



CHEESEMAKER PRIDE

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MONROE

SPRING EDITION 2018 - 2019

**DISTRICT
ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER**
925 16TH AVENUE SUITE 3
MONROE, WI 53566
608-328-7171

**ABRAHAM LINCOLN
ELEMENTARY**
2625 14TH AVENUE
MONROE, WI 53566
608-328-7172

NORTHSIDE ELEMENTARY
3005 8 ½ STREET
MONROE, WI 53566
608-328-7134

PARKSIDE ELEMENTARY
920 4TH STREET
MONROE, WI 53566
608-328-7130

MONROE MIDDLE SCHOOL
1510 13TH STREET
MONROE, WI 53566
608-328-7120

MONROE HIGH SCHOOL
1600 26TH STREET
MONROE, WI 53566
608-328-7122

WWW.MONROESCHOOLS.COM

MISSION STATEMENT

*The School District of
Monroe will prepare each
student for the future by
developing academic, life,
and employability skills.
To this end, we will foster
partnerships with family
and community to ensure
student success.*

The Role of a School Board Member



Rick Waski
District Administrator

Each year in April, one third of the nine seats that are available on the School District of Monroe Board of Education are on the ballot for an upcoming three-year term. This year, there are three people on the ballot for three positions (two incumbents and one new candidate). While people know that the school Board governs the school district, many people do not know both the powers, and limitations, that are associated with being a member of the Board.

In general, our Board members attend two meetings a month. These meetings are typically the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month. Board meetings are at 7 p.m. and committee meetings are usually held before these meetings. In addition to the two meetings a month, Board members are also at times needed for expulsion and employee hearings. As a result, it is not unusual for a Board member to have to give four or five nights a month to the duties as a Board member.

First of all, the Board really has one employee, the District Administrator, or Superintendent. I characterize my role as being their only employee because I am the only person the Board hires directly, evaluates, and supervises according to our chain of command. While any employee that is hired or terminated by the district is technically hired or terminated by the Board, the Board only serves as the "boss" for one employee and each Board member holds 1/9th of the decision-making power over the employment of the District Administrator.

The Board's primary function is to set policy. Policies are the written rules by which the district is operated. The Board governs the district through policy and the most critical function of a Board member is to make sure that the Board policies reflect the general values of the community, follow both state and federal laws, and provide a framework through which administrators and supervisors can operate their buildings and departments.

The Board's second function is to approve and oversee the budget. The district has a \$30 million budget and a wide variety of employees are responsible for accounting for how that money is spent. A vast majority of that money is spent on staff salaries and benefits. While the Board approves the budget, approves large purchases, and does make some staffing decisions based on the budget; the Board does not interview or select employees for positions. This work is completed by administrators and supervisors and the Board approves (or does not approve) their hiring recommendations.

The Board's last primary function is strategic planning. The Board created new "District Values and Goals" last year through a series of community forums, and they are using those goals as a basis for decision-making. We have long-term matters that the Board needs to look at such as facility needs and operating budget projections. If the Board does a good job of long-range planning, these decisions are easier to make and likely will be more successful after these recommendations are implemented.

School Board Role (continued on page 2)



SAVE THE DATE... Thursday, May 16, 2019
OPEN HOUSE FOR INCOMING 2019 –2020
KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS
TIME: 5:15 - 7:00 P.M.

****Note: In April, all incoming 2019-2020 Kindergarten families will receive a letter in the mail naming the school to attend for the open house and more detailed information. Please plan to attend the entire time. Food and childcare will be provided. The kindergarten teachers look forward to meeting the students and families!*

School Board Role (continued from page 1)

As a district, we have over 350 employees, of which more than 210 are state-licensed professional or administrative staff. It simply is not reasonable to think that volunteer Board members (our Board is one of the 7 school Boards in Wisconsin that is not paid) will provide oversight on staff issues. In fact, they should not do that at all because it is the Board that ultimately decides on all employee grievances and terminations. If you have an issue or a concerns with an employee, you should contact the principal of that building. If your complaint or concern is about the principal, or another administrator or supervisor, you should contact me.

Board members play a critical role in governance of a school district. They are not in charge of day to day operations. While much of their operational work is delegated to the District Administrator, they do play a critical role in setting the policies and providing the long-range planning needed to support and maintain quality schools in our community for our future generations. If you want to know more about what is involved with being a school Board member, feel free to reach out to any one of our Board members, or visit <http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/120/1/12> and reference Wisconsin State Statute 120.12 (School Board Duties).

Elementary Libraries and Makerspace

By: Heather Newton, Director of Elementary Library Media Services



Grateful is a word that I use when I talk to people about my new job in the Monroe School District. I manage the three elementary libraries in the district in conjunction with serving as the “Makerspace” teacher for all classes Pre-K-5. Makerspace is a place where students can gather to create, invent, tinker, explore and discover using a variety of tools and materials. You may also have heard the acronym STEAM which stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math. These areas of the curriculum work together as students explore options of interest and move toward 21st century skills.

