

INSIDE YOUR SCHOOLS

A newsletter for our District Residents.



SUMMER 2018

Students, Parents, and Staff drive WAPS Strategic Planning Process

One thing that I've seen repeatedly, throughout the school year, is that WAPS staff members work extremely hard to help ensure that all students are successful. To bring a shared focus to these efforts, we are undergoing a strategic planning process, which will be the driving force for our work in the coming years.

We are partnering with TeamWorks International to undertake this strategic planning development, which is designed to provide a sustainable system with a focus on meeting the needs of all students. Our work began in April, when a group of WAPS parents, community members, staff, and School Board members spent a day identifying our current and historical stages, as well as the trends and influences that currently impact our district. This work has identified "where we are now" and allows us to now focus on "where we want to be".

The next step in this planning process has been to gather input from students, parents, community members, and staff. We've asked these stakeholders to identify what they wish to see in the daily interactions between students, school staff, and families. Some examples of common responses from students have been a desire to have learning that is active, creative, and challenging; as well as the need to feel safe, respected, and valued.

School staff, parents, and community members have also shared their thoughts on this topic.

Now that this input has been collected, our next step will be to use this information to formulate a Mission Delivery Point, which Teamworks defines as "the point at which the lofty goals of the district are delivered and supported for student achievement". Teacher leaders will work with building and district administrators to develop goals and key initiatives for the next three years, along with the specific strategies to achieve these goals and an accountability system to measure progress.



Finally, the WAPS School Board and administrators will utilize all of this work to complete our Mission, Core Values, and Vision Statements and identify the key work of the School Board over the next three years.

The results of this process will be rolled out at the start of the 2018-19 school year. I'm very pleased with how this work has gone, with valuable input and feedback from all groups. We're looking forward to finalizing and implementing this shared vision for all WAPS students.

Rich Dahman
Superintendent

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

ALLIE HANG '18: "Winona Senior High School had a variety of classes that helped me prep to continue my education in the medical field. Human Anatomy was my favorite class with Mrs. Bussian. She always went above and beyond to make sure I fully comprehended each unit." Allie will be continuing her education at Winona State University with a major in Nursing.



CAMRON HAWKINSON '18: "Winona Senior High School Tech classes allowed me to explore trade career paths. My most memorable time at WSHS is driving a tractor to school on the seniors last day. I enjoyed WSHS tradition of Pep Fests where the band would play for our teams going on to state." Camron will be continuing his education at Riverland Community College to become an electrician.



IRIS TOROMANOVIC '18: "My proudest moment was having the opportunity to travel to Japan in the 8th grade. I enjoyed attending our Pep Fests where the band would play for our teams going on to state. I enjoyed my high school career thanks to our counselors, teachers and safety specialist. They provided the support I needed to be successful." After graduation Iris plans to join the Navy and then achieve a bachelors degree.



John Pampuch '18: "At Winona Senior High School, I received a well-rounded education, which included classes in new academic areas and high-level college courses. Through my membership in the National Honor Society, I discovered additional opportunities to give back to the Winona community. My proudest school moment was when I was selected to carry the American flag for the annual Veterans Day ceremony." John will continue his education at Winona State University.



WAPS EXPANDS MENTAL HEALTH PreK-12

Winona Area Public Schools, like districts across the country, has seen a growing prevalence of child and adolescent mental health issues impacting students' behaviors and academic performance at school. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14. Nationally, 1 in 10 youth has serious mental health issues that are severe enough to impair how they function at home, school or into the community. Unmet emotional needs impact a student's ability to function successfully by impairing ability to learn, concentration decision making, physical health and the ability to develop healthy relationships with others.

In 2016, the district, in partnership with Hiawatha Valley Mental Health Center, was selected to participate in a Collaborative Improvement and Innovation grant sponsored by the Center for School Mental Health. This provided the district an opportunity to collaborate with other districts across the county to build upon existing programs, services and strategies to improve the quality and sustainability of mental health and support services in the district. During this time, the district also applied for funding to increase the number of school social workers from two to five. In Fall 2018, there will be a full time social worker at all three of the elementary schools and 2.6 FTE in social work between the middle school, high school and Area Learning Center.

In 2016, the district began to introduce information on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Research has shown that ACEs can derail a child's normal brain development, adversely affecting attention span, memory and ability to process information.

In 2017, the district convened a mental health task force made up of teachers, counselors, social workers, school psychologists and building administration. After two retreats, the task force has emerged as the WAPS Mental Health Initiative. The goal is to improve mental health services and support so that each child receives appropriate evidence based supports and services to best maximize their psychosocial and academic functioning.

The following are highlights of the district's continuing efforts:

SUMMER 2017

- 6 staff attend a two day ACEs Interface training session

FALL 2017

- All WAPS staff receive ACEs Orientation
- 32 WAPS staff attended a two-day Trauma Informed Schools conference
- Area Learning Center staff receive Compassionate Schools orientation

WINTER 2018

- Mental Health Initiative identify areas of mental health focus

FALL 2018

- Opening day workshop will focus on mental health with keynote speaker, Mark Sanders, mental health professional from Minneapolis Public Schools.

It is the hope of the district that by focusing on a continuum of mental health areas (Social Emotional Learning, Alternatives to Suspension, Culturally Responsiveness, Self-Regulation Strategies, ACEs and Trauma Understanding), the district will create trauma sensitive schools that value safety, empowerment, collaboration, trust and choice.





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WAPS RETIREES

Amy Adams
Patricia Blaisdell
Judith Casper
Jo Dailey
Claire Fox
Charlotte Howard
Cynthia Johnson
Gerald Ludwig
Janet Luttmers
Hayley Martin
Sharon McQuire
Patricia Miner
Jean Moorhouse
Rocklen Peterson
Meri-Ruth Pfughoeft
Barbara Rahn
Linda Wendler
Joan Wickstrom

Thank you all for your dedication to Winona Area Public Schools and enjoy your next chapter in life!

FOUNDATION FOR WAPS

The "World Market... A Global Event" campaign raised \$56,000 for Academics, Arts, Athletics & Activities. Look for this money to be distributed to your schools in the fall!

WELCOME NEW ADMINISTRATORS



Director of Special Education: Dr. Sarah Knudsen

Dr. Knudsen received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Elementary Education and English/Language Arts from the University of Northern Iowa and a Master of Arts in Special Education from Morningside College. She then returned to the University of Northern Iowa to obtain her Director of Special Education license and finally a Doctorate in Special Education with an emphasis in Educational Leadership.

Sarah has most recently served as the Regional Administrator at Central Rivers Area Education Agency. In addition to her role as Regional Administrator, her 20-year career with the AEA included serving as a Special Education Coordinator, Special School Principal for students with significant behavioral and mental health needs, and Special Education Consultant. Prior to that she taught as an elementary special education teacher in both Minnesota and Iowa.

Dr. Knudsen will officially assume her new role on July 1, 2018.



Director of Human Resources: Emily Solheid

Emily Solheid has been serving as the Human Resources Administrative Assistant with Winona Area Public Schools since 2012, providing direct support to the current Director of Human Resources who will retire in June. Prior to WAPS, she was employed as a Staffing Specialist at DMark Group dba Manpower where she was responsible for recruitment and employee management for an assortment of Winona area businesses. Emily graduated from Saint Mary's University

of Minnesota with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Human Resources Administration and Marketing.

Emily will continue her role as Administrative Assistant until she officially assumes her new role on July 1, 2018.