

# LEADING THROUGH NEW TERRITORY

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY  
2020 - 2021

[ops.org](https://ops.org)

OMAHA  Public Schools





## Persevering in challenging times, irrationally optimistic about our future

### Dear Omaha Public Schools Community:

As we capture the accomplishments of the 2020-21 school year in this annual report, we understand the importance of remaining ready to meet today's challenges. Navigating a global pandemic reminds us of the need to remain flexible and keep our students at the forefront of every decision.

Like many school districts across the country, we began our school year with distance learning. Our district's preparation and foresight positioned us to be among the first, large urban school districts in the country to return to in-person learning—made possible through the teamwork of our staff, partnerships with local public health officials and the support of our entire community.

When we were forced to transition to remote learning in the spring of 2020, our Board of Education acted quickly to approve the purchase of internet-enabled iPads for every single one of our 53,000 students. Their support ensured each of our families had access to learning from home.

During our return to in-person learning, staff were also busy creating an academic acceleration plan. More than 18,000 students benefitted from the first stages of that plan through Next Level Learning, our summer school program. That's more than one in every four students in our district. Next Level Learning also provided more than 160 paid internships for high schoolers who not only helped teachers but gained valuable classroom experience and earned college credit. Elementary students focused on literacy, math and social-emotional growth while secondary students worked through lessons tailored to their individual needs. First-time middle school students attended a welcome camp and incoming freshmen attended Freshman Jump Start, designed to support strong transitions from one school to the next at such a critical time.

Throughout the pandemic, we continued bond renovations and the construction of five new schools as part of the \$409 million 2018 Bond Program. The Board of Education

approved name recommendations offered by students and families from each new school community. We're on track to open four schools in the fall of 2022 and our fifth in the fall of 2023. Our updated Student Assignment Plan ensures families are prepared for the transitions as schools open.

As this report is published, we are hosting engagement sessions to gather input for our College and Career Academies and Pathways initiative. In the fall of 2021, high school students will enroll in Freshman Academy where they will explore careers and focus on the skills needed for success in high school and beyond. We're also hosting sessions for the community to solicit feedback on how to best allocate the \$280 million of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding approved by Congress to assist pandemic recovery efforts.

The flexibility and commitment of our dedicated staff, who worked tirelessly to keep our students engaged and connected brought us successfully through this past year. That same dedication allows us to remain future-focused around our four Strategic Plan Priorities: Academics, Staff, Financial Accountability and an Ethic of Care.

Through these times, I'm grateful to serve as your superintendent. I'm proud of what we have overcome during these challenging times and I look forward to pushing forward toward academic recovery as we move into our new normal. I'm optimistic about the opportunities ahead and what we will continue to accomplish together.



Cordially yours,

Cheryl Logan, Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
Omaha Public Schools  
logancomm@ops.org





## Board of Education



Shavonna Holman, Ed. D.  
President



Jane Erdenberger  
Vice President



Tracy Casady



Spencer Head



Nancy Kratky



Ricky Smith



Kimara Snipes



Marque Snow



Nick Thielen

## Mission:

Omaha Public Schools  
prepares all students  
for success in college,  
career and life.

## Vision:

Every student.  
Every day.  
Prepared for success.





# Strategic Plan of Action

## Powered by Foresight

One month after its launch, Omaha Public Schools' Strategic Plan of Action Powered by Foresight was put to the test. The global COVID-19 pandemic brought unexpected challenges for all. Thanks to the thoughtful planning and forward thinking that shaped our strategic priorities, our district navigated the changes by keeping the best interest of our students, families, staff and community at the forefront. Now, as we move forward together, our strategic priorities remain on track in our efforts to provide opportunities for all our children.

### PRIORITY 1 Academics

Omaha Public Schools students are prepared to meet post secondary expectations. The portrait of a graduate outlines the expectations for all Omaha Public Schools graduates. To that end, the academic strategic priority will focus our work on early literacy, program redesign and establishing a high quality portfolio of school programs. Omaha Public Schools prepares each student to meet post secondary expectations.

