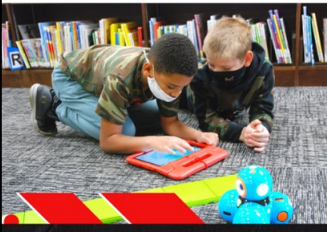


SPRING 2021-2022

# CHEESEMAKER PRIDE

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MONROE



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#CHEESEMAKERPRIDE

**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 1/2 STREET  
MONROE, WI 53566  
608-328-7134

**PARKSIDE ELEMENTARY**  
920 4TH STREET  
MONROE, WI 53566  
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**MONROE MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
1510 13TH STREET  
MONROE, WI 53566  
608-328-7120

**MONROE HIGH SCHOOL**  
1600 26TH STREET  
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## 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.*

## SELECTING THE NEXT DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR



**Rich Deprez**  
President, Board of Education

The relationship between District Administrator and the community is special. It takes a unique kind of person to sign up for this difficult and sometimes thankless job; to show up every day to nurture and develop that relationship to the betterment of the district, and ultimately our children. I can't thank Rick enough for the relationship he built with the Board of Education and our community. In my experience on the Board, Rick Waski has been a masterful communicator with a passion for making a difference in the lives of our students rivaled only by his capacity to care for you as a whole person. He certainly has left some very large shoes for us to fill as we thank him for his many years of steady leadership, inclusive mindset, and thoughtful care for our school district and community. Thank you for the impact you've had over your many years of service here in Monroe, Rick!

The single most important decision a School Board member will ever make is hiring a District Administrator. It's absolutely critical that the members making that decision be committed to the work and aligned with the values of our community. This decision places at the helm the driving force for our community that could have an impact for decades.

District Administrators lead with an infectious resiliency and passion for their profession and the pupils they serve. They are a servant-leader that supports and cares for the needs of their staff, so they, in turn, can provide the richest educational experience possible for their students. The good ones do this with a view of the larger goal of enabling students for a lifetime of learning, achievement, growth, and resilience.

To assist and prepare us for this incredibly critical task we have enlisted the help of Hazard, Young, and Attea (HYA). They are a search firm that specializes in helping communities find the best fit for their next District Administrator. We're excited to have them guide us through this process and I hope you will be welcoming and engaging with them.

As the School Board moves through the selection process we will need your help. In early March, HYA will begin to reach out to the community to ask for your time to take part in focus groups and surveys to help us identify what qualities and characteristics are most important to our community. Your thoughtful participation will help us develop the profile of our next District Administrator and inform the selection process, so our finalists represent the core values we need in the School District of Monroe's next leader.

After the candidate profile has been formed, HYA will begin screening candidates against that profile and winnowing the pool of hopefuls down to just six. At that point the Board will begin to interview that slate of potential leaders. This first round of interviews will help our nine-member Board to interact with and get a feel for the candidates, evoking answers to questions we know are

*Selecting the Next...(continued on page 2)*

**Selecting the Next... (cont. from pg. 1)**

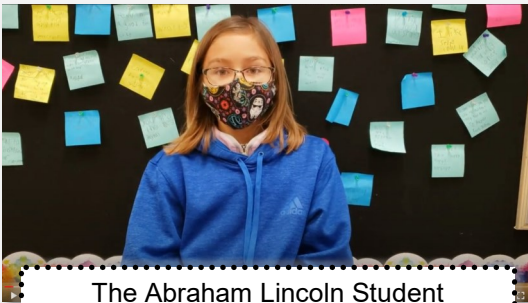
important to our entire community. It will also afford an opportunity for the candidates to travel to Monroe and get to know our caring and welcoming home.

Our next step will be to narrow the slate to two or three possibilities. Then, around the middle of April, we'll invite them back to Monroe for a final in-depth interview with the Board and stakeholder groups as well as a tour of district facilities. We'll gather feedback from the many facets of the day to culminate in selecting and extending the offer to begin making a difference in the lives of our children and shaping the future of our community. With luck, we will have impressed them as much as they have impressed us and will accept the challenge.

I can't stress enough that, while your Board of Education will make the decision to extend the opportunity to lead our amazing district, this decision belongs to the community and must be informed by it. Please consider participating in it with us and help us set the stage for continued excellence here in Monroe.



Parkside students played virtual BINGO with local residents of senior living homes. They also made cards for community members and sent thank you notes to healthcare workers.



