

Dialogue

Neenah Joint School District Community Newsletter

Winter 2019-20



FORWARD TOGETHER

2020 Referendum to Impact All Grade Levels

Residents of the Neenah Joint School District will be asked to consider a \$114.9 million referendum on April 7, 2020 to build a new high school.

The ballot resolution was approved at a Board of Education meeting on Dec. 17 by a unanimous vote of the nine-member board.

Along with a new high school, the ballot language also consists of safety and security upgrades throughout the District and a renovation of the existing high school to create an intermediate school for grades 5-6 and a middle school for grades 7-8.

In the plan, the 92-year-old Shattuck Middle School would be closed and Horace Mann Middle School would become an elementary school. It would also provide needed space at existing elementary schools. The annual estimated tax impact for a \$100,000 property would be \$99 per year for up to 20 years.

The new high school would be located on 225 acres the District is in the process of purchasing along Winchester Road (County II) just west of Highway 41.

District voters narrowly rejected a \$129.5 million referendum in April 2019 that would have replaced Shattuck with a grades 7-8 middle school, renovated the technology wing at the high school and made infrastructure, safety and security and Americans with Disabilities Act improvements throughout the District. The annual tax impact for last year's referendum was \$167 for a \$100,000 property. The vote failed a final count of 6,654-6,156. It was Neenah's first attempt at a facilities referendum since passing a referendum in 1994.

The plan for this year's referendum was developed out of four community engagement sessions held throughout the summer.

Continued on page 2

Referendum 2020

What's in the plan?

- Closing of 92-year-old Shattuck Middle School
- Construction of new high school along Winchester Road west of Hwy. 41
- Safety and security upgrades throughout the District
- Renovation of existing high school into grades 5-6 intermediate school and grades 7-8 middle school

What's the cost?

- Referendum amount of \$114.9 million
- Tax impact of \$99 per \$100,000 of property value for up to 20 years

Neenah Named to AP Honor Roll

The Neenah Joint School District is one of 250 school districts in the United States and Canada and one of 10 in Wisconsin to be honored by the College Board on the Advanced Placement (AP) District Honor Roll.

Schools on the honor roll have increased the number of students participating in AP exams, while also increasing or maintaining the number of students earning scores of three or higher on the exams. The honor roll is based on an examination of three years of AP data from 2017-19.

Neenah is the only District in the Fox Valley area named to the list. It is the fourth time Neenah has been honored in the 10-year history of the honor. Neenah made the list three straight years from 2012-14.

The AP program provides academically prepared students the opportunity to take rigorous college-level courses while still in high school and to earn college credit, advanced placement or both for successful performance on the AP exams. Overall, Neenah offers 23 College Board authorized classes with another pending. In 2018-19, a total of 322 Neenah students took 450 AP exams.

Osero Wins Fourth Consecutive State Girls Diving Championship



Neenah High School senior Av Osero became the fourth female diver in Wisconsin high school history to win four individual state titles.

Osero is just the second diver to achieve the feat at the Division 1 level, joining Kyle Rosenstock of Madison West from 2006-09. Only 17 athletes in the 50-year history of the state meet have won the same event all four years.

She is the seventh Neenah athlete to win four individual state titles in any sport.

Osero posted a final total of 498.15 to easily outscore runner-up Sydney Nelson of Arrowhead, who had a score of 417.95.

From the Superintendent



One of the many great things about living in the Neenah Joint School District is the passion everyone has for their schools and their desire to provide feedback and be a part of the process in making them even better.

In our last Dialogue, we asked the community to provide feedback from the previous referendum and join us at summer community engagement sessions. The response was impressive and impactful. We heard from people of all backgrounds and ages and had tremendous turnout at our engagement sessions. Over 4,000 of you responded to our community survey this fall.

What developed from that feedback is the referendum plan that is being proposed for the April 7, 2020 ballot. Closing the 92-year-old Shattuck Middle School remains a priority and the community determined the most impactful and economical way to address needs across the District is through this plan.

