

EDUCATION FORWARD



Compelling Vision. Systems & Service. Financial Management.

An Article From Superintendent, Mike Redmond, Ed.D



Our Compelling Vision

As I write this letter to our greater school community detailing the highlights and focal points of our ongoing academic year, I'd like to start off by calling the reader's attention to a pivotal phrase in our district's compelling vision: 'our systems.' The deliberate inclusion of this phrase is quite important—our district's

compelling vision holds significant weight—the **compelling vision** remains steadfast as the guiding compass for our district and building high quality systems is an essential part of how we deliver on this vision.

It is our moral imperative to change until all of our systems measurably work for each and every student.

Our focus must be on ensuring each member of our organization maintains high expectations and provides unwavering support for each of our student learners.

It is our responsibility to make sure each and every student receives quality core instruction and develops agency when it comes to their own learning.

A district like ours is a collection of many different systems. Each of these individual systems makes up one very large system in the form of a school district. Over the past three years, our leadership team has been working diligently to assess, improve, reform or adjust many of the individual systems across the district. **The ultimate goal in doing this work is to become more productive, more responsive and more efficient in how we provide services to students, their families and our community.**



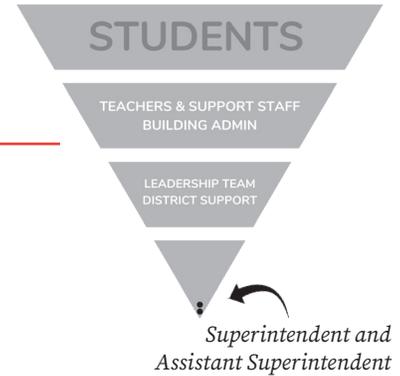
As we work on systems across our district, there are five essential questions that ensure decisions are made that truly support each and every student:

- Who should be at the table?
- Whose voices should be in the room, even if they are not actually present during discussions?
- What does the process look like for determining best pathways forward and desired outcomes?
- What does the process look like for taking action, implementing, and then assessing impacts and outcomes?
- How well does the desired new system align with our district's compelling vision?

Cont. from cover: *Compelling Vision. Systems & Service. Financial Management.*

Systems & Services

Whenever you happen to hear about things we’re working on as a district—the Comprehensive Literacy Framework, implementing Assessment for Learning, improving our hiring practices and a myriad other initiatives—each one is almost always focused on building a better system, or building an entirely new system. Our goal is to spend the time and make the effort to build high quality systems across our district to better serve students, their families and our community now, and well into the future.



To further illustrate our district’s structure that works to support each and every student, we’ve included a simple yet significant graphic - our inverted pyramid. The inverted pyramid concept comes from business author Ken Blanchard. Blanchard’s idea transfers well from the world of business to the field of education. **It shows that when we’re working to make sure we have high quality financial practices and we are maximizing our resources, it is ultimately being done with the goal of providing the best possible support and service to our students, their families and our community.**

Financial Management

Even when we, as a district, talk about the subject of finances, we are doing two things—building improved systemic structures and keeping those we serve at the forefront of our minds. I know we’ve previously shared much of the information below in various formats. However, I’m sharing again to demonstrate the improved function of our system of financial management, and continued commitment to financial integrity.

Unassigned Fund Balance

Policy 714 calls for the district’s Unassigned Fund Balance to be between 8-12% and that we will strive to maintain this range as minimum of the annual budget. On June 30, 2023, the General Fund Unassigned Fund Balance reached 8.4% (\$9,491,507), which was the first time in nine years the Unassigned Fund Balance was between 8-12% and in-line with district policy.

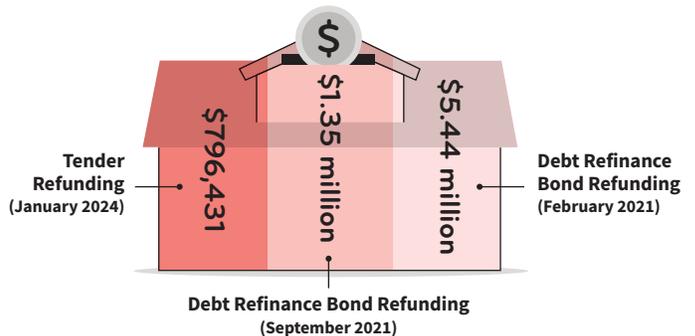
Bond Restructuring

Throughout the course of each school year, the district works with its municipal advisor, PMA Securities, to review interest rates and opportunities to refund or tender bonds.

