



DISTRICT BULLETIN

A World-Class Community of Learners

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SCHOOL!**

The start of
the 2022-23
school year

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**Community
is KEY**

**FALL/WINTER
2022**

Fridley community continues
to offer generous support to
Fridley Public School District

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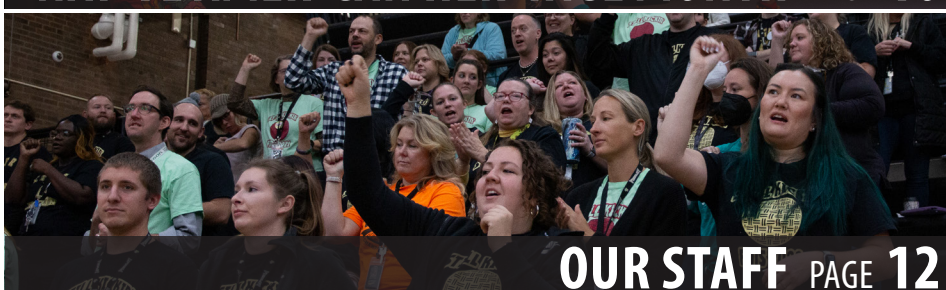
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A World-Class Community of Learners

FRIDLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

International Baccalaureate World Schools

DISTRICT BULLETIN

FALL/WINTER 2022

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Fridley Middle School

Principal: Amy Cochran

Assistant Principal: Matthew Engelhardt

Hayes Elementary School

Principal: Gaeli Iverson

R. L. Stevenson Elementary School

Principal: Veronica Mathison

DISTRICT OFFICES

Activities: 763-502-5606

Buildings/Grounds: 763-502-5008

Business & Finance: 763-502-5004

Communications: 763-502-5020

Community Education: 763-502-5100

Educational Services: 763-502-5021

Equity: 763-502-5067

Enrollment: 763-502-5081

Human Resources: 763-502-5013

Nutritional Services: 763-502-5021

Special Education: 763-502-5661

Technology: 763-502-5032

Transportation: 763-502-5026

IB (DP): 763-502-5062

IB (MYP): 763-502-5036

IB (PYP) Hayes: 763-502-5325

IB (PYP) Stevenson: 763-502-5219

IB (PYP) Preschool: 763-502-5117



Greetings, Fridley Community!

After nearly three years of disruptions caused by the global pandemic, this school year we are coming “back to better” in Fridley Public Schools. While there continues to be work ahead of us to address the academic and mental health needs arising from these past three years, our students are engaged and learning. It warms my heart to have our students back in person and to see them smiling, laughing and learning with their peers and our dedicated staff.

There is much to share with our Fridley community in this edition of District Bulletin. I am pleased to share with you some examples of how our students and staff make the Fridley community the best place to live, learn, work and play. In these pages are stories about the start of the school year, and the return of celebrations like Homecoming and events like pep fests, school musicals and performances. You will read about some of the many ways in which our community supports our district. The support our schools receive from our friends, neighbors and community organizations is truly a gift, and it is something that we do not take for granted.

You'll also learn about ways in which the district celebrated Native American Heritage Month, including showcases of Native cultural traditions like drumming and dance, and traditional Native dishes prepared by our Nutritional Services Department. You will also enjoy reading about our dedicated staff members who received awards and recognition for their service to our students and families.

We continue to work to make Fridley the best place to learn and the best place to work. On the back page of this issue you'll find links to learn about exciting career opportunities to join us in our work to educate the next generation of community members.

May this winter season be safe and filled with the joys of family and friends. I can't wait to see what 2023 brings!

Dr. Kim Hiel
Superintendent
Fridley Public Schools

FRIDLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS WELCOMES CRAIG WIEBER AS DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & OPERATIONS

Fridley Public Schools is pleased to welcome Craig Wieber as its new director of finance and operations.

Wieber brings an extensive background in public education financial planning and analysis, budgetary development and knowledge of financial markets.

“We are thrilled to have Craig join us as our new director of finance and operations,” said Superintendent Kim Hiel. “His leadership will complement our already strong finance, buildings and grounds, enrollment and transportation departments. Craig's prior work experiences will be a great asset to the district.”

“I chose to come to Fridley to use the skills and experience I've acquired in finance and budgeting after eight years of advising school districts,” said Wieber. “We will be able to leverage our team's knowledge and experience to help Fridley maximize any and all available funding and resources.”

Wieber previously served at Baker Tilly Municipal Advisors, where he provided debt issuance, debt management and budgetary analysis services for public and higher education clients in the Midwest. Prior to Baker Tilly, he was a chief fiscal analyst at the Association of Residential Resources of Minnesota and an executive budget officer at the Minnesota Management and Budget Office.

Wieber received his Bachelor of Arts in political science from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and his Master of Public Affairs from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



FRIDLEY STUDENTS BEGIN THE 2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR

FRIDLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS STUDENTS START THE YEAR WITH A FOCUS ON RELATIONSHIPS

The first week of school for Fridley students was different this year, with a focus on building relationships and addressing the social and emotional needs of students. By introducing smaller groups of students to their new schools and teachers, Fridley staff were able to welcome families with a personal touch, building on a practice that began during the COVID-19 pandemic.

