



WE ARE WESTSIDE



2021 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



Who We Are... District Leadership

Board of Education

Westside Board of Education meetings are primarily twice a month on Monday evenings unless otherwise posted. Meetings begin at 6:00pm at the ABC Administration Building at 909 S. 76th St. and are broadcast via Facebook Live on the district page, Westside Community Schools - District 66. Meeting dates, agendas and minutes can be found at www.westside66.org.



Back row: (left to right): Doug Krenzer, President; Mike Lucas, Superintendent; Adam Yale, Secretary;
Front row (left to right): Meagan Van Gelder, Vice President; Beth Morrisette, Treasurer; Kris Karnes, Director; Dana Blakely, Treasurer-Elect

Message from Superintendent, Dr. Mike Lucas



We are proud to be known as Westside Community Schools, because that is exactly what makes our district special: the power of community. In 2021, we passed a levy override initiative by a wide margin, enabling us to continue focusing on our mission of pursuing excellence for all learners. By saying yes, you - our parents, neighbors and community businesses - have allowed us to continue to utilize additional financial resources to get even better. We have set clear goals as to what we intend to do with that investment by sharing a new Strategic Plan. This was created after many months of research, collaboration, discussion and now, implementation, to ensure we do what we say we will do. I encourage you to scan the QR code available on this page for a detailed breakdown of that plan. We will be adding an "accountability scoreboard" on our website in 2022 that will show the progress we're making towards the ambitious goals.

We are constantly working to get better in all phases of our organization. We continue to look for ways to increase budgetary and financial efficiencies. We are exploring even more academic partnerships to broaden our offerings across the curriculum. We are working collaboratively with several partners to focus on WE-SIDE and enhancing our culture of belonging, acceptance, and opportunity for all students, staff, patrons, and visitors.

There's no better place to be than Westside Community Schools and there's never been a more important time to exemplify the Westside Warrior spirit. We have many challenges and opportunities ahead of us and we are so thankful to have your support all along the way.

Mike Lucas



Help us celebrate 75 years of Westside!

Who We Are... Fast Facts

6,221

PreK-12 students

1,165

Staff Members

36%

Of our students qualify for free/reduced lunch

10%

Students identified as High Ability Learners

17+

Employee state or national awards

20

Number of languages spoken

19.5

Students on average in each K-6 classroom

361

Learners in Westside Early Childhood programs

17%

Of students receive special services

13

Students placed with Intern Omaha partnerships

76

AP & Honors classes at WHS

34%

Of our students live outside the district and opt-in

32%

Identify as non-white or multi-race

70%

Of Westside teachers have earned a Master's degree or higher, versus 54% state average

124

Clubs & teams at WHS

153

Students who earned college credit at Metro Community College

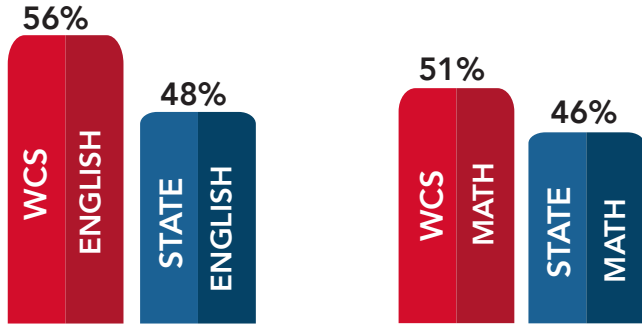
16

Students earned CNA certifications



Who We Are... Academic Excellence

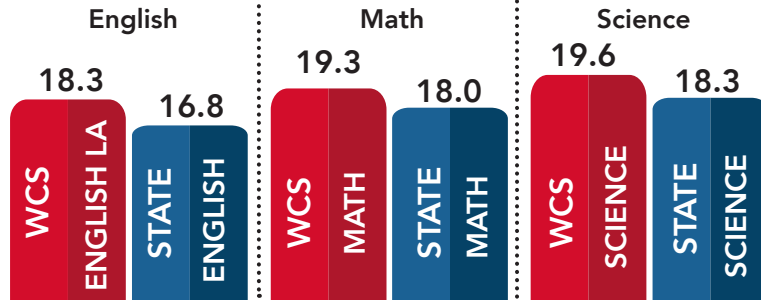
2020/21 NSCAS Scores (% proficient)



