

# ► Connections

Community and Staff Newsletter - January 2015



Bringing up the topic of School Board meetings rarely gets people excited, but there's plenty of reasons for enthusiasm this time of year when the Board gets to hear from staff at each of our schools around the District.

At each Board meeting from December through June, one of our District schools is invited to give the Board an update of its progress and success this year. Our administrators and staff members do a tremendous job of sharing recent activities unique to their school in addition to how they are progressing toward our District goals in math and literacy.

The Board members are able to see and learn about the creative approaches our teachers are using in the classrooms. They hear about the distinctive cultures at each school and the bonds that form within our staff, not only with each other, but also with their families.

These presentations are a win-win. They not only assist our Board members in becoming more knowledgeable about all of the happenings in our schools, but they also help our staff become more familiar with Board meetings and the individuals who serve on our Board. The presentations are also great to showcase our schools to any community members in attendance.

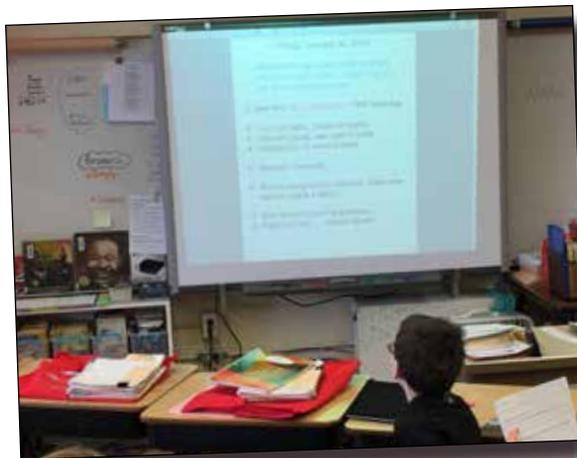
We are fortunate in Neenah to have such a dedicated staff and School Board. There are so many great things happening in our District and these presentations provide yet another way of sharing those with our colleagues.

Dr. Mary Pfeiffer  
Superintendent of Schools

## ► Smart Thinking: Neenah Schools Receive \$50,000 Technology Grant

Every elementary classroom in the Neenah Joint School District will have Smart Boards for the 2015-16 school year after the District was awarded a \$50,000 grant through the Wisconsin Technology Initiative.

With the grant, the District will purchase 39 Smart Boards. Grant recipients are required to match 10 percent of the funding, so Neenah will purchase four additional boards to cover every elementary classroom that currently doesn't have a Smart Board. Many Neenah classrooms already have the technology with most of the funding coming from Parent-Teacher Organizations.



Already a common sight in Neenah elementary classrooms, Smart Boards will be in every classroom in 2015-16 following a \$50,000 technology grant.

Smart Boards are interactive whiteboards that use touch screen detection for user input in the same way as normal PC input devices. Among many features, the boards include "digital ink," which allow users to have drawing or handwriting

capabilities with a finger or a digital pen. The boards also work with any program loaded or available on the host computer.

The grant is funded by the TOSA Foundation and seeks to enhance student academic achievement, 21st century skills, attendance and engagement through the effective use of interactive classroom technologies in K-12 schools.

Neenah High School social studies teacher Suzy Weisgerber was honored as the WIXX/Marian University Teacher of the Month. Weisgerber was nominated by her students and honored in her classroom. She received a gift package from several local sponsors. She is pictured with Principal Brian Wunderlich, Corey Carter from WIXX and Megan Liptow from Marian University.



# ► *Around the District*



*The Neenah High School Downtown campus students are diligently working toward their work option and volunteer requirements. As of the end of December, students had volunteered a total of 795 hours to numerous local organizations.*

## ► *Hoover Receives Grant to Host Oneida Nation Powwow*

Hoover Elementary School received a SEEDS grant from the Oneida Nation Arts Program and hosted a powwow in the school gymnasium on Jan. 20. The Oneida Nation Powwow Dancers demonstrated and explained the many different styles of dances performed at a powwow.

From the dignified and graceful Traditional Dancers to the vibrant and colorful Fancy Dancers, a powwow is a time to get together to sing, dance, renew old friendships and make new ones. Powwows are held in a circle, representing the continuous cycle of life. At a powwow, everyone is a participant, some dance, some sing and some watch.

The SEEDS grant program allows schools and other community groups to work with qualified Native Artists in interactive and engaging residencies, workshops and performances.