At Hayes and Stevenson Elementary Schools, teachers met one-on-one with students and families on Tuesday and Wednesday. As students arrived for their meetings they were greeted with enthusiastic smiles and hugs from staff, and Jack the Giraffe made an appearance at Hayes Elementary. Students were able to walk through the school to see where their new classrooms and lockers would be, and teachers were able to get a sense of how students are doing and where they are at with their learning.

Two Fridley High School students on the first day of school

Only two grades were back at Fridley High School (FHS) on Tuesday, September 6, as staff worked to ease the transition of ninth graders into high school and highlight unique postsecondary opportunities for 12th grade students. The FHS Link Crew—upper class students who serve as mentors to new students—gave ninth graders a thorough orientation of the school, and introduced them to fellow classmates and staff. Ninth grade students were able to connect with Link Crew leaders in small group sessions and talk with them about what to expect as they transition into high school.

Fridley's Get Ready (a college and career readiness program) coordinator, Matt Kiefer, planned a special day for 12th grade students. Students were able to choose a variety of workshop sessions that highlighted postsecondary options such as two- and four-year colleges, trade programs, career speakers, as well as useful information for the future such as help with financial aid and college applications.

Tenth and 11th grade students returned to school on

Wednesday, September 7 with a modified schedule that included a variety of activities to help teach expectations and build community.

Fridley Middle School welcomed back students for two orientation days to start the school year. On September 6, sixth and eighth grade students came to the building, while fifth and seventh grade students came to the building on September 7. Both days were filled with community building sessions, outdoor activities, pep rallies, a review of expectations and fun with friends. Welcoming students back over the course of two days allowed for collaboration amongst the middle school staff and offered students the chance to meet teachers from different grade levels. Overall, the day helped students and staff seamlessly return to the building after their summer breaks.

"We are so excited for the upcoming school year and look forward to all the amazing things our Fridley community will accomplish!" said Matthew Engelhardt, Fridley Middle School's assistant principal.

"It has been wonderful to see the smiling faces of students back in our buildings," said Fridley Public Schools Superintendent Kim Hiel. "After the challenges of these past two years, we are ready and excited to meet our students' academic, social and emotional needs."





HOMECOMING CELEBRATED BY FRIDLEY STUDENTS ACROSS THE DISTRICT

The Fridley 2022 homecoming week was celebrated across the entire Fridley Public Schools district during the week of Oct. 7-14. While each school participated in their own way, the excitement could be felt districtwide!

The week started out with a sold-out high school homecoming dance on Oct. 7 in the Fridley High School cafeteria. After a hiatus of several years, more than 350 students dressed up to attend the dance. Fridley High School students also enjoyed a senior girls powder puff game midweek and the traditional classroom door decorating contest. Throughout the week each school in the district had spirit days for students and staff to dress up. The days varied from comfy day, to sports day to class color day.

Friday was the culmination of the week with the sixth annual Color Run at Hayes Elementary, the Stevenson Fun Run and the FHS Homecoming pepfest.

Hayes' sixth annual Color Run raised more than \$11,000 and students were able to participate in various ways depending on the amount of money they raised. Students earned color run t-shirts, color packs, and entrance to the color run party. Funds raised will support Hayes with technology, classroom items, a new STEAM lab, field trips and more! Top fundraisers earned prizes such as breakfast with the principal and Jack the giraffe, and a class popcorn party.

The Stevenson Fun Run raised around \$10,000 and students ran a total of 5,100 laps! Students

collected donations and every student received a t-shirt to run in. Money raised will go directly back to our students through our PTO so families are never charged for a field trip. Additional funds are available by teacher request and for annually budgeted events like our fourth-grade celebration and Springbrook Nature Center programming.

The FHS Homecoming pepfest returned to the gym after COVID-19 regulations had moved it outside the last two years. In an effort to give middle school students a preview of high school, eighth grade students from Fridley Middle School were invited to participate in the FHS pepfest. The pepfest included a performance by the FHS band and FHS cheerleaders, a variety of games and the crowning of the homecoming royalty. The homecoming royalty were freshman Nex Nguyen and Lorenzo Hampton; sophomores Thi Nguyen and Cheyanne Sysavat; juniors Josiah Kozicky and Isabelle Simon; and seniors Anna LaFrenierre, Khaliifo Aden, Boomer Xiong, Camilla Faz, Jose Juarez Aldave and Amay Ruiz Barrios.



The 2022 Homecoming Royalty



COMMUNITY IS KEY

FOR FRIDLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The generosity of the Fridley community makes Fridley Public Schools unique. A few months into the start of the 2022-23 school year, we've already seen ways in which several community organizations support Fridley Public Schools. These philanthropic donations have turned into yearly traditions, touching the lives of our students multiple times over the course of their attendance at Fridley Public Schools, inspiring our students to become caring and knowledgeable life-long learners who inquire and take action to create a better world in return.