I am at one elementary school for a week and then transition to the next elementary school until all three schools have been attended. My focus so far has been to highlight the letters in the word STEAM. Some of the activities we have focused on at the various grade levels have been: making oobleck based on Dr. Seuss’s book Bartholomew and the Oobleck; coin launch and measurement; making cards with LED lights; testing results of the positive and negative sides of a battery with the LED lights; working with Colby the Mouse and Botley the Robot (coding/programming); cup stacking; measurement and more. Most recently we have been learning about the Caldecott medal that was awarded on January 28th along with many other prestigious awards for authors and illustrators.

It was also my vision to pilot a STEAM committee at one of the schools during my first year. We have a 16 member committee at Northside Elementary (NS). We brainstorm ideas for future makerspace projects and spaces, test materials that we already own, look at items to purchase based on student surveys that were given at the beginning of the year, learn new computer programs that emphasize coding, read articles related to makerspace, and I am hopeful that we will either have a few guest speakers or a field trip to the Monroe Middle School to see their makerspace area. I would like to expand this committee to all of the elementary schools in the future.

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MONROE SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Dan Bartholf, President
 Amy Bazley, Vice President
 Nikki Matley, Clerk
 Mary Berger, Deputy Clerk
 Rich Deprez, Treasurer
 Les Bieneman, Member
 Teresa Keehn, Member
 Cheryl McGuire, Member
 Jim Plourde, Member

School District of Monroe
 Board of Education Meetings
 are held the 2nd & 4th
 Mondays of Every Month
 7:00 p.m.
 Public is Welcome

Please check the District webpage at
www.monroeschools.com
 for meeting sites and agendas.





DISTRICT FINANCIAL UPDATES

Ron Olson, Business Administrator

It seems a bit strange writing an article on the district financials in the middle of winter. This is typically the slow time of the year as it relates to the school budget. Spring is the time when we are building out the budgets for the upcoming year. Summer involves

not only updating those new budgets, but also closing out the fiscal year, making all the final grant claims and going through the annual audit of financials. Fall is the time for filing the annual reports with the state, finalizing the budgets and levies, and doing long-range forecasting of future budgets.

This year we used those forecasts as the community approved a new five-year operating referendum that will commence with the 2019-2020 school year. When I wrote my fall article, we did not yet have our final revenue limit or state general aid amounts so we were not certain what our final levy would be. The community hadn't yet approved the operating referendum so we were uncertain as to what the upcoming budgets might look like. So even though this isn't the typical time of year to be discussing the school budget, I wanted to take my space and update the community on some of the budget pieces that did get finalized this past fall, two of the biggest of which are the final levy amount and the referendum.

The district set a final levy for the 2018-19 school year of \$11,984,833. This was a 5.33% reduction from the previous school year levy of \$12,659,268. Over the past eleven years the district total levy has stayed fairly flat. Although there have been varying increases and decreases on a year-to-year basis, the total levy has only increased 2.92% over the course of those eleven years. The new levy for 2018-2019 resulted in a District levy rate (mill rate) of \$10.55 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation. This was an 8.4% reduction from the previous year and is the lowest mill rate for the school district in the past 20 years.

The district Fund 10 (general operating fund) total budgeted revenues for 2018-2019 is \$29,980,358. Much like the total levy, this number has not changed much over the past eleven years. Over those eleven years the operating fund revenues have only increased by \$110,000. That is about one-third of one percent growth in eleven years. Revenues are basically flat with no annual growth. This is the primary driving need for the operating referendum questions that come up.

Fund 10 total budgeted expenditures for 2018-2019 is \$30,206,495. This results in a budgeted deficit of \$226,137. The district has been able to bring the actual expenditures in under budget for each of the previous twelve years I have been here. We fully intend to do the same this year so we hope that the final ending actual revenues and expenditures will be nearly balanced.

The district has a Fund 10 fund balance of just over \$7M. This allows us not to have to short-term cash flow borrow in the fall until the January tax proceeds come in nor in the spring when waiting for the state general aid payment in June.

The five-year operating referendum question that was passed in November (Question 1), will allow the district to maintain programs and offerings over the next five years similar to what they are now. Since the annual amount on the referendum was kept the same as the past three-year referendum that ends this year, the district will likely need to continue to find some budget savings over the course of those five years to keep the budget nearly balanced. The good news for the community is that it kept the tax impact from the referendum the same going forward as it has been this year and the prior two.

This spring will be the start of a new State of Wisconsin biennial budget. We anxiously look forward to see what commitments will come from the state for the next two years in regards to allowed funding for schools under the revenue limit and/or per pupil aid and what the total aid commitment to fund schools will be for general aid, per pupil aid and special education aid. The whole budget cycle will be starting anew at about the time you read this. Our initial budget likely won't know what those state commitments are as they most likely will be approved sometime during the summer or fall.

A couple final notes on the maintenance referendum that also passed this fall. The majority of the project will be completed in the summer of 2019 so Parkside Elementary will be a construction zone during the summer as the new HVAC, lighting and fire suppression systems will impact the entire building. Woodford State Bank was the low proposal on the borrowing for the project with an interest rate of 3%. The district will pay back the loan in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. The debt service levy will be basically the same as it was for 2018-2019 as there is other debt that will be paid off this spring.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS, DELAYS, AND EARLY DISMISSALS

The School District of Monroe's school closing information is posted to the district webpage and district Facebook page minutes after a decision to close, delay, or dismiss early is made. Parents and guardians of current students will also receive an automated phone call from our Skylert messaging system.

