

ISD 110 SCHOOL BOARD IN FINAL STAGES OF DECIDING WHETHER TO PLACE AN OPERATING LEVY QUESTION ON NOVEMBER BALLOT

ISD 110 continues to be a great school district, focused on an education that offers all students the opportunity to explore their passions and create their success. Over the past several years, Waconia Public Schools has been doing so on a lean budget. In November 2018, voters passed an operating levy that provided the district with an additional \$525 per student. The operating levy funds moved the district from 328th in state funding out of 331 school districts, to 289th—still near the bottom. Waconia Public Schools receives \$1,400 less per student than the Minnesota average in state funding. Even so, it was believed at the time that the operating levy would cover the district’s finances for several years.

Special Education Cross-Subsidy

What occurred after the operating levy passed was unforeseen by everyone, including the Minnesota Department of Education. The way special education is funded changed in 2016, but the impact of how it would affect districts was not realized until December 2018. It’s called the Special Education Cross-Subsidy and is the amount of money that the district has to take from general education funds to pay for special education. The new formula increased Waconia Public School’s cross-subsidy 70%, from \$680 per general education student

to \$1,150 per student. Over a three-year period, this resulted in a \$6.1 million shortfall, putting the district in Statutory Operating Debt (SOD).

Superintendent Pat Devine stresses, “This is not a special education issue. This is a state funding issue. We are very proud of our special education program and our special education students.”

Budget Cuts

In response to the \$6.1 million shortfall, the district made \$1.4 million in reductions in 2019 and another \$700,000 in reductions in 2020. Most of the cuts did not directly affect the classroom, as supply budgets were reduced, professional development budgets cut, and there were also cost savings through attrition; the positions of many of those who retired were not filled. The cuts along with funds from the 2018 operating levy will provide a projected \$400,000 surplus for 2020.

The preliminary 2021 budget has an estimated \$950,000 surplus, also due to attrition. In all, Waconia Public Schools is expected to have a negative \$5 million fund balance in 2021. That’s down from the original \$6.1 million deficit in 2018.

This is all good news for budgeting and is moving the district in the right direction, but these reductions are not sustainable and

The district has three ways to balance the budget and getting out of SOD:

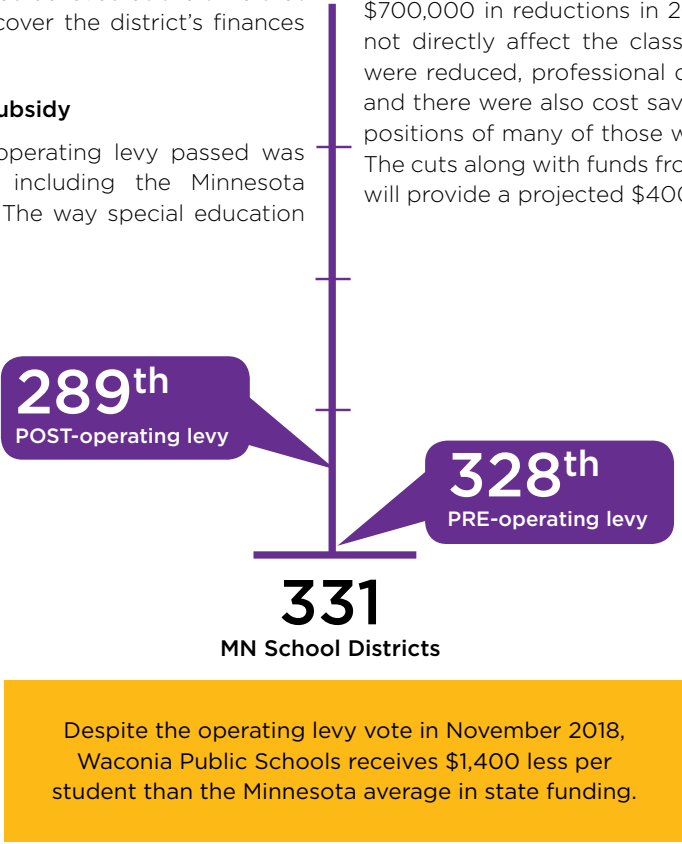
- 1) Raise revenue through an operating levy increase
- 2) Lower costs by making difficult cuts in programming and staffing
- 3) Implement a combination of both

will not get the district out of SOD in the timeline recommended by the state.

