

A YEAR OF NEW BEGINNINGS

BY PAT DEVINE, SUPERINTENDENT



With the last day of school for students having wrapped up on June 8, it is a great time to reflect on a wonderful year. Just one year ago we were packing up all the classrooms in the middle school and high school and moving them to their new locations. It is incredible to see the transformation we have made in just one year. Waconia High School and Waconia Middle School have done an excellent job of making their new spaces home. There is such a welcoming feeling at each of their new locations.

Students at the Waconia Learning Center also had a journey as they were in the high school building for half of the school year and then settled into their new building in January. The Early Childhood Family Education and Early Childhood Special Education programs have also created wonderful learning environments in their new spaces for our youngest students. The elementary schools continue to establish their new traditions with the second year as a school district with three elementary schools.

All of these improvements and enhancements for our students were made possible through the \$75 million bond referendum in 2014. All of the work is almost completed. The new stadium seating and lighting is going in this summer, with the goal of having the tennis courts completed in the summer of 2019.



The entire school district was buzzing with excitement and activity during the end of the school year and graduation season. End of year performances, field days and just all around celebrating the close of an awesome year!

It starts with Kids' Company and Early Childhood Family Education. We also celebrate the accomplishments of kindergarteners and fifth-grade students at each of the elementary schools. Our eighth-grade students at Waconia Middle School also mark the accomplishment of moving onto high school. It always makes me proud to be at all of these ceremonies, including watching students in our Transition Program and at the Waconia Learning Center move on to the next stage in their journey.

The largest celebration was for the Class of 2018 at Waconia High School. The growth in our school district is demonstrated by the increasing size of our graduating classes. The Class of 2018 will likely be the last one under 300 students as enrollment has tripled since 1990. The celebration was outstanding, with great speeches and excellent kids! If you want to see the ceremony, it's posted on our website at: isd110.org. While you're there, you can also check out my video blog about our seniors and all of their great work. All the graduation celebrations across the school district were exceptional. It is so exciting to see the accomplishments of our students, and their success makes me very proud to be a part of ISD ONE10!

COMMUNITY GIVES WACONIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS HIGH MARKS

As part of the district's comprehensive strategic and financial planning, a random sample community phone survey of registered voters was held in late April. Survey goals included helping to determine the community's assessment of the school district, prioritizing district funding needs and identifying current sources of district information.

Key findings included:

- Three-quarters gave the district an A or B for its quality, much higher than the national average of 55%.
- Funding priorities included:
 - Continue investing in high-quality academic offerings for students at all grade levels
 - Enhance programs to help students better prepare for work or college after high school
 - Provide more staff and programs for students struggling in math and reading
 - Increase support for students with mental health needs
 - Strengthen engineering and technology programs
- Eight out of 10 agree that "Strong public schools are directly linked to the quality of life and viability of our community."
- The top four current primary sources of district information are: friends and neighbors; local newspaper; teachers and staff; district emails and website.

Survey results will be used along with budget realities and strategic planning information to help the school board and district administration with financial planning to support district goals.

ALL'S WELL LOOKS TO GROW GRATITUDE

“All's Well is about wellness for everyone, from infant to senior—how we improve the wellness for everyone in our community,”

SARAH URTEL
Vice President at Ridgeview Medical Center & Clinics

Established in September 2013 with a grant, All's Well was formed by Waconia community leaders who wanted "to make the healthy choice, the easy choice." In its first three years, the cross-community collaboration bolstered Waconia's healthy eating and active living through more nutritious, locally grown and made-from-scratch food options in ISD 110 cafeterias. All's Well also worked with local grocers to reduce candy options in checkout aisles and offer more healthy grab-and-go options.



All's Well is now focusing on ways to promote health through happiness. "We want to help people create their own personal resiliency, and we want to do this through simple things: random acts of kindness and gratitude letters," said Urtel.

The annual day dedicated to purposefully perform Random Acts of Kindness is May 13. It's also the birthday of Superintendent Pat Devine's sister. She was born with Down syndrome, and her life inspired a legacy of appreciation for the power of kindness. The Gratitude Letters project will launch this fall and will involve writing and delivering a letter to someone who's made a positive difference in your life.

