



Advancing our Collective Work to Improve

**2025-26
Report to Our Community**



Results

Equity

Accountability

Leadership

Joy

OVERVIEW

We See How Much We've Accomplished, and We Know the Work Ahead of Us

SUPERINTENDENT MATTHEW RAY

We know our united focus on improvement: **Literacy.**

We know where we are headed: **All students reading on grade level by 2030.**

We know how we will get there: **Our 2026-30 Strategic Plan.**

For two years, we sought out student, staff, family, partner and community voices.

We listened to their experiences, priorities and ideas.

Now, we are taking action through our Strategic Plan.

Working toward one goal, we rally every one of our 9,000 staff members, our families, partners and community.

Using a scientific approach to improvement, we use data to do better in our classrooms and across our operations.

Every staff member has a direct impact on student success.

Our families are essential partners in learning.

The work shows early and exciting gains. **We are improving.**

Schools with less chronic absenteeism.

Greater reading proficiency across our district.

Higher English Learner scores.

There is still much more to do.

Our Annual Report gives a look at our progress and our path forward.

Throughout the year, www.ops.org/districtnews features the latest news, events and accomplishments of our students.

Our Moonshot is a community-wide call to action. It requires every one of us.

Thank you for being part of such important work.



**Every student.
Every day.
Prepared for success.**

STRATEGIC PLAN

Omaha Public Schools Board of Education approved our district's Strategic Plan during the spring of 2026. Our district is committed to one clear, shared focus for the next five years. At the heart of the plan is our Moonshot: All students will read on grade level by 2030. The Strategic Plan describes how Omaha Public Schools will move as one system to achieve that goal. It reflects what we learned through extensive engagement with students, families, staff, school leaders and community partners, alongside evidence from high-performing school systems and improvement science. It also reflects the Board of Education's expectation that our district operates with clarity, coherence and accountability.

⇒ ALIGNMENT

Alignment brings together student outcomes, community voice, district values and evidence on what works to establish a shared understanding of the challenge before us.

Alignment explains why improvement must be systemwide and how our thinking is aligned around a single, united focus on growth.

▶ ACTION

Action defines what will change to reach our Moonshot. Action defines the Theory of Action and describes the strategy the Omaha Public Schools will pursue, the conditions schools must have in place, and how adult practice and student experience will shift across classrooms and schools.

🏠 ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability ensures transparency, learning and follow-through. Accountability outlines how our district will measure progress, manage resources responsibly and hold itself accountable for results over time.

Read the full plan at ops.org/strategicplan.

MISSION:

Omaha Public Schools prepares all students for success in college, career and life.

Board of Education



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STRATEGIC PLAN

A Unified Path to Improve Student Success

Omaha Public Schools Adopts New Strategic Plan



With a clear, unified strategy in place, Omaha Public Schools is focused on using the **2026-30 Strategic Plan** to deliver results for students. Guided by Alignment, Action and Accountability, our district is working together as one to achieve our

MOONSHOT: All students will read on grade level by 2030.

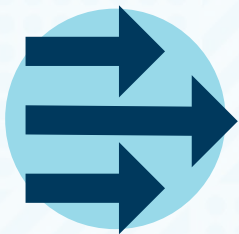
“It’s the commitment of the Omaha Public Schools to move as one system, with clarity, coherence and accountability toward one goal,” said Kanyon Chism, Ed.D., Omaha Public Schools chief of staff. “This plan is about consistency for every school, for every classroom and for every child.”

School and district leaders and board members presented the Strategic Plan during a March 2026 Board of Education meeting, highlighting the districtwide collaboration behind the work. The approach follows a vision for one, united focus on improvement.

“This work does not belong to one group or one moment,” said Jane Erdenberger, Omaha Public Schools Board of Education president. “Achieving our Moonshot will require sustained focus, collective responsibility and trust in the systems we are building together.”

Alignment work began during the 2024-25 school year. Our district gathered feedback from more than 1,000 students, educators, families and community members through listening sessions, surveys and earning system-wide accreditation.

“Core messages were remarkably aligned, citing the need for clearer priorities, greater consistency and stronger support for literacy learning,” said Kimara Snipes, Omaha Public Schools Board of Education vice president. “This path towards our Moonshot





reflects more than a year of staff and community engagement, iteration and Board partnership.”

Action is taking shape in classrooms through a focus on literacy and continuous improvement. At North High, teams regularly review student work and adjust instruction based on student needs.

