

LEADERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

December 2021

Elementary:

Elementary Report Cards are online

We are now in the last month of 2021 and this is the end of our first trimester of school. Grades were posted on-line Thursday, December 2, 2021. This is a wonderful opportunity for parents to compliment their children for working hard at school and encourage them to persevere through the rest of the school year using their grit, perseverance, or determination. Here are some of the ways we are explaining these words at school:

- I can finish whatever I begin.
- I can stick with a project or activity for a period of time.
- I can keep trying even after I experience failure.
- I can stay committed to my goals.
- I can keep working hard even when I feel like quitting.

A Month of Coding

Our Elementary Media Centers are focusing on a month of Coding! Students who learn how to code today will strengthen their critical thinking skills, will develop a better logical and computational thinking, and will be way better than others in analytical thinking and in teamwork. Because coding isn't only about the app, software, robot or digital solution our students create and build, coding is a multidisciplinary field where students gain knowledge and tools that go way beyond the pure line of code.

Backyard Wishes

Showing compassion in our own backyard by supporting families and empowering kids. Backyard Wishes is a 501(c)3 registered non-profit, founded in 2010 by Laura Cowley. The organization is dedicated to ensuring children in the Waconia community feel a strong sense of belonging. Backyard Wishes is the answer to the effects a family's struggle can have on a child. The focus is on providing opportunities for students to participate in activities that allow them to belong to their school community or school team. Backyard Wishes entertains special requests that align with their vision/mission of inclusion and sense of belonging for all.

Requests come by way of the watchful eyes and hearts of our school district's staff. We look forward to providing extra-curricular opportunities for students in our school community!

From our schools to you:

We wish you a restful and joyful Winter Break! Happy Holidays!

**Waconia Middle School:
Parent Teacher Conferences**

We experienced lower attendance than usual at the second quarter, midterm parent-teacher conferences on Thursday, December 9th. Lower attendance may have been due to parents and guardians having access to enough information about academic progress, Covid concerns, or the many conflicting activities that families experience in the evenings. It is also uncommon for families to wait until conferences to address concerns. The lower attendance will have us revisit hosting a second quarter conference opportunity in the future and may allow us to make some adjustments in time dedicated to building teacher and family relationships. Thank you to the PTO and the families that donated items for the pre-conferences teacher meal-- it was delicious!.

Choir Concerts

Close to half of our entire student body, 442 sixth, seventh and eighth students, performed beautifully at their December choir concerts on Tuesday, December 7th. The auditorium was crowded with standing room only for both of the 6th concerts. Our music programs continue to be a source of pride in Waconia schools and I congratulate the cadre of ISD 110 music staff throughout the district for building and maintaining a program kids love being a part of. Our elective participation numbers in music programs continue to be amazing. Vocal music instructors, Mrs. Werdahl (sub for Mr. Jones) and Ms. Snorek, thanked the families for their continued support of Waconia's music and arts programs. The students did a fantastic job and again the progression of vocal skills from 6th to 8th-grade is always amazing to witness.

Principal's Connect

This week the WMS principals and counselors met with each grade level in the auditorium to kick off the next unit in the [Second Step](#) Social-Emotional Learning program that will take place during Connect classes. The 35-minute presentation reviewed definitions of bullying and harassment, ways to recognize them, how to report them and what happens when bullying and harassment reports are submitted. The students appeared genuinely engaged and accepting of the responsibility to keep their school and community safe from bullying and harassment.

Teacher of the Month

November's Teacher of the month is Mr. Kelzer. Mr. Kelzer is our 7th and 8th grade Industrial Technology teacher. He was nominated by one of his 7th-grade students Bianca Bostick. In the nomination, Bianca wrote that Mr. Kelzer makes sure everyone stays safe while using the shop's machines and that he always makes time to help students. She also shared that he makes her laugh and that when the work she finished didn't look good to her, he could always find something good about it. Both Mr. Kelzer and Bianca received a gift certificate and a candy treat from the WMS PTO.

