

Spotlight

Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools

Spring 2025 | Volume 65 • Number 3



DISTRICT196
One District. Infinite Possibilities.



Hands-on Learning for Computer Science

Eager **Woodland Elementary** students designed a colorful maze to test their computer coding skills. Working with robotic mice, the students programmed directions, using logic and feedback loops to glide through twists and turns. The mice only move when the students provide clear instructions. "Try again!" one student squealed.

Learning to think like computer scientists at an early age, District 196 students are preparing for a future filled with innovation, problem-solving, and infinite possibilities.

Excellence in Community, Education, and Leadership



District 196 juniors **Sarah Labarere** of Rosemount High School and **Ankit Mukhopadhyay** of Eagan High School have earned ExCEL honors from the Minnesota State High School League for leadership and service.

Ankit is a dedicated leader in Youth in Government, Model U.N., Student Council, and Math Team. He excels in speech, debate, and tennis and performs in the top concert and jazz bands. He serves on the District 196 Legislative Advisory Council and Rotary Interact Club and is a student board member for the Eagan Community Foundation and The Drawer.

Sarah is a standout athlete in soccer and track and field and actively participates in choir and band. A DECA state qualifier and National Merit Scholar (10th grade), she is a member of the National Honor Society and the French National Honor Society. Committed to service, she volunteers at her church, is an RAAA youth coach, and volunteers at a local hospital.

The ExCEL Award for Excellence in Community, Education, and Leadership annually recognizes high school juniors for outstanding leadership and involvement. District 196 ExCEL nominees for 2025 were: **India Rutten** and **Ryan Christiansen** (Apple Valley High School); **Saanvi Seth** (Eagan High School); **Herawie Kebede** and **Aldon Roe** (Eastview High School); and **Ari Paitich** (Rosemount High School).



Translate
Traducir
Turjun



District 196: The State Of Our Schools

By **Michael Bolsoni**, superintendent



Whether you have lived in District 196 for years or are a newcomer – one thing is clear – our community takes pride in its public schools. Through thoughtful planning, hiring talented staff, and unwavering support from our communities, District 196 has earned a reputation for excellence. In my first year as superintendent, I've talked with thousands of people, and one theme emerged – pride in our schools and our students.

Our students are on the front line of rapid change, and it's difficult to imagine the world of 2050. That is when our youngest learners will be coming into their own, in careers yet to be imagined. So, our challenge is to prepare students to be adaptable, critical thinkers, and lifelong learners. As I contemplate human development, well-being, and purpose, I believe our "Triple A" philosophy is as important

as ever: Excellence in academics, arts, and athletics. Triple A inspires a growth mindset, responsibility, self-discipline, collaboration, wellness, achievement, community, and lifelong learning.

Our high school students excel academically, earning national merit, college board honors, and over 3,900 college credits each year. Our graduation rates exceed state rates, and every subgroup of students outperforms their statewide peers. We monitor academic data based on socioeconomic status, special education, race and ethnicity. Still, there is more work to do. Local, state, and national data show that academic achievement has not yet rebounded to pre-pandemic levels. However, our students continue to make gains each year on many measurements.

In the arts, thousands of community members can attest to the joyful theatre, band, and choir performances they attend each year. Our fine arts programs continue to bring home state and national accolades year after year—and it all starts in our elementary programs. Finally, our athletic communities lead Minnesota in championships earned.

In education, however, it's not about accolades. Our most meaningful work is providing every student with what they need to succeed – making connections, teaching fundamentals, and inspiring hope for their futures. By focusing on human relationships, we've increased consistent attendance (to 89%) and reduced disruptive discipline and out-of-school suspensions. Keeping students engaged and on track, we can personalize instruction and bring relevance to every learner.

Families continue to choose Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools because they want excellence in education. They understand that strong schools are the heart of strong communities. We have a shared vision and collective commitment to students, from school volunteers to families, business leaders, and elected officials.

As I look to the future, I'm filled with gratitude. Our tradition of excellence, student-centered values, and partnership with the community form the foundation for future success. The state of our schools is strong, and together, we will adapt and respond to the ever-changing needs and demands to prepare our students for the future.

Triple A Philosophy



ACADEMICS

District 196 is in the top three Minnesota school districts for National Merit, College Board, and college credits earned in 2024.



ARTS

District 196 is celebrated for its award-winning band, choir, speech, debate, and theater programs.



ATHLETICS

District 196 athletic teams lead the state in Minnesota State High School League championships.



THIRD LARGEST
Minnesota School District

165,000
Residents

29,049
Students

4,000+
Staff



Student Achievement

47 National Merit and
College Board Scholars

818 AP Scholars

3,966 college credits earned
in high school



Efficient Operations

3.4 million student meals
served per year

2.9 million miles transporting
students annually

4 million square feet of
facilities maintained



Fiscal Responsibility

10 consecutive national
budget award
YEARS

22 certificates of excellence
in financial reporting
YEARS

5% drop in 2025 school
property taxes



Dedicated staff

84% of licensed teachers
have advanced degrees

90% of students agree that teachers
care about students



Best U.S. High Schools

All District 196 high schools are on
the U.S. News list of best high schools.



