

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- **Pathway to Packer Promise**

New curriculum, services, and class choices at all levels are planned for next school year as we continue the sunset of the Primary Years and Middle Years Programs of the International Baccalaureate.

- **App Brings Support to Students/Families**

Through a new partnership with STOPit Solutions, SSPPS launched the HELPme App for students and families this spring. The app makes it easy to access resources, receive mental health support, and anonymously report harmful behaviors.

- **Reinventing School Lunch**

Nutrition Services are getting creative in how student meals are presented. Bold new flavors and local partnerships make lunch a new experience for students of all ages.

- **SSPPS Facilities Task Force**

SSPPS began the collective work of building short and long-term plans for maintaining the district's facilities. A task force has been created with members of the community and district staff to collaborate on this work.



South St. Paul Public Schools

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South St. Paul Public Schools Community Newsletter

SIXTIMES

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WORK FOR SSPPS!

SSPPS is looking for great people to join our team. We're always hiring part-time, full-time, and seasonal employees with flexible day and evening hours. Scan the [QR code](#) to view current openings.



LEA LOS SIXTIMES EN ESPAÑOL

Escanear aquí para leer una versión digital del [Boletín Sixtimes de SSPPS en español.](#)

BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH UNITED VALUES

SOUTH ST. PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE CITY OF SOUTH ST. PAUL UNITE UNDER A SHARED SET OF CORE VALUES

The City of South St. Paul and the South St. Paul Public Schools are proud to unveil our collaborative initiative that establishes a foundational set of core values that reflect the aspirations, priorities, and shared vision for our schools and entire community. These values - Respect, Pride, Collaboration, Integrity, Resilience, and Equity - are more than just words; they are the guiding principles that will shape our collective future. We invite every community member as well as every student and employee in our community, to embrace the following core values and make them an integral part of your daily lives, interactions, and habits:

- **PRIDE:** A welcoming, inclusive and supportive Packer community that honors and celebrates its rich history while collectively inspiring new traditions
- **RESPECT:** Recognizing and celebrating the goodness in oneself and others, seeing our differences as strengths and showing care and appreciation for people, property and the entire SSP community.
- **COLLABORATION:** Building community together through trust, hard work, innovation, and a shared commitment to building the South St. Paul that our community aspires to be
- **INTEGRITY:** Being thoughtful, honest, transparent in our words, and actions, and accountable for our decisions.
- **RESILIENCE:** The courage to adapt, change and persevere when presented with challenges and opportunities
- **EQUITY:** A safe and supportive environment that provides opportunities for all to be seen, heard, and valued

As we embrace these joint core values, we envision a future where the city and school district stand as pillars of strength and support, working hand in hand to create, maintain, and support a thriving, resilient, and harmonious community where our schools thrive and our community flourishes for generations to come.

We invite our entire SSP community to join us in this transformative journey to make these core values the heart and soul of South St. Paul. Here's how you can get involved:

- **Reflect:** Take a moment to reflect on what each core values means to you personally and how you can embody these principles in your actions and decisions.
- **Engage:** Translate these core values into tangible actions. Whether it's fostering collaboration in your neighborhood or demonstrating resilience in the face of challenges, every action counts.
- **Support:** Celebrate your successes, learn from your challenges, and support and inspire one another through this collective journey.

Together, let's build a community that reflects the best of who we are and the promise of what we can achieve together - a community where every street corner echoes with the laughter of children, where neighbors greet each other with warmth and respect. A SSP community where we all want to live, work, play and grow together!

SSPPS School Board and SSP City Council



[Learn More](#)



SIXTIMES

SUMMER 2024



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SIX



A NOTE FROM SUPERINTENDENT DR. ZAMBRENO

Amazing South St. Paul Community,

I write this letter with great pride and appreciation for all the incredible work in South St. Paul Public Schools (SSPPS) this year. We highlight how we are Special School District Number 6, which mostly reflects that our city and school district nearly share the same boundaries. It is fitting though because we truly have something special here. Our dedicated staff, talented students, and supportive families, all within a community that values its schools. While there are too many highlights to share here, I'd like to reflect on some key successes.

