

LEADERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

March 2022

Elementary:

Time sure is going quickly as March has brought us the end of trimester 2 and we are already two weeks into the final trimester of the 2021-22 school year. Elementary report cards are available online to parents as of March 15th. We continue to be so proud of the development of our students and the partnership between our staff and families. As we enter the spring season the elementary schools are excited to host many events that showcase the amazing learning of our students and inviting parents back into our school buildings to celebrate as a whole school community. Look for a spring event list in upcoming school newsletters.

2022-2023 Planning

In the months of March/April our Elementary Faculty puts a focus on planning for the upcoming school year. It's a busy time of year for us as we reflect on our school year thus far and plan ahead for the next school year. Our staff is very conscientious about planning a learning environment that builds student success for their future. In the months to come we will prepare class lists and set school improvement goals with actions steps for continued learning.

Waconia Middle School:

On Friday, 64 students from all three grade levels at WMS attended the Young Authors Conference in Arden Hills. The conference theme was Writing with Courage, highlighting that writers should be bold and fearless with their words. Students attended smaller classes where they worked with local writers to develop and explore different types of writing. They also had the opportunity to share their stories and poems in an open microphone format. It was a fun & memorable learning experience for these young writers. Thank you to our WMS Gifted and Talented coordinator, Mrs. Tonneson, for organizing and leading this great opportunity. [Click here](#) for additional information about the Young Authors Conference.

Mrs. Simon was recently recognized as the WMS February Teacher of the Month. Mrs. Simon teaches 7th-grade Language Arts, and she was nominated by one of her 7th-grade students Sarah Thoele. In the nomination letter, Sarah wrote, "...she is always kind." She also shared that she makes class fun and highlighted the frequent opportunities she creates to work with and talk to classmates and create and act out skits. Congratulations to both Mrs. Simon and Sarah. Both of them received a Target gift certificate and a candy treat from the WMS PTO.

The cast and crew for our Spring play, Matilda, has been identified and selected. There are over 60 students that have a part and close to 40 additional students on the crew.

Waconia High School & Activities:

ExCEL WINNER: Congratulations to Junior Berit Fitzsimonds for not only being selected the 2022 WHS ExCEL Award winner, but also a 2022 Minnesota State High School League STATE ExCEL Award Winner! Berit's selection as a State ExCEL winner was recognized during the

2022 MSHSL Girls Basketball State Championships this past Saturday and promoted on local television channel 45!

Sponsored by the Minnesota State High School League, ExCEL (Excellence in Community, Education and Leadership) is a unique recognition program designed exclusively for high school juniors. Students who are active in fine arts and/or athletic activities, who show leadership qualities, and who are model citizens are eligible for the award. To be eligible for the ExCEL Award, students must: be a junior in high school; make satisfactory progress toward graduation requirements; participate in a League-sponsored fine arts and/or athletic activity; hold a leadership position in their school; work voluntarily in their community; and meet MSHSL General Eligibility Requirements.

Tri 2 Honor Rolls: Honor rolls have been posted and can be found on the high school page under the guidance office tab.

ACT/Pre-ACT Testing: On Tuesday, April 5th, we will be doing ACT testing (Juniors) and Pre-ACT testing (Freshmen/Sophomores). Seniors will not have school on April 5th.

2022-2023 Registration: We are in the process of completing our staffing/sectioning for the upcoming school year.

Community Ed:

Our Wildcat Preschool opened registration up to the public on Tuesday, March 22. There are 9 sections of preschool and as of now 6 of the 9 sections are full. This is great news to have that many sections full already.

Our spring Pre-K through 6th grade soccer season starts on April 9. Hopefully the weather will cooperate so we can be outside right away. Our numbers are back to where they were before COVID. In 2021 we had 546 kids signed up for recreation soccer. As of now, in 2022, we have 667 kids signed up. It's great to see so many kids playing soccer this spring!

Technology:

Network Security--The Tech Staff have been working on increasing end-user network security awareness and also taking steps to improve District 110 network security.

- Email Phishing Campaign--We have been working on increasing awareness of phishing emails which is the highest percentage of reasons for network breaches. We have provided staff training on how to spot phishing emails and what to do with them when it is suspected. We have also run some in-house phishing campaigns through a service that we have purchased that sends out fake phishing emails to staff and tracks the number of interactions or "failures". Our original percentage of failure was 28% and since our staff has improved to 16% and then 11%. This is really impressive. The industry average is 18%.
- We have implemented the Phish Alert Button on all of our staff email accounts that allow staff members the ability to quickly send an email they believe to be suspicious to our Tech Staff to then address it appropriately. This has been a nice additional tool.

- We also starting to implement Multi-factor authentication (MFA) for all staff Google Accounts. MFA provides a layer of security beyond a single password. MFA is being rolled out in many online services and businesses that we all interact with on a daily basis, so this isn't a complete foreign concept. We are rolling this out small groups at a time.
- Many insurance companies are requiring many of the security measures that are mentioned above in order to even get Cybersecurity Insurance. We have been working to make sure that we are compliant so that we can continue to be insurable.

Support Services:

Initial work and planning has begun on Extended School Year (ESY) services for this summer. This summer's ESY will also include some Covid Recovery services for students that qualified for additional services due to the pandemic. Most of the ESY services will take place during 2 weeks in June and 2 weeks in July.

Special Education ESPs were introduced to Volo and how it works in our schools and systems.

There are few bills at the state legislature that impact special education and will need to watch regarding their potential impact if passed.