The district contacts the following TV and radio stations when these events occur:

TELEVISION

WMTV NBC 15 (Madison)

WISC CBS 3 (Madison)

WKOW ABC 27 (Madison)

RADIO

WEKZ FM 93.7/AM 1260 (Monroe)



Teaching to a Variety of Languages

Terri Montgomery, Director of Curriculum & Instruction

ENGLISH LEARNERS (EL)

In 1999, Parkside Elementary School became a magnet school for EL students. At that time, there were approximately 75 EL students in the district. Today the district has approximately 160 students who speak seven different languages. The majority of our EL students speak Spanish, but a small percentage of students speak Albanian, Arabic, Chinese, and Tamil. When Parkside Elementary began the EL program there was one teacher and one aide. As the student numbers increased at the elementary level, they also increased at the middle and high school. In 2003, Sara Ackerman was hired to teach EL students at MMS and MHS. Since that time, we have seen many more students entering our district with limited English proficiency. Identification of students with limited English Language proficiency is required by the Department of Public Instruction each year. Student's English proficiency is measured using the ACCESS. ACCESS measures student's English Language Proficiency (ELP) using a scale from Level 1 Entering to a Level 7 Fully English proficient.

The ACCESS assessment is given to all students identified with limited English proficiency usually between December and February. In January of 2019, the Board of Education approved the hiring of a third EL teacher for the district. This position will be posted in February of 2019 and we hope to hire someone before the start of the 2019-2020 school year. Finding highly qualified teachers in this area is difficult so we need to start early with the hiring process. This new teacher will mostly teach at Parkside since the greatest need is at Parkside Elementary. As the numbers of EL students move from elementary to middle school one of our elementary EL teachers may need to travel to the middle school to help service students. We will need to wait and see what the student numbers and levels of proficiency look like before making a decision about having one of these EL teachers travel to the middle school.

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SPANISH CURRICULUM AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL

In October of 2018, a proposal was made to the Colony Brands Foundation to offer Spanish as a special, similar to art, music and physical education at the elementary level. Many hours of research went into the planning of making this proposal. We contacted retired teachers Karen Fowdy and Lisa Hendrickson to give us some guidance for researching this topic. Karen and Lisa both consult on foreign language education. We also contacted the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and spoke with Pamela Delfosse who is in charge of the World Languages Department. All three of these people were invaluable to the gathering of information for our proposal. The next step was for us to visit Greendale Schools outside of Milwaukee. Greendale Elementary Schools have been providing Spanish at the elementary level for more than ten years. Two groups of teachers and administrators made the trip to observe K-5 students learning Spanish. We all were amazed at the level of proficiency of these students when it came to speaking Spanish. Some of our research was about students who are taught a second language during their formative years. Here are just three positive outcomes according to research about acquiring a second language.

1. Learning a second language early promotes academic achievement.
2. Learning a second language early promotes cognitive abilities.
3. Learning a second language positively affects attitudes and beliefs about language learning and learning about other cultures.

(Resource: https://www.actfl.org/advocacy/what-the-research-shows#academic_achievement)

These are just three of the major outcomes from children learning another language during their formative years. One of the outcomes that Greendale experienced was their students starting taking more language courses as a result of the elementary Spanish program.

After researching, we put together a proposal for the Colony Brands Foundation to help us fund teaching Spanish at the elementary level. They reviewed our proposal and decided to fully fund Spanish at the elementary schools for the next four years. The plan is to gradually add Spanish instruction at the elementary level over a four year period. In year one, we plan on having kindergarten students receive instruction. In year two, we will have kindergarten and first grade students receiving instruction. In year three, there will be instruction for students in grade K-3 and in year four Spanish instruction will be in all elementary grades. The plan is to start with one teacher and then by year four, the district will have three elementary Spanish teachers. We are grateful for this opportunity and want to thank the Colony Brands Foundation for their continued support in the education of our children.



Establishing Connections for Mental Health Support

Joe Monroe, Director of Pupil Services

Michael is a quiet and well-mannered nine year-old student that is working his way through fourth grade. While he wants to follow directions from his teachers, this often proves difficult. Michael often freezes when asked to perform relatively simple tasks. This is sometimes perceived as an attention issue, noncompliance, or disrespect. Michael doesn't have the language skills to communicate the overwhelming anxiety issues he deals with on a daily basis. As a result, the people around him sometimes become frustrated with him. This leads to additional stress and unwanted thoughts. Michael begins engaging in various rituals to alleviate his stress, which in turn draws more attention to his challenges. This cycle continues and Michael starts to exhibit significant behavioral issues which interfere with his learning and the education of others.