This year, we strengthened our partnership with the City Council by establishing common core values that will define and underpin our work in the coming weeks, months, and years. It is our sincere hope these core values resonate throughout the community, uniting us in making South St. Paul the best place to live, work, and go to school.

Our teachers and staff have once again fulfilled our mission to ignite a passion in every learner to inquire, continuously improve, and engage in positively changing our world. Elementary teachers implemented a new literacy curriculum, transforming how our students are learning to read, write, and communicate, significantly increasing rigor and preparing our students well for their secondary education. At our secondary level, teachers and administrators have redefined the learning experience with enhanced academic pathways shaped by extensive engagement with students, families, and staff. We are excited to introduce our new academic strategic plan, the Pathway to Packer Promise, detailed in this edition of the SixTimes.

These are just a few highlights of the great things happening in SSPPS. I always say that we are small but mighty, and a district on the move. With increased collaboration, intentional academic pathways, and robust systems of support for staff and students, I am confident we will continue to build on SSPPS's legacy of greatness.

Thanks for your support this year, and as always, Go Packers!



Dr. Brian Zambreno
SSPPS Superintendent

PATHWAY TO PACKER PROMISE

IGNITING A PASSION IN EVERY LEARNER TO INQUIRE, CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE, AND ENGAGE IN POSITIVELY CHANGING OUR WORLD

PACKER PATHWAYS: ACADEMIC STRATEGIC PLAN

Our dedication to academic excellence remains a top priority. Recognizing the need to enhance our students' academic journey and empower them to shape their educational paths, we are committed to driving meaningful change. Last spring, the district made the strategic decision to sunset the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years and Middle Years Programs at the end of the 2023-24 school year for students in grades K-5 and 6-10, respectively. While maintaining the IB Diploma program for grades 11-12, we are excited to introduce additional enriching opportunities for all grades through our Packer Pathway initiative, starting in fall 2024.

Exciting changes are on the horizon for our school district as we embark on a transformative journey towards our new academic model. Our Pathway to Packer Promise, creates opportunities for our students to explore, engage, and gives them choices in their academic pathway here at SSPPS. It will also help them explore and try new things in a safe and supportive environment. Our visionary leaders have been working tirelessly to create an innovative approach focusing on a holistic and supported experience for all of our students. Learn more inside this SixTimes or visit:

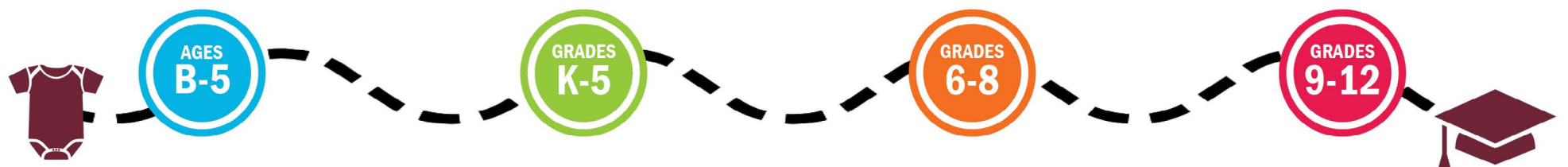
www.sspps.org/academics/packer-pathways



Learn More
about Packer
Pathways

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK A CRUCIAL STEP

We believe in the power of collaboration and value the diverse perspectives within our school community. Our leaders have actively sought and incorporated feedback from students, staff, and families throughout the development of the Packer Pathway. The insights shared by students, staff, and families, have guided the development of strategies to provide personalized experiences, support, and more opportunities for our students to explore a variety of academic course offerings. This inclusive approach ensures that the resulting pathways resonate with and provide the support needed to help our students be successful here at SSPPS and beyond.



STAY CONNECTED!