Superintendent:

Wonderful Return from Spring Break

The return to school after spring break has been wonderful. There is almost a feel of a normal school year. We had concerns that Covid may rise in the school community after spring break, but we have seen just the opposite. Even though we still need to be careful and take precautions to keep each other safe, we are experiencing a reprieve from Covid cases and our number of positive cases are less than other illnesses. [ONE10 Covid Dashboard](#). A Big Thanks to all those that have taken extra precautions to keep Covid out of our schools. Hopefully we can finish the school year without high concerns of Covid and the pandemic becomes endemic. Wishing All at ONE10 an Enjoyable and Stress Free Spring!!

Superintendent Search

Minnesota School Boards Association, MSBA, is the search firm working with ISD 110 to help find the next superintendent to lead ISD 110. In an effort to gather stakeholder input and explain the entire process, MSBA held an online Q&A session on March 24. The informative session explains the process, answers questions and addresses some concerns that were raised about the search process. [Watch Q&A](#)

During the Q&A, someone asked if they could see the position application. Please see them below while noting that the candidates' written responses are private and cannot be publicized.

- 1. What is your approach to building a successful leadership team? Describe the specific competencies and leadership traits you would look for in administrative colleagues, and how you would engage the team in the school community.*
- 2. What was it that drew you to education and what keeps you here? How did those motivators influence an initiative you are proud of leading or participating in over the course of your career?*
- 3. Having read the leadership profile for this position, please explain why you feel you are a match for Waconia Public Schools.*

A digital brochure has been created to help market the opening to potential candidates. The brochure has great information, including a leadership profile, that stakeholders will likely find helpful. [View Digital Brochure](#)

ISD 110 school board wants to hear from you and is asking for your input on what you would like to see in the next superintendent. [Click here](#) to complete a comprehensive superintendent search survey. Your responses will be summarized by MSBA and presented to the board at the April 14 special meeting.

The timeline and entire search process are outlined on the website and the information is updated accordingly. [View Superintendent Search Information on Website](#)

If you have any questions about the search process, please contact Barb Dorn at: (507) 508-5501.

Hiring Season is Here

This is the time of year when we start to post positions to replace staff that are retiring, leaving their position or moving to a new job. We are thankful for the school board's support in giving the authority at the work session to hire the positions needed next year to continue our great programming at ONE10. We look forward to bringing in high quality candidates for our open positions. Throughout my career, I have found that the hiring season has come earlier every year. When I came out of college in the 80's, schools did not hire staff until the summer months once college was completed. The staff hiring season has moved over time to become much earlier, and now April/May is prime hiring season. I am very proud of our hiring process at ONE10 that has produced wonderful results. In almost every position hired, the stakeholder groups that work with the position are part of the interview process, including students who are sometimes the best voice at the table. We have a great track record of bringing high quality staff to ONE10 and we look forward to seeing our next class of great employees.

Legislative Season

This is the time of year to get involved and watch the legislative process in MN. Decisions that affect the budget and policies in MN schools are decided by legislators through new bills that are being developed this time of year. I have been in conversations with our legislative representatives over the past couple of weeks and I am encouraged by their passion to help our school district. There are two priority areas that are being considered that would have a huge

impact on our school district and taxpayers if passed. The first is a bipartisan tax relief bill...HF3224 /SF3554. This bill as written today would generate additional revenue of \$892,919 for ONE10 and would give a total tax relief to our taxpayers of \$2,895,121. This is a very good bill for ONE10.

The second priority is addressing the SPED cross subsidy concern that is impacting all MN schools. With a nearly \$10 Billion state surplus and knowing MN schools are underfunded by nearly \$800 million due to not fully funding SPED mandated education, now is the time to address this underfunded Cross Subsidy issue in MN. A few years ago the State of MN implemented changes to the SPED funding process which dramatically impacted the ONE10 budget causing us to go into SOD and created a huge increase in our SPED cross subsidy. Our high cross subsidy that decreases the general education funds by nearly \$1,000 per student is among one of the highest in the state due to us providing a great education for students with special needs. As I have stated during many testimonies at the state capital, "those schools that provide great education for students with disabilities should not have less funding for all students at their school". This cross subsidy concern has made it to the state capital, yet legislators are still not sure how to make it right. I will keep you posted when I hear of bills that are being created to address this. In the meantime, feel free to reach out to our state legislators and express your support for the HF3224 /SF3554 bills for tax equalization and your concern for underfunding causing a huge SPED cross subsidy. Thank you for your efforts to help ONE10.

Waconia City Partnership Continues to be Strong

Throughout this school year I have had the opportunity to meet several times with the new city administrator, Shane Fineran. Shane and the city staff have a genuine collaborative spirit of wanting to make sure we work together to provide the best we can for the Waconia and ONE10 community. We are currently looking at crisis planning, ice rink management partnership and the Safari Island shared agreement to make sure we have a supportive partnership. The newly appointed Carver County Sheriff Sergeant and the newly hired Waconia Fire Chief have both expressed their interest in getting into our schools to meet with students in order to form positive relationships, to educate and to support our ONE10 students and staff. It is great to have a wonderful partnership with the cities we serve.

Crisis Planning

Paul David, our communications director, is wrapping up staff training on the district's new crisis communications app called VOLO. Paul has been working with all employee groups over the past month and a half to roll out the technology. Having the app on the personal phones of staff is voluntary. VOLO helps bring everyone together in seconds during an emergency. Staff, administration and first responders are all working together through the app to mitigate a crisis as quickly as possible...keeping everyone as safe as possible. ISD 110 is working with Carver County Sheriff's Office, Waconia Fire and the City of Waconia along with Ridgeview Ambulance. First responders will be trained on the app in the near future. ISD 110 will start using the app to run some drills internally with the ultimate goal of hosting crisis drills in conjunction with first responders.