The Abraham Lincoln Student Leadership group recorded special messages of thanks for area healthcare workers.



Northside students have been great leaders in our community! These students helped rake leaves for our Northside neighbors this past fall.



The Monroe Middle School Student Council and Junior Optimist Club teamed up for a Red Cross Blood Drive in December.



The Monroe High School Junior Optimist Club raised over \$2600 for the Jacob's SWAG Foundation through their annual Prom for Pennies Event.



## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE



Joe Monroe  
Director of Pupil Services

The last two years of living and working through a pandemic have challenged our schools and community in a way that previously was unimaginable. It has been a difficult experience for students, families, teachers, support staff, administrators, Board members, and the community as a whole. At times this challenge brought out the best in us. This was evidenced by staff that delivered meals to students in need, teachers that developed creative instructional models for students when they were ordered to stay at home, and most recently, the selfless sacrifices that were made by staff to ensure that our schools remained open despite high rates of sickness and sub shortages. There is no doubt that our dedicated staff persevered through this challenging time despite the significant obstacles that were presented in our ever-changing world. I couldn't be more proud of our team.

Despite these achievements, it is important to acknowledge that many members of our community have been frustrated with some decisions related to the pandemic. Whether it be vaccines, mask requirements, quarantines, or any other number of issues, we have to recognize that the last two years have made some stakeholders feel as though they were not being heard. This has led to disagreement, conflict, and at times, some fairly tense interactions.

We currently live in a very politicized world that has created a sense of division that has not been felt in years, if not decades. People are choosing sides based on personal philosophies, political affiliation, and/or the source of the information they consume. There is clearly no one answer that will satisfy all members of our community, and as a result, we are forced to make tough decisions that we know will alienate some of our stakeholders. At times, we have disappointed both sides simultaneously as some feel we have not done enough to protect children, while others feel we are being too restrictive. This is the impossible situation that school leaders have found themselves in today.

Recently, I revisited a book that offers some important lessons about dealing with challenges in life. *The Coffee Bean*, by Jon Gordon and Damon West, is a book that shares a fairly simple message. Life is often difficult, and it can feel like you are living in a pot of boiling hot water. Our environment can change, weaken, or harden us, and test who we truly are. Consider a carrot, an egg, and a coffee bean. Each reacts differently to the hot water. The carrot weakens and gets soft in the hot water. The egg hardens and becomes resistant to outside influences. But if you place a coffee bean in the hot water it transforms the environment into something better than it was before. The message is that every difficult situation is an opportunity to learn and grow. This is the challenge before us and it is my hope that much like the coffee bean, we will use the power within our community to create something amazing.

So the question is are we willing to do what it takes to move our community forward? Are we willing to focus on our common values (love of our children, quality education, a united and caring community) rather than investing so much energy into the differences we may have? Are we willing to acknowledge differences, while seeking to identify solutions that may best meet the needs of our children? And ultimately, are both sides willing to make some small sacrifices to endure tough times in an effort to come through this experience as a unified and caring community?

As school leaders, we are hopeful that we are starting to transition to a new phase of this pandemic experience. One that will allow us to return to some level of normalcy. While we don't know what the future holds, we do know that this school district and community need to meet the needs of our children and the community. Through this process, we can emerge better and stronger than we have ever been. I'm choosing to be the best coffee bean I can be. I hope you will join me in this effort.



**Spring Break Reminder**  
**NO SCHOOL**  
**Monday, March 21st -**  
**Friday, March 25th**

**School resumes**  
**Monday, March 28th**

## GROWING ELL COMMUNITY



**Todd Paradis**  
Director of Curriculum & Instruction

One of our fastest-growing student population groups in our district is our English Language Learners. Over the last five years, our student enrollment has almost doubled and grown from 72 students in 2017-2018 to 141 students this school year.

As our ELL numbers have increased, it has created challenges in having enough staffing and resources to provide high-quality programming to best serve the diverse needs of these students. Unlike many districts around us, we are very fortunate as a district to have some great ELL staff already in place. Our ELL staff has done an outstanding job of supporting our ELL students and their families as they make the transition into our schools and community.

Our current model of instruction is an immersion program that includes students being immersed in our regular education classrooms with the goal of acquisition of English language skills. Some of these students also receive pull-out instruction in small groups. This type of program works well for some of our students, but not all of our students and we still feel there is room for improvement. Over the second half of this school year, we will be considering changes for the 2022-2023 school year that would provide a differentiated approach to adapt to the varying needs of the students.