Due to continued sound financial management by the finance and leadership team, Shakopee received a Moody’s Investor Services upgrade to the district’s credit rating.

With this increased rating and favorable market conditions, the district recently completed a ‘tender refunding,’ which produced taxpayer savings even higher than the original projections. The restructuring of three bonds (January 2024, September 2021 and February 2021) totaled **\$7.59 million** in taxpayer savings. This refunding does not result in any additional funding for the district **as all of the savings go directly to the taxpayers.**

\$7.59 million in Taxpayer Savings



During the November 20th School Board meeting, the district received and accepted the formal annual audit results as presented by BerganKDV. On behalf of the School Board, I am happy to report that another clean audit report was received, which is the highest rating that a district can earn.



- Kristi Peterson, Current School Board Vice Chair November 2023 commentary, Shakopee Valley News

In Closing

There is still much to accomplish this school year, both within each school and throughout our district as a whole. Our students, teachers and support teams are fully engaged in completing the second semester/third quarter, diligently working to meet and surpass their goals. As outlined in the Compelling Vision, our guiding principle remains centered on serving every student to help them realize their utmost potential, with each system continually striving to measurably achieve this objective. We deeply appreciate the unwavering support of our community, business partners and families who partner with us on this journey. I firmly believe that “every kid is my kid,” and every kid has the potential to achieve remarkable outcomes.

Mike Redmond

National Merit Semifinalists



Shakopee High School seniors Andrew Klemm and Kush Purani have been named 2024 National Merit Semifinalists. Erika Schroeder was named a 2024 National Merit Commended Student.

More than 16,000 Semifinalists were selected for the 69th annual National Merit Scholarship Program competing for 7,140 National Merit Scholarships worth nearly \$28 million.

It's incredible to see Andrew and Kush carry on Shakopee's legacy of honoring National Merit Finalists. Our entire school community couldn't be more proud.

- Erin Heilman, High Potential and Innovative Program Coordinator, LT&E

Powerful Partnerships in Growing Readers

As Shakopee's elementary schools intensify their commitment to evidence-based literacy practices aimed at ensuring all students read at grade level, the team is also placing a significant emphasis on expanding professional development opportunities for staff, directly impacting classroom instruction. However, individuals outside of the school environment play a critical role in a child's literacy journey



Here are several ways families can actively support their elementary-aged children in reinforcing the skills they acquire at school*:

Reading Aloud: Regardless of the language used, reading aloud fosters imagination, broadens a child's worldview, enhances language proficiency and strengthens listening skills.

Singing Songs: Singing not only promotes clear speech but also enriches vocabulary, imparts creative language and rhyme patterns and enhances a child's memory.

Storytelling: Sharing stories not only provides an opportunity to pass down history, but also engages all household members. Encourage your child to retell the story in their own words to bolster vocabulary and comprehension skills while reinforcing sequencing abilities.

Writing Notes: Establishing a habit of leaving notes for one another serves as an excellent method to encourage writing proficiency in children.

**Reference: U.S. Department of Education's booklet, Helping Your Child Become a Reader.*

Summer Programs & Free Summer Meals



Shakopee Public Schools will continue to offer specialized summer programming for all students who meet Targeted Services or Credit Recovery criteria in the summer of 2024. Registration for all programs

opens on May 3, 2024 and will close on May 17, 2024. Look for information from your child's school in late April.

Free summer meals for all children in the community ages 0-18 will be available, onsite, at Pearson Early Learning Center starting in June. More information will be shared in May.

GET READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

March 19, 2024
5:30 - 7 p.m.

Eagle Creek & Red Oak Elementary Schools

March 20, 2024
5:30 - 7 p.m.

Sun Path, Sweeney and Jackson Elementary Schools

These fun-filled Saber events allow families and children to tour their elementary school, meet teachers, take a bus ride, enjoy a snack and get a *Future Saber* bag!

Ready to enroll? Scan the QR code on the back of this newsletter or visit the Welcome Center!

STEP INTO STEPPING STONES PRESCHOOL

Stepping Stones Preschool, located in Pearson Early Learning Center, offers a wide-range of preschool options including half-day and full-day programming when combining preschool and extended care with the YMCA. Select spots are still available for the 2023/24 school year. Scan the QR code or visit shakopee.reg.eleyo.com to learn more.