“Our data shows that we need to increase active engagement and expectations during instruction,” said Christopher Humphries, North High principal. “Teachers are learning how to implement opportunities for reading, writing, speaking and listening in courses ranging from math to PE.”

The third element of the plan, **Accountability**, outlines how our district will measure progress and hold itself accountable for results over time. Omaha Public Schools will publicly report on student outcomes and progress indicators, while continuing to gather feedback through surveys and focus groups.

“This approach keeps the focus not just on results, but on learning and strengthening the system as we go,” said Susanne Cramer, Omaha Public Schools chief school improvement officer. “That feedback helps us listen, learn and adjust, strengthening implementation as we move toward our Moonshot goal.”

As Omaha Public Schools moves forward in this work, the takeaway is clear: literacy unlocks everything else for young people.

“Literacy is the avenue through which students access every subject,” said Snipes. “If we strengthen literacy, we strengthen everything that follows.”

The full Omaha Public Schools 2026-30 Strategic Plan is available on our website, ops.org/strategicplan.

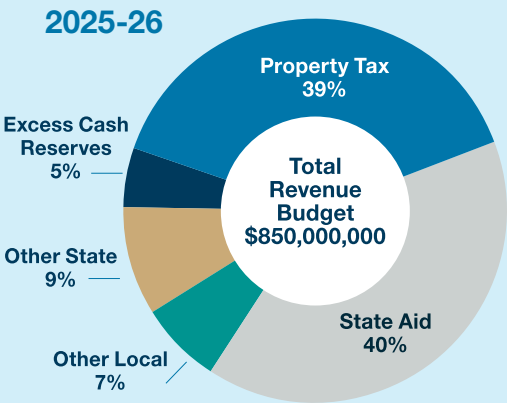
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MOONSHOT: All students will read on grade level by 2030

Budget

Where Does the Money Come From?



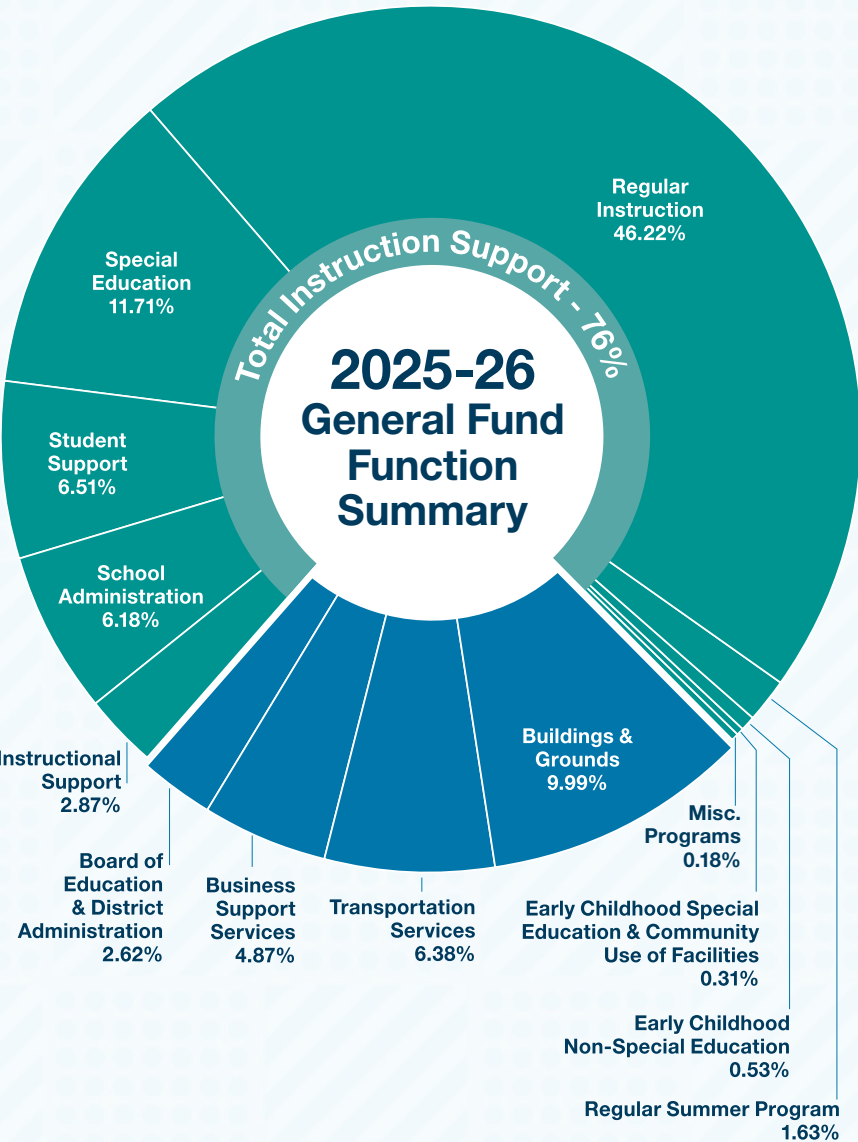
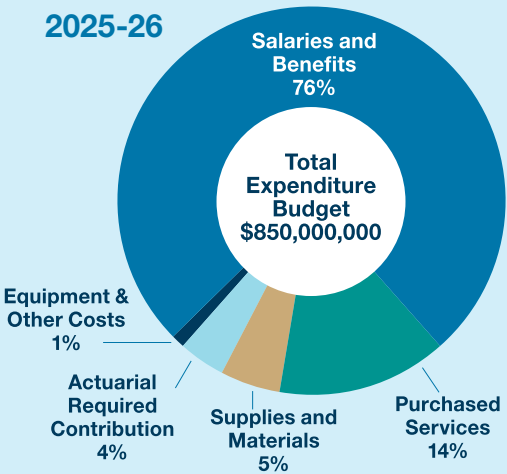
General Fund Budget