Fridley-Columbia Heights Rotary Club generously gives dictionaries to third grade Fridley students

Third grade students at Hayes and Stevenson Elementary were given their own copy of A Student's Dictionary on October 12 by members of the Fridley-Columbia Heights Rotary Club. The generous tradition, now in its 13th year, helps to accomplish one of the Rotary's six areas of focus: basic education and literacy.

After the dictionaries were passed out, Dr. Kim Hiel, superintendent of Fridley Public Schools, Rotary Club member and current Rotary Club president, engaged students by helping them find useful resources such as the table of contents, multiplication tables, sign language graphics and the longest word in the English language.

"Through Rotary's Dictionary Project we have true partnership and true building of our community in helping our students understand spelling, definitions and other things that occur in the world that can be found in the dictionary," said Hiel.

The Dictionary Project is one of the many community service projects that the Fridley-Columbia Heights Rotary Club

participates in. They note on their website that "basic education and literacy are essential for reducing poverty, improving health, encouraging community and economic development, and promoting peace."

Lions Club continues to make vital difference in classroom preparations

For the ninth year, the Fridley Lions Club donated gift cards to every Fridley Public Schools elementary classroom teacher on September 1. The gift cards help with the purchase of supplies for each classroom, such as crayons, tissues, and arts and crafts materials.

Lion's Club members Greg Gardner, Don Holum, Shannon Melham, and Jim and Jo Young presented gift cards in the amount of \$150 to the teachers, expressing their appreciation and gratitude.

"Thank you for all that you do every single year," said Jo Young, Fridley Lions Club president.
"Teachers



Members of the the Fridley Lions Club hand out gift cards to classroom teachers at Hayes and Stevenson Elementary schools.

The gift cards help with the purchase of supplies for each classroom, such as crayons, tissues, and arts and crafts materials.



are such an important part of our community, and the Lions have a deep love for the education you provide and the incredible job that you do.”

This year, the Lions Club partnered with the Fridley Schools Foundation to purchase Amazon gift cards, which helped the foundation earn Amazon Smile points. Through Amazon Smile, charitable organizations can benefit from a portion of any purchase. The Fridley Schools Foundation is a nonprofit organization that contributes to scholarships for graduating seniors, educator innovation grants, and school and district initiatives across the Fridley school district.

The Lions support the district in many ways, including through donations to its athletics and activities programs and sponsorships of programs and events such as the annual Black & Gold Gala and the Fridley High School Scholastic Achievement Scholarship Banquet, where tens of thousands of dollars are donated through scholarships each year.

fridleyschools.org

New school speed zone signs installed for Fridley Public Schools with help of City of Fridley Public Works and Fridley-Columbia Heights Rotary Club

The Fridley-Columbia Heights Rotary Club recently installed three new electronic school speed zone signs. This project was initiated by 2019-2020 Rotary president Chief Weierke of the Fridley Public Safety Department. It was done in partnership with Fridley Public Schools, the City of Fridley Public Works, and Fridley-Columbia Heights Rotary Club. The three signs are located by the Fridley Community Center, Fridley High School, and Fridley Middle School properties on 61st Ave and Moore Lake Drive.

These signs are designed to serve as traffic calming devices that detect the speed of oncoming

vehicles and display the driver’s speed by bright LED digits. The radar LED displays are intended to influence the driver’s behavior by showing their speed in combination with the school speed limit sign. Lights on the signs also flash when the speed limit is reduced from 30 mph to 20 mph during designated time periods.

“This was an important project to help reduce speeds near the schools and improve driver awareness. The locations of these signs help create a school safety zone for students as they travel to and from these buildings,” explained Chief Weierke.





GENEROUS GIFT FROM FRIDLEY ALUMNUS CELEBRATED AT ALUMNI CHOIR CONCERT

The Fridley High School Alumni Choir concluded its 25th season with a holiday concert at the Fridley District Auditorium on Sunday, December 4. A highlight of the celebratory occasion was the dedication of a grand piano gifted to the district by Greg Frankenfield, class of 1977, through the Frankenfield Family Foundation.

“On behalf of my family foundation, my daughter, Jessa, and my wife, Marissa, we’re very honored and humbled to be able to donate this beautiful piano,” Frankenfield told the audience.

The concert featured a performance by the Fridley High School Concert Choir before they were joined onstage by the alumni choir, in addition to guest conductors representing the past and present of the music program at Fridley High School.

The inaugural performance of the new Kawai grand piano brought a sense of reflection and gratitude to the special event, which Dr. Kim Hiel, district superintendent, observed in a speech to the crowd.

“It’s not always the monetary support, but it’s the heart support that keeps us going,” she said. “I thank this community from the bottom of our hearts for taking care of Fridley Public Schools and our scholars.”

FRIDLEY STUDENTS AND STAFF TAKE THE PLUNGE FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS MINNESOTA

On December 2, 239 Fridley middle and high school students and staff participated in the Cool School Polar Plunge supporting Special Olympics Minnesota. The Polar Plunge is a fundraising event for Special Olympics Minnesota that aims to give people with intellectual and physical disabilities the instruction and encouragement to participate in sports. Funds raised help to provide training and services to Special Olympic athletes across the state.

