

During a time when dialogue in the community, on social media and at School Board meetings may indicate differing views on education, finding a rallying point that all can agree on can be challenging. The school district adopted a unifying theme for 2024-25, It takes all of us, to counterbalance division and return the focus to students and the district mission to effectively educate each student for success. Do you remember the feeling of accomplishment when you received a congratulatory handshake and presentation of your high school diploma? The back-to-school video builds on this emotional moment by showcasing the team of over 8,000 staff members throughout the school district who support each students success. The video format uses natural sound and music to set the tone, and a storyline where the superintendent distributes Power of Purpose squeeze balls across the system as a metaphor for preparing students for the handshake at graduation. The idea of it takes all of us is developed through a series of educational moments where teachers connect with students and principals show their support with a squeeze of the Power of Purpose ball, aligning the work done at all grade levels as building blocks to receiving a diploma - because staff members at all areas in the district play a role in the success of each student in Anoka-Hennepin Schools. The idea leads to the graduation ceremony and the awarding of diplomas by the Superintendent. The use of the squeeze ball is meant to connect the graduation experience with the daily experience of staff across the district for the success of each student. The video premiered to audiences of staff members at back-to-school staff meetings the first week of school during professional development opportunities. It was unveiled to the general public via school district e-newsletters, websites and social media channels two days before the first day of school. The superintendent also shared the video at meetings he attended with community business organizations. Anoka-Hennepin Schools has a tradition of starting each school year with a back-to-school video, usually with a new theme for the year. In 2023-24, the district continued on the successful roll-out of The Power of Purpose, inspiring staff to reflect on why they are working in education. That theme was expanded in 2024-25 to further inspire staff to work together to generate positive outcomes for students by adding It takes all of us to make the best schools possible. The video premiered in-person to 8,000 staff members at back to school events, and emailed to the

families of over 36,000 students. It was also distributed on social media and the district website, the video has over 16,083 views on social media and 866 views on YouTube. Each school also received a number of Power of Purpose squeeze balls that are featured in the video for distribution in their buildings to build morale and support our collective purpose.