Waconia High School & Activities:

Bodhi Perera, who is a junior at WHS, recorded a perfect score of 36 on his ACT exam! A score of 34 or higher puts you in the top 1%. A perfect score of 36 is only accomplished by .3%.

Our student council held a Winter Wonderland formal dance on Saturday, December 4th. The weather cooperated and we got about 3" of snow that evening, so it truly was a winter wonderland. We had over 800 students participate in the event. Ms. Barrie, the student council advisor, and the student council members put in a lot of work and orchestrated a great evening for our students.

The annual Yuletide Festival played to a packed crowd in the Performing Arts Center on Thursday evening (Friday evening was cancelled due to weather). The festival has become a holiday tradition for many members of our community and is a great showcase for our music program.

The Honor Roll for the first trimester is available on the High School website. You can find it under the "Guidance Tab" on the high school page. We have 932 (70%) of our students being recognized as either A or B Honor Roll students.

All of our winter activities are fired up and are full speed ahead! Congratulations to the following student-athletes that signed a national letter of intent at signing day on November 10th. These students have accepted a scholarship at a division I or division II college or university.

Congratulations to:

- Julia Bartell signing with Brigham Young University – Swimming
- Ava Stier signing with Minnesota State University – Mankato – Girls Basketball
- Audrey Swanson signing with Southwest Minnesota State University – Girls Basketball
- Ella Swanson signing with Southwest Minnesota State University – Swimming

www.waconiaathletics.com

Community Ed:

Our ECCE classes are wrapping up the fall session of classes the week of December 13. It has been great to have so many of our youngest families in the building and enjoying classes again.

On Thursday, December 9 and Friday, December 10, ECCE held a Trim the Tree special event. Families were able to create an ornament and decorate their own spruce top. It's a great event to get into the holiday spirit.

Human Resources:

The School District's Insurance Advisory Committee held its first meeting of the school year earlier this month. The Committee received a claims update and discussed the success of the

Blue Cross Blue Shield Sharecare plan by employees and their families. Sharecare encourages members to take small steps toward improving their health by getting active and earning “challenge” points that can be redeemed for rewards. More than 300 employees and their eligible family members have earned challenge points this year.

The Insurance Advisory Committee is comprised of a cross-section of employees from across the district. The purpose of the Committee is to collaboratively work together to ensure the district’s insurance benefits meet the diverse needs of all employees. Committee members learn about the often complex topic of insurance together, which allows open communication and a common goal of obtaining the best possible results. The Committee received great news earlier this year when Blue Cross Blue Shield agreed to a 0% rate cap for the 2022-2023 insurance year.

Support Services:

DECEMBER LEADERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS:

It is a very busy time for the special education assessment teams (school psychologists, assessment facilitators, speech language teachers, and others who contribute to the process). We have a lot of new referrals for students going through the evaluation process due to concerns in academics, social-emotional, behavior, communication, etc. These evaluations require significant time and attention to be done correctly. Caseloads for special education teachers and staff in all buildings started high in the fall, and the addition of new qualifying students places more strain on the support system. Despite the pressures, the special education staff continues doing a great job with students.

Next week is also Inclusive Schools Week as proclaimed by Gov. Walz. We need to take time to celebrate Waconia School District’s inclusive beliefs and all the things we do for kids. All staff play such a critical role regarding inclusive education. I am very proud of the things we do for students with disabilities in Waconia!

Teaching & Learning:

Professional Growth, Reflection, and Evaluation

On December 6 and December 7, the instructional leadership team received professional development from Julie Bettis, an instructional coach from Learning Sciences International. Julie led the team in conducting classroom observations to practice, establish consistency and common language when using the new Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model.

Southview and Waconia Middle School served as host sites, and we had the privilege of observing 6 teachers who invited us into their classrooms to share their time and talent. This experience was so valuable and served as a reminder about the amazing work our teachers do everyday. Thanks to all involved!

