



MEETING OUR MISSION OF INSPIRING EACH

A Note from Superintendent Dr. Josh Swanson

Eden Prairie community,

Welcome to the 2023-24 school year! As you can imagine, the first days of school are some of my favorite days of the entire year. Staff have worked hard to prepare for the return of our students, families have gotten those last-minute items from their supply lists, and our big yellow school buses (that now have stop arm cameras!) have once again started to crisscross town, safely transporting students to and from our buildings. Seeing our students' bright faces as they leave their buses and cars and enter our doors – or log into our online classrooms – fills me with such pride and excitement for another year of learning and growth.

We have a lot of great things happening this year:

- It's the first year of putting into action our updated strategic plan, which has a renewed commitment to authentic and personalized learning along with an intentional focus on wellbeing, belonging, and inclusion.
- We're diving deeper into the Eden Prairie Schools Inspired Journey, which is the experience we provide for each person in our learning community. You'll see it at work this fall in our elementary schools, in which students will experience choice in their learning through interest-based Discovery Groups.
- We're celebrating 100 Years of Inspiring Each! As part of our centennial birthday, we'll have special recognitions, activities, and events to honor how far we've come.

Listing all of the amazing things happening across our district would make this a 50–page mailer – and we are only able to do all of this impactful work thanks to the generous support and partnership of each of you in our community. Together, we've made sure our city has the only straight-A school district in the state, offers the state's largest course catalog to better prepare our students for their futures, and efficiently and effectively manages our resources to fulfill our mission of inspiring each student every day.

Thank you for being with us on this journey, and we look forward to our next 100 years together!

Dr. Josh Swanson, Superintendent



Photo credit: Heidi Wigdahl
Linda Anderson, Don Anderson and Elizabeth Anderson Schmidt – co-owners of Fat Pants Brewing Co.

Community partners pay off 2022-23 meal debt

Eden Prairie Schools ended last school year with \$14,249 of unpaid meal debt. Because of three local community partners, that number is now \$0! Thank you to Grace Church, who donated \$1,000, Wooddale Church, who erased another \$2,000, and Fat Pants Brewing, who generously covered the remaining \$12,249 to support our students and families.

Want to get in on the fun? Fat Pants' Oktoberfest events later this month will help support their commitment to the cause! Learn more at fatpantsbrewing.com.



Scan to read Smiraa's piece, "Our Atman Never Dies," featured in the U's First-Year Writing Student Showcase

Name: Smiraa Misra **Grade:** 12
School: Eden Prairie High School

Last year, Smiraa accelerated her studies by enrolling in Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) classes at the University of Minnesota.

"There's a lot of freedom that comes with being in PSEO. There's a huge variety of classes for every interest."

"My goal is to major in biochemistry during college, and specifically work in the field of pharmaceutical or therapeutic innovation. From then on, I plan on becoming a lawyer."



OF INSPIRING EACH

100 Years of Inspiring Each would not have been possible without a community that consistently invested its time, resources, and energy into our students and families. This Give to the Max Day, you can help continue that legacy of excellence!



Now through November 16, visit givemn.org/EdenPrairieSchools to donate \$19.24 to support activities and events for students. Our goal is to raise at least \$19,240 in honor of our 100th anniversary!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS



- Oct. 10 & 12: Middle School Conferences
- Oct. 11 & 16: High School Conferences
- Oct. 12, 13 & 17: Elementary School Conferences
- Oct. 13: No School (Elementary conferences; secondary professional development)
- Oct. 19-20: No School (MEA)



EXCERPT Ep EXPRESS

EDEN PRAIRIE NEWS IN 30 SECONDS



01 District receives highest award for financial transparency ninth year in a row

The Government Finance Officers Association has awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for our annual comprehensive financial report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2022! The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial transparency.



All school buses now have stop arm cameras 02

Thanks to a \$53,000 grant from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, all buses in the Eden Prairie Schools fleet are now equipped with stop arm cameras that will record a driver's car, face and license plate if they disregard a stop arm meant to protect students as they cross the street. We're grateful for this additional way to keep Eagles safe on their way to and from school!

