

# Laker CONNECTIONS



A Publication of Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools • August, 2022



## From the Superintendent



Dr. Michael Thomas  
Superintendent

The school year will soon be upon us and as the new Superintendent of Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools I am looking forward to fall with great optimism.

I have spent much of this summer visiting schools, meeting with staff, parents, students, city and township leaders, and beginning to get to know the area and businesses. My family and I are enjoying this community very much and recently became some of Prior Lake's newest residents. After serving as a Superintendent in Colorado Springs, I am excited to be back in my home state and become a Laker.

With just over one month in the district, I can already see PLSAS has terrific staff who are dedicated to our mission to educate all learners to reach their full potential as contributing and productive members of our ever-changing global community. Together we will support students and build on our district's strong foundation.

This is not work that can be done alone. Strong schools equal strong communities and it will take our entire community, working together, to support our students and continue to bring our mission to life for them.

Looking ahead to the school year, I will be laser focused on core academics and providing the support necessary to meet the unique learning needs of all students, while providing them with social-emotional skills to help them reach their full potential.

I am also looking forward to getting more involved in the community, meeting parents and district residents, and gathering feedback to learn more about what's important to our stakeholders. I will be sharing more details on these listening and learning opportunities with our community this fall.

I am honored to serve this community and can't wait to kick-off a new school year as your Superintendent.

## Student information update

We are gearing up for a successful start to the school year! Part of that planned success depends on great communication and we need your help to make that happen.

We are asking all parents of current students to complete the Annual Update in Infinite Campus for each child before the first day of school. It is important to update or confirm your information so we can communicate with you about important events including emergencies and school closures. If your child has not yet attended school at PLSAS, you do not need to complete this update.

To start, visit our website at [www.priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us](http://www.priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us) and login to Infinite Campus in the Parent portal. Then click on "More," then "Online Registration" and follow the prompts. For assistance, contact Lynn Wiczorek at 952-226-0062 or [lwiczorek@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us](mailto:lwiczorek@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us)

## New Hammock Forest at Jeffers Pond Elementary



Jeffers Pond students can now be easily swayed to do some reading (and relaxing) in their new Hammock Forest.

The City of Prior Lake, along with teachers and members of the D.O.G.S. (Dads Of Great Students) group, collaborated on the installation of a new Hammock Forest in the outdoor learning space next to Jeffers Pond Elementary School.

Last spring there was a great turnout to help dig the holes, cement the posts and wheelbarrow the materials around to create this great space that our students are now able to enjoy.

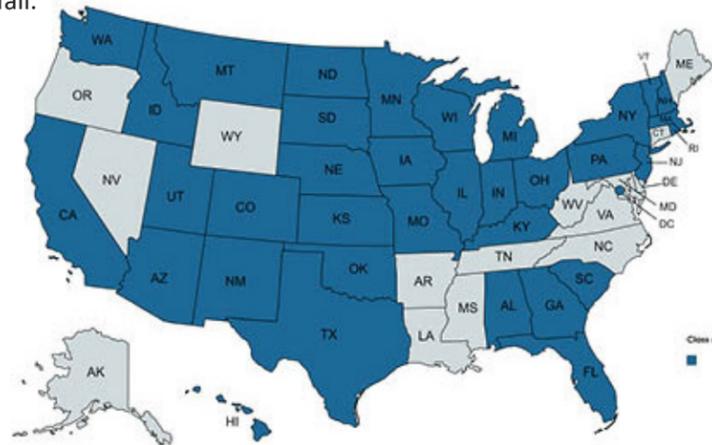
## Welcome to the 2022-23 school year

We can't wait to welcome back our Laker learners in September!



## Class of 2022: where they're heading

The class of 2022 is getting ready to embark on its next journey! 82% of 2022 graduates plan to attend 2 or 4-year colleges/universities, 10% plan to enter the workforce and 2% are joining the military. In the following graphic, the states in blue represent where our Lakers will be attending colleges/universities in the fall.



On June 10th, 732 Prior Lake High School and Bridges Area Learning Center students attended commencement at Dan Patch Stadium.



[www.priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us](http://www.priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us)

## / E-STEM Schools /

### Three PLHS students earn Gold Seal of Biliteracy

This summer the School Board honored three members of the Prior Lake High School class of 2022 by recognizing them for attaining the Gold Seal of Biliteracy from the Minnesota Department of Education.

