

Summer 2021

Dear Parents & Caregivers,

At the time of drafting this message, it has been about three weeks since the end of the 2020-21 school year. This past year was a historic year in many ways, and despite the daily challenges that were presented, our students and staff did some amazing work! Please allow me to extend my gratitude and many thanks to every employee of the SDWD for their herculean efforts to make this past year, large in part, such a huge success. This includes administrative assistants, bus drivers, custodians, TAs, food service staff, IT department staff, maintenance staff, the teaching staff and the members of the administrative team. We most certainly thank our students and parents for their flexibility and patience as well. At the end of the school year, each school in their own way had an opportunity to celebrate the students' achievement gains, accomplishments and good daily efforts. In short, here's one last big **THANK YOU** to everyone's efforts that made this year as successful as one could expect!

As we begin to look ahead to the 2021-22 school year, there will be an increased effort to further reduce students receiving failing grades as well as continue to strive for advancing student achievement for every student in the District. While the District has not received the results of its Grades 3-8 Forward assessments, we have internal progress monitoring data through i-Ready (an online program for reading and mathematics diagnostic assessment), and this form of assessment data indicates our students should fare well on the aforementioned Forward assessment data. When this information is released, it will be part of a future newsletter. Additionally, later this summer the District will receive summary data for how our juniors (Class of 2022) fared on the state-mandated ACT exam. We expect there to be individual student success on this assessment as well as opportunities for students to further improve student learning outcomes that vary by subject area. With that said, it's worth reminding WDHS is aiming to serve its increasing diverse student population by ensuring that every student is ready for post-high school success. This means readying students to entering the workforce upon graduation, preparing students who wish to pursue two-year technical college or four-year college.

As we look ahead to the 2021-22 school year, WDHS will see an estimated 227 students participate in 13 sections of Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Additionally, 314 WDHS students will participate in 23 sections of dual credit (DC) courses aligned with a Wisconsin Technical College System school. WDHS will also offer six sections of Project Lead the Way (PLTW) courses, and there are 106 students enrolled in these courses, and students who successfully complete these courses can earn advanced standing technical or college credits. Finally, sixteen students will be participating in the state-sponsored Youth Apprenticeship Program (YAP) next year. In the years to come, our goal is to double the number of students participating in YAP as it provides some tremendous real-world work experiences for our students. Again, this is evidence of providing our students with opportunities that will ensure our students are ready for post-high school success!

Finally, in August the members of our district-wide leadership team (principal & teachers) will be conducting a thorough review of the aforementioned assessment data in order to develop a couple of Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-based (SMART) goals to further focus on making

academic progress with all of our students. Ultimately these goals will fall within the confines of our strategic plan and more specifically one of our primary objectives of advancing student growth and achievement. This is challenging, but rewarding, work that benefits our students, and it takes a great deal of effort and focus to make the academic gains the District has made over the course of the past five-plus years.

As I have done in previous newsletters, here are the four main strategic objectives in which a great deal of our focused efforts center around.

- **Student Growth and Achievement:** Use data-driven, culturally responsive instruction to improve K-12 literacy and to ready learners for colleges and careers.
- **Professional Growth and Leadership:** Enhance student learning and retain top talent by supporting creative implementation of high-impact instructional strategies and targeted professional development.
- **District and Community Engagement:** Connect with the community to promote our district and best serve our students and families.
- **Facilities, Finance, and Operations:** Implement a long-term plan that ensures safe, clean, and healthy facilities that foster multiple student learning pathways while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

In the months to come, a forthcoming strategic planning survey will be readied to gain community feedback regarding the aforementioned strategic objectives. Based on the survey feedback, it will assist in developing the strategic planning priorities for the next two to five years. More information will be distributed later this summer in future newsletters.

Finally, as I typically do, please allow me close out this newsletter article by saying thank you for the opportunity to serve our communities' children for they are both our highest priority and it is a privilege to do so.

Respectfully submitted,

*Terrance R. Slack*

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