2021 NSCAS ACT Scores

50 Students in the Class of 2022 who earned 30 or higher on the ACT

2 Superscores of 36 on the ACT
(Sam Dowd & Isaak Burnett)



Dr. Mark Weichel

Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning

The 2020-21 school year was one of the most challenging educators have ever encountered. Our teachers at Westside were given the monumental task of supporting learners both in class and at home, often simultaneously. Some of our families chose to learn remotely for an entire semester or the whole school year. Others attended school on a limited basis while attending live for two days and remotely for three. As a result, we learned many new and innovative ways to teach, but we, like schools across the state and country, also saw dips in several areas when statewide testing took place in 2021. This was anticipated during this global pandemic, however, it is important to stress we neither have accurate comparison data accounting for the parameters we faced in 2020-21, nor were testing methods the same.



We embrace the challenges facing us as we continue to navigate this pandemic and focus on the future. We served 300 elementary students in a new summer school program, reinforcing math, reading and more with our learners who fell behind. We also reintroduced a summer school for middle school students and offered more sections at the high school than any previous years. We are excited about bringing in new dual enrollment opportunities with Metro Community College, curriculum, internships and certification opportunities at Westside High School, providing our learners an edge for whatever field they pursue. As a district, we unveiled a new Strategic Plan, focusing on clear academic objectives as well as a real-time dashboard so you, our community, can see our progress.

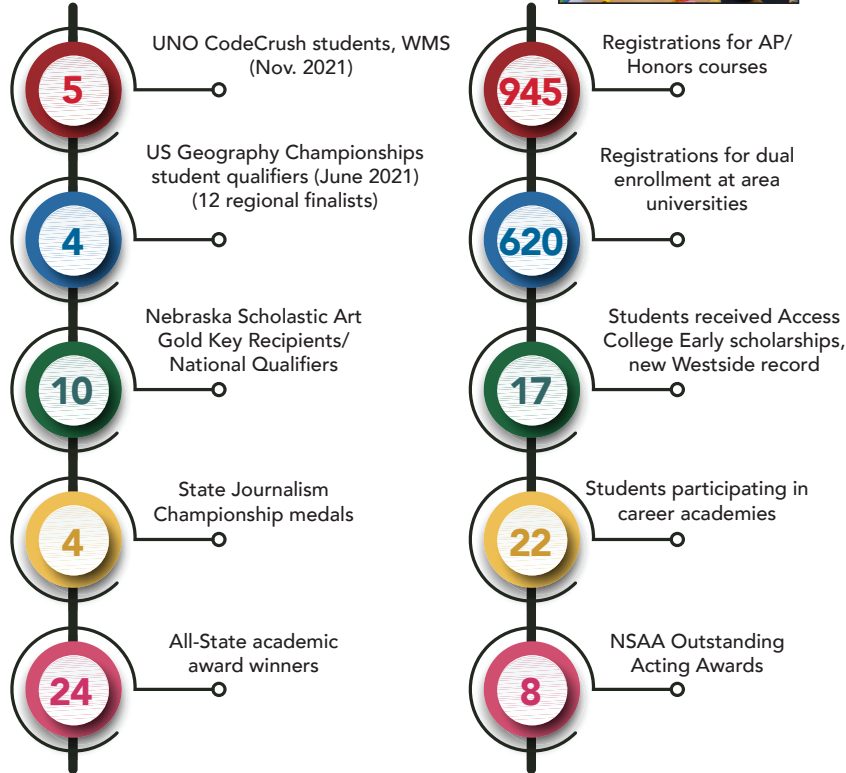
Who We Are... Academic Excellence

Academic Highlights



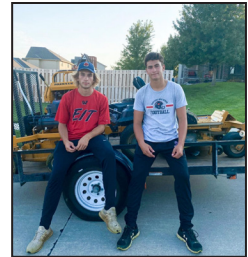
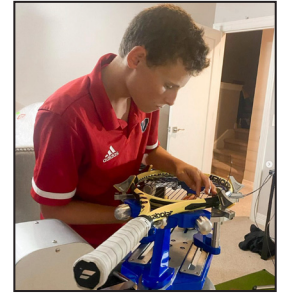
SWANSON ELEMENTARY

2021 National Blue Ribbon School



Westside's HATCH Program

Westside's pioneer HATCH program fully immerses students in business, helping them build successful businesses while still in high school! Community Partners like Nebraska Furniture Mart and Dundee Venture Capital are investing in Westside's young minds and future success - supporting those ideas and keeping this talent here in Omaha!