Due to the current budget situation, ISD 110 school board members will be deciding whether to put an operating levy question on the November ballot. The board knows, with the stress, financial and otherwise, that families are experiencing with the pandemic, that this is not the ideal time to place an operating levy question on the ballot. However, the board also knows that if we do not ask the voters for additional money we will be making substantial cuts until we have restored our operating debt. If a potential operating levy is voted down, then an additional \$1 million of difficult cuts would have to be made next year and continue until the district is out of SOD.

Programs that would be impacted and/or cut would be determined by the administration after levy decisions are finalized by the board later this summer.

ISD 110 School Board members know this is not what was promised to the public when we asked for your help in 2018. We share in your frustration in having to ask for more money to continue to keep our schools operating at the level we have come to expect. Having an operating levy on the ballot will allow the voters to decide our future actions as a board to remedy the deficit.



2020–2021 SCHOOL YEAR COULD GO ONE OF THREE WAYS, DEPENDING ON STATUS OF PANDEMIC



PAT DEVINE
Superintendent,
Waconia Public
Schools, ISD
ONE10

The big question this summer for everyone—parents, students, teachers, staff, and administration—is what will the fall look like when the 2020–2021 school year begins? As of now, there are actually three answers. The State of Minnesota, along with the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Department of Health, have instructed school districts across the state to prepare for three different scenarios, all dependent on what the pandemic is doing come fall.

The state will let districts know their decision in the last week of July. We understand that not knowing is stressful on everyone. In the meantime, we will be working during the month of July planning for one of the following three scenarios.

SCENARIO 1

Students come back to school as they would any other fall.

There are several requirements and recommendations that we need to follow on how to conduct school during this pandemic, such as maintaining social distancing, classroom layouts, masks, and lunch protocols. Plans that are being developed are customized to be appropriate for each grade level. If we do come back

to school, we will all need to work together to keep everyone safe.

SCENARIO 2

State officials are considering requiring schools to implement a hybrid model where students “take turns” at being in school.

There would be a combination of in-person instruction and distance learning. Details of exactly how that would look are being developed. This would be a totally different experience for everyone. I, along with numerous superintendents, have shared with the state how much stress this model would put on everyone. The plan requires hybrid lesson plans, needs to consider parent work commitments, have totally revamped bus schedules/routes, have a plan to get lunch to students who are at home for the day, ensure that every student has the proper technology, and have a totally new grading system. Probably one of the biggest challenges to figure out is how do teachers simultaneously conduct in-person instruction and provide a robust distance learning program for students who are at home. This scenario also has financial impacts.

SCENARIO 3

In this scenario, we would continue distance learning full time, just like we did in the spring.

Even though we are extremely proud of how everyone came together and rallied to make distance learning work, we also know that it was not ideal for everyone. Moving to this model for the start of the year brings with it a whole new set of considerations, including developing initial relationships with students, creation

of more permanent lesson plans, developing a remote lunch program and grading systems, daycare issues, technology distribution and maintenance, and more.

State officials have said that they will let us know their decision at the end of July regarding which scenario we will be implementing in the fall. Until then, we will work on plans throughout the month of July as if each scenario will be the one. We will be asking parents, students and staff for input so that all have a voice in plan development. As you can see, each scenario brings with it a whole different set of plans, challenges, and protocols.

Whatever plan is chosen, ISD ONE10 is committed to making the educational experience the best it can be for every student. We will be communicating our plans once the state makes a decision.