We're also making a commitment as a District by funding a significant portion of the project through dollars from our operating budget. This will allow us to do even more than what was proposed last year at a lower referendum amount. If you recall, last year's referendum amount was \$129.58 million, which would have been a \$167 increase per \$100,000 of property value. This year, the amount is \$114.9 million, which results in a \$99 increase per \$100,000 of property value. This non-referendum borrowing was not an option last year when the District was still spending \$4.5 million from its operating budget to complete an unfunded liability for retirement benefits that was negotiated in 2002. That obligation is now fully funded and gives the District the opportunity to prioritize those dollars into our facilities.

Last year's referendum primarily affected two grades with construction of a new middle school. In comparison, this year's referendum would significantly impact all grades. In addition to the transformation at the secondary level, elementary levels would benefit from additional space and safety and security upgrades.

Please consider joining us at an engagement session prior to voting on April 7. Special thanks to all of you who helped in developing this new plan for the future of our District. We continue to appreciate your feedback and welcome your questions about the referendum.

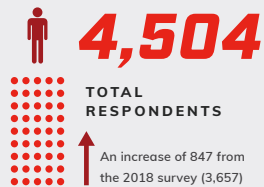
Forward Together in Neenah With Pride!
Dr. Mary Pfeiffer, Superintendent



ROADMAP TO EXCELLENCE

#NEENAHWITHPRIDE

WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE SURVEY?



THANK YOU

The Neenah Joint School District Board of Education would like to thank all respondents for taking the time to complete the community survey. Over the coming weeks, we will work to establish a plan that reflects the priorities of the taxpayers and meets the needs of our students.
THANK YOU!

THE SURVEY RESULTS ARE IN!

The Neenah Joint School District is committed to choosing a pathway to accomplish short-term and long-term upgrades to our school buildings that reflects the priorities of taxpayers and meets the needs of our students. To gather feedback on the District's proposed master plan options, a community-wide survey was mailed to all District residents. **THE RESULTS ARE IN!**

KEY TAKEAWAYS



66% of all resident respondents support the District pursuing a referendum at this time



62% of all resident respondents support Pathway #5 (new high school)



64% of all resident respondents support a referendum of up to \$125M

PATHWAY #5 INCLUDES

- Safety/security and ADA updates to all district buildings
- Building a new high school on the west side
- Repurposing the current high school into two schools to serve 5th-6th grade students (Conant section/north end) and 7th-8th grade students (Armstrong section/south end). It would also create space at all elementary schools when 5th grade is relocated to the repurposed high school.

Referendum Driven by Community Input

Continued from page 1

Nearly 300 people attended the sessions and provided feedback regarding six potential long-term master plan pathways. In a recent community survey, 66 percent of all respondents advised the District to pursue a referendum and 62 percent favored the new high school plan.

"We're thankful to everyone in our community who provided feedback since the last referendum and helped develop this new plan," Superintendent Dr. Mary Pfeiffer said. "This was truly a community effort and this referendum addresses pressing needs that will support students at every level in our District."

The scope of the overall project is larger and the tax impact is lower, in part, because of a \$47 million commitment by the District to borrow funds through its operating budget. The District had been spending \$4.5 million over the past nine years to fund a previously unfunded employee benefits obligation that was negotiated in 2002. That obligation is now fully funded and would have cost District taxpayers about \$10 million per year had it not been completed.

The District has continued to increase its annual capital maintenance budget to maintain facilities and is currently budgeting \$2.8 million annually. The capital maintenance budget in 2009-10 was \$400,000.

Learn More

- Visit us at: www.neenah.k12.wi.us/referendum
- Email questions to: referendum@neenah.k12.wi.us
- Call us at 920-751-6800
- Attend an informational meeting (dates, times and locations will be posted on the referendum website as they are determined)

Parlez-Vous

Neenah World Language Department Wins Top State Honor

The Neenah Joint School District world languages program is the 2019 recipient of the Donna Clementi Blue Ribbon Award from the Wisconsin Association for Language Teachers.

The award is presented to one school district in Wisconsin that promotes language learning through quality programs. This is the first time Neenah has received the honor.

Neenah offers courses in Spanish, French and Chinese from grades 6-12. In addition to their coursework, high school students have taken immersion trips to places such as Spain, France and Quebec. Neenah also has active student clubs in all three languages offered.

