seniors must be assessed in reading, writing, listening and speaking in a language other than English. Students take a bilingual assessment and are scored in all four areas based on proficiency guidelines established by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

- A World Language Proficiency Certificate is awarded for students who score at the intermediate low/mid-level in a language other than English. Students can receive up to two semesters of college credit.
- A Gold Bilingual or Multilingual Seal is awarded for students who score at the intermediate high level in a language other than English and earn English language arts credits. Students can receive up to three semesters of college credit per language.
- A Platinum Bilingual or Multilingual Seal is awarded for students who score at the advanced low level in a language other than English and earn English language arts credit or proficiency. Students can receive up to four semesters of college credit per language.

High school seniors interested in participating in the program this year should speak with their counselor or a teacher for information on how to register for the bilingual assessments.



Welcome, new teachers!

District 196 welcomed 189 new teachers during workshop week Aug. 21-22. That represents 9% of the approximately 2,100 total teachers working in District 196, the third largest in the state. Pictured during the new teacher welcome event are New Teacher Mentor **Katie Holman** (foreground) and O-Comp Program Lead **Krista Pawlicki** sharing information with a group of teachers who are new to District 196 and new to teaching.

Students get one breakfast and lunch per day at no cost

This year, Minnesota became the fourth state in the country to offer universal school meals to students. The Free School Meals Bill provides all students one breakfast and one lunch meal each school day at no cost. Individual items, second meals/entrees and a la carte options are not included in the Free School Meals Bill and must be purchased. The cost for an adult breakfast is \$2.25 and \$4.95 for lunch.

The District 196 Nutrition Services team fuels students for top performance each day. This year, they will provide students with more locally grown foods, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, milk, oats, wild rice, honey and tofu. The menu will also feature more culturally diverse meals, including sambusas and enchiladas. Members of the Nutrition Services staff will be involving students in taste tests, kitchen tours and student panels to strive to provide food they enjoy.

Families can view their school menu through the Nutrislice online menu platform (district196.nutrislice.com), which includes photos, nutrition information and allergens.

Notice of digital tools used in District 196

District 196 uses a variety of digital devices and software from technology providers as critical tools to support student learning.

The inventory of digital tools District 196 uses is posted on the 1:1 Parent Resources page at www.district196.org/academics/digital-learning/11-ipad-parent-resources/. The inventory describes the name of each digital tool, as well as the educational data elements affected through the use of each tool.

Parents and guardians may contact digitaltools@district196.org with questions regarding specific digital tools used in classrooms or to request to inspect a contract associated with a digital tool listed on the inventory.



The contingent of Apple Valley High School coaches and students who qualified for this year's National Speech and Debate Association National Tournament posed together on the main stage to show off all the hardware they were bringing home from Phoenix in June.

District 196 students and schools earn national speech and debate honors

Eleven District 196 students were finalists in their category of competition and three District 196 high schools earned top team honors at this year's National Speech and Debate Association National Tournament held in Phoenix, in June.

For team honors, Apple Valley and Eagan high schools were two of the top-10 Schools of Outstanding Distinction based on the number of rounds of competition their students completed in both speech and debate events at the tournament. Eastview High School was one of 20 to be named a Speech School of Excellence based on rounds completed in speech events.

Apple Valley had seven finalists in six events, including **Isaiah Craig** and **Fadumo Dolal**, who finished as national runners up in duo interpretation and received the President's Bowl for winning the final round. Other finalists from Apple Valley are **Mfaz Mohamed Ali**, who followed up last year's national

title in humorous interpretation with a third-place finish in oratory this year; **Hibaq Hassan**, third place in program oral interpretation; **Jihan Abdi**, fourth place in oratory; **Sophie Green**, who improved on last year's eighth-place finish by taking sixth in the nation in informative speaking this year, and **Leah Willingham**, sixth place in Lincoln-Douglas debate.

Eastview had two finalists: **Faye Zhang**, who went from quarterfinalist last year to national runner-up this year in U.S. extemporaneous speaking, and **Sahiti Atluri**, who placed sixth in humorous interpretation.

