



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF NEKOOSA

Quarterly Newsletter

November 2019

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Nekoosa School District Exceeds Expectations

By Terry Whitmore, District Administrator



Our state test scores for 2018-2019 exceed expectations. Our students have reason to celebrate!

Last week, the state of Wisconsin released district and school report cards for all schools and school districts in Wisconsin. While there are many indicators of school success – and most important is that every student realizes success – parents and the community have an interest in these accountability reports. We use the results as one indicator of improvement. You can find the reports and information on the categories used to compute our score on our District website at nekoosasd.net. Click on District and District & School Performance Data.

As a whole, the School District of Nekoosa exceeds expectations, and the Nekoosa High School was the highest rated high school in the SCC and in Wood County!

The District focuses its improvement efforts on high leverage instructional strategies, social and emotional learning, and equity and inclusion. Across the District, the greatest gains are in the category of closing gaps, which measures how well our students do compared to their peers across the state.

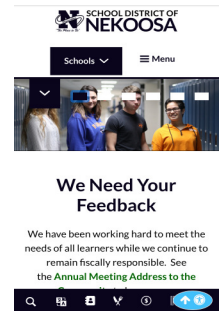
It is particularly gratifying that the district is trending upward in its report card aggregate scores. In fact, we raised our overall rating from meeting expectations to exceeding expectations for the past two years.

Yet, one area of challenge is meeting the needs of our elementary and early childhood students. We will remain diligent and focus improvement efforts to address those needs.

Our Website Is Now Mobile Friendly

We are happy to announce that our District website is now mobile friendly. We hope this makes for a better mobile experience for you.

FYI, The District News tab is where you will find upcoming community events and information.



Honoring Our Veterans

This year's Veteran's Day celebration was extra special as our guest speaker was NHS senior, Amanda Schaeffbauer. Amanda was introduced by her mom, Beth Schaeffbauer. Beth works in the middle school office and served in the military from 1997 to 2014. She was deployed to Iraq from June, 2008 to May, 2009.

Amanda plans to become an officer in either the Air Force or Army and has been given a congressional nomination for the Air Force Academy and the Army's West Point Academy. Her goal is to become a physician serving in the military.

Amanda's full speech can be found on the district website at nekoosasd.net, click on District News.

We are very proud of our students' accomplishments!



HOLIDAY COMMUNITY EDUCATION COURSES

Adult Enrichment Courses



Available to All Nekoosa School District Residents

The purpose of our Adult Enrichment Courses is to offer our district residents an opportunity to explore new interests, develop new skills, and enrich your life. These FREE courses offer an opportunity for you to get into “your” school district and work with our amazing staff! *Register today, space is limited!*

**Register by calling 715-886-8000 or
email: nekoosaschooldistrict@nekoosa.k12.wi.us**

Christmas Ornaments

December 3, 5, 10 and 12
4—5:30 PM
HES Room #116

Attend one, two or all four sessions, whatever best fits your schedule. Get into the Christmas spirit at our ornament making class! There will be a selection of different ornaments for you to choose from and all materials will be provided. What a fun way to enjoy a little Christmas calmness. Please let us know what session(s) you will be attending so we can be prepared for you!



Gingerbread Houses

Register for one of two sessions:
December 7 or
December 14
8 AM —1 PM
NHS Family and Consumer Education Room



Would you like the smell of fresh Gingerbread throughout your home this Christmas season? If so, sign up to make your own Gingerbread House. We will bake fresh gingerbread and make it into a simple house and decorate the board. The FUN comes with decorating! All gingerbread, candy, and frosting will be supplied. You will simply need to bring a wooden board to build your creation on (at least 20 inch x 20 inch in size and 1/2 inch thick). These classes are limited to 10 people. Register early!

Enjoy This Holiday Season Fully: Learn the Power of Gratitude

December 14
10 AM—Noon
NHS Library



Are you ready to fully enjoy this holiday season and move into 2020 with a new attitude? This gratitude based workshop will focus on ways to deepen thankfulness and appreciation, which can attract more circumstances to be grateful for. We will create mini gratitude journals to write, draw, collage, or doodle what we are most thankful for in our lives! Hear personal stories and see examples of how this process works. Learn how applying gratitude can bring five star service from business people and health care professionals! In addition, other ways will be shared to increase gratitude in your life, which leads to a happier state of mind. Expect to be uplifted!