Students and staff that raised a minimum of \$5 had the option to either jump into cold water or throw a rubber chicken into the water. In total they raised \$8,092 for Special Olympics Minnesota, with 35% of those funds donated back to the schools for school-wide positive behavioral supports.

The event took place at a mobile plunge site provided by Polar Plunge in the Fridley Middle School parking lot. While both middle and high school students

participated, Fridley Middle School additionally held pep fests before the jump and welcomed speakers from Special Olympics and a Special Olympics athlete to talk about the organization. As students and staff jumped, a crowd of fellow students, staff and family cheered them on. Some students decided to jump twice to help out nervous jumpers. Hot chocolate was provided to participants by the FMS Builder’s Club to warm them up after their jump.



STUDENTS AND STAFF DONATE BLOOD AT THE SEMI-ANNUAL MHS BLOOD DRIVE

The Minnesota Honor Society’s Blood Drive was held on November 18 at Fridley High School. Both students and staff signed up to donate blood during the day. There were 67 blood donors, including 32 first-time donors. In total 44 pints of blood were donated which can help up to 132 people.



Students had a variety of reasons why they wanted to donate blood, from wanting to save lives, to wanting to help other people, and just because “it’s really cool.” Donors received a t-shirt and snacks after donating.

“The honor society students volunteered the whole day,” said MHS advisor Christine Nalepka. “They checked-in each donor, and gave support during and after the donation process as well. All around it was a very good day!”





FRIDLEY SCHOOLS FOUNDATION WALK FUNDRAISER

The Fridley Schools Foundation held its sixth annual “Get Your Paws Moving” walk fundraiser on Wednesday, September 28 at the Fridley High School Stadium. The event raised more than \$2,000 to benefit students and staff members at Fridley Public Schools through educator innovation grants, student scholarships, and other school and district initiatives.

More than 50 families signed up for the walk this year, and 30 Tiger Club students participated. The students enthusiastically walked and ran the track four times, while the rest of the participants continued to walk through the neighborhood after their first lap.

Fridley High School cheerleaders took an active role in supporting the participants this year by cheering them on. The cheerleaders and their advisor, Kahnnie Gbor, stayed until the end of the event to talk with and build connections with the Tiger

Club students.

Southern Anoka Community Assistance (SACA) partnered with the Fridley Schools Foundation this year with food donations for the community. “We greatly appreciate SACA’s



willingness to partner with us over the years,” said Karin Beckstrand, Fridley Schools Foundation board chair.

The event was made possible by the generous support of the Fridley Schools Foundation board, the Lions Club, National Honor Society students and Fridley High School cheerleaders.

“It is always great to see our staff and students out for this event,” said Beckstrand. “It was a beautiful fall day and thank you to everyone who participated in support of the foundation.”



Fridley Middle School Family Outreach Liaison Aloda Sims hugs a student during the Back-to-School Resource Fair event.

RESOURCE FAIR CONTINUES TO DRAW COMMUNITY TOGETHER

The ninth annual Back-to-School Resource Fair was held on Saturday, August 20. This year, 350 backpacks were packed by staff the Friday before the event, containing school supplies donated by local church community members, the Lion’s Club and Mercy Hospital.

“Our community once again offered up that service that we know is really, really needed right now,” said Fridley Middle School’s Family Outreach Liaison Aloda Sims, who started the event in 2014. “They care about our kids.”

In addition to receiving backpacks, families had access to resources and information from Fridley’s nutritional services department and Southern Anoka Community Assistance (SACA). More than 450 families were served at the fair. Looking forward to next year, Sims says that she wants to hold a celebration for the 10th annual Back-to-School Resource Fair. “I want to celebrate, because it’s not just about the services that we provide,” Sims said. “It’s about celebrating the people that are in our school community.”



Fridley Middle School Assistant Principal Matthew Engelhardt hands a student a backpack.

Fridley Public Schools celebrates NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Fridley Public Schools celebrated Native American Heritage month in November through districtwide showcases of Native dancers, cultural food served at lunch, and educational activities that focused on Minnesota's Indigenous communities. November has been nationally celebrated as Native American Heritage Month since 1990.

In between dances, members of the group inspired the audience with messages of hope and perseverance. Additionally, students were invited to ask questions in between dances. In response to one high school student's question about what the performers think about when they are dancing, performer Samuel Torres responded,

"We dance to protect these ways for the future, for our children, for their children, so that we know that the world that's so hungry for healing, has something to be optimistic for." Lora added, "I'm dancing for you, even though I don't know you. I want to pave the path for you as a future generation."