Eagan High School seniors **Eric Li** and **Archan Sen** finished their high school debate careers with a sixth-place finish in policy debate to go with last year's third-place finish.

Semifinalists (top 14) include Eastview's **Allie Nathan**, eighth place in international extemporaneous speaking; **Cailin Mayotte**, 13th in dramatic interpretation, and **A.B.**

Amarreh in congressional debate-House, and Eagan's **Jacob Braginsky** in congressional debate-Senate. Eagan's **Aerin Engelstad** finished top 24 in Lincoln-Douglas debate and **Param Thakkar** and **Medihin Daniel** were top 24 in policy debate. Quarterfinalists (top 30) are Apple Valley's **Lucinda Standafer** in dramatic interpretation, **Connor Smith** and **Zoey Meier** in duo interpretation, and **Sophie Todaro** in humorous interpretation, and Eagan's **Beau Williams** and **Pierce Mitchel** in duo interpretation, and **Adelaide Adu-Gyamfi** in program oral interpretation. Octafinalists (top 60) include Apple Valley's **Lydia Voss** and **Wayne Southwell** in duo interpretation, and **Emily Melville** and **Lane Dehnel** in program oral interpretation; Eastview's **Elisabeth Nielsen** in U.S. extemporaneous speaking and **Zoe Champ** in program oral interpretation, and Eagan's **Jeune Hagape** in dramatic interpretation.

Career and technical education prepares students for workforce

The “vocational education” of years ago has evolved from wood shop and home economics into a powerful educational tool that is now called career and technology education (CTE).

With courses ranging from welding to culinary arts, CTE is part of a robust approach to boosting achievement and preparing students for jobs after graduation. Offered to juniors and seniors in District 196, CTE courses teach transferable workplace skills and provide opportunities to explore career options.

This program is offered to juniors and seniors enrolled in District 196 high schools. By successfully completing courses that are articulated with postsecondary institutions, students may earn college credit or a course waiver to enable them to enroll in the next level of a college program. Approximately 13,000 District 196 students participated in a CTE course last school year.

Funding for Career and Technical Education (CTE) is provided by The Perkins V Federal Grant. In Minnesota, funds are distributed on the basis of state-approved career and technical education programs and appropriate teacher licensure.

Advanced areas of study are known as Career Development courses and are available in Animal Sciences, Aviation, Emergency Services, Forensic Science, Medical and Health Care, Hospitality Management, Information Technology, Music Production, Mentor Programs, and Vehicle Services.

Students register for any of the Career Development courses through the regular registration process at their high school. Transportation is provided to students who attend a Career Development course that is not in their home high school during periods 1-2 or periods 6-7.



Well-protected picnic

Members of the Rosemount Police and Fire departments put on a picnic for students who attended Summer Academy classes at Rosemount Middle School. District and school administrators maintain strong relationships with police and fire personnel in the cities District 196 serves, with a common goal to protect the safety of students and staff in schools.

District 196 Foundation has opportunities to be involved

The District 196 Foundation is a nonprofit organization devoted to eliminating barriers to learning for students who live in our District 196 community.

If you have a passion for ensuring that no child goes hungry for food, books or music and are looking for an opportunity to become more engaged in the community, the foundation needs you. The District 196 Foundation Board of Directors is especially seeking diverse candidates with experience in accounting, event planning and implementation, fundraising, marketing/communications/journalism, and web design.

To be considered for a board position, apply at bit.ly/D196FoundationBd. For more information about the District 196 Foundation, visit District196foundation.org or call Community Education Director **Khia Bruse** at 651-423-7720.

Tax deductions available for qualifying educational expenses

All Minnesota families with dependent children in grades K-12 in public, private or home schools may qualify for a state K-12 education subtraction and/or credit for educational purchases in 2023. Both programs reduce the taxes parents pay.

