



# CHEESEMAKER PRIDE

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MONROE

WINTER 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](http://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.*

## Consolidation: A Complex Solution to an Uncertain Future



**Rick Waski**  
District Administrator

Now that the November referendum has passed and the community has weighed in on the future of our district, it is now time to begin the next phase of our discussions regarding the long-term facility needs of the district. In order to make informed decisions about the future of our district, we have to explore whether it makes sense, both fiscally and educationally, to consolidate from five schools in the district to four.

In June of 2018, the district surveyed the community regarding the the community's interests in consolidating from three to two elementary schools. The primary reason for asking this question stemmed from the district declining in enrollment, particularly in our lower grades. The secondary reason for asking this question is that repairing or updating all five buildings may require a financial investment that is greater than what the community could support.

In that survey, a majority of the community (68%) either favored or were unsure of exploring this concept, understanding that there would be many questions that would grow from such discussions. Conversely, 32% of the community was opposed to exploring this concept. As a result, the district feels that this conversation is one the community wants us to have.

There is one clear fact that needs to be reinforced in the community. There is not enough room at this time at any combination of two of our elementary schools to accommodate all of the students from the third school without remodeling at least one of the remaining buildings. At the same time, some of the cost of remodeling could be offset by operational savings realized from the consolidation.

This November, a committee was formed to discuss the pros and cons of some of the possible consolidation plans (including not consolidating). This committee is composed of staff members, parents, and community members at large. They will eventually make a recommendation to our Board of Education along with other recommendations coming from the District Facilities Committee that began meeting in January of 2018. Some of the plans they will be looking at include, but are not limited to, the following options:

1. Adding onto Northside, keeping Parkside open, and closing Abe Lincoln
2. Combining 7-12 into one building, making the middle school an intermediate school (grades 4-6), having Northside and Parkside serve as PK-3 schools, and closing Abe Lincoln
3. Keeping all five buildings open

This list only illustrates a few of the possibilities and does not address the remodeling or new construction that may be needed to accomplish these plans.

*Consolidation (continued on page 2)*

**Mr. Waski** (continued from page 1)

The bottom line is that this is a complex matter that will require extensive community input.

We hope that we can narrow the options down to two plans and have the community weigh in on them in the form of community surveys. We also would plan to have information nights at each school on the possible plans.

In the end, it is the community that needs to make, and own this decision. We spend less than the state average on our educational programming and we achieve at a far higher level than average. At the same time, we know that change creates concerns and it is possible that new questions that we have yet to have thought about will emerge through this process. As a district we are committed to keeping you informed as each step of this process unfolds.

Have a great holiday season and GO CHEESEMAKERS!

**Parkside's Fourth Grade Studio**



**By: Sarah Witke, Parkside Elementary Art Teacher**

Art connects us to everything we do and see. Buildings are designed by architects; clothing is created by fashion designers; book covers represent stories and people read road signs based on color, shapes and images. The list goes on and on with examples of how art effects our daily lives.

In the art room at Parkside, we create art to learn about art creation itself; reinforce classroom concepts in math, science and literacy for visual learners and provide an area of study where our students can explore and learn more about themselves. Once the art is created, we publish it into an on-line gallery, Artsonia, so that friends and family can see. You will also see art displays in the school's hallways and in the community's organized art shows.

Six years ago I decided to do a little research in the community. I found out that there are many other places that have the desire and the wall space to add art. Since then, our students have had exhibits at Burger King, Pick N Save and Wisconsin Bank and Trust. This outreach turned into a community request one day when we were asked to be involved in the milk can art for the square. Unable to take on 60 milk cans for a grade level project, I realized I could form an art group and the Parkside Art Studio was formed.

Each October, the fourth grade teachers ask students if they would like to be considered for Art Studio. Students are selected based on leadership skills and if they are keeping current with their work in the classroom. Once the list reaches me, I ask other staff in the building if they see leadership behaviors in other parts of the school such as the cafeteria, playground and gym.

The fourth Grade Art Studio meets on selected Wednesdays throughout the year. We eat lunch together and work on projects that come to our team. When asked to assist in the Asquarium design for the Monroe Square, the artists drew and painted sea life. Then the original artwork was printed on banners that hung from the lampposts for the summer. Other requests have included props and art for school music programs.

Additionally, the Parkside School Calendar has become an annual project for this group. They go through a brainstorming process and work on a common theme together, each designing a page of the calendar for the following school year.

Although we often have clients who come to us with a certain need for art, there are times we have some extra time for other opportunities. Last year, the group tested the new glass fusing kit, making sure their art teacher was ready for a project!

If you need original art, don't hesitate to contact us! Next up, a fourth Grade Studio art show at the Monroe Art Center in December. Thanks to staff, families and the community for supporting the arts!

**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.monroschools.com](http://www.monroschools.com)  
for meeting sites and agendas.

**SCHOOL BOARD  
ELECTION NOTICE**

The School District of Monroe will hold its annual School Board election on April 2, 2019. All incumbents not seeking reelection must file their written notification by 5:00 P.M. on December 21, 2018.