## ► *Lakeview Student Wins MLK Day Essay Contest*

Tori Rondeau, a fifth grade student at Lakeview Elementary School in Neenah, won the 2015 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Essay Contest and read her essay at a ceremony at Lawrence University on Jan. 19.



Tori, the daughter of Royal and Christine Rondeau, received a \$75 check and gift certificates courtesy of Celebrate Diversity Fox Cities, UW-Fox Valley and IndUS of the Fox Valley. She read her essay at the 24th annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration at the Lawrence University Memorial Chapel.

Students from throughout the area were asked to write essays on the following theme: "How can we fulfill a dream of equal opportunity for all in our schools, community and country?" There were four winners in categories of grades 2-3, 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12. Tori's essay was written in poetry form and was titled, "Opportunity." It is available to read on the NJSD website.

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration is an interfaith, multicultural event sponsored by Toward Community: Unity in Diversity, Lawrence University and a number of area churches, religious organizations, businesses, social service agencies and individuals.



*Neenah High School's ice fishing team placed second of 11 teams at the Kettle Moraine Lake "Tip-up Challenge" and fourth of 19 teams at the Ashland "Battle of the Bay." Andrew Belter caught a 29-inch Northern Pike in the Ashland meet to take "Big Fish" honors. The team is coached by Shattuck science teacher Chris Jones and meets Wednesdays after school.*

# ► School-by-School



Neenah High School held Winterfest Week during the first week of the second semester from Jan. 19-23. The week consisted of various dress up days as well as an intramural volleyball tournament, a movie night and a sledding party prior to the boys basketball game. The week was capped by a Winterfest dance on Saturday night.



Students have been meeting regularly in the Shattuck library as part of the "Breakfast Book Club." Most recently, the group has been reading *If a Tree Falls* and *The Future of Us*.

Also, a dodgeball tournament open to all Shattuck students and staff will be held on Feb. 6 from 3:30-7 p.m. in the OJ and North gymnasiums.



Horace Mann is participating in the Great Kindness Challenge during the week of Jan. 26-30. Coordinated by the Horace Mann Kindness Club, the nationwide event is a school week devoted to performing as many acts of kindness as possible, choosing from a checklist of 50 suggestions. Students received a checklist on Monday morning and had to turn them into the office by Friday for a chance to win coupons to local businesses.



Students in Alliance first, second and third grade classes spent a recent afternoon with adults in the Neenah Public Library's Memory Café event that helps individuals experiencing early stage dementia, mild memory loss or cognitive impairment. The students played games and activities in the "lyrics and laughter" themed event.



Clayton fourth grade students read a biography on a famous person, wrote a report and then presented at a "Wax Museum." Students dress as their chosen person and as people come by, press a "button" on their hand and the person "wakes up" and shares facts about themselves.



Third and fifth grade students were paired up to assist in proofreading and gathering ideas for the third graders' expert writing project. This project not only benefited the third graders, but also reviewed key concepts with fifth graders for their upcoming informational writing unit.



Hoover students will have the unique opportunity to experience science, technology, engineering and math firsthand on Feb. 6 with the help of Neenah High School students and engineers from Bemis. Also, Hoover held a family read-in night on Jan. 12 in conjunction with the Neenah Public Library.



Lakeview had the state's top three finishing classes in a recent Sumdog math contest. The Sumdog test is an online competition with classes around the country. Kristin Hesselthaler's fifth grade class was the top class in the state and second nationally. Tricia Retzlaff's class was 18th nationally.



Roosevelt third and fourth grade students have been focusing on biographies. During information literacy, students took the information they learned about their famous person and created a fun video to share. Students used an app called "ChatterKid" to make the videos.



About 100 Spring Road students participated in a Health Holiday Bingo program during the winter break. The bingo card displayed 25 different healthy activities to do during their time away from school. Five completed student bingo cards were randomly selected for Subway gift cards.



Taft students are participating in Jump Rope for Heart. Each student will participate and learn about being healthy during a four-day unit in February. Students can also choose to raise money for the American Heart Association. Also, Taft held a family read-in event at the Neenah Public Library on Jan. 19.



Tullar has a writing night set for Feb. 10 from 6-7:30 p.m. Students will focus on journal writing, book making, poetry writing and technology. Writing resources and activities will be available to take home. Families will be able to rotate freely among stations throughout the evening in a drop-in format.