The **K-12 education subtraction** is available to all Minnesotans, regardless of income, who have children in grades K-12. Families can take a deduction of up to \$1,625 per qualifying child in grades K-6 and up to \$2,500 per qualifying child in grades 7-12, for qualifying educational expenses.

The **K-12 education credit** is a refund (75% of paid and documented qualified expenses up to the maximum amounts) for families with up to two children and a federally adjusted gross household income of \$76,000 or less (add \$3,000 for each additional child after two).

Qualifying expenses include instructor fees and tuition for classes or instruction taken outside the normal school day or year; required materials for use during the normal school day; fees paid to others for transporting your child to and from school during the normal school day, and computer hardware for personal use in your home and educational software.

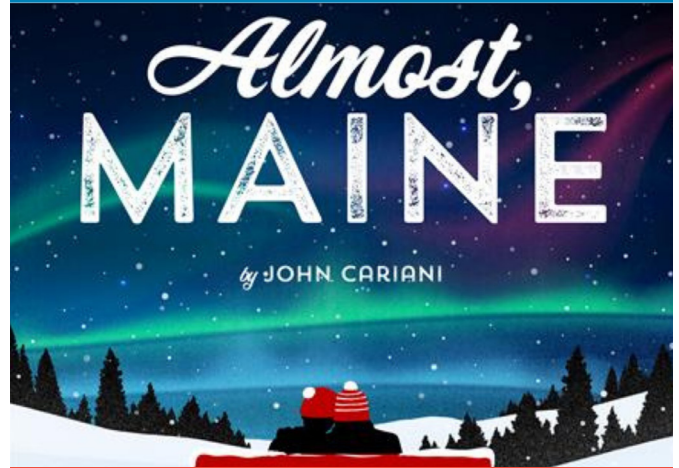
For more information and assistance, go to www.revenue.state.mn.us or call 651-296-3781.

Eagan High School Presents



October 4, 4 p.m. - Senior Preview
October 5, 6, 7 at 7 p.m.

Eastview High School Presents



October 11, 3:30 pm - Senior Preview
October 12, 13, 17 at 7 p.m.

Rosemount High School Presents



October 25, 3:30 p.m. - Senior Preview
October 26, 27, 28 at 7 p.m.

Apple Valley High School Presents



November 2, 3:30 p.m. - Senior Preview
November 3, 4, 10, 11 at 7 p.m., November 5, 11 at 2 p.m.

Concerts and Shows Coming Soon!

Apple Valley High School

- Fall Choir Concert, Oct. 7 p.m.
- Fall Dance Show, Nov. 20, 7 p.m.

Eagan High School

- Fall Vocal Music Concert, Oct. 30, 6 p.m.
- Fall Instrumental Concerts, Nov. 6, 6 & 7 p.m

Eastview High School

- Fall Choral Concert, Oct. 16, 7 p.m.
- Fall Band Concerts, Oct. 26, 6 & 7:30 p.m.

Rosemount High School

- Fall Choral Concerts, Oct. 30, 6 & 7:30 p.m.
- Fall Band Concert, Nov. 1, 7 p.m.

Parents and adult students may deny release of directory information

Notice is hereby given that District 196, pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, declares the following as "directory information" as provided in said Act, and that information relating to students may be made public if said information is in any of the following categories:

- * Student's name;
 - Date and place of birth;
 - Major field of study;
 - Participation and performance in officially recognized activities and sports;
 - Weight and height of members of athletic teams;
 - Dates of attendance;
 - Enrollment status;
 - *District-issued email address;
 - Grade level;
 - Degrees, honors, diplomas and awards received;
 - Honor roll;
 - School of attendance;
 - The most recent previous educational agency or institution attended;
 - Photographs and other video and audio representations for school-approved publications, yearbooks, newspapers, public presentations, student ID badges and publication on school-approved Internet pages;
 - * Student identification (ID) number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used by the student for purposes of accessing or communicating in electronic systems or displayed on a student ID badge;
 - School schedule, daily attendance record and parent or guardian names, email addresses and telephone numbers (for release to law enforcement officials);
 - Home addresses and telephone numbers (for release to the Dakota County Library for purposes of issuing a library card), and
 - ** 11th or 12th grade student's home address and telephone number (for release to military recruiters and institutions of higher education).
- * A parent/guardian may not prevent the disclosure of a student's name,

identifier or institutional email address in a class in which the student is enrolled or on a student ID badge.

