

Superintendent Search underway

On February 22, 2022, Superintendent Dr. Teri Staloch announced she has accepted a new position that will allow her to pursue a career opportunity in the private sector at the end of the 2021-22 school year. Following her announcement, the School Board began the process of a nationwide search for a new Superintendent to begin serving our district on July 1, 2022.

Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools (PLSAS) Board of Education approved a contract with BWP & Associates for Superintendent search services. BWP & Associates has begun to develop a Leadership Profile by soliciting staff and community input through a series of forums and a community-wide survey. This input was presented to the Board on April 11.

The job vacancy was posted in mid March and applications will close on April 15. BWP will identify those who most closely align with the Leadership Profile developed with community input. The Board will interview candidates May 2-7, and finalist interviews will be conducted May 9-12. The new Superintendent will be selected on May 23.

Further details regarding the search process can be found on the PLSAS website: www.priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us

To learn about the School Board's role in the Superintendent search, turn to page 3.



Dr. Teri Staloch receives Kay E. Jacobs Memorial Award

The Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) has named PLSAS Superintendent, Dr. Teri Staloch, the recipient of the 2022 Kay E. Jacobs Memorial Award in recognition of her exemplary school leadership, distinguished contribution to the success of Minnesota's children, and service inspiring emulation by her colleagues, especially those who are women.



Pictured with Dr. Staloch is Dr. Deb Henton, MASA Executive Director (right) and Dr. Daniel Bittman, Superintendent of Elk River Area School District & MASA President (left)

Dr. Staloch was honored during a statewide recognition ceremony during the MASA/MASE Spring Conference.

Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools earns financial reporting award

Our district has once again earned the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting award from the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) International. Our district has been an award recipient for the past 13 years.

According to ASBO, PLSAS earned the Certificate after providing a high quality Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year-end 2021. This award represents a significant achievement and reflects our commitment to transparency and high-quality financial reporting. Attainment of the Certificate signifies that the district has met the level of excellence required by the ASBO and is a testament to the integrity and technical competence of our district's business staff.

Local celebrities team up with students on youth-driven conversations



On March 18, Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools (PLSAS) partnered with Jordan and Shakopee Public Schools to work with students to address racial harm and discuss ways to create anti-racist environments that are welcoming for all learners.

Minnesota Vikings' C.J. Ham and actress/model Kuoth Wiel joined students in Caring and Committed Conversations to discuss school issues. Race Equity Facilitator Seema Pothini, PLSAS Director of Equity and Inclusion, Sam Ouk, along with counselors and administrators also joined students in open discussions and presentations centered around improving school climate and building relationships.

Small groups of students shared and listened to one another on a variety of topics that were meaningful to them, then reported their findings to the larger group. The event allowed students to brainstorm ideas for their schools, as well as share their stories and points-of-view.

The school districts came together at McColl Pond Environmental Learning Center in Savage as part of their ongoing Achievement and Integration work designed to increase student achievement and create equitable educational opportunities for all students.

Bunnies at Bridges ALC

Bridges Area Learning Center was hoppin' with some special visitors last month.

Some super soft and adorable comfort bunnies were brought in by Peacebunny Island to provide students with a unique form of stress relief during finals week. Based on their smiles and sweet interactions with the animals, it was evident how much joy the bunnies provided the students.



Local student Caleb Smith started his bunny business when he was just 8 years old. As a young boy, he was eager to help prevent the pet rabbit abandonment cycle and save as many bunnies as he could. He trains the bunnies to provide hope and "happiness" to groups and individuals needing a little extra peace and positivity in their lives. For more information about

Peacebunny Island, visit their website: www.peacebunnyisland.com



www.priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us

From the Superintendent



Teri Staloch, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Back in 2009 Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools (PLSAS) opened a first-of-its kind school in our district - one with a unique setting and approach designed to meet and support the changing needs of students. Now, more than a decade later, hundreds of Bridges Area Learning Center (ALC) students have earned their high school diploma, thanks to their own hard work and our talented teaching and support staff.

What started in small office spaces in the Northgate Center in Prior Lake has now flourished and developed into a high school program focused on personalizing student learning, strengthening, and enhancing connections to school, as well as focusing on a vital aspect of student academic success: social and emotional wellness.

Each time I visit Bridges I am struck by the sense of belonging students have in their school. Led by Bridges ALC Coordinator, Dave Brown, students and staff are a tight-knit community of learners where instruction is adapted to the needs of the student. The flexible approach to teaching and learning has been a key to student success.

