

# Spotlight

Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools



**DISTRICT196**<sup>®</sup>  
One District. Infinite Possibilities.

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

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## School Resource Officers rock!

In recognition of the important work they do with students and staff each day, District 196 and its schools recognized school resource officers (SROs) on National School Resource Officer Appreciation Day Feb. 15. Rosemount Police Officer **Paul Larson** (pictured) is one of eight SROs who serve the 13 district schools with middle- and high-school age students. The SROs are members of police departments in Apple Valley, Eagan, and Rosemount, and the Dakota County Sheriff's Department. More than 90% of District 196 students who participated in the Minnesota Student Survey answered "yes" to the statement that it is a good idea to have an SRO at their school. The district is advocating for legislation to ensure they continue to be in secondary schools (see p.4).

## Board plans to have next superintendent hired by May

Qualified applicants interested in being considered for the next superintendent of Independent School District 196, the Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools, have until 11:59 p.m. March 25 to submit their application. The School Board's timeline calls for semifinalists to be determined on April 4, with first interviews on April 13, and second interviews and selection of the successful applicant on April 23. Both rounds of interviews will be open to the public, but will not be live-streamed or recorded.

Superintendent **Mary Kreger** announced in January that she plans to retire at the end of this school year, her sixth as superintendent and 19th year total in District 196 (see related story on p.5).

Hiring a superintendent is one of the most important jobs of a School Board, a significant decision for the community that will shape the future of the district. After Kreger's announcement, Board Chairperson **Cory Johnson** led the board to issue a request for proposals for search services, and then hired the Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) to assist with their search.

The position officially opened Feb. 28 when it was posted on education and recruitment websites in Minnesota and nationwide. That same day, MSBA launched an anonymous survey to get input from all district stakeholders - parents, students, staff, residents, and business owners - about the qualities and skills

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## Leah Gardner appointed to fill School Board vacancy

Eagan resident, district parent, and policy director for a nonprofit, **Leah Gardner** was selected from four candidates the School Board interviewed Jan. 30 to fill a vacancy on the board. **Bianca Virnig** resigned her position on the board in February to take her seat in the Minnesota House of Representatives for District 52B, which she won in a special election in December. Gardner was scheduled to take the oath of office at the March 11 regular School Board meeting, after this issue of *Spotlight* went to press.



Fifteen district residents applied for the vacant board seat during the two-week application period in January. Along with Gardner, the board selected **Kate Alfonzo** of Eagan, **Catherine Diamond** of Eagan, and **Rachel Shoemaker** of Rosemount to participate in the interview. A fifth applicant was also selected, but withdrew from consideration before the interview, which was live-streamed on the district's YouTube channel.

"I look forward to the opportunity to work with all of our stakeholders to make District 196 the best it can be," Gardner said.

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## Infinite Possibilities

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

### Spotlight Newsletter

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

Send comments on **Spotlight** to [tony.taschner@district196.org](mailto:tony.taschner@district196.org)

### NONDISCRIMINATION NOTICE:

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

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

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

## Calendar changes recommended to meet READ Act requirements

The School Board was expected to take action on a recommendation to approve changes to the 2024-25 calendar at its March 11 meeting, after this issue of *Spotlight* went to press. Go to [District196.org](http://District196.org) to see if the recommendation was approved.

The biggest change would convert three student contact days to professional development days for staff, with no school for all students, in order to provide teacher training required under the state's new literacy initiative. The three days that would be converted are Monday, Nov. 11, 2024; Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2025 (day after Presidents' Day), and Monday, March 31, 2025.

The Reading to Ensure Academic Development (READ) Act was approved by the Legislature last year, with changes to assessment, curriculum, intervention, and professional development for teachers. To implement the professional learning required by the READ Act, more than 1,300 District 196 teachers preK-12 will each need to complete 45 hours of training that is spread throughout the year. Combined with professional development time already built into the existing calendar, the three additional days would provide enough time for teachers to complete the 45 hours of required training, Director of Teaching and Learning **Steve Troen** told the board when the recommendation was first presented Feb. 12.

In December, the administration established a task force to consider options for providing the additional professional development time needed, while staying within the parameters of the teacher contract and the required number of instructional hours for students. The 35-member task force included parents, students, teachers, and other staff. The group met multiple times to consider a variety of creative options before making its recommendation and presenting it to members of the Superintendent's Cabinet in January. The administration sought additional feedback from parent and teacher leaders, principals, and employee bargaining group leaders before finalizing the recommendations presented to the board Feb. 12.

If this change is approved, Troen said all three levels would remain well above state requirements for minimum instructional hours. Elementary is currently 79 hours over the minimum and secondary schools are 63 hours over. One day is approximately seven hours, so three days would reduce those totals by approximately 21 hours at each level.

The other 2024-25 calendar recommendation is to eliminate kindergarten transition days, two half days Aug. 26 and 27. This would align the first day of school for kindergarteners with all other elementary students, on Tuesday, Sept. 3, instead of having kindergarten start on Sept. 4 in the current calendar. The kindergarten transition days started two years ago. Troen said it has proven difficult to sustain the increased staffing and transportation costs, and some parents don't like having a different first day of school for kindergarteners. He said kindergarteners' transition to school can be supported in individual meetings with teachers during the existing elementary assessment days.

## Newly elected board members take oath, officers elected for 2024

Newly elected District 196 School Board members **Cory Johnson**, **Jackie Magnuson** and **Anna Williams** took the oath of office to begin their four-year terms at the board's Jan. 8 organizational meeting. **Sachin Isaacs** was also reelected in the Nov. 7 School Board election and took the oath at the Feb. 12 board meeting.



At its organizational meeting Jan. 8, the board also elected the following officers for 2024: Johnson, chairperson; Isaacs, vice chairperson; Williams, clerk, and **Sakawdin Mohamed**, treasurer.

The School Board holds regular meetings on Mondays at least once each month according to a schedule approved by the board. Regular board meetings begin at 6 p.m. at Dakota Ridge School, 4629 144th St. W., in Apple Valley. Video recordings of regular board meetings are streamed live on the District 196 YouTube channel and are available on the district website and shown on the District 196 TV educational access channel.

# Strategic roadmap keeps focus on priorities and improvement

By **Mary M. Kreger**, superintendent



Since announcing my plans in January to retire at the end of this school year, it's been challenging to think about my tenure as superintendent winding down. It has been an incredible personal journey and honor of my career to serve this amazing school district. As I think about the things I wish I could see through, I am reassured knowing that District 196 is following a "strategic roadmap" that is guiding our actions to produce the improvements in achievement we want for each student.

