

C Laker CONNECTIONS



A Publication of Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools • March, 2023



Are you new to PLSAS? Enroll online

Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools offers online enrollment for all new students in grades K-12. Families can visit the district's enrollment page to begin the student registration process.

Are you enrolling your student in kindergarten this fall? Join us for Kindergarten Open House on Monday, May 15, 2023. Five Hawks, Redtail Ridge: 3:30-4:30 p.m. Glendale, Hamilton Ridge, Jeffers Pond, La ola del lago at Grainwood, WestWood: 4:30-5:30 p.m.

We can't wait to welcome your student as a Laker!

www.PLSAS.COM/enroll



Preschool options to meet family needs

Registration is now open for our popular preschool programs. Visit www.plsas.org for more information and to enroll your child for the 2023-24 school year.

Circle of Friends Preschool

Circle of Friends Preschool offers School Readiness at Edgewood School and Nature School Readiness at Jeffers Pond Elementary.

Classes are for children three to five years of age and incorporate Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools' E-STEM philosophy.

Our program has a 4-star Parent Aware rating.

NEW!

Laker 3s Program

Laker 3s is a new program of Kids' Company. With extended hours to meet the needs of working families, the Laker 3s program offers families flexibility with a dependable 5-day schedule.

Children turning age 3 by September 1, 2023 and not assigned to a Circle of Friends class are eligible to join the program at Edgewood.

Lakers Preschool Child Care

Lakers Preschool Child Care is a branch of Kids' Company, offering morning and afternoon child care before and after Circle of Friends preschool classes.

This five-day schedule is offered at Jeffers Pond Elementary and Edgewood School.

Spreading kindness

Students throughout the district enjoyed participating in Valentine's Day activities that emphasized love, kindness and friendship.

From making friendship bracelets, painting hearts, creating kindness bookmarks, assembling folded heart pockets, writing cards and posters, delivering cards to local Veterans and wearing positivity shirts, students were definitely feeling the love!



Students at Jeffers Pond Elementary created a poster: "Helping one person may not change the world, but it could change the world for one person."

School Board members take the oath of office

Newly elected School Board members took the oath of office on January 9. Congratulations to Lisa Atkinson, Amy Bullyan and Jessica Olstad, as well as re-elected board member, Enrique Velazquez.



Also on January 9, Amy Crosby was elected Chair, Mary Frantz was elected Vice Chair/Clerk and Julie Bernick was elected Treasurer.

Teachers of the Year

In each of our buildings, an exemplary teacher was chosen by staff to represent the quality and contributions of all Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools educators. On January 16, the Prior Lake-Savage Education Association and the Prior Lake Rotary held a celebration to honor this year's honorees.



Karri Bowser
WestWood



Katie Devaney
Prior Lake High School



Jennifer Hansen
Redtail Ridge



Heidi Michaelson
Hidden Oaks



Heidi Murray
Glendale



Anne Nelson
Jeffers Pond



David Samuelson
Five Hawks



Kyle Schenkelberg
Twin Oaks



Kristin Stier
Hamilton Ridge



Ana Trimberger
La ola del lago



Lisa Treat-Urban
Edgewood School



Congratulations
Teachers!

ARE YOU AWESOME? WE'RE HIRING

JOIN THE LAKER TEAM!
www.plsas.org/employment



www.plsas.org

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P R I O R L A K E - S A V A G E
A R E A S C H O O L S

Helping students find their voice



Dr. Michael Thomas,
Superintendent

One theme that emerged during my Listening and Learning Tour this fall was the feeling of renewed excitement this school year. I felt it too and continue to feel that energy each week as I visit our schools and talk with students and staff.

Now, roughly halfway through the school year, we have kept that momentum going. We remain laser focused on high-quality academics and creating a positive learning culture, along with building strong relationships with students. I believe this combination is the pathway to student success.

Our Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools (PLSAS) teachers and support staff are responsive to student needs and get to know students as individuals. This is helping to get students back on track after two very challenging years due to the pandemic.

Our students have an amazing ability to articulate what they need to be successful. This has been evident in every grade level during something called, Caring and Committed Conversations where we set aside time to seek student input.

During Caring and Committed Conversations, students learn life skills such as how to talk with adults, work as a team, collaborate and develop critical thinking. Students also create new friendships that help them feel part of their larger school community, learn leadership skills and feel empowered to create positive change in their building.

