



DISTRICT BULLETIN

A World-Class Community of Learners



FALL
2023

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WEEK 2023**

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The Fridley Public Schools District Bulletin is published four times a year and is mailed to every home in the Fridley School District. Past issues are available online at fridleyschools.org.

Fridley Public Schools District 14
6000 West Moore Lake Drive
Fridley, MN 55432

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Cover photo: FHS juniors Brandi Washington (left) and Aubrey Cochran-Starr (right) play tug of war at the homecoming pepfest.

WE ARE HIRING



PARAEDUCATORS!

"What I love best about my job is that I get to work closely with many different students, build relationships, and see their growth! I also love being a part of the Fridley community!"

Kim Kaneakua

Paraeducator, Fridley Middle School

APPLY TODAY!

**We have openings across
the district!**

To Apply:

- Scan the QR code
- or visit: www.fridleyschools.org/jobs
- Questions? Contact 763-502-5003



Communications and Community Relations Office:

Director of Communications and Community Relations
Josh Collins

Communications Specialist
Mary Henry

Communications Specialist
Matt Carlyle

Email: communications@fridley.k12.mn.us



A World-Class Community of Learners

FRIDLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

International Baccalaureate World Schools

DISTRICT BULLETIN FALL 2023

SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Brenda Lewis

SCHOOL BOARD

Ross Meisner - *Chair*

Abdisalam Adam - *Vice Chair*

Nikki Auna - *Treasurer*

Sara Jones - *Interim Director*

Jake Karnopp - *Clerk*

Avonna Starck - *Director*

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Fridley High School

Interim Principal: Kelly McConville

Assistant Principal: Lamii Zarlee

**Fridley Area Learning Center,
Preschool**

Interim Principal: Renee Van Gorp

Fridley Middle School

Principal: Dr. 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

FALL 2023

Dear Fridley Community,

What a wonderful start to the school year it has been. At Fridley Public Schools we focus our work around access, opportunity and belonging. In my first few months serving as the district's superintendent, my family and I have been warmly welcomed by our students, staff, families and the community. We have felt a true sense of belonging here in Fridley.

As an International Baccalaureate district, one of our core values is to "enable students to direct their own learning pathway and develop the skills and confidence they need to thrive and make a lasting difference." At FPS we pride ourselves on this tenet.

This fall we saw our freshmen welcomed and set on a path for success by our juniors and seniors who serve as Link Crew members. We see many of our students involved in athletics and activities which serve to enrich the student experience. Our elementary students have raised funds through fun run activities to guarantee all of our students have access to field trips and enrichment opportunities. We welcomed our middle school families back with a block party to kick off the school year. Our youngest learners at the Fridley Community Center are thriving as they learn how to be learners and develop skills which serve as their foundation as lifelong learners. Fridley

Community Center is host to seniors engaged in a wide range of activities such as playing cards and BINGO, watching movies, taking part in book clubs and quilting and sewing groups, and attending defensive driving classes. The Fridley Senior Center also proud to partner with various organizations to provide important services to seniors.



As you walk the hallways and visit classrooms across the district you will see students of all ages immersed in learning experiences that are founded in access, opportunity and belonging. Our teachers and staff have engaged in deep professional learning within literacy, social emotional learning, AVID, and many other areas.

Fridley Public Schools is relentlessly focused on a student-centered experience grounded in equity and built upon the foundation of the International Baccalaureate. I am so thankful for the support of the Fridley community who continue to embrace our school district.

With gratitude,
Brenda

Fridley School Board November 2023 Election Results

On Tuesday, Nov. 7, voters chose three candidates to serve on the Fridley School Board, including reelecting Board Clerk Jake Karnopp to a second term, and electing first-time candidates Sara Jones and Erik Keeler. Jones has served as an interim board director since her appointment this summer to fill the seat vacated by Donna Prewedo.

In January, reelected and newly elected board members will join Board Chair Ross Meisner, Board Treasurer Nikki Auna, and Director Avonna Starck. Vice Chair Abdisalam Adam did not seek reelection.

The Fridley School Board has six members elected at large to serve four-year terms. Three school board members are elected in November of each odd-numbered year.



Welcome back, Fridley Students!