Any Monroe School District resident wishing to run for a seat on the Board of Education must file their candidacy papers by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 2, 2019. Candidacy papers may be picked up and turned in at the District Administrative Center, 925 16th Avenue, Suite 3 (third floor of the Public Library).



## School Safety Initiatives

**Ron Olson, Business Administrator**

There has been a lot of news in the last year regarding the state school safety grants that have been issued to school districts so I thought I would take some time to address some of the safety initiatives that the school is working on and has already implemented.

Prior to the Parkland shooting and the announcement of the school safety grants, the District had already begun addressing some safety initiatives as part of the 2016 referendum. Bollards (concrete posts) were installed outside school entranceways. A new phone system with emergency alerting capabilities was installed. Security camera systems were installed at all schools; we previously only had a camera system at the high school. An access control swipe card system was installed for all primary exterior entrances at all schools.

Once the first round of safety grants were announced, the District had to review what items had to be done and what other items were eligible for consideration and quickly determine within the limited timeframe what our next safety steps would be. Some eligible items such as the phone and emergency communication systems and camera systems the District had just completed. Shatter-resistant window film on all main entrances was one of the required items to be done. With the grant dollars, the District also chose to put the film on all major exterior entrance doors that access hallways. With every district in the state having to do some work with this product and limited installers, the installation has been delayed, but we hope to have the shatter-resistant film installed by the time you are reading this. We installed audio/video intercom entrance systems for all main entrances at all schools prior to the start of the school year. We have begun the process of installing door alarms on major entrance/exit doors. These will help to make sure traffic is steered through the main entrances during the school day and provide alarms/alerts should someone enter or exit a door without authorization or should a door be propped open. Finally, with the remaining funds we had available, we were able to allocate funds to purchase interior classroom locks for the middle school. Those locks will be installed this school year.

Once the Department of Justice (DOJ) determined how much money was allocated for all safety grants issued in round one, they determined that there were enough funds remaining for a second round of safety grants. A window opened for districts to declare if they would apply again. The DOJ then announced the funds available to each district, new school-required training and responsibilities, eligible expenses and the new grant process. The District had two weeks to respond. We just received notification of our approval of round two funding so the following items will be implemented throughout the school year.

The biggest security enhancement that parents and the

public will notice out of round two of the grants will be a visitor management and screening system. For visitors to our schools who want access into our schools beyond the school office, there will be a system that will scan the visitor's driver license, does a sex offender registry screening, creates a detailed visitor register and prints visitor badges.

Other items to be completed include further enhancements and expansions of the audio/video intercom entrance system and exit alarm systems funded in the first safety grant. We will also be covering the installation costs for the locks at the middle school purchased in round one along with purchasing and installing interior classroom door locks in all of the other schools as well. A portion of the grant funds will also need to cover the costs for the required training of staff and for staff time to complete the training over the summer, including some training and time for Monroe Police Department officers.

Although timelines have been tight and things have at times felt chaotic, both the DOJ and school districts have had to learn and implement these grants quite quickly. However, the increased safety of our schools, students, staff and visitors as a result of these grants is certainly very much appreciated.

### Enjoy Magic, Music and a Great Steak on December 9!

Support education by attending the Monroe Excellence In Education's annual fundraiser, this year entitled "***Magic, Music & More***" on Sunday, December 9 at Flanagan's Shenanigans on Monroe's Square from 3:30-6:30 p.m.

The event features a steak dinner, silent auction of items made by the district's very talented students, and entertainment. You will be mystified by the "Mystical Kid" (Trent Weber) and his magical talents and put in the holiday spirit through a performance by Monroe High School students.

This event has raised over \$122,000 in support of Monroe Excellence In Education which supports the students of the School District of Monroe. Last year, grants were awarded totaling \$13,490 to fund nine innovative projects in areas such as technology in the classroom, classroom enhancement materials, math, books for classroom libraries and the arts.

***Make your reservations now by contacting Cindy Rupnow at the District Office at 328-7109; tickets are \$50 (\$30 is tax deductible).*** Monroe Excellence In Education is a non-profit organization independent of the school district and the Board of Education. It is a component of the Monroe Fund organized under the Community Foundation of Southern Wisconsin.



## Monroe Curriculum Update

**Terri Montgomery, Director of Curriculum & Instruction**

### NEW CURRICULUM IN 2018

This year our district 4K programming adopted a new curriculum called Frog Street. Frog Street has all the components of a complete curriculum including, literacy, math, social studies, science, and social skills. Frog Street also includes professional development for teachers online and in person, differentiation components, bilingual resources and a family component. Frog Street was developed by curriculum experts in the field of early childhood and Frog Street is a curriculum that is only for used in the field of early childhood development. In August of 2018, we had all 4K sites and teachers from both district and community sites attend professional development at the district office. The teachers spent 2 days learning about the new curriculum. The Frog Street curriculum aligns with our Wisconsin Model of Academic Standards for Early Childhood. This is important to make sure our students are learning the standards our state has adopted for early childhood.

