

Spotlight

Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools



DISTRICT196
One District. Infinite Possibilities.

Fall 2025 | Volume 66 • Number 1



Principal **Chad Ryburn**, Superintendent **Michael Bolsoni**, District 196 School Board members, honored guests, and the spirited RHS marching band welcomed the Emerald Trail Elementary staff to school on Aug. 20, 2025.



National Champion!

Apple Valley High School's talented **Aniya Bostick** was named national speech champion in Program Oral Interpretation. The then junior marked her second appearance at the National Speech & Debate Tournament in June before flying the same week to New York City as a Hennepin Arts Spotlight Triple Threat Award-winner for her singing, acting, and dancing. Bostick will appear in Apple Valley's fall musical "Hadestown." She has also landed a lead role in "The Wizard of Oz" with the Children's Theatre Company next spring.

Emerald Trail Elementary School Opens

Emerald Trail Elementary is officially open – Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools elementary school #20 is a shining example of what happens with community support.

"We are so excited to open this new elementary school," said Superintendent **Michael Bolsoni**. "Built to relieve overcrowding and to welcome generations of learners in a modern, sustainable environment, this school stands ready to nurture students for years to come. It is a community commitment to building our future, and I want to thank voters who supported this project as part of the 2023 bond referendum."

Emerald Trail Elementary, located at 13600 Ardroe Ave., Rosemount, opened with 650 students on Sept. 2 and has a capacity of 750. Motorists are advised of two **new crosswalk zones** and **school speed zones** on **Bonaire Path** (30 mph) and **Ardroe** (20 mph).

From the earliest planning meetings to the joyful ribbon cutting, families, educators, city and county leaders, and community partners have shared one vision: creating a school designed for students first. The building features include a net-zero emissions design with bright, flexible classroom spaces that bring sustainability, innovation, and connection to daily learning.

School District Election Nov. 4

Four school board seats and the renewal of the district's technology levy will be on the ballot on Nov. 4, 2025. See related articles on pages 2, 6-7.

District 196 Technology Levy
IT'S TIME TO RENEW

A Promising Year Ahead for District 196

By **Michael Bolsoni**, superintendent



As I begin my 30th school year in District 196, I am filled with optimism for the future of our community. Each fall, the energy of students, staff, and families brings a renewed sense of our infinite possibilities. This year, we are celebrating major milestones that will strengthen our schools for years to come.

In August, we opened **Emerald Trail Elementary School**, our 20th elementary school, welcoming learners who are curious, kind, and ready to shine. The new school provides relief from overcrowding in the southeast portion of the district, which continues to see expansive growth.

Construction is also underway on the new **Rosemount Middle School**, which will replace our oldest (1918) school. The first two of the four high school activity centers have broken ground, with expected completion dates in 2027. These projects are possible because of our community's overwhelming support for the 2023 bond referendum – an investment that enhances safety, relieves overcrowding, and ensures consistent, high-quality learning experiences for all students. We are deeply grateful for this commitment to our children's future.

Listening to Our Community and Staff

We know that great schools are built on strong relationships. Last spring, we conducted two important surveys: a

random-sample community survey and our district's employee experience survey. The feedback gave us much to celebrate:

- **93%** of respondents rate the quality of education in District 196 as excellent or good.
- **90%** of respondents believe the district delivers a good return on investment.
- **91%** of employees would recommend our schools to friends and neighbors.
- **93%** of employees say they are proud to work in District 196.

These results affirm the strong foundation we have built, while also pointing us toward areas where we can continue to grow. This fall, we will extend our listening efforts by surveying parents and families to understand their experiences better.

Advancing Academic Excellence

Last year brought significant changes and exciting opportunities for our students. We implemented new curricula in math, reading, and science at the elementary level, and introduced a new Advanced Placement world history course for freshmen at the high school level. These efforts

are already producing positive results, which you can read about on Page 5. While we still have work ahead, we are encouraged by the gains we are seeing as we align systems and use data to drive academic success.

Preparing Students for Lifelong Success

With a clear focus on achievement, belonging, and our Triple-A philosophy – academics, arts, and athletics – we remain committed to developing well-rounded, inspired learners prepared for lifelong success. To sustain this momentum, we will ask voters in 2025 to renew our technology levy. Last approved in 2015, this local funding provides more than \$9.1 million annually for instructional technology and will expire in 2025. Without renewal, these essential resources would be lost. Please see Page 6-7 or visit www.district196.org/techlevy to learn more.

Looking Ahead With Confidence

As you read this issue of Spotlight, I hope you feel the same pride and excitement I do. Together, we are opening new doors, creating stronger schools, and inspiring excellence for all District 196 students. With the continued support of our families, staff, and community, the year ahead promises to be one of collaboration, growth, and success.

School District Election Nov. 4

Five residents of District 196 have filed to run for the District 196 School Board. Four at-large positions will be decided in two separate School Board elections on Nov. 4, 2025.

Three School Board seats are up for election in the General School Board Election. Four candidates have filed for the three seats: **Robin Cerio** of Eagan, **Leah Gardner** of Eagan, **Sakawdin Mohamed** of Eagan, and

Learn more at www.district196.org/vote

M. Tracey Plante of Rosemount will vie for the four-year terms, running from Jan. 2026 to Jan. 2030.

One candidate, **Catherine Diamond** of Eagan, is running unopposed in the Special Election to fill the remaining two years of the term of former School Board member Sachin Isaacs, who resigned his seat in Oct. 2024. The term runs through the first Monday in Jan. 2028.

District 196 Earns High Marks on Community Survey

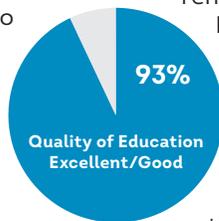
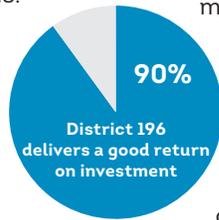
Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public School District 196 continues to be respected as one of Minnesota's top-performing school districts, according to a 2025 community survey conducted by the independent research firm Morris Leatherman Company. Survey results highlight strong public confidence in educational quality, fiscal stewardship, and student support – all at levels well above metro area averages.