A joyous first week around the district!

Some students got a jump on the school year on Tuesday, September 5, when Fridley Middle School opened its doors to 5th graders and any new 6th, 7th and 8th grade students, allowing them to acquaint themselves with the school a day before their peers joined them. Similarly, 9th grade students received a rousing welcome from Fridley High School staff and 11th and 12th grade Link Crew members that culminated in an assembly filled with fun games.

“We are coming into this together,” said Interim Principal Kelly McConville to the class of 2027. “This is my first year. For you 9th graders, this is your first year. We’re gonna make it the best year at Fridley High School.”

A little rain the next day didn’t deter Fridley scholars from enjoying their first day of school on Wednesday, September 6. Students couldn’t keep from smiling and hugging as they reunited with friends

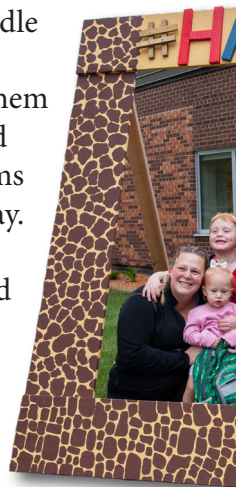


and recounted summer experiences.

FMS Equity & Inclusion Specialist Aloda Sims surprised middle schoolers by cheering for them with black and gold pom-poms in the entryway.



Hayes Elementary families posed for candid first-day photos in the #Hayes giraffe-spotted lifesize photo frame in front of the school. At Stevenson Elementary, teachers greeted anxious kindergartners on the front lawn, forming single-file lines as they made their way inside their new school for the first time. Last but not least, our youngest scholars in Fridley Preschool started making fast friends through play-based learning.



FHS capped off the week on Friday with a pep fest that filled the gym with rapturous cheering and chanting as students sang the school song and welcomed new staff.





10th annual Back to School Resource Fair

This annual event has been kicking off the new school year at Fridley Public Schools since its inception in 2014. Thanks to partnerships with the Fridley Schools Foundation, Fridley Lions Club and other community businesses and organizations, more than 5,000 backpacks have been donated to Fridley students.

This year's event alone saw more than 250 families receive 620 backpacks! What a way to commemorate 10 years of this fun community event.

"I want to celebrate, because it's not just about the services that we provide," said Fridley Middle School's Family Outreach Liaison Aloda Sims, who started the event. "It's about celebrating the people that are in our school community."



Superintendent Brenda Lewis reflects on her first week of school

"As the new superintendent of Fridley Public Schools, I have waited all summer for the start of school. It was wonderful to see our students arrive with their smiles and hugs and a little bit of nervousness. I had the privilege of being at each of our school sites and seeing joy-filled first day arrivals and dismissals. I wish that our entire community could see what I got to see during our first week. Fridley Public Schools is where every single student matters – you can feel it from our buses, to our classrooms, to our lunchrooms and our athletic facilities. I am so proud to see the level of belonging our students and families feel."

-Brenda Lewis, Ph.D.



Lions Clubs celebrates 10th year of donating gift cards to elementary classroom teachers

The Fridley Lions Club donated gift cards to every Fridley Public Schools elementary classroom teacher on August 30. This is their 10th year of donating gift cards. 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 presented gift cards in the amount of \$200 to the teachers, expressing their appreciation and gratitude for the roles teachers play in the Fridley community. This was the first year that they gave out \$200 gift cards. They have been steadily increasing their donations throughout the years.

The Lions Club partnered with the Fridley Schools Foundation to purchase Amazon gift cards. The Fridley Schools Foundation is a nonprofit organization that contributes to scholarships for graduating seniors, educator innovation grants, and school and district initiatives in the Fridley school district.



Left to right: Stevenson Elementary teachers and Hayes Elementary teachers.



The Lions support the district in many ways through donations to its athletics and activities programs, and sponsorships of programs and events such as the Fridley High School Scholastic Achievement Scholarship Banquet.