“This is a much-deserved recognition for our entire world language-



Neenah World Language teachers (L to R): Angela VerVoort, Erin Neinas, Zoe Witzeling, Dianne Calcaterra, Erin Meilhon and Brooke Hatten accept the 2019 Donna Clementi Blue Ribbon Award.

es staff,” said Neenah superintendent Dr. Mary Pfeiffer. “Exposure to different cultures has proven very beneficial to a student’s educational experience and we are proud to be honored with one of the state’s best overall programs.”

The award is based on criteria that includes percentage of students enrolled, curriculum aligned to state and national standards, highly qualified teachers, advocacy of world languages outside of the classroom and student achievement.

Other criteria considered include the percentage of students enrolled in upper-level courses, offering of less commonly taught languages, participation at multiple grade levels and substantial

contact minutes per week and school year.

Every Neenah School Earns State School Health Award

All 13 eligible Neenah Joint School District schools were among the 86 recipients of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction’s 2019 Wisconsin School Health Awards.

Neenah had the second-highest number of schools to earn the award of any district. Three Neenah schools were among 23 schools statewide recognized with the gold award as Clayton Elementary, Horace Mann Middle School and Wilson Elementary earned the honor. Horace Mann won its fifth straight gold award, while Wilson earned the gold distinction for the fourth straight year. Clayton received the gold honor for the first time.

Five schools received silver awards: Alliance Charter Elementary, Roosevelt Elementary, Shattuck Middle School, Spring Road Elementary and Tullar Elementary. Earning bronze awards were: Coolidge Elementary, Hoover Elementary, Lakeview Elementary, Neenah High School and Taft Elementary. Washington School of Early Learning was the only Neenah school that did not receive an award as it was not eligible since it does not offer a physical education curriculum.

It marked the fourth straight year that Neenah has had at least 10 schools earn the award and the first time every school has been honored. The award signifies a commitment to providing students with the knowledge and skills to make healthy decisions that will contribute to their academic success.

Five Neenah Schools Combine to Win \$10,000 NFL Hometown Grant Award

Five Neenah Joint School District schools will benefit from a \$10,000 NFL Hometown Grant Award from the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin and Wisconsin Fuel Up to Play 60. Neenah was the sole Wisconsin school district honored because of its long-term commitment to the Fuel Up to Play 60 program and history of involved student ambassadors.

Shattuck Middle School, Horace Mann Middle School, Spring Road Elementary, Tullar Elementary and Neenah High School will each receive \$2,000 to be used for sustainable healthy eating activities and improving physical activity options, such as purchasing new equipment.

Each school had representatives at an assembly with Green Bay Packers players at Shattuck (pictured, below).

Fuel Up to Play 60 is a leading national in-school health and wellness program launched by the NFL and National Dairy Council. Fuel Up to Play 60’s primary focus is to help schools meet their wellness goals. Neenah schools have been involved in the program since it began in 2009.

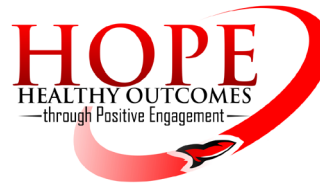




Neenah finished runner-up at the WIAA state boys soccer tournament in a 2-0 loss to Verona in the state title match. The Rockets finished the season 18-2-3 overall and reached the finals with a 4-1 semifinal win over Eau Claire Memorial. Neenah won both of its sectional matches in extra time to qualify for its 17th state tournament.

HOPE Program Offers Mental Health Services to Elementary-Age Students

Every elementary-age child in the Neenah Joint School District has the opportunity to participate in the unique HOPE screening program to help identify areas of emotional or behavioral concerns.



Parents or legal guardians of elementary students are encouraged to complete a brief questionnaire. If there is a concern, parents will be contacted by a trained professional from Samaritan Counseling to discuss helpful resources and recommendations.

Just like with physical concerns, it is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) to do an annual mental health check-up for all children. For more information about the HOPE Screening Program, visit the HOPE website at:

<https://www.neenah.k12.wi.us/academics/hope-program.cfm>

Special Olympics Basketball Event Continues to Inspire After Six Years

It had a new twist in 2019, but the competition was just as inspiring in Neenah High School's sixth annual "Phase 1" Special Olympics basketball game.

