

NEXT STEPS

Board Reviews Pathways for School Upgrades

After Neenah Joint School District voters did not approve a \$129.5 million referendum last April, the Board of Education is now reviewing pathways for future facilities upgrades.

The April referendum requested permission to borrow for a new grades 7-8 middle school, a new technical education wing at the high school, infrastructure upgrades, safety and security improvements and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) upgrades. The vote failed by a margin of 6,654-6,156.

Following the referendum, the Board sought community feedback and also conducted a survey of staff members and parents.

At a meeting on June 11, the Board reviewed five potential options that provide a long-term solution to address all grade levels. They will continue to revise the pathways in preparation for community engagement sessions on July 15, July 29 and August 15. Community members are invited to attend any or all of the

Join Us

Community engagement sessions to review pathways for facilities upgrades:

Monday, July 15 - 6 p.m.

at Spring Road Library

Monday, July 29 - 6 p.m.

at Neenah H.S. Cafeteria

Thursday, August 15 - 6 p.m.

at Neenah Public Library
Shattuck Room

Provide feedback at:

www.neenah.k12.wi.us/referendum
referendum@neenah.k12.wi.us

sessions as content will be the same at each meeting.

The pathways are intended to examine grade configurations throughout the District and determine the most efficient use of all buildings.

The feedback from the meetings will be used to develop plans that will be presented in a community survey in the fall. The results of the survey will be used to determine if the District should pursue another referendum in 2020 and, if so, what will be included.

The District continues to seek feedback on the recent referendum. Community members may visit www.neenah.k12.wi.us/referendum and enter feedback or submit questions. E-mails may also be sent to referendum@neenah.k12.wi.us. Community members are also welcome to review the pathways on the District website and submit their feedback in place of or in addition to attending the engagement sessions.

Shattuck VEX Robotics Team Competes at World Championships

A team of three Shattuck Middle School students recently became the first middle school group from Neenah to qualify for the VEX Robotics World Championship April 28-30 in Louisville, Ky.

The team (pictured, left to right) of Bailey Schmeichel, Milo Runnerstrom, and Ryan Leeser earned the invitation to the World Championship based on their fourth place finish among 86 teams at the Wisconsin State VEX IQ Robotics Tournament. They were one of five Shattuck teams coached by Brian Schalliol competing at the state meet.

Additionally, three high school teams competed at the state meet. One Neenah team reached the quarterfinal round. Team members were Will Foucault, Blake Merfeld, Tyler Vondracek, Gage Valeri and Nathan Bezier.

Robotic skills is a combination of students driving the robot on the competition field to score the most amount of points and the score of an autonomous program that they created to have the robot move the hubs on the competition field into the scoring zone without a human driver.



VEX IQ Challenge Next Level is played on a 4'x8' rectangular field. Two robots compete in the Teamwork Challenge as an alliance in 60 second-long teamwork matches, working collaboratively to score points. Teams also compete in the Robot Skills Challenge where one robot

takes the field to score as many points as possible. These matches consist of Driving Skills Matches, which are entirely driver controlled, and Programming Skills Matches, which are autonomous.

Words From the Superintendent



While the recent referendum vote was not what we hoped for, the passion in our community was more than we could have ever wished for.

Nearly 13,000 of you voted in the April election - an astounding figure in a spring election that represented almost half of the eligible voters in our District. We are truly grateful to those who took the time to attend our listening sessions, ask questions and thoroughly understand our needs.

We're also thankful to so many of you that reached out to us afterwards with feedback as to why you voted the way you did. I encourage those of you we haven't heard from to contact us through our website feedback form or through email at referendum@neenah.k12.wi.us. Feel free to message me directly as well. All of this feedback is shared directly with the Board of Education members.

One of the big questions we heard was in regard to how and why we've been spending our money the way we have. It's a complex issue, but hopefully the information on page 3 of this issue will provide more insight about state financing and our specific budgeting.

The needs in our schools haven't gone away and your feedback is critical in assisting us to find a plan that will improve the learning environment for all 7,000 of our students. With that in mind, we're already starting work on our next steps. The Board of Education reviewed five potential pathways for updating our schools at a special meeting on June 11. They will continue this discussion at another public meeting on June 20 at 6 p.m. at the administration building.