Grade A School District

District 196 is in the top 10
school districts in Minnesota,
according to niche.com.



Nationally Recognized

For budget transparency (10 years)
and finance reporting (22 years).

School Board Organizes for 2025

Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan School Board members elected officers at the annual organizational meeting in January. Robin Cerio and Catherine Diamond joined as new School Board members, effective Jan. 15.

The Board will hold regular business meetings at least once per month, typically on the second Monday of the month, beginning at 6 p.m. at Dakota Ridge School. The Board also will reserve the fourth Tuesday of the month for special meetings as needed. The School Board calendar, agendas, and minutes are available on the district website: district196.org/about/school-board/

2025 School Board

- Cory Johnson, chairperson
- Anna Williams, vice chairperson
- Sakawdin Mohamed, clerk
- Leah Gardner, treasurer
- Robin Cerio, director
- Catherine Diamond, director
- Jackie Magnuson, director

Our New Board Members



Robin Cerio has lived in the district for 22 years and has prior nonprofit board experience, having served on boards for the Minnesota Children's Museum and Dakota County Library. She is an active volunteer in District 196, having served as a past chair of the Community Education Advisory Council, a member of the Curriculum Advisory Council, and on Eastview High School and Black Hawk Middle School Site Councils.

Catherine Diamond, DrPH, is a mother of three who holds a doctorate in public health and works in injury and violence prevention for the Minnesota Department of Health. As a former research scientist, she brings a background in data-informed decision-making and strategic planning.

Cerio and Diamond, both residents of Eagan, were appointed in December to fill vacancies created by the resignations of Art Coulson and Sachin Isaacs. The two appointees will serve until a School Board election is held in November 2025.

Elementary Principal Named Finalist for National Distinguished Principal Award



The Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA) has named **Chad Ryburn**, principal of Highland Elementary

School, one of three finalists from Minnesota for the 2025 National Distinguished Principal award. This prestigious honor, presented in partnership with the National Association for Elementary School Principals (NAESP), recognizes principals who demonstrate outstanding leadership in instruction, student achievement, and school culture.

Ryburn has led Highland Elementary to a National Blue Ribbon Award for Exemplary High Performance. He fosters a culture of innovation, inclusion, and academic excellence by actively engaging parents, staff, and students in decision-making. Under his leadership, Highland's Site Council has grown to be an active Parent-Teacher Organization, and Highland school leadership teams were restructured to focus on student data and school goals.

In November, Ryburn was selected as the founding principal of Emerald Trail Elementary, opening in fall 2025. As the leader of the district's 20th elementary school, Ryburn is concurrently leading Highland Elementary and hiring, scheduling, budgeting, and planning to open the new school.

"Chad Ryburn has more than 30 years of experience as an exemplary elementary educator," shared Superintendent Michael Bolsoni. "At Highland Elementary, he has developed a positive, student-centered culture. His interest in opening 196's new elementary school was met with great excitement across our community. He is assembling an outstanding staff who are eager to work with him to create a welcoming school environment focused on student success."

In May, Ryburn and two other finalists will be interviewed by a panel of principal leaders from across Minnesota. Based on their interviews, applications, and recommendations, one principal will be selected to represent Minnesota as the 2025 National Distinguished Principal.

For more information about the National Distinguished Principal award, visit www.mespa.net/NDP.

Share Your Opinion

District 196 has partnered with the Morris Leatherman Company, a research firm, to conduct a community survey to gauge public sentiment about the district.

In March, a random sample of residents will receive phone calls to participate in the survey. Questions will be asked about quality of education, financial management, strategic priorities, graduation requirements, and educational technology.

District residents contacted by phone are encouraged to participate in the survey.

STRATEGIC ROADMAP

In 2023, the District 196 School Board adopted a Strategic Roadmap outlining our mission, vision, values, and strategic priorities. Behind the Strategic Roadmap is a three-year plan with specific actions within each priority area. The intentional alignment is helping District 196 shift from a decentralized, site-based system to a strategic, aligned organization with consistent expectations for all schools and better student outcomes.

MISSION • OUR CORE PURPOSE WITH DISTINCTION

Educating, developing, and inspiring our students for lifelong success.

VISION • WHAT WE INTEND TO CREATE

District 196 provides the experiences that our students, families and employees desire by:

- Developing the whole student and honoring diverse needs and cultures;
- Engaging students with opportunities in academics, arts and athletics, and
- Living our mission/core values to prepare students, families and employees for lifelong success.

CORE VALUES • DRIVERS OF OUR WORDS AND ACTIONS

- Student-Centered** • All decisions are centered on what is best for students.
- Empathy** • Seeking awareness/understanding of the perspectives/experiences of others.
- Wellness** • Support the emotional, social and physical wellbeing of the whole person.
- Integrity** • Act with respect, honesty and responsibility.
- Achievement** • Provide learning with high expectations, rigor and resiliency for all.
- Collaboration** • Learn and engage together for a shared purpose.
- Community** • Foster an environment of inclusivity, engagement and belonging.
- Lifelong Learning** • Inspire a love of learning for all ages.

