

# THE SUN PRAIRIE EXPERIENCE

A Community  
Newsletter

## SPRING 2023

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### STAY CONNECTED





# FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Sun Prairie Area School District,

The SPASD is excited to reconnect with you through this newsletter. It's one of the most effective ways to reach every household in the entire 79 square miles and 10 municipalities that make up the attendance boundaries of the SPASD. We're excited to share some of this year's innovative events, programs, and progress across our 15 schools.

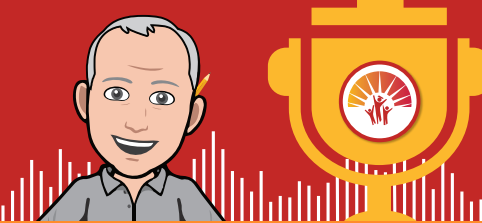
Please use this newsletter as a resource and as an update to our community. While this is a wonderful overview of our School District during the 2022–2023 school year, it is not comprehensive; if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out.

All my best,

**Dr. Brad Saron,**  
Superintendent



## SUN PRAIRIE SCHOOL DISTRICT HOMEROOM PODCAST WITH BRAD SARON



Do you want to learn more about the School District? Listen to our 30-minute podcasts at your leisure. Superintendent Saron hosts guest speakers who are doing great things in our District.

### GIVE US FEEDBACK

At the top of our home page ([sunprairieschools.org](http://sunprairieschools.org)), you can click on **"We Are Listening."** This is a great place to give a positive comment, suggestion for improvement, ask a question, and more. If you ever have a concern about content on a website or school technology, please include a URL in the comment.

The Sun Prairie Area School District takes allegations of bullying and safety very seriously. You can submit a tip to the **District's Electronic Safety Tip Line**. All tips will be investigated, but keep in mind that this process can only be as thorough as the information provided.

#### Vision

Recognized as a high-performing district of choice that reflects the cultures of our diverse community.

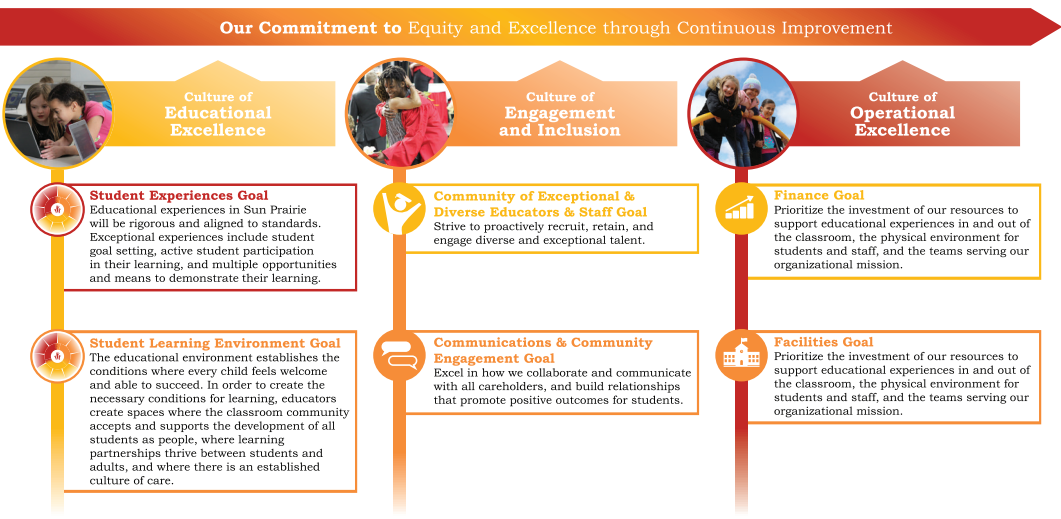
#### Mission

Inspire and prepare every child, every day, by providing relevant, engaging, and innovative learning experiences in and out of the classroom.

## OUR REFRESHED STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Sun Prairie Area School District aspires to be a recognized leader in education, empowered by the diverse community we serve. By providing relevant, engaging, and innovative learning experiences in and out of the classroom, we aim to help every child become the best version of themselves.

As we continue to work toward our goals, we need to ensure that our strategic direction is keeping up with our community's diverse needs and priorities. We have engaged students, families, and community members in dialogue about our strategic direction. We launched our refreshed Strategic Framework in the Fall of 2022.



## FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Dear Sun Prairie Area Community,

The Sun Prairie Board of Education wants to reaffirm our commitment to supporting Every Child, Every Day, as our students become the best version of themselves. We are here to serve and represent the members of our diverse community as we lead the District through policy. To model the leadership we expect from this School District, we have begun a new framework of continuous improvement for ourselves. Our new plan will ensure that all of our governance policies are updated on a three-year cycle:

- Year 1: Governance Culture / Board-Superintendent Relationship
- Year 2: Operational Expectations
- Year 3: Student Results (current revision process to conclude in 2023)

We are working to develop monitoring reports for ourselves as well as a "Portrait of a Board Member." We are also implementing a new Board member onboarding process and Board professional learning plan.

To ensure that everything we do is infused with the voices and support of the community we are elected to represent, the Board voted in November to approve two new initiatives:

### • Community Voices for Our Future

- Our goal is to create intentional and constructive dialogue between SPASD careholders and the School Board, primarily around the future of the School District and School Board policies.
- We will collaborate with community members / ambassadors to work toward solutions and partnerships in supporting our students and families.

### • United Sun Prairie: A Community That Cares for Its Children

- Students spend approximately 14% of their year in school, and the SPASD is committed to ensuring that all children will be safe and loved while they are in our community. The entire community must work together in a coordinated way to provide students with 100% of the support they need to thrive.
- Our goal is to develop stronger collaborative relationships with community members and organizations that share overlapping missions and visions with the District to create a unified action plan for supporting our students.