Student Mentorship Program

In recent months, we have experienced an uptick in new to county students enrolling in the district. We are so excited to welcome these students and families into our ONE10 community of learners. One of the ways we are supporting language acquisition is through the use of high school mentors. These volunteer mentors are students who have completed College in the Schools French or Spanish, which are capstone courses at the high school level. We'd like to recognize 4 students who have assisted us this year at Laketown and Bayview:

Kaethe Ludford - French speaking mentor
Megan Compaan - French speaking mentor
Grace Seim - Spanish speaking mentor
Cassidy Hughes - Spanish speaking mentor

Communications:

We conducted our annual weather communications audit in advance of Friday's winter storm. We inform families via email, voice and text whenever we make any district-wide changes in the school day schedule due to weather. The weather audit is for families to either opt in or opt out of any of those modes of communication. Messages were sent to families and staff who were informed how to make changes to their communication preferences if they so desired.

It's been a big week for students in Wildcat Media Productions. In an effort to continue offering authentic experiences with the goal of helping students be effective communicators regardless of what they do upon leaving Waconia High School, Janel Klein came to class to talk about her professional experiences. Janel is a freelance reporter who works mainly with ABC News, NBC News, NFL and the Weather Channel. Students were fascinated with her work (especially with how she gets to interview pretty much every big name in the NFL). She shared that people are people and she actually enjoys doing stories on 'the average person' because they are not so rehearsed on camera and they talk from the heart. Janel encouraged students to continue to keep in touch with her in the years ahead, stating, "I don't doubt I will be working with at least one of you if you choose to do this." She also watched



some of their work and provided feedback. She concluded by telling them to continue following their passion for storytelling.

Then, on Friday of this week, students attended a news conference at French Regional Park in Plymouth as part of the Twin Cities media pool. The joint news conference was held by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to discuss lake ice on Minnesota lakes. Students pulled the MPCA commissioner aside after the news conference to do a one-on-one interview. They will work on a story over the winter about ice on Lake Waconia. It was quite fun to see students flanked on either side by WCCO-TV and KSTP-TV photogs. The final product will be given to the MPCA to use on their website.



Superintendent:**Weather Related School Closure**

As we move into the winter season, it is important to remember our weather related school delay, early out and cancellation protocols. This [video](#) explains the process to make the decision. We also know that the first two weather related closures do not need to be made up so those will be true “snow days”. For the first two weather related cancellations, students and staff will not be expected to be at school with the exception of some employees who need to help at the buildings. If we need to consider a third cancellation in a school year, we would follow the Flex Learning Plan that we put in place in 2019. Now that we have all experienced Distance Learning, the Flex Learning Plan will be something all are familiar with. Here is information from the original Flex Learning Day Plan.

[Flex Learning Day information on our website](#)
[Summary of Flex Learning Day information](#)
[Teacher Resource for Flex Learning Day](#)

It's the Season for being Thankful and Caring

As we move into the Holiday Season, there is a lot to be thankful for at ONE10. Even through challenging times, we continue to deliver on the Daily Desirable Experiences due to our wonderful staff, students, parents and community. Hopefully ALL were able to have a wonderful Thanksgiving break and enjoyed some relaxation and family time. I am very thankful for my break to rejuvenate and the wonderful family time I had.

I would like to recognize and show appreciation for some of the excellence that has happened recently.

- I would like to thank the staff that presented our Social Emotional Learning & Counseling work we are doing in our school district. The following people did a fabulous job of highlighting the great programs we offer for students; emphasizing the need for this support:

ECSE Teachers: Terri Bessire and Megan Genz

Elementary Principal and Counselor: Keith Baune and Lindsay Butzer

WMS Principals: Shane Clausen and Irv Andrews

WHS Principal and Counselors: Paul Sparby, Lynette Alger and Dana Henn

- I want to acknowledge the wonderful, caring and diligent work that our high school administration and staff did to keep ALL students safe at WHS on Monday, 12/6/21, when we worked through a false threat. Administration, staff and students did an excellent job of handling the situation to ensure all were safe and communicated that school could go on as normal. We recognize that situations such as this can cause a lot of anxiety and uneasiness. We are very happy to know that we were able to keep our staff and students safe and help calm emotions where we could. All in all, it was handled very well and we are so thankful for all the wonderful work and amazing staff, students and parents at ONE10.
- I continue to be so thankful for **ALL at ONE10** for how we continue to persevere throughout the pandemic and do the best we can to keep all safe, in school and enjoying the ONE10 learning experience. THANK YOU!!