PACKER PATHWAY EXPERIENCES

Preparing each and every student for their next step in life through high quality, individualized programs, services, and personalized learning for all ages.



THE ELEMENTARY EXPERIENCE

SCIENCE AND SPECIALIST CLASSES

With the sunsetting of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program, the district is shifting our attention to better align with state academic standards and the preferences expressed by our families. Starting in the fall of 2024, we are excited to introduce Science as a specialist class for students in grades K-5. This means in addition to music/band, physical education, media arts, and visual arts, dedicated Science instruction will now be integrated into our curriculum, providing students with engaging opportunities to explore and discover the wonders of the world around them. As a result of this specialist shift at the elementary level, students will have their first opportunity to access Spanish instruction in grade 6. The decision was informed by the feedback received from our 2023 year-end survey and academic advisory committees, where families expressed shared interest in emphasizing science education. We are confident this adjustment will further enrich the learning experience for our students and better prepare them for success in their academic journey.

EXTRACURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

Currently, our elementary sites offer a rich array of extracurricular opportunities aimed at cultivating well-rounded students who can explore their passions in various ways such as: Math Masters, Art Club, Minds in Motion, etc. Over the next few years, we are committed to further integrating these types of opportunities with our academic programming and priorities.

WELCOMING, SAFE & NURTURING COMMUNITY

Ensuring everyone is valued, seen and heard is a core value of our work in SSPPS. To enhance this work, we will continue delivering instruction and fostering opportunities or growth in equity and social emotional learning.



THE MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

CORE CLASSES

Core classes include the fundamental academic subjects that are essential for a well-rounded education and form the foundation of a student's educational journey. These core classes of Math, English Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies, provide students with essential knowledge and skills for future success.

EXPLORATORY CLASSES

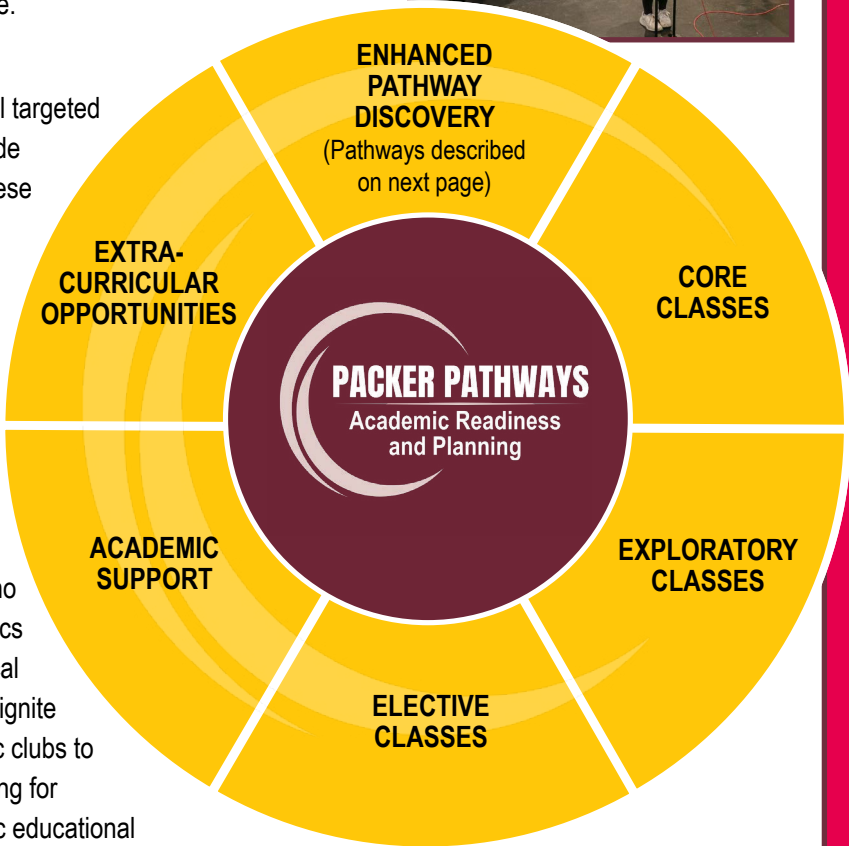
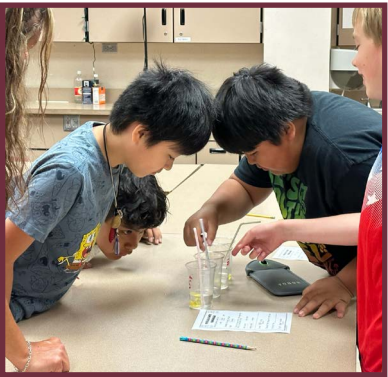
Classes designed to introduce all students to a variety of subjects and activities beyond the core academic subjects. Exploratory classes are aimed to expose students to different fields of study, hobbies, or skills to help them explore their interests and potential career paths. These classes often provide students with hands-on experiences and opportunities to develop new skills while encouraging them to discover their passions and talents. These courses generally are on a trimester rotation through a student's schedule.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