Conducted in April 2025 among 500 randomly selected residents, the survey found that **93%** of respondents **rate the quality of education as “excellent” or “good,”** with 30% rating it as “excellent” – a level that ranks among the highest in the metro area. Good teachers, broad curriculum, and excellent academics remain key drivers of these ratings, with a remarkable **94% positive approval rating of teachers** by the community.

Fiscal credibility remains a cornerstone of community support, with 80% agreeing that the district is spending bond money effectively and efficiently, and 90% believing the district delivers a good return on investment. Trust in the School Board and administration is equally robust, with 88% saying they trust

leaders to do what’s right for children and 83% expressing satisfaction with district decision-making.

“Our findings show a reservoir of goodwill and trust among residents,” said Peter Leatherman of Morris Leatherman Company, during a presentation of results to the School Board in June. “From high educational ratings to exceptional trust in leadership and responsible fiscal management, District 196 is one of the strongest districts we’ve surveyed in the last two years.”



Technology Levy Renewal

The survey also assessed community sentiment regarding renewing the district’s Capital Projects Technology Levy. Voters originally approved the levy in 2015 to fund student devices, internet access, cybersecurity, and infrastructure. If not renewed by voters, the levy will expire this year, resulting in a loss of \$9.1 million in local funding. The survey revealed that 85% of residents support renewing the current levy, and 64% favor a modest increase, which would cost the average homeowner approximately \$7 per month.

Key areas of support for new funding include:

- Cybersecurity and data protection (82%)
- Career and technical education expansion (74%)
- Assistive technology for students receiving special education services (73%)
- Computer science education expansion (72%)

Informed, Engaged Community

The survey found that 71% of residents feel at least somewhat informed about district decisions, with the district’s Spotlight newsletter, email updates, and website cited as the most credible sources of information.

While 27% of residents said there were no serious issues facing the district (nearly triple the metro norm), 20% cited lack of funding, and 12% cited class sizes as top concerns. A significant **71% expressed concerns about future state or federal government cuts to District 196 funding**, while 29% were unconcerned.

District 196 Superintendent **Michael Bolsoni** expressed gratitude for the community’s partnership and continued support. “These results reflect our shared commitment to students and affirm that our community values high-quality education, responsible financial stewardship, and personalized learning that prepares students for future success,” he said.

District 196: A Special Place to Work

The first District 196 Employee Experience Survey, with nearly 3,000 respondents districtwide, highlights a deep sense of pride among employees.

All employee groups – in classrooms, cafeterias, offices, buses, and buildings and grounds, understand their role in supporting student learning.

“These results affirm what makes District 196 a special place to learn

and work,” said Superintendent **Michael Bolsoni**. “Our employees bring extraordinary care, professionalism, and commitment to their work. Their passion for supporting students is evident every day,

Employees consistently described students as their greatest motivation. Building relationships, seeing student growth, and making a difference

in children’s lives were named the most meaningful parts of their jobs. The survey also pointed to areas for continued improvement in employee appreciation, collaboration, and internal communication.

“By listening to our employees, we strengthen our ability to serve students and families,” said Superintendent Bolsoni.

Pride and purpose in every role



Empowering Students to Navigate Personal Finance in Life

Personal Finance, once considered an elective for high school students, is now required for a high school diploma. Starting with the Class of 2028, every high school student will take the semester-long course. For many families and business leaders, this is welcome news to better prepare students for the realities of adult life.

The Personal Finance course aims to do more than help students balance a budget or understand credit. It empowers them to make thoughtful, informed financial decisions based on their unique life goals, experiences, and values.

"We want students to be able to navigate the financial systems they'll encounter – and do so with confidence," said Eastview teacher **Paul Theirl**. "That means understanding not only how to manage your money, but also the psychology behind financial choices."

Real-World, Hands-On Learning

"We want the course to be engaging, because students get the most out of classes when they can see themselves in the activities; they can understand how the concepts apply to their lives," Theirl said. That's why the curriculum includes interactive activities: comparing savings account options, creating mock investment portfolios, and even researching jobs and choosing where to live based on a realistic budget.

Assignments are not just about numbers – they're about decision-making. One unit, for example, asks students to compare three job offers with varying salaries, benefits, and time commitments. Which one is the best fit? That depends

on the student's own goals and lifestyle priorities.

E-commerce, marketing, and online tools are also discussed. "The world has changed. We've moved from checkbook registers to fintech; everything is online," noted Rosemount teacher **Kyle Paulson**. "In a world where everything seems instant, students need to understand that their bank account balance might not reflect recent transactions. It's essential students know how much money they actually have, not just what their screen shows."

Changing the Conversation About Money

One of the most significant aspects of the course is its intentional connection to family and cultural values. "Money can be a difficult topic to talk about with family," teachers acknowledged. But by encouraging students to bring their learning into family conversations – about spending, saving, values, and goals – the course aims to normalize those conversations. It's not about telling families what to believe; it's about giving students the tools to understand their own financial world and ask thoughtful questions.

"Up until recently, schools didn't teach kids how to manage money," Theirl said. "That was detrimental to individuals and our society. Today, it's just as important as reading or math. It's not something you just know – we need to teach them."

According to various studies, the payoff is significant: Students who take personal finance courses are likely to save more over their lifetimes, enjoy higher credit scores, and make smarter financial decisions. We're empowering students to build a future where they feel in control of their financial choices.