### What is an English Language Learner?

English Language Learners are students whose primary language is a language other than English. In our community and in our schools, the most commonly spoken language in ELL homes is Spanish. Other languages we have served in our district include Albanian, Arabic, Russian, Mandarin, and Polish.

ELLs are identified as students who demonstrate sufficient difficulty in reading, writing, speaking, or understanding the English language. This creates a challenge for these students to learn successfully in classrooms where English is the language of instruction.

Lacking the ability to speak English doesn't mean the student can't be a successful learner, nor should it prevent them from having the same access to high-quality learning experiences that other students receive. We believe all students can be successful and becoming bilingual is a strength to celebrate in our changing world.

### Strengths and Challenges of our ELL Students

ELL needs, strengths, and challenges can vary dramatically, even within the same classroom or among students from the same country. These needs don't necessarily correlate with a specific grade and depend on previous schooling and access to Spanish and/or English language instruction.

Some of our ELLs have strong literacy skills and content knowledge in their native language but must transfer those skills to English. With consistent support, these students experience success more frequently because, like many successful students, they have strong family support and access to resources at home.

Unfortunately, many of our ELLs face more challenges when they enter our schools. Some have little or no formal schooling and have poor academic skills in their native language. They move around a lot and lack access to effective, consistent language instruction. At home, many of them have personal responsibilities that occupy hours during or outside of school, such as caring for siblings, working one or more jobs, and translating for families. They also face the trauma of moving into an unfamiliar place and many times being disconnected from family members. Many of our new students this school year fall into this category and need lots of support.



Parkside Elementary ELL Team: (L-R)  
Samantha Lucas, Flor Koller, Candice Lenthe,  
Deb Moe, Marion Pink

### Success Stories

Despite the many obstacles our ELL learners face every day inside and outside of school, we have many success stories.

Most experts agree that it takes 5-7 years to acquire academic English, the language needed to succeed academically and professionally. With the support of our staff and the hard work of our students, we have a high percentage of our students reach a level of language proficiency that allows students to exit our ELL program and no longer need support. These students have gone on to be successful students and pursue college opportunities or join the workforce in our own community. Some help their families as they are business owners and major contributors in Monroe.

Other successes include the use of former ELL students to assist with the growing enrollment. Recently, we hired a former ELL student to be part of our ELL team at the Monroe Middle School. He has been a great addition and brings a perspective that only a former ELL could bring to the position. At Monroe High School, we are using our own students in classrooms to be teaching assistants and help with translations. It is amazing to see our own students and former students having such a big impact.

As a district, we are committed to building school cultures that support all learners from all types of backgrounds. We are excited about the future changes to the program and the opportunity to better support more students in their journey of career, college, or life readiness.



## DISTRICT LEVY RATE LOWEST IN DECADES



**Ron Olson**  
Business Administrator

As I write this, it is early February. The community survey to gather input on our high school facility and a potential fall referendum has just closed and we are awaiting results of whether the community preferred one option over the other, did not support either option, or would support either option. The Board will be reviewing the results of the community survey to help determine the path forward for a recommended solution in addressing the high school and a potential fall referendum high school facility question.

Although the survey may have been the first glimpse some individuals had of the concerns with the current high school facility and the proposed remedies, many of you are probably aware of at least part of the long process that led us to this point. The process commenced with a study of all District facilities in 2017. A District Facilities Committee of staff and community members was formed. The Committee determined in the spring of 2018 that the high school was the building in the District with the most extensive and immediate needs. The committee did not feel there was time to educate the community to the needs of the high school by the fall election, so they recommended a smaller project to upgrade the mechanical systems and restrooms of Parkside Elementary as they worked toward determining how best to address the needs of the high school and targeted a 2020 referendum for the high school. The Parkside referendum question passed, the work has been completed and the debt service already paid off.

In fall/winter of 2019 there were community listening sessions and a community survey that led to a recommendation for a fall referendum to address the needs of the high school. The recommended project

would update, remodel and add on to the existing high school and make it a 7-12 facility. The existing MS would become a 4-6 building. Parkside and Northside Elementary Schools would become PK-3 schools and Abe Lincoln would be closed. This option remains as one of the two potential options in the current survey. Unfortunately, in April 2020 COVID became a reality and shut down much of the country. The Board determined that they could not adequately inform the community on such an important issue prior to the fall election with lockdown restrictions in place and decided the question to address the high school had to be delayed. A referendum question was run and passed to update and upgrade the mechanical systems of Northside Elementary similar to what was done at Parkside Elementary. In addition, the roof and siding would be replaced and bathrooms updated. The work is being completed over the summer of 2021 and 2022 and will be paid off in two years.