3-YEAR OPERATIONAL PLAN

LEARNING WORK

Research, ideation, data, environmental scanning, listening, learning, and piloting initiatives.



IMPLEMENTATION

Action plans include goals, data, roles and responsibilities, communication, support, progress monitoring, reflection, and adjustments.



STANDARD WORK

Defined processes, consistent sustainable practices for long-term success; standard way of operating; part of the culture.

As new initiatives are considered, they progress through three stages: learning work, implementation science, and, eventually, standard work in our schools. The following are a few of the action plans in the implementation phase this year. These represent a sample of our strategic priorities—achievement and well-being—but do not encompass the full scope of our efforts.

ACHIEVEMENT

MATH AND LITERACY UNIVERSAL SCREENERS

Fastbridge, the district's math and literacy screener, is now in its second year and effectively predicts proficiency as measured by Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCAs). Students in grades K-6 take the assessment each trimester. As District 196 schools implement new K-5 math and literacy curricula, Fastbridge helps teachers determine the effectiveness of the curriculum, identify which students might need additional support or interventions, and improve student outcomes.

AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION

American Indian Education and Special Education teams are partnering to pilot the Minnesota Department of Education Dream Catcher program at four schools (K-12). The program trains American Indian Education advocates in student support and intervention teaming and builds partnership with special education teams in supporting families through special education referral processes.

DATA DASHBOARDS

Advances in data science and systems integration are transforming data use in District 196. Previously siloed, data is now centralized through a research team and dashboard tool, enabling disaggregation by economic status, English learner status, disability, race, gender, and more. This shift supports informed decision-making, targeted interventions, and improved student learning.

READING, MATH, SCIENCE CORE CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT (K-12)

In 2024, the district made a historic investment to update the core curriculum in reading, phonics, math, and science, while implementing Minnesota's READ Act. The state provides extensive professional development and the district supports teacher learning to improve instructional practices. Elementary teachers must complete READ Act training by 2025, and secondary teachers will complete the training the following year. The district converted three school days to professional development days to support teacher training. Curriculum implementation spans three years and is guided by specific goals for each content area.



“Our priority at the elementary level for 2024-25 is to support our teachers in learning and teaching the new curricula. It's a significant effort, and we are all learning together.”

– Michael Bolsoni, Superintendent District 196



“ If we seize this moment, step up for our children and their families in their moment of need, and lead with inclusion, kindness, and respect, we can lay the foundation for a healthier, more resilient, and more fulfilled nation. ”

– Dr. Vivek H. Murthy,
2020-24 Surgeon General of the United States

WELL-BEING

BUILDING ASSETS, REDUCING RISKS (BARR)

Restructuring the ninth-grade experience using the BARR model promises to enhance belonging, responsibility, and achievement. Focused on building relationships centered on students' strengths, needs, and interests, the BARR model will be implemented at all four District 196 high schools to foster strong connections and support so students thrive as they enter high school.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR AND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

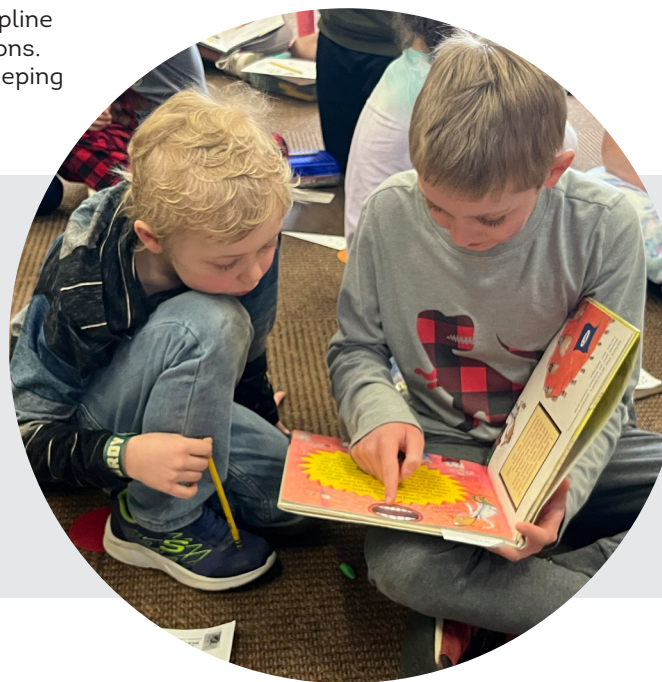
Minnesota's Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) program improves academic performance, reduces bullying and suspensions, and enhances social-emotional skills. The program will be used districtwide. In addition, Second Step, a K-8 social-emotional learning curriculum, is being used. Both foster safer schools, strengthen teacher efficacy, and promote a positive climate.

IMPROVING DISCIPLINE PRACTICES

Attendance is key to student success. Secondary schools are updating discipline practices to address disruptive behavior and reduce out-of-school suspensions. Over three years, suspensions have decreased by 20% across the district, keeping students in school and promoting academic achievement.