From there, we'll bring it to you, our community, to hear your thoughts on the potential plans. We will be holding community engagement sessions during the summer for you to offer thoughts in small group discussions on which of the plans you like best and why. We're looking for pros and cons to each of the options and will use the feedback to develop a community survey that will be brought forward this fall. We know summer can be tough for people to join us, so we're offering three opportunities: July 15, July 29 and August 15, all at 6 p.m. The content will be the same at each session.

Many of you know we started this process well over two years ago with a facilities study in January 2017. We've come a long way and it's been an exciting journey to get our District's school facilities up to par with others in our area. Based on the passion we saw this spring, we know this is a special community and we thank you for being part of this process.

Dr. Mary Pfeiffer,
Superintendent

Oeftgers Honored for Dedication to Neenah Special Education Programs

Neenah Joint School District educators Chad and Jenni Oeftger have been recognized by the Board of Education for their work in promoting inclusivity for all students with the "Passion for Excellence Award."

The Oeftgers both teach special education and are actively involved with the District's Special Olympics and Project Unify programs. Chad teaches at the high school and Jenni teaches at Shattuck Middle School.

The award is the most prestigious honor given by the Board and recognizes individuals or organizations who exemplify a commitment to excellence in our public schools. The Oeftgers are only the second recipients of the award over the past six years.

Their work extends outside their own schools as they organize "Spread the Word to End the Word" events at elementary schools. This past year they began a "Young Athletes" program for students with and without special needs from ages 2-7.



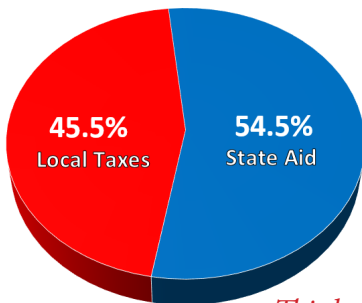
Five students from Alliance Charter School drafted a proclamation that was approved by Governor Tony Evers declaring Wisconsin's first-ever Montessori Education Week. Pictured (L to R): Sophie Stachurski, Hope Geiger, Jenny VanHandel, Evelyn Eichman, and Zaid Alhuraishi. Their teacher is Stephanie Markman.

Board of Education Members

- | | |
|--|--|
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Understanding School Finance

Since the referendum in April of 2019, the District has had a great deal of feedback and support related to the ambition of another referendum in 2020. A question that continues to arise is, "Why haven't you maintained the buildings we have and what have you done with your budget?"



NJSD Revenue Limit

The District continues to generate the maximum amount of revenue within the state revenue formula every year. The formula we are currently operating under was established when the state froze spending at 1993 levels. Because our District was fiscally responsible in 1993 and spent less compared to other districts, we were penalized. Today, the formula requires us to spend all of the money we receive in order to receive the most state aid, keep our local taxes low and, ultimately, reduce our mill rate.

Simply stated, more aid from the state means lower local property taxes.

Think of revenue limits as a pie - the limit itself is the outer crust and defines the size of the pie; there are two fillings: state aid and local taxes

Spending Priorities

In 2018-19, the District will spend over 70 percent of its budget on salaries and benefits.

Of the remaining amount, over the past nine years the District has prioritized spending on boiler and roof maintenance and computers and technology for student learning.

	July 1990- June 2010	July 2010- current	% increase
Roof Sq. Ft Replaced	724,765	419,989	45%
Avg. Per Year	36,238	52,499	
Boilers Replaced	13	11	112%
Avg. Per Year	0.65	1.38	
Computer Leases	\$1,848,231	\$5,976,107	708%
Avg. Per Year	\$92,412	\$747,013	