BREWING A LOVE FOR READING

at Hayes Elementary

As Hayes Elementary third grade teacher, Heidi Hall, led her students back to their classroom after specialist class on September 11, students excitedly noticed green, black and white balloons framing the classroom entrance and a familiar sign on their door. Students instantly recognized the Starbucks Coffee logo, but this sign read “Starbooks” and showed a mermaid reading a book. Hall put on a green apron and announced to her students that she was their “bookista” and would help them sample and taste different genres of books that day in their classroom turned cozy coffee shop.

“Finding what students are interested in is my biggest challenge,” Hall said about obstacles she faces in getting her students excited to read. “Students always say to me, ‘I don’t like to read.’ When I ask why, they respond with ‘Well, I don’t like the book.’” Hall often follows up by asking students what they are interested in to find a book that might pique their interest. She finds if students develop ownership in choosing what book they want to read, they have more success in sticking with the book and finding similar styles in the future.

Students sat on the rug first, while Hall explained how the book tasting would go. Each student had a bookmark, a book tasting menu, a placemat and a stir stick at their respective table seats. The stir stick acted as a tracking finger while students read. Students got five minutes each with five different genres of books to see what type of book they liked in genres including biographies, non-fiction, graphic novels, fiction (fantasy) and mystery. Hall explained that it’s OK if a student didn’t like a certain book; this activity was more about finding what they liked.

As Hall dismissed students to their tables, they began to taste-test their first books. “My biggest hope is that my students view reading as something they get to do rather than they have to do. It’s a treat,” Hall said. “We talked about the coffee shop vibe and how people go there to get away, be with friends and go somewhere new. I think that’s exactly what books do for you. You get to make new friends with the characters, you can travel to far away places, and really develop that love of reading.”

Every five minutes, Hall would remind students to take notes on the genre they were currently reading and then she transferred the genres to different tables. “One table said to me, I really like graphic novels, so bringing the graphic novels over to them and seeing that excitement on their face was really exciting.”

After their book tasting, students were able to continue to enjoy their cozy, coffee shop vibe by enjoying hot chocolate and a cookie. The next day, students “shopped” for books in Hall’s classroom library and she could tell the excitement was still there because they mentioned seeing certain books during the book tasting.

“A huge thank you to store manager Gina from the Maple Grove location of Starbucks for helping make this a possibility,” Hall noted. “Gina graciously donated everything, from the cups, the stir sticks, everything. It was amazing. Without that, it would have been hard to see this idea come to life.”





BREAKING DOWN EROSION

STEVENSON USES MODELS FROM MN SCIENCE MUSEUM

The restoration of the Elwha River in Washington state, starting with the largest dam removal in U.S. history about a decade ago, has revitalized the river's ecosystem, from salmon coming back in droves, to indigenous plant species thriving, to sediment deposits at the river's mouth slowly undoing a century of shoreline erosion.

But you already know all of this if you're a fourth grade student at Stevenson Elementary, thanks to river stream models provided by the Science Museum of Minnesota's Lending Library educator resource center.

"The experiments students participated in gave them the opportunity to explore sediment transport and erosion in a hands-on, interactive way," said Kate Talafous, IB coordinator at Stevenson. "The lessons were a part of a six-week unit of inquiry focused on how Earth's systems interact and cause change over time."

"In the past few years, we have been working to adopt Minnesota's new state science standards," Talafous continued. "The standards focus on giving students opportunities to conduct investigations, collect data and provide evidence about a phenomenon. The erosion tables and lessons around the Elwha River and its dam removal gave our students the chance to do just that."

The erosion tables were housed in Stevenson's STEAM lab—science, technology, engineering, the arts and math—which Talafous described as "a dedicated space for students to engage in hands-on learning, exploration and inquiry." The emphasis placed on

STEAM lessons and projects ties into the district's International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum.

"Giving students opportunities to inquire and develop their own understanding of the world is a major

focus of our IB framework," Talafous explained. "The erosion table lab required students to use research and thinking skills to better understand concepts related to erosion. It gave them an opportunity to practice skills needed to become lifelong learners."

The district's partnership with the Science Museum includes a membership to its Lending Library educator resource center, permitting Fridley schools and staff access to a wide variety of science-based educational resources available to loan from the museum. Previous materials Stevenson has checked out from the Lending Library include animal skulls, roller coaster building kits, and Lego sets for lessons about simple machines.