These classes are designed to offer additional targeted support to help students build skills and provide Enrichment at a more individualized level. These include support for Multilingual, Special Education, Reading and Math Intervention, and Talent Development Programming.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

A variety of enrichment opportunities both during and after the school day. Students can explore their interests and passions through a variety of avenues such as affinity groups where they can connect with peers who share similar interests or backgrounds, athletics and activities that foster teamwork and physical well-being, and vibrant theater programs that ignite creativity and self-expression. From academic clubs to community service initiatives, there's something for everyone to thrive and grow to foster a holistic educational experience that empowers our students to excel academically, socially, and personally.



K-12 TALENT DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCED ACADEMICS

SSPPS is excited to launch a K-12 Talent Development program this fall that provides equitable access in developing talents in students of all abilities, races, ethnicities, languages, gender, and socioeconomic circumstances. Our newest initiative is aimed at nurturing and honoring the unique talents and abilities of all our students while providing depth, complexity and acceleration to students who need advanced instruction. At its core, this program is designed to not only identify, cultivate, and celebrate the diverse strengths of each of our students, but to provide specialized opportunities and tailored support as we aim to empower each student to reach their full potential academically and personally. Through this program, we envision a learning environment where every student feels inspired, valued, and equipped to thrive.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

- Identifying and nurturing strengths and interests for all students
- Ensuring all students have the opportunity to enhance their critical thinking skills and develop high level educational routines
- Respecting students knowledge and empowering them to actively engage in their academic pathway
- Elevating the depth, complexity and acceleration to students who need advanced instruction
- Provide supplementary enrichment opportunities for support and success

LEVELS OF SERVICE

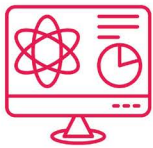
- 1** Accessible to all students, with a focus on personalized discovery and enrichment within a whole classroom environment. Teachers foster a culture of innovation, critical thinking, and creativity that allows students to identify and develop their unique strengths.
- 2** Open to all students who show an interest, talent, or achievement in a particular area. Services may happen during the school day or after school through activities such as Junior Great Books, Instrumental Music, Lego League, or targeted field trips.
- 3** Specialized services are offered to students identified as needing additional rigor and challenge, emphasizing the exploration of depth, complexity, and accelerated content.

ELECTIVE CLASSES

Additional opportunities for interested students wishing to add experiences like band, choir, world language, etc. to their school day. Electives are selected by the student and family and are scheduled for the entire school year.

ENHANCED PATHWAY DISCOVERY

Students will immerse themselves in learning experiences featuring real-world simulations, interactive discussions with guest speakers, enriching field trips, and curriculum-aligned activities seamlessly interwoven into their core classes. These personalized experiences are crafted to streamline with the array of high school pathways, empowering students in their journey of exploration and discovery.