"All's Well benefits everyone, through better leveraging our resources collectively," Urtel said. "We're trying to broaden the scope of our program beyond Waconia, because there is no reason this good work can't spread beyond our city limits."



See Academic Calendars
for 2018-2019 and
High School Activities Calendars
visit isd110.org

Ind. School District No. 110
512 Industrial Blvd
Waconia, MN 55387

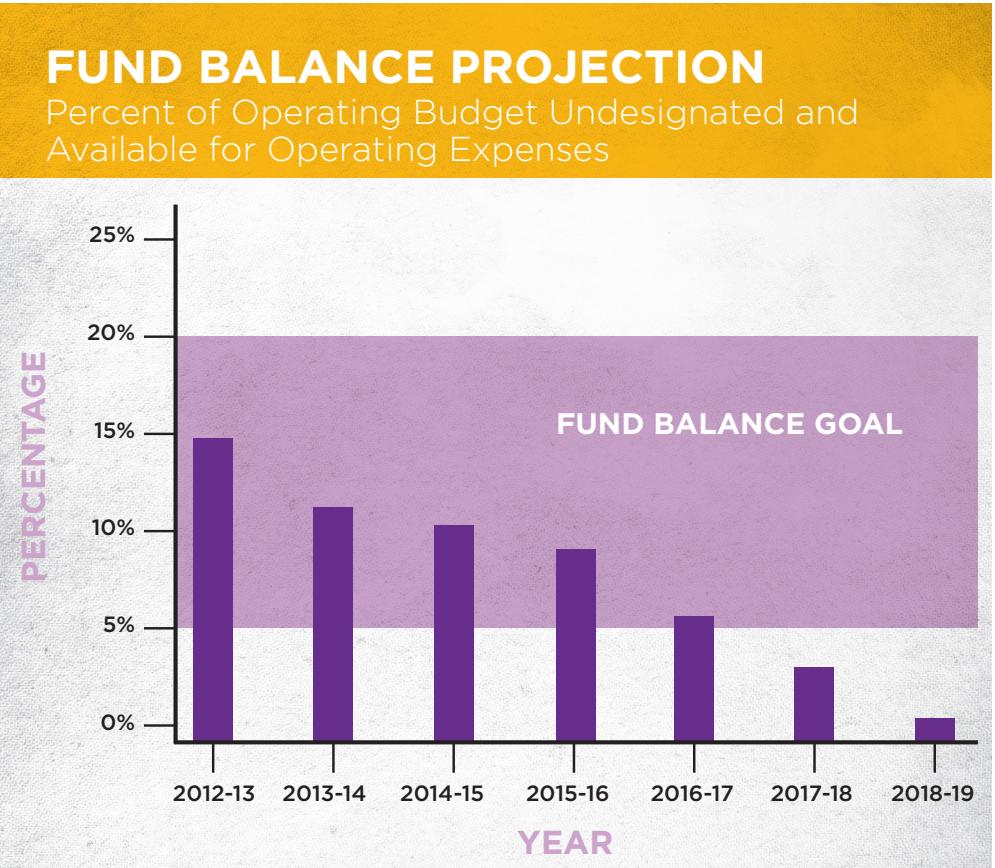
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SUSTAINING OUR QUALITY EDUCATION

We are proud to be a popular and growing school district. Because funding is tied to students, as our enrollment grows so does funding. But with additional students also come additional costs—more teachers, more materials and sometimes more schools. For the past few years, we’ve been using dollars available in our fund balance to help pay for staff and programs, but that approach is no longer sustainable. Looking ahead, we will need to increase revenue, cut costs or do a combination of both in order to maintain a balanced budget.