The strategic roadmap and three-year operational plan that stands behind it were developed before, during and after the pandemic, with a couple of stops and starts along the way. We introduced the strategic roadmap last year district-wide. It serves as a framework for decision-making and resource allocation. It has resonated with employees, who are referring to it in meetings and discussions with colleagues. The roadmap specifically outlines strategic priorities in the areas of wellbeing, achievement, equity, and resources. These four areas are the foundation for our work to improve outcomes for each student.

**Wellbeing** is critical for students to learn and grow. In District 196, we have prioritized physical and emotional wellbeing by spending the resources needed to provide comprehensive support for students. We are leaders in the state in ensuring that every school has at least one licensed nurse, offering vital services such as vision and hearing screenings, vaccinations, and care for students with chronic health conditions. Additionally, our Nutrition Services employees ensure that students receive nutritious meals each day, so their bodies are fueled and ready to learn. More than 90% of our students participate in the free school meals program approved by the state last year. For social and emotional wellbeing, we have school social workers, psychologists, and counselors dedicated to connecting with students facing all types of challenges. Each member of our staff plays an important role in supporting the wellbeing of our students, and ensuring that every child feels seen, heard, and nurtured on a daily basis.

**Achievement** drives our existence as a school system. While our students have shown exceptional success in many areas, we acknowledge an unacceptable gap for some in achieving their full potential. That's why our primary focus this year is a complete shift in our approach to teaching literacy. Spurred by the Reading to Ensure Academic Development (READ) Act approved by the state last year and a recognition that the balanced literacy approach has not yielded the results our students deserve, we are changing to a structured literacy curriculum and approach. Last summer, we selected and implemented a new screening tool to better analyze student skills and progress, and are making significant shifts in curriculum, while offering more effective interventions. Equally important is the investment in our teachers' professional development. With a new, comprehensive 45-hour training program, we're ensuring they possess the necessary skills to implement structured literacy methods. We are optimistic that these adjustments will strengthen the effectiveness of our educators and improve student results.

**Equity** is a lens on every aspect of our systems in District 196. We are committed to ensuring that each student has access to opportunity, engagement, and success. In this pursuit, every adult in our community plays an essential role. Our Cultural Family Advocates provide specialized support, addressing students' unique needs to be successful. We also provide comprehensive professional development for staff, ensuring that every member of our team possesses the skills necessary for equitable practices. Moreover, we actively celebrate the multicultural mosaic of students and families who make up our district through family and community events throughout the year. All of these initiatives are important in creating an educational environment for students to thrive, measured by improving outcomes, bridging gaps, and fostering academic success for each student.

**Resources** are the caring people who surround and support our students, along with the facilities and equipment that support their learning. We are grateful for incredible partnerships with parents and guardians, and the support of community and business partners who share our commitment to high-quality public education. The culture of District 196 is created, nurtured, and sustained by the individuals within it. Our dedicated employees play a pivotal role in our students' achievements, as echoed by the students themselves, who consistently recognize the profound impact that teachers, administrators, and support staff have on their educational journey. We are also fortunate to have a supportive community that has been willing to invest additional property taxes in the human and capital resources needed to support their students and keep District 196 a destination district for families, employees, and businesses.

As we near the end of the 2024 school year, I am deeply grateful to witness the progress made in areas of wellbeing, achievement, equity, and resources, all guided by our strategic roadmap. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the outstanding students, devoted employees, supportive families, and generous community members who together collectively make District 196 an exceptional place to learn and grow!

## 2024 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

### District asking state to support 'historic' changes for education approved last session

*(Editor's Note: These legislative priorities were developed by members of the district's Legislative Advisory Council and Budget Advisory Council, and were unanimously approved by the School Board on Feb. 12. If you wish to help the district advocate for these priorities, contact your legislators, legislative leaders, and the Governor's Office.)*

The 2023 session of the Minnesota Legislature was called 'historic' by many for the education funding being provided, for the number of law changes in the Omnibus Education Bill, and for the potential of these changes to positively impact the health, wellness, and achievement of all students in our state for years to come.

To realize these possibilities for our children, District 196 urges the Legislature and Governor to limit consideration of any new education laws or mandates during the 2024 session. Instead, we ask for focus on supporting successful implementation of laws approved in 2023; additional funding for high inflation, and fewer state mandates and more local decision-making authority.



#### 1. Review, adjust and support implementation of new laws

Implementing change requires ongoing review, adjustments and support to be successful. Some of the most significant laws approved in 2023 require additional review, discussion and action during this session, including;

- **READ Act** – Provide additional funding for curriculum and related costs, and additional time and flexibility for teachers to complete the minimum training requirements (45+ hours per teacher).
- **Unemployment Insurance** – Change the law to broaden the definition of “like” positions in determining eligibility for unemployment, and identify an ongoing funding source. An unintended consequence of the new law is that school districts are planning summer programming based on unemployment eligibility and availability of workers instead of what is best for students.
- **Student Safety** – Change language in the law on physical restraint to ensure law enforcement agencies and officers are comfortable having school resource officers (SROs) in our schools.

#### 2. Provide funding for inflation, equalization and compensatory needs

The total funding for education approved last session is more than any year before, and is appreciated, but it cannot undo decades of underfunding the general education formula or even the impact of inflation in the past two years. We ask for approval of these requests for stable funding and tax relief:

- **General Education Formula** – Provide an additional 2% increase in FY25 (4% total) to help compensate for high inflationary costs that will exceed the 4%/2% increases in the current biennial budget.
- **Equalization Aid** – Increase equalization of levies. This reduces education funding disparities and provides property tax relief to taxpayers in school districts with smaller commercial/industrial tax bases, like District 196.
- **Compensatory Funding** – Continue to provide school districts their previous level of compensatory funding (“hold harmless”) and identify a better measure of poverty for determining future compensatory funding, as families no longer need to apply to receive free school meals.

#### 3. Increase local control and reduce mandates

Local school board members and district officials know their school districts best. Unfunded and unnecessary mandates take money from the general fund for all students and time from staff working with students. We ask for the approval of these requests for more local decision-making and fewer mandates:

- **Local Authority** – Give local school boards authority to renew a voter-approved capital projects levy one time, for up to 10 years, same as allowed for operating levies.
- **Special Education Paperwork** – Eliminate unnecessary requirements that take time away from teachers and other staff working with students.
- **Bonding Bill** – Support the District 196/City of Apple Valley partnership with \$6 million in the 2024 bonding bill to help make needed renovations to the Apple Valley Sports Arena, which serves the south metro region.