### PRIORITY 2 Staff

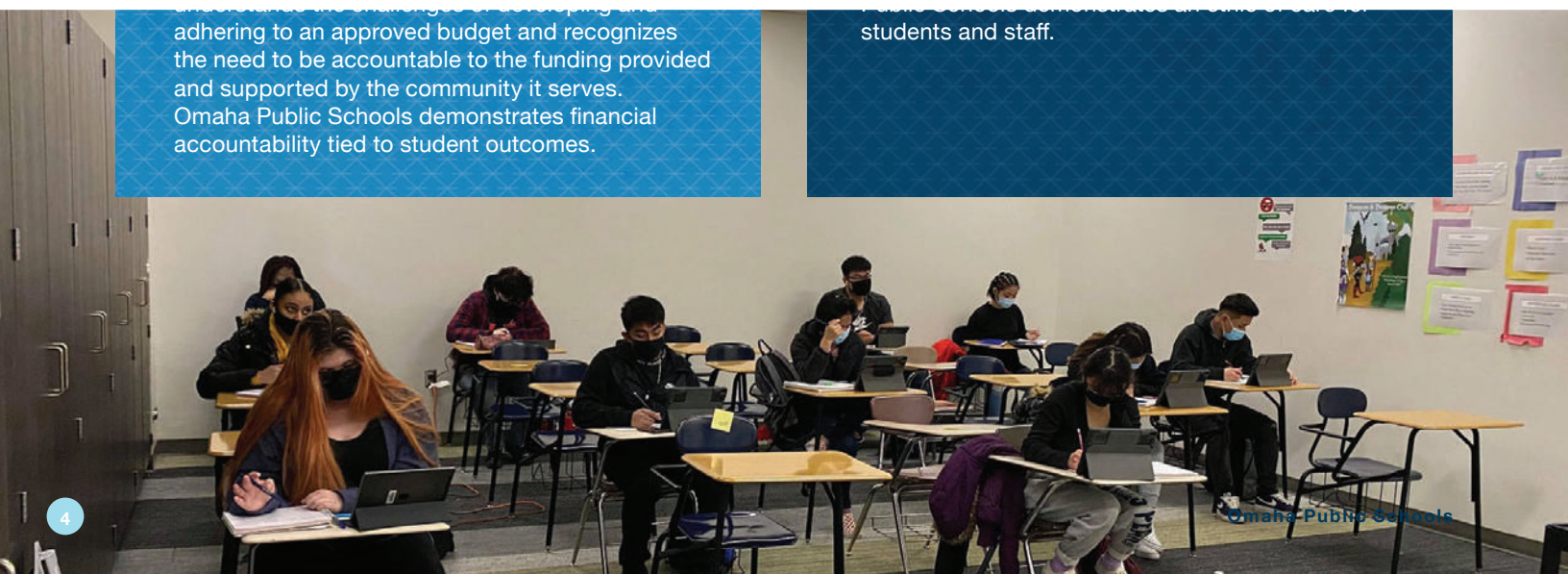
Omaha Public Schools has highly qualified and effective staff in every division. Recruiting and maintaining a highly qualified, developed staff is the most essential component of a successful school district. Omaha Public Schools has highly qualified and effective staff in every division.

### PRIORITY 3 Financial Accountability

Omaha Public Schools demonstrates financial accountability tied to student outcomes. School district budgets across the U.S. are challenged daily to be funded and many districts are unable to fund their highest priorities. Omaha Public Schools understands the challenge of developing and adhering to an approved budget and recognizes the need to be accountable to the funding provided and supported by the community it serves. Omaha Public Schools demonstrates financial accountability tied to student outcomes.

### PRIORITY 4 Ethic of Care

Omaha Public Schools demonstrates an ethic of care for students and staff. Fostering a caring, inclusive culture assures all feel value, support and joy. Everyone benefits as a result of students, staff and the community being served with care. Omaha Public Schools demonstrates an ethic of care for students and staff.







# Freshman Academy

## Launches August 2021

Omaha Public Schools has been working for nearly two years to evaluate how we can best prepare students for life after graduation. Through our Strategic Plan of Action, we created the portrait of a graduate that defines what every young person should know and be able to do upon graduation. Our district will focus on this graduate portrait from pre-K to graduation to ensure each student has the skills to succeed in college, career and life.



One of the ways Omaha Public Schools is preparing students for life after graduation is through the implementation of the Freshman Academy. Beginning August 2021, all students will participate in Freshman Academy. Students will explore careers and focus on skills for success in high school and beyond. Freshman Academy is one of the strategies of the Omaha Public Schools' NineforNine, which are the nine strategies designed to support our 9th grade students.

Omaha Public Schools has also reviewed current high school programming throughout our district. After an evaluation of programming and input from our community, our district proposed the Omaha Public Schools College & Career Academies and Pathways earlier this year.



**The program would ensure students gain real-world career experience while maintaining the foundation of core classes and access to advanced academics, fine arts and electives.**

Omaha Public Schools hosted engagement sessions throughout the spring and summer of 2021 to share more information and seek additional feedback. The proposed College & Career Academies and Pathways is scheduled to go before the Board of Education in the fall of 2021. If approved by the Board, the College & Career Academies and Pathways would be rolled out over the next four years until fully in place in 2024-25.



# High School Student Assignment Plan

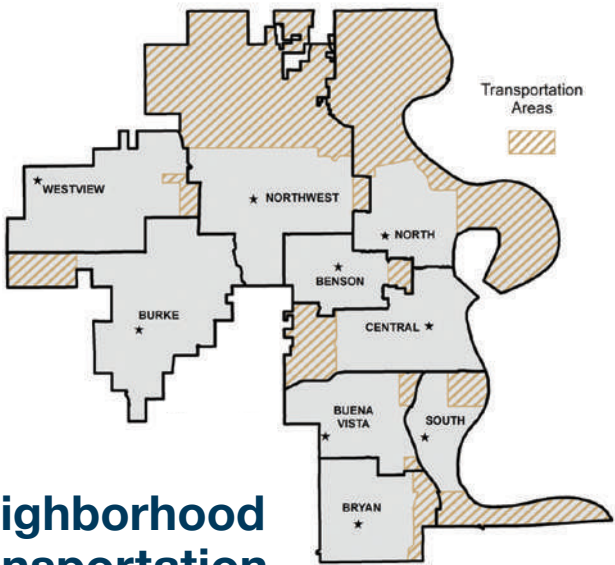
In March 2021, Omaha Public Schools finalized a new High School Student Assignment Plan to provide effective and equitable access to programs and transportation for students across our district. The plan’s implementation coincides with the opening of our two new high schools, since new school boundaries were needed to prepare for the opening of Westview High (156th & Ida) and Buena Vista High (60th & L).