### CPM OR COLLEGE PREPARATORY MATHEMATICS

Last year our middle school adopted CPM as their 6-8 math curriculum. This year our high school adopted the same program. This allows for more continuity in the 6-12 math curriculum. All math teachers were required to attend a 4 day professional development by CPM. CPM will not allow this curriculum to be taught until you have attended this training. This 4 day training is not the end of their training. They also have coaches who come to the school throughout the year and observe their teaching of the curriculum. The coaches from CPM then meet with the teachers following a lesson to debrief on how the implementation is going and to answer any questions they have about the curriculum.

### STATE ASSESSMENTS - ACT, ASPIRE, FORWARD, DLM, ACCESS FOR ELL

Each year our students are required to take various state assessments. Assessments begin in December with our English Language Learners taking the ACCESS test. ACCESS is given to all students in grades K-12 whose first language is not English. The ACCESS test measures students level of English language proficiency.

In February, eleventh grade students participate in the ACT assessment with writing and the ACT WorkKeys. This ACT assessment is the same one that students take for college entrance, but this is Wisconsin's state assessment.

The Wisconsin Forward Exam is administered to students in grades 3rd-8th and 10th grade. The Forward Exam includes reading, math, science, and social studies. Only students in grades 4th, 8th, and 10th take the social studies and science portions of the test, while grades 3rd-8th take the reading and math as well.

The Aspire Exam is given to students in grades 9 and 10. Students are assessed in reading, math, science, social studies,

### STANDARDS BASED GRADING (SBG) AND REPORT CARDS - WHAT DO PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

Standards are statements about what students should know and be able to do by the end of the year. The Common Core State Standards are written at each grade level and one grade builds upon the next. The most important thing we can do is help students master the standards at their grade level so they can progress successfully to the next level. Currently, the School District of Monroe has SBG and report cards. Last year, we made the move to standards based report cards for math and this year we are changing the reading portion to standards based reporting as well. We ask for your patience as we continue to move to a complete standards based report card.

### COMPONENTS OF A STANDARDS-BASED INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEM

- **Grade Level Standards** are standards that a child should be able to do at the end of their grade level. Each of these individual standards are listed on the report card for English and math.
- **Curriculum and Instruction** is teacher instruction, learning targets, and learning activities that help students become proficient at their grade level standards.
- **Assessments** are used to provide teachers and parents information on how a student is progressing towards meeting the grade level standards. Assessment data is reviewed to help teachers determine how meet individual student needs increasing student achievement.
- **Reporting** is done through parent/teacher conferences, progress reports, and report cards. The standards based report cards is an important part of this system.

**NO SCHOOL DAYS**  
**Winter Break**  
**Monday December 24, 2018 to**  
**Tuesday, January 1, 2019**

**No School Wednesday,**  
**January 2, 2019**  
**Inservice Work Day**



## High Expectations: The Key to Success for At-Risk Learners

Joe Monroe, Director of Pupil Services



One critical question must be asked and answered each day: How can we help our at-risk students make significant gains that will allow them to catch up to their same-age peers?

The reality is that there is no easy answer to this question. Learning is a complex process. Each child presents his or her own

unique puzzle that must be solved in order to meet his or her needs. While this process is often difficult, it has resulted in an understanding of some of the essential practices that must be a part of any student's chance at success.

One practice that is absolutely critical to the success of all students is the maintenance of high expectations. It sounds simple, right? Almost too good to be true? It isn't complicated and it doesn't cost a dime, but it has often been overlooked in the field of education. The reality is that if teachers and parents believe that students have the ability to achieve at high levels, and treat them as such, the students will respond accordingly.

Research has repeatedly proven this concept to be true. There was a study conducted in the 1960s that randomly separated students into two groups. Some teachers were told that they had been assigned high achievers and that their students would make great gains over the course of the year. The other teachers were not given any special information about their students. At the end of the year the students that were supposedly the "high achievers" actually did make significantly more progress than their peers. So why did this happen? When educators convey a likelihood of student success we are changing the behavior of both the teacher and the student. As a result, adults are more persistent and students work harder.

One of the very real challenges for educators is to maintain high expectations for students even when they face an

overwhelming number of challenges and risk factors. It is easy to understand how this might be difficult. Educators must resist the temptation to "take it easy" on students that are at-risk, and instead, push them to do things that are often not thought possible.

The School District of Monroe has implemented a number of strategies to ensure that high standards are maintained for at-risk students:

- Ambitious, yet achievable goals are developed for at-risk students.
- Progress towards goals is measured and monitored on a frequent basis.
- Student performance is reviewed by collaborative teams to ensure that students are being held to high standards.
- Problem-solving teams are employed when students do not demonstrate appropriate growth in goal areas
- Finally, students are celebrated when they make significant progress toward their goals.

The School District of Monroe has an amazing team of teachers, paraprofessionals, therapists, counselors, psychologists, nurses and health assistants that work tirelessly to meet the needs of the children in our schools. This team addresses the academic, social, emotional and behavioral needs of their students so they can be successful in school and life. This team has received an incredible amount of training and they continue to research evidence-based best practices. Through continued professional development and high expectations, we are able to help our students achieve levels of success previously not thought possible.

If you have any questions or feedback, please feel free to contact me via email at [josephmonroe@monroe.k12.wi.us](mailto: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!