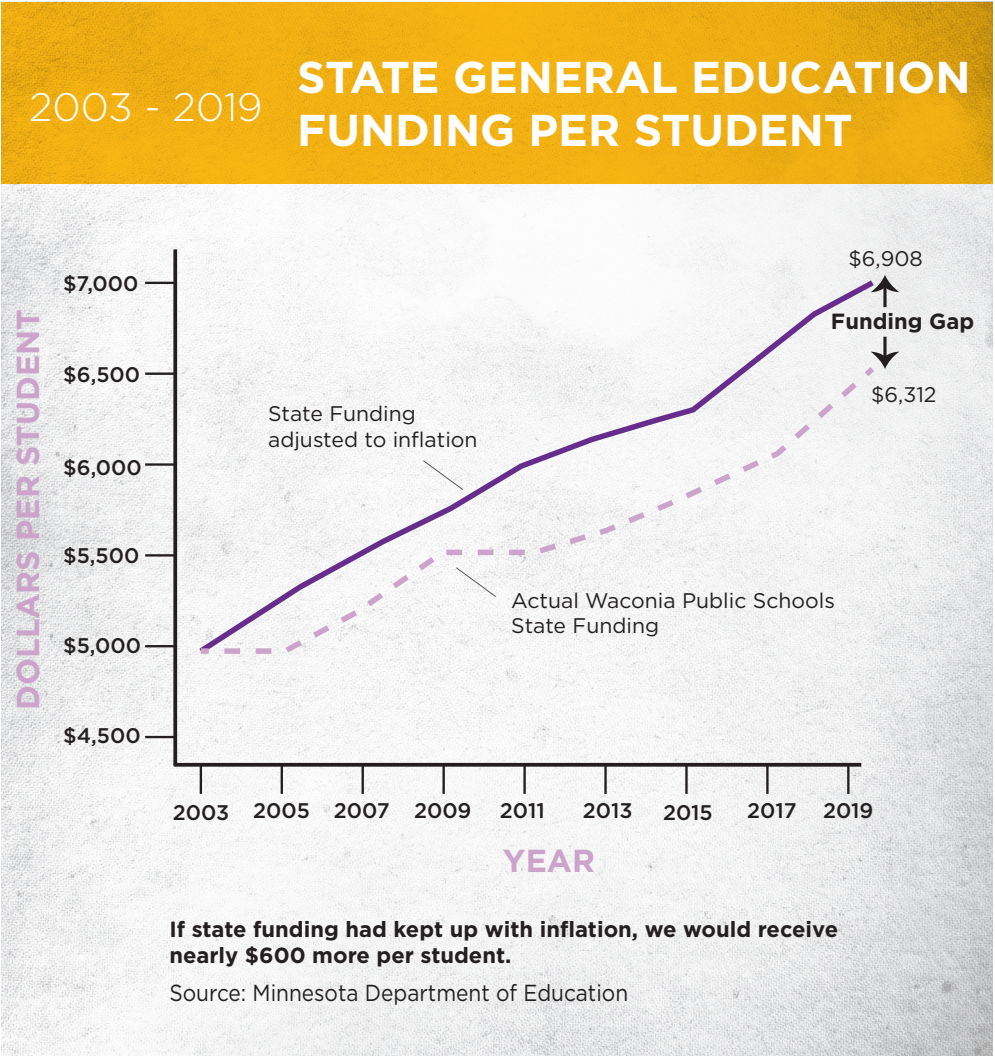
We are reviewing budget options that maintain programs and meet our educational goals while being financially responsible.



STATE FUNDING IS NOT KEEPING PACE

The vast majority of funding for school district operations—85%—comes from the state of Minnesota. But state funding has not kept pace with inflation or increasing costs. In fact, Waconia is in the bottom 1% of all Minnesota school districts in state funding per student. This puts increasing pressure on our operating budget as we work to attract and retain quality staff, provide the educational programs our students deserve and maintain the excellent educational system that contributes to the quality of life in our community.

