



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
WINTER 2024-25
EDITION

In this issue

2024 ANNUAL UPDATE
Pages II-V

IMMERSION INFO
Page VI

DISTRICT NEWS
Pages VII-IX

UPCOMING EVENTS
Page X

BE A BEAR!
Page XI

/isd624

FOLLOW WHITE BEAR LAKE
AREA SCHOOLS

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Creating Connections

This fall has been a season of unity, excitement, and celebration in the White Bear Lake Area Schools community! As the leaves turned and the air became crisp, our schools came alive with a shared spirit of togetherness. Homecoming 2024 was especially memorable, bringing students, families, and the community together for a week of unforgettable festivities. Blessed with beautiful weather, we celebrated our community's school pride outdoors, and the sense of connection was felt throughout the district.

One of the highlights of this year's Homecoming was a first for our district in decades: A pep rally with students from grades 9 through 12 together under one roof. The energy in the room was electric, as students cheered, laughed, and connected with one another to kick off another school year. This rally was more than just an event; it was a powerful expression of Bear pride and a reminder of the unique community spirit that defines our schools.

Continued on page VI

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



Have an incoming kindergartner?

Provide the info requested in the form found at this QR code so we can send you incoming kindergarten information!



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

STUDENT GROWTH & PROFICIENCY

Early Childhood

Our District offers a diverse range of early childhood education options from family education, vibrant preschool programming and nature-based learning experiences. We partner with our early childhood special education team to provide support and services for our preschool students with exceptional needs. We are recognized as a 4-star Parent Aware preschool program, the highest rating possible in Minnesota.

Elementary

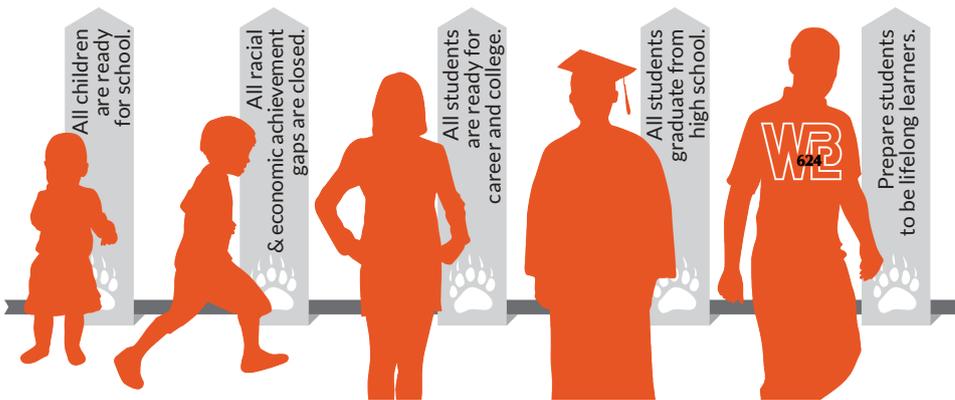
Our elementary students are assessed regularly in reading, math, and science using a variety of grade-level appropriate tools. To measure their progress against state standards, we utilize MCA tests. Students who need additional support or an added challenge receive personalized instruction.

Middle School

Middle school teachers and counselors use the MCA test, along with other data, to guide students in course selection. Instruction is personalized to meet the individual needs of each student.

High School

High school teachers assess students regularly using common assessments in each subject. Students also take nationally-normed tests like the PreACT, PSAT, and ACT at various points in their high school career. Counselors and teachers utilize this data, combined with knowledge of individual student goals and motivation, to help students select from a wide range of course offerings, including more than 250 courses and nine career pathways.



In addition to MCA data, White Bear Lake Area Schools utilizes a variety of local academic measures, including academic and social-emotional screeners, PreACT, ACT, and academic grades and credits, to apprise student progress.

MINNESOTA COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENTS (MCA)

Student proficiency is measured by the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) tests, Minnesota's state requirement for testing under the Federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

| 2023-24 WBLAS MCA COMPARISON TO STATE AVERAGES | | | |
|--|-------|-------|-------------------|
| | State | WBLAS | WBLAS above state |
| Reading | 49.7% | 50.3% | +0.6% pt |
| Mathematics | 45.3% | 47.1% | +1.8% pt |
| Science | 39.2% | 37.5% | -1.7% pt |

Source: Minnesota Department of Education's "Minnesota Report Card"

EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

To ensure our district remains at the forefront of education, we are focused on reimagining learning experiences to inspire student success.

