

2015-16 Year in Review

In summary, it has been a productive year for the Wisconsin Heights School District. We continue to expand learning opportunities for students and plan for the future of Wisconsin Heights. Recently, relationships built over the past years are resulting in positive opportunities for the school district in terms of business/school district relationships, collaboration opportunities with community members, and initiatives by the Wisconsin Heights Educational Foundation. These opportunities represent broader educational themes which in time will move our district forward. The development of these initiatives occurred because of continued outreach and a willingness to work with our staff and community. It is a reminder that not all successes are immediate. The completed initiatives in 2015-16 have opened doors to a safer learning environment and future successes.

District Office Accomplishments for 2015-16

1. Finance – A demonstrated strength of past years. The following examples have built upon previous accomplishments: Referendum passed, enhanced budget performance, training new business manager, summer projects, and strategic planning. We continue to solidify our financial position.
2. Community Outreach
 - a. Mazomanie Economic Steering Committee. Dale Green has been asked to continue on the committee for future leadership opportunities since Mark Elworthy has left the District to be the next District Administrator of Whitewater. This has been a dynamic experience that has provided me insight as to how the community functions and how it desires to grow. It has created new partnerships.
 - b. Business and school relationships (new). This is a result of being a part of the Mazomanie Economic Steering Committee. One of the contacts is willing to host the GPS Educational Opportunity. Currently four local businesses and seven other school districts are interested in participating. Conversations will continue in 2016-17.
 - c. Mental Health Community Presentation and Forum. We have begun a conversation on a topic that is rarely discussed. By the beginning of the 2016-17 school year, all staff will be trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid.
 - d. Smiles for Life Program brought to WHSD. Students are receiving dental care at no or reduced cost based on their ability to pay. This is a long-term investment in children that costs the district nothing.
 - e. Continually foster and maintain positive relationships with community groups and boosters. We continue to benefit from several generous groups in our community.
3. Educational Leadership – Youth Mental Health First Aid, Adaptive Schools Training, curriculum adoptions, Educator Effectiveness Coaching, and Intervention Program. Adaptive Schools was a four-day training to foster emerging leaders in the district. Administrators and support staff have been trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid; teachers will be next year. Educator Effectiveness Coaching and Intervention Programs are in their third year of existence.
4. A second foundation in the Wisconsin Heights School District was created: The Wisconsin Heights School District Endowment Fund in partnership with the Madison Community Foundation to fund mini-grants for staff.
5. Innovative Practices

- a. Pilots in technology and teaching environments – These have been implemented based on staff feedback and interest to promote innovation.
- b. Teacher mini-grants – Recognize excellence and promote innovation.
- c. PBIS at the elementary schools – A two year journey to improve how we support and address student behavior.

Pupil Services Board Report

1. Focus on Mental Health

- Youth Mental Health First Aid training was provided to Administrators in July and to Educational Assistants, Secretaries, School-based Administrative Assistants, and Pupil Services staff during the January Inservice. The entire teaching staff will be trained during the upcoming August Inservice.
- A community presentation on Youth Mental Health Awareness was provided by Nancy Pierce of Journey Mental Health on November 12th. Approximately 40 staff and community members attended.
- All Educational Assistants, Special Education staff, Secretaries, and Pupil Services staff participated in Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training on October 12th. Monthly Crisis Team Meetings took place to review procedures and discuss on-going concerns.
- The district was awarded the Building Bridges grant this spring in a partnership with the Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District. Three of our students and their families are currently receiving wraparound services through the grant. Amanda Krupp, who serves as the Clinical Coordinator for the grant, has been an active presence at Black Earth Elementary providing on-going consultation and support to the staff.
- On April 13th, Amanda Krupp provided a professional development presentation to Educational Assistants on the following topic: “It’s All About Perspective: The Key to Serving Our Students with the Most Challenging Behaviors.”
- This summer 5 staff members are attending sessions on autism, trauma, the “Nurtured Heart” framework, and effective behavioral approaches as part of the Verona Academy in June.
- Next year, we will focus on bringing more awareness and training to the regular education staff regarding mental health issues and the impact of trauma on learning and behavior. The DPI’s Trauma-Sensitive Schools Modules and Amanda Krupp of Building Bridges will serve as resources for this training in addition to the Youth Mental Health First Aid training in August.