"We're really thankful for our partnership with the Science Museum and the use of their education resource center," Talafous said. "It allows us to better develop lessons and curriculum that directly connect to some of our Minnesota state standards, as well as provide great hands-on learning experiences for our scholars."



HOMECOMING WEEK 2023

Homecoming week was an exciting time for Fridley students and staff! Revisit the fun week in our district!

1 The festivities began with Fridley High School students dressing their best for the homecoming dance in the FHS cafeteria on Saturday, September 23.



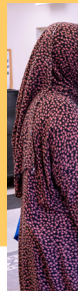
2 Stevenson and Hayes Elementary Schools hosted family nights on Wednesday, September 25, and Thursday, September 26, respectively. Families packed the schools as both events featured food trucks, games and engineering activities from The Works Museum.



No homecoming week is complete without a powderpuff game! Two teams of FHS senior girls faced off in a powderpuff game on Wednesday evening.



The Fridley Moore La Center (ALC) held its house Thursday evening, giving students the opportunity to meet their teachers and learn more about ALC community partners.



6 School spirit could be felt throughout the district on Friday, September 29, when Fridley Middle School hosted its first-ever homecoming pep fest in the FMS gym. Later that afternoon, FHS students doubled down on it with a lively pep fest of its own, pumping up the entire school before the momentous homecoming football game later that evening.



South week





Spirited game of flag football at Bob O'Neill Field.



Wake Area Learning annual open house, giving families a chance to meet their student's



The FHS football team did not disappoint, dismantling Minneapolis 34-8 to conclude homecoming with victory!



4

As Stevenson Elementary students arrived at school on Thursday, September 28, they had quite the surprise waiting for them. The varsity and concert bands from Fridley High School welcomed students outside playing spirited, pep band music to get the elementary students excited for homecoming week!



Siena Olson, the band and music teacher at Fridley High School, was approached by Stevenson receptionist, Cindy Richmond, to bring the FHS band to Stevenson during homecoming week, which had previously been a tradition in the community. "I wanted to say yes immediately because it's a goal of mine this year to get the band out into the Fridley community," said Olson. Within a week, Olson was able to organize this field trip.



Stevenson students danced and clapped as the band energetically played a variety of upbeat, instrumental pop songs. Parents and guardians dropping off students stayed to watch the performance as well. One elementary student was in awe when she found out that the musicians were Fridley High School students!

Olson noted that she wanted the high school band students to connect with the elementary students through music, hoping that they would feel proud of themselves and their accomplishments since they were in elementary school. "I hope the elementary students are amazed at what the older kids can do, as well as inspired by them," said Olson.

"The goal is for elementary students to feel excited for middle school and high school. In addition, I hope it is a mood boost for students and staff at Stevenson."

Gleaming through their entire performance, the band continued to play until all of the elementary students were brought inside to start their school day. A few staff remained outside to watch the band as they finished their last song.

"Investing time in visiting Fridley elementary schools gives band students a sense of growth and elementary students a sense of wonder of what growing up can look like," said Olson. "It is important for the high school band to be present and active in the community in order to inspire a new generation of Fridley musicians."

8

Check out our photo gallery of the joy this exciting week inspired across the district by scanning the QR code.



SCAN ME

Local educator and author **KEENAN JONES** visits Fridley ALC students

The Fridley Moore Lake Area Learning Center (ALC) welcomed local educator and author Keenan Jones as a guest speaker on Wednesday, October 5. Students from English teacher Jenny DeMars' and social studies teacher Greg Miller's classes listened as Jones spoke about his background as an Osseo prep basketball star, his achievements as a teacher and writer, and his advice to students.

"Everybody has a story. I think that's what makes us unique as humans. Your story is different from your story," Jones said, pointing to students in the classroom. "But it's your story, and nobody can take

literacy in the school-to-prison pipeline, specifically for young Black men, Jones replied: "I feel like we have to do whatever we can to get books in the hands of families early on. Because in America literacy is the key to making something of yourself."

DeMars was ecstatic to have Jones speak to her children's literature class about writing and his unconventional path to becoming a published author.