The High School Student Assignment Plan determines a student’s transportation eligibility and placement priority during the high school choice process. No matter where a student lives in our district, they can apply to any high school in Omaha Public Schools. Our district has guidelines for transportation eligibility to both neighborhood and non-neighborhood schools.

## Neighborhood transportation

Neighborhood transportation is for eligible students who attend their neighborhood (home) school.

- The plan increases neighborhood transportation eligibility to all high schools.
- Instead of using distance, the plan uses streets to identify transportation eligibility areas in each high school boundary.
- Transportation eligibility areas are generally located farthest away from the school.

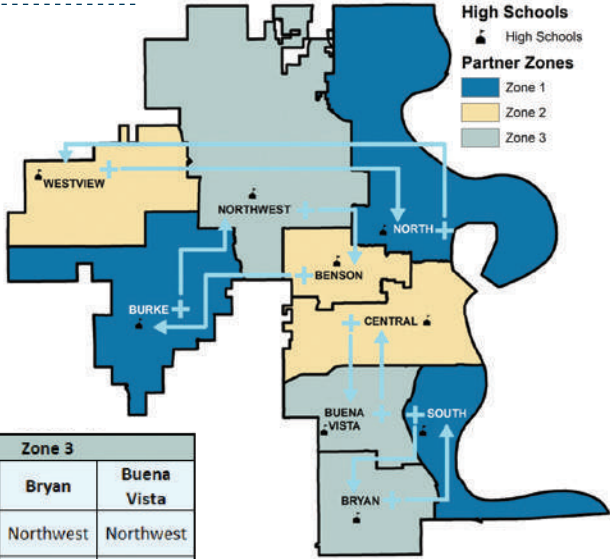


## Non-neighborhood transportation

Non-neighborhood transportation is for students who attend a school other than their home (neighborhood) high school.

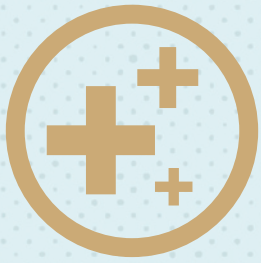
- The plan creates three partner zones each including three high schools.
- One additional school has been identified as a plus one school.
- Students will have priority and be eligible for transportation at other schools in their partner zone and their home school’s plus one school.
- All three partner zones offer students access to diverse programming at high schools across our district.

Neighborhood School	Zone 1			Zone 2			Zone 3		
	Burke	North	South	Central	Benson	Westview	Northwest	Bryan	Buena Vista
Eligible for Transportation to These Schools	North	Burke	Burke	Benson	Central	Central	Bryan	Northwest	Northwest
	South	South	North	Westview	Westview	Benson	Buena Vista	Buena Vista	Bryan
	+ Northwest	+ Westview	+ Bryan	+ Buena Vista	+ Burke	+ North	+ Benson	+ South	+ Central



The High School Student Assignment Plan will go into effect in August 2022 as our new high schools open. If you would like to learn more, visit [ops.org](https://ops.org) and search Student Assignment Plan.





# Next Level Learning

## Expands Opportunities

Omaha Public Schools served more than 18,000 students through our Next Level Learning summer school program this year. The program kicked off in June, with students able to choose full-day, morning, afternoon or one-hour tutoring options.

At the elementary level, students focused on literacy, math and social-emotional instruction. For secondary students, Next Level Learning featured a variety of opportunities catered to each student's individual needs. Students heading into middle school for the first time started with Welcome Camp, and incoming freshmen began with Freshman Jump Start. Both programs helped students with the transition to their new schools. They met their teachers, toured their new schools and built connections with their fellow students.

**Our expanded summer programming provided learning opportunities for thousands of students who were unable to do summer school in the past. In 2019, Omaha Public Schools served 11,300 students during summer school. This year, that number increased by more than 35 percent.**

Next Level Learning also created an opportunity for high school students to serve as paid interns. They helped teachers while earning valuable classroom experience and college credits. More than 160 student interns assisted at 43 elementary schools during Next Level Learning this summer.