2021-22 to 2025-26

Budget Year	Allowable Budget	Adopted Budget	Unused Budget Authority
2021-22	\$691,240,528	\$690,000,000	\$1,240,528
2022-23	\$710,000,000	\$710,000,000	*0
2023-24	\$727,000,000	\$727,000,000	*0
2024-25	\$812,000,000	\$812,000,000	*0
2025-26	\$850,000,000	\$850,000,000	*0

*Per direction from NDE, the Special Grant Fund Expenditure exclusion is reduced to eliminate any unused budget authority.

Where Does the Money Go?



Per Pupil Cost

(Note: 2024-25 is the most current data available)

\$19,077 – OPS
\$16,920 – State

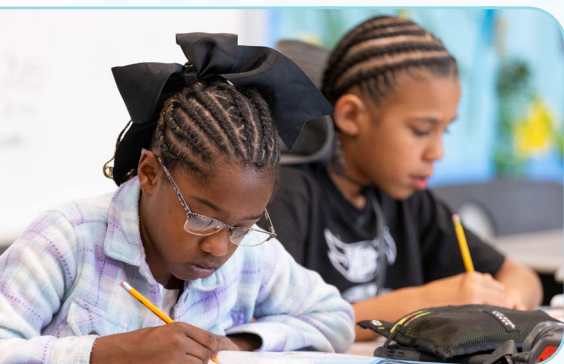


College and Career Ready Standards and Nebraska State Accountability Test Scores

Student data guides teaching and learning in Omaha Public Schools. State test scores are one source of that data. In Nebraska, college and career-ready standards are measured on state tests for elementary and middle school students. All juniors in Nebraska take the ACT, which is used as the high school state test. Students at certain grade levels take the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) test. The NSCAS is a statewide test that helps prepare students at different grade levels for success in postsecondary education, career and life. The NSCAS includes several measures that help inform educators and families as they support students.

How Does Omaha Public Schools Prepare Students for the ACT?

ACT standards are aligned and addressed across all content areas. The PreACT is given to Omaha Public Schools students in the fall of their freshman and sophomore years to prepare them for the ACT. School counselors also review PreACT and ACT results, then meet with students to help them set goals based on their scores.



2024-25 NSCAS Results

Below is the percent proficient.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS:

- English Language Arts: **41%**
- Math: **36%**
- Science: **70%**

MIDDLE SCHOOLS:

- English Language Arts: **38%**
- Math: **23%**
- Science: **51%**

2024-25 ACT Results

Average score for ALL students

STATE ASSESSMENT

English Language Arts: **12.6**
Math: **14.0**
Science: **14.5**

GRADUATING CLASS REPORT

Composite Score: **15.6**

The composite score represents the most recent score for 2025 graduates who took the ACT as sophomores, juniors or seniors either as the state assessment or on a national test day. These students earned a score that ACT allows to be reported to postsecondary educational institutions.



SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Adams Elementary Earns Place Among Elite Group for Academic Achievement



A burst of confetti filled the room when Adams Elementary's principal shared the news with her team in December 2025.

"We're an elite group. No one has ever been selected in our district," Principal Meagan Bakhit, Ed.D., explained. "Congratulations to you all."

The celebration highlighted Adams Elementary's designation as a 2025 National Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Distinguished School. The honor is one of the highest a Title I school can receive in the United States.

"I'm really proud of our kids," said Bakhit. "They show up every day and really ready to work and try their best."

Bakhit and her team of educators led the charge to achieve this level of improvement. In 2018, Adams Elementary was designated as a Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) school. That meant they were performing in the bottom 5% of all Title I schools. That's when they began the work to turn things around.

"It was really data driven," Bakhit explained. "Every group of students that we had in each grade level had to really target their own goal."

Teams met regularly to track progress and identify student needs.

"We had to look at the data, look at the data again to see if what we were doing was working and then provide specific strategies," Bakhit said.

Their process included ongoing academic discussions and different engagement strategies to help students improve.

"A lot of it was conversations and then trial and error and checking back to see if what we were doing was working," she added.

Over time, the effort paid off, improving student success and making Adams Elementary a distinguished school.





“From 2018 to where we are now, that is a quick turnaround for our students, and we knew they deserved it,” Bakhit said. “It’s rewarding to see that effort, the daily grind really paid off.”

For those working directly with students, it was about more than jumping on the latest trend in education; it was about staying the course.

“This is not all done by the efforts of one person or one class or one grade level,” explained Krissy Westphal, who teaches kindergarten at Adams Elementary. “This is everybody knowing the importance of getting all kids on grade level. Together, as a staff, we have committed to that.”

Specifically, they looked at improving literacy skills across all content.

“We really focused on kids speaking in complete sentences using descriptive words, writing and communicating with each other,” said Kerri Kratina, Adams Elementary instructional facilitator.

The literacy focus impacted academic growth in other core subjects, too.

“I think the steady progress just speaks to the daily practices that we have put in place,” Bakhit said. “In the same breath, having that sense of urgency because we know our kids deserve it.”

Adams Elementary is one of two schools in Nebraska and among 63 nationwide chosen to receive the ESEA Distinguished School honor.

“We have fun during our learning,” said Leya Mills, an Adams Elementary fifth grader. That’s what helps us get good grades. We know we’re doing a good job, and we’re getting rewarded for it.”

The school received the award at the National ESEA Conference in February 2026. Students celebrated the recognition with staff during an assembly that included a visit from Omaha Mayor John Ewing, Jr. that same month.

“I feel good and proud of myself,” said Carlisle Robbins, Adams Elementary fifth grader. “I just like the school, and I think we did a good job.”

“I’m really proud of our kids,” said Bakhit, “They show up every day and really ready to work and try their best.”



