

Edina middle and high schools came together for an icy adventure in the name of inclusion to raise \$79,515 for Special Olympics and our schools at the Special Olympics Cool School Polar Plunge!



Experience

Edina Public Schools/Spring 2024



Superintendent Dr. Stacie Stanley welcomed Education Commissioner Willie Jett from the Minnesota Department of Education during the district's annual Strategic Planning Retreat. Commissioner Jett engaged with students and staff from Countryside Elementary and Valley View Middle School, learning about their initiatives to foster inclusivity and belonging.

MESSAGE FROM SUPERINTENDENT DR. STACIE STANLEY

The Power of Community and Uniting for Excellence

There's a noticeable power in a community united by a shared vision. Here in Edina, success isn't merely a goal; it's a deeply held value. This collective ethos, woven into the green fabric of our community, is our defining strength. From our upstanding presence at state tournaments to how we celebrate differences at the Polar Plunge, our commitment to excellence resonates. This remarkable unity and dedication were evident during our annual Core Planning Retreat, supporting a collective vision for every student to discover their possibilities and thrive.

The Core Planning event stands as a highlight of my tenure as Superintendent, symbolizing the remarkable strides we've made in advancing our shared mission and vision over the past three years. I have deep appreciation for this group of students, faculty, parents, and community stakeholders who continue to push us toward our shared value of educational excellence in everything we do.

Our work recently caught the attention of Commissioner Willie Jett from the Minnesota Department of Education, who visited us during the Core Planning retreat.

During his visit, Commissioner Jett had the opportunity to engage with students and staff from Countryside Elementary and Valley View Middle School, where he witnessed firsthand the transformative impact of our Unified program on fostering inclusivity within our

school community. The resonance of this program extends far beyond its social inclusivity; it fundamentally enhances the educational outcomes for every individual involved.

Moved by the genuine enthusiasm and dedication displayed by our students and staff, Commissioner Jett expressed his profound appreciation for the authenticity of our strategic planning process and the tangible results it has yielded. It is through the collaborative efforts of our entire community that we continue to redefine the boundaries of excellence.

Looking ahead, we recognize that challenges are bound to emerge on our journey. Yet, I find reassurance in the support of our community rallying behind Edina Public Schools. From alumni to our partners at the City, Police, and Fire, to local businesses and the Chamber, to each of you who live in Edina. Thank you. The profound influence of a robust Edina community who supports its local schools extends far beyond our educational walls.

I hope you open the pages of this newsletter to discover a snapshot of remarkable accomplishments of our students and staff this year. I am continually inspired by the dedication, talent, and passion they demonstrate, and I am immensely proud of their achievements.

Go Hornets!

Noteworthy

Leadership Transitions Begin July 1



ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Nate Swenson has been announced as the Assistant Superintendent of School Excellence and Innovation. With a career spanning 20 years in educational leadership, Swenson brings a wealth of experience in school districts in Eden Prairie, Little Falls, Osseo, and Robbinsdale.

Assistant Superintendent **Dr. Randy Smasal** will retire at the end of the current school year. Dr. Smasal has been an integral part of Edina Public Schools, serving as the Director of Teaching and Learning before becoming Assistant Superintendent in 2020.



COUNTRYSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Cynthia Maldonado will be the principal of Countryside Elementary School. Maldonado brings extensive teaching and administrative experience from various schools. She is currently principal at Nuevas Fronteras Spanish Immersion School in South Washington County Schools.

Countryside Elementary School Principal **Karen Bergman** will retire at the end of the school year after a career spanning 39 years, including 13 years as Countryside Elementary principal.

Noteworthy

Leadership Transitions
Begin July 1



CREEK VALLEY ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Dr. Amy Reed will be the principal of Creek Valley Elementary School. Dr. Reed brings a wealth of expertise to the Creek Valley community with nearly ten years of experience serving in the principal role. She is currently the principal at Ramsey Elementary School in Anoka-Hennepin Schools.

Creek Valley Elementary School Principal Kari Dahlquist will retire at the end of the current school year. Dahlquist has dedicated nearly four decades to Edina Schools as a technology paraprofessional, teacher, and principal at Creek Valley.



Experience is mailed periodically to all residents in Edina Public Schools, District 273, to keep you up-to-date on the activities and accomplishments of students, staff, and the district. Questions or comments are welcome at communications@edinaschools.org.

Edina Public Schools

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Superintendent

Dr. Stacie Stanley
952.848.4000
Superintendent@edinaschools.org

Edina School Board

SchoolBoard@edinaschools.org
Erica Allenburg, Chair
Karen Gabler, Vice Chair
Michael Birdman, Treasurer
Dan Arom, Clerk
Jennifer Huwe, Assistant Treasurer
Cheryl Barry, Assistant Clerk
Elliot Mann, Assistant Clerk

For each and every student to discover their possibilities and thrive

Hornet Pride
Fly Hornets Fly!