Spending Obligations

Retirement Benefits	Administrator (retired 2006)	Administrator (current)	Teacher (retired 2011)	Teacher (current)
Eligibility	15 years of service 55 years of age	30 years of service 57 years of age	15 years of service 55 years of age	30 years of service 57 years of age
Stipend	\$244,230	\$30,000	\$171,595	\$30,000
Funding	Unfunded	Budgeted Yearly (as approved)	Unfunded	Budgeted Yearly (as approved)
Health Insurance at Retirement	Full coverage at no cost	Access to group health insurance plan at 100% retiree cost	Full coverage at same rate as active employees	Access to group health insurance plan at 100% retiree cost
Total District Cost	\$123,483	None (besides implicit subsidy)	\$119,247	None (besides implicit subsidy)
Life Insurance	\$58,500	None	\$36,500	None
Yearly District cost until death	\$1,903	None	\$1,187	None

In 2002, a negotiation between the Board of Education and the Neenah Education Association took place related to retirement benefits, a benefit above and beyond the Wisconsin State Retirement. With no plan to pay for this benefit, the financial position of the District spiraled downward. Administrators had a significantly higher benefit than other employee groups.

In 2011, Wisconsin Act 10 allowed the District to make necessary changes and ultimately take steps to fund an obligation of over \$80 million. The chart to the left shows examples of the previous benefit and the changes made reflecting the current benefit. Due to the diligence of establishing a funding plan, the District avoided between a \$5-\$9 million yearly budget shortfall and is now in a position where all obligations will be completely funded by 2021.



Neenah High School boys basketball coach Lee Rabas celebrates after cutting down the net following the Rockets' thrilling 68-66 win over Hudson in Wisconsin Rapids that clinched a state record-tying 27th trip to the WIAA state tournament. Neenah rallied from a 16-point second half deficit and won on a bank shot with 1.7 seconds left by junior Max Klesmit, who finished with 34 points. Neenah lost to eventual champion Brookfield Central 61-47 in the state semifinals.

Girls Hockey Wins WIAA State Title; Boys Finish State Runner-Up

Neenah High School athletes captured a WIAA state championship in girls hockey and a runner-up finish in boys hockey Feb. 28-March 2 at the state tournament in Madison. It was the first state tournament appearance for each team.

The girls compete as the Fox Cities Stars co-op with athletes representing up to 15 other area schools. Neenah joined the co-op in 2009-10 as the school's newest varsity sport and had three members on this year's team in seniors Morgan Trembl and Lauren Fine and freshman Izze Murphy (*pictured, L to R*). The Stars finished 24-4 overall and won the championship in dramatic fashion with a 6-5 double overtime win over Hudson. They fell behind 3-0 in the first period and tied the game with 11.1 seconds left in regulation. The team reached the title game with a 3-1 semifinal win over Sun Prairie.

The boys team is primarily comprised of players from Neenah and Hortonville along with one player each from Menasha and Shiocton. The Rockets finished 23-4-2 and had a 13-game winning streak snapped in a 6-2 loss to University School of Milwaukee in the state championship game. The team reached the finals with a 4-1 win over Hudson and a 7-3 victory over Waukesha.



Hoover and Wilson Elementary Schools Earn "Program of Promise" Awards

Hoover and Wilson Elementary schools were among 10 schools honored statewide with "Program of Promise" awards by the Wisconsin School Counselor Association (WSCA).

The award is the highest recognition that a comprehensive school counseling program can receive from the WSCA. They were the only two schools in the Northeastern Wisconsin area to receive the award. Wilson received the award for the second straight year.

Among the initiatives, Hoover counselor Katie Kessen-Checki (*pictured below, right, with Wilson counselor Steph Levine-Rankin, left, and WSCA director Stacy Eslick*) implemented and developed a peer mediation program with hopes of decreasing the number of behavior referrals. Wilson counselor Steph Levine-Rankin has connected families to numerous resources, including the weekend "Snack Pack" program, the District HOPE program and the "Wilson Wardrobe" and holiday giving programs.



Eight NJSD employees were named the District's Employees of the Year for 2018-19. Pictured (front, L to R): Amanda Huycke, Alisia Myers, Bonnie McClone, Margaret Konz. (Back): Ken Mathewson, Ryan Hammerschmidt, Chris Rundquist, Scott Schneider. The Project Lead the Way Launch Team was named the Team of the Year.