FREE EARLY CHILDHOOD SCREENINGS

Free screenings are held at Pearson Early Learning Center (917 Dakota St. S, Shakopee) and available throughout the year on weekdays. Call 952.496.5861 or scan the QR code below. You can also visit bit.ly/SSPScreening to schedule an appointment.



SHAKOPEE SABER KINDER KAMP - AUGUST 14 & 15, 2024

This free, unique experience is a great way for incoming Kindergarten students to get excited about the upcoming school year while also building relationships and comfort within the school community. Each of Shakopee's five elementary schools will offer this two-day morning or afternoon experience in August.

Scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/24SPSKinderKamp to register today!



CAPS INTERNSHIPS



Shakopee is grateful for the many businesses that hosted over

130 High School student interns from January - March (2024) as part of the CAPS Program.

- All Saints Senior Living
- Allina Health Security
- Bayer
- Benedictine Health Services
- Brad Billings Insurance Agency
- Brain Train Centers Inc.
- Canterbury Park
- CAP Agency
- City of Shakopee
- Crossings Dental
- Ebenezer Ridges
- Entrust
- Eric Means State Farm
- Friendship Manor
- Greystone Construction
- Health Partners
- HEART
- Highmark Companies
- Imagine
- MASH Baseball
- Midwest Industrial Coatings, Inc.
- Oral and Maxillofacial Consultants
- OSR Physical Therapy
- Park Nicollet
- Progressive Dental
- Rahr
- Saints Foundation
- Scott County
- Shakopee Chamber of Commerce
- Shakopee Community Education
- Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
- Shakopee Public Schools
- Southern Valley Alliance
- Speiker Company
- St. Francis Regional Medical Center
- St. Gertrude's Health and Rehabilitation Center
- Training Haus
- Valley Sports
- YMCA

Thank You!



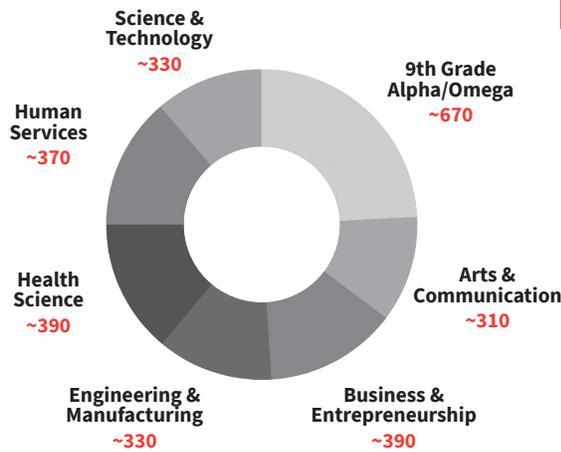
MY PLACE. MY PATH. MY FUTURE.



In case you haven't heard, the Academies of Shakopee has been making headlines throughout the school year. Thanks to our

Academy Champions – Valleyfair, Bayer, Entrust, Hometown Bank, Scott County, the City of Shakopee, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community and St. Francis Regional Medical Center/TRIA – our Sabers continue to have the support of the greater Shakopee community! The success of important events like the 9th Grade RESPECT Retreat and Career Expo were made possible by the Shakopee Chamber and Shakopee Foundation.

Academy Student Snapshot (2023/24)



INDUSTRY TOURS

Real-world experience starts with hands-on engagement in the community. Check out the list of community partners that have opened their doors to 10th Grade students this year.

- Allina Health EMS
- Bayer
- Bill's Toggery
- Canterbury Park
- Chanhassen Dinner Theater
- City of Shakopee
- Entrust
- Greystone Construction
- Hosanna
- Imagine
- International Paper
- Interstate Companies
- Lifecore Biomedical
- MyHealth for Teens and Young Adults
- New Horizon Academy
- Rahr
- Scott County Family Resource Center
- Scott County Household Hazardous Waste Facility
- Seagate
- Shakopee Brewhall & Coffee House
- Shakopee Fire Department
- Shakopee Police Department
- Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
- St. Francis Regional Medical Center
- Valley Sports
- Valleyfair & Soak City

SAVE THE DATE, IT WILL SOON BE TIME TO GRADUATE!



**South of the River Powwow
May 4, 2024**

Burnsville High School

**Feather Ceremony
May 23, 2024**

Mystic Lake Center, Prior Lake

**TLC Q4 Graduation
Early June 2024**

Tokata Learning Center

**Shakopee High School
Graduation
June 8, 2024**

Grace Auditorium, Eden Prairie



MIDDLE SCHOOL GATEWAY COURSES

Did you know that six 'Gateway' courses are offered to 6th and 7th Grade students at East and West Middle Schools to further explore their college and career interests as they prepare to enter the Academies of Shakopee. Classes include *Heroes, Be the Change, Programming is Electric, Think Tank, Snack Attack* and *Teen Engineer*.