“ When we strive to become better teachers than we are, everyone in our classroom becomes better, too. ”

– Robert John Meehan, American educator, author, and poet





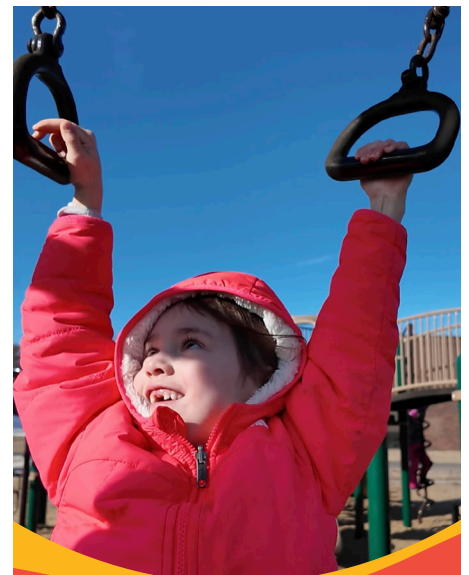
Hands-on learning ignites confidence, curiosity, and a passion for science, engineering, or the trades from an early age! In our elementary Maker Space, this second grader is applying creativity and problem-solving, using real tools to bring ideas to life.



When great teachers use technology for learning, personalization is efficient and effective. Every student in our schools has an iPad, which stores lessons, digital textbooks, learning activities, and homework. Teachers inspire learning at a "just right learning" pace. And when students take a brain break, the device remembers exactly where they left off when they return, saving time and attention.



At the School of Environmental Studies, juniors and seniors embrace the outdoors as their classroom, studying animal and human adaptations, building shelters, and collecting field data on their forested campus. This unique learning model is gaining global attention, with international researchers visiting to explore their innovative programming this spring.



Outdoor recess isn't just fun – it's vital for children's physical, emotional, and cognitive growth. Bundled up against the Minnesota cold, a Woodland Elementary student beams with joy, embracing the benefits of fresh air and active play.



Rosemount High School Principal **Peter Roback** congratulated a graduate at the 2024 commencement ceremony, capturing the joy and achievement of this special moment. Graduation is a time of pride, resilience, and celebration for students and educators alike.

Celebrating More Than 2,100 Graduates This Spring

More than 2,100 students are set to graduate from District 196 schools during commencement ceremonies this May and June. Graduates represent the district's four comprehensive high schools – Apple Valley, Eagan, Eastview, and Rosemount – and students from the School of Environmental Studies, Dakota Ridge School, Area Learning Center, Transition Plus, and Adult Basic Education diploma programs.

2025 COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES

American Indian Education Cultural Honoring

Central Park in Rosemount
Saturday, May 17, 1-3 p.m.

Adult Basic Education

Dakota Ridge Gymnasium
Thursday, May 22, 7 p.m.

School of Environmental Studies

MN Zoo Amphitheater
(weather permitting)
Thursday, May 29, 7 p.m.

Eagan High School

EHS Stadium (weather permitting)
Saturday, May 31, 2:25 p.m.

Eastview High School

3M Arena at Mariucci
Saturday, May 31, noon

Apple Valley High School

3M Arena at Mariucci
Saturday, May 31, 3:30 p.m.

Rosemount High School

3M Arena at Mariucci
Saturday, May 31, 7 p.m.

Dakota Ridge School

Dakota Ridge Gymnasium
Monday, June 2, 2:30 p.m.

Area Learning Center

Silver Bell Learning Center
Tuesday, June 3, 4:30 p.m.

Transition Plus

Rosemount Community Center
Wednesday, June 4, 12:30 p.m.

Apple Valley Alum Featured in Sundance Documentary 'SPEAK'



Dr. Scott Voss, head coach of the Apple Valley High School Speech Team, attended the premiere of "SPEAK" alongside alumna Mfah Mohamed Ali at the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, earlier this year. The event was a proud milestone for Apple Valley's renowned speech program, highlighting its legacy of excellence on a national stage.

A new documentary, "SPEAK," recently premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, featuring a familiar face from Apple Valley High School – alumna **Mfah Mohamed Ali**.