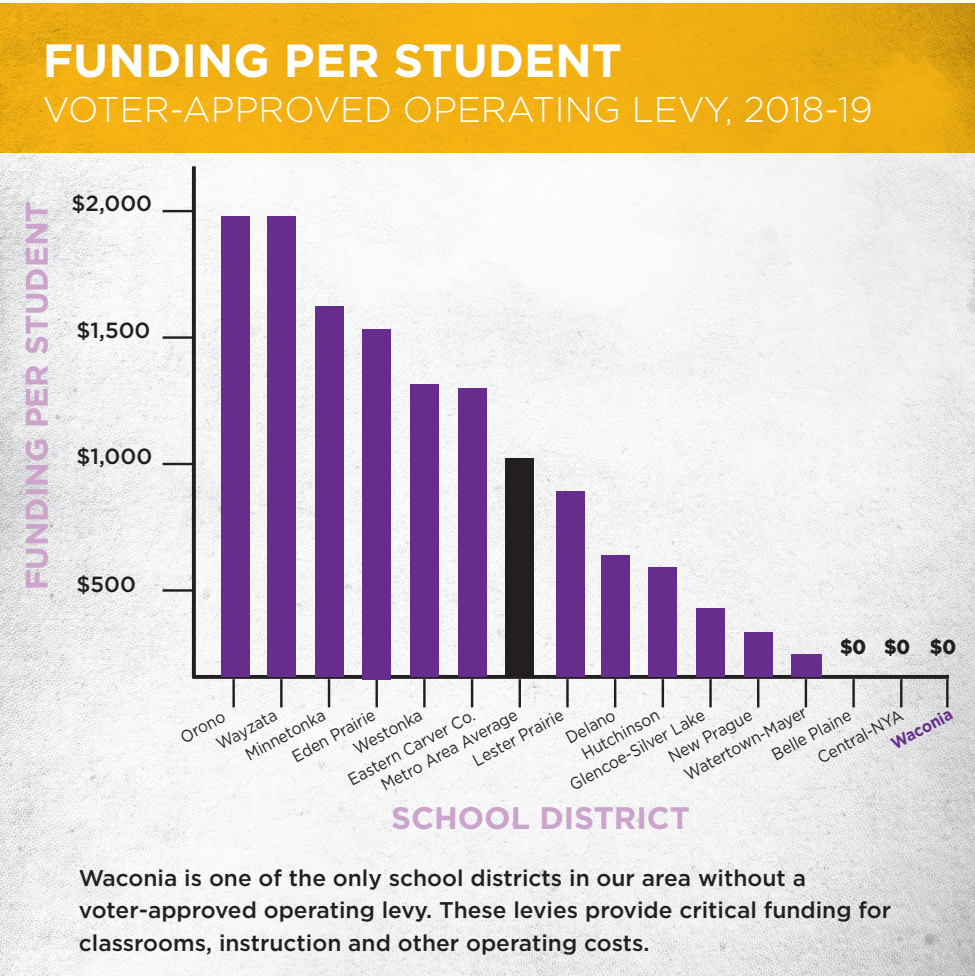
We also are one of the only school districts in our area without a voter-approved operating levy. We remain thankful that the community supported a bond referendum in 2014 to build a new elementary school and renovate our middle and high schools, but those funds can only be used for construction and renovations. Operating levies are a legally separate funding stream that support classrooms and educational programs.



