



# Superintendent's Message

*"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

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

October 2011

## Residential Enrollment Continues to Increase

*The WAWM School District is no Longer Identified as a Declining Enrollment District According to the State DPI*

In recent years the West Allis–West Milwaukee School District had been identified as a declining enrollment district in Wisconsin by the State Department of Public Instruction. This has been due to the fact that the West Allis–West Milwaukee School District communities are land locked and there is basically no room for residential home building growth. However, this enrollment trend has begun to change over the last four years. The District decline in enrollment has actually hit a plateau and began to increase in our residential population of students. Since the early 1990's the WAWM School District has seen a gradual and steady decline in the number of residential students. In fact, many projections that were made just a few years ago seemed to indicate this trend of declining enrollment numbers would continue well into the future. However, there has been a pleasant surprise with increased residential enrollment the past four years. The WAWM Schools residential enrollment has increased by 19 students from 2007 to 2009 and by an additional 134 students from 2009 to 2010. A majority of this growth is through young families moving into our district that have children in the primary grades. The trend this year is no different as our enrollment has increased by 264 students for the 2011-2012 school year. With these increases the West Allis–West Milwaukee School District continues to be the twelfth largest public school district in the state of Wisconsin.

In addition much of this is due to the following factors. First, the West Allis–West Milwaukee School District has been able to maintain quality programming opportunities for our students despite challenging economic times for public schools. Second, our 4 year old Kindergarten age program district-wide has seen a significant increase in numbers. Also, at Horace Mann and Irving Elementary Schools we are in the second year of offering a pilot program called **Discover 4** which is a full-day 4K offering for parents who wish to have their child enrolled in an all day program. This additional enrollment increase focused on the early primary grades which is a good sign of things to come. This indicates that young families are relocating in our school communities. This is potentially related to our increased availability of homes and the City's commitment to affordable senior housing which allows seniors to stay in our community and opens the doors for young families to locate here.

The West Allis–West Milwaukee School District continues striving to offer cutting-edge education programs while meeting the needs of all of our students. The goal of the WAWM Schools is to continue being the school district of choice for our residential students as well as attracting a limited number of students and families who wish to attend a district that continues putting children first.



## Tax Levy Update

*Tax Levy Decreases*

Over the past nine months there have been many news stories in our local media regarding the reduction in public school funding and the potential impacts on school districts and the citizens of these districts throughout Wisconsin. I am proud to inform you that despite this decrease in State aid which resulted in budget shortfalls in the West Allis-West Milwaukee School District of approximately \$9.4 million we have not had any reductions to our District programs or extra co-curricular activities. Our District continues to offer a wide variety of challenging opportunities and varied curriculum in order to foster each child's discovery of their own individual learning path.

Our District has been helped by the increase in residential enrollment. In the past the WAWM School District had been labeled as a declining enrollment district. Over the past three years we have seen a steady trend toward increased residential enrollment with most of this growth coming in the lower grade levels. This is an important factor as it shows that younger families are choosing to educate their children in our District. This increase in residential enrollment leads to an increase in revenue from the state and therefore it is an advantage for our tax payers. Since 2007 when our enrollment was 8,592 students our enrollment has increased by 668 students to 9,260 this year.

Overall our 2011-2012 budget had a revenue decrease of 5.01% due to State Aid reduction as well as an expenditure decrease of 4.99% for those funds that affected the tax levy. Based on current revenue limits and state aid legislation the tax levy for the 2011-2012 school year is \$46,344,013. This represents a projected decrease of 0.19% from last year's levy. The District confirmed its levy and levy rate at the Board of Education meeting on October 24, 2011.

## Recreation & Summer Activity Review *Academic Enrichment Was Part of the Activities*

This past summer saw a new venture into credit recovery for our high school students. Any student who was credit deficient was offered the opportunity to participate in either a face-to-face or a blended on-line learning class that helped them get back to an acceptable number of credits. Elementary students also had the opportunity for academic enrichment at home through **Compass Learning** which is an on-line program designed to offer blended learning. There were also special programs offered to students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELL) students. Overall there were many opportunities for academic enrichment for the students of the West Allis-West Milwaukee School District.