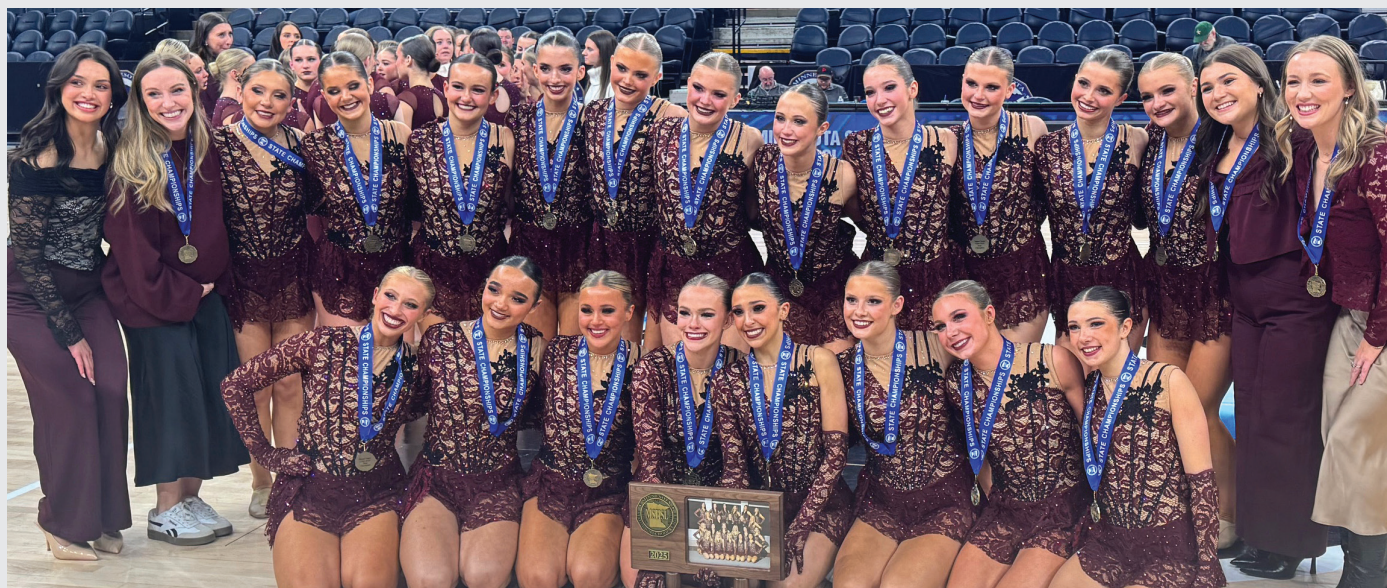
The film follows the journeys of five young orators from across the country as they train, compete, and strive to qualify for the National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA) Grand National Tournament. "SPEAK" captures the intensity, passion, and dedication of high school speech competitors.

Mfah, now a student at Northwestern University, was a standout competitor during her time at Apple Valley High School. Her younger sister, **Maab Mohamed Ali**, a junior at AVHS, is also a key member of the school's speech team and is featured in the documentary.

The Apple Valley High School Speech Team was given the exclusive opportunity to preview the film, with Mfah joining them via Zoom from her dorm at Northwestern. Reflecting on the experience, she shared, "Being a part of this documentary was truly an honor. It was a testament to the power of speech. Speech isn't just an extracurricular – it's a transformative experience that shapes confidence, identity, and the way we connect with the world."



Mfah's parents watched the film with current speech students at Apple Valley High School. Her father, **Babiker Mohamed Ali** (left), works as a paraprofessional at Southview Elementary, and her mother, **Ibithal Awadalla** (right), has been a steadfast supporter of her daughters' speech careers.



Jazz Dance Champions

The Lightning Dance Team was crowned Minnesota State High School League state champions in Jazz and state runner-up in High Kick this year. This marks the 28th straight year that Eastview has advanced to the state finals in both events, capturing 23 state titles. They were the only team to medal in both AAA Jazz and AAA High Kick this year.

Top Magnet Schools of Excellence

Echo Park Elementary School of Leadership, Engineering and Technology and Glacier Hills Elementary School of Arts and Science earned Top Schools of Excellence awards from the Magnet Schools of America. Only four schools in Minnesota achieved the excellence designation this year.

"I am so excited for our students and staff," said Echo Park Elementary Principal Logan Schultz. "The rigorous selection process is based on student achievement, family engagement, magnet integration, and closing achievement and opportunity gaps. I want to thank our community for supporting magnet schools and STEM education."

"We are grateful and humbled by this recognition for the third consecutive year," said Glacier Hills Principal Adriana Henderson. "We are committed to academic excellence, fostering strong community partnerships, and ensuring equitable practices in arts and science programming."

District 196 magnet schools are open to all students in District 196. Enrollment is determined through an application and lottery process held each January. For more information, visit district196.org/magnetschools/.



State Champs in Cheer

Rosemount High School Cheer Team captured the Minnesota Championship in the Game Day Non-Tumbling Division, earning a trip to the UCA National Cheer Championships in Orlando, Florida, where they finished 11th. Eastview Lightning Cheer also had a strong state performance, finishing second.

State Champions in Debate



Eagan High School students **Tristin Nguyen** (left) and **Param Thakkar** (right) won the state championship title in Policy Debate.

Eagan High School was the only Minnesota high school to medal in every debate category at state this year, including **Tristin Nguyen** and **Param Thakkar** winning the State Championship in Policy Debate. Other notable performances included Policy Debate quarterfinalists **Mia Werden** and **Karyn Wchnick** (EHS); Lincoln Douglas Debate semifinalist **Alex Huang** (EHS); Public Forum Debate semifinalists **Shreyan Jena** and **Hayagiriv Sajja** (EHS); Congressional Debate **Saanvi Seth** (third place) and **Nabiha Kashif** (fifth place) (EHS); and Public Forum Debate quarterfinalists **Herawie Kebede** and **Abby Tranter** (EHS).