Six Core Themes

The Personal Finance course is built around six core content areas, aligned with state standards and developed into lessons that are both academic and practical:

1. **Financial Psychology** – Students explore how advertising, emotions, and family history shape financial choices, launching students into the course through self-reflection. What do you want to get out of life, and what do you want money to do for you? Each student sets a personal SMART financial goal to revisit throughout the quarter or trimester.
2. **Earning an Income** – Students learn to evaluate jobs by looking at total compensation packages, including benefits like health insurance, retirement accounts, and paid time off, and not just salary. They research careers based on their own values – whether that's earnings, work-life balance, or pursuing a passion.
3. **Financial Systems** – Students examine banks, credit unions, and other financial institutions, understanding different types of accounts and interest, and learning how to evaluate financial services. Cash-only systems are also discussed.
4. **Credit and Debt Management** – Students explore how credit cards, loans, and mortgages work, including interest rates and terms. They'll learn the long-term impact of credit decisions and how to maintain healthy credit scores.
5. **Risk Management** – From car insurance to health coverage, students are introduced to different types of insurance and the roles they play in managing life's uncertainties. They'll understand terms like deductibles, premiums, and coverage limits.
6. **Budgeting and Investing** – Students build budgets, track expenses, and explore the basics of investing. Through stock market and mutual funds simulations, they learn about diversification, compound interest, inflation, taxation, and long-term planning.

At the end of each unit, students complete a portfolio project related to their original SMART goal, giving them a personalized, reflective learning experience that builds over time.

More Rigor, Greater Achievement For District 196 High School Students

Advanced Placement (AP) 2025 exam results show growth in achievement for Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan high schools, with an **83% pass rate** for the **5,556 exams** taken last May. Nationally, the AP pass rate is approximately 70%. In every AP course offered, District 196 surpassed the national pass rate on the 2025 AP Exams.

The high pass rate was accompanied by a **27% increase** in AP course enrollments, with 2,872 students enrolled. A new 9th-grade AP World History course offering was the primary growth driver. Historically, AP courses had been open only to students in grades 10-12.

In District 196, 47% of high school students choose to challenge themselves in AP classes. “We are seeing more District 196 students, from more diverse backgrounds, who are succeeding in AP courses,” reported **Dr. Todd Beach**, who leads high school social studies in District 196. “Eager learners had the opportunity to challenge themselves in a rigorous college-level course, and they rose to meet that challenge.”

2025 AP EXAM REGISTRATIONS & RESULTS BY DEPT

Subject	n	Pass Rate
Art	49	95.92%
Computer Science	204	80.39%
English	878	86.79%
Math	1,075	82.60%
Music	*	***
Science	599	83.31%
Social Studies	2,745	81.86%
GRAND TOTAL	5,556	83%

*Number of students tested is too small to report results.

Rewards of Taking AP Classes

Beyond the potential to earn college credits, there is significant evidence that taking AP courses strongly correlates with increased student achievement, college readiness, and college completion.

“The rigor of high school coursework is more important than parent education, family income, or race/ethnicity in predicting post-secondary [college] success,” said Dr. Beach. He cited a University of Texas study that found, “Students who take AP courses in high school are more likely to graduate from college within four years and earn higher college GPAs than peers who did not take AP courses.”

“Students who take and pass AP exams also earn higher ACT and SAT scores than peers who did not pass the exam,” he continued. And he explained that all students (grades 9-12) may register for an AP course within logical course sequencing. District 196 high schools have worked to remove barriers. However, students should be interested in the subject and willing to challenge themselves.

“Our teachers are incredibly thoughtful in meeting students where they are and working with deep care and commitment to build students’ reasoning and thinking skills in preparation for AP exams,” he concluded. “These results are a celebration across all subject areas.”

Advanced Placement Scholars

The College Board’s Advanced Placement Program enables willing and academically prepared students to pursue college-level studies while still in high school. District 196 high schools offer 28 different AP courses.

Students who take and pass three or more AP exams during high school are recognized by the College Board as AP Scholars. In 2025, the College Board recognized 976 District 196 high school students – a 19% increase over the prior year.

Visit www.district196.org/APscholars to see all scholars.

Seventh Grader’s Passion for Science Leads to Award-Winning Research



Scott Highlands Middle School seventh grader **Mitra Suriyanarayanan** is redefining what it means to be a young researcher. Her award-winning science fair project, *Musical Minds: How Music Shapes the Task Performance and Emotional Behavior of Children with Autism*, earned her top honors at the 88th annual Minnesota State Science and Engineering Fair.

Mitra’s journey into science fairs started in kindergarten, and her first formal behavioral research project was in fifth grade. It investigated how screen exposure before bed affects melatonin production and sleep quality. Since then, she has explored artificial intelligence and the inefficiency of multitasking, each year, expanding the scope of her research.

With her current project, the passionate young vocalist wanted to explore whether music could positively influence

emotional behavior and task performance in children with autism. “I love to sing, and I know how music affects me emotionally,” she said. “I wanted to see if it could help others.”

Mitra secured approval from a local nonprofit autism institution and designed observations using standardized scales to assess task performance and emotional behavior. She demonstrated scientific maturity far beyond her years, crafting observation tools and administering a staff survey.

Mitra’s work was recognized with the prestigious 3M “Science Applied to Life” First Place Award and a Silver Grand Award from the Minnesota Academy of Science.

“It’s not about competing with others,” Mitra said. “It’s about competing with myself and getting better every time.” She is appreciative that she connected with **Theresa Back** and **Austen Kruzeski**, her teachers at Scott Highlands who arranged so many opportunities for her.

District 196 Technology Levy

IT'S TIME TO RENEW

Vote on or before November 4, 2025



WHAT IS THE TECHNOLOGY LEVY?



District 196 will have an election this November to renew and increase **funding for technology** in our schools. The technology levy, initially approved in 2015, is the **primary source of funding** for 1:1 devices, digital curriculum, Wi-Fi, internet access, and cybersecurity. If not renewed by voters, the funding will expire, and the district will need to identify more than \$9.1 million in budget cuts.

