



BEAR'S BULLETIN

GO SUCCEED GO BEARS GO ACHIEVE
GO EXPLORE GO GRADUATE GO
GO SUCCEED GO BEARS GO ACHIEVE
GO EXPLORE GO GRADUATE GO



WELCOME TO THE FALL 2024 EDITION

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**Find info about a WBLAHS
Community Open House from
3-6 p.m. on Aug. 29!*

BE A BEAR!
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/isd624

FOLLOW WHITE BEAR LAKE
AREA SCHOOLS

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Embracing Our Future: Go Bears!

There is an old adage: "The best way to predict the future is to create it." Well, we've created it. It's time to embrace it!

More than five years ago, our community came together to envision the future for our children and our schools. We imagined transforming the way teachers teach and children learn. In 2019, our community approved our Building Our Future bond referendum, which upgraded and transformed each school.

In a rapidly changing world, each student is best served when they have an opportunity to realize their unique talents and abilities and design their own future. Personalizing education is at the heart of the relationships that our exceptional staff bring to our schools each day — fully committed to student success.

This fall, we will open our 9-12 high school campus, which will dramatically expand opportunities for students. Courses once limited to the junior and senior years will be more readily accessible to younger students who seek challenge and rigor. Our Career Pathways will allow a unique progression for students to explore interests and pursue their passions.

Continued on page II

TRANSLATIONS

Para Español por favor
llame al 651-407-7625

Xav tau ntawv Hmoob
hu rau 651-407-7623

FLIP TO SEE
COMMUNITY
SERVICES &
RECREATION
CATALOG



Residential Customer
ECRWSS EDDM

Non-Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
Twin Cities, MN
Permit #183

White Bear Lake Area School District
Community Services & Recreation Department
4855 Bloom Avenue
White Bear Lake, MN 55110-2371

School Board Meetings

- Aug. 12.....Regular Meeting
- Aug. 26..... Work Session
- Sept. 9.....Regular Meeting
- Sept. 23..... Work Session
- Oct. 14.....Regular Meeting
- Oct. 28..... Work Session
- Nov. 11.....Regular Meeting
- Nov. 25..... Work Session
- Dec. 9.....Regular Meeting

- » All Board meetings begin at 5:30 p.m. and take place in the Community Room 112 at District Center (4855 Bloom Ave).
- » Agendas, Board Packets, Minutes, Highlights and Video links are posted on the District’s website as they become available.
- » Regular School Board meetings are re-broadcast on Cable Channel 20 in the local viewing area the week of a regular business meeting:
 - Wed. at 2 p.m., 6 p.m. & 9 p.m.
 - Thurs. at 10 a.m.

Continued from cover

We have been architects of change, building a foundation to support our students and community for generations to come. From the early elementary years, students learn their unique strengths and then dream about and design their future. This journey is marked by innovation, collaboration, and an unwavering belief in the power of education to transform lives.

When we set our plan five years ago, it was not just a roadmap but a promise. We promised to create an environment where learning thrives, where every child feels valued, and where the future is not a distant dream but a tangible reality. And here we are, overcoming disruption and challenges and making our district the first choice for families who value excellence in education.

Our classrooms are now vibrant hubs of creativity and innovation. Our students will not be passive recipients of knowledge but active participants in their learning. They are critical thinkers, problem solvers, and compassionate individuals ready to make an impact, locally and globally. This transformation is a testament to our teachers’ dedication, our families’ support, and our community’s engagement.

As we look at our achievements, from student growth to graduation rates to facilities projects, it is essential to pause and recognize the significance of this moment. The goals we laid out and all we invested have led us here. Let’s celebrate our collective efforts. Let’s acknowledge that greatness doesn’t happen by accident. We have indeed created the future we envisioned.

The future holds boundless opportunities. As we stand on the cusp of this new era, I invite each of us to embrace this moment with Bear Pride. Let us continue to be the architects of our future. Let us inspire our students to dream big and to believe in their potential.