Washington students and families took a family field trip to the Neenah Public Library on Jan. 16. It was an opportunity for families to learn about the services the library offers young children.



The Community Foundation of the Fox Valley recently donated \$390 to Wilson for a Beauty and the Beast performance by Opera for the Young that will be held at the school in April. Also, Wilson held a family night on Jan. 14 for families to meet and socialize in a fun, learning environment.

# ► *What's Happening*

## ► **Neenah High School Winter Drama Set for Feb. 5-7**

Neenah High School's Rocket Players will perform four shows of the drama "Unspoken For Time" Feb. 5-7 in Pickard Auditorium.

The show, written by Jeff Barker, was a winner of the Kennedy Center's Meritorious Achievement Award. The play recounts a young woman's healing from childhood abuse. It handles themes of sexual abuse, suicide, faith and family with sensitive tact, loving humor and razor-sharp insight.

"Unspoken for Time" is directed by Neenah High School teacher Jane Dix. Shows are set each night at 7 p.m. with an additional 2 p.m. show on Sat., Feb. 7.

Tickets are available at the door for \$10 for adults and \$8 for students and senior citizens. They are also available in advance online at [seatyoursself.biz/neenahrocketplayers](http://seatyoursself.biz/neenahrocketplayers). Online sales include a \$1 service charge per ticket.

## ► **Munoz-Ellmann Moving to Horace Mann; Krieger Begins**

Jackie Munoz-Ellmann, currently principal at Clayton Elementary School, has been named the new principal at Horace Mann Middle School.



Munoz-Ellmann, who formerly taught at Horace Mann, will begin her new duties on July 1 and replaces Mike Tauscher, who resigned to take a similar position at University School of Milwaukee.

Munoz-Ellmann is in her ninth year in the Neenah Joint School District and third year at Clayton. She was hired by the District in 2006 as a special education teacher at Shattuck Middle School and moved to Horace Mann in 2008. She taught four years at Horace Mann before taking the Clayton principal position.



In addition, Adam Krieger has begun his new role as the District's Director of Facilities/Engineer. Krieger replaced Andrew Thorson, who moved into a new role as the Director of Business Services.

Krieger previously worked 10 years as an engineer at Graef in Milwaukee. He was involved with the design of the Potawatomi Casino expansion and several Department of Transportation projects.

An Oak Creek native, Krieger attended St. Thomas More High School. He earned an engineering degree from UW-Milwaukee and an MBA from Cardinal Stritch University.

## **Upcoming Events**

- Jan. 30.....Early Dismissal - All Levels (Professional Learning Day)
- Feb. 5 .....Horace Mann Band Concert (Mann Gym), 7:30 p.m.
- 5-7 .....NHS Winter Drama (Pickard), 7 p.m. (also 2 p.m. Feb. 7)
- 6.....FVA Boys Diving Meet, 6 p.m.
- 7.....FVA Boys Swimming Meet, 10:30 a.m.
- 12.....NHS Band Concert (Pickard), 7:30 p.m.
- 13.....WIAA Boys Diving Sectional, 5:30 p.m.
- 14.....WIAA Wrestling Regional (Fieldhouse), 10 a.m.
- 14.....WIAA Boys Swimming Sectional, Noon
- 17.....NJSD Stringfest (Pickard), 7 p.m.
- 20.....Early Dismissal - All Levels (Professional Learning Day)



Neenah High School student Corey Ehrgott earned two gold medals and one silver at the state Special Olympics winter games in Wausau. He won gold in the Slalom and Giant Slalom and silver in the Super G.

## ► **Staff Input Session on New Insurance Plan Set for Feb. 2**

Neenah Joint School District staff will have an opportunity to offer feedback and ask questions regarding the District's new insurance plans at a staff input session set for Feb. 2 at 4 p.m. in the Shattuck Middle School Auditorium.

The District switched to Humana Insurance on Jan. 1. The insurance plan includes the Humana Vitality program, which offers the District and staff members the potential of lower rates in future years for achieving a point status.

## **Keep up with the latest 4K news**

The Neenah Joint School District is offering a four-year-old kindergarten program for the first time in 2015-16. Information about the program and the latest news regarding 4K will be posted at the following site: [www.neenah.k12.wi.us/academics/4Kprogram.cfm](http://www.neenah.k12.wi.us/academics/4Kprogram.cfm).