When the District Facility Committee reconvened in 2021, they discussed the original proposed question from 2020 and any concerns they had heard in the intervening year. Three community concerns were raised. Some community members were concerned about the reconfiguration of grade levels in all District buildings and the closing of Abe Lincoln Elementary. Some community members were concerned whether the upgrades and renovations to the high school would resolve all issues, especially concerns over water infiltration and foundations issues. There were also community members concerned with renovating a building in which portions of the building are already 70 years old. They also were concerned that currently the newest District school is 35 years old and that if the high school was renovated and added to, that twenty years from now when it was paid off, all District schools would be between 55 and 100+ years old. The committee determined that one option for the community to consider had to be building a new high school on a new site. That led us to the current survey the community provided input on. There was the original 2018 proposed 7-12 renovation and the addition solution of a new high school on a new site. Both options had very similar costs.

We look forward to seeing the community input on the survey questions. The Board will be reviewing the survey results and if the community is supportive of one of the solutions, the Board will likely proceed with a referendum question on that solution or variation of it at the November 2022 election. The hope would be that a question could be identified this spring to allow the District to inform the community about the project and the referendum question throughout the summer and fall in order to provide the community the information they need as they vote.

My next newsletter article will likely focus on the results of the survey and any discussion or progress the Board has made toward finalizing a recommended solution and potential referendum question for the fall.



Board of Education meetings are live-streamed and archived on our School District of Monroe YouTube channel

## LEARNING BEYOND THE SCHOOL DAY

### *Clubs and Enrichment Opportunities for Students Before, During and After School*



Jenna Trame  
Principal, Parkside Elementary School

While the elementary school day provides students with a wide variety of academic learning opportunities across subject areas, wonderful enrichment activities and special opportunities extend beyond the classroom and the traditional school hours, too!

Here are some of the unique opportunities provided to Parkside students. These programs are possible because of the dedicated staff that go above and beyond to share their passions and personal interests with students in ways that provide additional learning, leadership opportunities, and connection with peers and staff.

#### **Learning Readiness Physical Education (LRPE)**

This innovative and research-based program takes place in the gym before school and is designed with student fitness and academic goals in mind. Mr. Justiniano and Mrs. Sween lead a group of students through structured movement activities and provide opportunities for students to enhance their social skills.

Research shows that when students elevate their heart rate to 60-90% of their max heart rate for 20 minutes or more their brain produces three chemicals that make them more academically alert (serotonin, dopamine, norepinephrine). Providing students with this opportunity before school sets them up for success for the school day.

Students in LRPE wear a heart rate monitor watch daily during the class to help monitor their own heart rate and safely reach the appropriate heart rate zone specifically for them. Data collected helps staff plan, assess, and make decisions specific student and program needs.

This program started with a very small group of students and has now expanded to include additional students because of the great benefits we are seeing through this unique opportunity.



#### **Hispanic Club**

This club provides an opportunity for students to learn about Hispanic culture including history, food, dance, music, literature and more! Mrs. Ormson leads students through a variety of activities and allows students to help select activities of interest as well.

#### **Spanish Enrichment Club**

This club provides students in 3rd—5th grades that aren't getting Spanish during the school day the opportunity to learn Spanish before school. Mrs. Ormson teaches high interest vocabulary (colors, weather, pets, feelings) through games, songs and activities.