Unfortunately, Michael's story is all too common. The rates of depression and anxiety in children in the country continue to climb. The most recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that the percentage of students dealing with anxiety, depression and behavioral issues has increased significantly; 8.4% of all children have been diagnosed with anxiety or depression. This would suggest that the School District of Monroe has more than 200 students that have received at least one of these diagnoses. Local data collected via survey of all students in grades 4-12 suggests that 19% of all students are at an elevated or extremely elevated risk for emotional and/or behavioral issues. Clearly this is an issue that requires attention.

Identification and diagnosis has become less of a concern as educators, physicians, and mental health professionals become more aware of these needs. The real issue is in the treatment of students with mental health needs. The United States is facing a crisis with regard to pediatric mental health. It has been estimated that approximately 55% of children with mental health needs go unserved. Those that do seek help often face significant challenges including lack of health care coverage, 4-6 month waiting lists, or no qualified service providers in the area (particularly in rural areas).

As a result of this issue, the School District of Monroe Pupil Services Team has been working to improve access to mental health care in our community. This process started in the summer of 2018 and efforts continue to this day. It started with a simple acknowledgement of the shortage in our community and then accepting that this is a problem that needs to be solved. The next step was to reach out to a number of professionals in the community and beyond to identify viable solutions that will offer increased access to mental health services to our students. The District is currently working with The Monroe Clinic, Green County Human Services, Avenues Counseling and Orion Family Services to identify ways to improve care for our children. The District

is exploring alternative options for service delivery that were previously not possible in our community. These options include professional counseling within the schools during the school day, enhanced communication with private practice counselors, and combining resources to provide an efficient network of support. Early discussions and efforts have resulted in very real improvements in mental health care for families.

In order to have strong schools, we must address the needs of our children. Mental health care is an essential part of safe and connected schools. If you have any questions, concerns or feedback, please feel free to contact me via email at josephmonroe@monroe.k12.wi.us or by calling me at (608) 328-7184.

Thank you for placing your trust in us as we work to provide the support and educational experience your children deserve!

2019 SUMMER SCHOOL

**Summer School Registration opens at 9 a.m.
March 18 through March 29.**

All registration is done online through Family Access.

Don't know your Family Access login and password?
Contact the Summer School Office at (608) 328-7400
or ashleycurtis@monroe.k12.wi.us

Summer School 2019 Dates:

Session 1: June 7 - July 3

(No Summer School July 4 or 5)

Session 2: July 8 - July 26

Students can attend one or both of the sessions.

Summer School will be held at
Monroe Middle School.

The Summer School course book will be available
the week of February 25.



Success in School Goes Hand in Hand with Good Attendance



Jenna Trame, Abraham Lincoln Elementary School Principal

Students with regular school attendance are more likely to achieve high scores on standardized tests. They are also more engaged in school activities and in general feel better about themselves. Studies show that even being just a few minutes late “tardy” on a regular basis has the same impact on students as a full day absence.

All classrooms at Abraham Lincoln begin their day with Morning Meeting. Morning Meeting includes a greeting, share, a short class activity, and a brief message to the class. Students look forward to the engaging ways their teachers have the students greet each other and hearing about their peers during the sharing component. The activity component is a time for students to participate in team building and fun activities with their entire class. Teachers use the message component to re-teach classroom expectations, review lessons taught in S.E.L.F (guidance), and discuss P.B.I.S goals for the month. Morning Meeting is a favorite time of day that many students don’t want to miss!

Put your child on a path to success with these school attendance tips for being on time and at school each day!

- Set a regular bedtime
- Establish a morning routine
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before
- Don’t let your child stay home unless he/she is truly sick
- If your child is frequently complaining of headaches or stomach aches and seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers and school staff, other parents, or medical professionals to help develop a plan to support your child.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up (parent illness, car trouble, work meetings)
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.

During the month of January, Abraham Lincoln Elementary School teamed up with the Milwaukee Bucks to offer an exciting attendance incentive for students. The Milwaukee Bucks Attendance Matters program awards students with a certificate for a free Bucks ticket for great school attendance. Students at Abraham Lincoln Elementary school that met the following criteria (0 days tardy, 0 days unexcused, 2 or less days excused) received a certificate from the Milwaukee Bucks! This certificate is redeemable for a free ticket to select Bucks games (with the purchase of a paid ticket). Congratulations to 192 students in grades 4K - 5 that received this certificate!



MILWAUKEE BUCKS
**ATTENDANCE
MATTERS**

Many Exciting Activities for 4K Students and Families

By: Molly Babler, Kris Rufer and Sheri Schaefer, Abe Lincoln 4K Teachers

4K has had an exciting school year so far. We started with learning and implementing a new curriculum, Frogstreet Pre-K Curriculum. Frogstreet is a comprehensive curriculum that provides age appropriate learning activities that focus on literacy, math, and social/emotional skills. Each month provides a different theme for learning. So far our themes have been: My School and Me, My Family and Friends, Giants, Choices, and Stories and Rhymes. Our students have loved the integration of all aspects of the curriculum into our day.

4K has participated in our fall and winter district assessments of PALS: Pre-Kindergarten Assessment Literacy Skills and PNI’s: Preschool Numeracy Indicators. Our students are doing well and increasing their literacy and math knowledge to be able to identify capital and lowercase letters, identify the sounds the letters make, rhyming simple words, counting 1-30, and identifying written numbers 1-20. We will be comparing the fall and winter data to document student growth and areas that need additional instruction. We will repeat the PALS and PNI’s in the spring.