WHY IS THE LEVY IMPORTANT?

It is the district's main source of technology funding. Renewal means maintaining the technology our students, staff, and families depend on. The levy funds:

- Student learning devices
- Digital tools and curriculum
- Classroom & building technology
- Technology support and maintenance
- Strong cybersecurity, network reliability and communication systems
- Expanding computer science education
- Enhancing career technical education

WWW.DISTRICT196.ORG/TECHLEVY



District 196 Technology Levy

IT'S TIME TO RENEW

WHAT'S ON THE BALLOT



District 196 is asking voters to renew and increase an existing technology levy to provide **\$15.5 million annually for 10 years**. Voters initially approved our technology funding in 2015, and it must be renewed this year or it will expire.



1:1 student devices and digital learning



Preparing students for careers in high-tech fields



Cybersecurity and network reliability

Investment needed: **\$7 per month** on a \$400,000 home

BE A VOTER! Vote on or before November 4

Three ways to vote:



EARLY BY MAIL

BEGINS SEPTEMBER 19

Request your ballot at district196.org/vote



EARLY IN PERSON

BEGINS SEPTEMBER 19

Cast your ballot at the 196 District Office or Dakota County Western Service Center in Apple Valley



ON ELECTION DAY

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4

Polls are open
7 a.m. - 8 p.m.
pollfinder.sos.mn.gov

ARE YOU REGISTERED?

In Minnesota, voters can register when they vote, with proof of their name and current address. Check your registration at MNVotes.gov.



FIND YOUR
POLLING
PLACE

WWW.DISTRICT196.ORG/TECHLEVY

Prepared and paid for by ISD 196, 3455 153rd St. W., Rosemount, MN 55068. Not circulated on behalf of any candidate or ballot question.





Eastview Student Crowned Miss Minnesota Teen

Eastview High School junior **Lily Geyer** was crowned Miss Minnesota Teen 2025 in June, earning a \$2,500 educational scholarship.

In her new role, Geyer will serve as Minnesota's teen ambassador at events statewide while continuing to promote her community service initiative, Cheer for the Children: Provide Support and Promote Success – a program dedicated to supporting teens experiencing homelessness and other hardships.

Geyer launched the initiative after seeing the impact of unmet basic needs through her mother's work as a school social worker. She plans to expand outreach this year by partnering with schools, businesses, and community organizations across Minnesota.



District 196 Leads Nation in Speech & Debate Champions

Apple Valley High School junior **Aniya Bostick** (cover photo) was named national champion in Program Oral Interpretation, marking her second appearance at the National Speech & Debate Tournament in June. Teammate **Isra Yasin** (left) earned national runner-up in Original Oratory in her NSDA debut, along with **Yahir Rodriguez Zavala** (right), national runner-up in Dramatic Interpretation.

District 196 continues to lead the nation in speech and debate excellence, with 35 national champions over the past 25 years. All four high schools – Apple Valley, Eagan, Eastview, and Rosemount – sent competitors to the 2025 National Speech & Debate Association Tournament.



The Eagan High School Debate duo of Tristan and Param finished their season Top 10 in the nation.



Athletes Earn Top Finishes in State Track & Field

District 196 athletes delivered strong performances at the state track & field finals on June 12, despite rainy conditions.

Eagan's 4x400 relay team – **Jake Sondag, Declan Dwyer, Tyler Sperl, and Noah Daniel** – finished second with a time of 3:20.03, just six-tenths of a second behind Hastings.

Rosemount's **Kavari Flowers** also took second in the 300m hurdles.

Additional top finishes included third place for Eagan's 4x800 relay (**Liam Frank, Cole Culler, Ethan Wilske, and Noah Daniel**) and Noah Daniel in the 800m. Rosemount's **Abby Essler** placed third in the girls long jump.





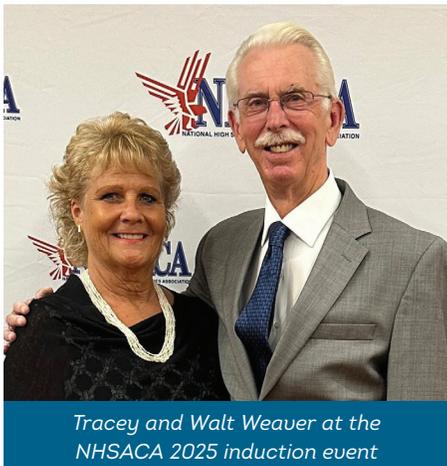
Dirksen Is Minnesota Chemistry Teacher of the Year

Kevin Dirksen of Eagan High School was named the 2025 Minnesota High School Chemistry Teaching Award winner by the Minnesota section of the American Chemical Society.

One parent shared, "Mr. Dirksen, you are the reason our daughter is studying chemistry at college with the hope of teaching in a few years."

Among the many congratulations and accolades shared on Facebook, Gus Broman credited Dirksen with inspiring future scientists. "Dirksen is a legend!" Broman said. "He did 'flipped classroom' when no one even knew what it was. My oldest son had him, and Dirksen was the inspiration for him to pursue his doctorate in chemistry at the University of Minnesota! This award is so well-deserved."

Another added: "An MSU Mankato alumnus, Kevin earned both his science teaching degree and his educational leadership specialist license. His commitment to excellence in science education continues to make a lasting impact in Minnesota classrooms."



Apple Valley's Walt Weaver Inducted in National Coaches Hall of Fame

Known as one of Minnesota's most successful high school volleyball coaches, **Walt Weaver** was inducted into the National High School Athletic Coaches Association Hall of Fame this summer in Rapid City, S.D. Weaver coached at Apple Valley High School for 31 years before retiring in 2006. He led teams to two state championships in 1985 and 1992. In the 2020s, Mr. Weaver was instrumental in bringing boys volleyball into the MSHSL.