#### Did You Know?

The Legislative Advisory Council is one of nine district advisory councils that give stakeholders the opportunity to be involved. See p.7

## Superintendent Search

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they believe are most important for the next superintendent. The survey was available in English, Spanish, and Somali, and was advertised in an email from the district to all families, and in school communications with families during the Feb. 28-March 10 survey window. The MSBA team analyzed the survey input to present to the board March 21.

All board meetings related to hiring a superintendent are open to the public, per state law, and names of applicants remain private until they are selected to be interviewed. The board's superintendent search timeline includes the remaining key dates:

- March 21 – Special School Board meeting, 5:30 p.m., to review survey input, receive training on interviewing in public, and develop interview questions and procedures.
- March 25 – Deadline for applications at 11:59 p.m. The MSBA team will review all applications and provide the board with a recommendation on which applicants to interview and which they consider "maybes". Board members will have access to review all applications submitted.
- April 4 – Special School Board meeting at 5:30 p.m. to determine semifinalists for first interviews, and review interview training, questions and procedures.
- April 13 – Special School Board meeting beginning at 10 a.m. for first interviews and select finalists for second interviews.
- April 23 – Special School Board meeting at 5:30 p.m. for second interviews and selection of the successful applicant. Begin negotiating contract April 24.
- May 6 – Regular School Board meeting at 6 p.m. to include approval of contract with new superintendent.
- July 1 – New superintendent begins.



Superintendent **Mary Kreger** congratulated Rosemount High School graduates during the traditional "Graduation Walk" through Rosemount Middle School and Rosemount Elementary School. This year's graduates were in seventh grade when Kreger was named superintendent in 2018.

## Kreger led district through cuts, pandemic, and referendums

In January, Superintendent **Mary Kreger** informed the School Board of her plan to retire at the end of this school year, her 35th in education and sixth as the leader of the state's third largest school district.

"It has been my privilege and honor to serve as superintendent of District 196 the past six years," Kreger wrote. "I look forward to reflecting on our many achievements together and the challenges we overcame in the past six years, but there will be time for that when I retire. Until then, I intend to continue actively leading the important work we are doing to implement a new literacy program and multi-tiered system of supports that will improve outcomes for students for many years to come."

Kreger was first hired in District 196 in 2005 as director of special education. She served in that role until taking over as interim superintendent in July 2018. "(Mary) is a problem-solver, a relationship builder, a skilled communicator and strong educational leader with a vision centered on student learning and achievement," then Chairperson **Jackie Magnuson** said before the board voted to make Kreger superintendent in October 2018.

In her first year as superintendent, Kreger led the district through a budget-cutting process and helped win voter approval of an operating levy referendum that is providing funding for additional teachers and other staff who are supporting students' mental health needs. Kreger also led the district through the many changes and challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, established the district's Equity and Inclusion Department, and last year helped win voter approval for \$493 million of facilities improvements. Last year, Kreger also initiated the district's shift from balanced literacy to structured literacy, which is now required under the READ Act approved by state policymakers last session.

Prior to coming to District 196, Kreger worked for South Washington County Schools for 13 years as a special education teacher, coordinator and supervisor. She started her career as a substitute teacher, working in Minneapolis, Lakeville and in District 196 schools. Kreger is a longtime Apple Valley resident and all three of her children graduated from District 196 schools.

Her last day in the position will be June 30.

## District and teachers have new two-year agreement

In February, the District 196 School Board approved a new two-year agreement with Dakota County United Educators (DCUE), representing the district's approximately 2,300 teachers and nurses. DCUE members had already ratified the tentative agreement in a membership vote the previous week.

"I am very happy to have a new agreement in place for our teachers and nurses that keeps us competitive," Superintendent **Mary Kreger** said following the board vote Feb. 26. "I want to thank members of both negotiating teams for the hours of effort and collaboration it took over the last several months to reach this interest-based bargaining agreement."

The agreement is retroactive to July 1, 2023 and runs through June 30, 2025. It increases the teachers' and nurses' salary schedules by 4% each year, and increases the district's contribution to health insurance by 4% this year and 5% in year two.

Under the new agreement, the starting salary in District 196 for a first-year teacher with no previous experience is now \$48,240. The district's average full-time teacher salary is estimated to be \$86,008, including longevity pay and the 4% increase in year one of the agreement. At the top end of the salary schedule, a teacher at the top step with a master's degree plus 60 hours of education (MA+60), with longevity pay, earns \$109,436 this year under the new agreement.

In year two, nurses will move from hourly pay to an annual salary, and three lanes will be added at the top of the nurses' salary schedule, MA+15, MA+30, and MA+60. An additional longevity pay level was added to the bachelor of arts (BA), BA+15 and BA+30 lanes, and the district 403(b) match increased by \$10 at each level, each year.



## Ready to break ground for new elementary school

Bids will be awarded and crews will break ground this spring on the district's next elementary school, shown in the rendering above, which will be located at the intersection of Akron Avenue and Bonaire Path in Rosemount. The elementary school is one of the improvements included in the May 2023 bond referendum to address facilities needs in the district. The yet-to-be named elementary school will have a similar footprint to East Lake Elementary School, which opened in 2017, and will have capacity for approximately 650 students. Later this spring, the district will initiate a process to establish an attendance area for the new elementary school, scheduled to open in fall 2025, as well as other potential adjustments to help balance enrollments and maximize space in adjacent schools.

## Board vacancy

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Gardner ran for School Board in the most recent election in November 2023. She ended her campaign to support candidates endorsed by Dakota County United Educators, but it was after the date to officially withdraw, so her name remained on the ballot. She also filed to run for the board in 2021, but officially withdrew her name from the ballot.

In 2022, Gardner was appointed to serve as a citizen member of the district's Legislative Advisory Council, which develops and advocates for the district's legislative priorities. She is a board member of the District 196 Foundation, a nonprofit focused on eliminating barriers to learning for students in District 196 by providing access to food, books, and musical instruments. She also volunteers at her son's elementary school.

Professionally, Gardner is the policy director for Hunger Solutions Minnesota, a nonprofit that links other nonprofits, and state and federal agencies to help end hunger in Minnesota. She has done public policy work for several nonprofit organizations, including the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, and has a master's in public policy from the University of Minnesota, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs.