MEETING THE NEEDS OF OUR GROWING POPULATION

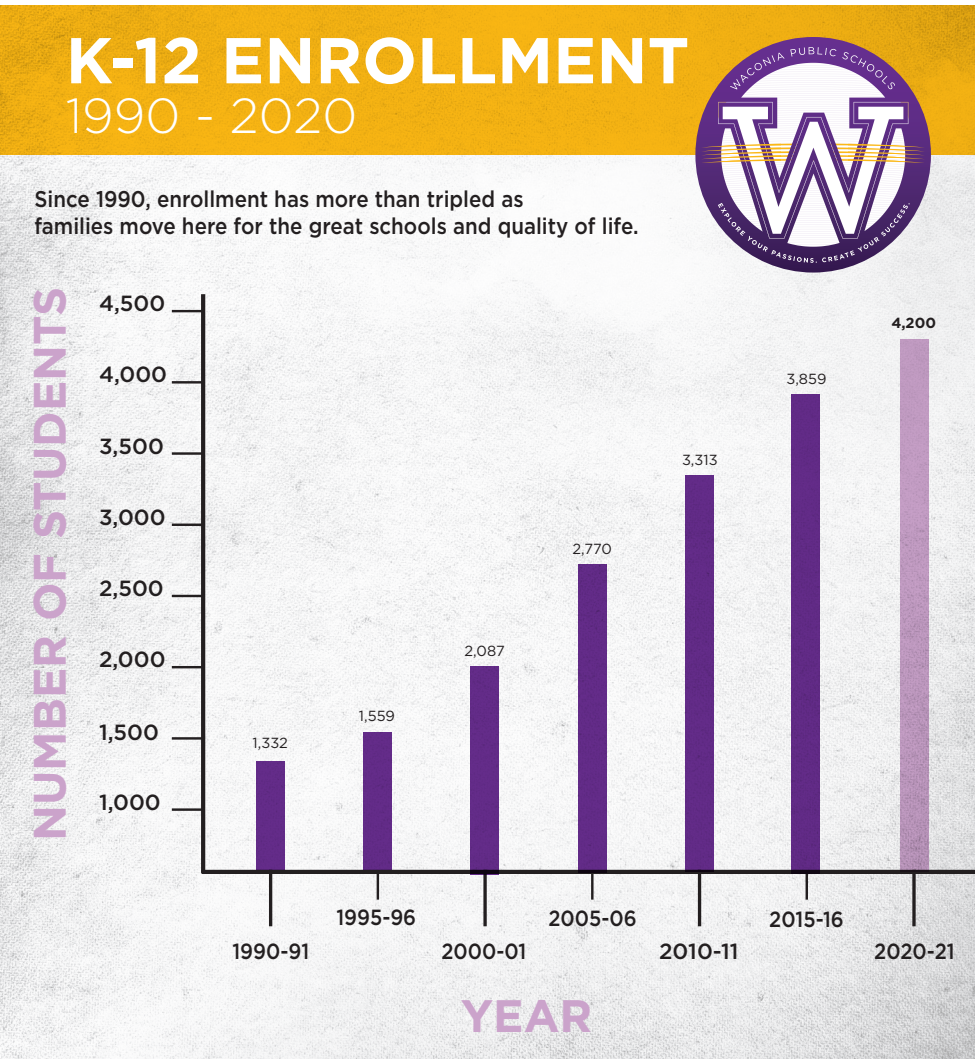
Since the 1980s, Waconia has changed from a one-stoplight town that required a long-distance call to the Twin Cities to a destination community that is growing and thriving. Much of this growth is due to the quality of Waconia Public Schools.

As much as our communities have grown, evolved and changed, so has how we educate our students. New technology, new research about how children learn, along with new methods of teaching are all changing what happens in our classrooms on a daily basis.



As we look ahead to the future, school-based teams of staff, parents and district leaders have been participating in a classroom-to-boardroom strategic planning process. We are identifying strengths, priorities, goals, and needs. One of the outcomes of that work is what we call the “Desired Daily Experience” for students, staff, and parents. It is our goal to have everyone have these experiences on a daily basis. The “Desired Daily Experience” reminds us of what needs to happen each day inside our classrooms as we encourage and support students as they explore their passions and create their success.

If we all work together, we can find a solution to continue offering the great quality of education we are known for at Waconia Public Schools. WEareONE10!



SOME FACTS TO KNOW:

- For the past 15 years, state education funding has not kept pace with inflation or increasing costs, putting pressure on school budgets across the state. If state funding had kept pace with inflation, we would have \$600 more per student in annual state funding.
- Waconia Public Schools is in the bottom 1% of all Minnesota school districts for general education funding.
- We are one of the only school districts in our area without a voter-approved operating levy; these levies provide critical funding for classrooms, instruction, and other operating costs.

WHERE EVERYBODY BELONGS (WEB) BUILDS CONFIDENCE

Entering middle school can feel disorienting for both students and parents alike, shares Kamra Michel, parent of a current Waconia Middle School (WMS) sixth grader. To ease the natural angst and empower students to navigate a more independent phase of school and life, WMS will kick off its second year of WEB.

WEB is widely recognized as an effective anti-bullying program that helps promote group cohesion. Incoming sixth graders are paired with eighth-grade leaders who participate in 8 to 10 activities at an Open House-style kickoff in late August.

WEB employs a “do it, then learn about it approach, rather than a learn about it, do it style,” according to Evan Jones, one of the two WEB program coordinators and choir director at WMS and Waconia High School. But the groundwork for a successful WEB program is laid well before the August kickoff.