Read the complete recap of Walt's career in the Sun This Week online.



Rosemount Coach Inducted Into Minnesota Hall of Fame

Rosemount's **Chris Harder** was inducted into the Minnesota Cross Country Coaches Hall of Fame on July 20. Harder has been the Rosemount boys cross country head coach since 1997 and was girls cross country head coach from 1998-2021. His teams have qualified for the state meet 21 times. As the distance coach of the Rosemount boys track and field program since 1998, he has coached 43 state meet qualifiers.

"I am honored and humbled to join an elite group of coaches, including my high school coach and college coach," Harder said. "It is a tribute to our program and the culture of Rosemount High School."

Thomas Lake Elementary Exemplary for Teaching Positive Behavior

From the "You are loved" signs on the walls to the everyday kindness shared between classmates, Thomas Lake Elementary is a place where belonging is part of daily life. The school's PRIDE core values set high expectations for positivity, respect, integrity, determination, and excellence.

Thomas Lake's welcoming, supportive environment has earned recognition from the Minnesota Department of Education the last two years for sustained excellence in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.

"At the start of the year, we visit every part of the school – the playground, cafeteria, hallways, classrooms – and talk with students about what PRIDE looks like in that space," shared **Principal Dave Lostetter**. "It means being a positive person, showing respect, having integrity, working hard, and showing determination. We see every child for who they are now and who they can become."

All District 196 schools are teaching positive behaviors that foster a welcoming environment and high expectations. Schools are seeing a noticeable improvement in student behavior, stronger engagement, and a culture of respect and responsibility.



Apple Valley Wrestler Wins Gold in Brazil

Apple Valley High School wrestler **Cassandra Gonzales** captured gold in the 69-kilogram division at the U17 Pan American Championships in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, helping Team USA sweep all 10 women's freestyle titles. Representing MN Elite Wrestling Club, Gonzales finished with a 3-1 record in the round-robin format. After a narrow 5-4 loss to Brazil's Mayara Santos, she bounced back with dominant performances – earning two first-period pins and a 10-0 technical fall over Canada to secure the championship. Gonzales also represented the United States at the U17 World Championships in Athens, Greece in August.



Valley Middle School Students Win Conservation Award

Valley Middle School of STEM in Apple Valley earned first place in the 2025 Conservation Minnesota Crew Project for a student-led initiative focused on reduction, recycling, and regrowth.

The VMS Conservation Crew diverted over 3,000 pounds of clothing from landfills through a donation drive and planted a tree for each filled box. The team also promoted recycling with custom bin maps, student-created signage, and campuswide volunteer efforts. In addition, they tackled food waste through peer education and composting programs – building a strong culture of environmental awareness and action.



Health Occupations National Qualifiers

At the Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) International Leadership Conference held in June, District 196 high school students emerged from a crowded field of more than 14,000 participants from seven countries.

Eastview High School's biomedical debate team of **Anna Rezcallah**, **Taj Bora**, **Sayf Aziz**, and **Evelyn Clark** ranked eighth internationally. Eagan High School students **Elina Zhang** and **Chloe Zhang** placed in the top 10% of the Healthcare Issues Exam. **Sahasra Juvva**, a senior at Eagan High School, earned the gold medal for the Barbara James Service Award for completing over 250 hours of volunteer work.



National Honors for Eastview High School

At the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) national leadership conference in July, Eastview High School received top honors in 2025. In addition to celebrating **Mia Batteston** as the National Family and Consumer Science Teacher of the Year, four students also earned honors. **Himani Mondal**, who plans to pursue a teaching career in family and consumer sciences, received the FCCLA Memorial Scholarship, took home first place in the FCCLA Knowledge Challenge Test, and placed third in the #TeachFCS Skills. **Abby Ward** was selected to showcase the outfit she made in the National Fashion Show. **Emily Ward and Aabha Katti** partnered for a bronze award in fashion design. Abby and Emily Ward both plan to pursue careers in engineering, and they credit FCCLA for inspiring them to develop their leadership skills and explore new creative opportunities.



50 Years of Mentorship and Meaning: Developmental Psychology

What if older students could guide younger students in learning about life choices? In 1976, that question launched the Developmental Psychology Program – a proactive effort to address youth chemical use. Five decades later, student-to-student learning remains an effective strategy.

“When older students talk about real-life choices and challenges, sixth graders listen,” said longtime teacher **Brian Poehler**. “That trust, that relatability – it’s what makes this program work.”

Built on a cross-age peer prevention model, the program taps into a unique connection between younger and older students. Seniors from each District 196 high school who enroll in Developmental Psychology put their training into action by leading a 26-week “Development and Prevention” curriculum for sixth graders in District 196 middle schools.

The lessons are engaging, age-appropriate, and grounded in real life. Topics include decision-making, goal setting, life skills, positive values, and preventing chemical use. Many seniors who teach in the program say they still remember being on the receiving end years earlier – and that experience inspired them to give back.

“Developmental Psychology taught me the importance of being a role model, not just in words but in actions,” said **Cindy Yan**, a 2025 Eastview High School graduate. “Helping kids build confidence, resist peer pressure, and make healthy choices left a lasting impact that reminds me of the kind of person I want to continue becoming.”

One of the program’s enduring strengths is the strong collaboration between middle and high schools. Sixth-grade teachers regularly share information about what their students are experiencing. In recent years, Developmental Psychology teachers have added lessons on cyberbullying, digital citizenship, academic success, and prescription drug dangers – ensuring the program remains timely, relevant, and impactful.

“The impact the class can have on a sixth grader is just so powerful because it shows that being healthy and happy without substances is still cool,” shared **Simar Means**, Eastview Class of 2025. “They don’t just get to hear it, but they actually get to see the seniors show this.”