Eagan Unified's 4-Peat State Champs



Led by a strong group of seniors, Eagan Unified won its fourth consecutive state championship.

The Eagan Wildcats beat Bemidji to win the Unified Basketball State Championship at the Target Center last month. Sponsored by Special Olympics, unified sports bring together athletes with and without disabilities to team up and compete while spreading a message of acceptance and inclusion.



Sara Luedtke



Luke Klopp



Jenna Teigland



Param Thakkar



Evelyn Swenson



Max Espena



Kelly Estebo



Connor Amos

District 196 Triple 'A' Award Nominees

Eight District 196 seniors have been nominated for the Minnesota State High School League Triple "A" Award. This prestigious honor recognizes high-achieving, well-rounded students active in academics, arts, and athletics. Students must demonstrate exemplary citizenship, sportsmanship, and conduct.

District 196 Triple "A" Award nominees are **Sara Luedtke** and **Luke Klopp**, Apple Valley High School; **Jenna Teigland** and **Param Thakkar**, Eagan High School; **Evelyn Swenson** and **Max Espena**, Eastview High School; and **Kelly Estebo** and **Connor Amos**, Rosemount High School.

Designing Future Cities



Students from Scott Highlands Middle, Rosemount Middle, and Valley Middle School of STEM earned top awards for innovative problem-solving at the 2025 Minnesota Future City Competition. The annual event challenged students to design a city 100 years from now while tackling real-world issues. This year's competition envisioned floating cities that address rising sea levels and climate change.

Congratulations to Valley Middle Team Kelluva for winning second place and the Real City Special Award.



Sophie Stramel



Annalee Holzer

Hockey Honors

Rosemount Girls Hockey finished 4th in State this year. **Sophie Stramel** earned East Metro Girls Hockey Player of the Year and **Annalee Holzer** was named to the Class AA All-Tournament Team.

Summer Construction Will Limit Access to Some Schools

Breaking ground on three high school activity centers may interrupt traffic patterns, relocate some athletic fields, and bring hope and excitement for the future.

- **Eastview and Apple Valley High School** construction will start in late May 2025. Projects at both schools include adding the Activity Center, renovating for science, and improving performance areas.
- **Scott Highlands Middle School** construction will continue through the school year and two summers and include eight new classrooms, new science labs, performance spaces, and additional parking.
- **Valley Middle and Falcon Ridge Middle Schools'** new science labs and interior renovations will stretch over two summers.
- **Dakota Ridge School** construction of six classrooms and a multi-purpose room addition is on schedule for completion in August 2025.
- **Thomas Lake Elementary** will have a new dedicated bus loop, additional parking, and new traffic flow completed this summer.
- **Rosemount High School** is the most extensive project, and it will take up to three years to complete the Activity Center addition, classroom additions, and interior renovations. Summer construction will coincide with the closure of Highway 3 (east of the school) as the state constructs a roundabout at 142nd St. W. The city also will rebuild Chili Avenue (southwest of the school) but allow continuous access for school use. The middle school north baseball/softball fields will be inaccessible from May 2025 until work is completed in summer 2027.



Eastview High School Activity Center rendering (upper level)



Apple Valley High School Activity Center rendering (floor level)

Emerald Trail Elementary School

With more than 600 names submitted, the district has approved a name for its 20th elementary school. Emerald Trail Elementary School will open in fall 2025. It is located at 13600 Ardroe Ave., Rosemount, near Akron Avenue and Bonaire Path.

"During the parent stakeholder meeting, Emerald Trail stood out," shared Principal **Chad Ryburn**. "The group unanimously supported it, recognizing the importance of creating a unique identity for this new chapter in our district's history. Emerald Trail Elementary will be where students, staff, and families come together to grow, learn, and thrive."

Why Emerald Trail?

The name was chosen to represent:

- Community connection: fostering a sense of belonging and pride within the Rosemount community.
- Sustainability and innovation: a net-zero ready, high-efficiency building featuring geothermal energy, with 440 wells and sustainable landscaping.
- Walkability and access: School sidewalks will connect to city and county trail systems.

Fun Fact:

The geothermal work involved drilling 440 wells, each 150 feet deep. Stacked end-to-end, they would stretch 12.5 miles – almost 200 football fields long.



Battistone Wins National FACS Teacher of the Year

Mia Battistone, a Family and Consumer Science teacher at Eastview High School, earned the National Teacher of the Year title from the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences. Her courses equip students with real-world skills in financial literacy, nutrition, child development, interior design, and consumer education.

"Mia's compassion for all learners is evident, creating a nurturing learning environment where she believes every student can learn," said Eastview Principal Bruce Miller. "Her ability to connect with students, differentiating her teaching to their unique needs, sets her apart."

This national recognition adds to Battistone's accolades, including the 2024 Minnesota FACS Teacher of the Year award and being a 2024 National FCCLA Adviser of the Year finalist.