Staff by the Numbers



Teaching Staff Experience

Average age: **42**

Average years of teaching experience: **11**

National Board Certified teachers: **14**



Schools/Programs

Total number of schools* **87**

Elementary Schools: **65**

Middle Schools: **13**

High Schools: **9**

Virtual School: **1**

*Omaha Public Schools has 8 additional programs



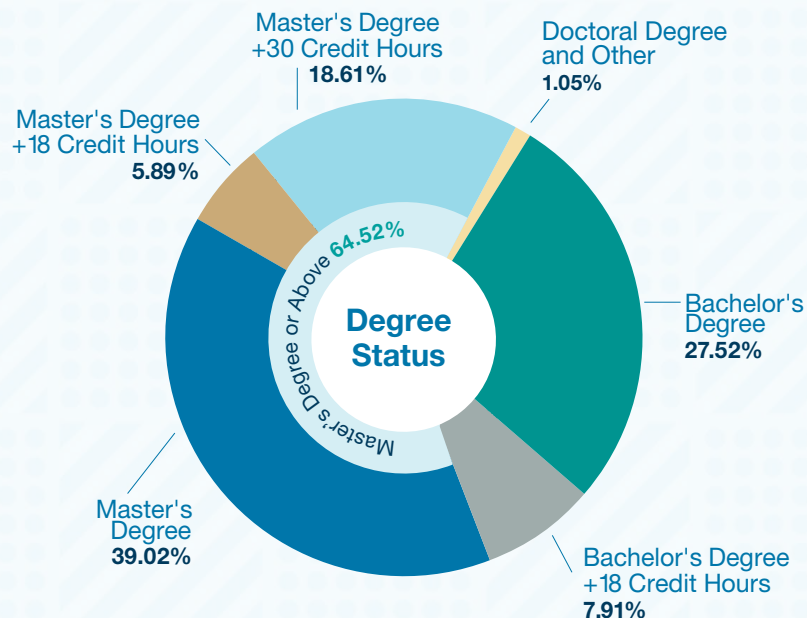
Student to Teacher Ratio

Elementary K-6: **13.2**

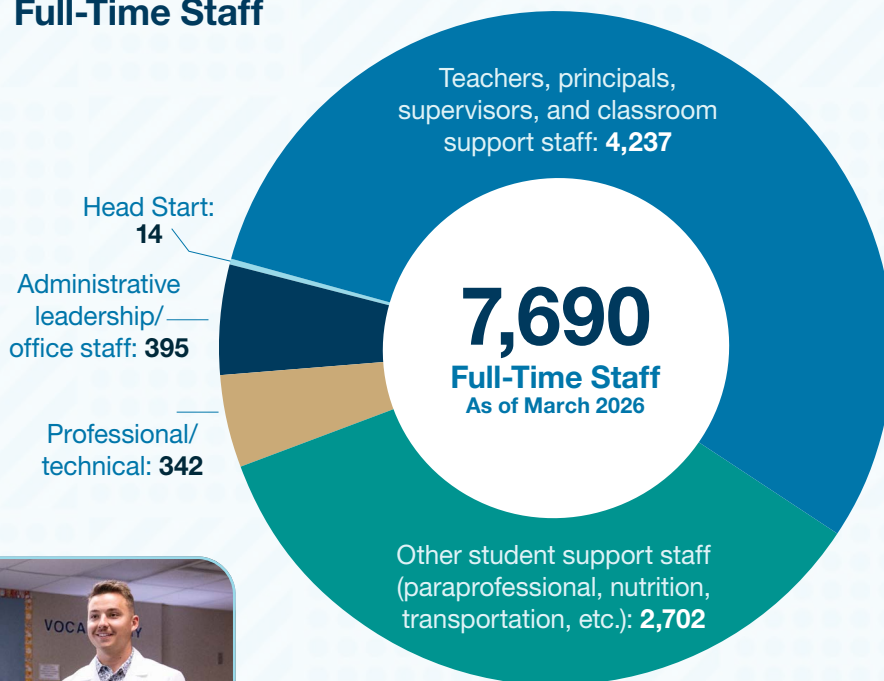
Middle School: **19.4**

High School: **19.3**

Certified Staff



Full-Time Staff



Students by the Numbers

Number of students:
52,116

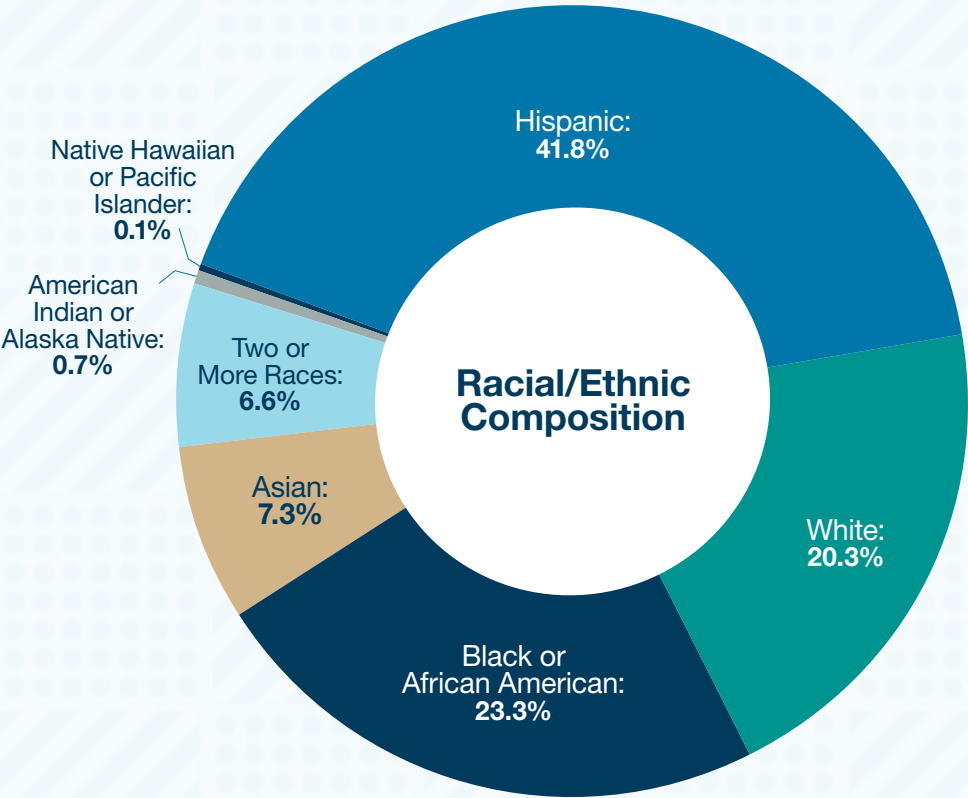
Projected

- ♦ 2028: **51,039**
- ♦ 2027: **51,455**
- ♦ 2026: **51,862**

(Includes Pre-K through 12)

Free and Reduced Lunch: **66.3%**

Some schools in our district qualified for the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) in 2025. The CEP provides breakfast and lunch at no cost to students. The schools that did not qualify for CEP during the 2025-26 school year transitioned back to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). This means to receive free or reduced-priced meals, families at NSLP schools had to complete a Free and Reduced Meal application.



Languages spoken:
125

Number of students participating in the English Learner (EL) program:

12,906

Our district serves more than 2,536 migrant and refugee students from 22 countries.



STUDENT EXCELLENCE

Omaha Public Schools Students Earn Prestigious National Honor

Buena Vista High students snapped to attention as Jennifer Lemus, a Buena Vista High senior, stood at the front of the room. As the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) battalion commander, she sets the tone and leads her fellow cadets.

"Everything good that's done in the program reflects on them. Every failure reflects on me," said Lemus. "Good communication is important so that we're all on the same page and know what needs to get done and how."

Lemus recently made Buena Vista High history, becoming the first student there to receive the JROTC's Legion of Valor Bronze Cross for Achievement.

"What this says about Omaha Public Schools is that we value our students and push them to give it their all," said Lemus. "I feel like I'm leaving a part of me here, and maybe in the future my siblings will attend this school and see my name on the wall."