Gardner was appointed to begin serving the remainder of Virnig's term, which expires in January 2026. By law, the seat of the appointed board member must be up for election no later than the next general election, which is Nov. 5, 2024. Gardner indicated in the interview that she would run for the seat this November. If she wins, Gardner would serve the remainder of Virnig's term and would need to run for election again in November 2025 to remain on the board for another term.

## Advisory councils offer opportunities for district stakeholders to help guide decisions

District 196 has nine advisory councils that offer parents, students, staff and other stakeholders the opportunity to provide input into decisions that guide the work of the district. The councils are advisory to district administration and do not make recommendations directly to the School Board. Advisory council members do, however, provide input to guide administrative recommendations and decisions of the board.

Interested stakeholders can apply to serve on an advisory council where they have a specific interest or expertise. The councils operate differently, but most meet four to six times during the year, in the evening, and may have optional events or activities.

There is typically no homework or preparation required for advisory council members outside of the regular meetings.

Applications from interested stakeholders are welcome throughout the year. Each council has its own application and timeline for appointing new members, with most happening in the spring. For more information on each of the advisory councils, go to [District196.org](http://District196.org) and select "Community" in the main menu. From there, click "Learn more" under Advisory Councils and you can select the group you want to know more about.



Members of the Budget and Legislative advisory councils met at the District Office in November to discuss possible district priorities for the 2024 session of the Minnesota Legislature. Their input led to the priorities that were approved by the School Board (see p.4) and now they are advocating for those priorities with state policymakers.

<p><b>BUDGET ADVISORY COUNCIL</b></p> <p>Ensures community participation and understanding of the district’s budget planning process, and provides input on budget plans that support district and board goals, policies, and initiatives.</p>	<p><b>COMMUNITY EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL</b></p> <p>Advises and assists the Community Education Department in the fulfillment of the community education mission of providing quality lifelong learning opportunities for all residents.</p>	<p><b>CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION ADVISORY COUNCIL</b></p> <p>Promotes community involvement in refining instruction and curriculum, while offering recommendations on education standards, assessments, and program evaluations.</p>
<p><b>EQUITY ADVISORY COUNCIL</b></p> <p>Analyzes student achievement, attendance, and discipline data, reviews programs and services, conducts community outreach for underrepresented families, and advocates for student equity and inclusion.</p>	<p><b>GIFTED AND TALENTED ADVISORY COUNCIL</b></p> <p>Ensures community participation in and enhances community understanding of the district’s gifted and talent development program, and provides input to the Curriculum and Instruction Advisory Council.</p>	<p><b>LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COUNCIL</b></p> <p>Facilitates community understanding of legislative proposals and their implications for District 196, while encouraging citizen engagement in the legislative process through various outreach initiatives.</p>
<p><b>NATIVE AMERICAN PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE</b></p> <p>Plays a pivotal role in advising and assisting with the strategic planning and execution of programs and events tailored to support the needs of District 196 American Indian students and their families.</p>	<p><b>SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL</b></p> <p>Represents the interests of learners with disabilities and advises the Special Education Department on current issues, program development, parental concerns and involvement, and department priorities.</p>	<p><b>EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL</b></p> <p>Assists in developing, planning, and monitoring the Early Childhood Family Education program, and provides input to the Early Childhood Family Education and School Readiness programs.</p>

### Three staff fill administrator vacancies in special education

Three district employees were tapped to fill administrator vacancies in the Special Education Department this winter.

**Kelly Wuensch** was hired as a coordinator to oversee management of special education services for students in the district's 19 elementary schools. She filled a vacancy created by a resignation. For the last six years, Wuensch had supported the special education department as a teacher on special assignment, working with coordinators, teachers and families. She started working in District 196 in 2008 as a center-based special education teacher.



**Shekinah Dillon** was hired as interim coordinator of Transition Plus, a special education program serving



students ages 18-22. Dillon had been the assistant administrator at Transition Plus since 2021 and is filling a vacancy created by a resignation. She was previously a special education teacher for the Minneapolis Public Schools and manager of a program serving people with autism.

**Joshua Smith** was hired as interim assistant administrator of Transition Plus to replace the vacancy created by Dillon's hiring as interim coordinator. He has worked in District 196 since 2017, when he was hired as a special education resource teacher at Greenleaf Elementary School. He spent three years as a teacher at Dakota Ridge, a special education school serving students K-12, and had been working as a mental health teacher on special assignment for the district since 2022.



### Bartosh is new equity and inclusion coordinator

**Alyssa Bartosh** was recently hired as the district's new coordinator of equity and inclusion to replace a recent resignation.



Bartosh has nearly 25 years of experience in District 196, the first 15 at Parkview Elementary School as a classroom teacher, literacy intervention specialist and instructional assistant, and the last nine years as the assistant administrator and magnet teacher on special assignment at Glacier Hills Elementary School of Arts and Science. In her new role, Bartosh will be responsible for developing and supporting initiatives, policies, and programs that foster an inclusive environment for students and staff.



# JOIN OUR TEAM!

District 196 is a Forbes Best-in-State employer.



Paraprofessionals | Custodians | Bus Drivers  
Nutrition Services Associates | and more!



**APPLY NOW!**



### Magnet schools earn national recognition

Three District 196 elementary magnet schools were selected for recognition in Magnet Schools of America's 2024 Merit Awards program.

Diamond Path Elementary School of International Studies and Echo Park Elementary School of Leadership, Engineering and Technology are being recognized as Schools of Distinction, and Glacier Hills Elementary School of Arts and Science is one of a select group of schools in the nation to be named a Top School of Excellence.

The Merit Awards of Excellence and Distinction recognize magnet schools that show a commitment to high academic standards, curriculum innovation, successful desegregation/diversity efforts, specialized teaching staffs, and parent and community involvement. The School of Excellence Award is given to magnet schools that have demonstrated the highest level of excellence in all facets of the merit award application. This year, 157 Schools of Excellence were selected nationwide.

"It is an honor to be recognized as a Top Magnet School of Excellence by Magnet Schools of America," Glacier Hills Principal **Adriana Henderson** said. "This award acknowledges the hard work of our entire school community and their dedication to the best outcomes for students."

All five elementary magnet schools in District 196 have received merit awards previously. The other two elementary magnets are Cedar Park Elementary STEM School, and Oak Ridge Elementary School of Leadership, Environmental and Health Sciences. District 196 offers Valley Middle School of STEM for students in grades 6-8, as part of a K-12 STEM pathway that includes Cedar Park and Echo Park elementary schools for grades K-5, and Apple Valley High School for grades 9-12.



