

CommunicAT

FALL 2020



ISD 110 VOTERS WILL DECIDE FUTURE OF WACONIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS



PAT DEVINE
Superintendent,
Waconia Public
Schools, ISD
ONE10

As I begin my seventh year as superintendent of ISD ONE10, I am so thankful to live and lead in a school district that values education so much. I continue to be amazed and proud of all that the ONE10 community is able to deliver for our students. The staff, students, parents, and community work so well together to deliver one of the best educational environments in the area.

It is so impressive how we always come together as a ONE10 community in times of adversity—such as returning to school in a pandemic. The ONE10 community rallied to provide the best education possible considering circumstances have changed the way we teach and students learn.

ISD 110 is proposing an operating levy of \$410 per student. If approved, Levy 2020 would generate approximately \$1.7 million per year for 10 years, and allow us to continue with our district as we know it. The impact on an average-priced home of \$350,000 would be about \$19 per month.

Even if Levy 2020 is passed, it would still put the district below the metro average of voter-approved operating levy funding.

Here is a summary of the financial situation that explains the need:

- › ISD 110 has a history of not going to voters for operating expenses unless they are needed. It had been 11 years between the 2007 and 2018 operating levy requests.
- › The fund balance was spent down from 2014–2018 to maintain our high-quality programs without having to ask taxpayers to consider an operating levy.

› Waconia Public Schools is doing exceptional work with a lean budget.

› ISD 110 is in the bottom 1% in general education funding from the state, ranked 328 out of 330 Minnesota school districts due to not qualifying for categorical aid.

› ISD 110 receives about \$7,100 per student in general education state funding, where some districts qualify for much more funding, up to \$13,000 per student.

› The state of Minnesota has not kept up with the cost of living since 2003 and is underfunding school districts by over \$500 per student.

› Waconia Public Schools pays more than 75% of all other Minnesota school districts for cross-subsidy expenses. Cross-subsidies in school districts range from \$116 to \$1,668 per student.

› We are paying approximately \$1,200 per student out of general education funds to cover the state- and federal-mandated special education expenses.

› The new special education funding formula caused our cross-subsidy to almost double and pushed us into Statutory Operating Debt (SOD).

› While in SOD, districts must take action to balance their budget and create revenue to pay down the debt. ISD 110 has made over \$2 million in reductions to our operating budget over the past two years. These reductions are unsustainable and, without extra revenue, in the next round of cuts, we would have to eliminate programs that the community has come to expect.

Please remember to vote on Nov. 3.

LEARN MORE

On the web: www.isd110.org

Email: Levy2020@isd110.org

Call: **(952) 442-0611**

If you would like Superintendent Devine to present to your group/organization, call: (952) 856-4514.

We will continue working with legislators to change the special education funding formula in an effort to reverse the negative impact on ISD 110. We have an awesome special education program, and we are extremely proud of what we all accomplish together in ONE10's special education program. We do remain hopeful that the state legislature will work on a fix for those few districts like ISD 110 that were deeply affected by the change. Until then, we will need local revenue or deep cuts to maintain our budget.



IF VOTERS APPROVE THE OPERATING LEVY REQUEST

- › Additional social-emotional and mental health support
- › Increase advanced class offerings
- › More authentic learning experiences
- › Continue offering high-quality programming
- › Maintain current class sizes
- › Continue offering electives
- › Add programming based on student interests and passion



IF VOTERS DO NOT APPROVE THE OPERATING LEVY REQUEST

The district would face budget cuts of at least \$1 million to the 2021-22 school year—this would be in addition to \$2 million in budget cutbacks the district has already made:

- › Less social-emotional and mental health services
- › Eliminate programs identified through community input
- › Larger class sizes
- › Fewer elective and activities offerings
- › Staff reductions