Computer Science and Business

Computer ScienceBusiness



Transportation and Trades

TransportationTrades



Health and Human Services

Human ServicesCulinary ArtsHealth Sciences



4-Year College

IB DiplomaConcurrent Enrollment

THE HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

CORE CLASSES AND TARGETED SUPPORT

Core classes include the fundamental academic subjects that are essential for a well-rounded education and form the foundation of a student’s educational journey. These core classes are aligned with state graduation standards in the areas of Math, English Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. Targeted support will also be offered to help students build skills and provide enrichment at a more individualized level. These include support for Multilingual, Special Education, Reading and Math Intervention, and Talent Development Programming.

ACADEMIC PLANNING AND COUNSELING

Academic Planning and Counseling assists students with navigating their educational journey at SSPPS. Providing a variety of approaches from more individualized to school-wide touch points throughout the year to address academic challenges, provide intervention support, access resources, and proactively plan their course selections to align with their passions and interests. By fostering a supportive environment that encourages exploration and goal-setting, Academic Planning and Counseling at SSPPS empowers students to make informed decisions and achieve academic success.



ENHANCED PATHWAY DISCOVERY

Students have the ability to explore a desired field in one of the available pathways or do a deeper dive to immerse themselves in learning experiences featuring real-world simulations, interactive discussions with guest speakers, enriching field trips, and curriculum-aligned activities seamlessly interwoven into their core classes. These personalized experiences are crafted to streamline with the array of high school pathways, empowering students in their journey of exploration and discovery.

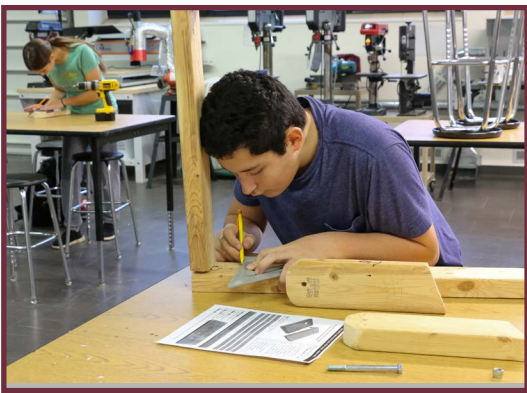
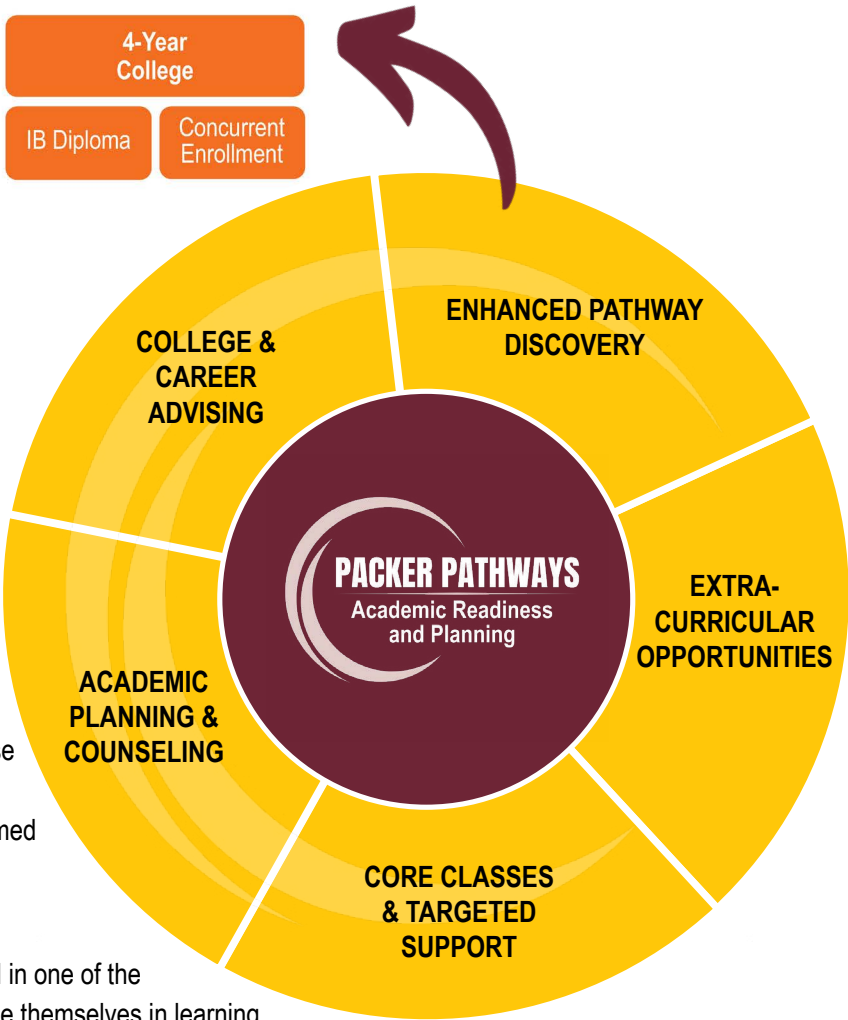
COLLEGE AND CAREER ADVISING