### Bumpers is state runner-up in alpine ski

Eagan High School junior **Courtney Bumpers** on one of her runs during the state alpine ski championships at Giant's Ridge in February. Bumpers had runs of 40.39 and 41.03 seconds, for a combined 1.21.42. That was three-fourths of a second behind the fastest time and good enough to earn Bumpers second place in the state.

### Students qualify for state business competitions

More than 200 District 196 high school students qualified to compete at state business conferences in March. To see all of their names, go to the News section at [District196.org](http://District196.org) and search for "DECA and BPA."

The Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) is an international association of high school and college students, and teachers of marketing, management and entrepreneurship, finance, hospitality, and marketing sales and service. The DECA state qualifying event was held in January. All totaled, 138 students from Rosemount, Eastview and Apple Valley high schools qualified for the DECA state conference March 10-12, after this issue of *Spotlight* went to press. Top finishers at the state competition earned spots at the DECA International Career Development Conference April 27-30 in Anaheim, Calif.

Business Professionals of America (BPA) is a cocurricular organization for students pursuing careers in business management, office administration, information technology and other related career fields. The BPA state qualifying competition was held in January. All totaled, 71 District 196 students from Eagan, Eastview and Rosemount high schools qualified for the state BPA conference March 14-16, after this issue of *Spotlight* went to press. Top finishers at the state competition earned spots at the BPA National Leadership Conference May 10-14 in Chicago, Ill.

### Reimbursement requests for nonpublic transportation

District 196 residents may request reimbursement for a portion of their costs for having transported their child during the 2023-24 school year to a nonpublic school to which the district does not provide transportation and does not have a comparable nonpublic school available within its boundaries.

Requests for reimbursement for nonpublic transportation must be

submitted prior to June 30, 2024 to: Independent School District 196, Director of Finance and Operations, 3455 153rd St. W., Rosemount, MN 55068. For more information or to obtain a reimbursement form, call 651-423-7715 or go to [District196.org](http://District196.org) and search for "nonpublic student transportation reimbursement request."

## Middle school students recognized for design and function of their cities of the future

District 196 middle school students took two of the top five spots and seven of the 18 special awards at the Regional Future City Competition held in January at Dakota County Technical College in Rosemount.

Sponsored by the National Engineers Week Foundation, Future City is a national, project-based learning experience where middle school students imagine, research, design and build cities of the future that showcase their solutions to a citywide sustainability issue. In this year's challenge, teams designed a futuristic city that is 100% powered by electricity with energy generated from sources that keep citizens and the environment healthy and safe. Students work as a team with a teacher and engineer mentor to design their virtual city using software and other resources. They also research and write a 1,500-word essay about their city, build a tabletop scale model with recycled materials, develop a project plan and make a presentation to judges at the regional competition. The top finisher in each region qualifies for the national finals held in Washington, D.C. each February.

Team Nina Urqkuna from Scott Highlands Middle School finished in second place and won special awards for Best Future City Model, and Best Land Surveying Practices. Team members are **Manaswini Dokka, Lorenzo Galindez, Rishik Kondadadi, Harann Piratheepan, Krishna Rathinavel, Eli Terre, Evan Thompson, Aida Yaba and Bonsa Yaba**. Scott Highlands Teacher **Theresa Back** is the coach advisor, the team's engineer mentor is **Christina Prezler** of Merjent, Inc., and **Ken Roy** of the Bureau of Land Management was a team volunteer.

The Four Leaf team from Valley Middle School of STEM was honorable mention in fourth place and received the special award for Best Visualization of a Smart, Sustainable City. Team members are **Stanley Haakenson, Poppy Pelinka, Taj Bora,**

**Adalyn Westereng, Sydney Mertens** and **Kate Frutiger**. Valley Middle teachers **Sarah Trudeau** and **Kirstin Rogers** are coach advisors and the team's engineer is **Kelsey Antonich**.

A total of nine teams from four District 196 middle schools participated in the competition. The following teams also won special awards:

- Team Niohogger from Scott Highlands won Best Transportation System, and Best Incorporation of Cultural and Historical Resources Into a City;
- Team Llumina from Black Hawk Middle School won the award for Safe Drinking Water, and
- Team I.S.S. Thoth from Rosemount Middle School won Most Innovative City Setting.



Team Nina Urqkuna from Scott Highlands Middle School finished in second place and won special awards for Best Future City Model, and Best Land Surveying Practices.

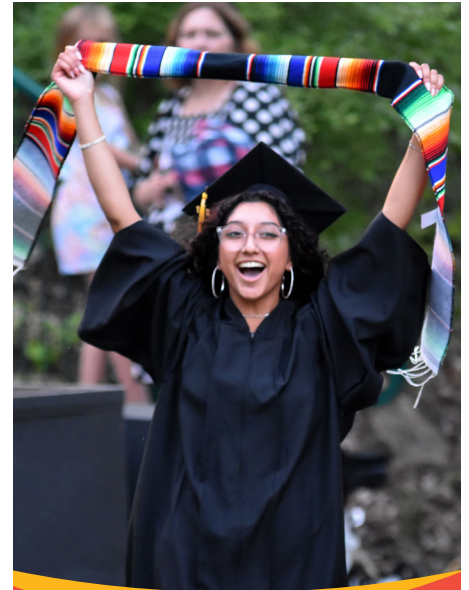


The Four Leaf team from Valley Middle School of STEM was honorable mention in fourth place and received the special award for Best Visualization of a Smart, Sustainable City.

## More than 2,000 students will graduate from District 196 schools this year

More than 2,000 students are scheduled to graduate from District 196 schools during commencement ceremonies scheduled for May and early June (see below). This number includes students from the district's four comprehensive high schools, Apple Valley, Eagan, Eastview and Rosemount, as well as the School of Environmental Studies, Dakota Ridge School, Area Learning Center, Transition Plus, and Community Education's Adult Basic Education diploma program.