## Colony Brands Foundation, Inc. Teacher Recognition Program

The Colony Brands Foundation recognizes that strong schools are a cornerstone of a strong community and educators play a pivotal role in helping to make our schools great and inspire future community leaders. To recognize the achievements of our educational leaders, the Foundation has created the Colony Brands Foundation Teacher Recognition Program.

The program will recognize educational leaders in the School District of Monroe, Wisconsin that achieve high quality, positive results through teaching excellence and innovation in the district. We are looking for individuals that contribute immensely to student achievement and growth and who are dedicated to giving our children the tools to succeed and inspiring them to do it.

**Nomination Process:** Parents, students, educators, administrators and community members are invited to nominate teachers for this award. Nomination forms for the 2018-19 program will be available on November 9, 2018. Nominations will be accepted until December 7, 2018. Nomination Forms are available on the District website: [monroschools.com](http://monroschools.com).

Nominations and applications will be kept confidential to only the School District of Monroe Administrative Exempt Staff and members of the Colony Brands Foundation, Inc. Board and Selection Committee, with the exception of nominations if the nominator indicates on the nomination form that their name can be shared.

**Applications and Nomination Forms should be sent to:** Colony Brands Foundation, Inc. Teacher Recognition Program  
Attention: Cindy Rupnow, School District of Monroe, 925 16th Avenue Suite 3, Monroe, WI 53566.



## Kindness is Contagious

**Jenna Trame, Abraham Lincoln Elementary School Principal**

Our theme for Unity Day 2018 was “Kindness is Contagious” and we plan to spread kindness all throughout the school year at Abraham Lincoln. A little kindness can go a long way and as we continue talking about kindness we will experience the contagious benefits including; happiness, increased self-esteem, lower stress levels, and positive academic outcomes.

Our Unity Day activities included opportunities for students to share kindness in their classrooms through role play, games, read alouds, and video clips. In addition buddy classrooms got together to ensure that our message of “Kindness is Contagious” would be spread throughout our community too! Prepare to smile the next time you say “paper please” at Pick N Save and receive a bag covered in positive pictures and inspiring words. Students also created cards to spread kindness to community helpers and local officials thanking them for their service to our community.

Although Unity Day has passed and the students have completed their kindness projects their efforts to spread kindness to their peers and the community will not end. Students also generated a list of ways we could keep this work going throughout the school year. Their suggestions included;

wave at someone, hold the door, help someone who is hurt, sit by someone who is alone, and smile. We agreed that these easy ways to spread kindness would make anyone’s day at Abe Lincoln or in the community.

As we strive to keep our Unity Day slogan, “Kindness is Contagious” alive all year long we know the benefits will extend far beyond making someone’s day. As we spread the contagious kindness bug this year check out this list of all the other things we will be spreading as a result.

**Better Concentration** - When children are happy and feel good about themselves, they have a positive outlook on learning. This increases their attention and focus too!

**Improved Health and Less Stress** - Being kind can trigger a release of the hormone oxytocin which has a number of physical and mental health benefits. This can significantly increase a person’s level of happiness and reduce stress.

**More Time** - When children are kind, they’re able to work together in a calm and productive way. This allows more time for learning and FUN!

**Academic Growth** - When children feel good about themselves, they are more engaged in their learning which leads to greater levels of academic success!

## Employment Education- More Important Than Ever

**Kim Schaaf, MHS Technology & Learning Coach/S.O.A.R. Coordinator**

According to an eSchool News report, the workplace is “on the cusp of a major evolution. Educators need to prepare students for a future in which 85% of the jobs have not been invented yet and many jobs will require increased digital skills and the ability to work with machines as an integrated team.”

College and career readiness is quickly becoming one of the hottest topics in public education. Basic curriculum knowledge is no longer enough to prepare our future leaders for the global market that exists. The landscape of the workforce is rapidly changing. There must be a strong emphasis on the part of schools, districts, and communities to prepare students, even at the youngest age, for this new future in which we can hardly imagine the careers/employment opportunities that will be in place.

Teachers today must prepare students to become lifelong learners. In fact we know that a minimum of 65% of jobs now require education beyond high school. Cultivating and nurturing this desire may require a shift in mindset. This involves providing opportunities, even in the youngest grades, for students to build general capabilities, support and nurture student interests and aspirations, and to build student skills in communication, problem solving, and collaboration.

The School District of Monroe is beginning to work with policy makers, teachers, and the community in addressing this future need for skilled workers prepared for a future workforce and global community.

The 2018-2019 school year was started with community business tours. Every district employee attended a tour of a local business. The feedback from both staff and businesses was overwhelmingly positive. Staff learned about career opportunities right here in our own community and this was vital to starting this initiative off right. Staff felt the tours were eye opening, “We talk about preparing students for life after school but hearing what this means from potential employers was helpful in bringing this to students in the classroom.”