Students receive more individualized and group touch points throughout the school year to help them navigate the intricate landscape of post-secondary education and career choices. To further empower students, they will have access to tools and resources designed to support their exploration and planning. Tools that are crafted to assist

students in identifying strengths, interests, values, and aligning them to their academic journey here in SSPPS and beyond. SSPPS has fostered partnerships with local businesses and colleges to provide students with authentic resources into various career paths. Guest speakers industry visits, mentorship programs will offer students the chance to engage directly with professionals to help make informed decisions about their future. This ensures learning is not confined to the classroom but extends into practical, meaningful experiences.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

A variety of enrichment opportunities both during and after the school day. Students can explore their interests and passions through a variety of avenues such as: affinity groups- where they can connect with peers who share similar interests or backgrounds, athletics and activities- foster teamwork and physical well-being, and vibrant theater programs igniting creativity and self-expression. From academic clubs to community service initiatives, there’s something for everyone to thrive and grow to foster a holistic educational experience empowering our students to excel academically, socially, and personally.



CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)

Career and Technical Education (CTE) represents a dynamic approach to education that prepares students for the demands of the modern workforce. SSPPS is building and partnering with organizations to offer a diverse range of specialized programs to empower students with both academic knowledge and practical skills necessary for success in various career pathways. By integrating these real-world experiences, our students at SSP High School will have hands-on learning opportunities, industry-aligned curriculum, and equip students with the tools they need to thrive in today’s competitive job market. CTE

emphasizes the development of technical expertise, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities, and not only prepares students for immediate employment opportunities but also lays a solid foundation for lifelong learning and career advancement. In an ever-evolving global economy, CTE plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between education and industry, ensuring students graduate high school with the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to pursue fulfilling and lucrative careers.



AROUND SSPPS

A look at the great things happening in our schools and school community

South St. Paul
Public Schools



REINVENTING SCHOOL LUNCH

School lunch has changed quite a bit over the years. This year with the new legislation, more and more students are eating school hot lunch. Breakfast and lunch participation increased nearly 10% at South St. Paul Public Schools this year from last. This led the Nutrition Services team to get creative with the meals they are serving and have launched new ways for students and staff to offer feedback and suggestions.

New Recipes and New Ideas

The Nutrition Services team has begun offering more ethnic meal choices and has partnered with local businesses to make it possible. By incorporating dishes from various ethnic backgrounds into the school menu, students can explore diverse cultures through the foods they eat. Partnerships with locally owned small businesses has made it possible to offer these authentic food experiences. Embracing new food choices not only promotes cultural awareness but also encourages curiosity, tolerance, and acceptance among students.