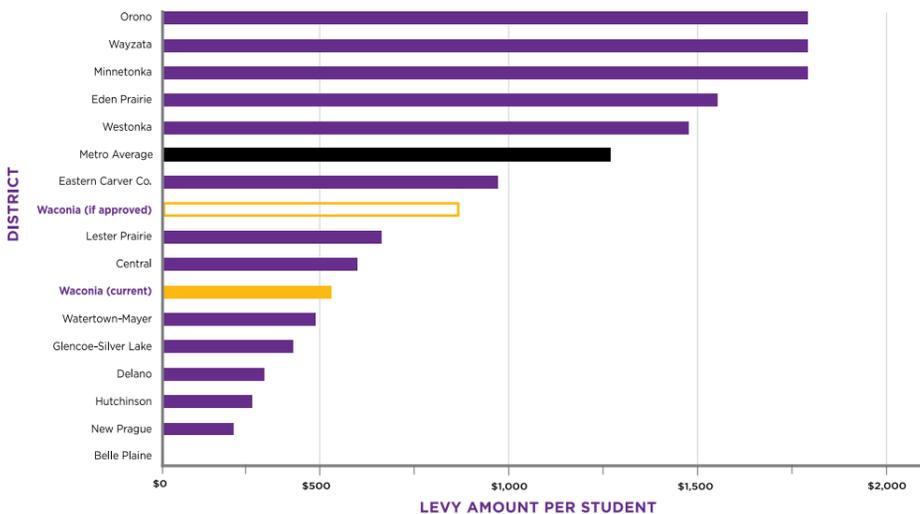
On Nov. 3, 2020, residents of Waconia Public Schools (ISD 110) will vote whether to increase the district's operating levy, which would provide more local support for Waconia's educational programs and student support services.

Ind. School District No. 110
512 Industrial Blvd
Waconia, MN 55387

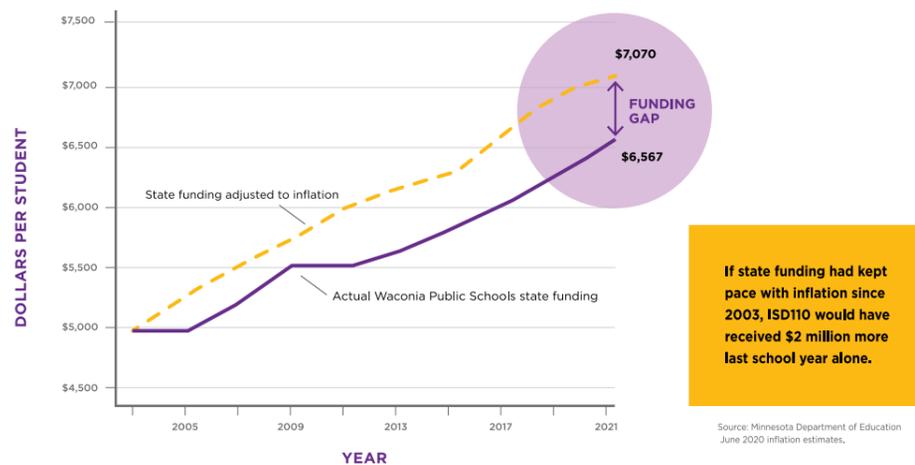
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VOTER-APPROVED LEVY COMPARISONS (2020-21)