In the past, some students and families have not considered how employment can help their education. In fact, some families have assumed that it is always more important to take classes than to learn on the job skills. To promote education for employment, Monroe High School launched a program called SOAR- Student Occupation & Academic Readiness. This program hopes to build career readiness with classroom curriculum and provide students with multiple opportunities to connect with college and career preparations. So far this school year the SOAR program has provided some students with opportunities to work as part of their school schedule. Students may earn credit, earn money, gain valuable employability skills and are provided



*Employment Education (continued on page 7)*

## Mystery Science at Abraham Lincoln

By: Kate Kelley and Laura Eckroat, Abraham Lincoln Elementary Third Grade Teachers



When the district offered the opportunity to explore Mystery Science, we were excited to check it out! Last spring we both signed up for Mystery Science account and were amazed the ease of the program and the detail provided. We began watching the first unit for third grade and knew this program would be a hit

with the kids and other teachers. Mystery Doug uses videos, labeled diagrams, and pictures to walk kids through every step of a science skill or learning target. Doug discusses Science using Academic Language but does it in a way that all students understand. He also uses real world experiences that kids are familiar with and shows them how they apply to that mystery. He also asks many questions, which allows for class discussion or writing answers or inquiries in student's Science Journals.

We began our first "mystery" by learning about Why Plants Grow Flowers. Mystery Doug discussed the parts of a flower, including the stigma, pollen dusters, pollen, and nectar. Students were then challenged to build a paper flower, recognize the different parts, and demonstrate the pollination process using pipe cleaner bees and ground coffee and turmeric pollen. The next lesson in the unit extended student's knowledge of pollination by talking about how it is necessary for plants to grow fruits. As the lessons continued on, students learned about recognizing traits of scientific fruits and about the selection process. Did you know that cucumbers are fruits and that squash are really pumpkins?

As third grade teachers, we are very impressed with the Mystery Science series as a supportive science curriculum. The ease of use, the depth of knowledge, and the interactive activities will all help the School District of Monroe students gain a higher knowledge of the Next Generation Science Standards while creating a fun and engaging environment.

### **Employment Education** *(continued from page 6)*

release time from school. This includes student school to work opportunities, volunteer service, and student internships. The largest focus of this program this year is building student awareness and providing training, guest speakers, tours, job shadows, university and technical college visits, and career exploration.

Curious about your own student's career exploration? Students in grades six through twelve are required to complete work in a program called Career Cruising. Students complete interest surveys and are able to research potential careers. Ask your student to see the results of their exploration in Career Cruising.

Monroe High School often has colleges, universities, branches of the military, and technical colleges visit us. This gives our students a chance to connect in person with their potential next steps. This fall we took three groups of students to Blackhawk Technical College's Tech Exploration Days. These full day events were packed with information and hands on experiences for students to get connected with their interests in business, early childhood education, health services, or manufacturing. After spending the day learning, students came back to the high school with a new perspective. Many confirmed their passions for a career and others discovered something new about themselves or the opportunities available to them.

All students need to experience the world of work, particularly work of the future, long before they leave school. The latest Mitchell Institute report, "Connecting the worlds of learning and work, says collaborating with industry and the community is vital to better prepare children and young people for future work and life. Exposure to the world of work provides opportunities for students to build connections with professionals outside their usual family networks, and to learn by "doing" in real world contexts."

The School District of Monroe is working with community partners in building a program that meets the needs of the students in new ways. If you are interested in learning more about how you, your business, or your student can be involved, please contact Kim Schaaf, School to Work Coordinator ([kimschaaf@monroe.k12.wi.us](mailto:kimschaaf@monroe.k12.wi.us)) or Chris Medenwaldt, Principal at Monroe High School ([chrismedenwaldt@monroe.k12.wi.us](mailto:chrismedenwaldt@monroe.k12.wi.us)).

## 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)



## Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports

**Amy Timmerman, Northside Elementary Principal**

Watch out Hollywood, the Northside students are taking the spotlight this year. The theme for the school year is "YOU set the stage" and the messaging involves dreaming big and working hard to create future success. Students are encouraged not only to take personal responsibility for their choices and learning, but also to encourage others to do the same.

This focus area falls under the umbrella of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) system. Our district strongly believes that our goal is to push students to reach their greatest potential academically and facilitate the development of the critical "soft" skills to communicate and collaborate effectively.

Our monthly topics guide students on the importance of showing initiative, generosity, kindness, cooperation, enthusiasm, perseverance, responsibility, and integrity. Meaningful activities help students make the connection to these important character traits that we want to cultivate. For instance, three weeks this fall were devoted to serving our local community by raking lawns, visiting the Pleasant View Nursing Home and Aster assisted living residents, reading to children at a daycare, and picking up litter near the school. We will also hold our annual food (November) and toy (December) drive to support those less fortunate in our community. Pictured here are third grade students helping out our Northside neighbors by raking their lawn.



To enhance our PBIS system and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum, this year students are learning how to better understand and self-regulate their emotions. The approach that we adopted is called Zones of Regulation, developed by Occupational Therapist Leah Kuypers. There are four "zones" or categories that all emotions fall within. The zones instruction first teaches children to identify their feelings, emphasizing that no feeling is wrong or bad and all individuals experience a range of emotions each day. They then learn constructive strategies to return themselves to the green zone, otherwise known as the happy, calm, and ready to learn category. This concrete model is proving extremely effective for students due to its simplistic design. BLUE - Sad, sick, tired, bored, moving slowly; GREEN - Happy, calm, feeling okay, focused, ready to learn; YELLOW - Frustrated, worried, silly/wiggly, excited, loss of some control; RED - Mad, angry, mean, terrified, yelling/hitting, out of control.