#### **Race to Read**

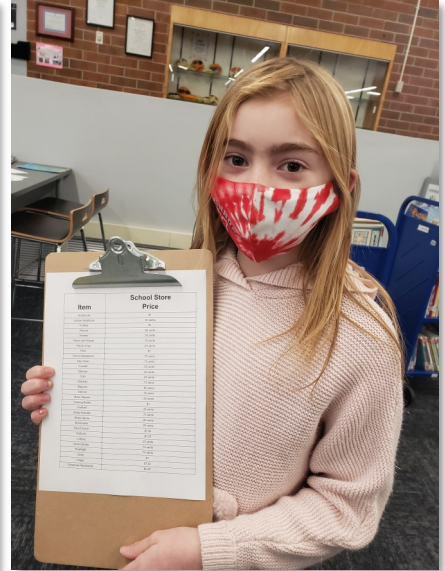
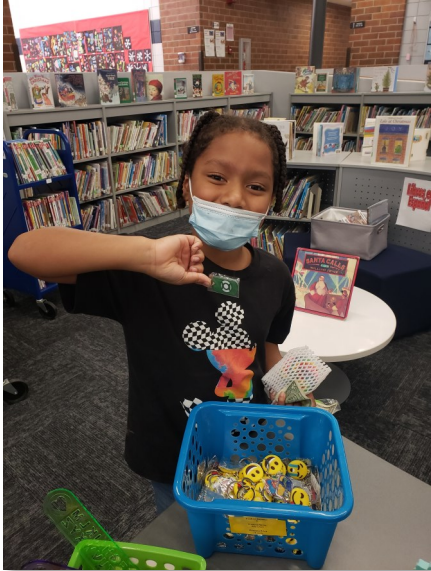
Students in 4th and 5th grade have the opportunity to participate in a reading club led by Mrs. Kiley and Mrs. Kittoe. A reading list is provided and students work hard on story comprehension in preparation for the Race to Read competition in the spring.

*Learning Beyond the School Day (continued on page 7)*



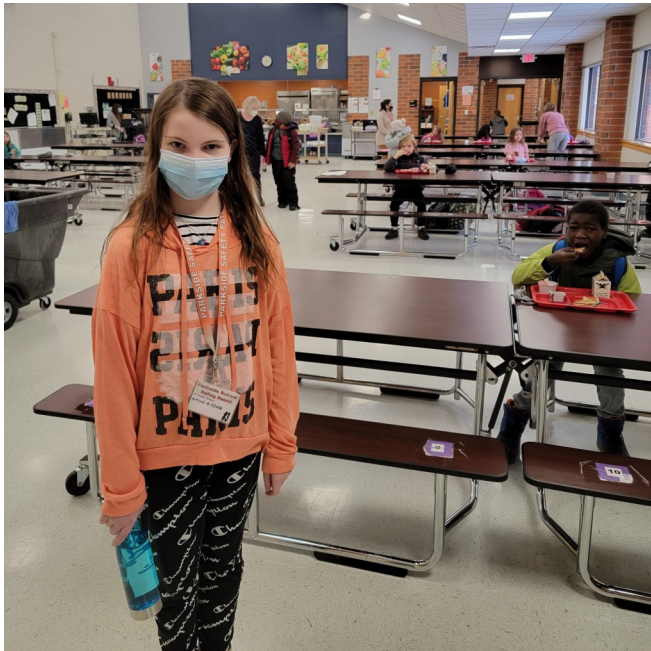
### School Store

Mrs. Meier works with a group of 4th graders to organize the Parkside school store. The students are a part of the planning, organizing, set-up and running the school store for the student body. The school store is open one time per month during the lunch periods and offers a lot of high interest items and school supplies for students at reasonable prices. This Parkside tradition is a student favorite and made possible by the students and staff that give up their lunch and recess times to plan and run the store.



### Safety Patrol

Before and after school you can find a number of Parkside 5th graders helping younger students throughout the building! These student leaders are our Safety Patrol. Younger students rely on our Safety Patrol to help them in the hallways, at breakfast, getting on and off the bus, and in the crosswalks. The students participating in this leadership role have signed a contract committing to demonstrating the highest level of expected behavior and staying on track with their academics to ensure they are leading younger students in a positive way. The Safety Patrol students who complete their assigned duties as outlined in the contract have the opportunity to participate in reward trips in appreciation for their help around the building.



## RESILIENCE IN A CHALLENGING YEAR



**Katie Landmark**  
Interim Associate Principal, Monroe High School

Hello! My name is Katie Landmark, and I'm the Interim Associate Principal at Monroe High School. Previously, I taught English at Monroe Middle School (MMS), and last year I was MMS's Reading Interventionist. This year has been an exciting transition for me. I can't believe we're halfway through the school year already! I'm hopeful that the second half will be a little less eventful as far as COVID numbers are concerned so that we can all get back into our routine.