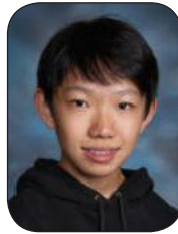
Reaching Perfection

Two Neenah High School Students Score Perfect Marks on ACT Exam

For the second straight year, two Neenah High School juniors earned perfect scores on the ACT college prep exam as Alex Lee and Quinn Parker both achieved the rare honor.

To put into perspective, according to ACT data, a total of 3,741 students nationwide recorded perfect scores in 2018. A total of 1,914,817 students took the exam, meaning 0.195 percent of test takers finished with a 36. The national average for the exam is a 20.8

The 36 composite score does not necessarily mean the student answered every question correctly. The score represents a combination of the math, reading, science and English scores. Parker was perfect in three areas and had a 35 in the reading section. Lee scored perfect in math and reading and had a 35 in English and science.



Lee (*pictured, top*) plays violin in the Touch of Class orchestra and is a member of math team, Key club and debate. He plays piano and helps tutor students in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects.

Parker (*pictured, bottom*) participates in football, powerlifting and tennis. Parker founded a mock trial team at Neenah High School and is also a member of math team and student council. He assists with a football study table and prep classes for the ACT and AP calculus exams.

Neenah also had two students with perfect scores in 2018 that will be graduating in May. Jackson Vendola plans to attend the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and David Xiao will be attending the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Neenah Automotive Students Earn Scholarships in UTI Top Tech Challenge

Neenah High School automotive students Eli Goethel and Brandon Patschke placed third in the Universal Technical Institute (UTI) Top Tech Challenge in April. The students had to complete hands-on tasks in specs, brakes and diagnostics and a 50-question written test to demonstrate their automotive knowledge. Each student was awarded a \$5,000 scholarship from UTI and about \$1,350 of Snap-On tools.

Goethel (*pictured, left*) plans to attend Fox Valley Technical College and work towards an automotive associates' degree while working at Bergstrom in Appleton. Patschke (*pictured, right*) plans to attend Michigan Technological University and major in medical engineering.



Neenah Students Participate in Disney "Cook Around the World" Event

Five Neenah High School students had the opportunity to "Cook Around the World" as they participated in Disney's seventh annual high school culinary competition on April 27 in Orlando.

The Cook Around the World event was held at EPCOT Center as students had the chance to learn alongside other competitors from about 60 schools around the country from local university professors and celebrity chef Damaris Phillips, who won season 9 of *Food Network Star*.

Neenah students who participated were Rachael Luebker, Madelynn Hendriks, Nikki Messick, Katie Berger and Brooklyn Marion. They teamed with five students from Mount Si High School in Snoqualmie, Wash. to form a 10-person team.



Each team was assigned a different cultural cuisine about a month before the culinary improv competition and then given 90 minutes to prepare two entrees with sides and decorate cupcakes for 20 people. The Neenah students were assigned an Asian dish and prepared a green chicken curry entrée and coconut shrimp with Asian slaw. Following the competition, all of the students were honored at an awards ceremony and international gala dinner at EPCOT.

Neenah High School teacher Debra Garbe led the group. The students paid their own way for the experience with fundraising throughout the school year. Neenah was one of two Wisconsin schools to participate in the invitation event along with Green Bay Preble.

Seven Individuals to be Inducted to NJSD Hall of Fame on September 28

Five prominent alumni and two longtime educators comprise the Neenah Joint School District's fifth annual Hall of Fame class in 2019. Graduates **Dr. Kerri Blobaum, Philip Johnston, Kris Kelderman, Tami (Whitlinger) Jones** and **Teri (Whitlinger) Boynton** will be inducted along with former teachers **Gary Parker** and **Jim Vine**.

Blobaum, a 1990 graduate, works as a materials scientist at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. She is a recognized expert in the field of actinide science and also led a team that developed specialized targets for high-energy-density physics experiments at the National Ignition Facility, the world's most powerful laser.