The future belongs to those who create it. So, go create. Go achieve. And Go Bears!

Dr. Wayne Kazmierczak
Superintendent

Calendars

The 2024-25 and 2025-26 academic year calendar one-page flyers are now available online on the district’s website, directly at isd624.org/about/calendar.

A printed 2024-25 Calendar will be mailed to all district families in late-August. Community members who would like a copy of the printed calendar are invited to pick one up in September at District Center (4855 Bloom Avenue, White Bear Lake).

The online calendar available at the district’s website allows users the ability to subscribe to building-level and program-specific calendars.



INNOVATE GO INSPIRE GO LEAD GO PERFORM
 INNOVATE GO INSPIRE GO LEAD GO PERFORM
 DISCOVER GO EMPOWER GO EXCEL GO
 INSPIRE GO LEAD GO PERFORM GO SUCCEED

New District-wide Hires & Assignments



Kevin Fernandez

Kevin Fernandez was named as the district's Director of Building Operations this spring. Kevin has been with the district for 27 years and served the majority of that time as our Grounds Supervisor. With the passing of the 2019 bond referendum, his role moved to that of Construction Project Manager. Kevin will continue to manage the construction projects scheduled to be completed by the fall of 2025 along with his director duties.



Susan Herder

Susan Herder is the district's new Director of Technology and Innovation. She has served for more than a decade as the Instructional Technology Coordinator at Mounds View Public Schools, managing the district's institutional technology and serving as a liaison to the Curriculum Department. She has also had a supportive role related to Minnesota state reporting and the development, implementation and achievement of district and department goals. Herder previously served as a middle school math and science resource teacher in Mounds View. She planned and led content, curriculum adoption and technology integration professional development for all middle school and math teachers.



Dave Johnson

Dave Johnson, a longtime employee of the Transportation Department, is the district's new Director of Transportation. Dave brings a wealth of experience to this important leadership position. With a proven track record in leadership and 23 years in our District, he has been instrumental in developing and promoting safety protocols in all of our transportation related services.



Kristen Nelson

Kristen Nelson is the district's new Assistant Director of Early Childhood Programs. She has worked in early childhood or connected with early childhood her entire career. She has served as a preschool teacher, parent educator, home visitor and coordinator. For the last 9 years she has served as the Early Childhood Manager in Elk River Public Schools, overseeing ECFE, School Readiness and Preschool Screening. Prior to her time in Elk River, she worked as a family services collaborative coordinator for Morrison County Social Services and in various early childhood program positions in Albert Lea Area Schools and Austin Public Schools.



Jenni Sjosten

Jenni Sjosten has been hired to serve in the role of High School Associate Principal - ALC at the district's Area Learning Center. She has worked for Richfield Public Schools since 2017, serving as an instructional coach and multilingual lead teacher. Prior to her years in Richfield, Sjosten served as an assistant director at Global Academy in Columbia Heights, as a multilingual and Gifted and Talented Coordinator at Willmar Public Schools, and as a principal at Volunteers of America's Opportunity Alternative High School.

WE ARE HIRING!


Find info at isd624.org/employment

Competitive wages / On the job training
 Chance to work near home / Flexible work hours
 Opportunity for: benefits, time off, holidays
Make a difference for kids in your community

FREE Senior Activity Pass

More than 1,000 Senior community members (those who are age 65+) who live in the District participate in the Lifetime Activity Pass program and enjoy complimentary admission to school activities.

Complete the pass application at isd624.org/SeniorActivityPass and your pass will be mailed to you. If you have questions, please contact Rachael Markuson by email at rachael.markuson@isd624.org or by phone at 651-407-7563.



**Senior Community Member
Lifetime Activity Pass**

This Senior Community Member Activity Pass grants free admission into home activities* for

YOUR NAME

Validated by Dr. Wayne A. Kazmierczak, Superintendent

Bear Wear Pics!