High school is an emotional time for young adults, often stressful and exciting at the same time. In a normal year, students are tasked with homework, exams, standardized tests, extracurricular activities, and work experience, not to mention planning for the future! The past two years have added a pandemic to that mix, which has left many of our youth feeling incredibly anxious, depressed, and overwhelmed. Some feel as if their struggles are insurmountable and are having thoughts of suicide. A recent article published by NPR reports, "According to CDC data, the number of Emergency Department visits due to suspected suicide attempts by people aged 12-25 started to rise by May 2020, and children's hospitals around the country have seen those numbers continue to increase" (Chatterjee, 2022, p. 4). Some students express their frustrations by lashing out verbally or physically, creating conflicts with friends and teachers. "High schoolers are behaving more like middle school students, often shoving and pushing each other in the hallways... Some kids who are struggling often manifest their emotions with more aggression and violence" (Chatterjee, 2022, p. 3). While I'm pleased to say that we've had few major issues at Monroe High School this year, we also recognize that many students are struggling, and it's important for parents also to understand and acknowledge the challenges their students may be experiencing.

Here at MHS, we have systems in place to ensure our students feel seen, heard, and supported. Our student services office is staffed with a school psychologist and two school counselors who are all available by appointment or occasionally for drop-in visits. We have quiet spaces for students who need a 10-15-minute break, whether they need to ease some anxiety or mentally prepare for class or a test. Students who want to be heard and make a difference have a variety of club opportunities, such as Student Senate, Junior Optimists, or E4E (Equity for Everyone). We also have fun clubs for students who just want a break from it all, including ESports, TikTok club, and our new Japanese Culture club. Every Monday in homeroom our teachers hold discussions on various topics related to social and emotional learning; they also engage in team-building activities and homeroom competitions to encourage students to get involved and build relationships. Our Link Crew leads activities with our freshmen to build a culture of unity and teamwork across grade levels and to ensure our freshmen students feel welcome and comfortable in the high school environment. We know that students are struggling, and so we are working hard to ensure that there truly is something for everyone here. The mental health of our students is a top priority, and we will continue to explore ways to better support every single one of them.

And guess what? You can help, too! Please talk to your students regularly about how they're feeling. Ask them specific questions about friends, classes, challenges, and worries. Pay attention to their progress in Skyward (attendance and grades!), and check in with their teachers, the associate principal (me!), or the principal if you have any questions that your student won't or can't answer. Check their phones on occasion so you know who they're texting, and keep an eye on social media accounts. So many conflicts and anxieties are connected to social media, and those issues are extremely difficult for us at school to do anything about. Many high school students experiment with tobacco products, drugs, and alcohol, none of which are legal for anyone under 18 and may be cause for suspension if discovered on students in school (even 18-year-olds). If you know your student is experimenting with any of these, make sure to have conversations about safety and consequences. Many young adults don't realize the impact their current choices and actions can have on their future. We will continue to do our part at the high school to educate and guide your students in the right direction, but our impact is multiplied when they hear it at home, too. We strongly believe we're partners in this work!

If you have any questions or concerns about your high school student, please reach out to me, our principal Mr. Jackson, or any of our student services staff listed below. We're here to help all students at Monroe High School finish the year mentally and academically strong!

### MHS CONTACTS

Jeriamy Jackson, Interim Principal, 608-328-7359, [jeriamyjackson@monroe.k12.wi.us](mailto:jeriamyjackson@monroe.k12.wi.us)  
Katie Landmark, Interim Associate Principal, 608-328-7557, [katielandmark@monroe.k12.wi.us](mailto:katielandmark@monroe.k12.wi.us)  
Melissa Brant, School Psychologist, 608-328-7243, [melissabrant@monroe.k12.wi.us](mailto:melissabrant@monroe.k12.wi.us)  
Lisa Davis, School Counselor, 608-328-7258, [lisdavis@monroe.k12.wi.us](mailto:lisdavis@monroe.k12.wi.us)  
Alicia Ziolkowski, School Counselor, 608-328-7123, [aliciaziolkowski@monroe.k12.wi.us](mailto:aliciaziolkowski@monroe.k12.wi.us)



**KINDNESS IS A KEY INGREDIENT AT ABRAHAM LINCOLN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**



Sarah Judd  
Principal, Abraham Lincoln Elementary

At Abraham Lincoln Elementary, reading, writing, math, science and social studies aren't the only skills being taught in our classrooms. Each month, we have a different school-wide, social-emotional skill that we are focused on! After we kick-off the skill in our Monday Morning Meeting, we provide direct instruction around the skill throughout the month. We encourage the students to practice the skill being learned both at school and at home.