In the spring before the fall school year starts, middle school counselors meet with elementary school counselors to closely understand individual student needs, including those of students in special education. At the middle school, eighth-grade WEB leader candidates are identified by school staff and sent invitations to participate. Others can also apply to be WEB leaders. Approximately 70 willing eighth-grade leaders are needed to work with the new middle-schoolers.

“The program starts with the new WEB leaders in May,” said Patti Henslin, WMS counselor and the other WEB coordinator. “Over the summer, we meet to train and get ready for the Open House kickoff.”

All entering sixth graders as well as middle schoolers new to the district are invited to participate. Group sizes consist of two eighth-grade leaders with 10 to 12 sixth graders.

Bus routes are running the morning of the kickoff so that students may opt to get acclimated, and on arrival, students are greeted with a pep-fest-like energy.

“It starts out with activities that are fun, open-ended, and general; then you get a little closer to people and a little closer, and finally, by the end of the morning, they know each other pretty well.”

PATTI HENSLIN
Waconia Middle School Counselor & WEB Coordinator

Connections continue between the students throughout the school year. Principal Shane Clausen is a fan of the WEB program and the great work of coordinators Jones and Henslin. “A benefit that is often hard to measure is the comfort and enthusiasm of the sixth-grade students entering a new environment,” Clausen said. “WEB is a chance for current students to answer a lot of the ‘what-ifs’ or dispel some of the rumors that may cause uneasiness.”

PREPARING PARENTS
Clausen encourages parents to attend a Parent Information Night and offers the following guidance and reassurance for families of students entering middle school:

“We have an amazing staff that knows and embraces the needs of middle school students. Together, we will take good care of them and guide students to grow academically, socially and emotionally. There will be many opportunities to join clubs, ensembles, teams, etc. The adolescent stages of development will be filled with emotional ups and downs and unexpected changes. Parents and school staff are partners in this journey, and regular communication to celebrate success and problem solve is routine.”

DATES TO REMEMBER

WMS STUDENT SCHEDULES
Released to students and families on or before August 3

NEW PARENT INFORMATION NIGHTS
Tuesday, August 7
6–7 p.m. – Middle School Auditorium
Wednesday, August 8
6–7 p.m. – Middle School Auditorium

WEB KICKOFF EVENT (FOR STUDENTS)
Wednesday, August 22
8 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

BUSING REQUEST FORM
Transportation requests accepted until Aug. 1

STORYTELLERS IN THE MAKING

Emily Compaan, Erick Valenzuela, and Grace Johnston are all done with their Waconia High School careers, but the footprints they left behind are paving a path for the next group of storytellers.



“When you go through high school, you don’t think about how the stuff you make can have an impact on people,” Erick Valenzuela, class of 2018, said. “A

lot of times you focus on the grade and then move on. But with Wildcat Media Productions, it felt like we were doing something real especially when people in the community would come up to me to let me know that they saw our story. It was kind of an amazing feeling to know we have made our mark.”

Fellow senior student Emily Compaan agreed: “It felt more like a college prep class than a high school class. There was a lot of learning but then even more doing. Knowing that you are sharing stories that would otherwise go untold was pretty powerful for me.”

Wildcat Media Productions is led by Paul David, the communications director for the school district. David has several years of experience in television news and video production. Throughout the two-trimester course, students produced multiple stories that covered a variety of topics. One of their productions, Noah’s Story, took off when it was posted on the district’s website.

“We knew it was a deep story but we had no idea that it would be that popular,” Grace Johnston said. “We really cared about what we did with every story. The deadlines were real, and our work was being seen by the world so we knew that we had to give it our best effort—all the time.”

Noah’s Story is about how students at Laketown Elementary have accepted and included their friend Noah when he is in class with them.

“I sat at the editor for a long, long time, probably at least three class periods, trying to figure out how to start Noah’s Story because I wanted to do it right,” Erick commented. “I knew the story was there, I just had to make sure I approached it the right way. Finally, when I figured it out, I was like, ‘that’s it.’ Then everything went from there.”



The Wildcat Media Productions team also produced Superintendent Pat Devine’s monthly video blog.