The summer of 2011 was also a very productive summer for our Recreation Department as well. The summer baseball and softball programs which are open to youth ages 4 to 14 years of age had 850 kids participate. The summer adult fitness program has 410 participants while the aquatic program had 539 participants which include swim lessons and adult water exercise. We offered a new summer adventures program at Walker, Franklin Elementary Schools. This program was a 7 week program that combined academics with recreation. A total of 24,898 meals were served at 10 different sites from June 13 to August 15. These meals include breakfast, lunch and dinner. The Summer Youth Recreation Tennis Team (Ages 15-18) took 3rd place at the MTEF/USA State Competition. The WAWM School District Recreation Department was awarded the SNAG G-Ball Golf Grant from the National Park and Recreation Association which allowed us to implement a golf program for ages 5 and 6. There were 36 participants this past summer. The WAWM Recreation Department was the only recreation department in Wisconsin to be awarded this grant.

The WAWM Recreation Department currently has some on-going after school programs. These programs are a new After School Enrichment Program to help bolster WKCE testing scores at all three levels (elementary, intermediate, and high schools). They also continue to operate 14 After School SAFE and REACH extended day programs. These programs are for students in the elementary and intermediate schools and help students with extra supervised academic supports.

## Star Powered Staff Continues to Excel for Students

This year's theme for the West Allis-West Milwaukee School District centers around "Star Power" both from our staff members as well as our students. We have implemented a system that recognizes those staff members on a monthly basis in each of our 17 schools that exhibit "Star Power". During the month of September we have recognized 22 staff members throughout the District for their Star Power efforts which help students achieve.

It is important that we recognize our staff accomplishments who every day go above and beyond by doing their very best in ensuring that all students in the WAWM School District can learn and excel. Our staff has been very busy since the beginning of the school year making the start of school a positive experience for children as well as conducting MAPS testing to set the stage for learning in every classroom and preparing students for the very important State and Federal WKCE (Wisconsin Knowledge Concept Exam) that is taken during the later part of October and throughout most of November.

These staff members who have been recognized for the start of the school year represent ALL the work our entire staff has done and will continue to do to help our students learn and achieve to the best of their abilities. Please help me recognize not only these "Star Power" staff members but also ALL of our staff members who come to work every day with the best interest of our students in mind. The current honorees are: Justine Beck of Wilson, Mark Cohen of Jefferson, Margaret Wandsneider of Longfellow, Diane Lazarides of Pershing, Emily Lucas of Mitchell, Nance Hluchnik of Walker, Lynn Malloy of Madison, Cindy Stemper of Irving, Tiara Chambers of West Milwaukee, Rachel Blum of Franklin, Brian Marx and Kelly Dodge of Lincoln, Laura Westcott and Nicole Hosni of Central, Jen Crawshaw of Horace Mann, Kim McBride of the Alternative Learning Center, Sara Stanley of Hoover, Chris Morrissey and Jenny Nabor of Frank Lloyd Wright, and Jeff Clark and Misi Jovosevic of Nathan Hale. In addition we have also had "Star Power" students for the start of the school year that we would like to recognize including: Rex Anthony Key of Nathan Hale for earning his Eagle Scout Rank, the Students in Mrs. Wandsneider's 2010-11 2nd grade class at Longfellow for winning the 2011 Scholastic "Kids Are Authors" book contest, Emma Pawlak of Pershing for taking third, Alexis Dominguez-Mendoza and Dora Mercado of Longfellow for Honorable Mention in the 2011 Wisconsin Association of School Boards Write and Illustrate Your Own Picture Book Contest. We will continue to recognize staff members and students who display "Star Power" throughout the 2011-2012 school year on a monthly basis.

## Pupil Non-Discrimination Meeting Opportunity

PI 90.6 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code requires that every five years school districts provide an opportunity for students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community members to review District practices related to preventing discrimination. Accordingly, the West Allis-West Milwaukee School District will be organizing meetings for all interested parties. Please contact Dan Weast, Director of Student Service at 414-604-3016 if you are interested in participating.

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### Board of Education

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