Who We Are... Awards and Honors

- 38 All State Band, Jazz Band, Chorus and Orchestra members (+ 2 alternates) (Nov. 2021) (INCLUDES WMS)
- Julian Hinrichs, National Finalist for Male Performance, High School Theater Academy
- Andrew Li, National Young Arts Merit Winner
- Zam Zam Farah, Mayor's Medallion, Omaha Arts Showcase
- Esha Pandarpurkar, NJAS State Science Fair Medallion Winner (Junior), Grand Award, U.S. Agriculture Award
- Gretchen Nelson, 2021 Omaha Fashion Week Emerging Designer Award
- Andrew Li, International Breakthrough Junior Challenge Finalist
- Ramya Iyer, 2021 US Presidential Scholar in the Arts
- Erin Mosier, 1st Place Video Feature, National Federation of Press Women
- Erica Smith, Nebraska State Youth of the Year

Athletic Honors

- Westside Volleyball - 2021 District Champions and State Semi-Finalists
- Westside Football - 2021 District Champions and State Football Runner-up
- Regan Rosseter, 2021 USA Wrestling High School Girls Wrestler of the Year
- Nate Germonprez & Colin Davis, 2021 NCSA Junior National Swim Champions
- Kaitlyn Hanna, Nebraska Girls' Amateur Golfer of the Year
- Jordyn Mclean, 2021 National Junior Olympics Track & Field Javelin Champion
- James Gurung, High School Esports League Fall Major National Champion
- Cole Payton, 2021 Gatorade Player of the Year



STATE CHAMPIONS

- TENNIS: Josh Rosenblatt – 1st Place (#2 Singles)
- JOURNALISM: Caleb De La Cruz, 1st Place Yearbook Sports Feature
- 2021 State Champions, Westside Esports
- SKILLS USA: Emeron Christensen, 2021 Skills USA State Champion, Welding Fabrication
- DECA: 6 State Champions (Madalyn DiPrima, Elizabeth Harding, Chloe Green, Jordyn Knight, Ava Fehr, Elle Hoffman)



Who We Are... WE-SIDE

Scan here to learn more! →



Our district continues to take steps forward as part of our **WE-SIDE** initiative, standing for Welcoming Equity Support Inclusion and Dignity for Everyone. Our focus is simple: we want all Westside students, staff and visitors to feel like they belong at Westside.

WE-SIDE is extremely important to the culture of our district, and is not a 'one and done' initiative. Prioritizing belonging is as much a part of our priorities as a district as are math, science and language arts. We want to continue to lead the way with this important mindset to ensure there is no better place than Westside Community Schools.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2021

- Provided staff the opportunity to learn about self-awareness, implicit bias and belonging from regionally and nationally recognized experts such as John Krownapple and Inclusive Communities
- Conducted staff and student surveys to establish baseline data about sense of belonging, highlighting themes which need to be addressed
- Established WE-SIDE Student Groups at WHS (with groups at WMS planned), adult WE-SIDE work groups, and Community Dialogue sessions to gather feedback and to dive into specific components of this work
- Increased the number of Unified Activities offered throughout our entire school district, providing more opportunities to students of all abilities
- Researched student discipline and suspension data, as well as class enrollments in high ability and AP classes, focusing on demographics of students involved
- Adopted an Anti-Hate Policy to ensure our district has consequences and education for those who use hateful language
- Organized Digital Citizenship forums, as well as training for students and coaches, to stress the importance of acceptance and belonging in all forums and venues outside of school
- Held a District Art Contest to engage and encourage students of all ages to express their feelings about inclusion and prompt open discussions at school and at home