Handmade Soap Workshop

December 14
9 AM—4 PM
NHS Art Room



In this class you will learn how to create your own natural artisan soap using the hot process method and a crock pot! This class is limited to 7 people. Register early!

Watercolor Painting

December 21
9 AM—4 PM
NHS Art Room



Learn to incorporate gold leaf into water color paintings. What a great time to create a gift for someone special! This class is limited to 10 people. Register early!

**Register by calling 715-886-8000 or
email: nekoosaschooldistrict@nekoosa.k12.wi.us**

Planning for a Fiscally Sustainable Future

A recent survey of residents of the School District of Nekoosa provided information about the financial factors facing the school district and sought input on possible solutions. Also, on November 21, an information session was hosted for community residents. By the time this newsletter reaches mailboxes, the survey will have closed and the Board of Education will be deliberating on its next steps, using the feedback gathered from these sources, to help guide its decision-making.

What's the problem?

The district has lost over \$1 million dollars per year in revenue since 2008. This has had a compounding effect. Despite staff and program reductions, and instituting operational efficiencies, the decline in revenue has presented a difficult situation to address all students' needs. In addition, the district has foregone athletic facilities improvements to balance the annual budget.

The solutions

The district desires to maintain current programs and services, and to address high need areas, such as technical education and helping all students be successful in their learning. The district has also identified several facility maintenance needs to support current athletic programming, and ways to improve the facilities.

The Board is considering solutions, ranging from asking taxpayers to approve a referendum to support educational staffing and support services, to supporting athletic facility improvements. The Board will need to make budget reductions if no additional funding is approved. Ultimately, the goal is to plan a fiscally sustainable and fiscally responsible future for Nekoosa Schools, the students we serve, and the school district's residents and property owners.

As Board members deliberate, they are making recommendations that will impact the district for years to come. Please stay informed in the coming months as their plan is shared with the public.

BOARD MEETING INFORMATION

Regular School Board Meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month in the District Office, 600 S Section Street at 6:30 PM. All are welcome to attend.

School Board Minutes are posted on the district website as well as in the Daily Tribune. You can watch Regular Board meetings on our district website (click on District, Meetings and Agendas). Meetings can also be viewed on Solarus channel 3 and Charter channel 985 every Thursday at 1:00 PM.

Notice of Election

(Sec. 120.06(6)(b))

Notice is hereby given to qualified electors of the School District of Nekoosa that a School Board Election will be held April 7, 2020 to fill the following Nekoosa School Board positions:

Two (2) Three-Year Term

Incumbents:

Brian Giese

Pat Resheske

Any elector desiring to be a candidate for a position on the Nekoosa School Board must file a "Sworn Declaration of Candidacy" at the Nekoosa School District Administration Office located at 600 South Section Street, Nekoosa, WI 54457, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on Monday through Friday or by mail to the address noted above prior to 5:00 p.m. on January 7, 2020.

If you have an interest or would like more information about running for the Nekoosa School Board, we have a great publication on our website called [A Guide To Become A Board Member](#). Go to nekoosasd.net, click on District, How To Become A School Board member, and click on the link: Guide to Become a Board Member. If you have questions, please feel free to call 715-886-8000.



HOLIDAY CONCERT SCHEDULE

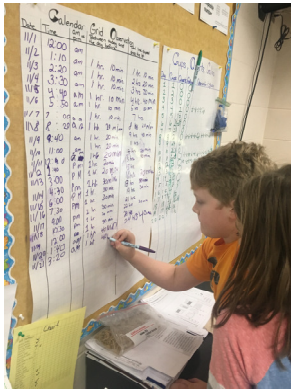
Please Join Us for Our Christmas Concerts
We guarantee you will leave with a smile

Kindergarten—Friday, December 13
3rd Grade—Monday, December 16
2nd Grade—Tuesday, December 17
1st Grade—Thursday, December 19
Concerts begin at 2:30 PM

December 16
NHS Band/Choir Concert—7 PM
Nekoosa High School Upper Gym

December 17
AMS 7-8 Band and 6-8 Choir Concert—7 PM
Nekoosa High School Auditorium

AMS Math Phases in Change



Math instruction in our elementary grades is changing, and our fourth and fifth grade teachers are doing the hard work of helping students grow.

