



## LEADERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

### **Elementary:**

The Elementary Schools hosted Parent-Teacher Conferences. Parent support and engagement is strong in Waconia Elementary Schools. 97% parent participation shows a true partnership between home and school.

2020-2021 Kindergarten Registration is in full swing! New Kindergarten families will attend Kindergarten Preview Night the week of February 10 - 14, 2020. There is great excitement in welcoming the newest members of our school community!

Grade 5 students expanded their learning by exploring Ice Fishing on Lake Waconia. Waconia High School Students in 30 Fish Houses guided elementary students through this fun learning experience. Wow! What an amazing invitation to learn about our local natural resources! Thank you to Waconia High School Conservation Club led by Mr. Wayne Trapp and Mr. Mike Jensen.

Integrating technology into the elementary curriculum has been fully supported by Media/Technology Integration Specialist at each of the elementary schools. Students have had the opportunity to use robots and coding to accomplish academic tasks. Waconia students have expanded learning opportunities in the areas of Creativity, Collaboration, Communication, and Critical Thinking. Students invent, discover, explore, create, and learn in a meaningful and authentic manner.

February is I Love To Read Month! All our elementary schools are celebrating reading and building our stamina for reading long and strong! From mystery readers, flashlight reading and cozy up with your stuffed animal to reading with beach attire, book trivia, wear your words, and crazy socks, we have planned many fun activities throughout the month of February to motivate our students to enjoy reading!

Gratitude! We are truly grateful for the immense amount of support we receive from our Elementary PTOs. Special events, fundraising efforts, and school support provide our students with an enhanced education.

We continue to begin each month with a focus on GRATITUDE. The first Monday of each month is an invitation to practice GRATITUDE ~ Saying Thank you and Being Thankful! This month we are encouraging everyone to share a one word gratitude.

**Middle School:**

Tuesday evening the band students in grades 5-12 performed beautifully at the All-District Band Concert in the middle school gym. The show, sometimes referred to as Band-o-Rama, was very well attended with a standing room only crowd. The collective skills and talents of our student musicians and our amazing teachers are something to be very proud of. The high numbers of students participating in band is amazing and may eventually require us to redesign this event due to space limitations-- a great problem to have. Many thanks to the band boosters, custodians and WHS student band leaders for all of the assistance with set-up, break down and clean-up. The logistics of securing and setting up chairs, stands, and equipment for over 900 musicians was quite a feat. Following the Tuesday night performance, 6th-grade band students traveled to Orchestra Hall on Wednesday to listen, view and interact with professional musicians. WMS band teacher, Mr. Snyder, shared that it was a great experience for the students and the performance was better than ever.

Last week we hosted the middle school version of the high school's Show Choir Spectacular. Our middle school show choir groups, Shockwave and Pulse, performed as well as many small groups and solo performances. The show provides the show choir performers the opportunity to share their unique talents and skills in music and dance. The Middle School Spectacular is commonly a highlight of the season for many performers and parents. A wide arrangement of desserts and treats were also available for those that performed and those that came to cheer them on.

Mr. Micklo was recognized as our WMS PTO January Teacher of the Month. Mr. Micklo was nominated by twin, 6th-grade brothers Brody and Brent Horwich. In his nomination letter, Brody wrote, "He is one of the nicest guys I've ever met, and that is why gym is one of my favorite classes altogether." His brother Brent shared, "When I have problems he can fix them. Also, he is a good influence on all the kids and teachers he works with." Congratulations to Mr. Micklo on being the WMS PTO January Teacher of the month. Thank you to Brody and Brent Horwich taking the time to recognize Mr. Micklo with the well-written nominations.

Waconia Middle School's Math Team had another great season. Their final competition was on January 13th, where Waconia placed 1st in their division. Individual medals were also awarded for the top ten student scores in the division, with Jack Geller taking 1st, Josephine Kisner taking 3rd, Justin Thomas taking 7th, and Sam Cloutier taking 10th. Waconia was successful because they had such a great group of students. Students on the team that were not yet mentioned: Austin Coffey, Brennan Markiewicz, Brynn Schochenmaier, Simon Peitersen, Sam Busch, Sara Schoenfelder, Carson Aschenbrener, and Will Melacon.