It's great to see students take a deep dive into their areas of interest while engaging with inspirational and technical leaders in our community. I think the best part of each course is the ability for students to take a hands-on approach to a project so they can truly understand their strengths and possibilities.

- Jordan Halverson, Assistant Principal, West Middle School

STUDENT SUPPORT & GROWTH

Saber pride moments happen every day in Shakopee. Check out the below highlights and follow “Shakopee Schools” on social media for the latest Saber stories.

AVID Middle School Growth

Advancement Via Individual Determination. AVID, one of the longest running nationally recognized programs to support college readiness and student growth, doubled class sections at East Middle School and added another section at West Middle School. This increase speaks to the value AVID holds with students and educator efforts to support this programming.



AVID is dedicated to bridging opportunity gaps, offering rigorous coursework, and particularly at the middle school level, guiding students in identifying their career and college aspirations.

With a robust support network, AVID also caters to first-generation students and those who may benefit from additional advocacy and assistance. Recognizing the importance of this support, students and families are actively engaging with AVID to take charge of their own journey toward success.

Specialized Student Support

Did you know that Shakopee Public Schools has a dedicated support team for students that receive special services. Their goal? Cultivating a safe and positive learning environment by providing comprehensive behavior regulation skills, offering mental health support and implementing trauma-informed practices. This collaborative effort allows Shakopee to provide tailored support to students who receive special services, enabling them to thrive within the district. An additional benefit includes minimized referrals outside of the school community, which promotes a cohesive learning environment.

Relevant Curriculum that Meets the Needs of American Indian Cultural Heritage

Shakopee’s 230+ native students have been able to directly engage with their culture through hands-on learning experiences and interactions with tribal community members.

Elementary Native Groups, which are groups of students who maintain cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition, have grown to 60+ students. Recent activities include games such as “I love my native people,” learned teachings and reading books by Native American authors.

Secondary Native Groups have engaged with various partners to develop a deep understanding of American Indian culture, traditions and community teachings. Additionally, upcoming events include field trips to the Bdote, which is where the Mississippi and Minnesota River meet. Each experience will build upon the previous year.

Post-secondary preparation for Shakopee’s Native High School students includes college visits and partner opportunities with the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, the Arts & Communication Academy Champion.

Student Voice & the Impact of Indian Education Programming



"I get to build positive relationships with other Native students and learn about my own culture."

"It provides a sense of belonging."

Outside of the school day, winter storytelling events have provided families with an opportunity to listen to Native stories and teachings. Traditional Lacrosse events continue to offer families a chance to engage in the sport while learning its cultural significance. Drum and Dance Groups, which occur at various times throughout the school year, provide families with opportunities to learn traditional songs and dance styles while connecting with community members from nine metro area school districts.

Groundbreaking Complete for High School Smudging Space



In February, Shakopee High School celebrated the groundbreaking of a dedicated smudging space for Native Shakopee students, made possible by a generous donation from SEEF in the 2022/23 school year. Smudging is a significant cultural norm for many Indigenous peoples that involves burning plants known as medicines to cleanse your mind, your space, and the energy around you.



15 high school students, along with an Engineering & Manufacturing class, formed the committee tasked with designing this sacred space. The expected completion date is early to mid-spring.



SABER ATHLETICS & ACTIVITIES

Check out the latest Saber Activities & Athletics winter highlights! Shakopee is proud of our elementary and middle school teams, organizations and events throughout the District, as well as others that may not be listed below.