Glacier Hills Educator is Magnet Schools Teacher of the Year

Nicole Hosek, a STEAM teacher and magnet team leader at Glacier Hills Elementary School of Arts and Science, has been named the Magnet Schools of America (MSA) Region VI Teacher of the Year – one of six finalists for the national honor to be announced in April.

Known for her hands-on, inquiry-based approach, Hosek brings science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) to life, fostering creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking in her students. Parents and colleagues praise her unwavering commitment. One Glacier Hills parent shared, "Ms. Hosek consistently promotes creativity, innovation, and a genuine love for teaching. She has built a safe and supportive classroom where students collaborate, solve problems, and grow as individuals."



Thomas Lake Kindergarten Teacher Nominated

Megan Cogswell, a Thomas Lake Elementary School kindergarten teacher, has been nominated for the 2025 Minnesota Teacher of the Year award. Thomas Lake Principal Dave Lostetter shared, "Mrs. Cogswell is an exceptional educator whose dedication and enthusiasm make a profound impact on our students and school community."

Beyond her dynamic and inclusive classroom, Cogswell is a passionate leader in her school – serving on multiple teams, and advising student groups. Her nomination is a testament to her hard work and unwavering commitment to her students.

Organized by Education Minnesota, finalists will be announced in March, and the 2025 Minnesota Teacher of the Year will be named on May 4.

JOIN OUR TEAM!

Build a meaningful career that directly impacts students, schools, and your community.

We're hiring

Nutrition Service Associates, Custodians, Bus Drivers, Substitutes, Paraprofessionals, and more!



Competitive pay



Paid time off



Excellent benefits



Family-friendly schedules



District 196 does not discriminate in admission, employment or in any of its education programs, including vocational opportunities, on the basis of sex, race, religion, color, creed, national origin, marital status, disability, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, gender identity, membership or activity in a local human rights commission, age or genetic information. For more detail, visit district196.org/notices

Legislative Advisory Council Advocates for Local Control

With 70% of the District 196 revenue dependent on state aid, the district's Legislative Advisory Council monitors the state's biennial budget process and advocates for full funding of laws passed during the 2023-24 session. The district's legislative platform is particularly concerned with securing adequate funding for Minnesota's new Paid Family Leave Law (cost estimated at \$2.7 million in new payroll taxes) and hourly employee summer unemployment insurance (\$1.58 million). The platform also advocates for more local control.

The governor's proposed budget adjustments would extend summer unemployment insurance reimbursements and hold harmless school district compensatory funding. Both are helpful. Other provisions would reduce education funding and services to families:

- Elimination of quality compensation (Q Comp) program (-\$7.5 million)
- Reductions in special education transportation aid (unclear impact)
- Changes to integration and achievement aid (-\$60,000)
- Elimination of nonpublic school aid (-\$1.3 million)

At a February meeting, the advisory council discussed uncertainty at the federal level. The district's total federal education funding is approximately \$11 million, plus \$7.6 million for the federal school meal program. Federal funding includes Title I, II, III, and IV programs, special education, and McKinney-Vento support for unhoused students. There are also discussions about E-Rate funding, which discounts school technology purchases. District leaders will continue to monitor federal policies impacting school funding.



District Earns 10th for Budget Transparency

For the 10th year in a row, District 196 has received the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) International's Meritorious Budget Award (MBA) for the 2024-25 fiscal year budget.

"The district's budget books aim to provide our district community with a roadmap through our budgeting process that breaks down the complex world of

school finance into more easily understandable sections," said District 196 Finance Coordinator Danny DuChene. "The progressively detailed layout allows us to share the district's financial story in a variety of ways to help maintain transparency and trust with our communities."

All budget documents for the current fiscal year and nine previous years are available on the Finance Department page at district196.org. These include the annual certified property tax levy, preliminary budget, final budget, capital expenditure budget, and the annual comprehensive financial report for each fiscal year.

2025 School Taxes Decrease

School taxes in Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan District 196 will decrease by 5% on average for 2025. The School Board adopted a tax levy 1% less than in 2024, leading to some potential property tax relief. A rise in commercial and industrial property values is contributing to a reduction in residential taxes.

District 196 Finance Director Christopher Onyango-Robshaw emphasized the importance of conservative budget estimates, noting past enrollment projections have been within a percentage point of actual figures, ensuring appropriate staffing levels. The district is projecting stable enrollment, and school tax levies are strictly regulated by state formulas, limiting increases.

Get Involved in District Advisory Councils

District 196 advisory councils provide students, parents, staff, and area community members with the opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process and help guide the district's work. Community involvement is critical to the success of our schools and helps build on the district's goals and mission of educating, developing, and inspiring our students for lifelong success.