Community support has also played a large role in the success of Bridges' students. From the very beginning, Prior Lake Rotary Club members have volunteered their time, offering one-on-one mentorship through the STRIVE program that supports students by fostering positive relationships with adults to help them navigate the complexities of school and life.

Bridges experienced two significant changes starting in the 2019-2020 school year. The first was designing and moving into a brand-new school, thanks to the support of our community through the successful passing of the 2017 referendum. Today Bridges is located near the middle school campus in a school that was designed specifically for multiple uses and student choice, with open spaces, flexible furniture, and opportunities for collaborative student learning and socialization.

In the 2020-2021 school year, Bridges adopted a new learning model for part of the school day called Project-Based Learning (PBL). PBL focuses on tapping into student interest and passion while working with a teacher as a project manager. Students work through a project design process that allows them to display their learning and knowledge of academic standards. In this way, when students have choice in their learning and work on relevant and meaningful topics, engagement happens in a deeper and more consistent way.

This change in Bridges teaching and learning was a result of three years of studying PBL in partner schools, as well as securing funding support through EdVisions. Thanks to grant donations, we have been able to accomplish staff professional development as well as purchase equipment and tools that support projects with high student interest such as a kiln, heat press and laser engraver.

The Bridges team helps to meet the needs of our students to help sustain their progress and reach their full potential. For the last thirteen years, we have worked with area students to help them graduate and move on to the next steps of their lives. Whether it's been pursuing post-secondary education, a job or entering the military, our students have been able to achieve their goals and become productive members of our ever-changing global community. #WeArePLSASAllIn



Pictured left to right: Alexius Serefeas, Bridges ALC teacher; Athena Negrete, student; Kirsten Calica, student; Ella Whiting, student; Dave Brown, Bridges ALC Coordinator

In March the School Board honored students from Bridges Area Learning Center during the Laker Pride portion of the School Board meeting. Students spoke about what it means to be a part of a school community that personalizes learning through Project-Based Learning.



Community Education
Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools
www.priorlakesavagece.com
952-226-0310

Community Education offers a variety of camps, classes and events for all ages. Visit www.priorlakesavagece.com or call 952-226-0310 for more information.

Community Education
Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools
www.priorlakesavagece.com
952-226-0310

Family Catalog
Classes For All Ages
March to August 2022

We Are Croisin' Into Summer Like...

Adult Programs Youth Programs Early Childhood Family Ed. Programs

www.PriorLakeSavageCE.com

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isd719CommEd

Summer Swim

Registration is now open for Summer Camps and Swimming Lessons.



Session 1: June 14-17 & June 20-23 (Closed June 13)

Session 2: June 27-30 & July 5-8 (Closed July 4)

Session 3: July 11-14 & July 18-21

Session 4: July 25-28 & August 1-4

* Lessons are held every day Monday through Thursday unless otherwise noted. Class times are subject to change.

The Killing Fields - Refugee Simulation (Ages 18+)

This seminar uses the power of simulation to provide a hands-on experience of what refugees have to endure in order to survive and start a new life in Minnesota. Participants will analyze true stories of Killing Field survivors and the families they have lost along the way. You will sit through a simulated concentration camp where you will learn whether or not you survive. Surviving the concentration camp is only the beginning. You will then make sacrifices to journey across their country's border to arrive at a refugee camp where you will wait to see what fate has in store for you.

Wednesday, April 13, 6:30-9 p.m.

Twin Oaks Middle School

Presented by: Sam Ouk, Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools' Director of Equity and Inclusion



KIDS' COMPANY
WE'RE MORE THAN JUST CHILD CARE.