“Working with Mr. Devine taught me how to direct people on camera, and it gave me the confidence to work with others who are older than me,” Emily said. “Before I took this class I thought about video production as only a hobby. But now, I might go to college for this.”

All of their work can be found at isd110.org on Waconia High School’s main page.

“It’s all teamwork. We all had to work together and count on each other. If the high school keeps offering things like this, where they bring people in from the outside to work one-on-one with students, I think they’re onto something really big,” Erick concluded.

2018 ATHENA AWARD RECIPIENT



Waconia High School coaches nominated Danielle Pioske to be the school’s third-ever recipient of the prestigious Athena Award, an honor that recognizes high academic achievement and model student citizenship in outstanding female senior

high school athletes from participating Minneapolis city, suburban, and private schools. Danielle’s MVP-earning accomplishments include the volleyball school record of 1,000 digs, the track and field school record long-jump of 18 feet 1.5 inches, and two MSHSL gold medals from the 2015 and 2016 state championship 4x200 relay teams. Along with maintaining a 4.0 GPA, Danielle contributed to the community through Peer Mentors, the Conservation Club and America Reads.

Track and field coach Christian Gilbert describes Danielle as an actual “living legend” and said her years of leadership and dedication to the program will leave behind a better team. According to Danielle,

“My success and achievements were not only a product of my hard work, but also that of many members of my coaching staffs, teammates, and family who have pushed me to be my best. I’ve grown up within many great programs in our community, and they have really shaped me into the person I am today.” Danielle has accepted a volleyball scholarship at Drake University.





WILDCAT HOCKEY PROGRAMS ENTER NEW ERA

A new head coach has been named for the Wildcat boys' hockey program, and the 2018-2019 girls' hockey season will be the first year that the team skates wearing Wildcat sweaters. Up until this point, girls Wildcat skaters played with Holy Family Catholic High School on a combined team.

GIRLS' HOCKEY



Co-Head Coach Jennifer Hempel

Hockey has always been a passion for Jen Hempel. Hempel grew up playing boys' youth hockey, Mites through two years of Bantam A, in the metro area. She played high school hockey in Hopkins. Following a remarkable

high school career, Hempel became an outstanding leader as a member of the University of Minnesota, Duluth Women's Hockey Team from 1999-2003. She is a three-time national champion as a member of the Bulldogs. In addition to many years on the ice as a player, Hempel has coached both boys' and girls' youth teams, high school hockey, two years with the Breakaway Hockey Program, and coached at the Division III level. In addition to coaching hockey, Hempel is a special education paraprofessional at Bayview Elementary.



Co-Head Coach Leah Johnson

Leah Johnson's enthusiasm for the sport of hockey has continued to flourish since her introduction to the game at a very young age. She grew up "on the ice" in Chanhassen and

earned the opportunity to play five years of varsity hockey for the Chaska/Chanhassen High School program. After a successful and enjoyable high school career, Johnson attended Gustavus Adolphus College where she studied elementary education and played four years of college hockey for the Gusties; Johnson was instrumental in the Gusties' two NCAA Frozen Four appearances. She teaches fourth grade at Bayview Elementary.

Assistant Coach Erin McNeill

Erin McNeill also grew up in Chanhassen, where she played four years of varsity hockey for the Chaska/Chanhassen High School program. After high school, she attended Concordia College in Moorhead where she played four years of college hockey with the Cobbers. After graduation, McNeill started her coaching career with the Minnetonka Youth Hockey Association and then coached junior varsity in Hopkins/St. Louis Park. She is a social worker for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Assistant Coach Colleen Stanley

Colleen Stanley loved the goalie position as a high school hockey player in Chaska. After high school, she attended St. Cloud State University and earned her bachelor's degree in special education. She has been involved with the Waconia Hockey Association as a goalie coach and has also assisted with the Chaska High School girls' hockey program. Stanley is currently in her ninth year as a special education teacher at Waconia High School.

BOYS' HOCKEY



Head Coach Andy Mair

Andy Mair has been around the game of hockey since he was a young child. He played in the Eagan hockey program and eventually made it to the state tournament. During that season,

Mair was named the Most Valuable Player of the Eagan High School team despite suffering a career-ending knee injury during state tournament competition.