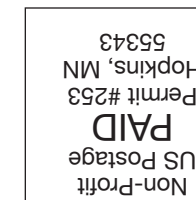
03 Kindergarten enrollment opens October 31

There's no trick about it – starting October 31, new kindergartners can enroll for the 2024-25 school year! If you will have a new Eagle, keep an eye on your mailbox and edenpr.org/kindergarten for information about exciting upcoming events.



INSPIRING NEWS

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Get to know our Inspired Journey

In the last edition of Inspiring News, we promised a deeper dive into the Eden Prairie Schools Inspired Journey, the continuous experience of discovery, exploration and pursuit we aim to create for each member of our learning community. Students will receive many opportunities to discover, explore, and pursue in each grade level and throughout their Inspired Journey.



All student learning experiences align with our five career-field Pathways of Business & Management, Human & Public Services, Natural & Applied Sciences, Engineering, Technology & Manufacturing, and Communication & Arts.

DISCOVER

During the **DISCOVER** portion of the journey, students begin to uncover their strengths, talents and interests as they sample a variety of topics.

NEW THIS YEAR:

Watch for "Discovery Groups" at each of our elementary schools! In these small groups, students drive their own learning in areas that interest them and make early connections to our five career-field Pathways.



WATCH: Examples from last year at Cedar Ridge and Eden Lake

EXPLORE

As students **EXPLORE**, they dive deeper into their interests and have opportunities to become curious about and build skills across many disciplines. Many middle school courses are designed to foster exploration.

PURSUE

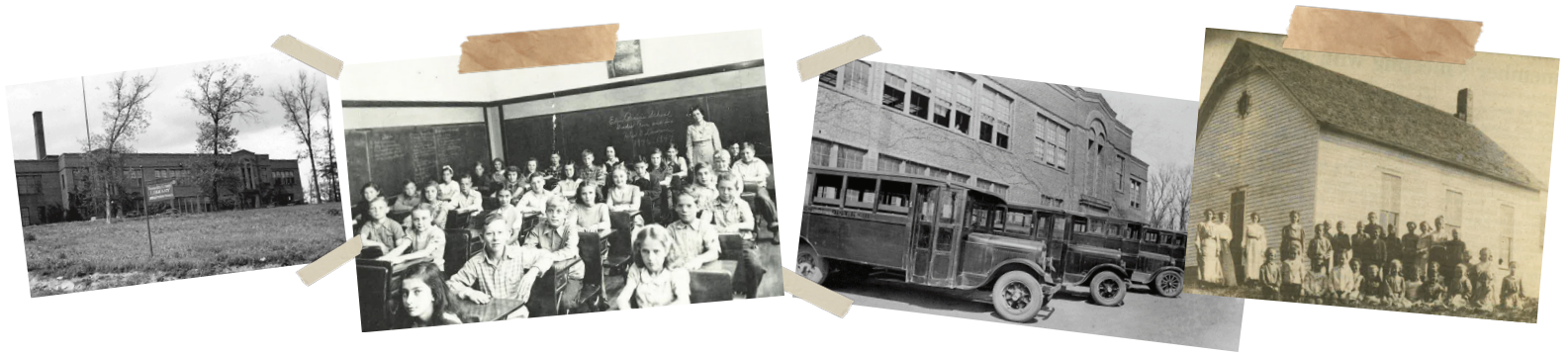
At the **PURSUE** stage, students take their interests to the next level to achieve their goals, including by taking one of 11 Capstone courses. Coursework and extracurricular experiences are aligned so students are prepared for life after high school.



WATCH: Last year's Science Research & Design Capstone visits SunOpta



Since Eden Prairie's earliest days, its residents have believed deeply in the power of community and the importance of education. In fact, the town board of Eden Prairie held its first meeting in a log schoolhouse on May 11, 1858 – the same day Minnesota became a state. That log schoolhouse would remain a hub of community for decades to come, and today, the school community it helped to create celebrates 100 Years of Inspiring Each.



Digging through the Decades

DID YOU KNOW?