Number Corner

Mitch Fischer, fifth grade math teacher said, "Number Corner allows students to discover new strategies to solve problems in dynamic ways. It gives the students the opportunity to teach each other these strategies and to learn from their peers."

Mr. Fischer spends about 20 minutes a day on Number Corner with each group of students. Number Corner has five different workouts with students--calendar grid, problem streams, calendar collector, computational fluency and solving problems--that use game and puzzle type activities to review math concepts students have already learned. This helps students to be ready for new math concepts that build on this review, and have fun in the process.

Bridges

In fourth grade, Number Corner is being taught in addition to a new math program called Bridges. Bridges helps students use math academic language, describe concepts in their own words, and find multiple solutions to problems. Students make sense of math both through direct instruction from the teacher as well as sharing with each other which approaches work best for them. "Students have been gaining a strong understanding through number corner," said fourth grade teacher, Heidi Hartman. "It is their favorite part of math each day."

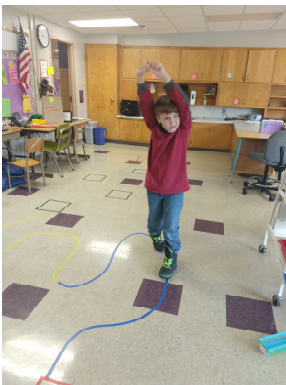
Next year the fifth grade teachers will teach Bridges as well. By doing a rolling implementation we are able to give more support for teachers during their first year of teaching Bridges. If you have any questions about elementary math at AMS, please contact Mrs. Hartman in fourth grade, Mr. Fischer in fifth grade or Mr. Black.



Students Learn to Self-Regulate in a Health Way

At Humke Elementary, we have been doing work to identify and assist students who have some sensory needs. One way we are working to meet this need is to have Sensory Obstacle Course. To teach us more about these, we interviewed the Occupational Therapist, Kari Torhorst, who has worked in collaboration with our Humke Special Education Team (Sarah Z., Sarah, J, Natasha M, and Wanda S.).

For those who are not aware, what are Sensory Obstacle Courses?



It is a journey in getting the brain and body ready to work. Students work through stations that meet a variety of needs to get their body refocused and ready to learn.

When going through the obstacle course, you will notice students completing core, deep pressure, vestibular, fine motor, and relaxation activities. Some of the student activities you may see are yoga poses, cutting activities, walking on tippy toes, and breathing exercises.

By completing the obstacle course, what skills are students gaining?



Students are learning to recognize when their body is "on track." It allows them to learn how to self-monitor and recognize that their body is ready to learn.

It also allows them to learn how to transition from one activity to the next. Because the obstacle is visual, it allows them to see a clear start and end point.

What benefits are staff noticing since the implementation of these courses?

Students are transitioning better, they are able to stay in class for longer periods of time, and having less outbursts.

What is the reaction of students since the implementation of Sensory Obstacle Courses?

Students crave this activity and they do not abuse the time. Students view it almost as a job. They come in, start the course, and at the end they know they go back to class and continue with their classroom work.

NHS Students Feel Prepared For Their Future

By Keith Johnson, Principal

The Nekoosa High School staff does a great job of offering students experiences that open their minds to what is possible in their future. NHS Principal, Keith Johnson, recently asked seniors what has most helped them prepare for life after high school.

A College Visit Changes A Future Path

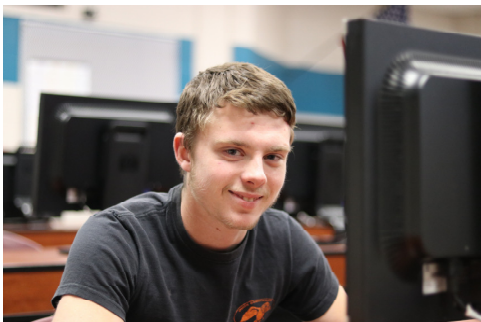


Paige Onstad, went on a college visit that totally changed her future path.