Ind. School District No. 110
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INNOVATIVE PROGRAM: ISD 110 PARTNERSHIP WITH WACONIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The partnership between Waconia Public Schools and the Waconia Chamber of Commerce is focused on showing students there are good-paying jobs in their own backyard. Waconia High School teachers explored trade jobs around the community in the program called Teachers in the Workplace Externship. Sponsored by a grant from the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce's Business Education Network, teachers get to work during the summer with local industries to better understand options for local trade jobs for students upon graduation.

“The Teachers in the Workplace Externship helps connect educators and businesses by bridging the gap between the classroom and the industry. Through this program, teachers learn the skills and industry requirements to be able to provide students with hands-on authentic learning experiences. It also allows local businesses to build up their future workforce.”

CHRISTINE FENNER
President of the Waconia Chamber of Commerce



Mike Jensen, Peter Brown, and Jay Widmer, Quality Senior Lead, Cabinetworks Group.

Math, science, and industrial technology teachers participated in the program. “We’ve been able to make connections with many different companies in our community, and the common thread we’ve seen everywhere is that they are looking for employees,” said Peter Brown, industrial technology teacher at Waconia High School. “The stigma of working in the trades is a huge hurdle that we have been trying to address and have been making some headway. Students are starting to see the great opportunities that are available to them, right here.”



From left, Gayle Farniok, Peter Brown, Dave Aeling, and Mike Jensen on site at Sackett-Waconia.

Ethan Vilmain, Waconia Class of 2016, found his career in the automotive industry. “I had an opportunity presented to me at Waconia Dodge and took advantage of it. You don’t have to go to a four-year college to find out what you want to do in this life.”

Nick Hanson of TMC Industries explained how he is always looking for local, high-quality technicians for his business. “I think people hear ‘manufacturing jobs’ and they think it’s assembly line type work. It’s much more involved than that. There’s much more ingenuity involved.”

Doug Johnson of Midwest Expanded Metal echoed Hanson’s sentiments. “We are having a hard time finding

employees to come work for us, and this program is perfect for young individuals to see what is made right here in Waconia.”

“The exciting part about this program is it really helps our staff get out into the real world. So, to have this

“When you look at the trade industry, there is a real lack of awareness of what kind of careers are possible in the trades industry. I think it’s important that our parents, kids, and teachers understand that opportunities are out there,”

PAT DEVINE
District 110 Superintendent

opportunity for our teachers to get out and see what really happens with what they are teaching in the classroom, it really helps them bring these meaningful learning experiences to the students,” said Pat Devine, superintendent of Waconia Public Schools.



TMC Industries’ Milena Souza with Anna Husman and Jodi Hunter, WHS teachers.

The grant funding is part of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce Foundation’s Business Education Network in partnership with the Waconia Chamber of Commerce. The purpose of the grant is to promote jobs that are in high demand in the community. The program also bridges the gap between the classroom and local industries.

BEHIND-THE-SCENES SUPPORT DURING DISTANCE LEARNING

There are so many reasons why distance learning was such a success in ISD 110. Parents, students, and teachers rose to the challenge to make it the best experience possible given the conditions at the time.

That success was also heavily impacted thanks to the behind-the-scenes work done by Buildings & Grounds, Café #110, Community Education, Technology Department staff, and Koch Bus Company.

Once distance learning began, Buildings & Grounds staff began their thorough sanitization of everything in every school. Now that summer is here, staff are continuing to “deep clean” the schools.

“Kids’ Company is being held at Southview Elementary and Bayview Elementary this summer, so it has been a good test run for what day-to-day cleaning could look like in the future,” said Dave Grandy, director of Buildings & Grounds. “We have also begun cleaning playground equipment at Southview and Bayview every day.”

“Our goal is to make school the best we can for the kids, and I want students and parents to feel confident we are not just meeting the requirements of the CDC but exceeding them in an effort to keep our facilities safe for everyone in the district.”

DAVE GRANDY
Director of Buildings & Grounds

Café #110 provided its first curb-side meal on March 16, and, through June, delivered 78,000 meals to district families.