South View Middle School was named a national Unified Championship school and crowned the Inclusive Schools Week Challenge Champions by Special Olympics.

Edina High School's Knowledge Bowl team won the AAA State Championship.

Girls' Soccer won the Class AAA State Championship.

Edina's FIRST Tech Challenge robotics team "Piece of Cake" earned the state championship title.

Devarsh Borah earned the State Championship title in Congressional Debate and Pranika Kumar was the state runner up. Aditi Jha was state runner up and Valerie Schmitt a state semifinalist in Lincoln Douglas Debate. In Policy Debate, Jo Adam and Kaushik Chava were state semifinalists. In Public Forum Debate, Claire Watz and Sadie Slobin were state quarterfinalists. EHS is the only school in state debate history to ever obtain bids in all four formats.



Both Boys and Girls Swim and Dive teams each earned the State AA Championships!

Edina High School student Kaylee Idrogo-Lam was selected as a 2023-2024 ExCEL Award winner by the MSHSL.

Edina High School senior Izzy Engle is this year's Athena Award winner and Metro Player of the Year for girls soccer.

Edina High School's student newspaper, Zephyrus earned nine individual Gold Medallion awards from the Minnesota High School Press Association.

Edina High School's Eleanor Schenk and South View Middle School's Divya Thamman, Vi Ciccone and Kaya Ygonia took top spots in the Minnesota History Day competition and will move on to the national competition in June.

2024 National Merit Semifinalists include: Celeste Eckstein, Jonathan Hou, Stephen Kanti Mahanty, Mandy Kao, Nikhil Konkimalla, Elena Loucks, Isaac Lower, Keerthik Muruganandam, Abir Rawal, Jay Shapiro, Derrick Siu, Isaiah Sweeney, and Henry Zheng. Commended students: Michael Arndorfer, Raja Chinnakotla, Katerina Duda, Rowan Eggum, Nora Hart, Sonja Holtey, Luka Jacobi-Krohn, Armaan Jain, Maria Kim, Brian Lo, Leo Mellum, Zachary Morton, Tate Olson, Benjamin Sanderson, Prema Suthaharan, and Bradley Yonke.

Creek Valley Elementary fifth-graders' science experiment (Nithini Weerakkodi Arachchilage, Kaydence Chen, Fallon Smith, Marit Western, and teacher Cody Ellis) will launch at the International Space Station (ISS) later this year after being selected by a national panel of experts in the Student Space-flight Experiments Program.

Munira Ahmed and Samiya Yusuf have been awarded the \$20,000 national Dell Scholarship.

Congratulations to wrestler Brody Perry for being named to the MWCA All-State Academic Team and reaching the 100-career win mark.

Edina Band students earned All State recognitions including Jonathan Wu, Sophie Nascene, Macallen Smith, Alex Thorp, Jackson Muehlbauer, Riley Knez, Armaan Jain, Nikhil Konkimalla, Wilson Schaefer, Stephen Kanti Mahanty, Maya Nowak, Prithviraj Varma, Ella Weinstein, Kaiping Zhang.

Edina High School students were selected to MN All-State Orchestra, Band, and Choir Ensembles next year including: Jacques Grégoire, Kevin Zhao, John Jerney, Eric Zhao, Ethan Liao, Helen Chu, Ray Anderson, Michael Howard, Sara McGrath, Wilson Schaefer, Cadence Snyder, Zed Thompson, Ryan Vecchio, Anushka Narielwala, Maya Nowak, Noah Hecker, William Jakala, Aaliyah Moser, and Odetta Schrempf.

Congratulations to Edina High School's Whigean yearbook and Zephyrus newspaper for earning national honors through the National Scholastic Press Association Clips & Clicks Awards.

Three senior Edina Dance Team captains Molly McGrane, Reese Burnham, and Stella Beck were selected to be a part of the Minnesota Association of Dance Team's All-State Dance team.

Mina Bhargava is the first Edina DECA student to qualify for the national finals two years in a row! Alex Schultze also finished with a top ten test score in a Finance Exam.

STAFF AND EDUCATOR AWARDS

School psychologist Leigh Ann Feily earned the 2024 Minnesota School Psychologist of the Year award from the Minnesota School Psychologists Association.

Edina High School educator Shannon Seaver was named the TENKE Tech Educator of the Year.