"His message about the importance of literacy and education is what I hoped might inspire students to keep going with their goals toward graduation and to continue their educations beyond high school," DeMars said.

that away from you. That's why I encourage you to write, even if it's just for fun."

Jones also talked about his upcoming book, "Saturday Morning at the 'Shop," a story about a young Black boy's experiences at the barbershop. It's Jones' first children's picture book and is set to release in fall 2024.

After Jones told his story to the scholars in attendance, they had the opportunity to ask him questions about his views on education, his writing career, and cultural events.

When one student asked his opinion on the role of

The ALC students also made an impact on Jones.

"It was an honor to have the opportunity to speak to such a wonderful group of young people," he reflected after the event.



National PRINCIPALS MONTH

October 2023



"We are Fridley Strong because we work together for the best outcomes of students. I am working hard to create that culture of togetherness where everyone belongs, has a voice and is valued."

Kelly McConville
Fridley High School



"We are in this together to work towards a common goal together and support one another when things don't go as planned and celebrate the successes along the way."

Renee Van Gorp
Fridley Preschool & ALC

"Building strong relationships is foundational to our work. When our relationships are strong, we accomplish more and that is where joy comes in."

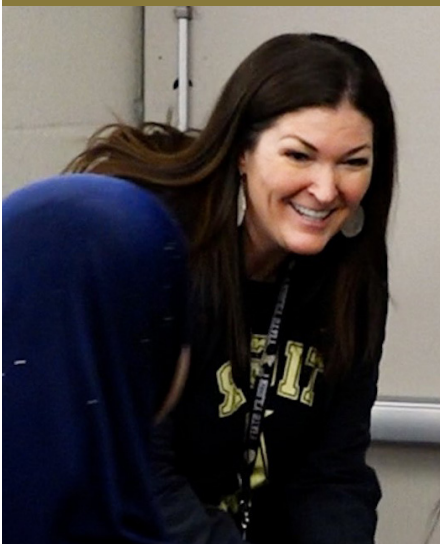
Veronica Mathison
Stevenson Elementary



Thank you!

"Working with children has always made my heart happy. Becoming a principal allowed me to both teach and also deeply connect with students and families each day."

Gaeli Iverson
Hayes Elementary



"We have an intentional focus on celebrating the many different cultural backgrounds that are present at FMS. I work to model and teach the value of equity and inclusion each day in the work that we do."

Amy Cochran
Fridley Middle School



FRIDLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL: MATTHEW FERRY



Congratulations to Matthew Ferry, Fridley Middle School's Teacher of Excellence for the 2022-2023 school year! Ferry is a seventh grade mathematics teacher who truly embodies the essence of excellence in teaching, dedication and service.

"Matthew stands out for his unwavering commitment to building relationships that extend far beyond the classroom walls," said Fridley Middle School principal Amy Cochran. "He invests countless hours nurturing connections with students, families and fellow staff members. His commitment creates an environment of trust and respect, where learning flourishes and students are inspired to reach their full potential."

Cochran also noted that Ferry is a shining example of a teacher who maintains a delicate balance between setting high expectations and showing genuine care. His passion for teaching mathematics is evident in the way he creates engaging and rigorous lessons that challenge and inspire young minds.

Thank you for all your "Mr. Do-It-All" work ethic. Congratulations on being named Fridley Middle School's Teacher of Excellence!

STEVENSON ELEMENTARY: AMY HOUSER



Congratulations to Amy Houser, Stevenson Elementary School's Teacher of Excellence for the 2022-2023 school year! Houser is a special education teacher at Stevenson and has worked in the district for almost 25 years.

"She is humble, soft spoken, and a highly skilled educator," said Stevenson Elementary principal Veronica Mathison. "She builds incredible relationships with her students that last years beyond Stevenson."

A colleague shared, "She is constantly looking for new resources and strategies that she can utilize to engage her students. She provides excellent individualized instruction."

Thank you, Amy, for your dedication to students. Congratulations on being named Stevenson Elementary's 2022-2023 Teacher of Excellence!

FRIDLEY PRESCHOOL & FCC: SARAH ANDERSON



Congratulations to Sarah Anderson, the Fridley Community Center's Teacher of Excellence for the 2022-2023 school year! Anderson is a speech and language clinician for Fridley Preschool. She is hard-working and always has a smile on her face.