Email communications@isd624.org a photo of your little one(s) in their “Born to be a Bear” onesie or “I’m a Bear” shirt and you may find them featured in a District publication!

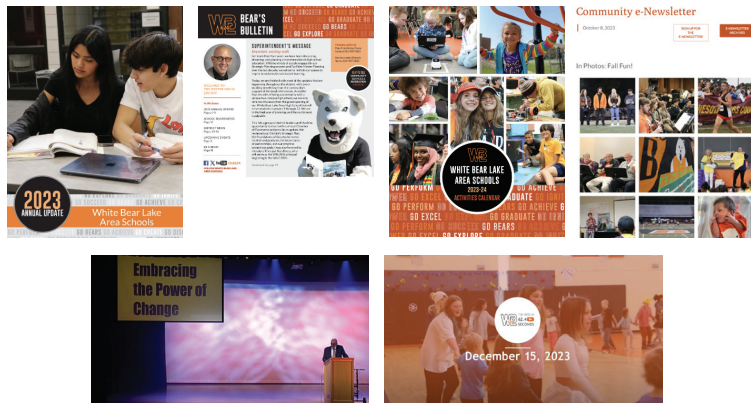
Onesies are mailed to families who live in the district upon arrival of a little one. Shirts are given to toddlers when they Screen at 3. Kindergartners receive shirts with completed enrollment paperwork.



District Receives National Communications Awards

The district was recently awarded national honors from the National School Public Relations Association.

The district’s 2023 Annual Update, Bear’s Bulletin flip-book to the Community Services Catalog and the 2023-24 Activities Calendar were all given Awards of Merit. The Embracing Change Convocation address, Community e-Newsletter and “The Week in 62.4 Seconds” video series received Awards of Excellence, which is the highest honor given.



Staff Honors & Awards

White Bear Lake Area School District staff members are high achievers. Here is a sampling of honors that have been awarded to our staff members:

- White Bear Lake Area Learning Center Teacher Michele Norcross was named the 2024 White Bear Lake Area Educators Teacher of the Year. The Language Arts teacher was chosen from an impressive slate of 6 finalists from throughout the district: Hannah Allen, Paige Kazak, Katie Solem, Michele Norcross, Ashley Peterson and Melissa Wickert.
- WBLAHS Teacher Nikki McGarthwaite was named a Minnesota Council on Economic Education Master Teacher.
- WBLAHS Speech Team Assistant Coach Anita Ukpokolo was named the 2024 Central Minnesota National Speech & Debate Association New Coach of the Year.
- White Bear Lake Area High School Boys’ Swim and Dive Assistant Coach Tia Quirk was named Section 4AA Assistant Coach of the Year.

Requesting an Interpreter

Families and community members can request that a district staff member call them through the use of an interpreter who speaks the language they speak. Information about how to make the request can be found in text and audio translations at this QR code:



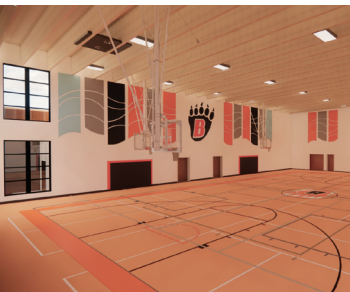


Building Our Future Update

This is an historic time for our school district and for the greater White Bear Lake Area community, as we are bringing our ninth through twelfth grade students together into one high school building this fall for the first time in a half-century. This change from a unique two-campus high school system was made possible by the community's passage of a \$326 million bond referendum, the largest in state history when it was voted upon in 2019.



Creating inspiring environments for students throughout the district has allowed us to realize the vision set forth by our Strategic Planning team. Our students are having more ownership of their learning as flexible learning spaces and learning studios are igniting opportunities for communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking.