A key step in this process was the unification of White Bear Lake Area High School, which will provide enhanced opportunities for our students. Additionally, we are excited to implement a trimester system at the high school starting in the 2025-26 school year. This new structure will allow for more focused learning periods and increased opportunities for student growth.

To further enrich our educational offerings, we will launch an Elementary Spanish Dual Immersion program in fall 2025, creating a bilingual environment that values diversity and cultural understanding.

At the middle school level, our teachers continue to collaborate to set high standards and provide rigorous instruction.



HIGH EXPECTATIONS & ENRICHMENT

WBLAS is a recognized leader in developing Career Pathways aligned with workforce needs.

Our pathways program helps students align their education with their career goals by offering opportunities to earn college credit, industry certifications, and valuable work experience through job shadowing and site visits.



NINE CAREER PATHWAYS CURRENTLY OFFERED AT ISD624

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Automotive | Construction & Skilled Trades | Family & Consumer Sciences (FACS) |
| Business | Education | Health & Wellness |
| Communication Technology | Engineering & Manufacturing | Information Technology |



The 4-year graduation rate for the White Bear Lake Area High School - South Campus Class of 2023 was 93.5%, 10.2 percentage points above the state average. Graduation rate calculations follow one year behind the current graduating year.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

We have high expectations for all students and offer a continuum of specialized instruction for students with unique needs. Our programs are individualized and comprehensive.

AVID

Our middle and high school students have the opportunity to participate in the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program, which offers rigorous instruction to prepare students for college. Lakeaires Elementary is also an AVID school and uses Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, and Reading (WICOR) strategies to enhance student learning.

BARR

Building Assets, Reducing Risk (BARR) programming is used in six of our schools to build strong relationships and provide early intervention support.

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

Since 2010, Matoska International has offered an IB World School option, providing a rigorous and globally-minded education for their elementary students.

55 COLLEGE LEVEL COURSES OFFERED AT WBLAHS DURING 2023-24

21 Advanced Placement (AP) classes, 30 concurrent enrollment courses (CIS/CitHS) courses, and 4 Project Lead the Way (PLTW) courses. Students also took advantage of Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) and Northeast Metro 916 Career and Technical Center offerings.

| | |
|-----------|----------------------------------|
| PLTW | 48 students earned 139.5 credits |
| CIS/CitHS | 470 students earned 1473 credits |
| AP | 313 students earned 1461 credits |
| PSEO | 123 students earned 2050 credits |



All tuition calculations except concurrent enrollment based on U of MN tuition rate of \$557.55 per credit. Concurrent enrollment based on Century College tuition rate of \$287. PLTW grade cutoff B-, all others C-. Students may be counted more than once if they participated in more than one program. AP credit calculations based on U of MN score acceptance.

89 ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) SCHOLARS

47 AP Scholars
17 AP Scholars with Honors
25 AP Scholars with Distinction

FINANCE

Financial Management

To ensure that maximum resources reach our classrooms, White Bear Lake Area Schools remains committed to fiscal responsibility.

Stewardship

The district continues to demonstrate strong stewardship, ensuring that taxpayer dollars are used effectively and efficiently to support student learning and well-being.