This past month, we taught and practiced the skill of showing kindness to others. That's right, it's a skill! Kindness enhances positivity and helps children feel good about themselves. We chose to focus on kindness hoping that our students would feel a greater sense of safety, support and acceptance.

Research suggests that teaching, fostering, and celebrating kindness in schools improves students' sense of well-being and success in school and life. Here are a few additional reasons to teach kindness in schools:

- ⇒ Happy Children!
- ⇒ Increased Peer Acceptance
- ⇒ Improved Health and Less Stress
- ⇒ Greater Sense of Belonging and Improved Self-Esteem
- ⇒ Increased Feelings of Gratitude
- ⇒ Better Concentration and Improved Results


Doing acts of kindness as a family is a great way to bond while teaching your children about compassion and service! If you're looking for additional ideas to help practice kindness at home, here are a couple additional articles that you could read:

<https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how-to-be-a-kindness-role-model-for-your-kids>

<https://biglifejournal.com/blogs/blog/kids-kindness-activities>



Ms. Koester read a story called, "Be Kind" to Mrs. Kelley's class during their class time in the library. In this story, readers explore what kindness is and how any act, big or small, can make a difference.



**WE NEED YOU!!! BECOME A SUBSTITUTE TODAY!**

The School District of Monroe is always looking for individuals to substitute in our schools for both our teaching staff and in support roles. If you have an associates degree or higher from an accredited college or university and have successfully completed an approved substitute training program then you can apply! The pay is \$120 a day and the rate increases to over \$225.22 a day if you spend 10 or more consecutive school days in the same assignment. There is a brief online training required. The school district will give you the information needed to do the training and we will reimburse your class fee of \$39.95 and your sub-license fee of \$125.00 once you have subbed for us at least 10 times.

For those interested in substitute positions for aides, secretaries, custodians, and food service a high school diploma or GED is required. The pay is \$15.85 an hour. Please contact Elizabeth Babel at 608-328-7236 or email at [elizabethbabel@monroe.k12.wi.us](mailto:elizabethbabel@monroe.k12.wi.us) for more information on how apply.

## MANAGING YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOLERS DIGITAL LIFE TO ENHANCE THEIR WELLNESS



**Brian Boehm**  
Principal, Monroe Middle School

Screen time for children has been steadily climbing for years and the rate of that increase has grown dramatically during the pandemic. Overall, children's screen time has doubled during the pandemic, according to Qustodio, a company that tracks usage on tens of thousands of devices used by children, ages 4 to 15, worldwide. In a survey given to Monroe Middle School students in 2019, 40% of them indicated they were on social media 4+ hours per day. In addition, a growing number of studies are finding a link between social media/screen time and negative psychological outcomes such as anxiety, poor self-perception, depression, sleep deprivation and decreased attention span. In the majority of harassment and bullying instances that we work on at MMS there is an electronic/social media component. This includes, Snapchat, Tik Tok and instant messaging. We've also seen an uptick in the solicitation of inappropriate pictures from student to student. The reality is that we as parents are paying for devices that can have a significant negative impact on our children. Children are finding it difficult to sustain attention in normal interactions without getting a reward hit of dopamine every few seconds, which they get in the digital world.

Parents are feeling the squeeze. According to the Pew Charitable Trust, two thirds of parents say that parenting is harder today than it was 20 twenty years ago and many cite technology, like social media and smartphones, as the reason. 71% of parents surveyed by Pew indicated that they believe the potential harm of smartphones outweighs the benefits.

Managing your child's online experience starts with knowing how to monitor devices, especially mobile devices. At Monroe Middle School we use a program called GoGuardian to monitor student Chromebooks both at school and at home. This program alerts us when students are visiting inappropriate sites. Many personal devices have Parental Controls available to help set limits and monitor your child's online activity. Below are resources for more information on parental controls for both Apple and Android devices. They are also a variety of device monitoring apps available with varying levels of control.

One thing you won't be able to do with most parental control apps is monitor calls or SMS, MMS, and encrypted messages. You can block secure messaging apps, but Boomerang and Qustodio are the only options aside from Apple's ScreenTime function that allow you to monitor SMS messages and call data. Services such as Boomerang, can automatically block new apps your child installs until you explicitly approve them. Mobicip gives you the option to whitelist only the apps you want your child to be able to use. With Apple iOS, you can block access to system apps such as Safari, Camera, and Siri, if you wish.