Lemus is one of six honorees from Omaha Public Schools and only 27 nationwide to receive the most prestigious medal given to JROTC members. The Bronze Cross for Achievement recognizes cadets who demonstrate excellence in military, scholastic and civic affairs.



At Central High, senior Drew Holdt says he was at a loss for words when he learned about his achievement.

“It made me feel so proud of myself, and it shows that I can accomplish things I didn’t know were possible,” said Holdt. “Being next to other recipients feels amazing, knowing that each one of us had to put a lot of effort into making our packets to receive the Legion of Valor.”

At Burke High, two seniors received the honor. Jenna Crippen and Michael Steinhoff credit the JROTC program with shaping who they are today.

“It’s been a great experience because I’ve figured out who I really am and what my leadership style is,” said Crippen. “This is my hometown, and the fact that all six of us got this only leaves 21 others for the entire nation.”

Steinhoff says the organization guided his future.

“I’ve met amazing people who will provide opportunities after high school, like college and careers,” he said. “I would like to go to a four-year college, and once I’m done, join the Air Force. Being in JROTC played a big part in that.”

Sydney Sainovich from Benson High and Jamie Jordan from Westview High also received the Legion of Valor Bronze Cross for Achievement.

The Omaha Public Schools Board of Education honored all six cadets during a meeting in October 2025. Jordan shared plans to attend nursing school and serve in the healthcare industry.

“With the career path that I chose, trauma nursing, JROTC has not only taught me communication that will take me far beyond my career, but teamwork, leadership and how to stand out,” said Jordan.

Sainovich said she has felt supported every step of the way in her high school journey.

“My principal is the biggest advocate for everything JROTC,” said Sainovich. “I would not be here without the staff, colonel, my family and everybody that supported me along the way.”

Together, these recipients represent leadership and excellence in the Omaha Public Schools.