Summer 2022
June 15-August 19 | 7am-5:30pm

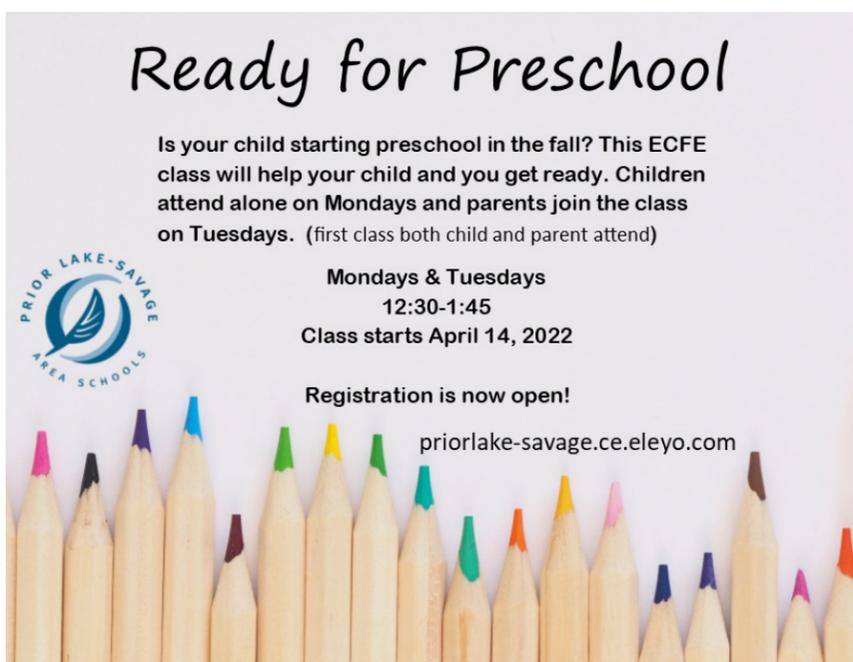
School Year 22-23
Before and After School Care
6:30am-School | School-6:00pm

Preschool Child Care
in partnership with Circle of Friends
2,3,4 and 5 day scheduling options

Registration opens March 16!

Circle of Friends Preschool

Circle of Friends is a 4-star Parent Aware rated program. Registration for the 2022-2023 school year is now open! Visit www.priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us and click on Circle of Friends Preschool under Our Schools to register.



Ready for Preschool

Is your child starting preschool in the fall? This ECCE class will help your child and you get ready. Children attend alone on Mondays and parents join the class on Tuesdays. (first class both child and parent attend)

Mondays & Tuesdays
12:30-1:45
Class starts April 14, 2022

Registration is now open!
priorlake-savage.ce.eleyo.com



Yeah Baby!!

8-week infant ECCE class
Thursdays
5:30-6:45 p.m.
First class:
April 14, 2022
Registration open NOW

priorlake-savage.ce.eleyo.com

Early Childhood Family Education classes Register: priorlake-savage.ce.eleyo.com

Nature Pop-up Fishing Fun

May 3, 4:15-5:15 p.m.

Join us for a fish story and then try your hand at catching your own fish. Fishing poles and bait will be provided. There will be opportunities to investigate some other pond critters as well. Bring the entire family.

Kids in the Kitchen

2.5 – 5 years

Thursdays, 12:00-1:15 (open now through June 2nd)

Pack your lunch and come to school for a FUN adventure! In parenting we will focus on food, nutrition and cooking with kids. As the weeks progress, families will create individual, kid-friendly recipes to accompany their lunch. While adults chat, kids will have the opportunity for motor play and to play with friends.

Role of the School Board in hiring the next Superintendent of Schools

One of the most important jobs the School Board has is the hiring of the Superintendent of the district. The Superintendent is the only employee that reports to the Board. The Board, in its role of governance, sets policies and goals for the district. The Superintendent is responsible for day-to-day implementation and management that meets these policies and goals.

In selecting the Superintendent, the Board is guided by Policy 303, under state law (Minn. Stat. § 123B.143, Minn. Rules, Chapter 3512). The policy spells out what School Boards should consider in the selection process. In addition to meeting or exceeding licensing standards, the Board should also consider professional preparation, experience, skill and demonstrated competence. The search process concludes once the Board selects a final candidate and negotiates the contract with this candidate.

While the Board is the final decision maker, we would like to acknowledge the high level of engagement and feedback from the community as we have begun this process. We are committed to the value of our stakeholder's voices as we consider the hiring of our future leader.

- Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools Board of Education

E-STEM in action

Fifth graders at La ola del lago at Grainwood have been studying erosion in Earth Science and got a unique opportunity to use some Elwha River Stream Tables from the Science Museum of Minnesota.



Students constructed their own dam, then removed it and recorded their findings. This provided a fantastic hands-on lesson on erosion, sediment and human impact on the environment.