As it celebrates its 50th year, the Developmental Psychology program continues to grow and evolve – helping students lead, inspire, and make a difference.



Applications Open October 6 for District 196 Magnet Schools

District 196 families have exciting school choice opportunities! Starting October 6, 2025, the application window opens for students who wish to attend a magnet school in the 2026-27 school year.

What Are Magnet Schools?

Magnet schools are public schools with a special focus or theme, such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), environmental studies, leadership, or the arts. They offer innovative, hands-on learning while still teaching our core curriculum in math, science, language arts, and social studies.

District 196 Magnet Schools Include:

- Cedar Park Elementary STEM School, Apple Valley
- Echo Park Elementary School of Leadership, Engineering and Technology, Burnsville
- Glacier Hills Elementary School of Arts and Science, Eagan
- Oak Ridge Elementary School of Leadership, Environmental and Health Sciences, Eagan
- Valley Middle School of STEM, Apple Valley
- School of Environmental Studies, Apple Valley (for students in grades 11-12)

Application Process and Eligibility

The magnet school application is open to all students entering grades K-5, middle school, or grades 11-12. Transportation is provided within the district boundaries for students living more than one mile from the school. Open enrollment students from outside the district are also welcome to apply. Enrollment is determined by a lottery system. Applicants not selected through the lottery may be placed on a waiting list. To learn more, visit www.district196.org/magnetschools.

Join the District 196 Foundation Board

Help Us Break Down Barriers to Learning

The District 196 Foundation is looking for passionate, community-minded individuals to join our Board of Directors. As a board member, you'll be part of a small but mighty team dedicated to removing barriers and creating opportunities for students across all 36 District 196 schools. From weekend food bags and summer reading programs to band instruments and essential school supplies, we work to ensure every student has what they need to thrive – and we'd love your voice at the table.

Board members:

- Serve a three year term
- Attend six meetings per year
- Help lead fundraising and outreach efforts that directly impact thousands of students

We're especially seeking diverse candidates with experience in:

- Event planning and implementation
- Fundraising and donor relations
- Marketing, communications, or journalism
- Web design and digital engagement

Apply today to make a real difference in the lives of District 196 students. Contact Khia Bruse at 651-423-7720 or learn more at district196foundation.org.

Know Your Rights About Educational Records

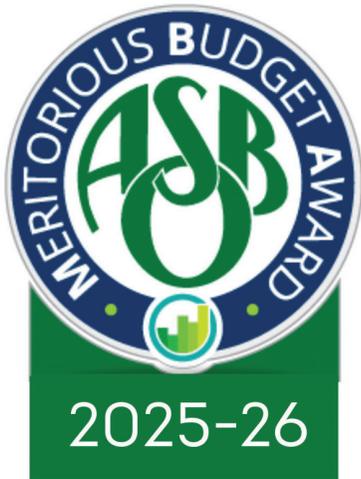
District 196 maintains a variety of educational records on its students. These records may include grades, attendance, behavioral records, testing data, health records, special education records and other relevant data. The district maintains educational records in compliance with legal requirements for the benefit of students and schools.

The district advises families of their rights with respect to educational records through two annual public notices. The first notice - **505.3.1P - Public Notice - Annual Notification of Rights, Protection and Privacy of Student Records** - describes the various student and parent/guardian rights that apply to a student's educational records and provides information about privacy protections. Rights include, but are not limited to, the right to inspect records, challenge the accuracy of records and file complaints.

The second notice - **505.3.2P - Public Notice - Directory and Yearbook Information** - lists the categories of student data that are classified as public and subject to release without parent consent. The notice also describes the process for families to follow if they wish to deny the release of their child's directory information.

Both notices can be found in the policy section of District 196's website and are summarized in the annual *Overview of Student Rights & Responsibilities* which can also be found on the website. Families are encouraged to review these notices and reach out to the school district with questions.

Meritorious Budget Award



The Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO) has awarded Independent School District 196 the prestigious Meritorious Budget Award (MBA) for the fiscal year 2025-26 – marking 11 consecutive years of recognition. This national recognition reflects the district's commitment to clear, transparent,

and high-quality budget presentation, reinforcing our dedication to responsible financial stewardship.

ASBO International's Meritorious Budget Award program sets the standard for excellence in school budget development and communication.

"An effective school budget is more than just numbers – it's a vital tool for building trust and engaging the community," said Jim Rowan, CAE, SFO, Executive Director of ASBO International. "The Meritorious Budget Award recognizes districts like District 196 that prioritize financial clarity and accountability. We commend their dedication to upholding nationally recognized budget presentation standards."

All budget documents for the current and nine previous fiscal years are available at www.district196.org/budget. These include the annual certified property tax levy, preliminary budget, final budget, capital

Did You Know?

- District 196 allocates only 2.9% of the annual budget to district administration, allowing most revenue to go to classrooms and instruction.
- The 2015 technology capital projects levy ranks #58 out of 60 Minnesota school districts with a technology levy. If voters approve an increase in November, the rank will be just above average for capital projects technology levies.
- The District's Comprehensive Financial Audit Report, released every November, has received the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting each of the last 22 years.
- ASBO has awarded District 196 the Meritorious Budget Award each of the last 11 years.

expenditure budget, and the annual comprehensive financial report for each fiscal year.



ce.district196.org

Your Voice Matters!

District 196 Community Education is conducting a Community Needs Assessment Survey, and **your input is essential**. Whether you're interested in Adult Basic Education, Adult Enrichment, Aquatics, Connections Preschool, Early Childhood Family Education, Facility Rental, Non-Public and Home Schools, River Valley Project Explore or Youth Enrichment -

We want to understand your needs and priorities.

Your feedback will guide us in shaping meaningful educational opportunities that serve our entire community. Take a moment to complete the survey—just scan the QR code or visit ce.district196.org.

Help us build a stronger, more responsive Community Education program!