One example of this is at Redtail Ridge where students had expressed interest in trying more ethnic foods. Thanks to the Nguyen family and our Child Nutrition Services (CNS) staff, students were able to try Chinese Fried Rice. It was so popular, the CNS staff served the dish to all PLSAS students during a World Wednesday celebration at the end of January.

Prior Lake High School and Bridges students recently focused on the topic, "The Purpose of School." Students studied the mission of the federal and state education departments and talked about how each individual student can get the most out of the investment their community makes by showing up to school every day, striving to reach their full potential.



Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools partnered with Jordan Public Schools and Shakopee Public Schools for the annual Caring and Committed Conversations event

We also empower student voices by conducting a voluntary survey each year, which is underway now for grades 3-12. This confidential survey helps us evaluate our strengths and opportunities for improvement. Summary survey results will be posted to our website in the coming weeks at www.plsas.org

It is my goal to take what we learn from gathering student input and work with various stakeholders to create a PLSAS Profile of a Graduate that details what each one of our students should learn in their K-12 journey and be able to embody before they graduate. This will help build future-ready students who are poised to thrive in college, the workforce and in life.

I believe the energy and excitement we are experiencing this school year, combined with student input, excellent staff and strong family/community partnerships, will propel PLSAS to be the premiere district of choice in the south metro.

Developing innovative leaders for the global economy

The Minnesota Center for Advanced Professional Studies (MNCAPS) Foundations of Business Pathway students held their annual Client Based Showcase on February 3.



Students spent four months gaining real-world experience by providing research-based solutions for local businesses and organizations and were able to share and present their impressive findings with showcase guests. Visitors were able to ask questions and engage in dialogue with the students during their presentations, as well.

MNCAPS is a partnership of education, industry and community, immersing all students in profession-based learning experiences. Our vision is to develop innovative leaders for the global economy. Learn more at www.MNCAPS.org



Community Education

Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools

www.priorlakesavagece.com
952-226-0310

Community Education offers a variety of classes and events for all ages. Registration is now open for our Spring and Summer seasons. Visit www.priorlakesavagece.com or call 952-226-0310 for more information.



Community Education
Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools
www.priorlakesavagece.com
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@PLSASCommEd

Family Catalog

Classes for All Ages

April to August 2023



Adult Programs

Pages 4-12



Youth and Early Childhood Programs

Pages 13-26



Youth Summer Programs


Pages 27-50

www.PriorLakeSavageCE.com

The Truth About Your Intuition and How to Make it Sing!

Wednesday, May 24
6:30 - 9 p.m.
Twin Oaks Middle School Auditorium

Register: www.PriorLakeSavageCE.com or call 952-226-0310



JODI LIVON



Nature Pop-Up

March 14, April 18, May 9
@Jeffers Pond
Family Event hosted by ECCE

PJ Party
(Ages 0-7)
6-7:15 pm
April 13 or May 4

FOR MORE INFO AND TO REGISTER VISIT
www.priorlakesavagece.com

Follow us



@PLSASCommEd

Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools


TOWN HALL MEETING

TUESDAY, APRIL 18, 2023

7:00 p.m. | Prior Lake High School

Topic of Discussion: SCHOOL FINANCE

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC



Bond sales save taxpayers dollars

At its February 13 meeting, the School Board approved the sale of a refunding bond issue for the purpose of refinancing two of the district’s existing bonds, resulting in \$342,102 in savings for taxpayers.

Bids for the sale of the refunding bonds were received on February 13 from a total of six financial firms. The award of the bond sale went to J.P. Morgan Securities LLC who had the lowest bid at 2.71%.

In addition, Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools has been able to maintain its AA2 bond (credit) rating, which means the district meets its financial commitments and taxpayers can expect to receive lower interest rates on district bond refinancing and any new, future bond issues than those with a lower credit rating.

“This is an excellent rating,” said Jeff Seeley, Senior Municipal Advisor with Ehlers & Associates, Inc., the district’s financial advisors. “Sound internal management of the district’s finances and budget, combined with strong outside influences such as the local tax base and regional economy has resulted in a very strong rating.”

Learning in the lunchroom

You may know that Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools' (PLSAS) Child Nutrition Services (CNS) staff focus on serving students nutritious, whole foods but did you know they also provide opportunities for students to extend their learning from the classroom to the lunchroom?

Recently CNS caught the attention of local news media for the following ways they serve up healthy school meals and help students try new foods.