You can find information about our plans on the District website.

On behalf of the Board of Education, thank you for reading this update. It is our pleasure to serve you.

**Dr. Steve Schroeder,**  
President, Board of Education  
[schoolboard@sunprairieschools.org](mailto:schoolboard@sunprairieschools.org)



### School Board Members (left to right):

Embree Way, Dr. Steve Schroeder, Carol Sue Albright, Tom Weber, Latoya Holiday, Eli Gillitzer, Alwyn Foster, Diana McFarland, Mrinank Panda, Bryn Horton | Not Pictured: Carson Schmoldt and Deneaja Donegan

## NEW!

School Board meetings have moved to a new location. They now take place in the School Board Meeting Room on the Historic Hilltop Campus at 222 Kronke Drive, Suite 28, Room 221.



## GRAND OPENING

A Grand Opening of the School Board Meeting Room, the Caren R. Diedrich Caucus Room, and the Professional Learning Center on the Historic Hilltop Campus was held on February 13, 2023. The community was invited to see the new spaces, including where the School Board meetings will occur, where staff training will take place, and the new home for the Wall of Success and Class Composites. *Read more on page 12.*



## REMINDER TO VOTE TUESDAY, APRIL 4, 2023

Two School Board seats are up for election this spring.

Current School Board members **Carol Sue Albright** and **Tom Weber** will seek reelection. **Lisa Goldsberry** and **Katey Kamuko** will also be on the ballot.



## STUDENT EXPERIENCES GOAL

Educational experiences in Sun Prairie will be rigorous and aligned to standards. Exceptional experiences include student goal setting, active student participation in their learning, and multiple opportunities and means to demonstrate their learning.



## SPORTS ARE FOR EVERYONE

*The Adapted Sports League gives students with disabilities an opportunity to participate in athletics.*

The District provides adapted physical education services to students with disabilities. Sadie Brown is one adapted physical education teacher in the District who works with her colleagues to adapt or modify activities so that kids with special needs can be active with their peers and improve their gross motor skills in physical education classes. Sadie was also instrumental in creating the **Adapted Sports League**, which launched this fall in conjunction with our Athletic Department.

The Adapted Sports League at both East and West High Schools has increased accessibility and equity in high school athletics. Students in grades 9–12 with IEPs or 504s who otherwise have been unable to access competitive athletics now have the opportunity to participate in soccer, hockey, and wiffle ball.

“The Adapted Sports League is transformative,” said Brown. “Students with disabilities have the right to extracurricular opportunities just like every other high school student. It is also a great opportunity for the rest of our student body to support, encourage, and cheer on students with disabilities.”

“Adding this competitive sports option for our high school students with disabilities is extremely exciting,” said Jennifer Apodaca, Sun Prairie Area School District’s Director of Student Services. “Our District strives to find new and innovative opportunities to help all students succeed inside and outside of the classroom, and the Adapted Sports League will do just that.”

## THE SCIENCE OF READING STUDYING THE RESEARCH

*by Deb Larson, District Literacy Coordinator*

An **Early Literacy Research Team** was established in the spring of 2022 to begin to learn more about the science of reading and to make recommendations for ways to improve student learning in literacy. The team consists of a variety of educators that represent grades K–2, as well as special educators, multilingual language teachers, learning strategists, instructional coaches, speech pathologists, and administrators. This team has participated in learning opportunities to both support current professional development for our teachers and inform the decisions of our Literacy Steering Committee as we move through the curriculum renewal and design process.

K–5 teachers across the District are participating in literacy professional development facilitated by members of the Early Literacy Research Team. They are using the book *Shifting the Balance*, by Jan Miller Burkins and Kari Yates, and making intentional shifts in their classrooms.

Shifts in current literacy teaching and learning practices include:

- increased emphasis on shared reading and systematic phonics instruction
- use of a variety of texts to include both leveled and decodable texts aligned to phonics features
- student use of phonics knowledge to solve unknown words and use pictures to confirm that the word they’ve solved is correct

Teachers will continue to learn about the science of reading as the year progresses and will apply strategies with students as we move into the 2023–2024 school year.





## SERVING UP EXPERIENCE

*ProStart students gain valuable food service skills.*

The **ProStart Program** is a two-year industry-based program that prepares students for careers in the restaurant and food service industry. Students gain valuable restaurant and food service skills through academic and workplace experiences. They have the opportunity to participate in catering activities and in simulated restaurants, preparing meals for faculty and community members. Students may participate in culinary food preparation competitions (Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America; SkillsUSA-Culinary Arts; and ProStart). Class challenges help students prepare themselves for competitions and give them a chance to test their ability to work under pressure.

Students who pursue ProStart 2 can take national exams to receive a National Restaurant Association Education Foundation Achievement Certificate and may be eligible for advanced placement credits at Vocational and Culinary Colleges.



### SUN PRAIRIE WEST PROSTART TEACHER, JILL HANSEN, EXPLAINS WHAT THIS PROGRAM IS ALL ABOUT.

We spend some time not only learning the basics but also learning about the industry and careers that are available in the food world, all “front of the house” and “back of the house” careers, and the expectations of professionals in the culinary world or of anyone working in customer service.

We learn about the flow of food from the ground to being picked, from the truck to the store, and finally to the customer. We learn about food safety, temperatures of food, safe food holding and handling, hygiene, and cleanliness rules. We learn about workplace safety, food service equipment safety, overall kitchen safety, and knife safety. We also learn about a variety of cooking methods—frying, sautéing, boiling, and so on. Then we put all of our learning into action.

Students get practice making salads, soups, stocks and sauces, cookies and pies for holidays, taco bars, pasta bars, breakfast for lunch, and more. The class also prepares and serves weekly staff lunches and provides a bakery / coffee shop three times a week.



