



Dr. Teri Staloch, Superintendent
Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools
Prior Lake American/Savage Pacer
Column run date April 17, 2021

At Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools we transitioned our secondary students back to In-Person Learning on April 15th so now all students, E-12, have the opportunity to be back learning in our schools. We also continue to provide Distance Learning for families who choose that model. This has been a very exciting time with our schools beginning to feel much the way they did pre-pandemic. Looking ahead, we are planning for the 2021-22 school year to have all students learning full time, in-person throughout PLSAS.

While this school year has certainly had its challenges, particularly with transitioning between Distance, Hybrid and In-Person Learning, creating personalized learning has remained central in providing a high quality educational experience in any learning model. Our talented teachers, administrators and support staff have risen to the challenges of the school year to meet the needs of students while consistently modeling kindness and resiliency. The return to In-Person Learning is a great opportunity to celebrate the PLSAS programs and learning spaces that cater to students of all ages and interest levels.

PLSAS puts a great deal of emphasis on developing strong relationships. The pandemic further revealed how our teachers are skilled at - and committed to - building strong relationships with students. Throughout the pandemic they have created space to listen to students, have check-ins and provide opportunities for them to seek the support they need. They have delivered instruction that is engaging and relevant to students, while working to keep routines as much as possible to create a sense of stability.

Another focus of the district is an emphasis on personalized learning. Environmental Education, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (E-STEM) is just one example of an engaging learning experience where students really connect with the lesson plans. E-STEM lessons often happen outdoors and this year we have been able to deepen E-STEM learning while keeping students and staff safe.

Other examples of unique personalized learning opportunities include La ola del lago at Grainwood Spanish Immersion which is celebrating its 7th year and is now housed in its own beautifully renovated building. PLSAS also provides a wide variety of options for families and our youngest learners through our early learning programs. Additional unique programs include the district's SAGE Academy serving gifted learners, Bridges Area Learning Center and the MN Center for Advanced Professional Studies, to name a few.

We are also excited to have our schools filled with students enjoying our beautiful new learning spaces throughout the district. From flexible furniture to movable walls, our spaces are meeting the needs of students by offering even more opportunities for personalized learning while also creating space for student collaboration. All of our schools are focused on providing an education that meets the unique learning needs of each student.

While the past year has indeed been challenging, there is so much to celebrate in PLSAS! Our committed and passionate staff, diverse program offerings and unique learning spaces create an environment that encourages students to grow and thrive. Thank you to all of our staff, families and students for coming together to navigate a challenging year. We look forward to moving forward, serving and celebrating all of our students.

For those families who are interested in enrolling in the district, or returning to the district after a year of pandemic restrictions, our online enrollment is open now at www.priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us/enroll or call (952) 226-0000.

We are excited and grateful as we begin our final quarter of the year to be with students in-person again and to reconnect in ways that are familiar and meaningful to them. At this time, our fall planning includes having all E-12 students learning full time, in-person. We look forward to the 2021-22 school year, continuing to reconnect with families and creating new memories with students.