"Her positive demeanor creates a warm, welcoming environment for the students and families. She consistently steps in to help colleagues with any and all things," said one of her colleagues. "Her professional, positive attitude adds tremendous value to Fridley Preschool. We are fortunate to have her working with us."

Another staff member said, "our students, families and staff all love her. She is a welcoming, supportive and collaborative team member, always looking to problem solve what is best for students with special needs."

Thank you, Sarah, for all your hard work, and congratulations on being named the Fridley Community Center's 2022-2023 Teacher of Excellence!

FRIDLEY HIGH SCHOOL: ANTHONY BRANITSKI



Congratulations to Anthony Branitski, the Fridley High School 2022-2023 FHS Teacher of Excellence! Branitski, who teaches physical education and health, is student centered, innovative, and a never-ending well of positivity.

"Anthony is the best cheerleader for Fridley schools that I have ever known," one staff member shared. "When I hear students talk about him, it is always filled with joy and positivity. This energy makes others around them feel good about themselves and helps them want to come to school."

Kelly McConville, interim principal for Fridley High School, noted that Branitski is an educator who leverages their skills and attributes for the betterment of students, creating partnerships with both the middle school and preschool.

Thank you for always going out of your way to help others find success. Congratulations, Anthony Branitski, on being named the 2022-2023 Teacher of Excellence at Fridley High School!

HAYES ELEMENTARY: ERICA WALZ



Congratulations to Erica Walz, Hayes Elementary School's Teacher of Excellence! Walz, a physical education teacher, serves every student at Hayes and works to connect with every Hayes staff member.

"In Erica's classroom, you will hear encouragement of taking risks, affirmations of quick wins, celebrations when a challenge has been overcome and gentle redirection when reminders need to be given," said Hayes Elementary principal Gaeli Iverson. "High expectations are evident and students rise to the occasion, due to the unique relationship Erica has with each and every one of her students."

A colleague describes Walz's dedication as "consistently going above and beyond to ensure students and staff at Hayes feel connected."

Erica is an incredible, amazing individual. Congratulations to Erica Walz on being named the Teacher of Excellence for Hayes Elementary!



2022-23 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

KERI HINNENKAMP ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Congratulations to Keri Hinnenkamp, Employee of the Year! Hinnenkamp provides special services, works in event planning, and provides motivation in the special services department.

"Keri supports our teams by keeping them on top of loose ends, and many more things," said Iversen. "Many team members call her to ask for help just to have someone to problem solve with."

Siefert-Hertling also noted that Keri embodies the role of a helper, always looking to lend a helping hand and contribute to the team as a thinker and problem solver with a determined attitude.

Congratulations to Keri Hinnenkamp on being named the 2022-2023 Employee of the Year!

25 YEARS OF SERVICE RECIPIENTS



Genea Sintler, Paraeducator at Fridley Middle School

Genea Sintler has provided 25 years of extraordinary service as a paraeducator at Fridley Public Schools and has shown her dedication to Fridley Middle School.

Genea embodies the essence of compassion and kindness. Every day, she enters the middle school halls with a smile that radiates warmth and a positivity that is both contagious and genuine. Genea lends her time to support students with special education needs, often going above and beyond without hesitation.

One special education teacher recalls an inspiring story of how, when swimming was introduced on Fridays, Genea's excitement was infectious. She declared, "I'll just get in too!" Her spirited plunge into the pool encouraged hesitant students to join in the fun, and now those very students eagerly anticipate our swimming days.

Genea Sintler's journey as an educator spans 25 remarkable years, each one marked by her boundless compassion, kindness, and belief in the potential of every student. Genea's legacy is one of positivity, inspiration, and unwavering support. Congratulations on this incredible milestone, and here's to the many lives you will continue to touch in the years to come. Congratulations, Genea, on 25 incredible years of service!



Alisa Lowry, Phy Ed Teacher at Fridley High School

Alisa Lowry has taught physical education and health throughout her 25 year career at Fridley Public Schools. She has worked as a volleyball and softball coach, led the prom committee, and has been an innovative curriculum developer and grant writer. She is a passionate, caring and reflective teacher who develops strong relationships with students, families and staff.