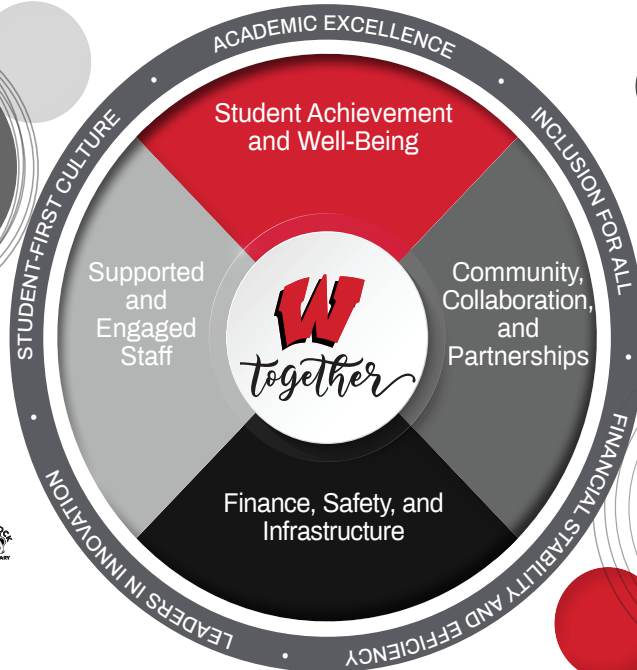
Who We Are... Planning for the Future



Westside Community Schools Strategic Plan 2021-2026

Mission

The mission of the Westside Community School District, as an innovative educational system, is to ensure academic excellence and to serve the unique needs of all learners.



Vision

Westside Community Schools will relentlessly pursue innovative educational ideals and promise to personalize learning for every student. We invite the challenge of developing a community of learners who embrace a broader, richer definition of success.

The Westside Community Schools Strategic Plan is a detailed outlook and playbook for 2021 through 2026. This plan came to be after 15-months of community-wide surveys, research, and focus groups including parents, teachers, administrators, community members, business owners and more. What do we want Westside to look like over the next 5 years, and how are we actively working to reach those goals?

In the coming weeks, we will start publishing data showing our benchmarks for each strategy detailed in our plan. With one visit to our website, you can see for yourself if we are making true progress.

Visit www.westside66.org or scan the QR code to learn more!



Who We Are... Building for the Future

Thanks to District 66 taxpayers, Westside completed Phase 1 of our Facilities Master Plan, approved by voters in 2015. All projects were completed within budget, as promised to Westside taxpayers. As we move into 2022, District leaders will begin discussing potential plans and timelines for Phase II of our Facilities Master Plan. We will continue to update our community as we move forward in this process. Thanks to the diligent work of our Board of Education and District leadership, we anticipate Phase II - when proposed to voters - will have half the tax impact or more as Phase I.



WESTSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL
Renovated with additions
August 2016



OAKDALE ELEMENTARY
NEW
Opened in January 2017



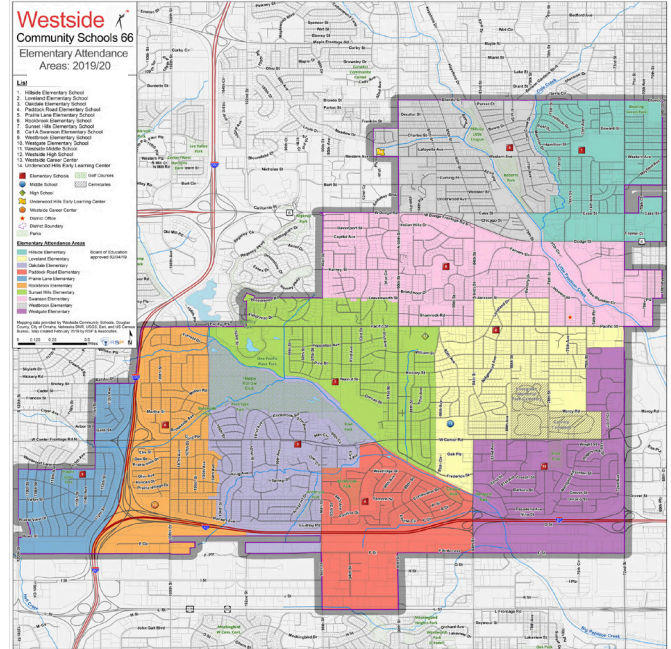
SUNSET HILLS ELEMENTARY
NEW
Opened in August 2018