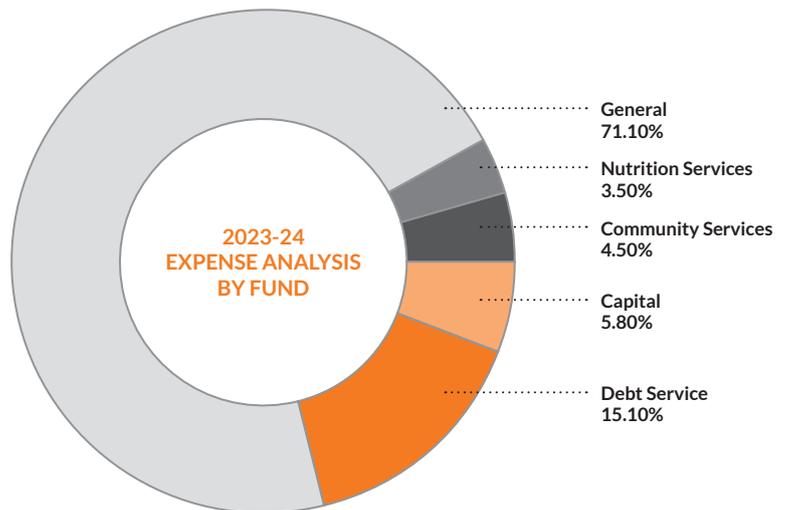
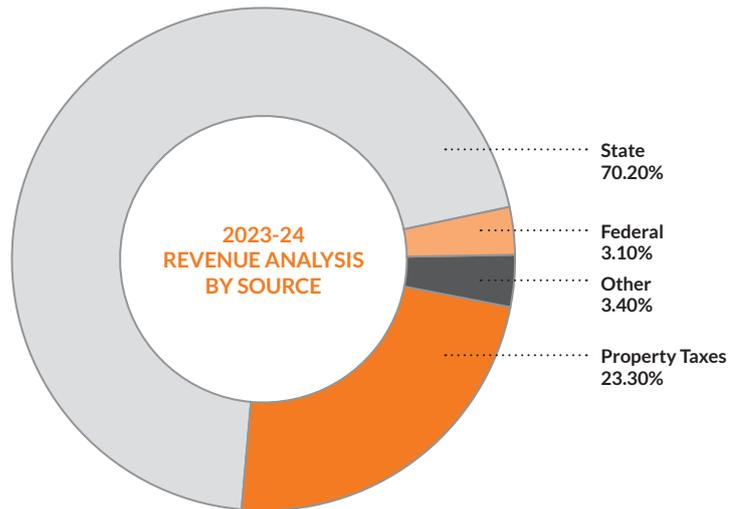
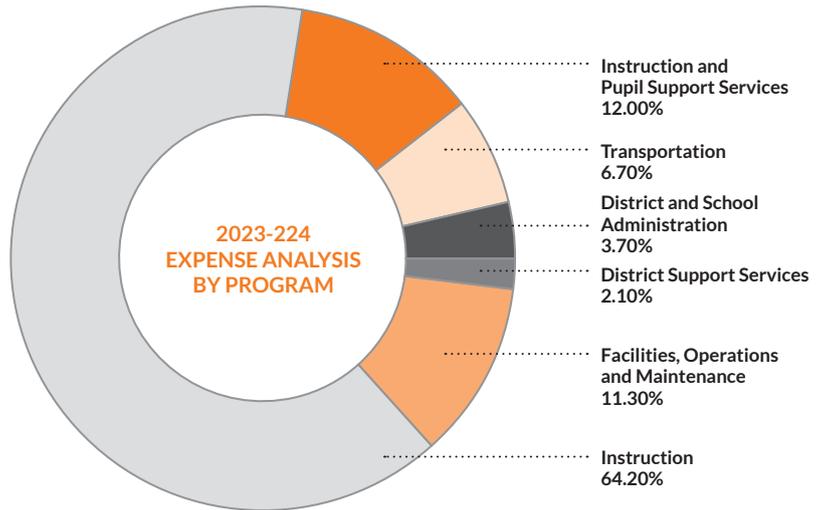
Financial Excellence

For 24 consecutive years, the White Bear Lake Area School District has been recognized by the Association of School Business Officials and Government Finance Officers Association for excellence in financial reporting.

These prestigious awards are the highest honor a governmental agency can receive in the field of financial reporting.

Partnerships

The district has innovative partnerships with Bear Care, Lakeshore Players, Tamarack Nature Center, White Bear Center for the Arts and many others.



Audit of 2023-24 data is in process at time of printing.



2024-25 DISTRICT PROFILE

The White Bear Lake Area School District serves all or parts of Birchwood, Gem Lake, Hugo, Lino Lakes, Little Canada, Maplewood, North Oaks, Vadnais Heights, White Bear Lake and White Bear Township.