Changes are also in order for Sunrise Park Middle School, which will move into the former WBLAHS - South Campus building that has been converted into Mariner Middle School this summer. Last spring, hundreds of students, staff, alumni and community members came together to celebrate Sunrise at an event that offered student performances and info booths, Sunrise Park history displays and an opportunity to share memories of Sunrise. The hallways were filled with guests who connected and enjoyed sharing memories of their time at the building. A special treat for alumni who came back to Sunrise was finding their photos in history posters and old yearbooks that were set out for display at the event.



Two projects that will be completed in phases that will continue through the fall of 2025 are Central Middle School and the Sunrise Park building. This summer, extensive work has been done at Central, with a gymnasium addition being added to the school's footprint and renovations being made to existing classroom areas. The summer of 2025 will see renovations made to the current District Center spaces to provide additional square footage for Central Middle School.

Renovations that began this summer will continue through the school year at the recently-vacated Sunrise Park building. District Services Center offices currently housed at District Center will move to Sunrise mid-year. Beginning in the fall of 2025, Sunrise will house the Early Childhood Center, Senior Center and Transition Education Center.

BUILDING PROJECTS

Completed projects

- Area Learning Center Phase 1
- Lincoln, Matoska, Vadnais Heights and Willow Lane Elementaries Updates
- New Transportation Facility
- WBLAHS - South Campus Phase 1 Gym Addition
- Birch Lake, Lakeaires, and Otter Lake Elementaries Updates
- North Star Elementary (New Elementary School)
- WBLAHS - South Campus Phase 2 Addition
- Area Learning Center Phase 2
- Oneka Elementary Updates

Ready for Fall 2024

- WBLAHS opens to grades 9-12 at the former WBLAHS - North Campus location
- Current WBLAHS - South Campus opens as Mariner Middle School
- Central Middle School Phase 1 updates

Ready for Fall 2025

- Central Middle School Phase 2 updates
- Sunrise Park houses Early Childhood Center, District Services Center, Senior Center and Transition Education Center



Complete info about the district's facilities projects, including construction details about individual projects, additional videos and presentations, can be found online at isd624.org/BuildingOurFuture.



WBLAHS Community Open House 3-6 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 29

Those who are interested in touring the renovated White Bear Lake Area High School are invited to join us for a Community Open House event from 3-6 p.m. on Aug. 29. Attendees are invited to stick around for our season opener football game vs. Minnetonka, which will kick off at 7 p.m. It's the perfect opportunity to see the new facilities and cheer on our Bears!

Community members will be invited in to see Mariner Middle School, located at the former South Campus, later this school year.

IMPORTANT DATES

- » **SEPT. 3**
FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL
for Grades 6 & 12
- » **SEPT. 4**
FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL
for Grades 1-5, 7-9
- » **SEPT. 5**
FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL
for K, 10-11 and 12+
- » **WEEK OF SEPT. 9**
FIRST WEEK for
Early Childhood Programs
- » **OCT. 6-12**
HOMECOMING 2024
Oct. 11 - parade in
Downtown WBL, football
game at WBLAHS Stadium



Community members are invited to stop by for an informal chat with Superintendent Wayne Kazmierczak over a cup of coffee for the first "Coffee with Dr. K" event of the school year!

4-5 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 19
Caribou Coffee in Downtown WBL

Stay Connected - and stay updated on upcoming events!

- **E-Newsletter** - The Community e-Newsletter is sent out each week, with alternating text and video editions. Text editions cover student and staff successes, school and Community Education offerings, and School Board proceedings. Request to be added to the recipient list by sending an email to us at communications@isd624.org.
- **Stay Social** - Join the district's social media circles - Facebook, Instagram and YouTube for daily 624 Fact posts and weekly video share-outs. Find links on the District's website.
- **Digital Backpack** - The Community Services Department distributes electronic flyers from the school district, as well as local organizations that offer opportunities for youth, on the first and third Thursday of each month. The Digital Backpack can be found at communityservices.isd624.org/about/digital-backpack.