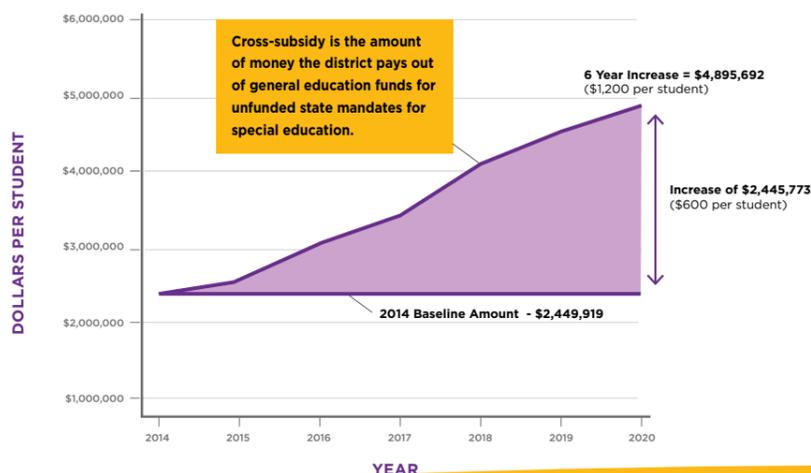


STATE BASIC GENERAL EDUCATION FUNDING PER STUDENT, 2003-2021



We have been talking about a potential operating levy for a year and a half; hopefully, you are well aware that ISD 110 is asking voters to decide on an operating levy in the November election. We realize this is not an ideal time to come to voters, but we wanted to make sure voters had a voice in the quality of our schools moving forward.

ISD 110 SPECIAL EDUCATION CROSS-SUBSIDY COSTS



Serving Waconia, St. Bonifacius, Minnetrista, Victoria, and New Germany and the townships of Benton, Camden, Dahlgren, Hancock, Hollywood, Laketown, San Francisco, Waconia, and Watertown

ISD 110 MINDFUL OF SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING DURING 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR

Through the story of *Ish* by Peter H. Reynolds, Laketown Elementary school counselor Lindsay Butzer helps fifth graders process feelings and experiences during this most unusual school year. As students connect with the young artist in the story who struggles with his drawing not looking exactly as planned, Mrs. Butzer provided space for students wrestling with similar challenges—around school feeling more “school-ish.”

Now, more than ever, ISD 110 school counselors are supporting ways that students, staff, and families can acknowledge and positively grow through situations where school (or life) may not feel or go exactly to plan. To equip students with skills to better manage emotions, problem-solve, and learn academically, counselors continue regular delivery of classroom lessons using the Second Step social-emotional curriculum in grades K-8, for students on site or learning virtually. As needs change for students, families, and staff, school counselors also deliver supplemental lessons in class settings, to small groups, or to individuals. Here’s what’s happening across the district, in the counselors’ words.

At Bayview, Laketown, and Southview Elementary Schools, staff are placing greater emphasis on school-wide community and building relationships, both in person and in distance learning classrooms, according to Roslyn Breyfogle, Bayview school counselor. “One of our hopes for our students this year is to learn how to ‘Breathe’ and ‘Pivot,’” Ms. Breyfogle shared. “What does this mean? We know the school year isn’t the same as every other year. We are uncertain if there will be more hurdles to overcome. Instead of letting our feelings run the show, we need to ‘Breathe’ in our favorite way. Next, we need to learn to ‘Pivot,’ which means to come up with a Plan B and use our flexible thinking. We can do this! WE ARE 110!”

Waconia Middle School counselors Patricia Henslin and Samantha Deren are helping middle schoolers practice and master the new “how-to” rules of school in a global pandemic. These include strengthening the muscles of “executive functioning”—how to organize homework, how to keep track of what’s due when, and how to manage your time best during distance learning

days. Families and staff collaborate in teams and with students on ways to set up middle schoolers to succeed.

At Waconia High School, three school counselors meet virtually and in person with students who may be navigating challenges with emotional health and the different structure of school this year, according to Dana Henn, high school counselor. “Many times, students struggling with mental health are also struggling with their academics. We work together to formulate a plan to get caught up, prioritize work, and brainstorm ways that distance learning can be more productive,” Ms. Henn described.

In addition to organization and time management resources, high school counselors created a WHS Guidance Office group on Schoology that contains mental health support and mindfulness resources. WHS is also fortunate to have a dedicated Carver County therapist who meets with students during the school day, both in person and virtually, to work on mental health.

EDIBLE CLASSROOM GROWING STRONGER THAN EVER

Edible Classroom managers Michele Melius and Rachel Deodhar share summer and fall 2020 success stories in the Edible Classroom, Orchard, and Apiary.

We benefited from the help of five high school interns this summer—Caleb McMullen, Nathan Langer, Jenna Fawcett, Andrew Weinand, and Grace Steffen—and were they needed! To date, we now have 54 raised beds in the garden! We had great success with our rhubarb, strawberries, squash, herbs, peppers, cucumbers, tomatoes, potatoes, peas, and beans.