In addition, the playground had a small makeover this summer. Over the last several years the staff has observed a decrease in the level of physical activity and understanding of how to play games during recess. To address these concerns, several enhancements were made to increase the opportunity for active and fair play for all students. The staff volunteered hours of their time in August painting the playground with the help of Coplien Painting. The end result has been that the students are thoroughly enjoying much more active, engaged, cooperative play during all recesses!

## Northside PTO News

**By: Briana Cleary & Erica Zentner, PTO Co-Presidents**



Northside Elementary School has a strong Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) that has focused on family friendly events for years. The Northside PTO enjoys hosting these events for families to spend time together in fun and unique ways. The Sock Hop Dance in the fall and the Open House Basket Raffle in the spring are a few traditions that date back to many years ago. Newer events consist of first day of school ice cream floats, family reading night, family roller skating night and a night families choose to draw, dance and learn sign language together! New this school year, the Northside PTO will be sponsoring a family movie night in

the gym and a Stuart Stotts sing-a-long concert!

The Northside Sock Hop is a tradition that dates back years ago. This school-wide dance is usually held in the beginning of November. Students and teachers often come to school dressed in clothing from the 1950's, parents even join in the dress up fun that evening at the dance. Students learn dances from all decades during grade level fitness class. They dance the night away with music and lighting provided by a DJ. The sock hop also involves games, a pizza dinner, poodle skirts, leather jackets and a whole lot of family fun!

The Northside Open House Basket Raffle has become the largest fundraiser for the PTO. This one fundraiser generate funds that are donated directly back to the school. Often times supporting technology, field trips and classroom libraries. Elaborate baskets are created through community and family donations as well as PTO funds. Every year, tickets are sold in the spring for fifteen or more themed baskets consisting of: 55" TV's, WI Dells Trips, WI Sports tickets and apparel, gas grills, board games, camping and many others! Winners are announced on Northside's spring Open House night. It is an event attended by nearly all Northside families.

### 2018-2019 PTO Dates

Family Movie Night - Friday, January 11

Stuart Stotts Family Concert - Thursday, February 7

Open House and Basket Raffle - Thursday, April 25





## Early Learning - A Day in the Life of a Kindergartener

**Todd Paradis, Parkside Elementary Principal**

Have you ever wondered what it's like to be five years old again and attend a full-day kindergarten? No, it's not exactly the same kindergarten we remember from 25-30 years ago when we had half days or an every other day format that included nap times, but the overall goal has stayed the same. We want students to have fun at school and have time to play and be kids.

When you break down the full day of our kindergartners, it's amazing to see how much our youngest students accomplish over the course of a day and a full year. Students learn how to interact and play with peers, follow a structured day, perform many routines and procedures, and learn several foundational skills that set them up for future success in reading, writing, and math.



### ACADEMIC LEARNING

One of the biggest changes with kindergarten is the higher expectations in academics and what students need to know and be able to do in the areas of reading, writing, and math. Many students enter kindergarten knowing a few letters and numbers. They leave

kindergarten knowing how to read short books, count to 100, and write a story with complete sentences. These skills are accomplished through the hard work of the students, our teachers, and support from home. Our staff does an excellent job of keeping the learning fun, active, and engaging. One of our most successful methods of teaching students these skills is through a structure called Kindercamp. Kindercamp is small group learning that puts students in groups of 5-6 and uses games and movement to teach specific skills students need to become readers. Activities include: printing letters with shaving cream, hopscotch on letters, bean bag toss onto letters, dance videos with movement, and making letters out of playdough.

### SOCIAL / EMOTIONAL / BEHAVIORAL LEARNING

Some of the biggest areas of growth for kindergartners happens socially, emotionally, and behaviorally. Students learn how to problem solve, develop friendships, play together, take turns, and manage their emotions. Many of these skills are taught throughout the day. Recess, lunch, morning meetings, and choice time all provide opportunities for learning in these areas. Morning meeting time happens at the beginning of the day for all students. Teachers meet with students on their rugs and provide time for student greetings, sharing, discussions about specific skills, and relationship building activities. It is a great way to start everyone's day!

At the end of every day students get free choice time. During this time students have fun with arts/crafts, pretend play, building blocks, and playing with cars and trucks. They learn to share toys, work together on projects, and play safely. This is our students favorite time of the day!



Throughout the year, kindergarten has many other special events, trips, and activities that create memorable experiences. Some of these highlights include: trips to the zoo and the Pumpkin Patch, 100th day of school, activities with fourth grade buddies, and many guest speakers from our community.

Kindergarten is the beginning of a long journey. Before you know it, these students will be crossing the stage and graduating high school. As parents, we encourage you to enjoy the ride and be involved in your child's education. Attend field trips, join the PTO, volunteer for events, ask questions of their teachers, and talk with your child daily about school. Don't accept the response "good" when you ask them about their day. The more you know, the better you can support them along the way. Your support makes a big difference!