Johnston, a 1990 graduate, is an Oscar and Annie Award-winning screenwriter for Walt Disney Animation Studios. Johnston wrote the screenplay for "Zootopia," which won an Academy Award, Golden Globe and Annie Award for Best Animated Feature Film. Individually, he won an Annie Award for Best Writing in "Zootopia" and "Wreck-it-Ralph." Johnston also co-directed the recently-released "Ralph Breaks the Internet" that was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Animated Feature Film.

Kelderman, a 1987 graduate, won championships at every level of his soccer career. After leading Neenah to consecutive state titles in 1985 and 1986, Kelderman was the University of Virginia's leading scorer for its 1989 NCAA championship squad. He was a member of the first two MLS Cup championship teams with D.C. United in 1996 and 1997.

Parker has more wins than any football coach in Neenah history, posting a 108-69-2 record from 1972-91. During his tenure, the Rockets won seven conference championships and made three WIAA playoff appearances, advancing to the state semifinals in 1988. He also was the head boys track and field coach for 10 seasons, winning three conference championships.

Vine was the originator of the Neenah High School Vintage show choir. He taught music and choir to junior and senior high school students in Neenah from 1970-2000. His show choir ensembles won numerous awards in competitions throughout the country.

Boynton, a 1987 graduate, is the only four-time WIAA state doubles tennis champion in state history. She was a four-time All-American performer at Stanford University and still holds Stanford's school record for singles victories with a 101-6 career record. She won the 1990 NCAA doubles championship and teamed with her sister to reach the third round of the 1991 U.S. Open doubles draw.

Jones, a 1987 graduate, never lost a match in her high school career, finishing 105-0 as one of three players in state history to win four WIAA singles titles. Professionally, she reached at least the third round of every Grand Slam tournament, including the fourth round of the 1991 French Open when she reached her career high singles ranking of No. 41 in the world.

Join Us

Celebrate the 2019 Hall of Fame class at a luncheon on **Sat., Sept. 28 at 11:30 a.m.** at Bridgewood. Tickets go on sale August 1.



Hoover Elementary was honored as a 2018-19 Wisconsin Title I School of Recognition by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Hoover was selected as a "Beating-the-Odds School" for schools that are in the top 25 percent of high-poverty schools with above-average math and reading scores in the state. Principal Melissa Chrisman (left) and teacher Kim Friedrich (right) accepted the award from state superintendent Carolyn Stanford Taylor.

District Receives Military Employer Support Freedom Award

The Neenah Joint School District received the prestigious Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award for its support of employees serving the nation in a military reserve capacity. The award is the highest recognition given by the U.S. Government to employers for their outstanding support of employees serving in the Guard and Reserve.

The Neenah Joint School District was one of nine statewide recipients of the "Above and Beyond Award" and one of three public sector employers honored by the Wisconsin Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. Neenah High School teacher and boys cross country coach John Morgen (*pictured, with superintendent Mary Pfeiffer*), a colonel in the Army Reserve who recently completed a one-year deployment in the Middle East, nominated the School District for the award.





Neenah High School students received a surprise just before final exams with a “self-care” bag from students in the Educational Leadership class. The project was intended to remind students that they matter and to take care of themselves, especially during stressful times. Students filled 1,000 bags with stress balls, uplifting messages, snacks and other helpful donated items from community individuals and organizations.



Members of Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue shared rescue techniques with Shattuck physical education classes. Students rotated through stations of administering CPR, carrying hoses up stairways and pulling people from danger.

Additionally, Venture Academy students toured the Fox Valley Technical College Public Safety Center and police, fire and EMT simulation training.



Horace Mann band students played pieces written by world-renowned composer Larry Daehn for part of their spring concert programs. Middle school students have been learning about Mr. Daehn this year as part of their small group lesson composer rotation. The students and their teachers recently received a rare opportunity to learn from the composer himself as Mr. Daehn, who lives in New Glarus, visited their classes.



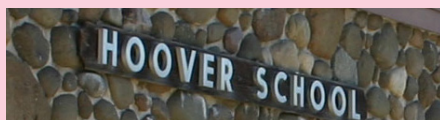
Alliance and Roosevelt students had a program called “Planet or Plastic” presented by high school student Olivia Dungan. After learning about the importance of recycling, students created their own posters to display in the gym.