SWANSON ELEMENTARY
NEW
Opened in August 2019



PRAIRIE LANE ELEMENTARY
NEW with renovations
Opened in April 2021



Stay updated! Join our Community List for important updates on bond projects, budget changes, curriculum, news events and more!
Go to www.westside66.org and 'Subscribe to our List' (found halfway down on the home page).

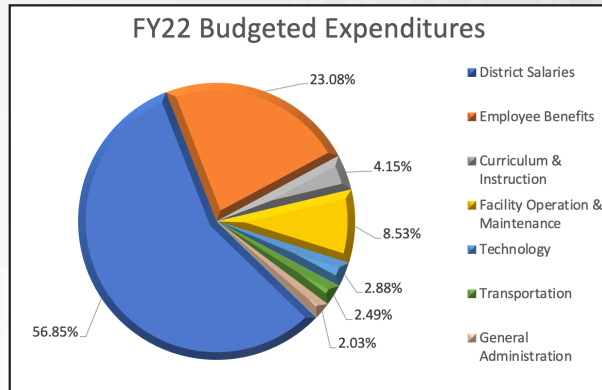
Who We Are... Fiscally Responsible

FY22 Budget: \$85,793,991

THANK YOU to the District 66 voters who granted our Board an extension of our general fund taxing authority of \$1.20. Even with this important levy override in place, our General Fund tax request for the 2021-2022 school year was \$1.16, a reduction for the third year in a row. This **decreases** the annual tax payment for the owner of a \$250,000 home by \$55.00 from the prior year.

Due to our state's school funding formula, Westside is forced to rely on more than 60% of our total revenue from local property taxes. This is double the national average of 30%, and higher than the state average of 52%; Nebraska ranks 49th in the country in the percentage of state funding for K-12 education. It is this over-reliance on local property taxes, not school spending, that causes high property taxes for our stakeholders. We will continue to advocate for a predictable and sustainable school finance model with our state senators as part of the 2022 Legislative session.

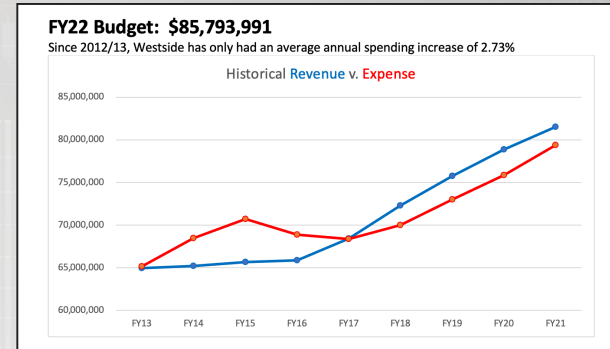
Where Does the Money Go?



For FY21, approximately 36% of all Westside students were enrolled in the District through the option enrollment program. These students who chose to not enroll in their resident district in favor of coming to Westside added **\$20,274,543 in state aid revenue to our district**, allowing us to maintain 10 neighborhood elementary schools and to provide robust course offerings at Westside High School.

Revenue vs. Expenses

Since 2012/13, Westside has only had an average annual spending increase of 2.73%



- For FY22, we **reduced** our General Fund Levy by 1.7 pennies, the third year in a row it has decreased
- For FY22, the total levy (General Fund/Bond/Bldg) **decreased** by 2.2 pennies

Who We Are... Fiscally Responsible

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief

ESSER I - CARES Act (March 2020)

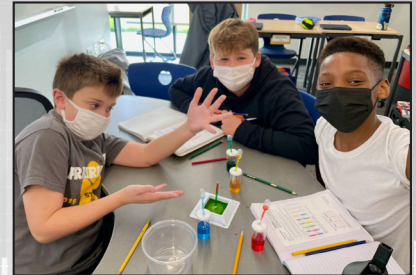
- In September 2021, Westside entered into a new technology lease with Apple, providing iPads to every elementary and secondary student. Westside will use ESSER I funds to cover part of that lease payment.
- These devices, as part of Westside's 1:1 Technology Program, provided a huge advantage for our learners throughout remote and hybrid learning caused by the pandemic.