A staff member stated, "Alisa is an exceptional leader at FHS. She builds strong, lasting relationships with students, staff and families. She excels at supporting the school through fun games and events such as fantasy football, March Madness and planning social events".

Alisa demonstrates high mastery of content as a classroom

teacher. Her innovative and forward thinking skills support her colleagues in navigating instructional needs as the IB leader of her department.

Alisa is someone who goes all in for the students and staff at Fridley High School. Alisa is a driven, intelligent and hardworking educator who loves Fridley deeply and believes in the students she works with. Congratulations, Alisa, on 25 years of service!



Todd Reiland, 5th Grade Teacher at Fridley Middle School

Todd Reiland has proven himself to be an exceptional educator throughout the past 25 years, leaving an indelible mark on countless young lives. He has taught every grade level except 8th grade at the middle school, demonstrating his versatility and adaptability as an educator.

The impact Todd has had on Fridley Public Schools goes far beyond the classroom walls. He has been the driving force behind 13 memorable school trips to Washington, D.C., where he has shared his love for learning by making history come alive for his students. Beyond academics, Todd has been an influential figure in extracurricular activities. As a coach for both high school track and field and middle school basketball, he has instilled valuable life skills such as discipline, teamwork and perseverance in his students.

Todd is a loyal and dependable colleague, a true friend whose presence enriches the lives of those around him. His willingness to lend a helping hand and his vibrant sense of humor make him a cherished member of our community.

Todd's dedication, passion and warmth have touched the lives of countless individuals, leaving an enduring legacy that will continue to shape minds and hearts for years to come. Congratulations, Todd, on 25 incredible years of teaching excellence!



Jeren Anderson, Individuals & Societies Teacher at Fridley High School

Jeren Anderson has been an educator at Fridley Public Schools for 25 years. Jeren has taught in the humanities department at Fridley High School and Fridley Middle School over his career. Throughout his years, Jeren has been a caring, collaborative colleague who is willing to support his students and coworkers at any time.

A staff member who has had the privilege of working closely with Jeren stated, "While many know him for his humor and sarcasm, he is the consummate professional who holds himself to the highest standards. He goes above and beyond expectations."

Jeren has found new and fun ways to make the experiences of his students and colleagues richer. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Jeren organized a virtual "Festivus" night to raise the spirits of staff. Jeren is someone who is present for students and staff, sees what needs to be done and will make it happen. He believes that all students can achieve at high levels and gives them the support to reach their goals.

The students and staff are fortunate for Jeren's expertise in the classroom and beyond. Congratulations Jeren on your 25 years of service to Fridley Public Schools!

*Congrats
to all staff!*

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR:

ASSISTANT FOR SPECIAL SERVICES

nenkamp, the Fridley Public School District's
nenkamp, the administrative assistant for
ery building and is a source of support and
ervices department.

rganized, connecting with families, tying
Laura Siefert-Hertling, director of special
k questions, find resources, and sometimes

es the spirit of collaboration, always willing
success of the teams she works with. Keri is a
ation that is both admirable and infectious.

ng recognized as Fridley Public Schools'

Preschool IB Night is fun for the whole family

Fridley Preschool families enjoyed time together at the annual Preschool International Baccalaureate night on Thursday, October 5. The Mississippi



Library also had an activity table for students to create their own bookmark and offered information to families about the library.

The evening started with a family, play-based, inquiry activity which engaged the young scholars' problem solving skills. After the activity, students were invited to go with staff to play, while the adults stayed and learned more about IB and the Primary Years Programme. Families then visited their child's classroom to see where their student spent their day. All families left with an inquiry activity they could do at home.

"Parents were appreciative to hear information about the preschool and visit the classrooms," said Renee Van Gorp, interim principal for Fridley Preschool. "This is the first glimpse of their child's educational journey in Fridley Public Schools."

FCC Senior Fall Kickoff brings our community together

Fridley's Senior Programs welcomed the start of another year with its Fall Kickoff event held on September 13 at the Fridley Community Center. The room was packed with 80 senior members of our community sharing conversation and slices of pie.