### WHAT THE SUN PRAIRIE WEST STUDENTS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE CLASS:

**LEXA** – This classroom always feels like home and is the best way to start the morning. Mrs. Hansen is always so happy and is in such a good mood. That just makes my day.

**EDEN** – This class has prepared me for my future in culinary arts and reminds me about what I love about the kitchen. I love to come in every morning and do the bakery / coffee shop and run the espresso machine. We have so much fun!

**EMMY** – This class taught me not only how to cook but also the importance of dedication and what true team comradery means.

**NOLAN** – I like this class because it gives us experience cooking mass quantities and serving food to customers.

### EMPTY BOWL DINNER

*SP West students work together for a good cause.*

Sun Prairie West students hosted an Empty Bowl Dinner in November. Students made over 10 types of soups and rolls, and the art department made 150 soup bowls from scratch. Guests enjoyed live music from the orchestra while people dined on soup. Participants were able to take the bowls home. The proceeds from the event were donated to a local charity.





## INSIDE SUN PRAIRIE STUDIOS

High school students have access to unique digital publication spaces.

Audio and video recording continues to be an area of growing student interest, especially as **digital publication spaces** have become more accessible. This student interest was incorporated into the design work for the high schools. Curt Mould, Director of Digital Media, Innovation & Strategy, says, "We also recognize the influence of hip hop on our culture, and providing the necessary equipment and skilled studio staff was essential to bringing student interest and passion to life through the recording arts."

Marcus Porter works at all three of the high schools, which each have their own studio space. He says: "Students are learning how to write songs, make beats, record and engineer their own music, and run the space. They will also learn the industry and much more and can use these skills however they see fit in entertainment fields if they choose that path."



## WRITE ON!

Visiting the UW-Whitewater Creative Writing Festival

Every year for over a decade, creative writing teachers at SPHS have brought students to the **UW-Whitewater Creative Writing Festival**. It's a superb opportunity for young writers to get expert feedback on their work, learn from professional authors and poets, and meet other creative teenagers. There is an awards component—and students from Sun Prairie have won in the past—but the main focus is on the power of words and developing our habits of mind.

This year, seven students from Sun Prairie West High School attended the festival, joined by teachers Megan Nicoud, Carly Allard, and Eric Piotrowski. Mr. Piotrowski also ran a workshop on short fiction, a workshop on humor, and a teacher writing session.



**Biological engineering** students grow 20 pounds of lettuce a week for the lunch program at Sun Prairie East High School. It's a great opportunity for some hands-on learning while helping the school.



Token Springs fifth graders visited **New Perspective Senior Living** and joined residents for reading, crafts, and sharing stories. A parent told us that their student was apprehensive before going that day but came home with so many stories about the resident they got to know. They found out that they both are athletes and have many other common interests.



We have **24 students** who are practicing being Certified Nursing Assistants. The **CNA program** prepares students for employment as nursing assistants and home health aides.

**DID YOU KNOW?**



## JOY THROUGH MUSIC

Our students have access to amazing experiences!

Sammy Miller and the Congregation completed a **two-day residency working with students** at Sun Prairie East and West High Schools. The Manhattan-based jazz quintet mentored students and performed with them later that night.



"Working with such an esteemed group of musicians was remarkable. Being able to see such kind people in positions of influence really inspired me. I was able to have conversations that helped me realize I have a place in this world."—**JUANITA DUARTE, STUDENT**

"Sammy's entire vibe is entirely genuine. His mission is to spread joy through music, and that was 'mission accomplished' from the moment he stepped in the room to work with kids."—**MATT McVEIGH, TEACHER**





## STUDENT LEARNING ENVIRONMENT GOAL

The educational environment establishes the conditions where every child feels welcome and able to succeed. In order to create the necessary conditions for learning, educators create spaces where the classroom community accepts and supports the development of all students as people, where learning partnerships thrive between students and adults, and where there is an established culture of care.

## WHAT IS RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM?

by Brooke Pierce, Third-Grade Teacher at Horizon Elementary

I use Responsive Classroom in our classroom community beginning on the first day of school. Responsive Classroom is an approach that ensures a positive and productive learning environment for our students.

Students are active contributors in writing our classroom agreements at the beginning of the year. After creating agreements as a team, we discuss what happens when an agreement is broken. This is where the idea of logical consequences comes into play. A student may lose a privilege, fix a mistake, or do an apology of action. Students may be involved in class meetings if there is a recurring problem that the whole class is facing. Students are also involved in problem-solving conferences if they are struggling with an agreement or facing an issue in the school day. Students are advocates for themselves and problem solvers too!

As a teacher, I make sure to use lots of modeling and incorporate practice for students when learning routines and procedures. I use reinforcing, reminding, and redirecting language when coaching these classroom and social-emotional skills.

Responsive Classroom is all about practicing social-emotional skills embedded throughout our day of learning. Most importantly, we begin our day with a Morning Meeting that consists of a greeting, share, activity, and message, and we conclude our day with a closing circle, which includes a share, an activity, and announcements. This sets our day up with positivity and ends our day with reflection and celebration.

At Horizon, it is incredibly powerful that all classrooms use Responsive Classroom practices. It allows for all teachers to share ideas and collaborate on what will work best for our students.



## COMING SOON!

*Spanish/English Dual Language Immersion (DLI)*

Enrollment of Spanish-speaking students continues to increase in SPASD. We enthusiastically embrace the opportunity to develop and deliver a bilingual program as part of our overall instructional and equity vision for the future. Wisconsin State Statutes also give us guidance that when a certain number of Spanish speakers are present in a school, a Spanish/English Bilingual/Bicultural program shall be developed. We have met those thresholds in four of our elementary schools. Beginning in the fall of 2023–2024 school year, we will begin **Spanish/English Dual Language Immersion (DLI) programming with a 50/50 model (50% of core instruction in Spanish, 50% in English) in kindergarten at Northside Elementary and Westside Elementary (pending enrollment numbers) with Royal Oaks and Creekside as two additional feeder schools.** As students progress to the next grade level at Northside and Westside, the DLI program will expand upward by one grade level each year based on enrollment. A Bilingual Task Force of parents, caregivers, and staff from the four elementary schools has been assembled. The Bilingual Task Force will guide the development of enrollment processes, curriculum/instruction, and related communication.