Feedback and Suggestions

The Nutrition Services team has been looking for ways to improve their menu items and to hear directly from the students and staff who are eating the food daily. By hearing what the students want from their lunch experience it fosters a sense of ownership and empowerment and makes them more likely to eat the meals they are presented with. Nutrition Services gathers feedback in three main ways:

- Through samples during regular lunch times
- Offering proposed menu items to the Superintendent Student Advisory Council for feedback and suggested changes
- Generic feedback and requests that allow students to voice their opinions on things small and large when it comes to their lunch experience

Over the years, school lunches have undergone a transformation, evolving from unexciting single choice meals to diverse culinary experiences. With a growing emphasis on nutrition, inclusivity, and cultural awareness, today's school lunch menus reflect a broader spectrum of flavors, ingredients, and dietary preferences than ever before.



HELPME APP BRINGS SUPPORT TO STUDENTS, STAFF, AND FAMILIES

As part of our Pathway to Packer Promise to bring more resources, help, and access to mental health support, we are bringing the program HELPme to our students, staff, and families. HELPme is a 24/7/365 technology platform designed to provide a private and accessible way to access resources and support. Users can make anonymous requests and reports through the app or web-based platform.

HELPme can assist with:

- Personal needs- food, clothing, shelter, and more
- Anonymous reporting- someone else is in need, you witness or experience bullying, assault, or other harmful behaviors
- Mental Health- Crisis text line, finding help, resources for maintaining your own metal wellbeing

We are excited about the introduction of HELPme to our SSPPS community to complement our existing support systems. Together, we can make sure everyone gets what they need to thrive. Scan the [QR code](#) to learn more about HELPme at SSPPS.



FACILITIES TASK FORCE REVIEWS DISTRICT BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

This spring a 25-member task force consisting of students, staff, district families, and community members began their collective work to help build short and long-term plans supporting the needs and goals for maintaining the District's facilities. The committee is also reviewing and discussing how we use space throughout the district for our current academic programming.

This long-range planning will help SSPPS align long-term goals and develop action plans providing smaller and more achievable action steps to reach ultimate objectives. These plans can range from a few years to a few decades into the future and help guide decision-making, budget planning and short-term projects along the way. Stakeholder voice is a critical component and we are excited to be partnering with our community members, staff, students, and families.

2024 SSP EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION SILVER APPLE AWARD WINNERS

Congratulations to the 2024 South St. Paul Educational Foundation Silver Apple Award winners! Students are invited to nominate a South St. Paul Schools staff member as someone who has made a positive impact on their life either this school year or in the past. Each year up to three SSPPS staff members are honored.



Brenda Johnson, Physical Education Teacher at Kaposia



Jill Croonquist, Intervention Teacher at Kaposia

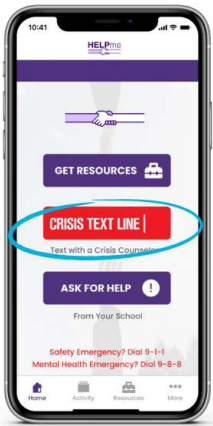


Soviett Loyd, PreSchool Teacher at Kaposia

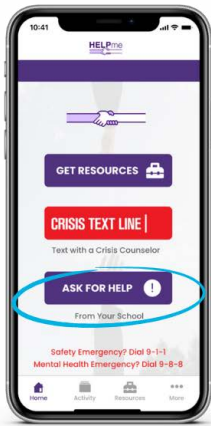
Don Bliss, class of 1950, established the Silver Apple Award in honor of his wife, Roxanne Waldhauser Bliss, class of 1951. During his career, Don would ask others who were the most influential people in their lives. Almost always it would be a teacher. Most often, we have become adults before we realize the importance of a special teacher or staff member who has had a lasting influence on our lives.



Connect to Basic Needs Resources



Immediate 24/7 Crisis Support



Two-Way Communication with School

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

A place where our community can come together to learn, grow and socialize!