ESSER II - CRRSA Act (December 2020)

- Westside targeted \$290K of ESSER II funds towards expanded summer school opportunities in the summer of 2021, recognizing closures during this pandemic created learning loss across the district.
- Approximately \$585K of ESSER II funds was targeted to fund HVAC improvements at Westside High School and WHS West Campus to improve air quality.
- Approximately \$819K in ESSER II funds covered the cost of new technology leases, similar to that used in our ESSER I funding allocation.

ESSER III - ARP Act (March 2021)

- Based on learning loss as described above and the success of Westside's 2021 Summer School programs, Westside targeted \$885K to expand summer school opportunities for 2022-2024.
- Approximately \$2M of ESSER III funds are targeted to fund additional HVAC improvements at Westside High School and WHS West Campus, as well as Westbrook Elementary.
- Approximately \$922K in ESSER III funds will cover the cost of new technology leases, similar to that used in ESSER I and ESSER II funding allocation.



Who We Are... A Team United

Our staff members at Westside Community Schools are the heart and soul of our district, dedicated to the success of thousands of children year after year. We are committed to our strategic goal to be innovative in attracting, selecting, developing and retaining excellent staff in a quality work environment. All staff members will learn and grow in a culture where everyone belongs.

- 2021 EMPLOYEE HONORS** • Cynthia Bailey and Kerri Palmesano, 2021 Omaha World-Herald Midlanders of the Year
- Kim Eymann, 2020-21 Principal of the Year, NE State Assn. of Secondary School Principals
 - Dr. Kami Jessop, 2021 NSPA Service to Children Award • Dr. Enid Schonewise, 2021 NCSA Distinguished Service Award
 - Monica McKeivitt, 2021 NSPA Outstanding School Psychologist Award • John Horton, Spirit of the Slam Teacher Award 2021
 - Dr. Kami Jessop, 2021 NCSA Distinguished Special Education Administrator • Amber Biegler (WMS), 2021 NSPA Founders Award
 - Doug Hauserman, 2021 UNO Alumni Distinguished Professional Achievement Award • Faren Huben (WMS), Excellence in Flex Time
 - Tom Kerkman, Athletic Director of the Year by the Nebraska Athletic Administration Association
 - Travis Vo, 2021 NSEA Educational Support Professional of the Year • Abbey Painter (WMS), Excellence in Flex Time HM
 - Kristeen Shabram (WMS), NDE Career & Technical Educator of the Year • Terri Standhill, 2021 NDE ParaEducator of the Year
 - Dr. Mikayla Bruner (WMS) 2021 Finalist Nebraska Teacher of the Year • Mike Jernigan, 2021 Metro Wrestling Coach of the Year
 - Heather Weist, 2021 National PowerSchool Mentor of the Year



Who We Are... A Team United

Dr. Andrea Haynes

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and District Operations



Extraordinary. This is the first word that comes to mind when I think of the students, staff, and families I am now privileged to serve here in Westside. As we navigate another historic school year, we have all been challenged individually and collectively. Our strength is in our ability to come together as a community to collaborate, problem-solve, plan, implement, and continue to innovate and lead the way.

Our Human Resources and District Operations staff continue to provide the infrastructure and underlying foundation for the daily operations of our school district through continued prudent financial decisions, dependable and secure Building Services support, supportive Nutrition Services offerings and meals, dedicated and reliable transportation services and the list goes on. All of these vital district services, and the adults who lead and implement them, enable the District to keep students at the center of our efforts. In addition to highlighting the important daily operations, I want to share a few exciting new projects and initiatives we have embraced thus far this year:

- Human Resources staff partnered with our district's Communications department to form new marketing and recruitment materials, as we continue to traverse labor shortages across the country.
- Human Resource and Business Services departments have harnessed the power and efficiency of new technologies with the roll-out of a new electronic time-keeping payroll system for all employees.
- We are proud to embark on new endeavors related to "Growing our Own" through an "Educational Assistant to Teacher Ladder Program" and partnering with our Teaching and Learning Department to enhance our Educators Rising programming and education preparation courses at WHS.