Highlights of celebrating Native American Heritage Month were the showcases by two local Indigenous cultural groups. Fridley High School and Fridley Middle School were invited to see Kalpulli Yaocenoxtli (kal-PUU-lee yao-say-noh-shlee) perform in the Fridley District Auditorium at the high school. Introduced to us by Stevenson Elementary's Equity and Inclusion Specialist Alma Lora, who is a member in this group, Kalpulli Yaocenoxtli is composed of families that are committed to lifelong learning of the philosophy, dance, drum and songs of the Mexica (Aztec) traditions. Kalpulli Yaocenoxtli is a traditional Mexica-Nahua (Aztec) cultural group dedicated to preserving and sharing the dances, songs and philosophy of Nahua traditions and culture, Kalpulli Yaocenoxtli means warriors of the first cactus flower.

Madge Ducheneaux, who works at the Division of Indian Work and works with elementary students who identify as American Indian, helped facilitate the performances at Hayes and Stevenson elementary schools. Dancers, dressed in traditional regalia, performed as elementary students watched in awe. The performers explained their traditional dress and identified parts of their outfits that held meaning to their culture. One of the performers, Afton Delgado, explained that she is a Northern Women's Traditional dancer and can be identified by the stationary dance and long breastplate that she wears. Her dance signifies the strength of Native communities and honors the important roles of women in Native culture. They then performed a circle dance, first with members of the



Kalpulli Yaocenoxtli dancer Margarita Quiroz

American Indian student groups and then welcomed other elementary students to join in.

Fridley's American Indian Education Coordinator Jayna Gunderson, worked to plan the districtwide showcases. "The goal was to be inclusive of groups in Minnesota as well as Indigenous people throughout North America," Gunderson said. She mentioned that this was the first year that Fridley has planned such a big celebration for the month. "We learned new things from both groups, it brought really great energy to the buildings and to our knowledge about Native American culture," Gunderson said.





Fridley Public School's Nutritional Services department sought to incorporate three dishes this month that honor and reflect Native and Indigenous culture: wild rice salad, wojapi and three sisters salad.

Americans would plant them together because they would help each other grow.

At the beginning of November, the equity and inclusion specialists at each school shared age appropriate

crafts, field trips and Lakota and Ojibwe cultures.

In addition to the student groups, Gunderson notes that there is an American Indian Parent Advisory Committee that parents are invited to join, saying that "their feedback and input is invaluable." For more information about Fridley's American Indian Education program, visit fridleyschools.org/academics/american-indian-education.



Left to right: wojapi, wild rice salad and three sisters salad.

Wild rice is of great historical, spiritual and cultural importance to the Ojibwe people. Minnesota has more acres of natural wild rice than any other state in the country and it has been historically documented in 45 of Minnesota's 87 counties and in all corners of the state. The wild rice salad included wild rice, locally sourced apples, cranberries, maple syrup and a few other ingredients.

Wojapi is a traditional berry soup, or pudding, and is associated with the Lakota of the Northern Plains and is traditionally made with local berries such as chokeberries or buffalo berries.

Three sisters salad consists of three main ingredients: corn, beans and squash. The three ingredients are known as the Three Sisters to the Iroquois and Cherokee. Native

educational resources with their fellow staff, including information about the eleven Native tribes in Minnesota, notable Indigenous leaders from our state, videos about powwows and importance of land acknowledgement statements. Students were given the opportunity to ask questions and reflect on what they learned.

"I appreciate that Fridley is very diverse and has been working on their inclusion and equity journey," said Lora. "I'm so happy I can share what I can with our community."

Fridley Public Schools invites students that identify as Native American to participate in a Native American student group year-round at their schools. The student groups focus on cultural knowledge, language development, creation of traditional



2021-22 TEACHERS OF EXCELLENCE

FRIDLEY PRESCHOOL AND ALC: ARIEL CHANG

Congratulations to Ariel Chang, the Fridley ALC and Fridley Preschool's Teacher of Excellence for the 2021-2022 school year! Chang is an instructional leader and a teacher and coordinator for English learners (EL). She is insightful and always has a smile on her face, even in the most stressful times.



"I have seen Ariel take on many tasks in the pursuit of supporting students and staff as an instructional leader and EL coordinator," said ALC Principal Kelly McConville. "Her passion and dedication to student success across the district has left an indelible mark on Fridley Public Schools."

"Ariel never fails to bring her wisdom and well-timed sense of humor to those hard moments," said Alaina Dehnke, a school social worker and colleague. "Ariel knows the impact we have on our students' lives and is always looking for ways to enrich their experience."

Thank you, Ariel, for all your hard work, and congratulations on being named the Fridley ALC and Fridley Preschool's 2021-2022 Teacher of Excellence!

FRIDLEY HIGH SCHOOL: KELSEY KNUTSON

Congratulations to Fridley High School Social Worker Kelsey Knutson, who has been named the 2021-2022 FHS Teacher of Excellence! Knutson demonstrates a passionate commitment to her students and their families, and is a dedicated colleague and friend to the entire community at school.



"Kelsey is there for each and every student; she is responsive, caring, compassionate, and kind," said Principal Patty Hand. "She always makes time in her day to take walks with students, process with them, do check-ins, and build relationships."

A colleague shared that "Kelsey works tirelessly to provide for our students and truly listens. She has her 'thumb on the pulse' of the basic and emotional needs of our students."