Pedro Nore, Yelena Okhman and Sofia Abbott were awarded with certificates for attaining proficiency in two or more languages by their high school graduation. They each took a test of the language in speaking, writing, reading and listening. The Seal of Biliteracy also earns them college credits.

Congratulations to these outstanding bilingual Laker graduates!



**"Being bilingual is not just about being proficient in another language but it's also about embracing another culture."**  
- Sofia Abbott



**"I believe it's not only good to be connected to your native culture, but necessary."**  
- Pedro Nore



**"Knowing two languages allows you to help out more people."**  
- Yelena Okhman

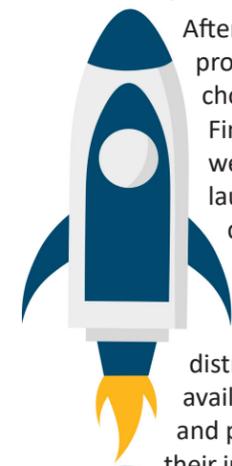
**DID YOU KNOW?**

One in five sophomores at Prior Lake High School earned college credit in Advanced Placement World History during the 2021-22 school year.



### Launching soon

After eight years the PLSAS website will be getting a fresh, new look! A PLSAS committee of stakeholders started work last fall by gathering feedback and looking at website functionality, user experience and accessibility to revise our website into a tool that will be well organized, mobile-friendly and attractive.



After a Request For Proposals process, PLSAS has chosen our current provider, Finalsite to continue hosting our website. This fall we plan to launch the new site with a design that will be easy to use on a computer or mobile device, with a more visual approach to showcasing the district's stories and opportunities available to all students -- current and prospective -- as they explore their interests and plan their futures.

Look for more information on the launch date and improved features in the coming weeks.

### Unity Mural unveiled at Prior Lake High School



On June 9, Prior Lake High School hosted a special celebration and recognition of the student and community efforts towards the creation of a new Unity Mural for the high school. The Prior Lake Rotary's Equity and Inclusion Committee, local artist Greg Preslicka and high school art teacher Kristi Malmgren joined forces to organize approximately 200 students to come together and complete the mural representing the students' vision of diversity and unity.

The idea for the project came about during a meeting with the PLHS Student Advisory Group (SAG) and Prior Lake Rotary's Equity and Inclusion Committee. SAG is comprised of students from the Black Student Union, Asian Student Association, Muslim Student Association, Native American Student Coalition, Queer Teen Coalition, Women's EmPOWERment Group and Student Council.

### Prepared to respond: PLSAS staff participate in reunification exercise



Maureen Mullen, Assistant Director of Operations, Transportation, Health and Safety, explains to observers the Standard Reunification Method (SRM)

On June 13, more than 200 PLSAS staff members, along with public safety partners and observers participated in a Standard Reunification Method (SRM) Functional Exercise that simulated the response that would occur in our district during an emergency.

The method practiced is designed to ensure the safe and accountable reunification of students with parents and guardians during an unplanned event, and to provide timely and accurate communications including follow-up resources for students, families and staff members should the unthinkable happen.

The drill took months of preparation and is the second SRM exercise PLSAS has conducted. PLSAS has adopted these procedures from the The "I Love U Guys" Foundation, an organization that developed this proven method. Their programs for crisis response and post-crisis reunification are used in more than 30,000 schools, districts, departments, agencies, organizations and communities around the world.

To learn more about SRM and PLSAS' school safety practices, visit our website: [www.priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us](http://www.priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us)

### Your School Board - helping all learners reach their full potential

The PLSAS Board of Education is driven by its commitment to serve our community's families and children, centered around the district's mission to educate all learners to reach their full potential as contributing and productive members of our ever-changing global community. While the pandemic certainly brought unprecedented challenges to education, as your School Board we are more committed than ever to bring this mission to life for all learners.

As a School Board, our governance role is to hire the Superintendent, set policy and oversee human and financial resources. We also serve on several committees, attend district and school events, and pitch in whenever we are needed. Helping to serve student lunches during the staffing shortage last school year was just one way many of us were able to connect directly with students.

As we welcome the start of the 2022-23 school year, we are unified in our dedication to students and together, with Superintendent Dr. Michael Thomas, are working as a cohesive team with a common purpose of providing a quality education that leads to high levels of student achievement.

We concentrate our focus around our mission and district Strategic Plan that was written with staff, student, parent and community input. With these goals, we will make the best decisions possible for the students, staff and families of PLSAS.

- Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools Board of Education

## Student Surveys

Occasionally the school district utilizes surveys to obtain student opinions and information about students. Student surveys may be conducted as determined necessary by the school district. School board policy 520 addresses the administration of student surveys.

A student, staff and parent survey will be administered annually each spring by the district.

### Student Surveys Conducted as Part of U. S. Department of Education Programs

All instructional materials, including teacher's manuals, films, tapes, or other supplementary material which will be used in connection with any survey, analysis, or evaluation as part of any program funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education shall be available for inspection by the parents or guardians of the students. No student shall be required, as part of any program funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education, without the prior consent of the student (if the student is an adult or emancipated minor) or, in the case of an emancipated minor, without the prior written consent of the parent, to submit to a survey that reveals information concerning:

1. political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
2. mental and psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
3. sex behavior or attitudes;
4. illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
7. religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student's parent; or
8. income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

### Student Surveys that are Not Sponsored by a Department of Education Program

Parents will be notified in advance of a survey and may inspect, on request, a survey, including an evaluation, created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed by a school to a student. The notice will include information on how parents may gain access to the survey prior to its administration.

### Information Collection or Disclosure

This policy does not apply to the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for, or to, students or educational institutions, such as:

1. information collected by teachers to gather students' feedback on the classroom experience;
2. college or other postsecondary education recruitment or military;
3. book clubs, magazines, and programs providing access to low cost literary products;
4. curriculum and instructional materials used by elementary and secondary schools;
5. tests and assessments used by elementary schools and secondary schools to provide cognitive, evaluative, diagnostic, clinical, aptitude, or achievement information about students, or to generate other statistically useful data for the purpose of securing such tests and assessments and the subsequent analysis and public release of the aggregate data from such tests and assessments;
6. the sale by students of products or services to raise funds for school-related or education-related activities; and
7. student recognition programs

## Protection and Privacy of Student Records

Policy 515 contains information regarding Directory Information. In accordance with federal law and state statutes, the school board has defined Directory Information as listed below.

If you have questions about Directory Information, or should parents (or students age 18 or older) NOT want the below information released, please contact Liz Zimmerman at 952-226-0013 or ezimmerman@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us and you will be asked to submit a form, which must be completed annually by October 1.

Directory Information includes:

- Student's name and address
- Telephone listing
- Date and place of birth
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Degrees or awards received
- Previous educational agency or institution attended
- Pictures for school-approved publications, yearbooks, electronic newsletters, cable TV or newspapers
- Student pictures, video and artwork on district web pages, including district and school social media sites
- Names and pictures of students participating in or attending extra-curricular activities, school events, and High School League activities or events

## E-Learning Days

Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools (PLSAS) offers E-Learning Days to provide an opportunity for students to learn from home when our schools close due to weather. Our first inclement weather day of the school year will NOT be an E-Learning Day. The first school cancellation due to weather will remain a traditional cancellation as in the past. Should there be additional inclement weather days, an E-Learning Day will be called.

## Access to State Report Cards

The state's reporting system on school districts provides parents access to report cards on the district and each of the schools. Go to: [www.education.state.mn.us](http://www.education.state.mn.us) to access the report for your child's school. Information can be accessed under the Data Center heading.

## Child Nutrition Services



Child Nutrition Services provides students with nutritious, high quality meals that promote good physical and mental development. We focus on serving local foods, many cooked from scratch, with cleaner labels for our students.

We offer a variety of nutritional meal choices consisting of at least two hot meal offerings and one cold option. A la carte items are offered in grades 6-12 only.

### Free/Reduced Price Meals

Federally funded free meals for kids waivers enacted during the pandemic have ended. With the conclusion of these waivers, Prior Lake - Savage Area Schools will no longer be offering free meals for all students. Free or Reduced-Price Meal applications are available. Electronic applications can be found in the SchoolCafé app or a hard copy application can be found on our department web page. Applications must be filled out for each school year the assistance is needed. For questions, please call Linda Roach, Child Nutrition Specialist at 952-226-0009.

### Breakfast

All kindergarten students receive a free breakfast. Grades 1-12: \$1.80

### Lunch

Elementary: \$2.75  
Middle: \$2.85  
Bridges: \$2.85  
High School: \$3.25

### Milk: \$.45

Second entrée grades K-8: \$1.80  
Second entrée high school: \$2.50

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

**JOIN OUR TEAM**  
**NOW HIRING OUTSTANDING STAFF**

We are currently looking for individuals to  
join our PLSAS team!

