

Ankeny Schools Snapshot

A monthly district newsletter

September 2021

Advancing the Vision

with Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Erick Pruitt

My first day was July 1, 2021, and I have committed to spending my first 100 days getting out in the community to listen and assess the strengths, challenges, and opportunities facing the district. I've just been here 59 days, but I have been learning a lot from the community during this time. Some common things that I have been hearing are:

- It's important for the community to support the district and individual schools
- ACSD provides great experiences for students and constantly strives for excellence
- In addition to students pursuing college, what other postsecondary options are offered to students?
- Despite the district's success, there is room for growth

One of the ways Ankeny Community School District can grow is by more fully engaging parents and guardians in our shared work. This is why I have started a Parent Advisory Council (PAC) to bring us together to assist with achieving the district's educational goals and supporting the success of each student. Thank you to everyone who attended our first meeting last evening where the foundation was laid for the work we will be doing this year. The PAC also heard from a panel made up of principals and instructional coaches that shared stories and information on Wednesday morning late starts (professional development time for teachers) and why they are important and how they are beneficial for everyone. You can view the slide deck from last night's meeting on our [district website](#). Also, I am asking for suggestions on further [PAC topics](#). I want to cover topics that are relevant to you and our students

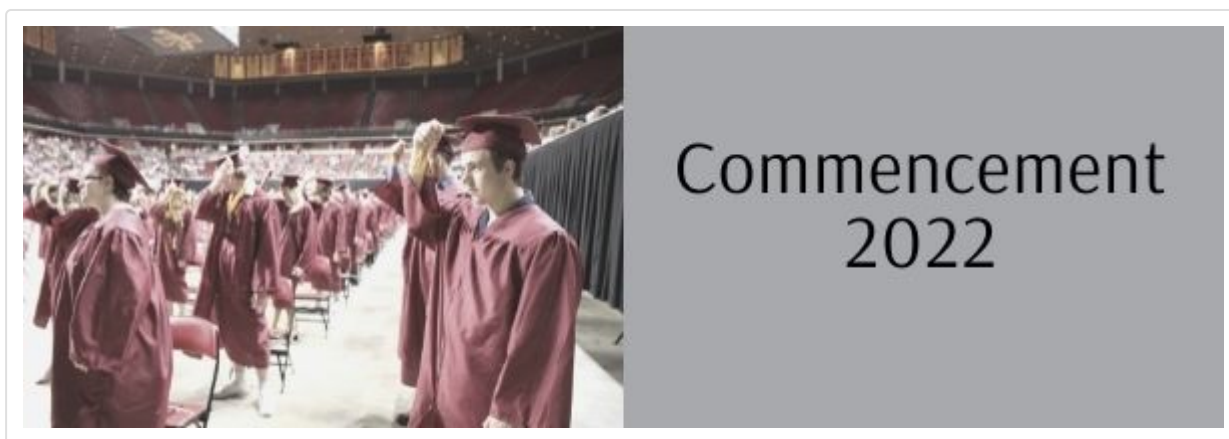
The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 21, 2021 at 6:00pm at Northview. More information on upcoming PAC meetings can be found on our [district website](#).

Another opportunity for us to come together as a community is through the development of a revised strategic plan. We want and need your help to craft a vision for our district's future. To share more about why ACSD is undertaking the planning process now and to make sure you know about opportunities to get involved, we are kicking off the process with a Community Summit on Thursday, September 23, 2021 from 7-8 p.m. at Southview Middle School (1020 SW Cherry Street).

Thank you for your ongoing welcome to me and my family. We continue to enjoy meeting more of you and the continued learning about the wonderful opportunities the community of Ankeny offers.