Teacher of the Year semifinalists Bianca Suglia, Hawley Mathieson

Eight Edina Public Schools teachers were named candidates for Education Minnesota's 2024 Minnesota Teacher of the Year award. Sarah Fincham (Normandale Elementary), Nicholas Gaudette (Edina High School), Jennifer Heyer (Highlands Elementary), Hawley Mathieson (Student Support Services), Christine McCarthy (Cornelia Elementary), Bianca Suglia (Normandale Elementary), Katie Widen (Highlands Elementary), and Alaina Zapata-Sirek (Early Learning Center) were chosen among the 159-candidate field. Mathieson and Suglia were later selected as two of 27 semifinalists across the state.

Countryside educator Alexander Giraldo was selected to the Fulbright Teachers for Global Classrooms Program.

Edina High School teacher Jodi Ramirez received the Edina Chamber of Commerce's Teacher of the Year award.

Superintendent Dr. Stacie Stanley was named president-elect of Minnesota Association of School Administrators. Superintendent Stanley also received the Quantum Impact Courageous Leadership Award at The 4th Annual Quantum Ten (Q10) International Educational Conference this year.

Facilities Director Eric Hamilton received the Facilities Management Professional of the Year award from the Minnesota Educational Facility Management Professionals organization.

Don't miss our hockey champs on page 4!

Editor's Note: We're inspired by the immense talent in our Edina community. This list is not exhaustive, so check out our Facebook, Instagram, and X for more Hornet Pride updates.

PROGRESS REPORT

Advancing EPS Strategic Plan for Student Success

Edina Public Schools’ strategic plan, approved in June 2020, is the road map to the district's future and our students’ success through 2030. It identifies five priority strategies focused on creating and delivering an academic experience that engages every student and propels each toward a future that realizes their goals and dreams.

The district advanced its work in each of the five priority strategies in the 2023-24 school year. In April, a cohort of Edina students, educators, parents, board members, and administrators — all integral members of the Strategic Plan’s Core Planning team — toured schools across the district and had an opportunity to witness firsthand the progress toward our vision of ensuring each and every student discovers their possibilities and thrives. In addition, the team experienced a full day of presentations and discussions before wrapping up this year's Strategic Plan review.

A few highlights from the Core Planning team’s site visits and review process included:

Elementary: Edina’s advanced implementation of a new literacy instruction is showing significant improvement in student performance. The Minnesota READ Act now requires all K-3 educators undergo structured literacy training by July 1, 2025. Nearly 100 percent of Edina’s educators have already taken or will complete the graduate-level training this year, including preK educators.



Concord Elementary School kindergarten teacher Michele Rock demonstrates core literacy building techniques with her students during a Strategic Planning site visit with community members, parents, students, and fellow educators and administrators.

Middle School: The Core Planning team heard about the Unified program and how it nurtures academic growth and a positive school culture. In addition, the team observed explicit vocabulary instruction at South View and understanding the building blocks of words. Valley View’s parent volunteers described their experience building a positive atmosphere in the hallways and cafeteria.

High School: Students from the Career and Technical Education (CTE) program shared the rigorous course options and internship opportunities at companies like Artic Wolf, Optum, the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, and the Microsoft Technology Center. They discussed the invaluable hands-on experiences and industry insights gained.



View the full Strategic Plan online: edinaschools.org/abouteps/strategic-plan.

Edina Public Schools Buzzworthy Metrics

ENROLLMENT

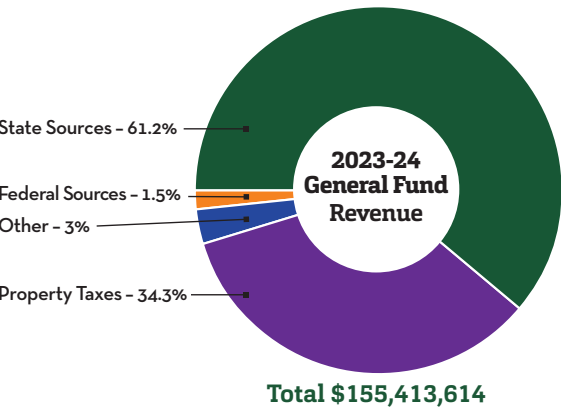
Oct. 1, 2023 count and does not represent final enrollment for the district

Early Learning (age birth-5): 414
K-12 Students: 8,455

EDINA EDUCATORS

83% Advanced degrees
50% have been in the district 10 years or more

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP



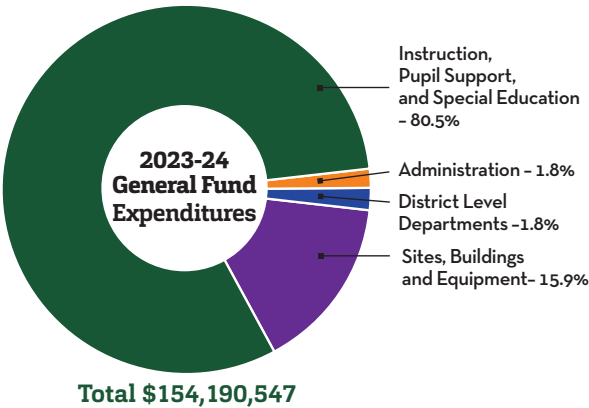
PARENT APPROVAL RATINGS

Scientifically valid survey conducted Oct. 2023 by Morris Leatherman research company