Farm to School

Farm to School offers students a chance to experience food that is seasonal and produced in their community. The "Meet the Farmer" series provides experiential learning where students can explore new flavors, textures and high-quality foods. Some local farmers even visit PLSAS' cafeterias and classrooms and teach students about where their food comes from.

Some of our local farmer partners include the following:

- Casey's Acres, sweet corn
- Ferndale Market, Free-range, local turkey products
- Hmong American Farmers Association, red potatoes, sweet potatoes and butternut squash
- Spring Lake Farm, microgreens
- Thompsons' Hillcrest Orchard, apples and squash
- Waxwing Farm, sweet peppers, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots and watermelon radishes

Try It Tuesday

CNS staff also offer samples of new food items during Try It Tuesday. The LakerMarketplace kitchens offer students food that may be unusual to them. Staff use colorful flyers to teach students where the food comes from, what nutrients are in it and other interesting facts. Some of the foods offered in the past have included watermelon radish, poblano peppers and persimmons.

World Wednesday

Students also try ethnic foods during World Wednesday. In a recent World Wednesday at Redtail Ridge, students were treated to samples of Chinese Fried Rice provided by the Nguyen family.

Another way CNS staff encourage healthy eating is by placing fruits and vegetables first in the meal lines, trying different cooking techniques such as roasting vegetables instead of steaming them and using produce grown in school gardens.

Make sure to like us on Facebook @LakerMarket to learn what’s new in the lunchroom!



The Nguyen family treated Redtail Ridge students to their family recipe of Chinese Fried Rice as part of World Wednesday

Patriot's Pen essay contest winners

Congratulations to Hidden Oaks Middle School student Chase Walgrave on his second-place finish at the state-level VFW Patriot's Pen essay competition.

Chase originally took first place in the district-level competition, which qualified him for the state competition.

Hidden Oaks student Raina Schroeder earned second place in the district-level competition and was recognized with a Certificate of Merit at an awards luncheon on January 7.



Chase Walgrave received a Laker Pride Certificate at the February 13 School Board meeting for his winning essay, along with Hidden Oaks Assistant Principal, Melissa Knettel and Hidden Oaks Teacher, Lorinda Welch

The VFW-sponsored youth essay writing contest gives students the opportunity to write an essay expressing their views on a patriotic theme each year. This year's theme was, "My Pledge to Our Veterans." All Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools entries started at the local Prior Lake VFW Post level, where a handful of winners were then chosen to advance to the contest district level.

Congratulations to the following students who all had essays chosen for the initial district-level 2022-2023 Patriot’s Pen essay competition:

- Kylie Asleson - Twin Oaks Middle School
- Khalid Ayour - Twin Oaks Middle School
- Aaron Hoad - Hidden Oaks Middle School
- Karen Lam - Twin Oaks Middle School
- Casey Moore - Hidden Oaks Middle School
- Lillian Ngo - Hidden Oaks Middle School
- Tiana Nguyen - Hidden Oaks Middle School
- Claire Schellhorn - Twin Oaks Middle School
- Raina Schroeder - Hidden Oaks Middle School
- Aiden Schroeder - Twin Oaks Middle School
- Mallory Schwen - Hidden Oaks Middle School
- Leon Szabo - Twin Oaks Middle School
- Chase Walgrave - Hidden Oaks Middle School
- Molly Zack - Hidden Oaks Middle School

Sam Ouk receives Best Presentation Award

Congratulations to Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools' (PLSAS) Director of Equity and Inclusion Sam Ouk on receiving the Best Presentation Award at the Minnesota English Learner Education (MELEd) Conference for his refugee simulation, “After the Killing Fields.”



Sam Ouk, Director of Equity & Inclusion

Ouk’s 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 analyze true stories of Cambodian Killing Field survivors and the families they have lost along the way.

Ouk, a Cambodian refugee who immigrated to Rochester, MN at the age of 2, has also presented his seminar as a PLSAS Community Education class where participants sit through a simulated concentration camp and learn whether or not they survive.

Recently Ouk presented the simulation at the MELEd Conference where it was voted Best Presentation. The simulation has now been accepted as a “Best of Affiliate” presentation for the 2023 TESOL International Convention and English Language Expo, which will be held March 21 - 24 in Portland, Oregon.