Upon completion of the survey, you will have the chance to be entered into a drawing for \$25, \$50 and \$100 Visa gift cards.



Homeschools Required Reporting

Families living in District 196 who plan to homeschool their children for the 2025-26 school year must submit a yearly Initial or Intent to Continue Report, as required by state law. The deadline to submit reports for 2025-26 is Oct. 1, 2025.

The report is available at www.district196.org/academics/homeschool. Completed reports should be submitted to Khia Bruse, director of Community Education, 15180 Canada Ave., Rosemount, MN 55068. For more information, call 651-423-7722.

Safety and Security Projects Complete

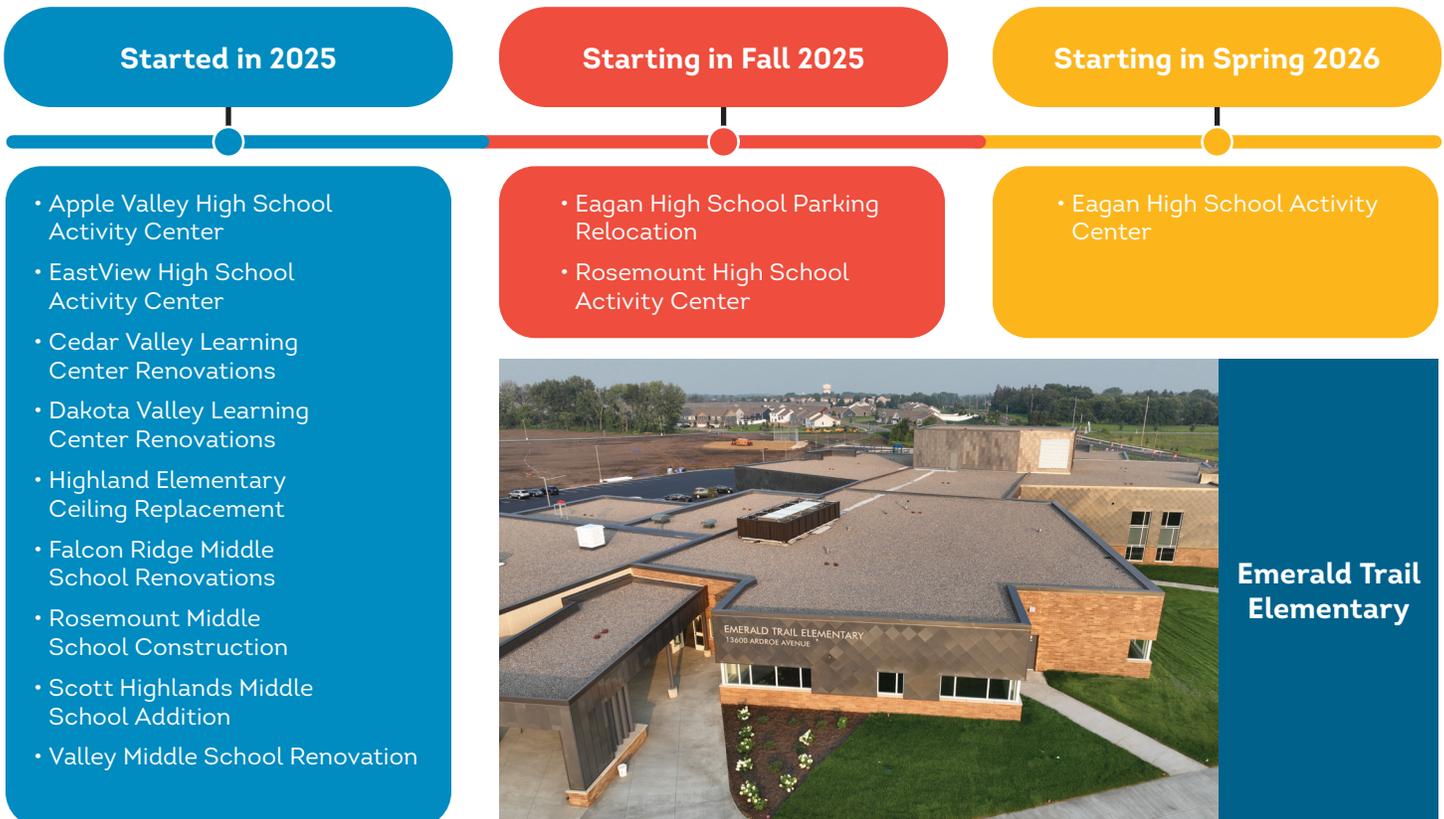
Over the past four years, District 196 has made substantial improvements to school safety, emergency preparedness, and security infrastructure. Enhancements were made possible by 2019 and 2023 bond referendums and reflect our district's commitment to maintaining safe, secure, and responsive learning environments for students, staff, families, and visitors. District 196 leaders work closely with law enforcement and school resource officers (SROs) to maintain safety and respond when incidents occur.

Key safety initiatives include:

- **Lockdown Technology:** Updated lockdown buttons in buildings can immediately secure learning areas and alert emergency response teams, supporting faster, more coordinated lockdown procedures.
- **Expanded Security Cameras:** Additional cameras inside and outside schools improve surveillance and deter unsafe behavior.
- **Secure Entry Vestibules:** All school buildings now have secure entry vestibules requiring visitors to be buzzed in during the school day and providing monitored access points.
- **Visitor Management System:** Raptor visitor management system screens and tracks visitors, enhancing front office safety protocols.
- **HALO Smart Sensors:** HALO detectors monitor air quality and detect vaping, aggression, and abnormal sound levels, helping staff identify and respond to prohibited behaviors.
- **Standard Response Protocols (SRP) & Reunification Training:** Consistent crisis response language across all schools improves clarity, communication, and coordination during emergency events. Collaboration with local law enforcement outlines a clear, efficient process for reuniting students with families during emergencies. Each school is equipped with standard emergency and medical go-bags for evacuations or emergencies.
- **Two-Way Radios and Communication Infrastructure:** Installed a districtwide radio system and fleet of 1,700 units for daily and emergency communication efficiency.
- **Improved traffic management** for Thomas Lake Elementary and Falcon Ridge Middle School

Construction Timeline

With Emerald Trail Elementary and Dakota Ridge construction complete, District 196 is updating the timeline for remaining projects.