The Eden Prairie Consolidated School, which is now the district's Administrative Services Center, first welcomed students in March 1924. As one of the first electrified buildings in Eden Prairie, it went on to be an important gathering place for all residents, providing space for movies, voting, weddings and clothes ironing!



➔ Happy first week of school from the Eden Prairie High School seniors! This photo is stored in the Eden Prairie Historical Society Archives and is believed to have been taken in 1964.



↓ Several decades later, Eden Prairie students were busy learning about a new wave of technology. Looking at this picture from 1997, it's hard to believe over 500 Eagles now learn in our fully-online school, EP Online!



JOIN THE CITYWIDE CELEBRATION!

We're taking the show on the road!

As we celebrate our centennial anniversary this year, we want you to get in on the fun! Watch for more information in the coming months about a **citywide parade** honoring Eagle Pride through the decades.

Break out your dancing shoes!

On May 18, you're invited to a **citywide prom** at the Eden Prairie Historic Gym, hosted in partnership with the Eden Prairie Historical Society. Save the date!

Read more and stay in the know!

Check out our 100 Years webpage for more information about our centennial celebration.

www.edenpr.org/100-years

A MESSAGE FROM your Eden Prairie School Board

It is hard to believe we are already sending out a welcome back to school message! We trust the summer months provided some rest, relaxation, and time away from the demands of the 2022-2023 academic year. The start of a new school year marks a time of excitement and anticipation, whether you are a parent/guardian holding back tears as you guide your student onto the bus for the very first time, a seasoned Eden Prairie Schools "pro," or a community member enjoying the "back to school vibes," the Board of Directors want to thank you for choosing and supporting Eden Prairie Schools.

Certainly, the board has been active over the past several months, beginning the annual monitoring process of district policies, reviewing and approving the fiscal year 2023-2024 budget, and participating in a board development workshop. In addition, a few events stood out as highlights worthy of mention.

The first highlight was the graduation of our Class of 2023 seniors! The commencement ceremony was such an enjoyable event. We want to recognize and thank the district staff, family, friends, and Eden Prairie community for supporting these seniors throughout their time in Eden Prairie Schools. A big thank you also goes out to our PTO volunteers, some of which have faithfully volunteered their time and talents over the entirety of their student's careers! Congratulations graduates and families for finishing strong.

The second highlight was a series of events including school site visits and a trip to the district's transportation facility in May and June. Seeing firsthand the strategies being operationalized and hearing from the respective principals at each of the school sites was



The Eden Prairie School Board: (starting left) Dr. Josh Swanson – Superintendent of Eden Prairie Schools, Abby Libsack – clerk, Charles Strehl – treasurer, Aaron Casper – chair, Dennis Stubbs – director, Kim Ross – director, Debjyoti Dwivedy – director, Steve Bartz – vice chair.

educational and inspiring. Many board members were especially impressed with the tour of district transportation headquarters. One director commented, "The school district is successfully managing a massive logistics operation including dispatchers, staff, drivers, and maintenance personnel. Computer spreadsheets were accessed in real time by mechanics, dispatch, and drivers allowing the transportation department to track and service every bus." As we kick off a new school year, these positive comments segue to a friendly reminder to take advantage of the district's bus service, offered at no cost to school families living in Eden Prairie.

Lastly, the start of the 2023-2024 school year marks the 100th Anniversary of Eden Prairie Schools! We are excited to celebrate this special achievement over the course of the school year. The board warmly extends its "welcome back to school" wishes and looks forward to connecting and engaging with families and the community at respective school sites and upcoming district events. If you spot one of us, please take a few moments to talk with us about your experiences in Eden Prairie Schools. Have a wonderful year!

Eden Prairie football team forms a special bond with The Waters of Eden Prairie

The Eagles have many devoted cheerleaders – but few are quite as lifelong as their cherished fans at The Waters Senior Living Community in Eden Prairie. The team has picked up where it left off before the pandemic, regularly visiting residents for hot dog eating contests, shuffleboard, touch football, push-up contests and, of course, valuable relationship building.

This month, The Waters came to the Eagles' turf, cheering from the sidelines at their Sept. 8 game against Edina.

WATCH THE WCCO STORY