Athletics

- **Boys Varsity Hockey** raised the SSC Championship trophy for the first time and had a sold out Ice Arena for Section playoffs.
- **Shakopee Wrestling** won the Section 6AAA Championship and sent nine wrestlers to the State Tournament. The team finished third overall. 11 of Shakopee's wrestlers also competed in Individual States with eight of them taking home hardware. Olivia Sackor earned the 106# Champion title.
- **Girls Varsity Basketball** completed the first round of Section playoffs where senior Olivia Pawlicki scored her **career 1,000th point** (1,001 to be exact) at the team's last season game.
- **Boys Varsity Basketball** finished out the regular season with a 21-5 record. Jalen Langsy also hit his **career 1,000th point!** The team received the #2 seed in Sections and will be in playoffs at the time this newsletter is produced.
- **Boys Swim & Dive** finished their competitive season at the Section 2AA meet.
- **Girls Varsity Hockey** closed out their season against Prior Lake. The Shakopee Ice Arena also unveiled a custom logo under the ice in memory of Shakopee High School senior, Mikalya McCarvel.
- The **Shakopee Dance Team** excelled throughout the season and also competed in the Section Dance Tournament that was hosted at Shakopee High School.
- Shakopee's **Adaptive Floor Hockey** team, the Southern Stars, played eight competitive games and finished out the season against South Suburban.
- Even with the warm weather, the **Alpine and Nordic Ski Teams** hit the slopes through their co-op with Burnsville.
- In early March, a **Twin Cities Native LaCrosse** traditional game was held at Tahpah Park in memory of Shakopee High School junior, Evan Martin.
- Connor McGee and Hailey Sauer were **AAA Award Winners**.

Activities

- Shakopee **DECA** members had 114 students compete in the District 3 Competition with 73 students qualifying for the State Career Development Conference. 26 students qualified for two events and eight qualified for three events.
- From Duluth to various locations across the Twin Cities, the **Shakopee Speech Team** continually earned awards and Sheymaa Nur was a dual champion at two different meets.
- 10 students in the Arts & Communication Academy displayed artwork at the **Normandale South Suburban Art Conference**. Kai To and Sidney Meurer each received an Award of Achievement.
- Shakopee students competed in the **Metro Regional National History Day Competition**. Shaunya Kumar and Caroline Gaussman qualified for the State Competition.
- **Shakopee Boys Volleyball** earned a first place title against Eastview in February in addition to various other successful matches across the Twin Cities.
- 30 students in the **Black Student Union** hosted the third-annual Black History Month Showcase where 200+ guests attended the event that had 10 acts and samplings of food from local partners.
- **ALAS** packed 14,256 meals at Feed My Starving Children.
- As part of the **Educators Rising Club**, seven Shakopee High School students participated in the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) competition against 77 students from seven schools in the region. Seven Shakopee students qualified for the State FCCLA Leadership Conference.
- The cast and crew of the **fall musical, High School Musical**, earned over 20 commendations from Spotlight Education.
- The **winter middle school musical**, Disney's Newsies Jr.!, had numerous sold out nights at the renovated West Auditorium with a cast and crew of over 90 students.

AN ACTIVITY FOR EVERY STUDENT AND EVERY STUDENT IN AN ACTIVITY

For an overview of the Athletics and Activities, scan the QR code to the right.



Did you know...

Shakopee is only one of five schools in the state to earn the 2023 National Banner Unified Champion designation and is the only school in the Midwest to be recognized on ESPN's Honor Roll.

A Special Olympics Unified Champion School has an inclusive school climate and exudes a sense of collaboration, engagement and respect for ALL members of the student body and staff.



Special Olympics

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 2024 POLAR PLUNGE!

Tuesday, March 26, 2024
Shakopee High School
Scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/24SHSPolarPlunge for more information.



SHAKOPEE EDUCATORS IN THE NEWS

Get to Know Dean of Students, Camille Delaney

Learn more about the impact of Saber Squad and reading at an early age on Sweeney Elementary's Podcast hosted Ali Kopsend and Katie Bohn. Scan the QR code or visit: bit.ly/SweeneySmartsEp6



Teacher of the Year

159 candidates were named for the 2024 Minnesota Teacher of the Year award and Shakopee is proud to honor four amazing candidates from Eagle Creek and Jackson Elementary Schools.

**Kris Pappas • Becky Garvin
Amy Rutter • Jenn Johnson**

Congratulations to Jenn Johnson who has been selected as a Semi-finalist!



Grow Your Own Scholarship Program

In partnership with Minnesota State University and Normandale Community College, nine Grow Your Own - Adult Pathways Scholarship Program recipients are in process of completing their first semester and well on their way to becoming licensed educators!

**Ana Soto Rodriguez • Ashley Gomez
Lena Abu-Saleh • Naomi Tegard
Ruth Rodriguez • Samantha Mendez
Yael Ripoll • Yansy Maldonado
Evelin Hernandez-Morales**



SHAKOPEE SCHOOLS IN THE COMMUNITY

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK | MAY 6-10, 2024

As Shakopee Public Schools plans for a special week of recognition alongside generous donations from community partners, the community, students and families alike are welcome to join in sharing positive thoughts and comments about educators in Shakopee. Scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/24SPSTeach to share an appreciation message for an educator in Shakopee! Messages will be shared with each school during Teacher Appreciation Week in May.



