



Superintendent's Message

News from the Superintendent to help inform parents, staff, and community of current school district news, events and issues.

"Working together as a school community, we must put children first . . . we all have an obligation to touch children's lives and make a difference."

Superintendent
Kurt Wachholz

November 2011

Star Powered Staff Continues to Excel for Students! *Our Star Powered Students Excel as Well!*

As I previously mentioned in my last Superintendent's Message, this year's theme for the West Allis-West Milwaukee School District centers around "Star Power." Each month we recognize staff members and students from our 17 schools who exemplify this type of leadership and/or behavior.

It is important to recognize the accomplishments of our staff who every day go above and beyond by doing their very best in ensuring that all students in the WAWM School District learn and excel. We are just completing one of the most important and challenging time periods of the entire school year. Over the past six weeks our students took the annual WKCE (Wisconsin Knowledge Concept Exam) tests. These tests are part of the Federal Government's No Child Left Behind mandates on accountability. While our School District has met the AYP standards annually thus far, the bar keeps raising each year. I would like to thank all of our staff members for doing their very best, especially this month, in helping our students succeed with their WKCE testing and the achievement that goes well beyond this point in time test.

The staff members who have been recognized with Star Power for this month are: Greg Wall and Peggy Lyons-Martens of Central High School, Deb Bukowski and Dan Dederich of Nathan Hale High School, Peter Kraker of the Alternative Learning Center, Connie Bergmann and Andrea Warner of West Milwaukee Intermediate School, Erin Beyer and Jessica Czajka of Lincoln Intermediate School, Greg Klotz and Jay Tanel of Frank Lloyd Wright Intermediate School, Shannon Dannhoff of Franklin Elementary School, Kay Caron of Hoover Elementary School, Nancy Nienhuis of Horace Mann Elementary School, Annie Nelson of Irving Elementary School, Christie Kleinowski of Jefferson Elementary School, Eden Steigerwald of Longfellow Elementary School, Sue Kramer of Madison Elementary School, Amy Nowak of Mitchell Elementary School, Nicole Blohm of Pershing Elementary School, Elizabeth Hatab of Walker Elementary School, and Patti Wilke of Wilson Elementary School. The efforts highlighted by these staff members focused on areas such as: providing student support and opportunities beyond core classroom expectations; next generation learning; leadership to improve student learning; modeling and leadership for and with their peers, department, school and community service.

The students who exemplified Star Power for this month are: Nathan Hale High School – Curt Farner and Samira Suleiman for being recognized as 2012 National Merit Scholarship Program **Commended Students**, Nicole Lang 2012 National Merit Scholarship Program semifinalist; Central High School – Jake Drajeske for organizing a Class of 2015 Mentoring Meeting on drug and alcohol awareness and helping organize Ghost Day, Martha Pena and Sadie Huven for helping organize Ghost Day; and Hoover Elementary School – Ian Hoffman for initiating a fundraiser that sent two veterans to Washington, DC. We will continue to recognize our staff members and students who display "Star Power" throughout the 2011-2012 school year on a monthly basis.

New Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Graduation Expectations *Students at the High School Level Placed in 4 Year Graduation Cohorts*

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has developed new graduation requirements for those students entering their freshman year of high school. Any student who enters high school as a freshman is now placed in a four-year cohort group and is expected to graduate in four years. The West Allis-West Milwaukee School District is offering students and parents the ability to track academic progress on-line via a program called **Graduation Planner**. This program allows parents to track their child's progress through the parent portal on Infinite Campus. Parents have already received these details through their child's high school. Parents who have not received this information are asked to please contact the High School Guidance office.

This past summer the WAWM Schools took measures to assist students in credit recovery. We offered summer school programs aimed specifically at getting students back up to their grade level in credits. This is one example of what we as a district are doing to help put children first. All parents/guardians are encouraged to get involved in their child's path to graduation and make sure their students stay on course in regard to credits needed to complete their high school education.