The past year marked the first "unified" game where students with and without intellectual disabilities combine on the same team. The program was inspired by the simple principle that training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding.

Annually held following the boys basketball team's "Meet the Rockets" night, the event features Special Olympics athletes participating



in a skills competition with members of the varsity basketball teams. The unified team then takes on a faculty all-star team in an exhibition game with a unified dance team consisting of girls volleyball athletes and Special Olympics athletes performing at half-time. It typically brings out a loud and sizable student cheering section.

Neenah is the only school district in the state with three schools recognized as "Unified Champion Schools" by Special Olympics for their work in promoting inclusion of all students. Neenah High School, Shattuck Middle School and Spring Road Elementary all received the honor.

Board of Education Members

- | | |
|--|--|
| Michelle Swardenski , President | mwardenski@neenah.k12.wi.us |
| Brian Epley , Vice-President | brian.epley@neenah.k12.wi.us |
| Betsy Ellenberger , Clerk | bellenberger@neenah.k12.wi.us |
| Lauri Asbury , Treasurer | lauri.asbury@neenah.k12.wi.us |
| Carol Hollar-Zwick | carol.hollarzwick@neenah.k12.wi.us |
| Stefanie Holt | stefanie.holt@neenah.k12.wi.us |
| Peter Kaul | peter.kaul@neenah.k12.wi.us |
| Scott Thompson | sthompson@neenah.k12.wi.us |
| Deborah Watry | deborah.watry@neenah.k12.wi.us |



Neenah was transformed into "Whoville" for a week in October when the high school performed five shows of "Seussical the Musical." Over 3,500 people attended the five shows. Mayor Dean Kaufert declared the name of the city changed as the cast posed in front of the sign on Winneconne Avenue.



Five prominent alumni and two former teachers were inducted into the Neenah Joint School District Hall of Fame on Sept. 28. Pictured (L to R): Gary Parker, Jim Vine, Teri (Whitlinger) Boynton, Tami (Whitlinger) Jones, Philip Johnston and Dr. Kerri Blobaum. Not pictured: Kris Kelderman.



Coolidge students battled the snow and cold weather around the neighborhood in costume on Halloween to collect canned goods from generous neighbors. The items were donated to St. Joseph's Food Pantry. Over 2,400 pounds of food was collected.

High Marks

Neenah Schools Score High on State Report Cards

Six Neenah schools significantly exceeded expectations and four others exceeded expectations in 2018-19 school report card data.

Alliance, Clayton, Lakeview, Roosevelt, Tullar and Wilson all landed in the "significantly exceeds" category for the third consecutive year. Coolidge, Horace Mann, Spring Road and Taft were all rated in the "exceeds expectations" category. Neenah High School, Shattuck and Hoover all met expectations.

The District earned an overall score of 72.9 to meet expectations and fell just one-tenth of a point short of the exceeds expectations category.

Schools are graded on four priority areas: student achievement in reading and math assessments, student growth in year-to-year

improvements, gap closing between specific student groups and on-track and postsecondary readiness. Overall District report cards also include attendance and graduation data. All Neenah schools have at least met expectations every year the report cards have been issued since 2011-12.

Each public school is graded on a 0 to 100 scale and it should be noted these scores are not a "percent correct" measurement. Alliance had Neenah's highest score at 92.1 and Tullar scored a 91.3 to both rank in the top 50 of the 2,146 schools that received scores. Alliance ranked 36th overall and 28th among elementary schools, while Tullar was 48th overall and 36th among elementary schools. Each school's report card may be accessed on its school website.

Four Students Named National Merit Scholarship Program Semifinalists

Four Neenah High School seniors have been named semifinalists for the prestigious National Merit Scholarship Program.

Alexander Lee, Isabella Mullally, Quinn Parker and Nathanael Rohlwing were honored for their performance among than 1.5 million students nationwide who entered the 2020 competition by taking the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test.