Core Values

The White Bear Lake Area School District builds quality lives and strong communities through compassion, integrity, respect, responsibility and service.

District Mission

The mission of the White Bear Lake Area School District, the community at the forefront of educational excellence, honoring our legacy and courageously building the future, is to ensure each student realizes their unique talents and abilities, and makes meaningful contributions with local and global impact through a vital system distinguished by:

- » Students who design and create their own future
- » A culture that respects diverse people and ideas
- » Safe, nurturing, and inspiring experiences
- » Exceptional staff and families committed to student success
- » Abundant and engaged community partners

In addition to English, students in our district speak



- » Akan
- » Aleut
- » Amharic
- » Anuak
- » ASL, Sign Language
- » Azerbaijani
- » Bosnian
- » Breton
- » Burmese
- » Chinese, Mandarin
- » Czech
- » English, Creolized
- » Farsi
- » Filipino, Pilipino
- » French
- » Ga
- » German
- » Gujarati
- » Harari
- » Hindi
- » Hmong
- » Igbo
- » Japanese
- » Kannada
- » Karen
- » Karen, Pwo
- » Karen, S'gaw
- » Khmer, Cambodian
- » Kom
- » Korean
- » Laki
- » Lao, Laotian
- » Latvian
- » Lithuanian
- » Mandar
- » Marathi
- » Mende
- » Nepali
- » Not Specific
- » Oromo, Afan Oromo, Oromiffa
- » Pahlavani
- » Polish
- » Portuguese
- » Punjabi
- » Russian
- » Serbian, Herzegovnian, Montenegrin
- » Somali
- » Spanish
- » Swahili, Kiswahili
- » Tagalog
- » Tamil
- » Thai
- » Tigrinya
- » Tok Pisin
- » Turkish
- » Twi
- » Ukrainian
- » Urdu
- » Vietnamese
- » Yoruba

| STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS 2024-25 | |
|----------------------------------|--------|
| Free/Reduced Price Lunch | 29.62% |
| Multi-Language Learner | 6.49% |
| Special Education | 18.02% |
| American Indian/Alaska Native | 0.35% |
| Asian | 8.45% |
| Black/African American | 7.03% |
| Hispanic/Latino | 9.25% |
| Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 0.06% |
| Two or more races | 7.47% |
| White | 67.37% |

Source: District data (K-12+)

| STUDENT ENROLLMENT 2024-25 | |
|---|-------------|
| Early Childhood (Includes all District preschool and early childhood programs at all District locations.) | 662 |
| Elementary (Grades K-5) | 3655 |
| Middle School (Grades 6-8) | 1813 |
| High School (Grades 9-12) | 2728 |
| Transition Plus (T+) (Special Ed - ages 18-22) | 51 |
| District Total K-12 | 8196 |
| District Total Birth-T+ | 8909 |

Source: District data

School Board Meetings

| | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| January 13..... | Regular Meeting |
| January 27..... | Work Session |
| February 10..... | Regular Meeting |
| February 24..... | Work Session |
| March 3..... | Regular Meeting |
| March 24..... | Work Session |
| April 14..... | Regular Meeting |
| April 28..... | Work Session |
| May 12..... | Regular Meeting |
| May 19..... | Work Session |
| June 9..... | Regular Meeting |

- » Board meetings begin at 5:30 p.m.
- » 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.

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

- Jessica Ellison
- Scott Arcand
- Deb Beloyed
- Angela Thompson
- Kathleen Daniels
- Marge Newmaster*
- Christina Streiff Oji

*Marge Newmaster's term expires 12/31/24. Dan Skaar, who was elected in November, will be sworn in to office in January.

2024-25 SCHOOL BOARD STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

- Lydia Kleinhans
- Tom Reese, Alternate

District Launches Elementary Spanish Dual Immersion Program

The White Bear Lake Area School Board recently approved an Elementary Spanish Dual Immersion program, set to launch in Fall 2025. This program will be offered at Otter Lake Elementary and Matoska International, with each school hosting up to three kindergarten immersion classrooms for a potential total of six classrooms district-wide. Transportation will be available to resident families throughout the district for students enrolled in this program.