To stay on track for the four-year cohort, students should have earned six credits by the end of 9th grade, twelve credits by the end of 10th grade, and eighteen credits by the end of 11th grade. The total credits for graduation attainment in the West Allis-West Milwaukee School District is 23.5. Students who are credit deficient will be required to participate in credit recovery programs, most of which will occur in the summer or beyond the traditional school day. If parents have any questions regarding this program, they should contact their child's high school counselor.

High Schools 8th Grade Open House Dates Set

Central and Nathan Hale High Schools Offer Students an Opportunity to Visit

Central and Nathan Hale High Schools are providing the opportunity for any 8th grade students to preview their high school. Central High School is holding their **Incoming 9th Grader Preview Night** on Monday, December 5, 2011, beginning at 6:30pm. Nathan Hale High School will have their **Incoming 9th Grader Preview Night** on Tuesday, December 6, 2011, beginning at 6:00pm.

Staff members from each school will be available to answer any questions and discuss the academic program, students support services, achievements, and extra-curricular activities and opportunities. Students and parents/guardians will be able to meet coaches of the sports teams and advisors of the many extra-curricular clubs and organizations. For more information on these open house opportunities, please call Central High School at (414) 604-3100 or Nathan Hale High School at (414) 604-3200.

We have two outstanding Comprehensive High Schools in the West Allis-West Milwaukee School District. Each school offers a full array of core academic, advanced, and accelerated learning classes along with a very strong elective, fine and allied arts programs. In addition, West Allis Central offers specialty programs in STEM (Project Lead the Way), AVID, Electricity, and Printing.

In the West Allis-West Milwaukee School District, parents are able to choose which high school they would like their child to attend. Transportation is the responsibility of the parents (except when a student lives beyond two miles from the nearest high school; in which case, the student will be provided yellow bus transportation to the nearest WAWM high school to their residence).

It's Time to Begin Preparing Children for Outdoor Activities

Colder Weather Means a Change in Student Dress

The summer months and mild fall weather have quickly turned to winter and the cold weather it brings. It is extremely important that children dress as warm as possible prior to their daily departure for school. Even though some of the students get rides to school they will still be spending time outdoors on the playground. This is especially true before school, during the noon lunch/recess hour, and after school. When it is not raining or when there is not a great danger of significant wind chill (according to the National Weather Service wind chill index), students play or wait outdoors at our various school levels.

Here are a few tips that might be helpful on winter apparel and how your child can stay warm for the colder winter months:

- Provide a suitable winter jacket and snow pants or snow suit. (water resistant/water proof works best).
- Provide either a winter cap, head band, or ear muffs.
- Provide warm winter gloves or mittens.
- Provide insulated winter boots that have some type of waterproofing for playing in the snow.
- Provide long underwear or a sweater as options for colder days.
- Provide a change of socks, pants, and shoes if possible in the case that your child's clothes do get wet from the snow and slush that accompany winter weather.

Parents who have questions or concerns regarding building access times or how your child should dress for winter, are asked to please contact your local school principal and they will be happy to provide tips and guidance for you.

Holiday Season Offers Many Concert Opportunities

All Schools and All Grades Work Hard to Perform

It is the time of year when all of the schools in the West Allis-West Milwaukee School District begin to hold their holiday concerts. All grade levels in all of our schools hold one or more concerts which offer the students the opportunity to play a musical instrument or sing holiday songs. All of our students and music instructors spend numerous hours each fall preparing for these concerts. I would encourage anyone who enjoys holiday music to review our concert schedules on the District's website at: <http://www.wawm.k12.wi.us/Family/Community%20Resources/ConcertSchedule-2011-2012.htm>. We hope you will consider joining us to celebrate the holiday, as well as supporting our students and listening to wonderful performances, and in many schools, enjoying the festive art work as well!

The West Allis-West Milwaukee School District will have students competing in the ice sculpting competition on Greenfield Avenue beginning at 1:00pm. Also, all of our secondary bands will be participating in the annual City of West Allis Christmas Parade. These events are happening on Saturday, December 3, 2011 on Greenfield Avenue. The parade will run from State Fair Park east through downtown West Allis beginning around 4:15pm.



Happy Holidays to all of the families in the West Allis-West Milwaukee School District



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