"When thinking of ways in which she supports our staff, Kelsey stands out as a leader in staff development, creating lessons around supporting social and emotional learning that staff members can turn and use in their classrooms," Hand said.

Congratulations, Kelsey Knutson, on being named the 2021-2022 Teacher of Excellence at Fridley High School, and thank you for your positive presence that supports our whole community!

HAYES ELEMENTARY: CASEY LEASURE

Congratulations to Casey Leasure, Hayes Elementary School's Teacher of Excellence! Leasure, a special education teacher, shines in her passion for teaching, courageously loving her scholars and bringing positivity to the community.



"In working with her students and establishing clear and consistent expectations with a whole lot of love, [Casey's students] feel safe, empowered to lead others within their space, and most importantly positively re-engaged within our community," said Principal Gaeli Iverson.

The example she sets as a teacher and ability to connect with students was noticed not only by her department, but also by teachers and staff across the building.

Casey is a champion for our scholars and community. Congratulations to Casey Leasure on being named the Teacher of Excellence for Hayes Elementary!

R.L. STEVENSON: CHRISTA SANDERS

Congratulations to Christa Sanders, Stevenson Elementary School's Teacher of Excellence for the 2021-2022 school year! Sanders is Stevenson's school counselor and a leader on the PBIS team.



"Christa is humble, has an incredible skill set, and is passionate," said Principal Veronica Mathison. "She helps children when their emotions overtake them, makes uplifting Stevenson Scoop videos, provides classrooms with lessons in social and emotional learning, and so much more."

A colleague shared, "Her contributions are a huge part of what makes our school such an amazing place to be. I don't know what I would do without her."

Thank you, Christa, for your resiliency, commitment to success, and positivity. Congratulations on being named Stevenson Elementary's 2021-2022 Teacher of Excellence!

FRIDLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL: JESSICA RIFLEY

Congratulations to Jessica Rifley, Fridley Middle School's Teacher of Excellence for the 2021-2022 school year! Rifley is a sixth grade math teacher who is noted for being an exceptional teacher and colleague.



"Jessica loves her students deeply, and works hard to build and maintain strong relationships," said Principal Amy Cochran. "She is someone who goes above and beyond to ensure her students feel valued, are advocated for, have engaging activities, and feel safe at school. Her collaboration, flexibility, drive, and leadership are unmatched on the sixth grade team."

A colleague described her as "inspiring, kind, and a light on the cloudiest of days."

Thank you, Jessica, for all your hard work, and congratulations on being named Fridley Middle School's 2021-2022 Teacher of Excellence!

2021-22 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR:

KATE WESBUR, DISTRICT ACCOUNTING SUPERVISOR

Congratulations to Kate Wesbur, the Fridley Public School District's Employee of the Year! Wesbur, the district's accounting supervisor, is an integral part of daily fiscal operations.



"Kate's work ethic, tenacity, and resolve in ensuring Fridley Public Schools follows all rules, regulations and accounting standards has enabled us to make informed decisions about our financial stability and forecasting," said Barbie Roessler, former finance and operations director.

Wesbur's colleagues are quick to note that she is a humble employee, working behind the scenes to ensure financial and payroll information is up-to-date, processes are followed, and precision is upheld.

"Kate is incredibly helpful to all employees, administrators, secretaries, and teammates with reliability, equity, and humility regardless of the question or need," a colleague said.

Congratulations to Kate Wesbur on being recognized as Fridley Public Schools' 2021-2022 Employee of the Year!

FRIDLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS 25 YEARS OF SERVICE RECIPIENTS

Karin Beckstrand, *Preschool PYP and Targeted Services Coordinator*



Karin Beckstrand has been a champion for Fridley Public Schools over the last 25 years, and has had many roles supporting our community, staff and scholars. She worked as the band director at the high school for five years, the music and instructional leader at Hayes for 18 years, and became the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme coordinator in 2018. Karin's work ethic, attention to detail and unwavering passion to do what's right and best for students has been instrumental in making Fridley Public Schools the first and only district in the State of Minnesota to offer the full IB Continuum from preschool through grade 12. In addition to her work with the preschool, targeted services, and summer school, Karin also took the helm as president of the Fridley Schools Foundation in 2021. In the midst of her work accomplishments, Karin's determination and willpower saw her complete an Ironman Triathlon. Thank you, Karin, for 25 years of service to Fridley Public Schools!

Steve Holt, *Individuals & Societies Teacher at Fridley High School*



Steve Holt is an educator who is incredibly compassionate and will never give up on any student. He makes relationship-building look easy, making students smile even during difficult discussions. "Everyone can see the passion, energy and warmth that he continuously demonstrates with his students," said Patty Hand, Fridley High School principal. "Time after time, I hear students' comments about how appreciative they are of Steve's kindness. Steve takes the time to get to know his colleagues as well, and is a collaborative department member." One colleague stated, "A lot of people do not see the work he puts into the Youth in Government program, helping students to write bills and present them to a large group of their peers, answering questions about parliamentary procedure, and even chaperoning the evening hotel activities – with a bag of fresh popcorn." Thank you, Steve Holt, for being the incredible educator you are, and congratulations on 25 years of service to Fridley Public Schools!