- **Native American Cultural Honoring Ceremony** – Saturday, May 11, 2 p.m., Central Park in Rosemount
- **Adult Basic Education** – Thursday, May 23, 7 p.m., Dakota Ridge School
- **School of Environmental Studies** – Thursday, May 30, 7 p.m., Minnesota Zoo Amphitheater (weather permitting)
- **Eastview High School** – Saturday, June 1, 1 p.m., Mariucci Arena
- **Eagan High School** – Saturday, June 1, 2:24 p.m., Eagan High School Stadium (weather permitting)
- **Apple Valley High School** – Saturday, June 1, 4 p.m., Mariucci Arena
- **Rosemount High School** – Saturday, June 1, 7 p.m., Mariucci Arena
- **Dakota Ridge School** – Monday, June 3, 2:30 p.m., Dakota Ridge Gymnasium
- **Transition Plus** – Tuesday, June 4, 12:30 p.m., Rosemount Community Center
- **Area Learning Center** – Wednesday, June 5, 4 p.m., Silver Bell Learning Center



This School of Environmental Studies graduate expressed her excitement during the 2023 graduation ceremony at the Minnesota Zoo amphitheater.



SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

### A magnet high school, located on the grounds of the Minnesota Zoo, that immerses students in the study of environmental topics and issues.

*Students come from across the metro area for this unique learning experience!*



*“If you're looking for a small community filled with friendly, passionate people, this is perfect for you.”*

- student, class of 2018



**ENROLL TODAY!**

# Congratulations!

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

**Param Thakkar** and **Tristin Nguyen** of Eagan High School were semifinalists in policy debate and **Jacob Braginsky** of Eagan was a medalist in congressional debate, finishing third at the state debate tournament in January.

The **Eastview High School dance team** took third place in both jazz and high kick competition at the state tournament in February.

**Lilah Bartels** of Eagan High School is one of 32 students statewide selected as region winners in the Excellence in Community, Education and Leadership (ExCEL) Award for the 2023-24 school year.



**Lilah Bartels**

Bartels was selected for Region 3AA. Sponsored by the Minnesota State High School League, the ExCEL Awards recognize high school juniors who are active in fine arts and athletic activities, who demonstrate leadership qualities and who are model citizens in their community. Each high school in the state can nominate one junior boy and girl for the ExCEL Awards. Two recipients are selected from each of the eight competitive regions in the state for both Class A and AA schools. The other ExCEL Award nominees from District 196 are **Delina Tizazu** and **Gerald Nibombe** of Apple Valley High School; **Param Thakkar** of Eagan High School; **Himani Mondal** and **Max Huberty** of Eastview High School, and **Neha Chetty** and **Andrew Tennesen** of Rosemount High School.

The **Apple Valley High School e-sports team** won its fourth consecutive Minnesota Varsity League championship in the game Valorant in January, and in February was recognized as one of the nation's top high school e-sports programs at the Walter Day National High School and Collegiate Esports Award Ceremony in Iowa.

Eight District 196 seniors were nominated for the Academics, Arts and Athletics (Triple A) Award for the 2023-24 school year. The Triple A goes to nominated seniors with a 3.0 or higher



## Eagan High Unified team earns state basketball title

Members of the Eagan High School Unified basketball team won the 2024 State Unified Championship in February at Target Center. Unified sports bring together student athletes, with and without disabilities, to compete under a common message of inclusion. Members of the team are **Sean Albert, Tab Booker, Alex Capitani, Ozzie Cooper, Brooklyn Evans, Jack Gohar, Jacque Haas, Louis Hurd, Bria King, Connor King** and **Syon Thapa**. Managers are **Michael Corbo, Lydia Frome, Sydney Vigness-Pint,** and **Greta Peterson**. Coaches are **Cooper Bernard, Kai Strunk,** and **Carter Will**.

grade-point average who participate in athletic and fine arts programs, and exhibit exemplary citizenship and the highest standards of sportsmanship and conduct. Each high school in the state can nominate one senior boy and girl for the award. This year's recipients had not been announced when this issue of *Spotlight* went to press. Triple A Award nominees from District 196 are **Grace Alagbo** and **Dominic Bauer** of Apple Valley High School; **Keira Waldrop** and **Jack Kruger** of Eagan High School; **Emily Hering** and **Connor Barry** of Eastview High School, and **Alexa Erzar** and **Andrew Schultz** of Rosemount High School.

**Jennifer Miller**, a special education teacher at Diamond Path Elementary School of International Studies, is one of 159 candidates who accepted their nomination for 2024



**Jennifer Miller**

Minnesota Teacher of the Year.

Semifinalists will be selected in March and all finalists will be recognized at the selection banquet May 5 in St. Paul.

Southview Elementary School Principal **Christine Evans** received the Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association's Division Leadership Achievement Award for the south suburban division.



**Christine Evans**

The award recognizes principals for promoting a positive school culture, guiding instruction, and providing leadership.

The **Apple Valley High School wrestling team** qualified for the state team competition for a record 39th time in March, and lost in the quarterfinal round. Apple Valley also remains the record holder with 25 team state championships in the school's 48-year history.

<< continued on page 13 >>

## Spring shows and concerts give students the stage to showcase their talents in the arts

District 196 is committed to a Triple-A philosophy of developing the whole student by engaging them with opportunities in academics, arts, and athletics. In the arts, students are encouraged to explore their creative talents in band, choir, music, dance and theater, and get to showcase those talents in performances that are a source of community pride.

### Apple Valley High School

- Speech and Debate Eloquence - April 5, 7 p.m.
- "Working" - April 24, 3:30 p.m. (senior preview), April 25- 27, 7 p.m., April 27, 2 p.m.
- Jazz Ensemble - May 1, 7 p.m.
- Danceworks - May 16, 17, 7 p.m.
- Band Concert - May 23, 7 p.m.
- Choir Concert - May 29, 7 p.m.

### Eagan High School

- "ENCORE! 2024:- Streaming LIFE" - April 24, 4 p.m. (senior preview), April 26-27, 7 p.m., April 28, 3 p.m., May 2-4, 7 p.m.
- Showcase Concert - May 7, 7 p.m.
- Freshman Spring Band Concert - May 13, 7 p.m.
- Spring Concert and Awards - May 28, 6 p.m.
- Varsity Spring Concert and Awards - May 29, 7 p.m.

### Eastview High School

- "BRAVO! 2024: Amazing Race" - April 23, 3:30 p.m. (senior preview), April 25-27, 7 p.m., April 28, 2 p.m., April 30, 3:30 p.m., May 2-4, 7 p.m.
- Spring Dance Show - May 12, 7:30 p.m.
- Varsity and Concert Band Concert - May 20, 7 p.m.
- Symphonic and Wind Symphony Concert - May 23, 7 p.m.
- Spring Choir Concert and Awards - May 29, 6 p.m.