Abe Lincoln’s 4K has had many wonderful learning opportunities take place at school in the past few months. In November, we had a Thanksgiving Feast, where we sampled traditional holiday foods and discussed the meaning of Thanksgiving. In December, we had a Gingerbread House making day, in which family members joined us to create masterpieces for the holidays. In February, there will be a district wide Playdate with Your Parents in the Abe Lincoln School gym, where all 4K students can bring their families to play and participate in an obstacle course together. Grandparents Day will be in April. In May, our 4K students will be performing in their very own 4K Showcase Concert at the PAC in the high school with our favorite classroom songs and dances and displaying our art work. There will be a district wide 4K celebration at Twining Park where all 4K families will celebrate the end of a great year and learn about activities offered throughout the community during the summer.



Fifth Graders - Leaving Their Mark!

Todd Paradis, Parkside Elementary Principal

Fifth grade is an exciting year for our students. It's their last year of elementary school and the last year to leave their mark as students, as friends, and as leaders before moving on and taking on the challenges of being a "middle schooler." This last year of elementary school is filled with many fun experiences and leadership responsibilities that hopefully create memorable moments that will last a lifetime.

LEADERS OF THE SCHOOL - When students reach fifth grade, they immediately become the "big kids" on campus and take on the responsibility of leading by example.

As fifth graders, they are challenged to be positive peer models and show the younger students how to make good choices and follow school rules of being respectful, responsible, and safe. One big leadership responsibility all fifth graders experience is the job of Student Safety Patrol. Students take pride in putting on the orange vests and the challenge of monitoring hallways, doors, and crosswalks. All students have the opportunity to participate in safety patrol and have scheduled duties throughout the year. It is a big help in keeping our school safe!



Other leadership responsibilities for our fifth graders include leading all-school announcements and being the oldest in our buddy classroom partnerships and K-5 PACK groups. In both student groupings, fifth grade students act as leaders for special activities and spend time reading to their second grade buddies. These groups meet monthly and allow younger students an opportunity to learn and interact with students they look up to.

PARTNERSHIPS, LEARNING, AND FUN - Fifth graders also have many fun experiences that are specific to their grade. They have an amazing partnership with Aster Assisted Living of Monroe and visit frequently to interact with people who are living there. Students also participate in the Kindness Retreat every year. This all-district event promotes kindness, courage, and respect. This program challenges students to think about the impact of their everyday choices and how they treat themselves and others.

Other special opportunities for fifth graders include: participating in chorus and creating an end of year concert, taking on the 40 Book Challenge of reading many different genres, and celebrating the end of elementary school with a fifth grade only bowling party.

TRANSITIONING TO THE MIDDLE SCHOOL - As the school year starts to wind down, many of our students begin thinking about the big changes ahead and the unknown of how school will look the following year when they experience new schedules, new friends, and new challenges. To support students in this big transition, we work closely with the middle school staff to provide several chances for students to learn about these differences and exciting opportunities they will have as sixth graders. In the spring, students visit the middle school and get a tour of the building. We also get a visit from the middle school counselor and former Parkside students late in the year to answer questions and provide helpful information on what to look forward to. Students are even given locker combination locks to begin practicing the important skill of getting into their lockers quickly.

In addition to the experiences listed above, students entering sixth grade this fall will take part in a new program called WEB - Where Everyone Belongs. This is a peer mentoring program that supports students in the transition to the middle school.

HOW CAN PARENTS SUPPORT THIS JOURNEY? - As students finish up their last year of elementary school, we as parents also have nervous feelings of how our kids will do and how they will manage the challenges of getting older and dealing with more complex problems. To help with these feelings, I recommend a few things.

First, please enjoy every moment (good and bad) and try to help your child understand the learning experiences that come with each. Second, stay involved in your child's education by having open communication with your child and staying connected to the school by talking with teachers and regularly viewing the informational platforms such as Skyward and Schoology. Don't be afraid to ask for help. This help can come from teachers, counselors, principals, or even other parents that are going through these same experiences. Lastly, here are few things you can do over the summer to prepare your child:

- Assign more duties around the house to help students practice being more responsible.
- Attend summer school and have six weeks to learn the layout of the middle school building.
- Be active in summer programs to give your child a chance to interact and get to know students from other elementary schools.

Your child's six years of elementary school goes by really fast and three years at the middle school will feel the same way. Enjoy the journey and support them in leaving their mark!





Capitalization, Punctuation, Grammar-Oh My!

Amy Timmerman, Northside Elementary Principal

Hey Duncan,

“It’s me, Red Crayon. We need to talk. You make me work harder than any of the other crayons.”

-Drew Daywalt, *The Day the Crayons Quit*

“Mr. and Mrs. Watson have a pig named Mercy.”

-Katie DiCamillo, *Mercy Watson to the Rescue*

Examine the sentences above and consider for a moment all of the language patterns that are used when authors write. Capital letters at the beginning of a sentence, punctuation at the end of sentences, the correct utilization of pronouns—these are just a few of the language conventions that the authors chose to shape meaning in their children’s books.