## Exciting Changes at Parkside

November 6 was an exciting day for our district, but even more exciting for our Parkside Community. With the passing of the referendum question #2 and the support of our community, Parkside Elementary is going to have some major building maintenance updates within the next two years.

### Description of the Work:

- **New HVAC system** - We will be transitioning from several small furnace and air conditioning units to a highly efficient system that will be more cost effective.
- **LED interior lighting with new ceilings** - The old grid ceilings and lighting systems will be removed and updated.
- **Fire sprinkler system** - When removing the ceilings to replace the ductwork, we will be able to upgrade our sprinkler system.
- **Restroom remodel and Americans with Disabilities Act upgrades** - Bathrooms will be reconfigured to provide more accessibility for our students, staff, and visitors.

If additional funds allow, we would be looking at upgrading our front entrance to have visitors enter the building through the office. This change would fit with our new video and voice entry buzzer systems and improve safety.



## MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS AND TECHNOLOGY

**Brian Boehm, Monroe Middle School Principal**

At Monroe Middle School we see first-hand the benefits and costs of the technology that is available to tweens and teens. Through our Chromebook program students are able to access educational resources that are beyond anything we might have imagined when we were their age. On the other hand access to questionable content, provocative images, along with a bewildering array of social media can present many challenges for children, especially on non-school devices. I have excerpted a section from an article entitled, "How Using Social Media Affects Teenagers", from the Child Mind Institute. It goes into some detail about the dangers of technology. After the article excerpt there are suggestions about how parents can monitor and guide their child's use of technology.

"A big danger that comes from kids communicating more indirectly via social media is that it has gotten easier to be cruel. "Kids text all sorts of things that you would never in a million years contemplate saying to anyone's face," says Dr. Donna Wick, a clinical and developmental psychologist. She notes that this seems to be especially true of girls, who typically don't like to disagree with each other in "real life."

"You hope to teach them that they can disagree without jeopardizing the relationship, but what social media is teaching them to do is disagree in ways that are more extreme and do jeopardize the relationship. It's exactly what you don't want to have happen," she says.

Dr. Steiner-Adair agrees that girls are particularly at risk. "Girls are socialized more to compare themselves to other people, girls in particular, to develop their identities, so it makes them more vulnerable to the downside of all this." "We forget that relational aggression comes from insecurity and feeling awful about yourself, and wanting to put other people down so you feel better."

Peer acceptance is a big thing and kids today are getting actual polling data on how much people like them or their appearance via things like "likes." It's enough to turn anyone's

head. So kids can spend hours pruning their online identities, trying to project an idealized image. Kids gang up on each other. When kids scroll through their feeds and see how great everyone seems, it only adds to the pressure. We're used to worrying about the impractical ideals that photoshopped magazine models give to our kids, but what happens with the kid next door is photoshopped, too? "Adolescence and the early twenties in particular are the years in which you are acutely aware of the contrasts between who you appear to be and who you think you are," says Dr. Wick. "It's similar to the 'imposter syndrome' in psychology. As you get older and acquire more mastery, you begin to realize that you actually are good at some things, and then you feel that gap hopefully narrow. But imagine having your deepest darkest fear be that you aren't as good as you look, and then imagine needing to look that good all the time! It's exhausting."

As Dr. Steiner-Adair explains, "Self-esteem comes from consolidating who you are." The more identities you have, and the more time you spend pretending to be someone you aren't, the harder it's going to be to feel good about yourself."

This article paints a clear picture of why adults need to help shepherd children through the technology forest. At MMS we spend a great deal of time discussing the importance and specifics of being good digital citizens. In addition we employ the GoGuardian software that alerts us to student misuse of Chromebooks.

As parents we would never imagine dropping our children off in an unsupervised, unstructured place with hundreds of other children. However, with technology that is exactly what can occur and the results can be devastating. Below is a guide to parental control apps that is worth taking a look at. Ultimately, families will decide how to monitor their children's technology. As a middle school principal I am increasingly seeing the internet and especially social media as public mental health concerns for our students. I hope this article provides some insights into how we can help them.

<https://www.tomsguide.com/us/best-parental-control-apps,review-2258.html>

## Amazing Opportunities Abound, Monroe Youth Center

**By: Matt Brown, Monroe Middle School Assistant Principal**

In addition to our twenty extracurricular activities including academic, community service, and athletic pursuits, the Monroe Youth Center is one more wonderful opportunity for our teens and tweens to get engaged with both peers and their community. The center is open to all middle school aged students either attending Monroe Middle School or receiving home schooling.

The Monroe Youth Center was created with the intention of providing a safe, structured after school environment. The focus is on the development of social, emotional and cognitive skills while incorporating fun, forming friendships and cultivating leadership skills.

Aptly named **Youth Central** by the students in a recent contest, the center's doors opened the first day of the 2018-2019 school year. It is located a block off the square at 1504 11th Street and is a short walk for students after school. The center is open every day school is in session from 2:30 – 6 p.m. on early release Mondays and 3:30 – 6 p.m. Tuesday through Friday.