He began his coaching career conducting Eagan High School's off-season programs. Mair also helped lead the St. Louis Park Peewee and Bantam teams before joining the Waconia High School coaching staff as an assistant; he is now being promoted to head coach. While coaching for the Wildcats, Mair was selected for the Minnesota Wild Coaching Excellence Award, as well as the Charlie Stryker Coaching Excellence Award, which recognizes the top boys' and girls' high school hockey coaches in the state.

2018-2019 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

AUGUST

- 22 K-12 Open House
- 27 First Day of School (Gr. 1-12)
- 29 First Day of School (Kindergarten)
- 30 Early Childhood Open House

SEPTEMBER

- 3 Labor Day (No School K-12)
- 28 Homecoming

OCTOBER

- 5 2-Hour Early Release (K-12)
- 17-19 No School (K-12)

NOVEMBER

- 2 No School (K-12)
- 21-26 No School (K-12)

DECEMBER

- 21-31 No School (K-12)

JANUARY

- 1 No School (K-12)
- 21 MLK Day No School (K-12)

FEBRUARY

- 8 No School (K-12)
- 15 2-Hour Early Release (K-12)
- 18 Presidents' Day: No School (K-12)

MARCH

- 1-8 No School (K-12)

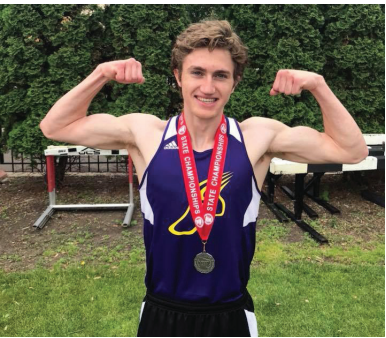
APRIL

- 19 2-Hour Early Release (K-12)
- 22 No School (K-12)

MAY

- 4 Prom
- 26 Class of 2019 Graduation
- 27 Memorial Day: No School (K-12)
- 30 Last Student Day
- 31 Last Teacher Day

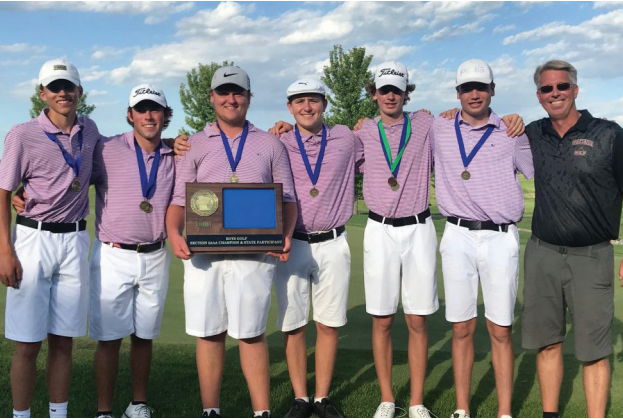
WILDCAT ATHLETES COMPETE AT STATE TOURNAMENTS



Caden Turner, senior, placed 2nd in the 110 meter hurdles and 4th in the 300 meter hurdles. His time of 14.65 in the 110 hurdles is a school record and he already held the school

record in the 300 hurdles. Other Wildcat athletes to compete at state were Danielle Pioske, Adam Ebent, Samantha Hedtke, Kaleesa Houston, Karl Welbes, Kal McDonough, and Trygve Capistrant-Kinney.

The boys' Wildcat golf team won 2AAA sections to earn a trip to the state tournament and competed at state for the first time in nearly four decades. They placed sixth in the state tournament. Congratulations on a great season!



Left to Right: Sam Berger, Connor Glynn, Joe Adams, Blake Schuler, John Fischer, Gus Leivermann, and Coach Don Skerik.

WACONIA HIGH SCHOOL NAMES ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL



ISD 110 is pleased to announce that Paul Sparby will be the next assistant principal at Waconia High School. The position opened up after Dave Kuehn retired following a 12-year career with Waconia Public

Schools. Sparby has been the principal at Glencoe-Silver Lake High School since 2010. Visit isd110.org for more on this story.