Most of us were taught grammar and conventions by being peppered with rules (along with the many rule-breakers) and completing fill-in-the-blank worksheets with little background on the “why” of their importance. Today all of our first through fifth grade elementary students throughout the district are engaging in an inquiry-based model to learn all of the language conventions in reading and writing (sentence structure, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation). Jeff Anderson’s Patterns of Power framework is structured for students to “participate as meaning makers rather than error avoiders”.

The Patterns of Power approach begins with lifting lines from authors (as seen above) or perhaps even a student’s writing to use as discussion starters. Teachers use question prompts forcing students to think, study, and share with their classmates what they notice and wonder about the specific learning target. The teacher waits for their thoughts and reactions and then builds upon their understanding. Each skill is taught in small “digestible chunks” across the span of approximately one week, with the final outcome being proper application in their own writing.

Fourth grade students recently were challenged with the overarching question, what do pronouns do? Their understanding began with the identification of pronouns, moved on to their purpose, and ended with a greater understanding of point of view and voice. To apply their knowledge, students then wrote letters practicing using the pronouns in various points of view.

Students report they look forward to this time of day and say they are learning more because it is fun. The teachers have been incredibly impressed and surprised by the greater student engagement, understanding, and carry-over in their writing. This approach is proving to bolster not only the correct use of conventions, but is also allowing for greater study of various authors and, most importantly, refining their own writer’s craft.



Playing Coin War in second grade is so much fun!

NORTHSIDE HAPPENINGS



First graders received Word Detective badges from the Monroe Police Department after working really hard learning to use their word super powers.



In honor of Unity Day, kindergarten students wore orange to promote and spread kindness.



After months of hard work and responsible behavior, fifth grade students spent their play money purchasing items from the annual auction. Great financial lessons were learned.



Fifth grade students in the African Ensemble work hard every Thursday after school perfecting their skills to perform for programs in January and May.



Continuing Courage & Strengthening Transitions

Matt Brown, Monroe Middle School Assistant Principal

Our eighth grade students participated in the annual full-day Courage Retreat led by the Youth Frontiers (YF) organization. The retreat was paid for by generous donations from Jacob's Swag Foundation and school funds.

The retreat focused on students realizing their full leadership potential and ability to affect positive change within themselves and their school communities. The retreat was a blend of insightful presentations by the YF staff members, engaging and interactive opportunities within small student groups facilitated by Monroe High School student leaders, and time for personal reflection and sharing.

As in years past, multiple students and staff attending the retreat shared how important and impactful the day had been. To ensure this powerful day and its messaging did not get lost in the day-to-day happenings of a typical middle school, the MSD Pupil Services Team developed a follow-up plan to keep these concepts in the forefront of our 8th graders' thoughts and actions for the remainder of the 2018-2019 school year. This plan includes a combination of in-building activities during homeroom periods and video collaboration and feedback between MMS students and their MHS group leaders. This will culminate in a visit from MHS group leaders to the middle school, allowing MMS students to have the opportunity to meet face-to-face with their group leaders again to discuss and set individual courage goals for their upcoming transition to their freshman year.

The Courage Retreat and aforementioned follow-up activities provides 8th grade students with the chance to build upon their social-emotional skills while developing interpersonal relationships with classmates and upperclassmen. This work is instrumental to the success of our students and their transition to the high school, which is why MMS will now be implementing a similar program to start the 2019-2020 school year for our incoming sixth graders.

The transition from elementary to middle school is daunting for a variety of reasons: sheer building size, student and staff population, 8-period schedules, homework, combination locks, etc. It can be intimidating for even your 'most ready' 5th grader. To that end, I am excited to announce that starting next school year, MMS will be implementing the WEB transition program. The WEB program will include a full first day of school for sixth grade students only and will be led by a handful of trained MMS teaching staff. In addition to the sixth grade orientation day, the program also enlists 8th grade students to act as leaders and mentors by running small student groups through fun and engaging activities during the school year.

MMS is looking forward to a phenomenal finish to this school year and a great way to start next fall by building positive relationships between our grade-level peers, upperclassmen, and staff.



MHS German Exchange Getting Ready to Travel

By: Kristin Bansley and Alla Schwartz, MHS German Instructors



In a few weeks, fifteen students and two teachers will be getting on an airplane and heading to Neu Anspach, Germany. For the students, the anticipation and nervousness of seeing their partners again is high. For the teachers, the excitement of getting to see old friends and visit familiar places is comforting.

This year marks the 30 year anniversary of the German Exchange program. It was initially started in 1988 when Monroe High School teacher Karen Fowdy, now retired, established a partner school through the Council on International Education Exchange. This partnership with the Eschenbach Gymnasium created lasting bonds between the schools, families, and communities. The connection lasted for 14 years until personnel changes in the Eschenbach Gymnasium caused us to seek a new partnership. Since the German state of Hessen and Wisconsin are sister states, we looked there to find a new school. We quickly learned that the Adolf-Reichwein Schule was a great fit for us. This school is located in the city of Neu Anspach, just north of Frankfurt.