To encourage students to participate, attendance is completely voluntary. Students participating in multiple extracurricular activities are allowed to come late or leave early. The only requirement is students must sign in upon entering and sign out when leaving. Though, once a student leaves, they are unable to return until the next day. Students are also provided a free, healthy snack and are allowed to bring in their own food and drinks.



*Monroe Youth Center (continued on page 11)*



## New Schedule at Monroe High School

**Chris Medenwaldt, Monroe High School Principal**

This year, Monroe High School embarked on its first substantial schedule change in over 20 years. In 1993, Monroe High School changed from a seven period day to an eight period day. There have been many changes in curriculum, standards, technology and demographics over the past 25 years. For instance, there were not opportunities to access the internet, to have one-to-one devices, or to focus on standardized assessments to measure schools. It was time for Monroe High School to consider if a change in schedule could aide in keeping up with the progress in education over the past quarter century.

Monroe High School reached out to schools who have schedules other than an eight period day. The staff examined block, modified block, flex-mod, and trimester scheduling. We visited two schools who use a trimester schedule. Both of these schools reported that the trimester schedule creates positive results for students and staff.

Monroe High School is already experiencing some of the anticipated benefits of the trimester schedule. One is that students focus on fewer classes at a time. Students have, at most, five classes to focus on during a week. This also means that students have fewer transitions, but longer transitions during the day to make the schedule less hurried and more collegiate in nature. Another student asset is having more time with a teacher during the day. Students are able to have deeper learning opportunities because of the longer class period. In particular, classes that incorporate labs or projects have time for students to make substantial progress. For instance, classes in art, technical education, and family and consumer science can focus on project completion and spend less time on setup and clean up. Due to three trimesters, students have more opportunities to remediate a failure in a future trimester. While we hope not to have to use this possibility, it may provide a way for students to stay on pace to graduate. Anecdotally, all schools in the trimester that we communicated with shared that the stress level for their students decreased as well.

Staff also see benefits of a trimester schedule. Teachers have longer time in the day to prepare for fewer classes. This allows them to plan for and assess classes more effectively. It provides the opportunity for teachers to have collaborative prep times to work with others who teach the same classes. Another asset is having fewer students per day, which allows them to give more meaningful feedback and have more time to build relationships with students. As with students, schools we communicated with in the trimester shared that staff members experienced reduced stress.

Furthermore, the trimester allowed Monroe High School to incorporate a FLEX time during the day. This is a period that allows all students to have access to all teachers for 40 minutes each day. Students can sign up to meet with particular teachers, or they may be requested by teachers to meet to complete work, to remediate a skill, to challenge students to excel, or to experience a new skill or idea. Students can also choose from two study hall options during FLEX time. Each week, staff offer enrichment opportunities for students that may or may not be directly related to the curriculum. For instance, students have been able to play games, begin writing a novel, or experiment with a new activity or club. We have found that an unanticipated benefit is the quality of relationships that students and staff are able to build through this time.

To address concerns about the curricular shift, Monroe High School staff have collaboratively shared ideas and best practices that are successful. Several staff have led professional development on brain breaks and re-energizers for students. They have also collaborated on ways to manage projects and group activities. Teachers will continue to share what works best in their classrooms to promote student engagement.

While this change has brought some anxious thoughts, as change inevitably does, it has also been exciting. Monroe High School will examine attendance, academic and survey data throughout the year to evaluate the trimester and FLEX time schedules. To date, the schedule change has been successful due to the collaboration of Monroe High School's staff and the relationships they continue to build with our students.

### **Monroe Youth Center** *(continued from page 10)*

The center has multiple areas for students to play and simply hangout with friends. It is equipped with free wifi, a Nintendo Wii, multiple board games and puzzles, an arts and crafts area, two foosball tables, an air hockey table, an outdoor basketball hoop, a homework help area, and multiple lounging spots. A weekly schedule of planned activities are also available for students but participation in these activities are based upon student voluntary interest and time. Some examples of these activities include: community activities, bowling, various craft projects, yoga and a Friday movie day.

The center is staffed, programmed and coordinated by two youth leaders. Christina Johnson, the Site Coordinator, has lengthy experience working with youth in a variety of settings. Her assistant, Mary Andrews, works as an educational assistant at Monroe Middle School. Volunteers are also encouraged to contact the youth center to provide more opportunities to enhance the center's programming.

The Monroe Youth Center and Board of Directors would like to extend a thank you to the Green County Leadership program for realizing a community and youth need. We are grateful for all of the generous individual and business donations provided to get the center fully funded for the first year! This endeavor would be impossible without the outpouring of community support. If you would like more information regarding the Monroe Youth Center's daily operation, volunteer opportunities, donation inquiries, please call 608-325-4678 or email the MYC at [youthcentermonroewi@gmail.com](mailto:youthcentermonroewi@gmail.com).



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MONROE

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## SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MONROE 2018-2019 CALENDAR

Monday December 24, 2018 to Tuesday, January 1, 2019	No School - Winter Break
Wednesday, January 2, 2019	No School - Inservice Work Day
Monday, January 21, 2019	MHS Parent Teacher Conferences
Monday, February 4, 2019	MHS Course Information Night
Thursday, February 21, 2019	Parkside Open House
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.