**El futuro es nuestro...todos los niños, todos los días.**

## A CLOSER LOOK AT SP30

*How does SP30 support students?*

**SP30 is our students' advisory period**, commonly known as "homeroom" in education. As we continue to meet our students where they are, SP30 allows our teachers to address students' development as it relates to their Academic and Career Plan (ACP), Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS), Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), and school expectations and norms (CARES) in real-time.

Students in our high schools are placed as ninth graders into an SP30 class that they maintain throughout their entire high school career.

Students in our middle schools are placed into an SP30 class with one of their house teachers or an assigned elective teacher. The intention is to keep the groups smaller to support the development of strong relationships with students and staff. This allows for a safe and consistent space to engage in honest, trusted, and productive conversations and activities with educators and peers. Additionally, this allows teachers to encourage and incorporate student voices in conversations and planning.





## TELL ME MORE!

We have staff who occupy positions our community might not be familiar with.  
Let us tell you more about how they support our students!



DEB  
LARSON

### WHAT DOES A LITERACY COORDINATOR DO?

The **4K–12 literacy coordinator** supports the classroom teacher, grade-level teams, resource teachers, and building administrators to plan, model, observe, and provide feedback on culturally responsive, differentiated instruction. Working with District and school-level leaders, the literacy coordinator develops and implements structures and procedures to support systemic improvement in teaching and learning.

Instructional coordinators play a critical role in narrowing and closing the achievement gap by providing support to school teams with their School Improvement Plan related to literacy teaching and learning.

### WHAT DOES A RESTORATIVE PRACTICES COACH DO?

The **restorative practices coach** works with staff and community partners to improve District and school culture, increase attendance and academic achievement for identified students, reduce suspensions for identified students, and support the school-wide implementation of restorative practices by developing and facilitating professional development. The coaches are trained in Restorative Justice. We now have a restorative practices coach in each of our three middle schools.

Alysha Justice is a restorative practices coach at Westside Elementary School. She uses restorative conversations and circles to help repair the harm caused in situations such as physical altercations, friendship fallout, disagreements/arguments, and much more. Using restorative conversations and circles helps give the victim in any situation a voice and a chance to allow their feelings and voice to be heard.



ALYSHA  
JUSTICE

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

*Aliza Kruger receives a grant to help promote student safety.*

Sun Prairie West High School student **Aliza Kruger** is the newest member of our Student Safety Ambassadors program. She moved from California where she attended a middle school five minutes from a high school that had an active shooter, which is where her sister attended. After our first active threat drill of the year, Aliza approached Associate Principal Whalley asking about **Stop the Bleed kits** for the classrooms, as these saved lives in her sister's high school. That conversation led to her organizing an initiative to equip each classroom with at least one kit as well as a campaign to teach students and faculty how to use them. Aliza wrote a grant to the Education Foundation asking for money to make this happen. The grant was written for West with additional information/requests to

equip both East and PPA as well if the foundation was willing to increase the requested amount.

Just before winter break, the Sun Prairie Education Foundation awarded Aliza a check for the full amount requested (\$6,600) to make this project happen at all three high schools: 100 kits for East, 100 for West, and 20 for PPA. With the help and support of Elizabeth Feisthammel, the District health nurse, we will order the various components for the kits, and our Safety Ambassadors will assemble them. We have also developed partnerships with local hospitals and have a surgeon ready to help create videos and provide other informational supplies to support the education piece of the initiative.



The Sun Prairie Area School District has had a Stop the Bleed program in place since 2017, with staff trained in bleeding control measures and multiple Stop the Bleed kits in every school building. Feisthammel says, "This grant is exciting, as it will help us to expand Stop the Bleed education and access to all high school students."



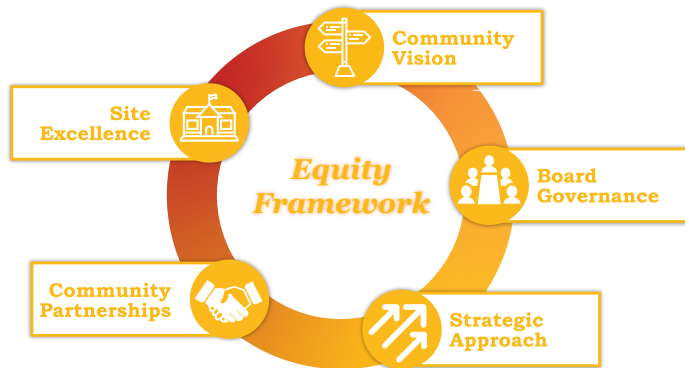
Sun Prairie West's production of **Grease** has been nominated for 11 Jerry Awards recognizing excellence in high school musical theater.



Central Heights seventh-grade Peer Ambassadors worked hard throughout the month of November organizing and promoting a **Children & Teen Book Drive**! They collected close to 1,400 books and will be distributing them to different elementary and middle schools in the District and placing books in the free libraries around Sun Prairie. Thanks to Kelsey Aleckson, the school counselor, and the students for organizing this.



## OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUITY



The **SPASD Equity Framework** details and informs our equity work to help all students succeed. We will continue to use our Equity Framework to guide how we apply strategies in a systematic manner across our departments and schools to authentic equity transformation. The Equity Framework informs the District scorecard, from which fixed strategies cascade to department and site scorecards that include the systemic action steps for equity. Visit our website to learn more: [www.sunprairieschools.org/district/equity](http://www.sunprairieschools.org/district/equity)



## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Black History Month was filled with activities and events across the District. Some of the events included virtual book readings, a soul food dinner, Read Your Heart Out, and more! Check the District's Facebook page to see event photos.

JOIN US MAY 7TH

## 5TH ANNUAL B.E.A.M. 2023

BLACK EXCELLENCE ACHIEVEMENT MAKERS AWARDS  
BANK OF SUN PRAIRIE STADIUM AT ASHLEY FIELD

## AN UNFORGETTABLE JOURNEY

*Sun Prairie BSU students visit HBCUs.*

This year's Black Student Union HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) tour visited nine colleges in three states with 50 scholars.

The tour included stops at:

- National Civil Rights Museum (Memphis, TN)
- Edmund Pettus Bridge (Selma, AL)
- The National Memorial for Peace and Justice (Montgomery, AL)
- Alabama State University (Montgomery, AL)
- Tuskegee University (Tuskegee, AL)
- Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park (Atlanta, GA)
- Morehouse College (Atlanta, GA)
- Spelman College (Atlanta, GA)
- Clark Atlanta University (Atlanta, GA)
- Meharry Medical College (Nashville, TN)
- Fisk University (Nashville, TN)
- Tennessee State University (Nashville, TN)
- Lemoyne-Owen College (Nashville, TN)

This trip would not have been possible without the generosity of American Family Insurance and the Department of Systemic Equity and Inclusion, and our chaperones: Renee Coleman, Pricilla Garner, Tenisha Winn, Felix Giboney, and Reggie Williams.



## HMONG NEW YEAR

Each year, the Hmong people celebrate Hmong New Year to give thanks to their ancestors and to welcome the new year. **Sun Prairie East and West's Asian Clubs collaborated in creating a Hmong New Year Show** to showcase Hmong culture and the importance of the Hmong New Year celebration. Students, staff, and community members were able to experience the Hmong culture and traditions like never before.



# CULTURE OF ENGAGEMENT AND INCLUSION



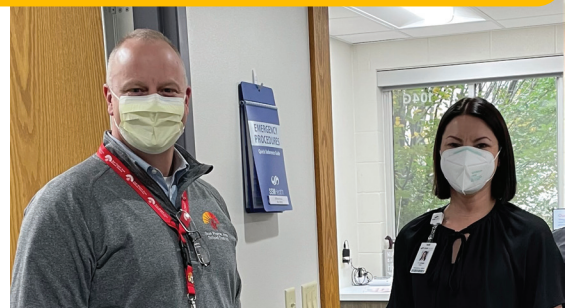
## COMMUNITY OF EXCEPTIONAL AND DIVERSE EDUCATORS AND STAFF GOAL

Strive to proactively recruit, retain, and engage diverse and exceptional talent.

## PROMOTING STAFF WELLNESS

*Our Employee Wellness Department continues to promote a healthy lifestyle for staff, building a culture of wellness across our District through a wide variety of opportunities, tools, and resources.*

Our District's **Employee Wellness Clinic** moved onsite in October 2022 and is located at the Historic Hilltop Campus next to Central Heights Middle School. The grand opening of the onsite clinic included clinic tours, free flu vaccinations, blood pressure checks, review of medical records, educational materials, and refreshments. Frosty the therapy dog was there to welcome everyone! In addition to the grand opening, the clinic hosted two flu vaccination events. Since the move, our clinic staff have administered over 700 flu vaccinations. Our clinic offers free or low-cost appointments for many services, including preventative care, acute care, disease management, occupational health, healthy lifestyle coaching, and health maintenance. Due to insurance plan design changes, the clinic will add a cost-neutral behavioral health coach to support District and City staff with their mental health needs. Since moving onsite, the clinic has increased utilization, with fill rates at or near 100% daily.



Superintendent Brad Saron and nurse practitioner Jen Lange at the **Employee Wellness Clinic** Open House in its new location.



## EXCELLENCE IN WELLNESS

The Sun Prairie Area School District continues to be recognized as one of the Nation's Healthiest Organizations by the Wellness Council of America, maintaining our Platinum Level Status, the highest designation. The Sun Prairie Area School District is nationally recognized by the Wellness Council of America (WELCOA) for prioritizing the health and wellness of its employees and their families. The WELCOA is one of the nation's most respected resources for building high-performing, healthy workplaces. The District's high-performing Wellness Department is considered a model of excellence for the industry. Karyn Richmond, Chris Sadler, and Steve Schroeder, along with our insurance broker, presented "Developing a Wellness Strategy That Works" at the Wisconsin Association of School Boards Annual Conference in January.



"I was lucky to be the FIRST patient at the Sun Prairie Wellness Clinic's new site! I needed some stitches removed, and it was so quick and convenient to be able to walk over from my office space to the new location. The clinic space is very bright and inviting, and the staff was warm and welcoming . . . even as they were still unpacking! I really appreciate having this great resource." – **ELIZABETH FEISTHAMMEL, DISTRICT NURSE**

The Wellness Department offers a wide variety of motivating **wellness challenges and weekly wellness opportunities**, including a walking club, workout classes, mindfulness and meditation sessions, virtual cooking classes, and special events.



✓ **100%**  
OF PATIENTS STATED  
THE LIKELIHOOD THEY  
WOULD RECOMMEND THE  
DISTRICT'S EMPLOYEE  
WELLNESS CLINIC  
TO OTHERS WAS  
GOOD / VERY GOOD.









## COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GOAL

Excel in how we collaborate and communicate with all careholders, and build relationships that promote positive outcomes for students.