PLSAS is a leader in energy efficiency

Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools (PLSAS) is getting high marks for low energy consumption throughout the district. At the February 28th Study Session, School Board members heard from Mechanical Engineer, Margaret Bishop who presented an analysis of the district's energy use. Here are a few highlights from Bishop's report:

- PLSAS has reduced energy consumption by nearly 19% since the 2012-13 school year.
- All of our schools have earned an Energy Star® score of 75 or higher on the Environmental Protection Agency's 1-100 scale, which indicates that they perform better than at least 75% of similar buildings nationwide.
- According to the State of Minnesota's B3 Benchmarking for public buildings, PLSAS is one of the most energy efficient districts in the state with energy use substantially lower than districts of comparable size.

PLSAS choirs presents: The Peacemakers



Photo courtesy of Janean Mestnik

In February the Prior Lake High School Choirs, the Hidden Oaks and Twin Oaks Middle School Bel Canto Choirs and a 24-member professional orchestra performed Karl Jenkins' masterworks show, The Peacemakers.

More than 250 students collaborated their talents for this phenomenal performance which also featured quotes and texts by some of the world's most prominent proponents of peace, including Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, the Dalai Lama, Anne Frank, Mother Teresa and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Their collective desire for peace, brotherhood, love, understanding and justice was beautifully set to music by Welsh composer, Karl Jenkins.

JOIN OUR TEAM

NOW HIRING OUTSTANDING STAFF

www.priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us/apply

Try It Tuesday

LakerMarketplace uses lunchtime as an opportunity for students to continue the learning that happens during their school day.

Every Tuesday, Child Nutrition Services staff offer students food that may be unusual to them. Staff use colorful flyers to teach children where the food comes from, what nutrients are in it and other interesting facts.

Recently students tried Daikon Radishes (sometimes called the white winter radish), which is a root vegetable similar in shape to a large carrot, with a flavor that is similar to a mild, red radish. It's grown in many Asian countries and in Japan, it is their most commonly eaten vegetable.

Students have also been able to sample coconut water, which is a popular drink in tropical countries. Although over 95% of it is water, it is packed with natural electrolytes such as potassium.

Another Try It food students were exposed to were fresh cranberries - one of the few berries that is native to the United States, with Wisconsin producing over 60% of the country's cranberries.



PLSAS is getting a new website

After eight years the PLSAS website will be getting a fresh, new look!

Coming this fall, the new site will be mobile friendly with a more visual approach to showcasing the district's stories and opportunities available to all students as they explore their interests and plan their futures. Look for more information on the launch date and improved features in the coming months.



Teachers of the Year



Pictured left to right: Miranda Hanstad, Glendale Elementary; Julia Hipke, Jeffers Pond Elementary; Deveny Beaton, Hidden Oaks Middle School; Christie Bauer, Twin Oaks Middle School; Lindsay Skjoiten, Redtail Ridge Elementary; Mary Hoffman, Hamilton Ridge Elementary; Lori Bui, WestWood Elementary; Jillian Magnusson, Five Hawks Elementary; Mike Shebuski, Prior Lake High School; Marissa McDonald, Edgewood School; David Lawson, Bridges Area Learning Center. Not pictured: Michelle Guzman, La ola del lago at Grainwood.

In February staff gathered to celebrate the PLSAS Teachers of the Year, sponsored by Prior Lake Savage Education Association. Congratulations to these phenomenal educators!

Athena Award winner

Congratulations to Prior Lake High School (PLHS) senior, Julia Hanson, on receiving the 2022 Athena Award. The Athena Award program recognizes outstanding female students in athletics and academics within their school.

Julia has played on the PLHS Girls' Varsity Volleyball team all four years of her high school career, where she earned a Varsity letter in the sport in each of those years. She was also named captain of the team for two of those years. She received four All Conference awards and two All State Section awards during her tenure at PLHS. She also set the school record in kills with 1,490! In the fall, Julia is headed to the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities on a volleyball scholarship.



Julia Hanson, Athena Award winner

Julia will be honored at the 50th anniversary Athena Awards luncheon on May 6 where she will be presented with the award in recognition of her effort and dedication.

Community Coffee & Conversations

An opportunity to discuss race and equity in our communities



Please join us for another round of warm coffee and enriching conversations. This month's event is sponsored by the Laker Educational Foundation.

Our discussion will focus on how the outreach of the Foundation has worked to help the school community close the opportunity and achievement gap. We will also take a closer look at how current practices can even better help all students to succeed.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
Light refreshments will be served.

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 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
[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 or 952-226-0014



The stock we are printing on contains 10% PCW

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

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