South St. Paul
Public Schools



LIFELONG LEARNING FOR ALL AGES

South St. Paul Public Schools Community Education is housed in Central Square Community Center. Enrichment opportunities and classes are available for all ages. Scan the [QR code](#) to the right to learn more about SSPPS Community Education and Central Square Community Center.



55+ PROGRAMMING

The South St. Paul Senior Center promotes and provides opportunities in the area of socialization, recreation, education, and health to residents age 55+.

- Enrichment Activities Include:
- Daily social activities
 - Hobbies- crafting, woodcarving, line dancing
 - Trips to various Minnesota/Wisconsin locations
 - Lunch outings
 - Low-impact fitness classes
 - Spring and fall fashion shows
 - Free lap swimming



ADULT ENRICHMENT

Adult Enrichment offers classes and activities for adults ages 15 and up based on the needs and interests of community members.

- Enrichment Activities Include:
- Culinary arts
 - Fitness classes
 - Learn to dance
 - Lap swimming
 - Health and wellness information
 - Spiritual Wellbeing
 - Financial courses



ADULT EDUCATION

South Suburban Adult Education provides adults with educational opportunities to acquire and improve their academic skills. All classes are FREE.

- Class Offerings Include:
- General Education Degree (GED) Prep
 - Tests of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS) Prep
 - English Learning
 - English Learning Conversation Class
 - Citizenship
 - Developmental Math Partnership with Inver Hill Community College- PreAlgebra



YOUTH ENRICHMENT

The South St. Paul Youth Enrichment Program offers a range of classes for students in grades kindergarten through high school during the school year and throughout the summer. The program strives to provide opportunities that supplement the school curriculum without duplicating it.

- Enrichment Activities Include:
- Gymnastics
 - Swim Lessons
 - Multi-sports camps
 - Babysitting Certification
 - ACT prep courses
 - Driver's Education
 - Visual arts
 - Performing arts

GYMNASTICS

Central Square Gymnastics offers classes for youth of all ages and abilities. Classes begin at age 18 months with tumble together and continue until gymnasts are ready to enter high school level competition.

This year, the program added a pre-competition team to give young gymnasts a chance to experience competition level gymnastics. Scan the [QR code](#) below to learn more about class offerings, summer camps, and getting involved.



Interested in coaching? Community Ed is always looking for anyone ages 16+ interested in helping train the next generation of young gymnasts.



SWIM LESSONS

This past year swimming lessons returned to the Central Square swimming pool. Lessons for all ages and abilities. Beginning at 6 months of age, little swimmers can learn to enjoy water while accompanied by a parent or adults.

At age three swimmers begin lessons on their own. This summer, youth ages 8-15 can join the Summer Swim Club as a way to build endurance and refine their strokes. Scan the [QR code](#) below for more on Swim Club, lessons, and getting involved.



Interested in coaching? Community Ed is always looking for anyone ages 16+ interested in helping train the next generation of young swimmers.



SOUTH ST. PAUL EARLY LEARNING

The South St. Paul Early Learning mission is to strengthen families through education and support for all. Parents are their children's first and most important teacher and Early Learning staff will support you every step of the way. All families are welcome and invited to attend! Classes are designed for parents and children, birth to kindergarten enrollment.

- Join us this summer for Drop-In Play!**
- Drop-in Play sessions provide the opportunity for you and your child(ren), ages birth-5, to pop in for some parent/child ECFE fun.
- Thursdays, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm, \$4/family
- June 13, 20, 27
 - July 11, 18, 25
 - August 1, 8, 15

SSP is enrolling for 2024-25 Preschool. FREE all-day and half-day preschool for 4-year-olds. Learn more about Early Learning and PreK by scanning the QR code or visiting <https://earlylearning.sspps.org>.



SUMMER CATALOG

Details of all of these courses, activities, and more can be found in the Community Education Summer Catalog.

Catalogs are delivered to all mailboxes in South St. Paul, you can also find the digital version online by scanning the QR code below or visiting: <https://communityed.sspps.org>.