A total of 16,000 semifinalists were named nationwide, representing less than one percent of high school seniors. The three Neenah students are each vying for one of 7,600 National Merit Scholarships, which total about \$31 million. Final scholarship awards will be announced next spring.



Lee (*top, left*) scored a perfect 36 on his ACT exam last year. He plays violin in the Touch of Class orchestra and is a member of math team, Key Club and debate.

Mullally (*top, right*) participates in wind symphony and powerlifting and is the manager for the girls swimming and diving team.

Parker (*bottom, left*) scored a perfect 36 on his ACT exam last year. Parker participates in football, powerlifting, tennis, math team, mentoring and student council.

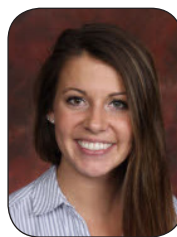
Rohlwing (*bottom, right*) is new to Neenah this school year after recently transferring from Auburn High School in Rockford, Ill.

Neenah Schools Welcome Two New Principals For 2019-20 School Year

Neenah has two new principals and two others in new positions for the 2019-20 school year.



Neenah High School teacher Deb Garbe has been selected as the American Culinary Federation - Fox Valley Chapter 2019 K-12 Educator of the Year. Garbe (pictured with ACF-Fox Valley President Brock Decker), is in her 20th year of teaching in Neenah and has grown the culinary arts program to one of the premier in the state.



Lexi Snedden (pictured, top) is the new principal at Hoover Elementary and Ashley Bath (pictured, bottom) has been named principal at Roosevelt Elementary and Alliance Charter Elementary. Both most recently worked in the Appleton Area School District.



Diane Luft moved from Roosevelt/Alliance to Spring Road Elementary and Michaela Neitzel shifted from Spring Road to Washington School of Early Learning.

Snedden was Dean of Students at Franklin Elementary in Appleton. She previously taught in Milwaukee Public Schools, spending nearly four years at Rogers Street Academy at a variety of grade levels.

Bath spent the past 10 years in Appleton, including nearly five years as the District's Response to Intervention (RTI) coordinator. She previously spent two years as a school counselor and three years as a teacher of students with autism at Huntley Elementary.

Helping Hands Craft Fair Continues to Provide Community Assistance

The Helping Hands Craft Fair had another record year as 2,868 people attended the Nov. 2 event at Neenah High School and helped raise \$19,756. Every penny of the money raised is given to families in need in our Neenah community.

The event, which completed its 12th year, features over 100 fine arts and crafts vendors displaying a wide variety of goods. The event also features a used book sale and Touch of Class orchestra performs throughout the day.

The fair is coordinated by high school Spanish teacher Shelly Aaholm. Numerous volunteers help make the event happen, along with over 100 vendors. The application for vendors interested in participating in next year's fair on Nov. 7, 2020 is available on the high school website under the "families" tab.

Taft and Hoover Students Gifted Backpacks and School Supplies

Every Taft and Hoover Elementary student received a new backpack filled with school supplies thanks to a generous donation by Neenah-based Jewelers Mutual Insurance and the Kids in Need Foundation.

Students received 20 different items, including pencils, pencil pouches, notebooks, crayons and markers. The backpacks also contained motivational hand-written notes from Jewelers Mutual employees. Schools were selected based on the percentage of the student population who take part in free or reduced lunches.

"We are so grateful to Jewelers Mutual for providing these donations to schools in their own backyard," said superintendent Dr. Mary Pfeiffer. "It's a great relief to many of our families and seeing the faces of our kids after receiving the backpacks was priceless."



Neenah High School named its soccer field in honor of Harry Kelderman, who owns the most victories in state history with a 603-143-55 career record over 35 seasons. Kelderman's teams won three state titles and 28 FVA championships. The field was dedicated during a ceremony prior to a game on Sept. 26.



Neenah High School's welding program was the recipient of a Multimatic 255 welding machine from Miller Electric, UA Local 400 and Mechanical Contractors Association. The program was chosen among 96 schools in the area for its commitment to the youth apprenticeship program and success of students in the workforce. Representatives from each organization shared the opportunities available for students while presenting the new machine that is valued at about \$3,500.