Staying Healthy during Winter Season

A message from The ONE10 Health Services Team:

As we move into the winter season, we are seeing an elevated number of absences related to illnesses. Typically our district sees an elevation in the number of absences related to illnesses during the winter season. This week we have seen an increased number of absences diagnosed with Influenza ([Influenza Fact Sheet](#)). Common symptoms of Influenza are chills, body aches, fever, headache, cough, runny or stuffy nose and sore throat. These symptoms can be similar to COVID-19 and families are encouraged to stay home if ill, contact your healthcare provider and consider being tested for both COVID-19 and Influenza. Health Services will continue to closely monitor, if you have questions please contact your child's building Health Services Office.

We are thankful that staff and families are following the recommendation of staying home if ill and seeking necessary medical care when needed. We encourage everyone to continue to protect themselves by washing hands, getting vaccinated, staying home if ill, and wearing a mask while indoors or with large groups. Be Well!

Covid-19 Updates

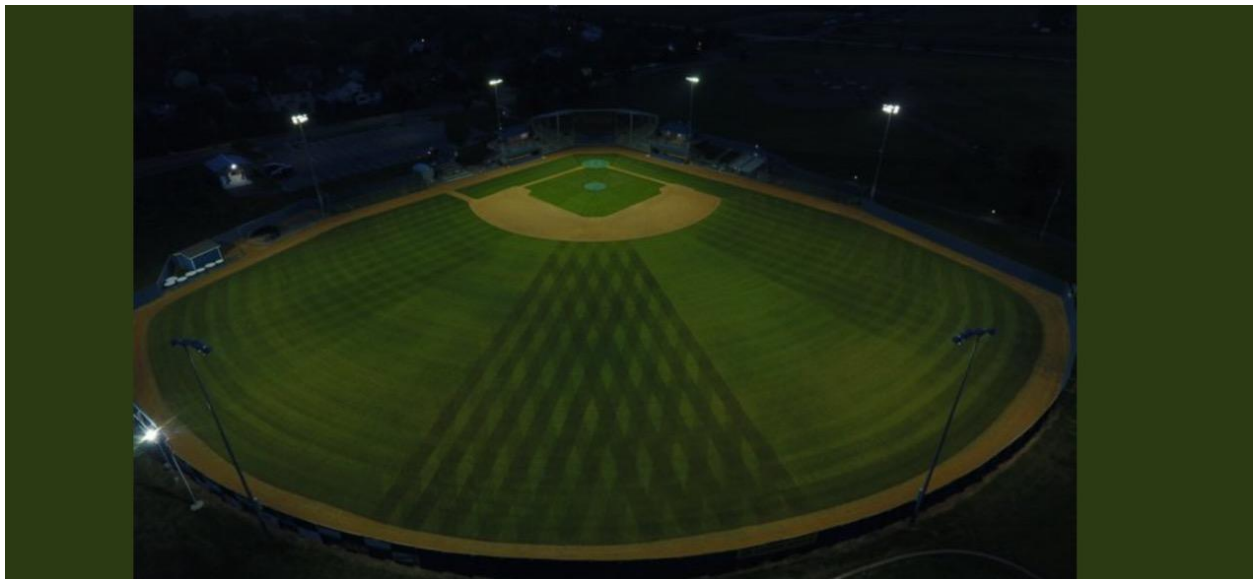
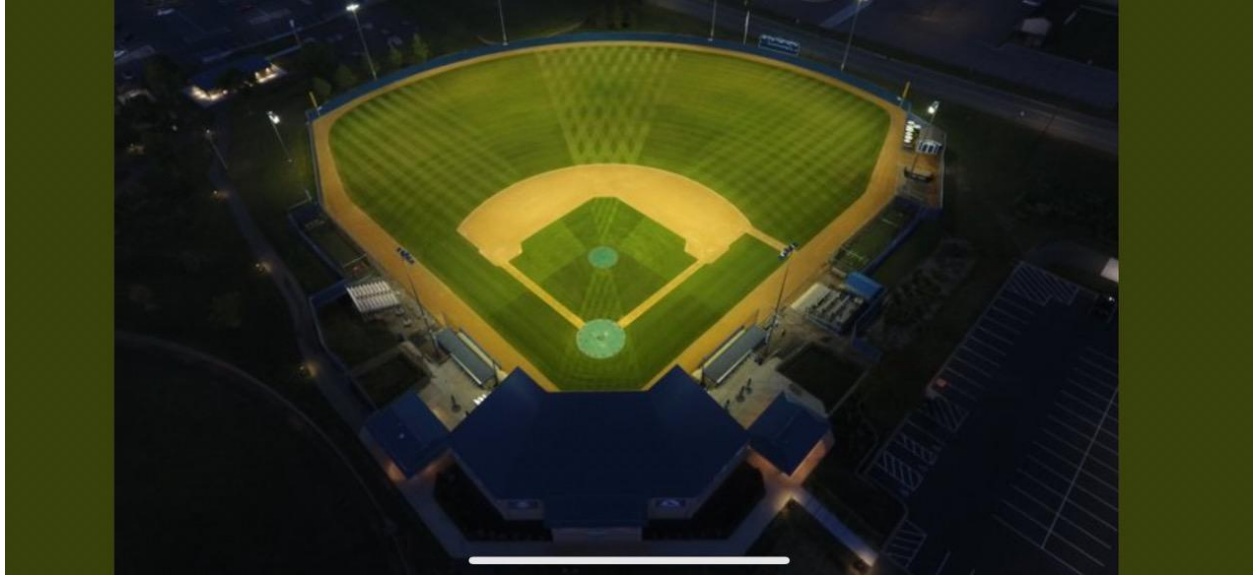
- We continue to monitor the reported positive [covid cases](#) at ONE10 and increase mitigation strategies when necessary.
- Having the vaccination opportunity for our younger students and boosters for adults is helping provide another safety layer to fight Covid. I am a firm believer that vaccinations are our best way out of this pandemic. Be well!