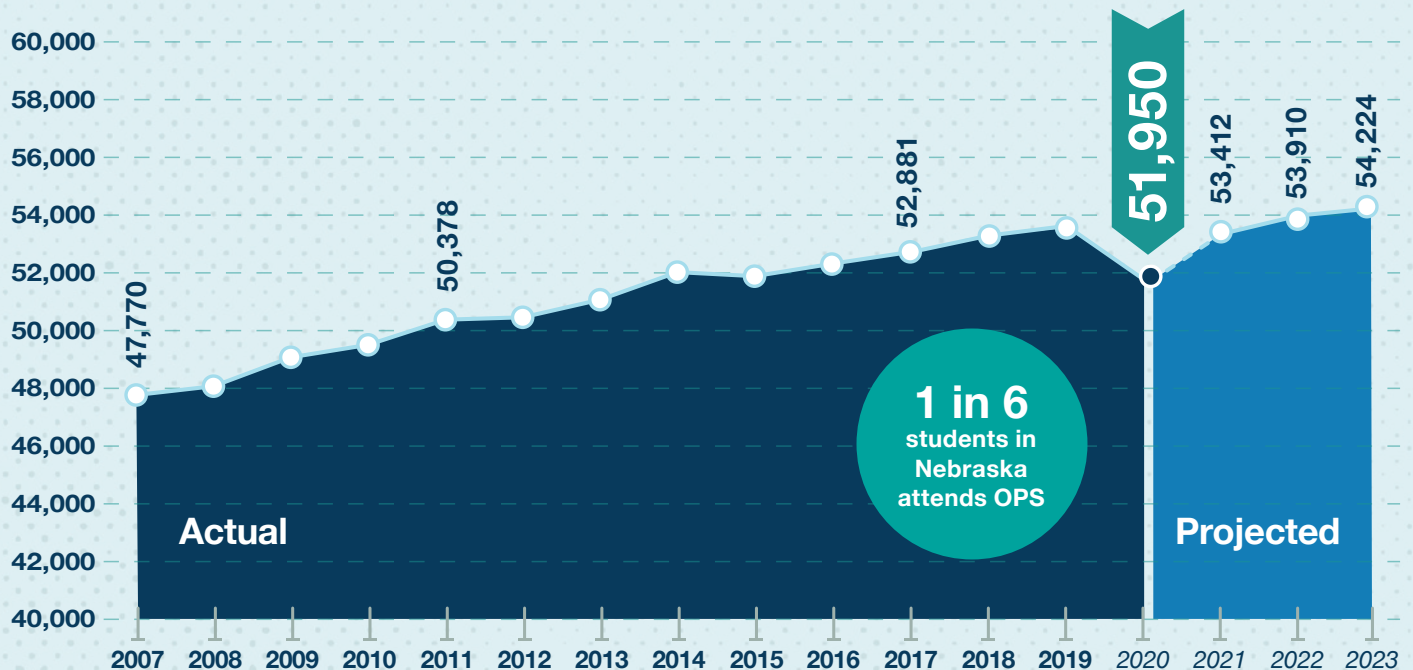
In addition to Next Level Learning, elementary and middle school students received Scholastic books at the end of the school year, and all students had the opportunity to keep their district-provided iPads for the summer with access to summer learning activities.



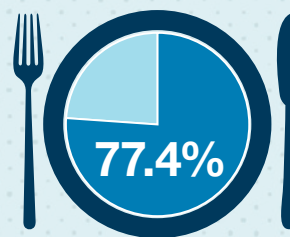
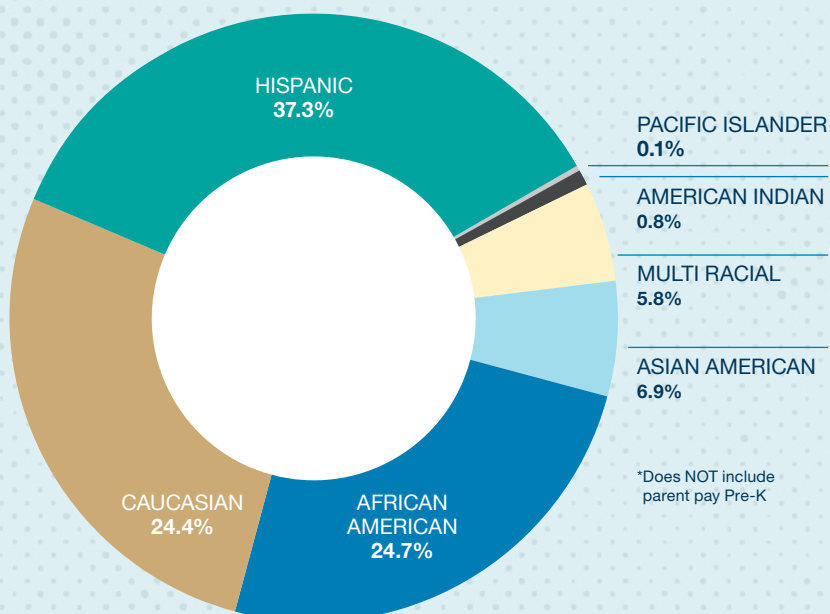