Without laying off staff and by getting creative in the kitchen, Café #110 continued its mission to cook

and serve wholesome meals with local products from scratch.

“While we were providing meals on the curb, we heard kids say they miss school lunch,” said Barb Schank, director of Nutritional Services. “We would see a lot of kids in their PJs or fun costumes to come and pick up their lunch!” Schank elaborated on a silver-lining of distance learning, saying, “We had staff from all schools, unfamiliar with one another, who by the end of the first week were getting to know each other and laugh together. We are thankful to have continued to be a part of students’ lives and be able to connect with each other and with the families of the district.”

There is a meal benefit application available online for anyone who has experienced financial hardship due to COVID-19. The application and more information can be found on the website: isd110.org > Café 110



Café #110 provided 78,000 meals March 16 - June 30.

Amidst a spring of transition, Community Education continued to provide quality care for the children of essential workers.

“This spring we had about 35 to 40 kids on site every day,” said Tiffany Nelson, director of Community Education. “It was almost impossible to keep little kids apart from each other but we did our best.”

With most camps and activities canceled for the summer, Nelson and her team got creative on what to offer during the summer while still meeting government-mandated group sizes and restrictions.

“We currently have about 300 kids registered for Kids’ Company programs this summer, and we would like to continue adding more outdoor activities and programs as soon as possible,” said Nelson. “However, it takes time to update our guidelines and implement new ones given to us.”

From delivering hardware and Wi-Fi access to families across to the district to providing online troubleshooting support, the Technology Department and Koch Bus Company also played significant roles in the success of online learning.

When discussions began about closing schools, the Technology Department had no time to waste. They began planning how to distribute devices to students at home and provide access to Wi-Fi for families who needed it. Partnering with Koch Bus Company, within 24 hours of an online request, students and teachers received a device, hot spot, or charging cables to do their schoolwork.

“We worked with our Internet provider to put an external hot spot outside the high school that would allow access to people in the parking lot or football stadium,” said Jeff Jeska, director of Technology. “We also developed a remote support team to help identify and fix any hardware or software problems that came up for students and staff. Teachers especially had to learn, adapt, set up, and take the lead on integrating technology into classwork and have done a fabulous job.”

ONE10 COMMUNITY STAYS CONNECTED DURING PANDEMIC

As a way for ONE10 parents, students, teachers, and staff to stay connected during the pandemic, the district launched a weekly ONE10 Spirit campaign.

Families sent in photos and messages of encouragement of how they are staying positive and how they are helping others to do the same during these stressful times. The campaign launched with Stay Positive Week. The district then partnered with Backyard Wishes to do a compassion card campaign. Students made cards that were delivered to those living in senior care centers in the area. There was a virtual spirit week, Wildcat reads week, and Random Acts of Kindness week. The sheer number of families who participated speaks volumes about the ONE10 community! We are ONE10!



Harper, third grade, making compassion cards for seniors.



Mrs. LaTour and Greta with a neighborhood hope sign.



Chalk art on a gorgeous afternoon!



Ethan, fifth grader, Madelyn, future Wildcat, and Jackson, kindergartner, did some window art to brighten people's day when they walk past the house.



Nia, kindergartner, Samson, Waconia Preschool, and Joel, ECFE, enjoy Ms. Cheri's morning circle time with jungle animal masks.



Hadley, kindergarten, along with Briar, preschool, and Paul, future Wildcat, enjoy a Friday night movie! Staying home to keep our community healthy!



Seventh grader Nolan is spending his time baking delicious treats and cooking things for his family while home!



Summer, ninth grader, practicing clarinet during a weekly virtual music lesson.



Olivia, second grade, and Dan, kindergarten, practice static movement with their stuffed animals and Mr. Bessire.

AMARA JONES-MYERS AWARDED SCHOLAR OF DISTINCTION FOR THEATER ARTS



Amara Jones-Myers, a Waconia High School junior, was awarded the Scholar of Distinction, Meritorious Performance for Theater Arts by the Minnesota Department of Education. Though her ceremony of recognition was canceled due to the pandemic, she will receive her medal of recognition in the mail this summer.