The new immersion program is designed to serve both Spanish-speaking and non-Spanish-speaking students together in a bilingual environment that values the contributions of every student and family. Participants will learn in a mix of English and Spanish, experiencing unique benefits such as academic growth, enhanced language and cultural understanding, social and emotional development, and expanded future opportunities.

"This is forward-thinking education. When I look in the job market, almost all of the employers want you to have a second language," said School Board Vice-Chair Angela Thompson. "I think this is another asset for our students. I'm really excited to see what this program does in the district."

Families will be able to select this option during the kindergarten registration process. Enrollment information will be mailed to all incoming kindergarten families in December 2024, with the enrollment window for the 2025-26 school year opening on December 16, 2024. Priority placement will be given to district students, with open enrollment applications considered after January 15, 2025.

"This program addresses the needs of families seeking unique educational options, including immersion programs, and it supports multiple goals in our district's strategic plan," said Dr. Wayne Kazmierczak, Superintendent of White Bear Lake Area Schools. "We're committed to creating a safe, nurturing environment for all students, personalizing education, and helping each student recognize and develop their unique talents."

For info and updates about the Spanish Dual Language Immersion program, families and community members can visit www.isd624.org/immersion. That web page also contains a form that families can complete to ensure they receive the district's kindergarten mailings and registration information.

Immersion at a Glance

Schools

Otter Lake Elementary & Matoska International

Grades

Starting with Kindergarten, 2025-26 school year

Classrooms

Up to three per school, six total

Enrollment

Opens December 16, 2024; open enrollment applications will be considered after January 15, 2025 (priority to district students)

Transportation

Available to resident families throughout the district

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



JOIN US
FOR THIS EXCITING PROGRAM

AS WE BUILD
BILINGUAL SKILLS AND BRIGHT FUTURES!

Continued from cover

The week culminated in the Bears' first-ever Homecoming football game at our newly completed stadium. The stands were filled with fans cheering in unison, creating an atmosphere of unity and excitement that was unforgettable. As we watched the game under the Friday night lights, it was clear that this stadium represents more than just a venue — it's a place where memories are made, connections are deepened, and our community's pride shines brightly.

Looking ahead, we're excited to share an initiative that builds on our commitment to fostering a sense of belonging and to staying at the forefront of educational excellence: The launch of our Elementary Spanish Dual Immersion program. Recently approved by the school board, this program will begin in Fall 2025 and will be offered at Otter Lake Elementary and Matoska International. The Dual Immersion program will give families an opportunity to immerse their children in a bilingual learning environment, beginning in kindergarten. Registration will open for this program during our kindergarten enrollment process that begins soon, and transportation will be available for resident families across the district. (Find details at www.isd624.org/immersion)

The Dual Immersion program reflects our district's dedication to expanding educational opportunities and meeting the needs of our students and families. As a district, we're committed to fostering meaningful connections — from the stands of our stadium to the classrooms where young Bears embark on their educational journeys. This new program is part of a broader vision to transform our organization in ways that reflect our community's values and aspirations.

Together, we are shaping a community that values learning, embraces diversity, and celebrates the shared experiences that make us all Bears.

Dr. Wayne Kazmierczak
Superintendent

Lifetime Achievement Award

In October, recently-retired Director of Building Operations Dan Roeser was awarded the 2024 Lifetime Achievement Award at the annual Minnesota Educational Facilities Management Professionals conference for his outstanding dedication and commitment to educational facilities.

Roeser served in his role in the district for a decade before retiring. He was heavily involved in building and construction projects that were made possible by the community's support of the 2019 bond referendum that funded facilities projects throughout the district.



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



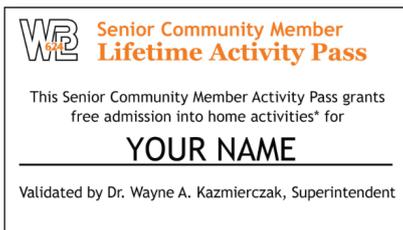
Stay Connected

- 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.
- Construction Updates**
 Find updates about the construction projects happening throughout the district at isd624.org/BuildingOurFuture.
- 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.

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.

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



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, in all languages spoken by students in the district, on the district website or at the QR code below:



Digital Backpack

The district's 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 and submission instructions can be found at communityservices.isd624.org/about/digital-backpack.