Apply Now

[WWW.PRIORLAKE-SAVAGE.K12.MN.US/EMPLOYMENT](http://WWW.PRIORLAKE-SAVAGE.K12.MN.US/EMPLOYMENT)

## A message from the Director of Community Education



Joel Dahl  
Dir. Community  
Education

I am proud to be serving as the new Director of Community Education Services for Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools. We have a very talented, dedicated and innovative team who provide our communities with many quality lifelong learning opportunities.

As we welcome another season of learning, I invite you to browse through our catalog and discover something new for yourself. We have classes and activities for students of all ages. I also encourage you to share your ideas for new programs that you would like to see us offer. I look forward to seeing you at one of our classes soon!

The Community Education Fall Family Catalog will mail to all households in Prior Lake and Savage around August 19. Online registration is open at [www.priorlakesavagece.com](http://www.priorlakesavagece.com)

## Fall Community Fest Monday, September 19, 6-8:30 p.m. Prior Lake High School - Activity Center

Join us at the Prior Lake High School Activity Center for Fall Community Fest. More than 200 exhibitors will be present to provide information on the services and opportunities they offer the Prior Lake-Savage Area community. Learn more about school activities, adult service clubs and organizations, as well as youth sports, and become more familiar with the variety of businesses located in the community. Many giveaways make for a fun, enjoyable evening for the whole family.

new!  
4 day option

**KIDS' COMPANY** 2022-2023

now enrolling  
PreK - Gr 5  
\* space is limited \*

**Before and After School Child Care  
6:30 a.m.-School | School-6:00 p.m.  
Preschool Child Care at Edgewood**

## Register for Early Childhood Family Education classes



Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) is a program designed to support and strengthen families - who are the first and most important teacher in a young child's life. There are a wide variety of fall classes available to suit many interests and schedules. Registration for fall classes is open now. Register at: <https://bit.ly/3RGXYE0>

## Are you new to the district?

Welcome to Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools! If you have school-age children, you can enroll them online at [www.priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us/enroll](http://www.priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us/enroll) or visit the District Services Center, 4540 Tower Street SE in Prior Lake.

For more information, call 952-226-0000. We look forward to welcoming your child into our school district as a Laker!

## Connect with us

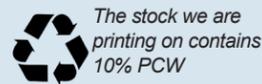
To get news, photos, events and more, "Like" us on Facebook and/or follow us on Twitter and Instagram.



[facebook.com/PLSAS](https://www.facebook.com/PLSAS)  
[twitter.com/isd719](https://twitter.com/isd719)  
[instagram.com/isd719](https://www.instagram.com/isd719)

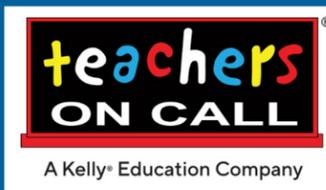
## About this Newsletter

For questions or comments regarding *Laker Connections*, contact Kristi Mussman, Director of Communications, [kmussman@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us](mailto:kmussman@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us) or 952-226-0014



Our mission is to educate all learners to reach their full potential as contributing and productive members of our ever-changing global community.

**BE A PART OF  
THE PLSAS  
TEAM BY  
BECOMING A  
SUBSTITUTE  
TEACHER!**



Apply now!

## SNOW much fun!

PLSAS third graders got high marks for creativity after being chosen as winners in the City of Prior Lake's Snow Plow Naming Contest. Five Hawks third graders in Mrs. Sandberg's class named two snow plows: "Snowbuster" and "Blizzard Wizard."

At Jeffers Pond, Connor and his classmates in Mrs. Sandau's class were honored with naming another snow plow, "Snow Trooper."

Residents will be seeing these colorfully decorated and specially named snow plows on the streets this winter.



Jeffers Pond third graders stand by the snow plow they named "Snow Trooper"



Five Hawks third graders named two snow plows: "Snowbuster" and "Blizzard Wizard"

## Connect with your local schools



See a show

Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools is pleased to offer free activity passes to residents in the community age 55 and older to attend most home events. Passes for the 2022-23 school year can be picked up at the District Services Center, 4540 Tower Street SE, Prior Lake, Monday through Friday, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Call 952-226-0000 for more details.



Enjoy a concert



Go to a sporting event

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