“For me, the college visit was a big thing. I would not have visited Northcentral Tech College without my mom forcing me to go on it when the school sponsored a visit,” said Paige.

When asked about her overall experience, Paige said, “I think we have a really good staff throughout the district. The staff has always pushed me to work hard and help me be prepared. The staff really takes students under their wings and helps them to succeed.”

A Youth Apprenticeship Opens Eyes



Dakota Moody had the opportunity to be involved in the Youth Apprenticeship program. “The NHS teachers really help us to plan for our careers and set goals for life after high school,” Dakota said.

“Before Mrs. Jackson told me that a Youth Apprenticeship was possible, I had no idea. She helped me find the job with Pointe Precision, Inc. and I was able to earn high school credits as I worked.”

Dakota feels this experience helped him realize what a real job is like. “I have had a chance to see the responsibilities involved with working as an adult.”

A Job Shadow Confirms Career Choice



Amanda Schaeftbauer says that she feels prepared to go to college. “I think the course selection has been really helpful, and the opportunity to take the higher level courses (AP courses) has helped me to be prepared for college.”

Another experience Amanda appreciated was her job shadow in the medical field.

“My freshmen year I had the opportunity to meet people (role models) who were older than me and taught me to be involved in school activities. Through Link Crew and National Honor Society I am now a role model for younger students.”

Leadership Learned From Role Models



Anita Jaimes feels that her NHS experience has been very helpful. “I have had so many new opportunities and the high school staff has always been there to help me, and push me to try new things and step out of my comfort zone.” Anita shared. “I think I will do well at college as I have learned the skills that I will need to succeed in college.”

“The opportunity to job shadow at Aspirus Riverview Hospital was helpful. Being able to see what my possible career path would look like from someone who had lived it was beneficial.”

Anita took advantage of every opportunity that came her way. “Working with Incourage around creating a sustainable community during my Junior year has given me a vision for my future. Attending HOSA Nationals in Florida also made a big impact on me. I was able to see a bigger picture of the world and working closely with Mrs. Kautzer helped me to see all of the possibilities.”

The Future Looks Bright

Thanks to the hard work of the staff and the students, the future looks bright for our students.

4K—It's More Than You Think



Some folks may think 4K is a time for children to play and get to know how school works, but it is so much more than that! 4K Teacher Kelly Acker, said, “4K is a magical year that gives our youngest students a chance to experience so many new things in a fun, safe, exciting environment. It also gives parents a great opportunity to form a strong school partnership and offers many opportunities to participate in their child's first educational experience. Building a strong home-school partnership is so important in today's very complex, fast-paced world!” Below are some other benefits of 4K.

The Benefits of 4K Include

Curriculum

- The District focuses on student’s health and physical development, social and emotional development, language development and communication skills, cognition and general knowledge.
- The District emphasis is on active learning.

Flexibility

- Parents have the option of designing a program with the school that allows them to attend on a part-time basis
- There are extended day options through the YMCA or Headstart right on campus.

Other Benefits

- Students are prepared for Kindergarten
- Access to a variety of resources that promote the development of large and small motor skills.
- Access to outside learning spaces

How Do You Register?

Each spring we offer Development Days for those children in the Nekoosa School District who will be 4 years old by September 1st of the upcoming year. This is also a time for 5 year olds to register that did not attend a 4K class in Nekoosa.

This day-long event is held at the Nekoosa Community Center and our team looks forward to this day as much as the little ones do! Prior to the event, parents are asked to make an appointment so our team is prepared for each child. This appointment will last for an hour. Every single appointment is extra special to us as we meet and “play with” the kids. The children love this one-on-one attention and, by the time they are ready to leave, they cannot wait to start school!

This event is advertised throughout the community and the information can be found on our district website: nekoosasd.net.

We look forward to meeting your little ones ... the class of 2034!



WISE Academy Offers Choice

“I love being a student in WISE Academy. I get to learn from home using hands-on activities that allow me to focus on my interests!” Isn’t it great to hear from kids who are excited to learn?! Having access to the right learning style makes a difference, and we know that there are many different learning styles that motivate students to learn. This is one reason Nekoosa School District started WISE Academy, a virtual charter school.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Education, enrollment in virtual schools tripled across the state between 2007 and 2017.