# Students and Staff by the Numbers

## Number of Students



## Racial/Ethnic Composition



**Free and Reduced Lunch**

OPS is the most diverse school district in the state, serving students who speak

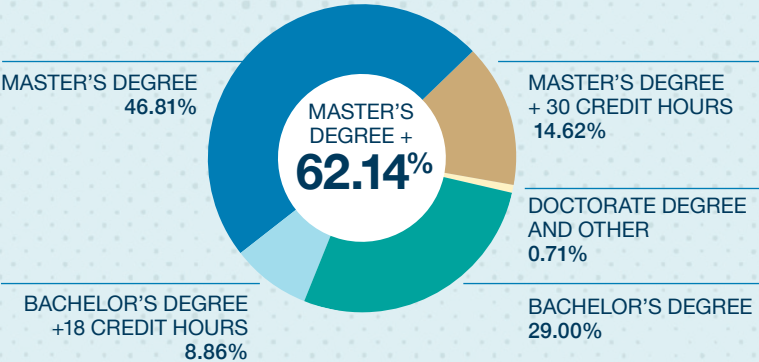
**109**  
languages

**NUMBER OF EL STUDENTS**  
**18,777\***

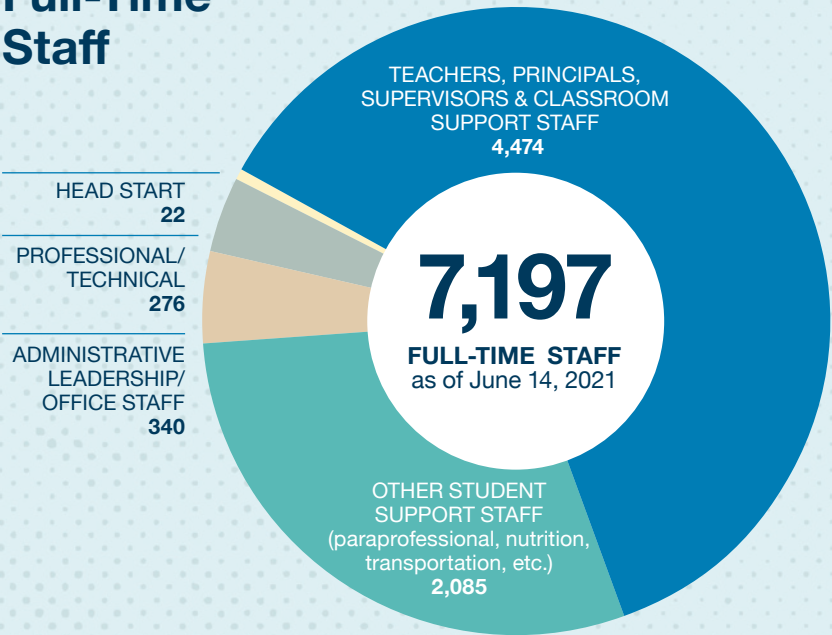
\*Number of current students who have been provided English Learner (EL) services throughout their time at OPS. Not all students are currently receiving services.



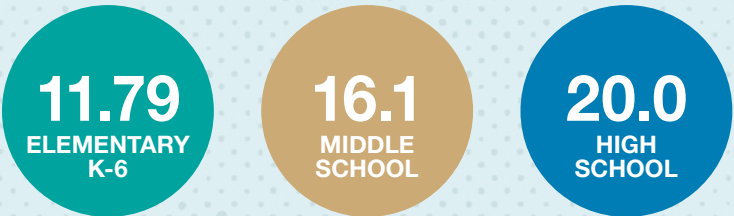
# Certified Staff Degree Status



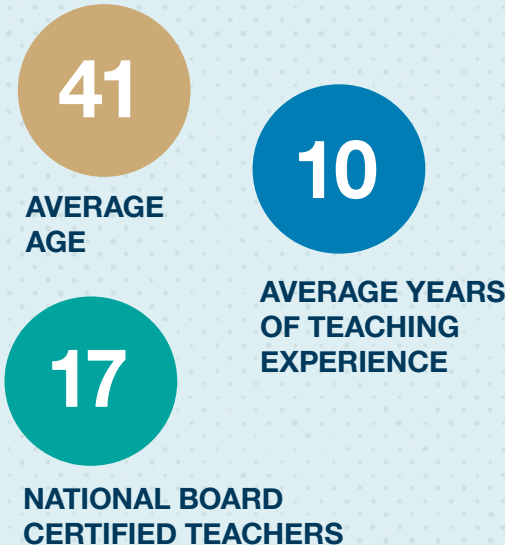
# Full-Time Staff



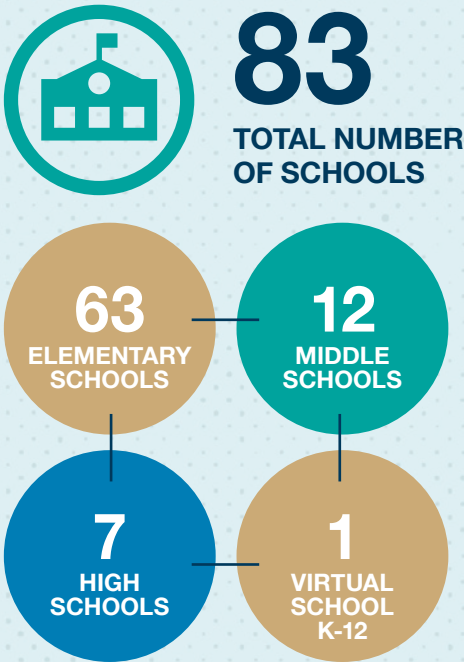
# Student-Teacher Ratio



# Teaching Experience



# Schools/Programs



OPS has 12 additional Alternative Programs

 OPS is always hiring highly-qualified staff. Check out open positions at [ops.org](https://ops.org).