*** In accordance with the law, the district must release to military recruiting officers and institutions of higher education the names, addresses and home telephone numbers of students in 11th and 12th grades within 60 days after the date of the request, unless a parent or adult student denies the release of the information.*

Directory information does not include identifying data which references religion, race, color, disability, social position or nationality.

Any parent or guardian of any student in the district, or any student 18 years of age or older, may notify

District follows plan for inspection and removal of asbestos

District 196 maintains a plan for managing all building materials that contain asbestos, as required by the Environmental Protection Agency. In compliance with the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act, a licensed asbestos abatement contractor inspects all materials for damage every six months and performs a major re-inspection every three years.

The presence of asbestos does not endanger the health of building occupants. The district works with the abatement contractor on the management and removal of all asbestos-containing materials in district buildings.

District obtains required criminal background checks

Minnesota school districts are required to notify parents annually about compliance with state law requiring school districts to perform criminal history background checks.

District 196 obtains criminal history checks on everyone offered employment in the district, as well as selected volunteers and independent contractors, including volunteer coaches (except enrolled students). In exercising its discretion with respect

to the district that they deny the release of one or more categories of directory information by contacting the principal and completing Procedure 505.2.4.3P, Denial of Release of Directory and Yearbook Information. This notification must be given to the district within 30 days of this publication notice or at any time with the approval of district-level administration. If filed, a denial will remain in effect until it is modified or rescinded by the parent, guardian or eligible student.

Please understand that if you choose to deny the release of all directory information, your child (or you, if a student 18 years of age or older) will be excluded from documents such as yearbooks, honor rolls, news releases regarding sports achievements, honors received, graduation programs, and athletic, theater and fine arts programs.

In summer 2023, asbestos abatement was conducted at Northview and Westview elementary schools in conjunction with boiler replacement projects at both schools. All work was performed by a licensed abatement contractor following state and federal air-monitoring requirements.

Additional asbestos abatement may occur at different times of the year as part of construction projects. Information about the locations, condition and type of asbestos-containing materials in district buildings is contained in the asbestos management plan. For more information or to review a copy of the plan, call the district Facilities Department at 651-423-7730.

to independent contractors and volunteers, the district considers such factors as the amount of student contact and the duration of the contact.

The district does not perform background checks on the staff or volunteers of outside clubs and organizations that offer activities for youth in the community that are not organized or operated by the district.

Parents, guardians and adult students can access educational records

District 196 schools maintain educational records on all students to help plan the student's educational program, communicate with parents/guardians and comply with state regulations. Student records include information such as standardized achievement and ability test data, grades, attendance records, health/medical records and evaluations by professional staff.

Except in limited circumstances authorized by law, most information from student records will not be released to members of the public without the written permission of the student's parent or guardian, or of the student if he or she is 18 or older. One exception, which permits disclosure of educational records without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff; a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to provide a service instead of using its own employees or officials, including the school district's insurer or an

authorized volunteer. Legitimate educational interests include those directly related to the school official's professional responsibilities for classroom instruction, teaching, assessment and research, student achievement and progress, student discipline, student health or welfare, or other legitimate professional responsibilities.

District 196 forwards educational records (including disciplinary records) of students to other schools and school districts in which a student seeks or intends to enroll upon request of that school or school district. A parent, guardian or student who is age 18 years or older may request and receive a copy of the records which are transferred and may, pursuant to policy, challenge the accuracy of the records. The district does not, however, notify parent(s), guardian(s) or students age 18 or older prior to such transfer.