2. Special Education Updates

- The number of students requiring special education services and the intensity of their needs continue to increase. We were serving 89 students at the beginning of the school year, and that number had increased to 100 by the end of the year. After accounting for graduates, known transfers, and newly-identified students, we anticipate starting the next school year with 98 students. I want to especially thank the Board for recognizing these increased needs and agreeing to support additional staffing.
- New staff members joined our team this year: Alyssa Hingeveld and Pam Cashman as special education teachers, Julie Horner as the School Psychologist, and Donna Struck as a Behavior Interventionist at Black Earth. All provided invaluable services to the district. Next year we welcome Heather Reader to the role of Behavior Interventionist at Mazomanie Elementary, and Becki Schuetz will provide full-time special education behavioral support at Black Earth.
- At this time last year, I shared the results of our DPI compliance audit. As part of a new initiative at the federal level, districts will be held accountable for results in achievement in addition to compliance in the coming years. This is termed “Results-Driven Accountability” (RDA). The state of Wisconsin has decided to focus its efforts on literacy achievement since

this is an area of challenge for many students with disabilities in the state. Wisconsin's effort retools the acronym as "Reading Drives Achievement: Success through Literacy (RDA:StL)." A short video that introduces RDA can be found at the following link: [DPI's RDA Video](#).

- New IEP forms were recently released by the WDPI to emphasize this new focus on reading achievement. Throughout the next school year, special education teachers will be trained in how to use these new forms and in writing standard-based IEP's-- IEP's which provide specific information on how special education students are performing in relationship to grade-level standards.
- Instructional approaches and materials for improving reading achievement will also be explored over the next school year.

3. Academic and Career Planning

- Beginning in the 2017-18 school year, legislation requires every school board to provide academic and career planning services to all pupils enrolled in grades 6 to 12. DPI videos that provide an introduction to this initiative are found at the following link: [Academic and Career Planning](#).
- Definition: Academic and Career Planning, or ACP, is a student-driven, adult-supported process in which students create and cultivate their own unique and information-based visions for post secondary success, obtained through self-exploration, career exploration, and the development of career management and planning skills.
- A few initial meetings were held with counselors and the career and technical education (CTE) teaching staff to review current career-related activities provided to students. We also had an overview of the Career Cruising software which was purchased by the state to aid in this process. This software, which replaces WisCareers, interfaces with Skyward to provide instant access to transcripts, grades, and course planning in addition to comprehensive information on career and higher education resources.
- Work will continue on this initiative throughout the next school year as a joint project between the Curriculum Director and myself.

Black Earth and Mazomanie Elementary Schools

PBIS: We finished our first year with PBIS Tier I, and we are pleased with our results. Our universal expectations are being used throughout both buildings and we anticipate no major changes with our Tier 1 language and expectations as we move into next year. Our committee met monthly and we had four school assemblies to celebrate our successes. Students earned over 19,000 Gotcha tickets, and Class Dojo was successfully implemented as a communication tool with parents.

Reading/Language Arts materials adoption: Implemented a new textbook series at each school, Journeys at Black Earth and Benchmark at Mazomanie as the core resources for our reading/language arts instruction.

Math Curriculum materials adoption: Implemented the new textbook series Go Math at all grades K-5. Implemented a math guided group time within the math block for small group work.

Technology: Additional laptop carts at Mazomanie, our smartboards, computer labs and tablets see extensive productive use daily at our schools. Movement of Learning pads to Black Earth help fill a need there as well.

UW- Madison/Biocore Ambassadors - We continued to work with UW-Wisconsin, Biocore Ambassadors who hosted a Science Night at Mazomanie Elementary as well as offering an afterschool Science Club twice a month to the students at Mazomanie Elementary.

Mazomanie Run Club - Starting in March and to the end of the school year, students at Mazomanie had the opportunity to participate in an afterschool “Run Club” twice a week. The goal was for students to discover that physical activity can be fun and rewarding, regardless of fitness level or athletic ability. Students developed confidence while building fitness, reducing stress, making friends and creating good lifelong habits. This was our first year and a special thank you goes out to teachers. Amanda Duley and Alyssa Hingeveld for organizing and supervising our afterschool Run Club.

One School –One Book: This event was designed to get our entire school community involved in the joy of reading. Each child received a copy of the selected book. Following a shared schedule and discussion guide, families read together one chapter of the book each night. Black Earth Elementary chose the book “The World According to Humphrey” and Mazomanie Elementary chose the book “The Lemonade War”. Each school kicked off the event with an all-school assembly. At school, the students participated in daily trivia questions and other activities related to the books. We would like to thank the Wisconsin Heights Education Foundation and PTO for sponsoring this event.

Literacy Events– Everything came together for our annual Literacy Night, highlighted by singer/songwriter Tom Pease. Josie Geishirt, Reading Specialist along with our interventionists, organized and facilitated OSOB and Literacy Night, with the help and support from all staff who were involved with the planning and participation with the daily activities.

WHPTO: We continue a wonderful relationship with our parent organization: They sponsor all of our grade level field trips, as well as hosting student events throughout the year such as our traditional Halloween Night, Family Fun Night, and Party in the Park. They even added “The Heights Hustle” this year, walk/run event using the Wolf Run Trial. We appreciate our relationship with our parents and all their efforts throughout each school year.