This past September, MHS hosted the students from our partner school for two weeks. Each visiting German student was matched with a partner and they spent their time learning about school in Monroe, going on various field trips, participating in family activities and even got to experience Cheese Days. Now, when we go to Germany, many of the same kinds of activities will be planned for us. Past highlights include going to Frankfurt, seeing the castles of Burg Eltz and Heidelberg and touring the Lindt Chocolate Factory in Cologne.

While there is a lot of preparation that goes into hosting and traveling, German teachers Kristin Bansley and Alla Schwartz feel that the work is all worth it. Giving students the opportunity to actually see and experience what they have learned in the classroom is invaluable. Many students and their host families form strong bonds with their partners and those connections can last a lifetime.



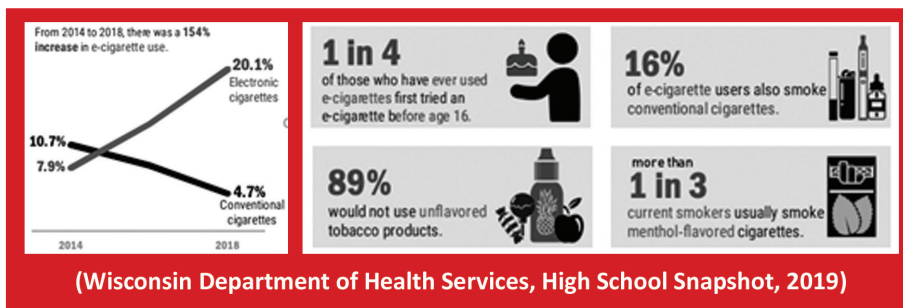


E-cigarettes: A Popular and Dangerous Trend

Chris Medenwaldt, Monroe High School Principal

You may have read a social media post or seen an advertisement recently for e-cigarettes. In the United States, these devices are quickly growing more popular among teenagers. In fact, it is estimated that over 2.1 million students used an e-cigarette in 2017 (U.S. Food and Drug Administration, 2017 National Youth Tobacco Survey, 2018). Monroe is no different as there has been a rise in e-cigarette use over the past several years.

WHAT IS AN E-CIGARETTE? E-cigarettes are technically referred to as Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems; however, they are commonly referred to as vapes. They often resemble pens, USB sticks, and other everyday items. The most popular vape among teenagers is a brand named Juul, which looks like a USB drive you might plug into your computer. In fact, teens often refer to vapes as juuls and refer to vaping as juuling. Vapes work by heating up a liquid (often called e-liquid, pods, or juice) until it turns into an aerosol and is inhaled. This delivers nicotine to a user's lungs. The vapor also contains diacetyl - a chemical linked to lung disease, formaldehyde, organic compounds, cancer-causing chemicals, and heavy metals such as nickel, tin, and lead (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Quick Facts on the Risks of E-cigarettes for Kids, Teens, and Young Adults, 2018).



WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF E-CIGARETTES ON TEENAGERS? From 2014 to 2018, there has been a 154% increase in e-cigarette use among Wisconsin high school students. In fact, 1 in 4 Wisconsin high school students who have tried a vape, did so before they were 16 (Wisconsin Department of Health Services, High School Snapshot, 2019). This is concerning as nearly all e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which studies have shown is highly addictive. In fact, one Juul pod contains as much nicotine as an entire pack of cigarettes. Nicotine is particularly addictive to adolescents and can rewire their brains to make them more susceptible to addiction. Furthermore, teens can become addicted to it in as little as a few days. Nicotine use in young people also has negative impacts on learning, attention span, and memory. Unfortunately, research has shown that teens who are addicted to nicotine are more susceptible to using marijuana, alcohol and prescription drugs (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Know the Risks: E-Cigarettes and Young People, 2018). In fact, some e-liquid contains the same active ingredient as marijuana.

HOW DO VAPING COMPANIES ATTRACT YOUNG USERS? E-cigarette companies develop advertising campaigns aimed at young users and create flavors that are attractive to them. E-liquids and pods come in flavors like fruit loops, mango, slushy, gummy bear, and fruity candy. Teenagers have stated that they would not use these products if they were not flavored. In fact, 89% of Wisconsin teens say they would not try a product if it was not flavored (Wisconsin Department of Health Services, High School Snapshot, 2019). While tobacco companies are prohibited from making television commercials that glamorize smoking, e-cigarette companies have no such restrictions. These companies can and do target young people with online, television, and print advertisements.

WHY IS THIS INFORMATION IMPORTANT TO MONROE RESIDENTS? The use of e-cigarettes is becoming a health epidemic. In fact, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services has released a public health advisory for e-cigarettes. This is a difficult problem that will take a cooperative effort in communities to solve. We have all heard the expression, "it takes a village to raise a child." If you have a relationship with a young person, maybe your neighbor, your nephew, your granddaughter, or your child, please take time to talk with them about vaping. Let them know that e-cigarettes are addictive and harmful. Tell them about how nicotine can change their brains and affect their ability to learn. Educate them on the harmful chemicals that are inhaled, not just by the person vaping, but also by bystanders. Basically, let them know the facts. I know that when young people are informed, and supported, that they often make great decisions. Young people are our future; please help make sure this future generation is a healthy one.