Sincerely,

Dr. Erick Pruitt



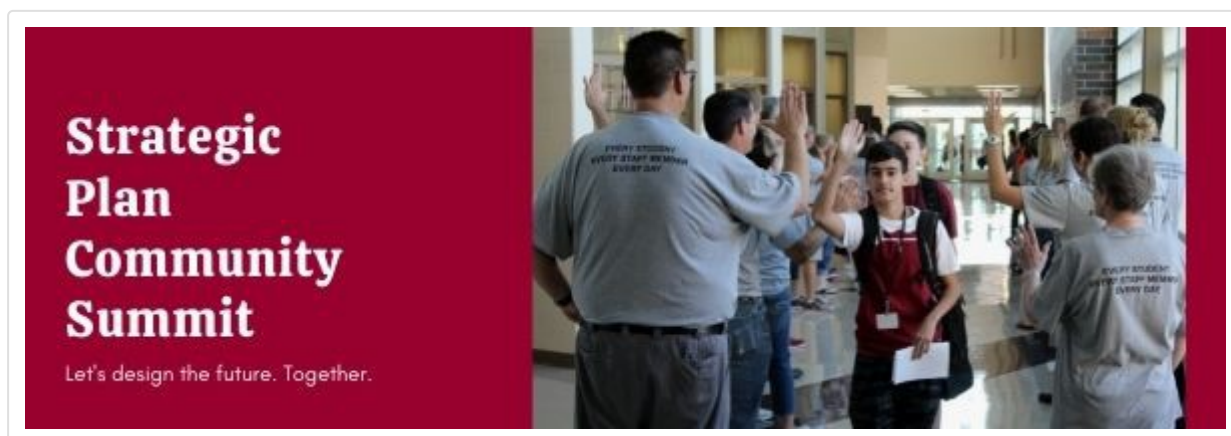
Commencement Dates Announced for Class of 2022

Commencement ceremonies will be held on **Saturday, June 4, 2022** at the Hilton Coliseum in Ames. The Ankeny High School ceremony will be at 10 a.m. and Centennial High School will be at 1 p.m. More details will be shared as we move forward with planning this special event.



Three Ankeny Students Chosen as Semifinalists for National Merit Scholarship Competition

Officials of National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) have announced the names of approximately 16,000 Semifinalists in the 67th annual National Merit Scholarship Program. **Among the honored students are Ankeny Centennial High School seniors Thomas Brustkern and Nathan Nepl and Ankeny High School Senior Grace Peil.** These academically talented high school seniors have an opportunity to continue in the competition for some 7,500 National Merit Scholarships worth more than \$30 million that will be offered next spring. To be considered for a Merit Scholarship® award, Semifinalists must fulfill several requirements to advance to the Finalist level of the competition. Learn more about this honor by [clicking here](#).



Register to Attend the Strategic Plan Community Summit

We need your help! We are asking for your assistance in creating our new strategic plan. We want to hear students, staff, parents, business owners, civic leaders, advocates, and other community members' voices over the next 8-10 months as we plan to develop an actionable, long range strategic plan for our school district.

To share more about why we are undertaking the planning process now and to make sure you know about opportunities to get involved, we are kicking off the process with a Community Summit on Thursday, September 23, 2021 from 7-8 p.m. at Southview Middle School (1020 SW Cherry Street).

While registration for the event is not required, to help us ensure we have adequate space and supplies available, we encourage you to [register online](#).

Thank you for your continued support of the Ankeny Community School District. Now, let's go design the future. Together.

Extracurricular Activities Transportation - Bus Driver Shortage

On Tuesday and Thursday of this week there was a shortage of buses for some of our extracurricular activities. Schedules were adjusted, activity vans were used when available, and in some cases families stepped up and transported students.

The Ankeny Community School District contracts with [Durham School Services](#) to provide transportation services to our students. Our current contract (and at least our past three years of contracts) allows for eight buses over our normal routes. We work hard to avoid making any significant changes to schedules, but in the fall and spring, we do have some dates where there are more extracurricular activities scheduled than our contract allows. In the past, Durham has worked with our Activity Directors (ADs) to provide additional busing when needed.

Currently there is a bus driver shortage, not only affecting the ACSD, but many transit agencies across the country. Durham is dealing with illness along with some drivers choosing to resign or retire. Durham continues to reach out to their affiliate districts to attempt to arrange for substitute drivers, however, this week there were no drivers available.

Activity Directors attempted to charter services, but they also are short on drivers. They will make the needed adjustments in their schedules when necessary, and they will continue to attempt to charter buses for future dates when available.