## A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR CELEBRATING OUR PAST

*Historical class composites and yearbooks are now more accessible than ever before.*

We are committed to uplifting our alumni's achievements and our District's 150-year-old culture of excellence. **We now have yearbooks, class composites, and Wall of Success profiles located on our website.** You no longer have to be in a school to see these archives. You can view them from wherever you are in the world. [sunprairieschools.org/community/history-wall](https://sunprairieschools.org/community/history-wall)

### DID YOU KNOW?

We have class composites dating back to 1886. In addition to seeing them online, you can visit them at the Historical Hilltop Campus during a School Board meeting.

### DID YOU KNOW?

We have yearbooks dating back to 1917. We worked in conjunction with the Sun Prairie Museum to locate some of the older books and then had them scanned to the website where you can find them.

### NEW THIS YEAR:

Sun Prairie East High School, Sun Prairie West High School, and Prairie Phoenix Academy now have **touchscreen digital exhibits** showcasing class yearbooks, class composites, and Wall of Success profiles.



## CAN'T HIDE THAT #SPUNITED PRIDE

*Students, staff, and community members take part in our pennant campaign.*

We handed out **pennants** at both Homecoming parades. Our community, staff, and students continue to send us **photos showing off their spirit**. While we have three high schools now, we are still a community united. Pennants can be picked up at the District Support Center, 501 S. Bird St. Send your photos to: [socialmedia@sunprairieschools.org](mailto:socialmedia@sunprairieschools.org)



We received a \$1,000 donation to our **Hunger Hero Campaign** from the family of Paul Korz. Paul was a District staff member who passed away, but his family wanted to share this gift with our District. Do you want to make a contribution to the Hunger Hero Campaign? **This funds lunch balances for our students who cannot pay without assistance.** Visit the School Nutrition page to learn how to donate.



The Social Justice Club at **Royal Oaks** filled 50 boxes with donations from their school community for the **Spirit of Giving Food Drive!**

**Horizon** Elementary School families filled 55 boxes with donations! Mrs. Weymier and Mrs. Johnson's Student Leadership groups helped organize the boxes, and the fifth-grade team members helped load the truck.



# COMMUNITY SCHOOLS



Community schools are public schools in the hub of their neighborhoods, uniting educators, community partners, and families to provide all students with top-quality academics, enrichment, health and social services, and opportunities to learn and thrive.

In Sun Prairie, we use the Community Schools strategy to support:

- improving academic achievement for all students
- reducing chronic student absenteeism
- increasing family connectedness to the school and community

To hear more about the work Community Schools is doing, reach out to **Jamie Racine**, Sun Prairie Community Schools Program Coordinator, at **608-318-8109** or [jlracin@sunprairieschools.org](mailto:jlracin@sunprairieschools.org).



Prairie Phoenix Academy was filled with love and community at the **Sun Prairie MLK Day Celebration!** Northside POETICS spoken word club also performed an original piece to celebrate the day. Thank you to all the speakers and organizers for your continued dedication and service to our community and for bringing everyone together to honor MLK's legacy. Community Schools hosted this event in partnership with the Sun Prairie Area School District Department of Systemic Equity and Inclusion, Boys and Girls Clubs of Dane County, the City of Sun Prairie, and Sunshine Place.



Door Creek Church delivers our **Fill the Van** donations, which stock our school food pantry with essential items for Westside Wildcats and their families.



Our Northside Nighthawks **Kindness Council** organized a food drive that will help the Sun Prairie Community Food Pantry and supply the food pantry at Northside.

## MEET OUR NEW COMMUNITY SCHOOLS SITE COORDINATORS



### CREEKSIDE WELCOMES **KATRINA COLLINS**

Katrina Collins is our new Community Schools site coordinator serving at Creekside Elementary! Katrina has been working at Creekside for ten years as a playground and teacher's assistant and is very excited about this new role.



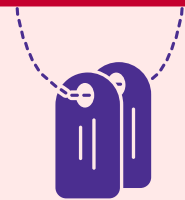
### C. H. BIRD WELCOMES **JENNY DIVNEY**

Jenny Divney has a background in education as an adult learning site coordinator, high school librarian, preschool teacher, daycare provider, reading and math interventionist, and substitute teacher. She believes we each bring our own strengths and gifts to our community and when we pool those resources and collaborate, the result is a stronger community where everyone feels valued, seen, and celebrated.

## SUPPORTING OUR MILITARY FAMILIES

We are thankful to all veterans for their service to our country and to all military families for the sacrifices they make for that service. We stand in support of the military families living in our District, and we take seriously the responsibility of providing unmatched educational opportunities to students of military households while accommodating their unique needs. Check out our new webpage with resources for our military families and students.

[sunprairieschools.org/families/military-families](https://sunprairieschools.org/families/military-families)



**MILITARY  
FAMILIES**  
★ ★ ★ ★ ★



# CULTURE OF OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

## FINANCE AND FACILITIES GOALS

Prioritize the investment of our resources to support the educational experiences in and out of the classroom, the student and staff physical environment, and the teams serving our organizational mission.

## 2022 OPERATING REFERENDUM UPDATE

### THRIVING SCHOOLS, THRIVING COMMUNITY

On November 8, 2022, voters approved for the District to exceed the state-imposed revenue cap.

# THANK YOU!

## THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!

The \$3 million for the 2022–2023 budget will be used to maintain the current spending and not cause the District to use fund balance (cash reserves). This was the plan shared with residents leading up to the vote.

For the projected 2023–2024 budget, the District will **maintain class sizes and student services**. A wage increase for staff has not been established, but when it is finalized, the goal will be for SPASD to remain competitive with neighboring districts.