# #OPSProud

OPS students and staff are recognized throughout the metro, region and nation for their outstanding accomplishments. Here are a few highlights of awards earned during the 2020-21 school year:

## Student Awards Snapshot\*

- Students earned more than \$69.2 million in scholarships!
- Burke High School students Nicholas Hammans and Laura Kirshenbaum were among 31 other Nebraska students to achieve top scores on the ACT.
- Standing Bear Elementary was recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School for exemplary high performance.
- Marrs Middle School's Diego Gomez Zamora was selected as a Jack Kent Cooke Young Scholar, a prestigious program that accepts fewer than 100 students from across the country each year.
- South High School boys' soccer team won the 2021 Class A Nebraska State Soccer Championship.
- McMillan Middle School's Science Olympiad Team placed first in the Nebraska State Science Olympiad.
- Northwest High School and Morton Middle School both placed first in their categories in the 2021 African American History Challenge.
- North High School's Tyler Stewart won the Nebraska Class A 220lb wrestling championship.
- Northwest High School students Pu Meh, Manal Suliman, Htoo Say, Hannah Dalton and Kiersten Copenhaver placed among the top finishers in the 2021 Educators Rising state and national contests.
- Students from four of our high schools competed and placed in the 2021 Nebraska State Track & Field Championship. Four student athletes earned first place in their event(s).

## Staff Awards Snapshot\*

- Buffet Middle School teacher Marisa McClintock was named the 2020 Middle School Art Educator of the Year by the Nebraska Art Teachers Association.
- Norris Middle School counselor Giovanna Zermeno received the Nebraska Middle School Counselor of the Year Award.
- Walnut Hill counselor Jacqueline Hotz received the Nebraska Elementary School Counselor of the Year Award.
- South High School teacher Carrie Palmesano was named the 2021-2022 Nebraska English Language Arts Teacher of the year, Teacher of Excellence by the Nebraska English Language Arts Council and the National Council Teachers of English.
- Morton Middle School teacher Adam Malmquist was recognized as the 2020 Middle School Physical Education Teacher of the Year by SHAPE Nebraska for his innovative and adaptive instruction to meet the needs, interests and abilities of each student.
- Benson High was recognized as the Nebraska Career and Technical Education Outstanding Career Academy of 2021. Benson's Health Professions Academy and its Freshman Academy also achieved Model Academy status.

\*This list provides a snapshot of some of the awards OPS students and staff received during the school year.



# College and Career Ready Standards

## and Nebraska State Accountability Test Scores

In 2014, the Department of Education began revising standards to reflect College and Career Ready Standards. The Nebraska College and Career Ready Standards are a rigorous set of standards that aim to prepare all students to graduate from high school and be able to complete credit-bearing, first-year, postsecondary courses without a need for remediation. The standards reflect a new definition of “meeting expectations” at each grade level.

The state sets standards. Then, each district has one year to align their standards with the state standards. The Nebraska Department of Education follows a standards revision timeline for all content areas.

The standards are measured on state tests for elementary and middle school students. All juniors in Nebraska take the ACT, which is used as the high school state test. Some students take the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS). Similar to the ACT, the NSCAS is a statewide test that helps prepare students for success in postsecondary education, career and life. The NSCAS includes several measures that help inform educators and families as they support students.

Although testing usually takes place annually, the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted the regular school year calendar. The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) canceled the NSCAS assessment for the 2019-2020 school year which included the general, alternate and ACT tests. Therefore, the most recent results displayed are for the 2018-2019 school year.

### What is Omaha Public Schools doing to prepare ALL students for the ACT?

Omaha Public Schools provides a guaranteed and viable curriculum for students along with rigorous instruction. ACT standards are aligned and addressed within the A+ Curriculum Guides for all content areas. The PreACT is given to Omaha Public Schools students in the fall of their sophomore year to prepare students for the ACT. Advisement teachers and school counselors also review PreACT and ACT results then meet with students to help them set goals based on their scores.

#### 2018 2019 NSCAS Results

Below is the percent proficient

##### ELEMENTARY

##### English Language Arts

35.1%

Math 33.7% Science 47.6%

##### MIDDLE SCHOOL

##### English Language Arts

31.2%

Math 25.9% Science 39.0%

#### ACT – State Assessment

##### Average score for 2018-2019 for ALL Students

This score reflects all grade 11 students who took the ACT state assessment. The individual student scores may be reported to post-secondary educational institutions based on ACT guidelines.

English Language Arts  
14.7

Math 16.1 Science 16.1

#### ACT – Graduating Class Report 2020

The score includes the most recent score for 2020 graduates who took the ACT as sophomores, juniors or seniors either as the state assessment or on a national test day. These students earned a score that ACT allows to be reported to postsecondary educational institutions.

Composite  
Score  
16.6

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, NDE canceled the 2019-2020 NSCAS Assessment; therefore, there are no results to report.