“When I first heard that I had won, I was shocked! They only choose the best of the best,” said Amara. “My theater directors recommended the program to me, and I was the only one from Waconia to apply.”

To earn this recognition, applicants must have high academic standing, demonstrate a mastery of complex subjects, and apply their knowledge to challenging projects in leadership, mathematics, science, social studies, STEM, or theater arts.

The Theater Arts award category recognizes excellence in Minnesota's top theater students who demonstrate outstanding knowledge, skills, and creativity in theater arts. The program grants awards to students who can show extraordinary accomplishment in acting, design and technical theater, directing, or—in Amara's case—playwriting.

“When I was little, I would write little productions with my cousin and brother that we would perform for my mother,” recalls Amara. While she loves writing and directing, her favorite part of being involved in theater is being on the stage.

“Acting in front of a crowd is like therapy for me and is a way to share my emotions with others,”

AMARA JONES-MYERS
WHS Junior

Amara is planning to pursue a major or minor in theater while in college, but until then, she will continue to pursue her love of playwriting and acting.



Fifth grader, Alex played baritone for his grandmother outside her nursing home window.



WHS SPRING ACTIVITIES KEEP STUDENTS INVOLVED, IMPROVING, CONNECTED, MOVING

Despite the season cancellations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ISD 110’s athletes, musicians, and performing artists developed new ways to support one another and build personal resilience.

THEATER, BAND, AND CHOIR

The Waconia Theater Department’s traditional “Curtain Call” awards banquet took place via Zoom, during which new members were inducted into the International Thespian Society, seniors were recognized, and departing theater director Liz Smith was honored. Smith, who worked tirelessly to build Waconia Theater during her tenure, helped “the show go on,” as she worked with students to compile video-recorded scenes and monologues from what would have been the spring show, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. WHS junior Amara Jones-Myers was also named a Scholar of Distinction, Meritorious Performance for Theater Arts, awarded by the Minnesota Department of Education.

For WHS instrumental music teacher John Pohland, his focus shifted more toward supporting student well-being, as many found themselves coping with distance learning, with no real warning or training. Pohland connected with every student at least once a week via video meetings and was available as often as possible to help students with music assignments or just to talk. Through weekly playing and listening assignments, the goal was to further students’ love of music and grow their music education as much as possible.

“Probably one of the toughest parts of the spring was

To be perfectly honest, for me, I just missed making music with the students on a daily basis more than anything else. We grow to be a family through band, and not getting to share those final few months together was so difficult for everyone,”

JOHN POHLAND
WHS Instrumental Music Teacher

letting students know that we wouldn’t be having our spring concerts, which our students really look forward to, especially our seniors, and that we would not be having a 2020 season for the Waconia Marching Band,” Pohland said. “We had nearly 175 students excited for yet another summer of music and marching, and it was devastating for many of them to realize that they would not get to put together a show for the 2020 season.”

Through a unique WHS virtual choir contest that substituted for the annual Region 2AA Solo and Ensemble Contest, Waconia choir students found their voices. Fifty-five students sang, and private judges offered live feedback after each performed. Vocal music instructor Aaron Olson knows that choir settings allow separate voices to follow one another or blend in, so he’s appreciated the chance to hear individual students more and plans to continue providing some individual feedback when choir resumes.

Nick Hackman shared a link.

What are you doing when No one is watching?

WHEN NO ONE'S WATCHING
BEN LIONEL SCOTT

YOUTUBE.COM
WHEN NO ONE'S WATCHING - Powerful Motivational Video

Coaches communicate workouts and motivation with athletes virtually .

BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL

A strong coaching staff generated a great variety of options for a memorable season, according to Girls’

Softball coach Audra Lehrke. Among the activities: Zoom team-building scavenger hunts, former college softball players sharing their stories, online workouts with strength and conditioning coach Josh Anderson, and an online meeting with Division I coach Gina Fuchs, who shared favorite drills, the inside scoop on the recruiting process, and COVID’s effects on college recruits.