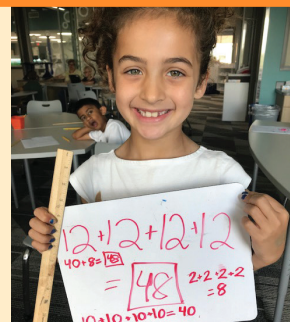
The Facilities and Grounds department is working on a budget plan to address **equity in learning environments** at the older elementary schools. The District has raised the pay for **substitute teachers** and also has placed “building subs” in all the schools. The District has been using grant money to pay for **social workers at the high schools**. For 2023–2024, the District will use levy dollars. In addition, the District’s **McKinney-Vento coordinator** will shift from grant funding to levy dollars.

The uses for funds added from exceeding the revenue cap are described in the graphic to the right that was shared with residents before the vote. If you have any questions, please contact the Director of Business and Finance, **Phil Frei**, at 608-834-6510 or [pfrei@sunprairieschools.org](mailto:pfrei@sunprairieschools.org).



## DID YOU KNOW?

**Our District's enrollment is volatile.** While the state's official third Friday count in September showed a decrease in enrollment by 15 students, we had a net increase of enrollment by 71 students in October. We had further net increases in November by 29 students and in December by 4 students. **That means that our enrollment has increased by 105 students!** Because the increases happened after the third Friday in September, these students are not included in the state's funding formula for our District.



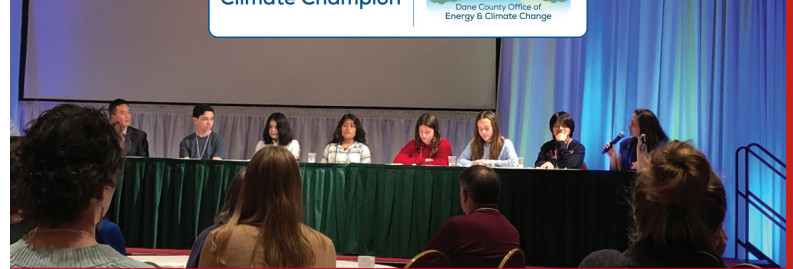
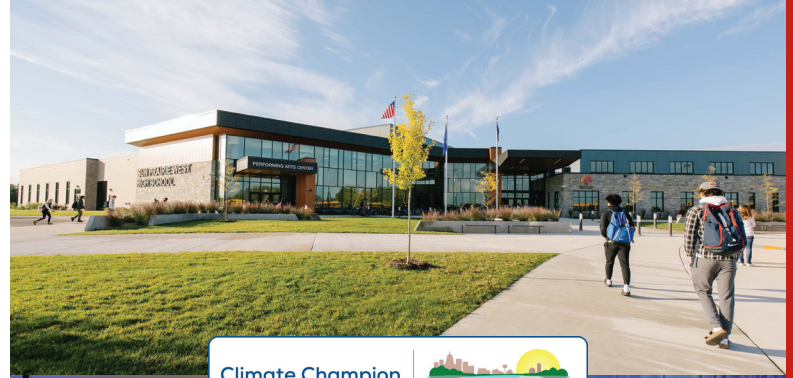


# CLIMATE CHAMPIONS

Our District is recognized by Dane County for continuing to find new ways to be more sustainable.

Our District and our construction partners, Bray Architects, Fredericksen Engineering, Muermann Engineering, and HGA, achieved Climate Champion 2-Star Status for Building Design for **Sun Prairie West High School** as part of the Dane County Office of Energy and Climate Change Climate Champions program. A solar array provides 10% of the building's energy, while geothermal heat pumps and LED lighting reduce the school's energy consumption. Sun Prairie West uses about half as much energy as a comparable school.

**Patrick Marsh Middle School** achieved Climate Champion 2-Star Status for a student project to reduce food waste at the school. Students developed initiatives to reduce up to 60% of wasted food heading to the landfill and partnered with the City of Sun Prairie to lead composting classes.



The students who led the Patrick Marsh project, and their teacher at the time, Angela Rivera Rautmann, were recognized at the **Sustain Dane Live Forward Awards** and spoke about the project at the awards reception.



During **Crossing Guard Appreciation Week**, the Student Leadership Club at Horizon presented Helen, their crossing guard, with cards and much appreciation for keeping them safe each day!

## WE ARE LISTENING

If you have questions, please contact us.

### DISTRICT SUPPORT CENTER:

501 S. Bird Street, Sun Prairie, WI 53590  
608-834-6500 | [sunprairieschools.org](http://sunprairieschools.org)



## Big News!

Community members can support innovative learning for all Sun Prairie Area School District students by purchasing a hexagon tile on the wolf donor wall located in the Commons area adjacent to the Sun Prairie West High School competition gym.

### What?

With over 122 tiles on the lighted donor board, the community has several donation level options ranging from \$2,500 to \$50,000 to create a legacy that will last for decades.

### Why?

The need for supporting our schools has never been greater! With 600 grants requested since its inception, SPEF hopes to raise the funds needed to meet the increasing community demands and fund 100% of eligible grants submitted.

### How?

Contact an SPEF Trustee today or fill out the contact form for more information. An SPEF Trustee is happy to provide more details and even provide you with a tour of any of our 15 amazing schools to show you all the options available for you to CREATE YOUR LEGACY!

[www.SunPrairieEducationFoundation.org](http://www.SunPrairieEducationFoundation.org)

Find us on Facebook

Scan to learn more!