Important Nutrition Program Update

Food and labor shortages are affecting the Ankeny Community Schools Nutrition Program, along with all school meal programs across the nation. The pandemic has broken the food supply chain, and school meal programs are being challenged to find high quality and acceptable products, while meeting government regulations. Some of the largest manufacturers (Tyson, Advance Pierre, Sunnyfresh, etc.) are cutting back or discontinuing production of their school line products. The ramifications of these nationwide outages is that Ankeny School lunch menus will continue to change, in some cases, without notice. Please know that we will continue to offer a balanced meal each day that includes protein, whole grains, fresh fruit, vegetables, and milk. For the most up-to-date menus, please log onto www.schoolcafe.com.

Upcoming Menu Changes:

Elementary schools:

- Elementary menus will no longer be sent home.
- Weekly menus will be [posted online](#).
- Beginning Monday, September 20, juice box and bottled water sales will be discontinued.
- Milk will still be available to purchase a la carte, as long as a student has money in their meal account.
- Thursday, September 23, French Toast Sticks will be replaced with a cheese omelet and Scooby graham crackers.

Grades 6-9:

- Grab & Go Salads/Wraps will be eliminated temporarily.

- Protein packs will continue to be offered.

Grades 10-12

The variety of Grab & Go Salads/Wraps will be reduced.

Free and Reduced Eligibility:

All meals (breakfast and lunch) will be free for all students through the rest of the year.

However, if you think you qualify for free/reduced price eligibility, please complete an eligibility application. If your family qualifies, you may be eligible for:

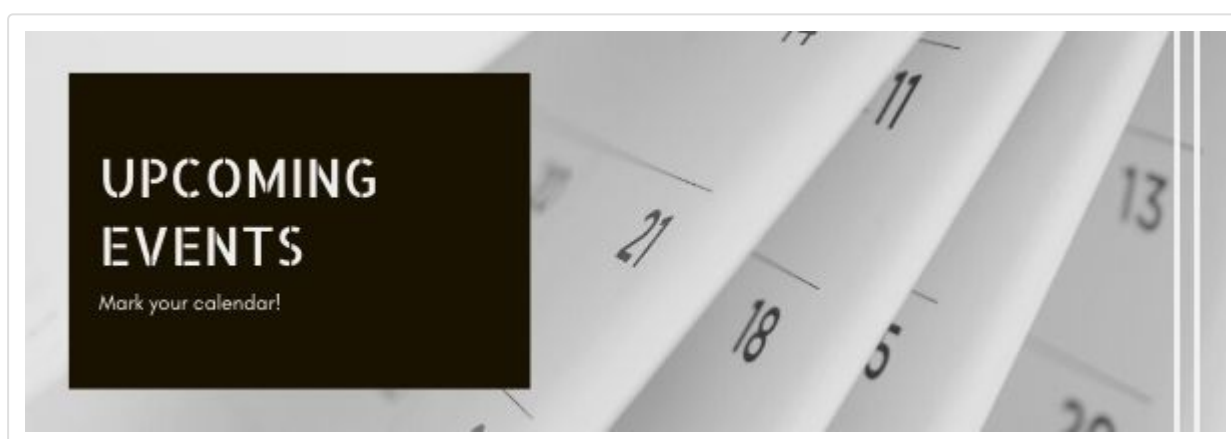
- Reduction of textbook fees
- Activity passes (9-12th graders only)
- Reduction of Driver's Education fee

Applications may be completed at www.schoolcafe.com or [on our website](#).

September vBackpack

Find this month's vBackpack [here!](#)

- [Camps and Scouts](#)
- [Community Engagement Courses](#)
- [Educational Opportunities](#)
- [Sports and Activities](#)



Board Meeting - Tuesday, September 21 at 6 p.m.

Strategic Plan Community Summit - Thursday, September 23 at 7 p.m.

Seeking Truth in Our Classrooms - Wednesday, September 29 at 6 p.m.



Ankeny Community School District

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It is the policy of the Ankeny Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy please contact Ken Morris, Jr., Equity Director at 306 SW School Street, Ankeny, IA 50023, 515/965-9600 or kenneth.morris@ankenyschools.org. The grievance will then be directed to the appropriate administrator charged with managing the program or department specified in the grievance.

306 SW School St, Ankeny, IA, ... 515-965-9600

ankenyschools.org