**SPRING BREAK
REMINDER**

**NO SCHOOL
Monday, March 25 to
Friday, March 29, 2019**



**School resumes
Monday, April 1, 2019**



Girls on the Run Program

By: Amanda Graham, Parkside Elementary School Counselor

I am incredibly excited to share that the Girls on the Run program is coming to Parkside this Spring! Girls on the Run is a national program for girls in grades 3-5 that empowers young girls to recognize their potential, build confidence and develop leadership skills through physical activity. The 10 week season culminates with the girls participating in a community impact project and a celebratory 5K on Saturday, June 1, 2019 in Middleton, WI.



As the name 'Girls on the Run' suggests, we will certainly be doing some running this season but the program encompasses so much more than that. The Girls on the Run program provides a curriculum that helps build character, leadership, compassion, and teaches girls that they have the potential to reach their goals. Instilling these values and skills in girls at this age is important because by adolescence, confidence levels drop twice as much compared to boys. This is also an age where friendships become more difficult and unfortunately signs of anxiety and depression are becoming more common at an earlier age. The curriculum paired with physical activity is a great way to help reduce some of those negative experiences and have a positive impact on our girls.

Dr. Maureen Weiss conducted a study to measure the impact that the Girls on the Run program has on the girls involved. It was found that there was a significant increase in confidence and connection among all girls involved in the study, girls who were least active prior to Girls on the Run increased their physical activity levels by over 40% and 97% of girls reported gaining valuable life skills through the program. It was also found that the impact of Girls on the Run is greater than that of a typical sport and physical education course.

As the school counselor, I am always seeking new opportunities to support the social and emotional needs of my students and am grateful to be able to bring this to Parkside. I will be coaching along with Courtney Hiatt and we are both so excited for another opportunity to connect with the students in another capacity.

Parkside will kick off our first season of Girls on the Run the week of March 18th. We will meet after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays for our practices that will be held right at Parkside for convenience for our students.



Monroe High School's Costa Rican Exchange

By: Michelle Kister, Monroe High School Spanish Teacher



(L to R) Michelle Kister, Michelle Rossing and Jennifer Wheeler

Monroe High School has had an exchange with schools in Costa Rica since 1995 and with its current partner school Liceo Experimental Bilingüe de Pococí since 2001. The exchange brings Costa Rican students and teachers to Monroe for 3 weeks every other December and January to live with Monroe families, attend school, and tour the area. In July of odd years, Monroe students complete the exchange by traveling to Costa Rica. The Costa Rican Exchange is an opportunity to see the language and culture come alive in real situations and to learn to respect the differences. Monroe students actually live Costa Rican culture while they are there; they are immersed, not just looking at it through a bus window. An interesting twist is that students end up learning more about their own culture.

Monroe High School's most recent hosting experience ended only a week ago. Students participated in a Monroe Dairy tour, trips to Chicago's Shedd Aquarium and Willis Tower, and went to the Wisconsin State Capitol and Chazen Museum of Art in Madison. They were also able to try some typical winter activities such as ice skating and sledding. At the very end of the 3 weeks, students from The Liceo Experimental Bilingüe de Pococí performed a dance presentation highlighting many typical cultural dances.

In July, a group of MHS students will travel to Guápiles, Costa Rica to complete this year's exchange with MHS Spanish teachers Michelle Kister and Jennifer Wheeler. They will have the opportunity to go to the capital city, San Jose, to visit the National Museum and National Theater, to Tortuguero where sea turtles go to lay eggs in the summer months, and to see a volcano and the rainforest. Students will live with families, speak Spanish, and attend school. They will learn more about the Spanish language, the Costa Rican culture, and about accepting cultural differences while there. Monroe students will also create bonds of friendship that will last into adulthood. They will come back home having had a life changing experience and it will help them further grow into well-rounded individuals.

Thank you to all of the families who have participated in the Costa Rican Exchange in the past 24 years and to the organizations and businesses that have supported our mission. This program would not be as successful without all of you.



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MONROE

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Monroe, WI 53566

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SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MONROE 2018-2019 CALENDAR

Thursday, March 7, 2019	MMS Parent Teacher Conferences
Thursday, March 14, 2019	All Elementary Parent Teacher Conferences
Tuesday, March 19, 2019	All Elementary Parent Teacher Conferences
Monday, March 25, 2019 to Friday, March 29, 2019	No School - Spring Break
Monday, April 15, 2019	All Day School - No Early Release
Monday, May 27, 2019	No School - Memorial Day Holiday
Sunday, June 2, 2019	MHS Graduation
Monday, June 3, 2019	All Day School - No Early Release
Wednesday, June 5, 2019	Last Day of School



ATTENTION NON-RESIDENTS OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MONROE

This newsletter is provided to all residents of the School District of Monroe. The most affordable process used to circulate this newsletter throughout the district is to use saturation mailing. It is costly to avoid a few non-residents from receiving our newsletter. We apologize for your inconvenience but wish to provide important information to all residents. Thank you.