## DISTRICT CONTACTS

<b>Dr. Brad Saron</b> Superintendent	608-834-6502	<b>Janet Rosseter</b> Assistant Superintendent of Operations	608-834-6683
<b>Stephanie Leonard-Witte</b> Assistant Superintendent of Teaching, Learning & Equity	608-834-6516	<b>Patti Lux</b> Communications & Engagement Officer	608-834-6562
<b>TEACHING, LEARNING &amp; EQUITY</b>		<b>OPERATIONS</b>	
<b>Jennifer Apodaca</b> Director of Student Services	608-834-6520	<b>Phil Frei</b> Director of Business & Finance	608-834-6510
<b>Janet Thomas</b> Director of Student Services	608-834-6638	<b>Rhonda Page</b> Business Services Manager/Busing	608-834-6512
<b>Dr. Curtis Mould</b> Director of Digital Media, Innovation & Strategy	608-834-6531	<b>Dr. Chris Sadler</b> Director of Human Resources	608-834-6551
<b>Dr. Nick Reichhoff</b> Director of Student Policy & School Operations	608-834-6624	<b>Isabel Simonetti</b> Employee Relations Manager	608-834-6522
<b>Dr. Sarah Chaja-Clardy</b> Director of Secondary Teaching, Learning & Equity	608-834-6572	<b>Kathryn Walker</b> Director of School Nutrition	608-834-6527
<b>Rick Mueller</b> Director of Elementary Teaching, Learning & Equity	608-834-6506	<b>Kevin Sukow</b> Director of Facilities & Grounds	608-834-6567
<b>Dr. Michael Morgan</b> Director of Systemic Equity & Inclusion	608-834-6599	<b>Eric Nee</b> Director of Athletics & Activities	608-834-6532
<b>Jamie Racine</b> Community Schools Program Coordinator	608-318-8109		



**We are making plans for staffing classrooms next year.** If you have a new neighbor or friend, or if you know of a family who has moved to Sun Prairie recently, please encourage them to enroll their child(ren) as soon as possible for the 2023–2024 school year. Learn more about the enrollment process by clicking on the ENROLLMENT icon on the District home page.

**ENROLL NOW!**



Sun Prairie Area  
School District

501 S. Bird Street  
Sun Prairie, WI 53590

**DID YOU KNOW WE OFFER  
HALF-DAY 4-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN?**

**WE ARE NOW ENROLLING FOR 2023–2024.**

*Any child who is 4 years old by Sept. 1, 2023, can register.*

**[WWW.SUNPRAIRIESCHOOLS.ORG/SP4K/ENROLL](http://WWW.SUNPRAIRIESCHOOLS.ORG/SP4K/ENROLL)**



## **MISSED ATTENDANCE IS MORE THAN A MISSED DAY**

It is our belief that **there is a clear and positive correlation between student learning and consistent, prompt attendance in class.** Much of what is presented in courses is sequential. Therefore, learning requires regular attendance and effort.

We also strongly believe that **what occurs in class is vital to student learning.** This means that even if students make up missed work, they have forever lost an opportunity for increased learning and skill development. Some of these opportunities include:

- richness of class discussions
- exchange of ideas with peers and teachers
- opportunity to defend one's ideas
- viewing of films and videos

A great deal of work in class is done cooperatively, and a lack of attendance makes it difficult, if not impossible, for peers to successfully complete the work required. In addition to the academic rewards of consistent and prompt attendance, please know it is our goal to prepare our students to be career and college ready when they graduate.

**Developing habits of timeliness and attendance will promote success in future endeavors.**

**HOW CAN YOU HELP? IT IS OUR HOPE THAT PARENTS  
AND CAREGIVERS WILL SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE THEIR  
STUDENTS TO HAVE GOOD ATTENDANCE.**

**ATTENDANCE  
COUNTS**

Achievement ★ Opportunity ★ Community

No student may be unlawfully discriminated against in any school programs, activities or in facilities usage because of the student's sex (gender identity, gender expressions, and non-conformity to gender role stereotypes), color, religion, profession, or demonstration of belief or non-belief, race, national origin (including limited English proficiency), ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, homelessness status, sexual orientation, age, or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability. Harassment is a form of discrimination and shall not be tolerated in the District. It is the responsibility of administrators, staff members and all students to ensure that student discrimination or harassment does not occur. (SPASD District Policy JB)

The Sun Prairie Area School District ("District") does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of sex in any education program or activity that the District operates. Title IX's requirement not to discriminate in any education program or activity extends to cover, but is not limited to, District students, certain admissions processes, and District employment. To access the relevant policy and procedures you can go to the District's website. For inquiries regarding how Title IX and the federal Title IX regulations apply to the District please contact the District's Title IX Coordinator, (the Director of Student Policy & School Operations, 501 S. Bird Street, Sun Prairie, WI 53590, 608-834-6624 or by email at [titleixcoordinator@sunprairieschools.org](mailto:titleixcoordinator@sunprairieschools.org).)

The Sun Prairie Experience is published by the Sun Prairie Area School District. The District Support Center is located at 501 S. Bird Street, Sun Prairie, WI 53590. 608-834-6500  
Visit the District website for more information: [sunprairieschools.org](http://sunprairieschools.org)

## **2023 UPCOMING DATES**

### **FEBRUARY**

- **Friday, February 17:** NO SCHOOL

### **MARCH**

- **Monday–Friday, March 20–24:** SPRING BREAK

### **APRIL**

- **Tuesday, April 4:** Election Day
- **Friday, April 7:** NO SCHOOL

### **MAY**

- **Saturday, May 13:** Sun Prairie East Prom
- **Saturday, May 20:** Sun Prairie West Prom
- **Friday, May 26:** May be used as a make-up day if we exceed 3 snow days this year.
- **Tuesday, May 29:** NO SCHOOL

### **JUNE**

- **Friday, June 9:** Last Day of School (K–12)

#### **Dismissal Times:**

Elementary Schools: 11:10 a.m.

Middle Schools: 12:05 p.m.

High Schools: 12:15 p.m.

Prairie Phoenix Academy: 11:50 a.m.

- **Friday, June 9:** High School Graduation
- **Tuesday, June 20:** First Day of Summer School



### **JULY**

- **Thursday, July 20:** Last Day of Summer School

### **SEPTEMBER**

- **Tuesday, September 5:** First Day of School (Grades K–12)