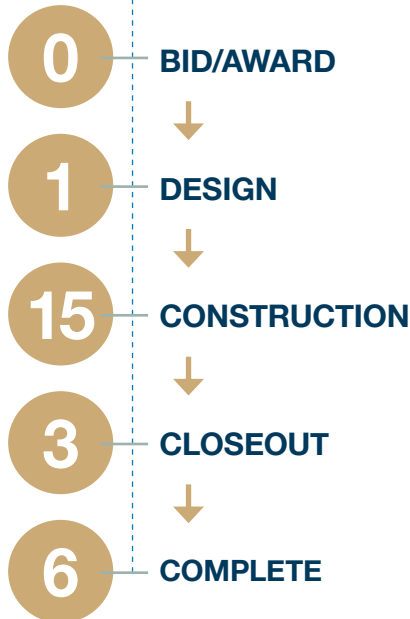




# Bond Program Status

## 2018 Phase 2 Bond Program

**25**  
ACTIVE  
PROJECTS



### TOTAL CONTRACT AMOUNTS:

90.14% of Program

**\$371,784,150**

### TOTAL EXPENDITURE AMOUNTS:

48.60% of Program

**\$200,469,380**



**FOREST STATION ELEMENTARY**

## Bond projects to benefit students districtwide

During the 2020-2021 school year, Omaha Public Schools' 2014 Phase 1 Bond Program reached the finish line. Now, as five new schools take shape, our district's 2018 Phase 2 Bond Program remains on schedule and within budget. Earlier this year, our district shared the names, mascots and colors for the new schools following an exciting process that involved students, staff and community members. In addition to the new builds underway, students throughout our district will soon benefit from other bond projects. Crews are completing upgrades to lighting and HVAC systems, along with building renovations and additions that will eliminate the need for portables at a number of locations.

### NEW HIGH SCHOOLS

#### BUENA VISTA HIGH 60TH AND L ST

65% Complete

Critical work includes painting, installation of drywall and glass walls in the academic wing, as well as exterior brick installation and site work for the sports fields and track.

**Scheduled to open August 2022**

#### WESTVIEW HIGH 156TH & IDA ST

64% Complete

Critical work includes painting, drywall and electrical work in the academic wing, installation of exterior metal panels and site work for the sports fields, track and pool.

**Scheduled to open August 2022**





Stay up to date with all Bond Program projects via the OPS Bond Program website

[ops.org](https://ops.org)



PINE ELEMENTARY

## NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL

### BLUESTEM MIDDLE 42ND & Y ST

18% Complete

Critical work includes the installation of structural steel and panels. Grading is scheduled to start in summer 2021 along with the placement of concrete.

**Scheduled to open August 2023**

## NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

### FOREST STATION ELEMENTARY 1000 N FORT CROOK RD

81% Complete

Critical work includes painting, installation of drywall, light fixtures and plumbing, and brick and siding installation.

**Scheduled to open August 2022**

### PINE ELEMENTARY 10TH AND PINE ST

57% Complete

Critical work includes electrical, plumbing, mechanical and drywall installation. Brick installation continues along with siding and site utilities work.

**Scheduled to open August 2022**

## Economic Inclusion



The OPS Bond Economic Inclusion (EI) Program focuses on ensuring that Small and Emerging Businesses have opportunities to participate in bond projects. EI is applied to all bond spending, excluding land acquisition and builders' risk insurance.

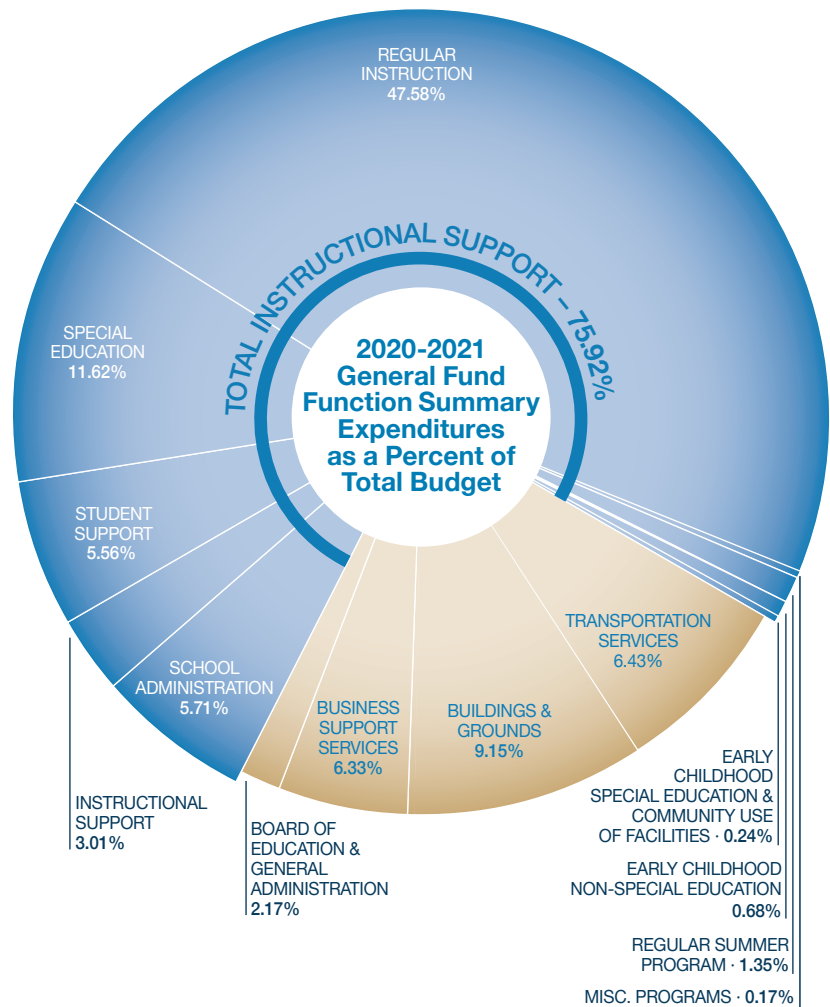
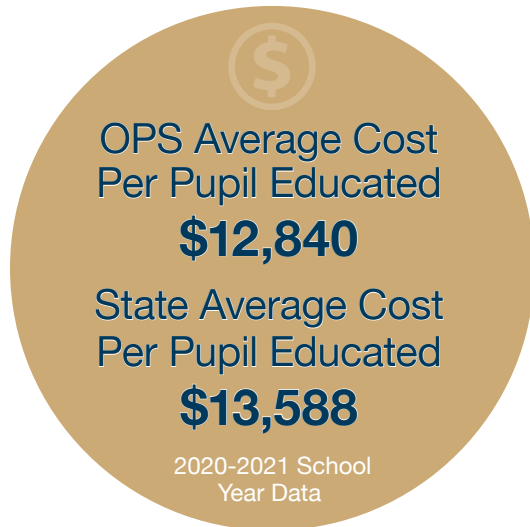
**2018 PHASE 2 BOND PROGRAM GOAL 15%**