Seniors shared words of wisdom with younger players, and different groups communicated things they were looking forward to each week.

After a week of in-person throwing and conditioning, the Boys’ Baseball team moved to Zoom workouts with assistant coach Erik Olson. Twenty-two players were on a Zoom workout when the coaches received heartbreaking news that the season was canceled. “Some of these players I’ve known since they were 5 years old; some were in JV and had been putting in time to get bigger, stronger, and just didn’t get a chance to prove themselves,” coach Mark Grundhofer said. The team ran their water-softener salt fundraising drive recently, and it was good for the team to work together, to be together. So many of them just want to play baseball, Grundhofer said. Coach Olson has summer camps set up for 10th through 12th graders, and he may be able to work with the 10- to 15-year-old athletes yet this summer.

BOYS’ TENNIS

The new tennis courts are getting great use this summer, as Boys’ Tennis coach Jeff Bessire conducts Community Education camps across a variety of ages and abilities.

While the high school boys’ team didn’t compete, Coach Bessire shared drill ideas this spring to help team members improve.

They are getting bigger, stronger, and faster. We have planned a couple special events for our seniors to express how important they have been the last four years through the growth of Waconia Lacrosse. And I am happy to report that we have a great group of underclassmen who will be ready for the next high school season.”

JARED DEWOLF
WHS Boys’ Lacrosse Coach

Drawing from Bessire’s previous experience in Prior Lake, where he developed a youth tennis program, Bessire remains focused on building a fun, energetic program that produces well-rounded student-athletes who become leaders in school and the community.

BOYS’ AND GIRLS’ LACROSSE

Coach Elizabeth Doran ran weekly online workouts with the girls. The Boys’ Lacrosse players participated in a preseason conditioning camp at Waconia’s Crusher CrossFit, which was proving to be a great start to the team’s second high school season, according to coach Jared DeWolf.

When the season was canceled, the team continued a seven-week workout/training session online, to keep players engaged and active.

BOYS’ AND GIRLS’ GOLF

Connection and competition remained the name of the game for WHS golfers. Girls’ Golf coach Dan Benham shared weekly practice plans and said, “Our biggest goal was to make connections and get the girls to come out for golf next year.”

Early in “lock-down,” Boys’ Golf coach Don Skerik started Trick Shot Tuesday. The golfers went out in their yards and sent in videos of their trick shot—some of which were truly amazing.

This was a team that got second in State last year, and the kids were preparing—hitting balls at least twice a week in the Braemar golf dome this winter . . . and they didn’t get a chance to show their stuff,”

DON SKERIK
WHS Boys’ Golf Coach

As videos were shared through email, competition heated up, as the boys kept trying to one-up each other. But the loss of the season was difficult. With 17 or 18 golfers on the boys’ roster, about a third were seniors.

Looking forward, the Minnesota Junior Golf Association has begun offering competitive opportunities this summer.

TRACK AND FIELD

Christian J Gilbert

Hanging with some of my favorite people talking about a special group of more favorite people... coaches zoom meeting! Blessed to work with such great people who care deeply about the kids of Waconia... Waconia Track & Field is a great place to be! #BAM We truly hope that all our athletes are doing well in this crazy time and please feel free to reach out to any of us if you need anything!

Track and Field coaches participate in a Zoom team meeting.

Head Track and Field coach Christian Gilbert and his diverse team of coaches deployed all kinds of workouts through Facebook. The workouts spanned speed, strength, and stamina, and also consisted of regular athlete check-ins and inspiring, positive mental motivation.

According to Waconia Student Activities director Jill Johnson, the MSHSL summer coaching waiver period (which gives MSHSL coaches and volunteers permission to work with their students outside of the defined season) was approved to open on June 15 and will run through Aug. 7.