Apple Valley High School

COMING TO AVHS FALL 2025
HADESTOWN
TEEN EDITION

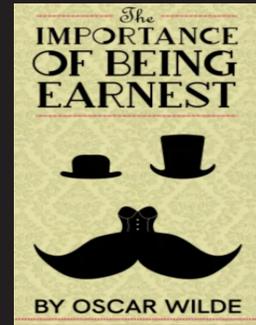
AUDITIONS 5/29 & 5/30

LEARN MORE
& SIGN UP:



Thursday, Nov. 6; 3:30 p.m. (senior preview)
Friday, Nov. 7, 7 p.m. • Saturday, Nov. 8, 7 p.m.
Sunday, Nov. 9, 2 p.m. • Friday, Nov. 14, 7 p.m.
Saturday, Nov. 15, 2 p.m. • Saturday, Nov. 15, 7 p.m.

Eagan High School



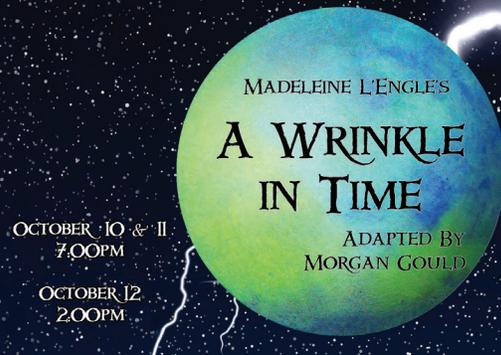
Wednesday, Sept. 24, 4 p.m. (senior preview)
Thursday, Sept. 25, 7 p.m. • Friday, Sept. 26, 7 p.m.
Saturday, Sept. 27, 7 p.m.

Eastview High School



Wednesday, Sept. 30; 3:30 p.m. (senior preview)
Thursday, Oct. 2; 7 p.m. • Friday, Oct. 3; 7 p.m.
Saturday, Oct. 4; 7 p.m.

Rosemount High School



Wednesday, Oct. 8; 3:30 p.m. (senior preview)
Friday, Oct. 10; 7 p.m. • Saturday, Oct. 11; 7 p.m.
Sunday, Oct. 12; 2 p.m.

Concerts and Shows Coming Soon!

Apple Valley High School

Choir concert, Oct. 13, 6 p.m. and 8 p.m.
"Just a Glimpse" dance show, Nov. 20, 7 p.m.
Band concert, Dec. 8, 7 p.m.
Jazz Ensemble, Dec. 18, 7 p.m.

Eagan High School

Choir concert, Nov. 17, 6:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. at AVHS
Band concerts, Nov. 3, 7:30 p.m.

Eastview High School

Choir concert, Oct. 13, 7 p.m.
Band concert, Oct. 23, 7 p.m.
Fall Dance Show, Nov. 2, 7 p.m.

Rosemount High School

Choral concerts, Oct. 22, 6 and 7:30 p.m.
Band concert, Oct. 28, 7 p.m.



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Rosemount, MN 55068

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Community Education

Early Childhood Family Education | ECFE

ECFE recognizes that parents are their child's first and most important teachers. We offer families hands-on learning experiences that will nourish a lifetime of teachable moments. Join us for our Backyard Family Fun Event on September 25, 2025, 5:00-7:00 p.m. at the Dakota Valley Learning Center.



Visit ce.district196.org/ecfe to learn more and to register for fall classes. Classes begin September 3.

Adult Basic Education | ABE

Prepare for a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) course and pass the Personal Care Assistant (PCA) and Community First Services and Supports (CFSS) certification test.

Pre-CNA/PCA Prep Class

Tue & Thu | Oct 21-Dec 4 | 12:30-2:30 p.m.
skip Oct 30, Nov 27 | Dakota Valley Learning Center
Visit ce.district196.org/adult/adult-basic-education or call 952-431-8316 for more information.

RVPE | River Valley Project Explore

We provide educational, social and recreational opportunities for adults with disabilities and encourage inclusion in community activities. Participants enjoy a wide variety of classes and activities including cooking, bowling, crafts, dances and more!

Visit ce.district196.org/projectexplore or call 651-423-7931 for more information.

Come One, Come All! Craft Fair

Over 70 crafters! There's something for everyone! Food and beverages for sale.

Sat | Oct 4 | 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. | Free! | VMS

Make an impact! Join the Community Education Advisory Council

We are seeking applications from community members who wish to provide input regarding lifelong learning opportunities for all residents. Visit ce.district196.org/ceac for more information. Contact Khia Bruse, Director of Community Education at Khia.Bruse@district196.org or call 651-423-7720.

Community Education Needs Assessment Survey - Your Input is Needed!

District 196 Community Education is conducting a Community Needs Assessment survey and we need your input!



We are looking to understand and address the needs, gaps and strengths of our community to ensure that your voice is heard, guiding the focus of our programs toward what matters most to you.

To access the survey, scan the QR code or visit the website at ce.district196.org. Survey closes November 1, 2025.

Fall Registration is Open

Get ready to learn and explore this fall! Registration for Youth and Adult Enrichment classes and Aquatics programs is now open. Whether you are looking to pick up a new hobby, improve a skill, or connect with others in the community, this season's programs are designed to inspire and engage. Register at ce.district196.org or call 651-423-7920.



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



DISTRICT 196
COMMUNITY EDUCATION
One District. Infinite Possibilities.