Shattuck Velocity Academy students read books to four-year-old kindergarten students at Washington Elementary. They also are creating a children's book which teaches about a particular virtue and will be using a computer program called StoryJumper where they will be able to import artwork and text to create their original books which will then be gifted to their new Washington friends.



Nationally-known author Avi spoke to students at Horace Mann in October. Avi is an award-winning children's literature and young adult author who has penned over 80 books. He answered questions from students and shared his experiences and inspirations during an all-school assembly.



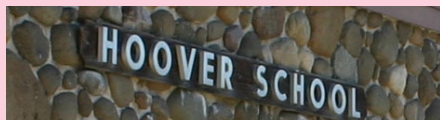
Alliance is one of several Neenah elementary schools that now has a hydroponics unit in one of its classrooms. Students have been growing lettuce in their classrooms over the past several months.



Clayton fifth graders participated in their annual "Give-a-Kid-a-Book" event for the 19th straight year. Students collected books and money that was used to buy books. On Dec. 6, they went to Barnes and Noble to purchase books and then donated them to the Neenah Public Library's campaign.



Coolidge students donned their Halloween costumes for a good cause in their "Trick-or-Treat for the Needy" event. Students battled the snow and cold weather around the neighborhood to collect canned goods from generous neighbors. Over 2,400 pounds of food was collected and donated to St. Joseph's Food Pantry.



Hoover has a group of third and fourth grade students practicing on the ukelele after school. The students made their debut by performing a collection of holiday songs they had been practicing with a short concert after school for schoolmates and staff members on Dec. 18.



Lakeview held its 12th annual "Stuff the Turkey" event just prior to Thanksgiving and families contributed over 7,000 pounds of food to help needy local families during the Thanksgiving holiday. Fourth graders in Alisia Meyers' class coordinated the event.



A group of about 60 students at Roosevelt and Alliance have been volunteering to stay after school on Wednesdays to learn sign language and help two deaf or hard-of-hearing kindergarten students at Roosevelt feel more welcome.



Spring Road won \$1,000 in School Specialty gift certificates as part of the Fox Cities Marathon School Challenge weekend of events. Spring Road had the most participants in the medium-sized school category. Winning schools are determined by the percentage of students who participate.



Taft has partnered with J.J. Keller, Inc. for the second straight year on a mentoring program. Employees from J.J. Keller are paired up as mentors for Taft students and visit their students weekly for lunch and activities.



Tullar fifth grade students created a flag for the school hallway with names of relatives of Tullar students and staff members who have served in the military. The project was completed as part of a Veterans Day tribute.



Washington and A Child's Imagination four-year-old kindergarten classes walked to their nearby fire stations. Students learned basics of fire safety and had a chance to try some of the firefighting equipment.



Wilson students created a wide variety of holiday items over the recent months and held an annual "Merry Craftmas" sale in the gym to raise money for the school.

A Passion for Excellence
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Joint School District
410 South Commercial St.
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POSTAL PATRON

Upcoming Events

January

- 17.....Early Dismissal - All Levels (End of Semester)
- 30-Feb. 2 ... Winter Drama, 7 p.m. (Jan. 30-Feb. 1), 2 p.m. (Feb. 2)
- 31.....No School - All Levels (Professional Learning Day)

February

- 3.....Band-O-Rama (Einerson Fieldhouse), 7 p.m.
- 11.....District Choir Festival (Pickard Auditorium), 7 p.m.
- 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

- 17.....Junior ACT Testing (No School - Grades 9, 10 & 12)
- 20.....Early Dismissal, Grades 6-8 (End of Quarter)
- 23-27No School - All Levels (Spring Break)

April

- 7.....Spring Election Day
- 7.....Rocket City Jazz Concert (Shattuck), 7 p.m.
- 10-13No School - All Levels
- 23-26Spring Drama, 7 p.m. (Apr. 23-25), 2 p.m. (Apr. 26)

May

- 9.....Show Choir "Finale" (Pickard Auditorium), 7:30 p.m.
- 21.....Jazz and Touch of Class Concert (Pickard), 7:30 p.m.
- 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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www.neenah.k12.wi.us

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)