In regard to the fall season, we remain hopeful and optimistic that our school and activities will be open and up and running. We miss our kids!”

JILL JOHNSON
Waconia Student Activites Director

Lauren Reed

Long/Triple Jumpers: this is your workout plan for the week, too.

Plyo Ideas: Squat Jumps, Star Jumps, Box Jumps (if you can find a safe box to jump on), Air Squats, Jump Rope, 1,2,3.. POP, Bounds, Cherry Pickers)

20-30 minute runs (2-4 miles) are good for EVERYONE- even jumpers! Work in a few longer runs this week if you can.

SPRINT WORKOUT FOR THE WEEK!!

Monday- At home weightlifting & plyo's

Tuesday- 5x50-100%-
4X40-100%
3x30-100%
Walkback Recovery
10 min btwn sets

Wednesday- Chaska Invite.....oh wait. 😞😞

Hack 100's x15 outside

Sample online workout.

CELEBRATING 2020 RETIREES FROM WACONIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Since the district couldn't celebrate the accomplishments of retiring staff in person, they were honored for their years of service several different ways. Each retiree was given the opportunity to participate in a video about their career, they were honored at a virtual school board meeting, and many had a drive-by "thank you" parade.

With over 300 years of combined service, we honor this year's retirees:



Joanne Bongard
26 years



Karen Cardinal
17 years



Brenda Grams, 35 years

“The community, the families, the businesses in this town have always been so supportive and respectful of the schools. It really made this a special place to teach, and for that I'll always be grateful!”



Beth Gerritsen
29 years



Lisa Goede
34 years



Janet Malotky
9 years



Mavis Mathistad
35 years



Becky Musich
14 years



Cyndi Mayer, 31 years

“I feel really blessed that I was able to work in the same school district my entire career—not many people do that. It's always been a community that has cared for its students, its families, and its employees, so I've just felt very blessed,”



Lisa Sauer
32 years



Cindy Solheim
15 years

THANK YOU!



Cheri Parkinson, 17 years

“My favorite part of my job is working with children and families. I love to create fantastic learning environments for students to learn in.”



Angel Perez Chihuahua
13 years

ISD 110 REMAINS COMMITTED TO CULTURAL COMPETENCE

By Pat Devine, Superintendent

At ISD 110, we are focused on cultural competence and are committed to establishing an educational environment that ensures equal access and is welcoming and inclusive to all students.

Our core purpose in ISD 110 is to empower students to explore their passions and create their success by providing opportunities for academic, social, and emotional growth. We do this by adhering to our core values of respect, collaboration, inclusiveness, empathy, and resilience.

We remain committed to these ideals as we help prepare students to contribute purposefully in the world.

Four years ago, I recognized the need for diversity, equity, and cultural competence training at Waconia Public Schools. Since then, we have implemented staff development and training opportunities for our staff members. This has made a positive impact on what and how we deliver education at ISD ONE10. Having staff be aware of their own unconscious bias and having a deeper understanding of cultural competence has allowed for changes in the classroom. These changes provide for a more inclusive and equal access approach to teaching.

- We do this so that
- all have the capacity to recognize and respond to cultural commonalities and differences;
 - all feel safe, valued, and respected in their school community; and
 - all are prepared to live and work in a diverse world.
- Aware of the civil unrest that is happening throughout the country over systemic race issues, our commitment and concern is for the health and well-being of our ONE10 students.

It is our priority to ensure all students at ONE10 are valued, welcomed, and supported.

We know that cultural competency is essential for our district's employees to educate and serve students, so we have and will continue to provide professional growth opportunities in this important area.

We will continue our cultural competence work at ONE10 and, during this nationwide unrest, we have provided resources for our parents to help comfort their children through traumatic events. We want all to know that the ONE10 community is always here for support. After all the events that have happened this spring, there is no time like the present to know what it means to say, "WE ARE ONE10!"

CORRECTIONS FROM SPRING COMMUNICAT



Waconia Lakettes – Libby Kuntz should have been listed as All-Conference. We apologize for the errors.