Time restrictions are another major feature of parental control apps. Some services, like Norton Family and Locategy, let you specify how many total hours (or minutes) a day your child can spend on any given device as well as a schedule for when they can use it. Qustodio lets you set up schedules for specific apps and device usage, as well as specifying a total time allotment for your child that applies across every piece of hardware they use to access the internet.

### Internet/Media Safety Tips For Families

1. Set Limits
2. Monitor Activity
3. Use Parental Controls
4. Talk to Your Kids



#### Talk to Your Kids

Although the range of features parental control software supports is impressive, no system is perfect. If your children want to get around the limitations you impose, they will likely be able to do so either by using unmonitored devices or finding ways to wipe their devices clean of the controlling apps. Thus, it's worthwhile to take the time to talk with your child about why you have installed monitoring software in the first place.

#### Resources:

⇒ You can learn more about Adolescent Development and Media Safety by visiting the American Academy of Pediatrics website at [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org).

⇒ Parental Controls are available in "Settings" for most devices. Android Users can search for "Parental Controls" at <https://support.google.com/>. For Apple users, visit <https://support.apple.com/> and search for "Parental Controls."



## THE VALUE OF FRIDAY EARLY RELEASE



**Katie Coplien**  
5th Grade Teacher, Northside Elementary School

Many continue to ask why the School District of Monroe has early release on Fridays. This time is dedicated for teachers to work and collaborate with their peers. People ask after the weeks and years that we lost from COVID, why is Friday not used for lost instructional time? As a teacher, I think these are fair questions.

From the perspective of someone who works first-hand in this district with our kids, this time has made a world of difference in how our teachers learn, work, and collaborate with each other, which has benefited our students from 4K to 12th grade. I am in communication with a multitude of teachers from a variety of districts across Wisconsin and Illinois and they are so impressed and even a little jealous of the fact that we are so far ahead in areas of collaboration, analyzing data, interventions, and other major concepts that structure high-level instruction. These successes are largely due from the work completed on Fridays.

The first question I usually get asked about Friday Professional Collaboration Time (PCT) is; "What do teachers do during this time?" The list could go on and on, but here are a few that I usually explain. On Fridays, teachers may have professional development. This year, for example, all K-3 teachers have been working diligently and tirelessly on enhancing their instructional practices on foundational literacy skills, which has already positively impacted our young readers with their development of sounds and words. These teachers are in meetings for hours working with the LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) program and experts that lead to rich conversations and new findings of how to incorporate and improve the program into our current reading curriculum. Other times, teachers are working with their grade level or subject level teachers to analyze data from assessments. This type of work allows us to discuss and find ways to support our students who are struggling with the previously taught standards, skills, and concepts. We also find ways to enrich our students who are at grade level to push their thinking and abilities to the next level. We are given the opportunity to collaborate with teachers across the district to ensure a guaranteed and viable curriculum. This type of work supports the idea that each student, no matter the school they attend, will receive a curriculum that is equitable and rigorous.

Typically the next question is; "Why is this allotted time different compared to after school hours and prep time?" This time is significant because it is a block of time that allows teachers and staff to have collaborative conversations without being limited to other daily needs that connect with students, parents, and other significant factors during normal school hours. Many times teachers and staff are in several meetings throughout the week, during their prep time, and after school. These meetings are essential to the growth and success of our district, but can take away from time with our peers. Also, many times the administrators are so busy with their daily responsibilities that it can be tough for them to be in every conversation and meeting, as well. Therefore, Friday afternoons have allowed time even for them to connect and work collaboratively with their staff.

The district is making important changes that will continue to support not only our students, but our teachers as well. But in order to do this type of work, time is the biggest factor. So, as a teacher, I am thankful to the administrators and Board of Education for recognizing the value of this time and concept on Friday afternoons.

### School District of Monroe Summer School

Monday, June 13 - Friday, July 1st

August Jumpstart:  
Monday, August 1st - Friday, August 12th

Online registration is open  
March 29th - April 9th

Summer School Course Offering Books  
will be available online on March 14th  
at [www.monroeschools.com](http://www.monroeschools.com)  
or at any school building office

**School District of Monroe**

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***School District of Monroe Calendar***

**March 21st - 25th**

**No School - Spring Break**

**March 29th - April 9th**

**Summer School Registration Open**

**April 15th**

**No School**

**May 30th**

**No School - Memorial Day**

**June 2nd**

**Last Day of School - Half Day, No Lunch**

**June 13th - July 1st**

**Summer 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.