• We are restarting Westside's Leadership pipeline program for school leaders. We believe the future leaders of our schools are right here in our district. We want to ensure we are developing their skills and offering them additional opportunities to positively impact our students in new ways as they move through their careers.

• We are rolling out new initiatives aimed at the advanced recruitment and retention of the highest-quality teachers by implementing proactive recruitment strategies, nurturing new partnerships with local colleges and universities, and creating student teacher hub sites available at early childhood, elementary, and secondary school sites.

• Student Services and Human Resource departments continue to provide leadership and direction for all Westside staff and students related to Covid-19 protocols and safety measures. With continuity of instruction and safety as their main priorities, our team has worked with staff, buildings, and families to maintain a safe environment and keep students in school as much as possible.

These are just a few of the new and expanding commitments we have made, as we move our Strategic Plan forward. I am proud of all that we have achieved in light of all of the challenges we have faced. In fact, there are so many more Westside success stories than can be summarized in this annual report. You are encouraged to use the engagement methods highlighted in this report, including social media, newsletters and in-person meetings, to stay informed, give your input, and celebrate our ongoing successes. Our Westside staff members have faced unprecedented challenges again this school year and yet, they have continued to support one another and leveraged our spirit of collaboration to help students learn and thrive.

Like all of you, I am so thankful to be a part of the Westside community - a community that is determined, and positioned, to provide a safe and world-class education to all of our children.



Who We Are... A Team United Warriors for Life

Foundation and Alumni Association →



Westside High School graduates are impacting the world in all areas including business, philanthropy, medicine, politics, art, inclusion and more. We are humbled and grateful that many of these alumni continue to support Westside Community Schools! Are you a proud Westside graduate? Join the Alumni Association! Registration is free and provides you with details throughout the year on district updates, events and reunion opportunities.



CHRIS MUNDY
Class of 1984

Emmy Nominated Writer and Producer

Mundy is the show runner, head writer and co-executive producer of the critically acclaimed Netflix series Ozark. He has written and worked for more than 25 TV shows, and previously worked as a senior writer and contributing editor for Rolling Stone magazine.



EVA HOUSTON
Class of 2019

Paralympic Athlete

Houston represented the United States at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, competing in the 100 meters and 800 meters. She began wheelchair racing in high school, coached by Westside's Jon Preister.



MICHAEL STAENBERG
Class of 1972

Commercial Developer and Philanthropist

Staenberg's real estate ventures have drawn in clients including Walmart, McDonald's and AMC Theatres, becoming the third largest real estate commercial firm in the United States. Through his personal foundation, Staenberg has donated an estimated \$250 million to various organizations, including the Westside Foundation and Westside Community Schools students.

Who We Are... Celebrating 75 Years!

Celebrating Our Past and Defining Our Future

75-year Back-to-School celebration... coming Summer 2022!

1947-2022



1954



1970



1984



2021



2021



2021

Be in the Know... Stay Connected

Be in the know about what's happening
with Westside Community Schools!

Check Us Out:



www.westside66.org



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District 66](https://www.facebook.com/westsidecommunityschools-District-66)



[@westside66](https://twitter.com/westside66)



[@westsideschools66](https://www.instagram.com/westsideschools66)



communications@westside66.net

This Annual Report is provided as a quick snapshot of 2021. It has been produced by the Communications Department. For more detailed information, please visit the district website at www.westside66.org or contact the Central Office at 402-390-2100.

Westside Community Schools
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Westside Community Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, race, color, national origin, religion, disability, age, marital/parental/pregnancy status, genetic information, military or veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under law in its educational programs and activities or in admission or access to, or treatment in, hiring and employment. Retaliation for reporting discrimination or harassment or participating in an investigation is also prohibited. For questions/concerns including, but not limited to, reporting discrimination, harassment or retaliation on the basis of any protected class listed above, email titleixcoordinator@westside66.net. For questions/concerns about sex discrimination or sexual harassment under Title IX, visit the District's Title IX Compliance page at www.westside66.org.