### Rosemount High School

- "Mean Girls" - April 24, 3:30 p.m. (senior preview), April 25-27, 7 p.m., April 28, 2 p.m., May 2-4, 7 p.m.
- MOMOCO Dance Performance - May 17, 7 p.m.
- Spring Band Concerts and Awards - May 22, 23 7 p.m.
- Spring Choral Concert and Awards - May 29, 6 p.m.



### Hollywood Dreams

Apple Valley High School senior **Jayden Barness** took center stage in the school's production of Hollywood Dreams in February. The production featured more than 130 students as instrumentalists, vocalists, dancers, and theater technicians.

## Congratulations

<< continued from page 12 >>

**Dylan St. Germain** of Eagan High School and **Marcell Booth** of Apple Valley High School both finished runner-up in the state Class AAA wrestling tournament. St. Germain wrestled in the 107-pound weight class and Booth at 189 pounds.

Four District 196 students won individual championships at the girls' state wrestling tournament, including **Cassandra Gonzales** (136-pound weight class), **Grace Alagbo** (170 pounds) and **Gioriann Vigniavo** (190 pounds), all of Apple Valley High School, and **Riley Myers** of Eastview High School in the 130-pound weight class. At 124 pounds, **Andrea Quiones** of Apple Valley was runner-up and **Kamdyn Saulter** of Rosemount High School placed third.

The **Rosemount High School boys' alpine ski team** finished sixth in the team competition at the state tournament, and **Wes Ebaugh** of Rosemount was the top finisher from the district in the individual championships.

The **Eastview High School girls' Nordic ski team** qualified for the state tournament in February and finished 16th in the team competition. Eastview's **Emily Percival** was the top finisher from the district in the girls'

pursuit, and **Luke Poppinga** of Eagan High School was the top finisher in the boys' pursuit.

The **District 196 Icettes** won The President's Trophy at the ISI Winter Classic National Competition in Orlando, Fla., in November. The Icettes earned first-place finishes for varsity synchro and jv synchro, and a second in the production category.

The **Rosemount High School girls' hockey team** qualified for the state tournament in February and lost in the quarterfinal round.

Rosemount High School junior **Lucas Gerten** made it three state championships in three years in the 1-meter diving event during the boys' swimming and diving state tournament in March. Gerten earned his third consecutive state title with a score of 539.60, a Class AA and all-time state meet record. The event was a sweep for District 196, as **Owen Kipp** and **Stone Larson** of Eagan High School took second and third place, respectively, in 1-meter diving. In addition, **Quinlan Schroeder** of Rosemount High School placed third in the 100-yard breaststroke, and **Braden Hegenbarth** of Eagan took sixth in the 50-yard freestyle.

DISTRICT 196

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For over 50 years, District 196 Community Education has been offering lifelong learning opportunities for your engagement, enrichment and inspiration.

These are highlights of our spring and summer programming. Visit [ce.district196.org](http://ce.district196.org) to find your passion, learn a new hobby, get fit, train for a new career and more at a school or learning center near you.

[ce.district196.org](http://ce.district196.org)**Locations**

BHMS | Black Hawk Middle,  
1540 Deerwood Dr, Eagan

Emerald Greens Golf  
Course, 14425 Goodwin Ave,  
Hastings

FRMS | Falcon Ridge Middle,  
12900 Johnny Cake Ridge Rd,  
Apple Valley

HL | Highland Elementary,  
14001 Pilot Knob Rd,  
Apple Valley

RHS | Rosemount High  
School, 3335 142nd St. W.

SHMS | Scott Highlands  
Middle, 14011 Pilot Knob Rd,  
Apple Valley

# Learning for all ages

Educating, developing and inspiring our community for lifelong success.

**Easy Artisan Breads (adults)**

Save a lot of money, increase your kitchen expertise and enjoy fresh bread every day with this simple bread dough that you store in the refrigerator and bake on your schedule. Understand the basic theory of artisan breads using wet dough. Enjoy samples, mix a batch of dough and receive recipes for various breads. Take home a batch of bread dough and a warm loaf of baked bread. Supply fee of \$9 payable to instructor.

Mon. | April 15 | 6:30-9 p.m. | \$55 | SHMS

**Cookies Galore (adults)**

Are you tired of the everyday kinds of cookies? Are you tired of store bought cookies, too? Make the most beautiful and tasty cookies you have ever seen! Use pan molds to make spring tulips, roses and other cool shaped cookies. The dough making is easy and molding is fun and simple. Once cookies bake and cool, we will trim them together. Go home with a lovely box of colorful finished cookies. Supply fee of \$13 payable to instructor.

Tue. | April 16 | 6-9 p.m. | \$39 | FRMS

**Baklava (adults)**

Baklava is a traditional pastry dessert that is known for its sweet, rich flavor and flaky texture. Prepare flavorful and easy-to-learn baklava to take home and bake yourself. Supply fee of \$15 payable to instructor.

Thu. | May 2 | 6:30-8:30 p.m. | \$45 | FRMS

**Festive Spring Salads (adults)**

Head into spring and summer with a wild rice and breast of chicken salad or wild rice with fresh mushrooms and cashews. Features also include a vegetarian salad using multi-colored peppers and the unique grain, quinoa. What could be more refreshing than fruit, a salad combination of cantaloupe and strawberries with an orange sauce. Round out the evening with three easy dressings for your favorite combination of assorted garden greens.

Wed. | May 8 | 6-9 p.m. | \$49 | SHMS

**Ballroom  
Dancing for  
Beginners  
(adults)**

No matter the occasion, be prepared to dance! Be one of the best dancers at your event, or just have some fun dancing together at home. Try something new to add spark and romance back into your relationship. Taking steps from classic ballroom dances, learn easy to remember mini-routines, danceable to all your favorite songs including pop, blues, rock, country and more. If you think you have no rhythm and two left feet, this is the perfect course for you!

Fri. | April 26-May 17 | 7-8:30 p.m.  
4 sessions | \$69 | HL

**Zumba with Alex (adults)**

Get groovin' at your own pace with Zumba. This Latin inspired dance-fitness workout provides modified, low-impact, easy-to-follow moves for a healthy, active lifestyle. Perfect for beginners and ages, 18 to 80+. Improve balance, flexibility, coordination, and cardiovascular strength.

Sat. | June 8-Aug. 3 | 9-10 a.m.  
6 sessions | \$65 | FRMS

**Get Golf Ready: Beginners  
(ages 15+)**

Develop skills that allow you to be comfortable and competent on the course. Discover the skills of full swing, putting and chipping. Understand the basic etiquette and equipment of the game. Includes two, one-hour lessons on the driving range, two one-hour lessons around the green, and a three-hour on-course lesson to practice what you have learned under the patient guidance of instructors. Range balls, clubs if needed, tees, and training aids provided.