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



Building Our Future

The 2019 bond referendum list of comprehensive building projects is nearing substantial completion marking an exciting chapter for White Bear Lake Area Schools. This fall, we celebrated two major milestones with the opening of two sites.

After welcoming students and families to the newly configured grades 9-12 campus for open house and back-to-school events, the community came together for a special Open House event at White Bear Lake Area High School. It was heartwarming to see hundreds of community members explore the updated spaces, enjoying the enhancements alongside our students, staff, and families.

During Homecoming week, we hosted a “Set Sail with Mariner Middle School” Open House to celebrate the opening of Mariner Middle School while honoring the rich legacy of Mariner High School. Attendees enjoyed reconnecting and reminiscing, with former Mariner High School students proudly donning their letter jackets and spotting themselves in yearbook-inspired displays throughout the hallways.

The new White Bear Lake Area High School Performing Arts Center (PAC) has officially opened its doors. With seating for 800, this state-of-the-art facility recently hosted its first student music performances and will serve as the venue for future events, including the high school’s fall musicals.

Construction at the Sunrise Park building is progressing steadily. This winter, District Center offices will relocate to Sunrise, which is being transformed to house the District Service Center and the Senior Center. Once the administrative move is complete, School Board meetings will also transition to the new School Board Room at Sunrise Park. By Fall 2026, the building will also house the Early Childhood Center and Transition Education Center.



PROJECTS

Completed

- Area Learning Center Phase 1
- Lincoln, Matoska, Vadnais Heights and Willow Lane Elementaries Updates
- Transportation Facility
- WBLAHS - South Campus Phase 1 Gym Addition
- Birch Lake, Lakeaires, and Otter Lake Elementaries Updates
- North Star Elementary
- WBLAHS - South Campus Phase 2 Addition
- Area Learning Center Phase 2
- Oneka Elementary Updates
- Mariner Middle School
- Central Middle School Phase 1 Updates
- White Bear Lake Area High School

Ready for Winter 2024-25

- District Service Center and School Board at Sunrise Park

Ready for Fall 2025

- Mariner Middle School HVAC Improvements
- Central Middle School Phase 2 Updates
- Senior Center at Sunrise Park

Ready for Fall 2026

- Early Childhood Center and Transition Education Center (TEC) at Sunrise Park

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



WELCOME TO WHITE BEAR

January 2025

Get to know us!

While all are welcome to visit our schools any time, there will be special opportunities in January for families to learn more about our schools!

isd624.org/Welcome

Check out the website to find opportunities to learn more about each of our educational programs:

- Elementary
- Middle School
- High School

Early Childhood program registration information will be available later in the spring.



Community members are invited to stop by for an informal chat with Superintendent Kazmierczak over a cup of coffee. Find us at Caribou Coffee in Downtown White Bear Lake:

- Feb. 27, 12-1 p.m.
- May 6, 7:30-8:30 a.m.

IMPORTANT DATES

- » **DEC. 23 - JAN. 1**
NO SCHOOL
(Winter Break)
- » **JANUARY**
WELCOME TO WHITE BEAR MONTH
- » **JAN. 20**
NO SCHOOL, DC CLOSED
(MLK, Jr. Day)
- » **FEB. 17**
NO SCHOOL, DC CLOSED
(Presidents' Day)
- » **FEB. 27**
COFFEE WITH DR. K
12-1 p.m. at Downtown WBL Caribou Coffee
- » **MARCH 10-14**
NO SCHOOL
(Spring Break)
- » **MAY 6**
COFFEE WITH DR. K
7:30-8:30 a.m. at Downtown WBL Caribou Coffee
- » **MAY 26**
NO SCHOOL
(Memorial Day)
- » **JUNE 3**
TEC GRADUATION CEREMONY
12:30 p.m. at Central Middle School Auditorium
- » **JUNE 4**
ALC GRADUATION CEREMONY
6 p.m. at Mariner Middle School Theater
- » **JUNE 5**
WBLAHS GRADUATION CEREMONY
7 p.m. at WBLAHS Stadium (outdoor ceremony)
- » **JUNE 6**
LAST DAY OF SCHOOL