- We continue to offer a COVID-19 take home test for those that have symptoms and any employee who would like a N95 mask is able to get one.
- [Carver County Local Testing Options](#) are available at this link
- [State of Minnesota's Vaccine Locator Map](#) is available at this link

SEE Legislative Platform

In my role as the Schools for Equity in Education Legislative Chair, I was able to be instrumental in the development of this year's SEE Legislative Platform. We are hopeful that our state legislators will consider the items in this platform which will help ONE10. The main focus is on tax reform and relief which will benefit ISD 110 residents. Feel free to share and use [this information](#) for conversations with legislators. With the updated state budget forecast of a \$7.7 billion surplus for 2022-23, hopefully some of this state budget windfall will be targeted towards education.

Waconia Lions Baseball Field is named National Baseball Field of the Year

We are very pleased to announce that the Waconia Lions Baseball Field was named the NHSBCA Baseball Field of the Year for 2021. (NHSBCA-National High School Baseball Coaches Association.) See the [link here](#). Congratulations to Coach Mark Grundhofer and all the ONE10 Baseball Coaches and Athletes along with the amazing community baseball organization that maintains the Lions Field....especially those affiliated with the Waconia Lakers. This honor is so well deserved. Congrats!!



**Enjoy the Winter Season!!
Thanks for All You Do!
WE Are ONE10!!**