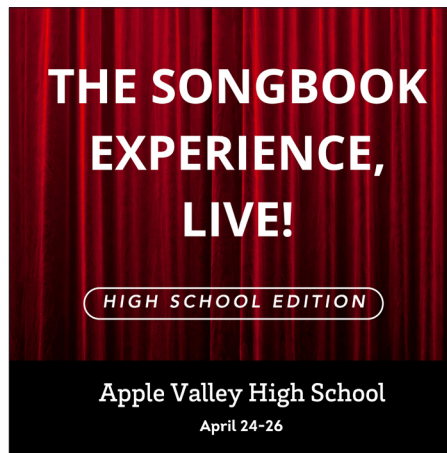
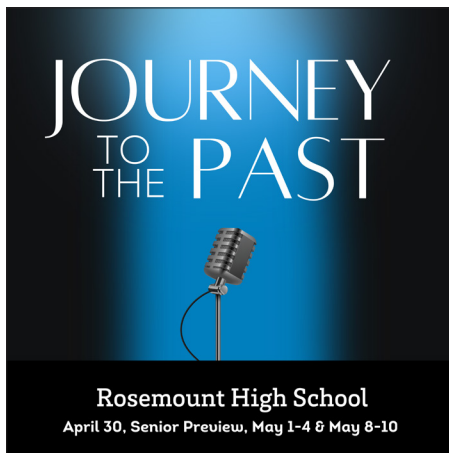
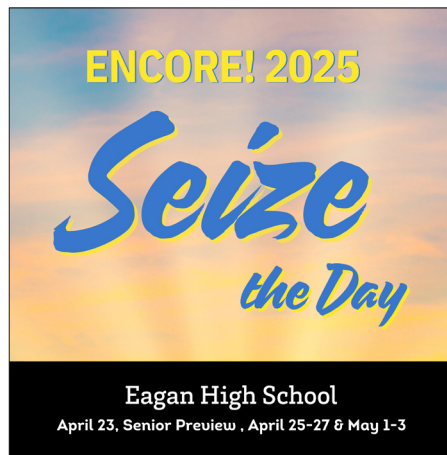
Applications for advisory councils open each April. Everyone is welcome to apply for membership on any of our advisory councils. Learn more at district196.org/advisory-councils

Reimbursement for Nonpublic Transportation

District 196 residents who qualify for nonpublic transportation reimbursement during the 2024-25 school year must submit a reimbursement form prior to June 30, 2025 to District 196, Director of Finance, 3455 153rd St W, Rosemount, MN 55068. For details and a reimbursement form visit: district196.org/nonpublic-transportation



Rep. Liz Reyer visited Cedar Park Elementary School in December. District 196 hosted area legislators to showcase the importance of the READ Act and Meals for All funding.



Concerts and Shows Coming Soon!

Apple Valley High School

Speech and Debate Eloquence, April 4, 7 p.m.
Jazz Ensemble Concert, April 30, 7 p.m.
Danceworks, May 15, 7 p.m.
Danceworks, May 16, 7 p.m.
Band Concert, May 22, 7 p.m.
Choir Concert, May 28, 6 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Eagan High School

Wind Ensemble Concert, May 5, 7 p.m.
Wind Symphony Concert, May 6, 7 p.m.
Freshman Spring Concert, May 12, 7 p.m.
Spring Choral Concerts and Awards, May 27, 6 p.m. and 7 p.m.
Varsity Spring Concerts and Awards, May 28, 7:30 p.m.

Eastview High School

Spring Dance Show, May 18, 7 p.m.
Band Concert, May 20, 7 p.m.
Grand Finale Band Concerts and Awards, May 22, 7 p.m.
Spring Choral Concerts, May 28, 6 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Rosemount High School

Wind Ensemble/Rosemount Community Band, Mar. 16, 2 p.m.
Showcase Choral Concerts, Mar. 18, 6 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Spring Band Concert and Awards, May 21 and 22, 7 p.m.
Spring Choral Concerts and Awards, May 27 and 28, 6 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

District 196 Students Shine on Stage

District 196 students showcased impressive performances this winter, demonstrating their talent and dedication to the performing arts.



One Act Play, Antigone Now
Photo credit: Allen Photo Works



Disney's Beauty and the Beast
Photo credit: MoLo Photography



Les Misérables



The 25th Annual Putnam
County Spelling Bee



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Community Education

Early Childhood Family Education

Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) recognizes that parents are their child's first and most important teachers. ECFE offers parents hands-on learning experiences; led by licensed early childhood teachers, nourishing a lifetime of teachable moments. A typical ECFE class includes:

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

Learn more at ce.district196.org/ecfe.



Family School

Parents: Learn with your child! Parents and their preschool children can attend school together Monday through Thursday mornings at District 196 learning centers in Apple Valley. Family School has four important parts:

- A preschool program for children ages 3 to 5
- Time for parents and children to play and learn together
- Parent education
- Adult education

Find out more at
ce.district196.org/familyschool or call 952-431-8316.

Come One, Come All! Waffle Breakfast

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

Sat. | April 26 | 8:30-11 a.m.

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

Summer FIRE — Our New Summer Camp Program

Get fired up for summer classes for you and your family! Explore what is hot this summer at ce.district196.org, or pick up a catalog at your nearest school or library.



Rent a Gym, Pool, Lecture Room, Auditorium, or More!

Does your business or organization need a space to meet? How about at a nearby school?

Visit ce.district196.org/facilityuse to find out more.



DISTRICT 196

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

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Visit ce.district196.org or call 651-423-7920