The Anoka County Community Action Program (ACCAP), City of Fridley Recreation Program and Oaks Landing were there to share information, and a musician played classic hits on the guitar. It was a great event to kick off the fall!

"Fridley seniors and the Fridley Senior Program are a vital part of the Fridley community and Fridley Public Schools," said Stephen Keeler, director of Community Education. "A thriving senior program is crucial to a thriving community. Our seniors and the Fridley Senior Program embody what it means to be a lifelong learner!"

ECFE Fall Festival

Early Childhood and Family Education families celebrated the season at the ECFE Fall Festival on October 28. Costumes, face painting, temporary tattoos and Play-Doh were among the festivities.



Fridley Public Safety partnership a success for Preschool and district

Firefighters and police officers from the City of Fridley Public Safety visited Fridley Preschool students in the Fridley Community Center parking lot for their third annual Public Safety and Preschoolers event on Monday, October 30. Students had the opportunity to tour emergency vehicles, learn about services provided by school resource officers, and test their fire safety knowledge.

The community outreach visit gives first responders a platform to introduce themselves to Fridley scholars at a young age and bolsters the vital partnership between the district and Fridley Public Safety.

"It's important for our younger learners to know and recognize the first responders in their community," said Nico Wallat, school resource officer. "I hope they enjoyed the visit. I also hope that they understand how cared for they are in this community by the men and women of the Fridley Public Safety department."



Hayes gets colorful with annual Color Run

Hayes Elementary received more than a splash of color on Monday, October 16, during its sixth annual Color Run. The fundraising event has become a yearly favorite of the Hayes community, which showed its true colors with this year's donations topping \$10,000 – a new record!



The funds raised at this fun event help the school pay for things like field trips and enrichment items for its science, technology, engineering, the arts and math, or STEAM, lab. In fact, the STEAM lab space was created with money earned from past Color Runs.

“Our scholars worked hard to earn pledges for our school,” Iverson said. “I am incredibly thankful to our Hayes community for working together for our fall fundraiser!”

Stevenson Elementary puts the fun in fundraising with Fun Run



Stevenson Elementary students had fun breaking a sweat while participating in the Stevenson Fun Run on Friday, October 27. Though the fundraising event is only in its second year, the Stevenson community has quickly embraced it, with this year's donations totaling \$13,300!

The money raised has already paid for school spirit shirts for all Stevenson scholars. The rest will go toward resources and materials for students, as well as covering the full costs for class field trips.

“We are incredibly grateful to all of our scholars, families and staff who supported our most successful Fun Run to date,” Mathison said. “Thank you for helping us build community and provide resources back to each and every one of our Stevenson scholars.”

Fridley Cross Country team continues Kids' Apple Run tradition

Students in grades K-6 across the district participated in the 27th annual Kids' Apple Run at Commons Park on Tuesday, October 10. The event is a fall tradition hosted by the Fridley cross country team that gives younger scholars an opportunity to connect with the team before they are of age to join.

“Our team takes great pride in hosting this race for Fridley students because we know and experience the benefits of running,” said Brad Fisher, special education teacher and Fridley Cross Country head coach. “We hope to inspire future generations to develop a love of running.”

The race has made an impact on Fridley students and the community since it was started by Fridley Athletic Hall of Fame cross country coach Jeff Bullard in 1996. Assistant Coach Hannah Johnson recounted that she ran cross country at the University of Minnesota Duluth with a Fridley alum who had fond memories of participating in all of the Kids' Apple Runs as a young student and later as a member of Fridley Cross Country.



“The Apple Run is special to me because it's what got me started in running, which has helped transform me into the person I am today,” said Ethan Andler, an FHS senior and cross country member who has participated in the race since he was in fourth grade.

The event is broken into three age groups: grades 5-6 run a course of approximately 1000 meters, grades 3-4 run 800 meters, and grades K-2 run 600 meters. Each group is led in warm-up stretches and exercises by the cross country team. After some last-minute advice and encouragement from Fisher, each race began with FHS senior Yassir Ali leading the way and setting the pace. As they crossed the finish line to cheers and applause, runners received a Cortland apple from local grocery store Bob's Produce Ranch, a frequent community partner.





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