Clayton students held an open house to display their projects from “Genius Hour” when they select a topic in which they are passionate and want to learn more about. Students created a wide variety of projects and families were able to browse through the unique projects from all 270 students.



Coolidge students celebrated Dr. Seuss Week in April as each class created a video of a “Seuss-ism.” Teachers at the school compiled all of the videos and ended it with a reading of the book, *There’s a Wocket in My Pocket*.



Neenah High School engineering students designed challenges for Hoover students during the school’s sixth annual STEAM Day. Students rotated among a variety of different science, technology, engineering, art and math activities and also participated in virtual reality activities.



Lakeview staff members received a welcomed surprise as they began Teacher Appreciation Week. Staff were greeted with a completely renovated lounge, bathroom space and kitchen due to the work of the school’s PTO. A number of local business people donated their services, time, money and labor.



Roosevelt fifth grade students have been researching the harmful effects of screen time and wrote an argumentative essay. The students also created posters and asked business owners in downtown Neenah if they would be willing to display the posters.



Community members shared their passions with Spring Road students at the school’s annual Career and Hobby Day. Students learned from over 25 presenters in such areas as horse care, kayaking, military, dentist, pilot, fishing and quilting. Students were able to choose three presenters that matched their interests.



Taft students participated in an “ABC Countdown” for the final 26 days of school. Each day had a different theme based on the letter. For instance, the countdown began on April 29 with an Arts and Crafts Day and continued the following day with a Book Day.



Tullar fourth grade students grew lettuce in their classroom over the winter through the use of a hydroponics garden tower. The tower was installed by the Neenah High School Arete Academy and funded through a series of grants.



Washington students read the book, *If You Give a Dog a Donut* as part of their adventure book bag during the final month of school. Students read the book with their families and then had activities to complete around the book.



Wilson Elementary students had the opportunity to learn about subjects they don’t normally cover in school with a unique event called “Wilson U.” Staff members shared a topic or hobby in which they have interest and students could choose up to three subjects in which to participate.



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Key 2019-20 Dates

September

- 3.....First Day of School
- 27.....No School - All Levels (Professional Learning Day)
- 27-28NJSD Homecoming/Hall of Fame

October

- 21/23.....Parent-Teacher Conferences, Grades 6-12, 4-8 p.m.
- 22/24.....Parent-Teacher Conferences, Gr. 4K-5, 4-8 p.m.
- 25.....Parent-Teacher Conferences, 4K, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
- 25.....Parent-Teacher Conferences, K-12, 1-4 p.m.
- 25.....Early Dismissal - All Levels (Parent-Teacher Conferences)
- 28.....No School - All Levels (Professional Learning Day)

November

- 1.....Early Dismissal, Grades K-8 (End of Quarter)
- 27-29No School - All Levels (Thanksgiving Break)

December

- 20-Jan. 1....No School - All Levels (Winter Break)

January

- 17.....Early Dismissal - All Levels (End of Semester)
- 31.....No School - All Levels (Professional Learning Day)

February

- 17.....No School - All Levels (Professional Learning Day)
- 24/26.....Parent-Teacher Conferences, Grades 6-12, 4-8 p.m.
- 25/27.....Parent-Teacher Conferences, Gr. 4K-5, 4-8 p.m.
- 28.....Parent-Teacher Conferences, 4K, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
- 28.....Parent-Teacher Conferences, K-12, 1-4 p.m.
- 28.....Early Dismissal - All Levels (Parent-Teacher Conferences)

March

- 2-3No School - All Levels
- 20.....Early Dismissal, Grades 6-8 (End of Quarter)
- 23-27No School - All Levels (Spring Break)

April

- 10-13No School - All Levels

May

- 22.....No School - All Levels (Professional Learning Day)
- 27.....NHS Graduation

June

- 3.....Last Day of School - 4K and Early Childhood
- 4.....Last Day of School (Early Dismissal) - Grades K-11



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@neenahschools



Board of Education meetings are typically held the first and third Tuesdays of every month at 6 p.m. at the District Administrative Building at 410 S. Commercial St. (Check the NJSD website for complete schedule)