Parent(s) or guardian(s) of a student, or a student who is age 18 or older, may request to inspect and review any of the student's educational records except those which are, by state or

federal law, made confidential. The district will comply with the request immediately if possible and, if not, within 10 days exclusive of weekends and holidays. Copies of records may be obtained upon written request. A copying and handling fee will be charged.

A parent, guardian or student age 18 or older who believes that specific information in the student's educational records is inaccurate, misleading, incomplete or violates the privacy or other rights of the student, may request that the district amend the record in question. Challenges may be made by requesting and filing Procedure 505.2.11P, Request to Amend Educational Records, with the superintendent.

Parents, guardians and students age 18 or older may submit written complaints of violation of rights accorded them by 20 USC Section 1232(g) to the Student Privacy Policy Office, U.S. Dept. of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW; Washington, DC 20202-8520.

Notice of use of pest control materials in buildings

District 196 uses a licensed, professional pest control service for the prevention and control of rodents, insects, and other pests in and around the district's buildings. The program consists of:

- Inspection and monitoring to determine whether pests are present and whether any treatment is needed;
- Recommendations for maintenance and sanitation to help eliminate pests without the need for pest control materials;
- Utilization of non-chemical measures such as traps, caulking and screening, and
- Application of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered pest control materials when needed.

State law requires school districts to

inform parents that the long-term health effects on children from the application of pesticides used by the district may not be fully understood. All pest control materials are chosen and applied according to label directions per federal law, and all pesticide products used in and around school buildings are required to be registered with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and EPA.

An estimated schedule of interior pest control inspections and possible treatments is available to review at the district Facilities Department, 14309 Diamond Path in Apple Valley. For more information, contact Facilities and Grounds Manager **Lindsay Elwell** at 651-423-7735 or lindsay.elwell@district196.org.

District tests for lead in drinking water

District 196 tests for the presence of lead in drinking water in schools, as required by state law. All taps used for drinking water and food preparation must be tested at least once every five years. The initial testing in District 196 schools began in July 2018.

The district plan requires that the tests be conducted using "first draw" samples, meaning the samples are collected before the fixture is used or flushed during the day. The district's Lead in Water Management Plan and test results are available on the Facilities Department page of the district website at District196.org. For more information on the plan, contact Facilities and Grounds Manager, **Lindsay Elwell** at 651-423-7735 or lindsay.elwell@district196.org.



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Community Education

Early Childhood Family Education | ECFE



We invite you to join our ECFE family as we share and learn together this fall. In addition to our classes, we offer one-time weekly events for parents and children to enjoy together. Supporting early childhood development and parenting is our passion. We believe everyone deserves support through their parenting journey.

Visit ce.district196.org/ecfe to learn more.

Adult Basic Education | ABE

Prepare for a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) course and pass the Personal Care Assistant Community First Services and Supports (CFSS) certification test.

Pre-CNA/PCA Prep Class

Tue. & Thu. | Oct. 24-Dec. 12 | 12:30-2:30 p.m.
skip Nov. 2, 23, Dec. 7 | Dakota Valley Learning Center

River Valley Project Explore RVPE

We provide educational, social and recreational opportunities for adults with disabilities and encourage inclusion in community activities. Participants enjoy a wide variety of classes and activities including cooking, bowling, dances and more!

Come one, come all! Craft Fair

Over 50 crafters, there's something for everyone! Food and beverages on sale.
Sat. | Oct. 14 | 10 a.m.-3 p.m. | Free! | Valley Middle School of STEM



Join Our Team!

Share your passion. Share your expertise as an **instructor for youth, after school and adult programming!** Become a **lifeguard, swim instructor or building supervisor**, welcoming thousands of residents into our schools!

Find out more ce.district196.org/employment

Make an impact! Join the Community Education Advisory Council

We are seeking applications from community members who wish to provide input regarding lifelong learning opportunities for all residents. Visit ce.district196.org/ceac to find out more about the Community Education Advisory Council or contact **Khia Bruse**, director of Community Education Khia.Bruse@district196.org • 651-423-7720



DISTRICT 196

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

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