School Safety Spotlight

Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools is pleased to announce a new Emergency Preparedness and Response Coordinator position has been created to oversee emergency management planning and school safety. After a detailed interview process, the candidate chosen for this position was Hayley Heidelberg.



Hayley Heidelberg, Emergency Preparedness and Response Coordinator

Heidelberg has held several safety positions, most recently as the Emergency Planning and Security Supervisor for St. Paul Regional Water Services. She is also a Captain, Firefighter/First Responder and Public Education Coordinator for the Mendota Heights Fire Department.

Twin Oaks students explore frontiers in history



Twin Oaks Middle School students took a deep-dive into history by taking on research projects designed to teach an understanding and appreciation of history while developing critical thinking skills.

The annual History Day event took place on February 15. To prepare, students chose a topic that relates to this year’s National History Day® theme, Frontiers in History: People, Places and Ideas. The theme allowed students to consider a wide variety of world, national or state history subjects and its relevance to ancient history or to the more recent past. Once a topic was chosen, students had to make the case for their topic by identifying or defining the frontier and thinking about what came before and after it.

In the weeks leading up to the event, students conducted in-depth research, used primary and secondary sources, read a variety of texts, and analyzed and synthesized information. Students then presented their historical content, either individually or in teams, in one of five presentation categories: research paper, exhibit, documentary, performance or website.

Students presented to guest judges who listened to their presentation, asked questions and provided feedback. Some students hope to move forward to the Regional History Day event this spring.

Laker Educational Foundation

The Laker Educational Foundation is back with enthusiastic Board members, a new Executive Director and a renewed energy and passion to inspire and enrich creativity, innovation and excellence for our community’s students.



The Laker Educational Foundation serves to raise money for grants for innovative projects that serve our students and our Laker Impact program which is a focused effort to raise money for a specific cause.

This year's designee is Prior Lake High School's Industrial Technology department. We are looking to raise money for new, enhanced equipment for their Metals Lab.

Our most recent fundraiser was a Bunco Tournament at the VFW in Prior Lake. The event was a great time with an amazing turnout!

Stay in touch to learn about our upcoming events and grant award recipients on our website.

www.lakereducationalfoundation.com

PLHS seniors sign National Letters of Intent



Congratulations to these 13 Prior Lake High School student-athletes who signed National Letters of Intent (NLI) on February 1. The NLI is a document used to indicate a student athlete's commitment to participate at an NCAA college or university.

- Blake Helberg - Baseball - University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
- Luke Crosby - Football - St. Olaf College
- Dylan Hanson - Football - St. John's University
- Joseph Krouse - Football - University of Minnesota-Duluth
- Trace Bowman - Football - University of Minnesota-Duluth
- Grayson Spronk - Football - University of St. Thomas
- Jacob Fier - Track and Field - University of Minnesota-Duluth
- Sophia Crespo - Track and Field - University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
- Lillian McRoberts - Swim and Dive - Luther College
- Bruce Soukup - Football - University of Sioux Falls
- Lula Swanson - Hockey - University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
- Brooke Holmes - Softball - St. Cloud State University
- Madeline Marvel - Softball - Concordia College

Scholastic Art Award winners



Anita Lam
"Post Commute"
Gold Key and American Vision Award



Kelsey Schreiner
"Ceramic Skull" face painting
Silver Key and two Honorable Mentions



Aubrie Sutherland
"Twin Flames"
Silver Key

Congratulations to these Prior Lake High School students who have won a Minnesota Scholastic Art Award. All works that receive a Gold Key Award are automatically entered in the National Scholastic Art Awards competition that takes place in New York. These pieces were also included in the Gold Key Exhibition at the University of Minnesota's Regis Center for Art throughout February.

Triple-A Award winners



Alyssa Lam



Jacob Artang

Alyssa Lam and Jacob Artang, both seniors at Prior Lake High School, earned the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) Triple-A (Academics, Arts and Athletics) Award. The award recognizes students who excel in the classroom, athletics and in the arts.

Alyssa Lam participates in band, speech and tennis, while Jacob Artang participates in band and tennis.

In addition to their accomplishments in activities and arts, Triple-A Award winners must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. The top award recipients from each region will be invited to a recognition luncheon and one senior boy and one senior girl from both Class A and Class AA will be selected to win \$1,000 scholarships.

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.plsas.org/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
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About this newsletter

For questions or comments regarding *Laker Connections*, contact Kristi Mussman, Director of Communications, kmussman@plsas.org or 952-226-0014



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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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