**High School:**

Our Soles4Souls drive to collect shoes has come to an end, with the final total exceeding 2,000 pairs of shoes. Congratulations to the International Club for their work on this project, and to the two students who took the lead in the project, Emma Ziesemer and Nicki Shoutz. Thanks go out to all of the schools as shoes were collected across the district.

The Conservation Club conducted another successful ice fishing event with 5th graders from Bayview, Southview, and Laketown. This has become a great tradition for both our students and the 5th graders. Special thanks goes out to In Towne Marina, the MN DNR, Carver County Sheriff department, the Waconia Fire department, and especially Wayne Trapp who has been the primary organizer of this event.

We have begun the final academic push of the second trimester, with the last student day scheduled for Thursday, February 27. Both students and staff are working hard to get coursework completed and curriculum covered, while keeping an eye on Spring Break.

**Activities:** [www.waconiaathletics.com](http://www.waconiaathletics.com)

We are pleased to announce that FIVE of our student athletes signed national letters of intent to continue to pursue their passion for learning as part of a collegiate DI or DII athletic team. We celebrated the following student athletes Wednesday morning, February 5th:

**Max Kalenberg**, signed with Southwest Minnesota State University – Baseball

**Carson Karnes**, signed with Southwest Minnesota State University – Baseball

**Tim Stapleton**, signed with the University of Minnesota – Wrestling

**Bennett Weber**, signed with the University of North Dakota – Football

**Kali Wolf**, signed with the University of New Mexico – Volleyball

Congratulations Wildcats!

**Community Ed:**

Community Education is thinking about Spring! On Wednesday, February 5, it was our recreation deadline for spring soccer and lacrosse leagues. Hopefully, the weather cooperates this year and we will be able to get outside in April for our games.

Our Preschool Open House in January was very well attended. Registration for the 2020-2021 school year has officially opened. We are about 80% filled at this time. Kids' Company registration has also opened for this summer as well as for the following school year. If you are still looking for child care for this summer. Please register early! Some grade levels do fill up before summer starts.

**Human Resources:**

The School District's Insurance Advisory Committee learned at its February meeting that our Blue Cross Blue Shield's medical insurance renewal will be at the 8% rate cap for the 2020-2021 plan year, which was our expectation based on the last twenty-four months of

claims. Medical claims for the district have trended downward in the last six months, however, which could have a positive impact on our 2021-2022 plan year. The Committee meets regularly during the school year to help ensure the district's insurance benefits meet the diverse needs of our school district's employees.

### **Teaching & Learning:**

**Department of Labor and Industry Grant:** Earlier this year Kelly Jo Raether and Jenny Sebola, D110 Transitions Coordinators, brought a grant opportunity from the Department of Labor and Industry to our attention. The purpose of this grant is to expand opportunities for youth skills training in the areas of manufacturing, industry, or healthcare. Given our proximity to healthcare facilities and the emerging need for skilled workers in these fields, we saw this as a unique opportunity. To strengthen the application we partnered with Southwest Metro 288, and together, submitted an application with the following objectives:

- Expand course offerings at WHS to include a Health Careers Exploration course, Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) certification, and a Pre-CNA course to better prepare students for success.
- Increase awareness of health-related career pathways for students who may not see themselves pursuing a 4-year college or university.
- Make Waconia a hub for surrounding districts to access career exploration, training, and work experience in health-related fields.

On January 21, we were thrilled to receive news that we have been awarded a 2-year grant for \$90,000. Many thanks to Joyce Eissinger, Christine Fenner, Kelly Jo Raether, and Jenny Sebola for their passion and vision. We'll continue to keep you updated on progress related to our action plan.

### **Testing and Assessment -**

Preparations for the first round of spring MCA testing has begun at WMS and WHS.

- Grade 8 Early Science - March 10 and March 11
- Grade 10 Early Reading - March 10 and March 11
- Grade 10 Early Science - March 12 and March 13

Thanks to Tim Koschinska, Tracy Edsill, and the Principal Team for scheduling and coordination efforts.