Cindy Morrissey, *Paraeducator at Fridley High School*

Cindy Morrissey is the epitome of the word "energy," as her colleagues attest. As a special education math paraeducator over the past 25 years, she is irreplaceable. Her positive energy, work ethic and dedication to all of our Fridley students is amazing. "Cindy Morrissey is great to work with," said Principal Patty Hand. "She seamlessly supports our students with special education needs while also connecting and challenging all students." A colleague stated, "I have seen her work with many students, and on numerous occasions heard students say, 'Ms. M., math is easy the way you explain it.' We often find ourselves saying we will be in big trouble once Cindy decides to retire. Please stay here forever!" Fridley Public Schools is fortunate to have Cindy spreading her joy and knowledge with our school community. Thank you, Cindy, and congratulations on 25 years!



Peggy Haselman, *2nd/3rd Grade Teacher at Stevenson Elementary*

Peggy Haselman is an exceptional Stevenson teacher who has served in many different roles at the school over the past 25 years. Currently, she shares her gifts as a second grade classroom teacher. Peggy is a dedicated staff member who develops strong relationships with every one of her students, and encourages them to be their best selves. She works tirelessly to make her classroom welcoming and inclusive for all of her scholars, and designs curriculum to meet the specific needs of each child. Peggy holds high expectations for learning and does whatever she can to find resources to help her scholars to meet those expectations. "Peggy is a thoughtful, caring person," said Stevenson Principal Veronica Mathison. "Peggy is known as the 'child whisperer.' She knows exactly what to do or say to turn a challenging situation around." Congratulations, Peggy, on 25 years of service and thank you for all you do!



Jeanette Grant, *Health Assistant at Fridley High School*

Jeanette Grant has been a health assistant in the Fridley school district for the past 25 years, and currently serves the high school. She is a dedicated staff member who supports all aspects of health services. "Jeanette is hard working, well organized and very informative. She is always willing to help her coworkers and provide guidance," said District Nurse Cassandra Byrne. "Jeanette has made it easy for me to learn the role of being a school nurse and has even provided me with knowledge and support. She takes on many tasks besides her duties as a health aide. Jeanette is a great asset to the Fridley Public School District." During the COVID-19 pandemic, Jeanette helped organize vaccination clinics for our students and staff. She also supports students in the high school with many different health concerns. Congratulations, Jeanette Grant, and thank you for your 25 years of service!

SCHOOL NEWS

FHS STUDENTS INDUCTED INTO THE MINNESOTA HONOR SOCIETY

On October 26, Fridley High School inducted 33 new members into the Minnesota Honor Society, our state's chapter of the National Honor Society. Students were selected based on their scholarship, leadership, character and service to the school and community. To qualify for induction, students must achieve a grade point average (GPA) of 3.4 or higher and give examples and evidence of how they embody the four pillars of National Honor Society.

Following a welcome message from FHS Principal Patty Hand and Assistant Principal Lamii Zarlee, the ceremony was conducted by the five current MHS officers: co-presidents



Congratulations to the 2022 Minnesota Honor Society Inductees: Riyan Ahmed, Ethan Andler, Ayushi Bijlwan, Palak Bhakta, Mars Bright, Bryson Buggs, Ana Cerda, Emily Duba, Abdulrahman Farah, Lillie Franklin, Deodatus Gbadoe, Soyome Getachew, Cosette Henrikson, Hannah Hoogheem, Muna Hussein, Sophia Jensen, Aaron Johnson, Alex Kaiser, Onni Kisner, Annabella Kotas, Catherine Leong, Mike LeRoy, Najad Mohammed, Chesney Olsen, Ashlee Sharpe, Isabelle Simon, Hannah Stacy, Jude Takyi, Erik Valtierrez, Isaiah Watson, Serina Wood, Eli Yang and Allison Yergan.

Nathan Thorp and Mirkeni Ahmed, vice president Amayramy Ruiz Barrios, secretary/social media chair Veronique Kolibe-Gnamikou, and treasurer Iman Ahmed. Each officer lit candles that represented the pillars of scholarship, leadership, service and character and explained what it meant for a student to exemplify each pillar.

Activities Director Justin Reese was chosen as the faculty speaker for the event. He congratulated the new inductees and spoke about how he sees these students demonstrate each pillar. "You have demonstrated a commitment that stands out above and beyond your peers," said Reese. "I want

to congratulate and thank those who have helped you achieve your goals – family, friends and others who help you navigate your school experience each day."

Each new member chose an honored guest to be present at the ceremony. As each new member was inducted, the member's guest of honor stood in the audience to be acknowledged and listened to why the student chose them.

"We are so proud of all our new members and are looking forward to seeing these scholars volunteer and give back to our fabulous community at FHS," said Hand.

FRIDLEY DRAMA'S PRODUCTION OF DISNEY'S NEWSIES

Fridley Drama's fall production was Disney's Newsies. The show ran November 11, 12, 17, 18 and 19 at the Fridley District Auditorium in Fridley High School.