Boys' Basketball – PJ Hayes, Connor Schwob, and Spencer Swanson should have been listed as All-Conference.

FAREWELL, 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR!



MIDDLE SCHOOL



CommunicAT



CLASS OF 2020: COVID WILL NOT DEFINE US

While COVID-19 has had a huge impact on local seniors' final year of high school, the Class of 2020 won't let it define them.

That's the view of many Waconia seniors as they approached their graduation on June 7, considerably altered by the coronavirus.

Granted, the pandemic will give them something to remember and talk about for years, but as senior Jake Colson said in a video yearbook interview, "We don't want be known as the corona class."



Although as another student joked, "We will be known as the only class to graduate without going to school for the last two and a half months."

In short, while the events around COVID-19 taught them patience, humor, and a stronger appreciation for what they have, it's not the memory graduates will carry with them after high school.

"Even though our senior year did not go as planned, we still were able to make the most out of the six months we had together," said senior Anna Edsill. "Many students were able to enjoy their last high school sports and activities, attend a lot of different events, and continue to build friendships that will last a lifetime."



For senior Michelle Lowden, the year started out well with a memorable show choir season, which included several group awards and a dream-come-true individual performer award.



"Choir and band were super fun, and we sang and played beautiful music together," she said.

Of course, there were the usual stressors like schoolwork and college considerations. Then the big one hit: the coronavirus, the closing of classrooms, and the realization that many of the traditional spring events and senior milestones would not happen.

"Obviously, this is not how we wanted to end our senior year. We missed out on a bunch of exciting things, including prom, our last sports/activities, and being able to be with teammates and friends," Anna said. "It's tough not being able to see some of our teachers ever again or even some of our classmates."



"This senior year was definitely not what I had imagined," said senior Olivia Grundhofer. "I looked forward to spring sports, class graduation, senior picnic, senior skip day, decision day, graduation parties, and lots more. Due to the pandemic, a lot of these things were taken away. I am saddened when I think about these senior traditions that we were denied and unable to celebrate together as a class."



And not getting to march at graduation has been hard for many.

"It's hard knowing that we went through 12 years of school and we will not be able to walk across the stage in front of our classmates and families, something that people look forward to throughout all of high school," Anna said.

"Not having a proper graduation was extremely disappointing and made me not as excited to graduate," Michelle said. "But my friends and family were very supportive and did everything they could to make me feel special for my final year of high school. And I would like to thank my teachers for all their cooperation and making it as easy as possible for us."

"We were all looking forward to our wonderful 'lasts' and finally graduating. Though it does not replace what we've missed, the school's actions, such as drive-through pickup and virtual graduation, have certainly helped,"

ABE STROSCHIN
WHS Graduate

"It certainly feels like my class has missed out on something special," said senior Abe Stroschein.



What seniors collectively say they will carry into the future is not to take anything for granted—even simple things like a trip to the grocery store or sitting in a classroom.

"I don't think anyone would have thought they would miss school as much as they did," Anna said. "It becomes a routine and something that a lot of people take for granted."

"I learned to never take anything for granted, especially being able to go to school," said Connor Schwob, adding that closing of classrooms provided a "time to reflect on how great high school was."

"One thing I will take away from this pandemic is to enjoy everyone's presence because you will miss them even if you don't think you will," he said.

"The hallmark takeaway here might be something about treasuring what you have while it lasts, or making the best of a bad situation," Abe said. "Though quarantine put an unfortunate stop to some other lasts, there were some interesting firsts. For example, my first drive-through cap and gown pickup, and my first time playing graduation music for my own graduation thanks to the magic of technology."

Little did we know that our school year would end in March. This is not how any of us wanted to end our high school career, but we will always be remembered as the 2020 graduation class that demonstrated perseverance and grit to conquer it all,"

OLIVIA GRUNDHOFER
WHS Graduate



"This was our time to show upcoming seniors just how fast everything goes in life," Olivia said.

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