2015-16 Middle/High School Accomplishments

- We began the school year with the summer parking lot project, and it resulted in an improved flow and shift of parking practices. It has been a beautiful addition to our building and provides not only flow, but a more upgraded and modern aesthetic as the first impression to our building.
- We had new chrome books and new sample classroom furniture this year! The test classroom stated that the new furniture enables incredible flexibility with classroom activities and student learning! And the teachers appreciated the chrome books to our stash of technological resources.
- We successfully graduated one credit-deficient student who was unable to graduate two years ago through alternative programming in a co-op agreement with Huber and put together a contract for GEDO2 requirements, resulting in his finally acquiring a WHHS diploma. He wrote a letter recently thanking us for the opportunity, and promising to never be incarcerated again; stating he had learned his lesson.
- All Seniors graduated this year.
- As a result of the generosity and support of our community and its members and organizations, WHEF was able to recently present 30 graduating seniors with 64 monetary scholarships for

seniors to further their education. In addition, these students have also earned 22 other scholarships on their own from outside sources to help assist them in their pursuit of higher education. The contributions tonight equal an unbelievable amount of \$418,165.00.

Curriculum

- Our two major curriculum updates have been implementing the new Math and Language Arts curriculum and textbook adoptions. We have raised the bar with these programs and although there has been some significant learning curve on both the part of the teachers and students, the end result is continued movement toward academic rigor. The one piece that both teachers and students are appreciative of is the technology aspect of the new textbooks that students can use as a resource.
- This is the first year that we implemented the required civics standard, and every junior/sophomore student passed the civics test.
- 61 Advanced Placement tests were taken, the largest amount since I have been here (6 years).
- Spanish was added as a Middle School exploratory class in 7th grade this year.
- Our ID program has become more active in transition programs, and one of our students will begin a paid position this summer.

New activities that teachers have added to their programs

- MS science department discovered a parent who is a geologist and she gave a wonderful presentation and interactive experiences to the class about rocks and minerals.
- FBLA – New and improved school store which has been more public and made an effort to be visible at events, parent/teacher conferences, marketing ads.
- A UW-Madison Ph-D graduate in Atmospheric Science also presented about the weather, weather systems and brought in a wonderful demonstration to our Middle Schoolers.
- Our ID program received adult tricycles and snowshoes to access the Wolf Run Trail, and the students actively participated in these activities, which they thoroughly enjoyed.

Students/Accolades

- We had a student who researched New Diggins as a Sun Down town and got the opportunity to share her findings with historian/ author Dr. James Loewen. That was neat.
- National History Day: documentary group of Anil Jergens, Tanner Thiede, and Alex Klaschus qualified for state competition.
- We had a great year in Forensics this year: all participants qualified for state, and the playacting group got a 24 out of 25 points at State. Kiara Esser got a Critics' Choice perfect score award in 4-minute speaking at State.
- Our Academic Decathlon team placed a respectable 5th place in Capitol Conference Academic Bowl.

**Music/Drama –We continue a very active and talented program here at Wisconsin Heights:
95 band students and 39 choral students – 36% of our student body participate**

- The musical had three sold out shows, which is the first time that has ever happened. With the purchase of the microphone system last year (thank you to Jim Schroeder and Pam Cashman), the drama club was able to raise close to \$4,000 this year. We are looking into some equipment for the drama club with these extra funds.
- Along with all of that, we also had the biggest drama club membership since I have been here. For the musical, we had over 50 high school students participate in one way or another!
- The high school choir also had a big year with the largest number of students enrolled since the program was restarted 4 years ago, starting the year with 28 students. At Large Group Festival, all three judges commented on how mature and lovely the choir sounded. And that was with us being compared to schools two or three times our size with choirs of over 50 people or many more. We also received a rating of a 1st, as did the bands.
- Wisconsin Heights hosted the Conference Large Group Band Festival this year – lots of work, and it was a success.
- The music department and the PE department both entered the Peoples Community Bank video contest and both won \$500 for the purchase of music and equipment, respectively, for their programs.
- The MS band received a \$200 grant from the Madison Jazz Society to purchase new music.

Teachers

- We had a number of teacher recognitions this year, Ann Kirschbaum was awarded the state's "Outstanding Teacher of American History Award" sponsored by the Daughters of the American Revolution.
- Kim Houser received the Wisconsin FFA Alumni Association Agriculture Instructor Recognition Award.
- Kim also applied and received \$3900 of grants to help fund agricultural education. [She was able to purchase items such as an egg incubator, arrows, fishing lure kits, fly tying kits, and a hydroponics system.]
- Dawn Schlick was a Crystal Apple nominee this year.