“It made me feel so proud of myself, and it shows that I can accomplish things I didn’t know were possible,” said Holdt. “Being next to other recipients feels amazing, knowing that each one of us had to put a lot of effort into making our packets to receive the Legion of Valor.”



Expanding Access. Elevating Expectations.

Omaha Public Schools prepares students for success in college, career and life through its many educational offerings. High school students have access to 115 pathways and advanced academic diploma programs, including International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement Capstone, Early College with Metropolitan Community College and Cambridge International. Students can also earn college credit through dual enrollment and Advanced Placement coursework.

During the 2025-26 school year:

- Omaha Public Schools students earned more than **1,500 industry-recognized certifications**.
- Omaha Public Schools connected students with more than **10,000 experiential learning opportunities**, partnering with more than 400 businesses and industry organizations.
- Omaha Public Schools offered **Dual Language programs at 10 schools** to students in grades K-12. Our district marked 25 years of the program this school year.
- More than **290 students earned the Nebraska Seal of Bilingualism**.
- 4,592 students participated in at least one dual enrollment course, a **more than 6% increase over the previous year**.
- The College Board **designated 332 Omaha Public Schools students as Advanced Placement Scholars**.
- **Students showcased their learning at state and national levels** in Educators Rising, DECA, FBLA, FFA, HOSA and SkillsUSA.



#OPSPROUD AWARDS SNAPSHOT

Staff

- Pamela Young, Bluestem Middle physical education teacher, received the Middle School Physical Education Teacher of the Year Award from the Nebraska Society for Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE).
- Deana Rainey, Northwest High English teacher, won the University of Nebraska Omaha Student Choice Outstanding Dual Enrollment Instructor Award.
- Omaha Public Schools educator Dean Stamp earned the 2026 Dr. Benton and Harriet Kutler Outstanding Vision Teacher Award from the Nebraska Foundation for Visually Impaired Children.
- Ella Cleaver, Pine Elementary and Gifford Park Elementary art teacher, was named the 2025 Nebraska Art Teachers Association Frances Thurber PreService Student of the Year.
- Katie Czerwiec, Beveridge Middle language arts teacher, and Keaira Watson, King Elementary second grade teacher, earned 2026 Nebraska Excellence in Teaching Awards from the Nebraska Department of Education.
- Thomas Lee, Westview High Principal, received the 2025 John Wooden Legacy Award recipient from the Nebraska Basketball Coaches Association.



Students

- Alexandru Bardac and Ivory McTizic, Buena Vista High students, competed in poetry at the 2026 National Individual Events Tournament of Champions.
- The National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts selected artwork from Benson High's Vittorio Heh and Gerardo Gutierrez-Cano and Northwest High's Addy Hamilton and Hani Hassan for the National K-12 Ceramic Exhibition.
- Bryan High and Beveridge Middle placed first in their divisions at the 100 Black Men of Omaha's 26th Annual African American History Challenge.
- Four Omaha Public Schools students qualified as semifinalists in the 2026 National Merit Scholarship Program, including Central High's Daniel Cox, Joshua Shapiro & Adelan Gholami, and Westview High's Austin McGrath.
- Three Omaha Public Schools students earned a place on the podium as 2026 NSAA State Wrestling Champions, including Khy'Ree Thomas-Calloway of Bryan High, Terence Crawford Jr. of North High and Kalynn Lyons of Westview High.
- Bluestem Middle earned the school-wide Social Justice Trophy in Omaha's 8th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Living the Dream Competition.



Stay Connected with Omaha Public Schools

Families, please ensure your phone number and email address are current with your child's school to receive important updates about school and district happenings.



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Administrative Department Numbers

Information Center..... (531) 299-0220
 District Communications..... (531) 299-0221
 English Learner Department (531) 299-0259
 Help Desk (531) 299-0300
 Nutrition Services (531) 299-0230
 Omaha Public
 Schools Foundation (531) 299-0250

Student and Community
 Services (531) 299-0314
 Student Placement..... (531) 299-0302
 Student Transportation..... (531) 299-0140
 Talent Services (531) 299-0240

Omaha Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, citizenship status, veteran status, political affiliation or economic status in its programs, activities and employment and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following individual has been designated to accept allegations regarding non-discrimination policies: Superintendent of Schools, 3215 Cuming Street, Omaha, NE 68131 (531-299-9822). The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Director of Equity and Diversity, 3215 Cuming Street, Omaha, NE 68131 (531-299-0307).