SPRINGBROOK VISITS PRESCHOOL

Springbrook Nature Center visited Fridley Preschool on September 30. Preschool students learned about the lifecycles of plants and animals, including a turtle, frog and skunk!



Interpretive Program Coordinator Cody Rossetti lead students on scavenger hunts to collect a variety of artifacts of the various lifecycles and explained how the mammals, amphibians and plants change throughout their life. Students were engaged in the hands-on activities and enjoyed learning about the world around them!

STEVENSON ENGINEERING NIGHT OFFERS DISCOVERY AND ENTERTAINMENT



A building full of enthusiastic families signaled the return of Stevenson Elementary's annual family engineering night on September 29. Students and parents took part in a range of fun and educational science experiments that brought the joy of discovery to their faces. In addition, attendees were entertained by 4th grader Jay Cooper performing on his drum set and Mexico/Aztec Cultural dance group Kalpulli Yaocenoxtli, featuring Alma Lora, equity and inclusion specialist at Stevenson.



WELCOMING MURAL AT FRIDLEY HIGH SCHOOL REFLECTS ALL STUDENTS

Students, staff and families will be greeted with an amazing new piece of artwork when entering Fridley High School this school year. A mural, representing the diversity of the school's student body now welcomes all people entering the main entrance. The mural also references the International Baccalaureate Learner Profile characteristics which include: Inquirers, Knowledgeable, Thinkers, Communicators, Principled, Open-minded, Caring, Risk-takers, Balanced and Reflective.

Principal Patty Hand saw an opportunity to revamp the front hallway and intentionally sought out Christopharaaron Deanes, the district's culture and climate coordinator, to create an original mural for the space. Deanes, who is a visual artist and program director of the Roho Collective, partnered with St. Paul visual artist Ricardo Dominguez and local public and gallery artist

Christopher E. Harrison on the artwork.

Creating murals in educational settings is not new to Deanes, but this mural is special to him because it's the first one he's painted in a school where he is currently employed. His goal for the piece was to not only show diverse bodies, but diversity in language and cultures.

"It's important to not only see students that look like them, but to see students that don't look like them as well," Deanes said. "I can appreciate the breadth of that level of diversity. As a country, we've gone beyond diversity into equity and inclusion, but forgot about diversity."

Deanes started collaborating with Dominguez after noting how Dominguez's work mirrored his own, and decided to bring him in to help complete the mural. Dominguez, who is a member of the Roho Collective



St. Paul Artist Ricardo Dominguez (left) and Culture and Climate Coordinator Christopharaaron Deanes pose in front of the in-progress mural.

"My whole goal [as an artist] is to engage community and find critical ways to open up conversations about who we are."

Christopharaaron Deanes
Culture and Climate Coordinator

and Art From The Inside, noted that this is his first public artwork. Deanes said the artwork celebrates their own cultures and bridges the gaps with others as well.

"My whole goal [as an artist] is to engage community and find critical ways to open up conversations about who we are," Deanes says. "A lot of things in our lexicon as a culture and country right now place us squarely in the division category. My work is all about trying to unite us and trying to find those commonalities."

Deanes is thankful to Superintendent Hiel, Principal Hand and Assistant Principal Zarlee for their support, input and enthusiasm which helped to bring the mural to life. Deanes is excited for students to interact with the mural, take photos in front of it and feel good to be a part of it.



The finished mural in the Fridley High School, highlighting diversity and the IB Learner Profile Characteristics.



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FCC Senior Programs Fall Kick Off

Fridley's Senior Programs welcomed the start of another year with its Fall Kick Off event held on September 8, 2022 at the Fridley Community Center. The room was packed with senior members of our community sharing conversation and slices of pie. A variety of tables were set up advertising fall programming and activities as well as other community organizations and health resources.



WE'RE HIRING!



Fridley Public Schools offers competitive salaries and benefits. As a world-class community of learners, we develop internationally minded students. We challenge ourselves, our students, and our community to become caring and knowledgeable lifelong learners who inquire and take action to create a better world.

Candidates who are Black, Indigenous, people of color, women, and LGBTQ+ are strongly encouraged to apply to positions with Fridley Public Schools. We recognize and value the importance of diversity and inclusion in enriching the experience of our employees and in supporting our academic mission, and we are committed to attracting and retaining employees with varying identities and backgrounds.

Join the Fridley Public School District team by applying today!

Open roles include:

- Special Education Teacher (multiple)
- Social Worker
- Occupational Therapist
- Paraeducator (multiple)
- Water Safety Instructor
- Technology Assistant position
- Cook 4 hr/day Fridley High School
- Math Teacher Long Term Substitute
- **AND MORE**



SCAN TO LEARN MORE
ABOUT THE AVAILABLE
POSITIONS!

SCHOOL BUS AND VAN DRIVERS ARE NEEDED!

First Student is currently hiring **bus drivers**.

Scan the QR code to find out more information.



A number of Van Transportation companies are hiring **drivers**.

Scan the QR code to find out more information.



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