### **Superintendent:**

#### **Financial Update**

This is the time of year when I like to update the community on the school district finances. As a school district we are using the information from the December audit to start the budgeting process for the next year.

The Director of Finance and I are determining the parameters for next year's preliminary budget to help with staffing planning. We will bring our forecasting information to the school board for discussion. Each year that we are in statutory operating debt (SOD), we need to submit a plan to the Minnesota Department of Education that details our plan for maintaining a balanced

budget and how we plan on getting out of SOD. The plan for the upcoming school year was recently approved by the school board and submitted to the state.

This recovery plan outlines projections and assumptions around a number of variables in the financial management process, including student enrollment revenues, staffing, expenditures and contingency budgeting.

Currently, our negative fund balance is \$6.4 million. As we have been sharing with the community over the past year, much of that is largely driven by a shortfall from the state in special education funding. It's known as the cross subsidy -- general education funds that need to be used to pay for mandated special education programming. Changes in the special education funding formula made in 2016 lagged for two years and the new funding amount could not have been predicted. This shortage of funding happened at the same time we had chosen to spend down the fund balance before going out for an operating levy. Even though this allowed us to sustain our great academic programming we have for students, it made us vulnerable to the possibility of going into SOD. When it was uncovered (2 years down the road) that we were not going to be reimbursed from the state by as much as we had planned, our fund balance went into a negative two year trend. We have made the needed adjustments to have a balanced budget moving forward, but we will need to pay off our negative fund balance and that is described in the SOD plan submitted to the state. More information about the cross-subsidy and going into SOD can be found on our website at this [link](#).

Governor Tim Walz has assembled a task force to look at the cross subsidy issue and I have made many trips to the Capitol and plan to make many more this legislative session. I have been asked to testify to the Governor's task force to help explain the negative consequences of the new special education funding formula. We remain hopeful that our lawmakers are hearing us and will decide to make the special education funding formula more equitable. It is our plan to continue the great academic programming we have at ONE10 throughout this SOD journey and we appreciate all the staff and community support as we move forward. This has been a strong WEareONE10 moment.

### **DeRusha Eats**

WCCO-TV's Jason DeRusha came to Waconia High School to check out Cafe 110 for his "DeRusha Eats" segment. He toured the kitchen with our nutritional services director, Barb Schank, and then sat down to have lunch with students. Jason seemed super impressed with what we are doing in Cafe 110, commenting, "This feels more like a bistro than a school lunch line." He also mentioned "how nice and respectful" all the kids were to him. That's ONE10! The story is scheduled to air on the WCCO morning show Thursday, 2/13/20. After that, it'll be online so, if you miss it, we will share the link after the story is posted.

### **District Band Festival**

The ISD ONE10 Districtwide Band Festival continues to be a hit. This is a popular concert every year because it showcases all of our ONE10 band students, grades 5-12. This year, due

to the MN Caucus night, the original schedule date had to be moved, causing the venue to move to the middle school. The staff that made this happen was remarkable. It was a tight fit but the show was amazing. Over 900 students performed that night. Congratulations to all the students, parents, directors, staff and administrators for their wonderful work. One of the highlights of the night was recognizing Lisa Sauer for all her years of service as the beginning band teacher at ONE10. It was a great night for all.

### **Polar Plunge to Happen Soon**

The yearly Polar Plunge Statewide Fundraiser is an event that ISD ONE10 has led the state within staff and student participation. This year the ONE10 Plunge will be on Friday, 2/28/20, in Lake Calhoun. Feel free to participate or donate by going to [plungemn.org](http://plungemn.org) and search for Waconia Wildcats Unified.

### **Kindergarten Preview Night**

The Kindergarten Preview Night is a great night for our parents of next year's kindergarten students and the future kindergartener to get a feel of the great school environment they will experience next year. This is an exciting night. Please come to your perspective school on the scheduled night:

### **Bayview - Feb. 10**

Session 1: 4:00pm-5:15pm

Session 2: 6:00pm-7:15pm

### **Laketown - Feb. 11**

Open session 4:30pm-6:30pm

### **Southview - Feb. 13**

Session 1: 4:00pm-5:15pm

Session 2: 6:15pm-7:30pm

**Have a Great Week!**

**We are ONE10!!**