In response to student needs, WISE Academy began as a home based education program within the schools eight years ago and became a district charter school in 2018. This change allowed the Nekoosa School District to accept open enrollment students from around the state who wanted a virtual option. This positively impacts the district by increasing the number of families that can be enrolled as part of the district while they pursue their desire to school from home.

Supporting Educational Diversity

By offering a variety of school options, Nekoosa School District supports educational diversity! This sheds a positive light on the Nekoosa School District by bringing awareness about the unique educational opportunities available to families within and outside of the District of lines.

To focus on student needs, Individual Learning Plans are created for each student and parents play a vital role in supporting student learning using curriculum provided by the district that is specific to that learning plan. This is truly strength-based individualized education. A parent of a student in WISE Academy says, “Options are always a good thing. When one schooling option isn’t working, it’s so nice to have alternatives. WISE is a fantastic alternative to brick and mortar classrooms without going out on your own by homeschooling.”

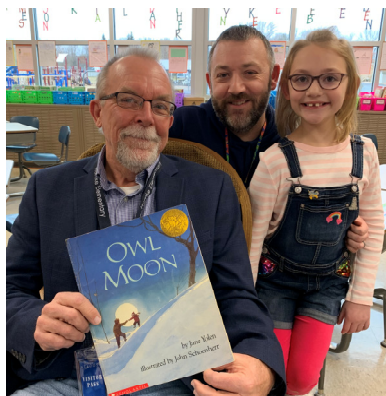
Flexibility is Key

As an alternative to homeschooling, families enrolled in WISE Academy have the support of district staff and maintain the flexibility to work when it is best for them. Another parent shared, “WISE allows kids to “go to school” during non-school hours. I know many families where one parent has work hours outside of the normal M-F 8-5 schedule. Children participate in school work on Saturday and/or Sunday and take a couple of weekdays off instead. Alternatively, some families start school after lunch and don’t finish until later in the evening or begin earlier in the day and finish by 1pm to accommodate a parent’s work schedule. This allows families to spend more quality time together and strengthens the family unit.”

We are fortunate to have WISE Academy within the district as an option to support educational diversity! Please contact Stacey Russell stacey_russell@nekoosa.k12.wi.us or Terry Whitmore terry_whitmore@nekoosa.k12.wi.us if you have any questions about WISE Academy!



Reading to the Generations



On November 18, Doug Machon visited Mrs. Blaser’s 2nd grade classroom and read the book “Owl Moon.” Doug’s granddaughter, Brooklyn, was so proud to have her grandpa read to her class. This wasn’t the first time Doug read this book to a second grade class. In 1991 Doug read the same book to his son Brian’s 2nd grade class. What a special day for Brooklyn, her dad, and her grandpa.

Brian Machon now serves on the Board of Education for the Nekoosa School District.

This newsletter is sent to the residents of the Nekoosa School District to help keep all area residents informed about the news, activities, and events occurring in your public schools.

***Find Information on Nekoosa Area Hometown Christmas
(Saturday, December 7, 2019) on our District Website.***

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF NEKOOSA

BOARD OF EDUCATION & ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Board of Education

Brian Giese, President
Cody Przybylski, Vice President
David Schmidt, Treasurer
Pat Resheske, Clerk
Brian Machon, Director

Administration Office

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Nekoosa, WI 54457
715-886-8000
District Administrator
Terry Whitmore
Director of Pupil Service
Brian Grill
Business Manager
Lynn Knight
Community Outreach
Coordinator
Paul Liebherr

Nekoosa High School

Nekoosa Academy
Keith Johnson, Principal
500 Cedar Street
Nekoosa, WI 54457
715-886-8060

Humke Elementary School

Jon Sprehn, Principal
500 South Section Street
Nekoosa, WI 54457
715-886-8010

Alexander Middle School

**Central Wisconsin STEM
Academy**
Nathan Black, Principal
540 Birch Street
Nekoosa, WI 54457
715-886-8040

WISE Academy Virtual School

Stacey Russell, Coordinator

NEKOOSA PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Nekoosa Public School District does not discriminate against pupils on the basis of sex, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, color, or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability or other disability in its education programs or activities. Federal law prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of age, race, national origin, sex, or handicap.