96% of parents are proud their students attend EPS and would recommend to others

96% of parents give our teachers favorable job performance ratings

91% of EPS residents say the quality of our schools is good to excellent



NOTABLE AWARDS



All Edina Schools earned top spots in this year’s U.S. News and World Report rankings

Edina Public Schools earned an **A+ rating on Niche** along with A+ ratings for the districts teachers, academics, sports, and college prep.

South View Middle School earned the **School of Distinction** award from AMLE this year. South View is one of just 11 schools selected nationwide and the only middle school in Minnesota.



Countryside Elementary School was awarded a **National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence** award by the U.S. Department of Education.

Edina Public Schools earned the highest triple-A credit rating from **Moody’s Investor Service**. Edina is one of just three school districts in the state to earn this strong financial management distinction.



State Title Championship record holder in Minnesota.

The above figures represent the revised fiscal year 2024 budget, which will be formally adopted by the School Board at the June 10, 2024 Regular Meeting.

Budget Discussions to Continue Next School Year

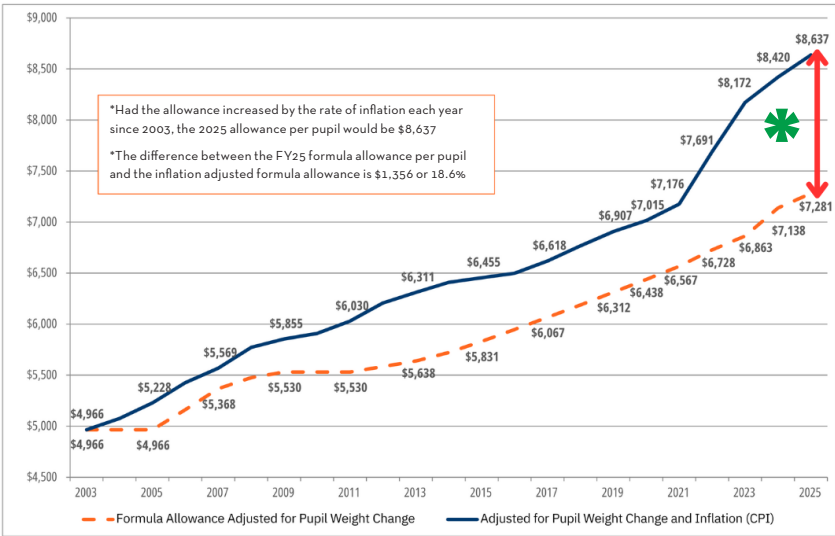
Earlier this year, the School Board voted unanimously on a plan to address a \$3.62 million budget gap, resulting from high inflation and escalating labor costs surpassing state funding increments. Despite a historic increase in state education funding, inflation has widened the gap rather than narrowing it. The district also projected staff compensation to surpass initial estimates by \$4.5 million to \$5 million.

The decision, option A-1 cost containment, delays implementing certain cost containment measures impacting school staffing by sustaining \$800,000 of debt through a capital note, while approving \$2.8 million in budget reductions, reallocation, and revenue generation measures. This postponement allows for further exploration of revenue possibilities and evaluation of alternative cost containment strategies. However, the gap persists and will continue to grow annually due to interest on the capital loan and increasing labor wages outlined in contractual agreements.

Moving forward, the district remains committed to fostering transparency and soliciting input from stakeholders to inform future budgetary decisions. The ongoing dialogue will shape strategies to address the persistent budget gap. Details of proposed and approved budget measures are accessible at www.edinaschools.org/2025-budget-planning.

STATE FUNDING COMPARED TO INFLATION

General Education Formula Allowance, 2003-2025
Adjusted for Pupil Weight Change and Inflation (CPI)



✱ **\$1,356 GAP PER PUPIL IN STATE FUNDING**
\$12.8 MILLION GAP IN TOTAL STATE FUNDING FOR EDINA PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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Check the district website for new stories: www.edinaschools.org

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WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS!

Edina High School girls and boys hockey teams took home state title championships this year. Boys hockey won the Class AA State Championship for the 14th time in the program’s history, and the girls’ hockey team won the State AA Girls’ Hockey Championship for the 5th time in its history. Congratulations on this remarkable achievement! More state championship titles, awards, and accolades are on page 2.