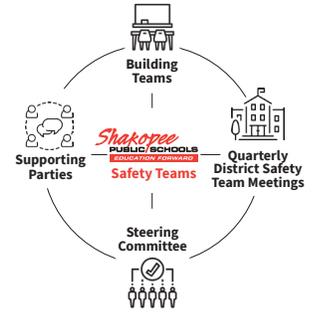
Additionally, May includes National School Nurses Day, National School Lunch Hero Day, National Principals Day and many more. May is also National Mental Health Awareness month. Messages to honor these staff members may also be added to the form above.

SAFE SCHOOLS. SAFE COMMUNITIES.

Safety is always a top priority for any school district as it directly impacts the well-being and success of students, teachers, staff and the greater community. When students feel safe, they are more likely to attend school regularly and perform at their best. Likewise, Shakopee is committed to providing a safe environment for teachers and staff so they can focus on supporting each and every student in a meaningful and impactful way.

Ongoing Process. Team Approach.

School safety is not a one-time effort but an ongoing process that requires regular evaluation and improvement. Shakopee Public Schools continues to partner with school staff, the City of Shakopee, Shakopee Police & Fire Departments, Scott County and national partners to constantly enhance safety and security measures, in addition to efforts that support the overall wellbeing and mental health of our school community.



Planning for the Unknown Doesn't Have to Be Scary

Planning for the unknown and being prepared for an emergency shouldn't be alarming. Planning ahead means that Shakopee, as a district and community, will be ready with an intentional response to things such as severe weather, a neighborhood power outage or a public health alert.

REUNIFICATION n. ree-yoo-nuh-fi-key-shuhn

An accountable method, supported by the *I Love You Guys Foundation*, in which students and families are reunited in an emergency situation.

This June, after school is out and the Class of 2024 raises their graduation caps, Shakopee Public Schools will be holding its first safety and reunification planning exercise in partnership with various public safety agencies. This exercise is designed to build confidence with school staff and increase alignment with local partners while seeking to best support students and families.

School Community Partnership

It's important for schools, individuals and communities in Minnesota to be prepared for emergencies by having a plan, staying informed and knowing how to respond safely. Families - please take time to review and update contact information in Infinite Campus or by connecting with your child's school. Our collective partnership will continue to make Shakopee a great, safe place to live, and most importantly, where students of all ages and abilities can thrive.



BECOME A SABER

Come experience the Shakopee difference by enrolling in Shakopee Public Schools, registering for ECFE/Community Education classes or by joining the Saber team!



**Shakopee Public Schools
 Enrollment**



**ECFE
 Registration**



**Stepping Stones Preschool
 Registration**



**Join Our Team
 Career Opportunities**



- Mar 18 | School Board Business Meeting
District Office
- Mar 19 | Kindergarten Roundup
*Eagle Creek & Red Oak
Elementary Schools*
- Mar 20 | Kindergarten Roundup
*Jackson, Sun Path and Sweeney
Elementary Schools*
- Mar 21 | Coffee with the Superintendent
Shakopee Coffee House & Brewhall
- Mar 22 | Two-Hour Early Release -
K-12 Students
- Mar 29 | No School - E-12 Students
- Apr 1-5 | No School - E-12 Students &
Staff
Spring Break
- Apr 8 | School Board Work Session
District Office
- Apr 10 | No School - E-12 Students &
Staff

MAY 2024 COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

In an effort to keep a continuous dialogue and feedback loop within the Shakopee Public Schools community, a 2024 online survey and community conversation will kick off May 1, 2024 and be available through May 24, 2024. All families, business partners and community members are encouraged to participate in the online feedback opportunity.

The survey and community conversation will help further define areas of growth and improvement that can be implemented alongside the district's vision, mission and overall priorities.

Look for more information and the online link in early May.



COMMUNITY EDUCATION & FACILITY RENTALS

The Summer 2024 Shakopee Community Education catalog is available now.

Continuing this year will be "Lunch Link," an hour of supervised time between camps in which kids will be able to eat, socialize with other campers or engage in fun games!

Driver's Education, Driver's Discount Programs and Facility Rentals are also available. Scan the QR code or visit Shakopee.k12.mn.us/CommunityEducation to learn more!