**COMMITMENTS  
\$36,058,416**

**EXPENDITURES TO DATE  
\$17,268,636**

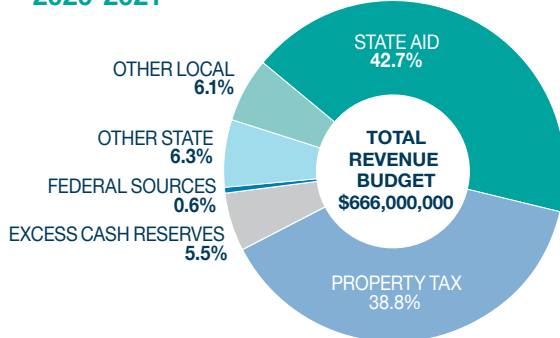


# Budget



## Where Does the Money Come From?

2020-2021



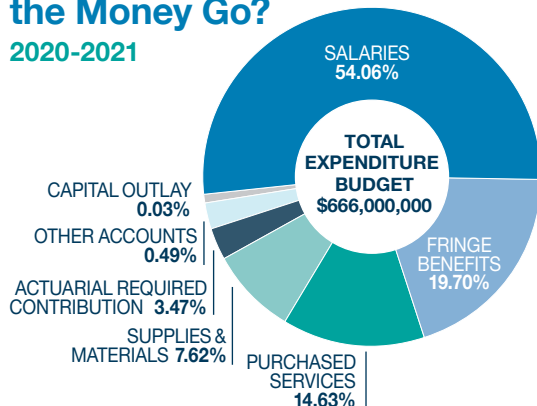
## General Fund Budget

2016-2017 to 2020-2021

Budget Year	Allowable Budget	Adopted Budget	Unused Budget Authority
2016-2017	603,635,116	582,072,902	21,562,214
2017-2018	636,837,202	608,843,809	27,993,393
2018-2019	636,185,573	617,090,766	19,094,807
2019-2020	680,218,611	621,000,000	59,218,611
2020-2021	692,572,835	666,000,000	26,572,835

## Where Does the Money Go?

2020-2021



### Allowable Budget

The amount to which the General Fund budget may increase in accordance with state statutes.

### Adopted Budget

The General Fund budget of expenditures adopted by the Board of Education following receipt of public comments and Board discussion.

### Unused Budget Authority

The excess of Allowable Budget over the Adopted Budget.





# Diverse Educational Opportunities for All

OPS is proud to offer diverse educational opportunities for students. No matter what a student is interested in, there is something for everyone. Each school is unique and they all make us #OPSProud.

**11**

College and Career Academies

More Advanced Placement (AP) courses than any other district in the state

**30+**

Career education programs of study

**22**

Career education certifications offered

**63,821**

College credits earned over the past four years by OPS students

**10**

Dual language programs offered

**560**

Industry-recognized certifications earned by Career Center students



# Stay Connected with OPS

Families, please ensure your phone number and email address are current with your child's school to receive important updates about school and district happenings.

**ops.org**

3215 Cuming St.  
Omaha, NE 68131



## Follow us on Social Media

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## OPS Administrative Department Numbers

**Information Center..... 531-299-0220**  
District Communications.....531 299 0221  
EL Department ..... 531-299 0259  
Help Desk ..... 531 299 0300  
Human Resources .....531 299 0240

Nutrition Services..... 531-299 0230  
Omaha Public Schools Foundation.. 531-299 0250  
Student and Community Services....531 299 0314  
Student Placement ..... 531-299 0302  
Student Transportation .....531 299 0140