Tue. | May 7-28 | 7:15-8:15 p.m.  
5 sessions | \$79 | Emerald Greens Golf Course



Visit [ce.district196.org](http://ce.district196.org) or call 651-423-7920 for more!



### Beginner Tennis Lessons (adults)

Learn basic stroke mechanics of forehand, backhand, volley, serve,

footwork, rules, and scoring. Designed for the player with little or no tennis experience. Bring your own racket. Tennis balls provided.

Mon. | June 3-24 | 6:30-8 p.m.  
4 sessions | \$55 | SHMS

### Outdoor Yoga with Stacy (adults)

Discover how to quiet the mind while increasing energy and concentration. Improve your overall sense of wellbeing by integrating your spirit, mind, and body. Try basic yoga poses and learn safe strengthening and stretching exercises, along with functional balance postures. Learn a contemporary approach to an age-old discipline.

Mon. | July 8 | 6-7 p.m. | \$15 | HL

### Fused Glass Suncatcher (adults)



Learn how to make your own fused glass suncatcher! Select your special glass, hand cut and design a suncatcher. A great gift idea and a wonderful way to spend time with friends and family in a collaborative artisan environment.

Tue. | June 25 | 6-8 p.m.  
\$49 | FRMS

### Photoshop Elements (adults)

Discover how to get better results retouching portraits, as well as size and print photos. Uncover the basics of photo manipulation to give marginal photos the "Hollywood touch." Learn to add or remove objects from photos, convert from color to black and white, crop, and more.

Sat. | April 6 & 13 | 10 a.m.-3 p.m.  
2 sessions | \$99 | FRMS



### High School Sports Camps (grades PreK-12)

High school head coaches and assistants have planned and prepared summer camp activities that will promote skill improvement and good sportsmanship, all while having fun! Visit [ce.district196.org](http://ce.district196.org) for a listing of all camps.

### Open Swims (all ages)

Bring your family for fun in the pool. Register online for the day(s) you will attend. Locker rooms are available for changing. Children under the age of 8 must be accompanied by an adult in the water. Children ages 8 to 10 must be accompanied by an adult in the pool area.

#### Pay as You Go Open Swim

Ages 3 and younger . . . . . Free  
Ages 4 and up . . . . . \$10  
Family (immediate family members) . . \$25

Fri. | April 5, May 3 and/or June 7 | 6:30-8 p.m. | SHMS



### Water Safety Aide (ages 13+)

Do you seek employment as a swim instructor aide? Join us and be qualified to apply for employment at the age of 14. CPR and first aid training are included.

Mon.-Thu. | March 25-28 | 9 a.m.-4 p.m. | 4 sessions | \$195 | BHMS

Mon.-Thu. | June 10-13 | 9 a.m.-4 p.m. | 4 sessions | \$195 | FRMS

### Water Safety Instructor (ages 16+)

Become certified to teach American Red Cross swim lessons. Skill prerequisite: Demonstration of swimming skills equivalent to Red Cross Level 4 swim lesson requirements.

Mon.-Thu. | March 25-28 | 9 a.m.-6 p.m. | 4 sessions | \$290 | BHMS

### Pad Thai (adult and child ages 5-15)

Indulge yourself! Chicken Pad Thai is a delicious and popular Thai stir-fry. With your favorite adult cooking partner, build an authentic Pad Thai sauce with flavor profiles of sweet, salty, sour and spicy. Wow friends and family with your new signature dish. Hands-on class with samples provided. Supply fee of \$20 payable to instructor.

Tue. | April 2 | 6:30-8:30 p.m. | \$55 | SHMS

### Home Alone (adults and children ages 8-11)

Prepare for being home alone ... for a few minutes, several hours or all day. Learn telephone rules, safe use of keys, household safety checks, constructive use of time, healthy snacks, and how to deal with home-alone feelings. Fee includes a *Home Alone* workbook.

Thu. | April 25 | 6-7:30 p.m. | \$25 | FRMS

**Do you need fee assistance?** Visit [ce.district196.org/feeassistance](http://ce.district196.org/feeassistance) to apply online, or call 952-431-8777 for aquatic programs or 651-423-7920 for enrichment classes.



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Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) recognizes that parents are their child's first and most important teachers. ECFE offers parents hands-on learning experiences, led by licensed

early childhood teachers, that will nourish a lifetime of teachable moments. A typical ECFE class includes:

- Parent-child interaction: Time together to enjoy a classroom filled with developmentally appropriate learning activities.
- Parent education: Relevant, effective education and support that encourage the growth and development of families.
- Children's activity time: Children explore, gain independence, and practice social skills while under the supervision of a licensed children's teacher.

Learn more at [ce.district196.org/ecfe](http://ce.district196.org/ecfe).

**Plan a summer of fun and learning!**

See what we have in store for you and your family! Visit [bit.ly/Summer24Catalog](http://bit.ly/Summer24Catalog), or pick up a catalog at your nearest school or library.



**Volunteer Award Winner**

Congratulations to **Nisha Rana** on receiving Literacy Minnesota's Outstanding Volunteer Award. Nisha has accumulated more than 270 hours of service to date in the District 196 Adult Basic Education

(ABE) program. "Nisha's contributions directly impact the positive progress made by our online English Learner (EL) students. She helps students one-on-one and in small groups gain language, computer literacy and online learning skills to help create a robust class of online learning," states online ABE teacher, **Keith Lewis**.

This year, there are 52 ABE volunteers who have provided 2,370 hours of helping our students build literacy skills and achieve their goals. If you would consider volunteering in our ABE classrooms, visit [ce.district196.org/abevolunteer](http://ce.district196.org/abevolunteer), email [abe@district196.org](mailto:abe@district196.org), or call 952-431-8316.

**Come one, come all! Waffle breakfast**

Enjoy an all-you-can-eat waffle meal served with sausage, fruit and beverage. The mouth-watering aroma of the waffles will greet you as you walk in the door! Bring your family and invite a friend or two to join you for a delicious meal, and raise money to help keep Project Explore program costs down.

Sat. | April 27 | 8:30-11:30 a.m.

\$10 per person | \$5 ages 6-12 | free ages 5 and younger  
Messiah Lutheran Church, 16725 Highview Ave, Lakeville

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