We added two more levels, with steps to help with runoff and to encourage students to walk in and around that area.

The apiary now has two beehives. They add fun and interesting ways to enrich seventh- and eighth-grade curriculum. Mrs. Melius suited up and used Zoom to introduce distance learners to the bees and show all the parts of the hive.



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 During COVID-19, we recognized the importance of having an outdoor classroom area, so we repurposed old benches and tables so that everyone could be six to 12 feet apart. They turned out beautifully and have been used by all middle school grades. The berm (our pollinator garden) has never looked better.



The 54-tree orchard on the high school campus provided a bountiful harvest of Honeycrisp apples, Parker and Luscious pears, Whitney crabapples, and sour cherries.

CAFÉ 110 TO OFFER FRESH HAMBURGERS THANKS TO PEARL

Through a matching grant from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Café 110 was recently able to purchase Pearl. Staff like to name some of their specialized kitchen machines after family members, hence, Pearl. This new technology can make homemade hamburgers and, after being thoroughly cleaned, can also punch out cookies by the dozens.



“Our goal at Café 110 is to do as much scratch cooking as possible,” Barb Schank, director of Nutritional Services, said. “With Pearl, we are now able to locally source our beef and make our own hamburgers.”

The district partnered with Churchill Reserve farms from Cannon Falls to get 100% grass-fed, hormone-free beef for the district.

“With this partnership, we will be able to make roast beef, hamburgers, and ground beef for chili, and we plan to cut the steaks into strips for Philly cheese steak sandwiches,” Schank explained.



ISD 110 TEACHING AND LEARNING DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Kathy Oliphant, director of Teaching and Learning, and Jeff Jeska, director of Technology, describe the district's planning and delivery of safe student instruction in the current pandemic.

This summer, the governor of Minnesota directed public school districts to prepare three safe forms of learning to be used in response to various conditions created by the COVID-19 pandemic. In early August, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) issued guidelines for how schools should hold classes for the 2020-2021 school year:

1. In-person learning – requires creation of as much space between students and teachers as feasible, without being held strictly to 6-foot enforcement of social distancing during primary instructional time in the classroom.
2. Hybrid learning – requires strict social distancing and capacity limits of individuals in school facility to 50% maximum occupancy. Sufficient social distancing of at least 6 feet between people must occur. If distancing cannot be achieved in a space, occupant reduction must occur.
3. Distance learning – always an option for all students and may be implemented district-wide if local COVID-19 metrics reach a certain level.



Based on the district's Safe Learning Plan for 2020-21 and COVID-19 cases in Carver County, ISD 110 students may transition between the three forms of learning: In-person, Hybrid, and Distance learning.

When ISD 110 designed instructional delivery for the school year, the district committed to returning K-6 students to school in person, every day, while following necessary safety protocols. For grades 7-12, the district aimed for continuity via a hybrid learning model consisting of twice-per-week, in-person student instruction on the same days of the week (either Monday/Thursday or Tuesday/Friday), divided out in two groups, by last names A-K or L-Z.

As of this fall, approximately 8%, or 350 students of the 4,036 total enrollment, opted for distance learning—an option for any ISD 110 student. Current teaching staff shifted to dedicated online instruction to provide the same rigorous content consistent with what is happening at school. Elementary students who are distance learning receive regular, live interactive feedback, and they may personalize work time to fit individual needs in a “learner driven” approach.

ISD 110 families may move to a different learning model at designated timepoints during the school year. At the first timepoint, 22 students moved from hybrid to distance, and 27 moved from distance to hybrid.



Achieving Consistency through Creative Use of Staff and Space

In the Waconia Elementary School Learning Pod Model, K-5 students currently attend every-day, in-person class at the student's elementary location in a “learning pod.” A learning pod consists of two classrooms of students split across three learning spaces. Two licensed elementary teachers and one educational assistant (a learning coach) provide support, supervision, and instruction. Art and Spanish are fully taught online; physical education and music are in-person, and band is offered in-person in grade 5.

Waconia Middle School sixth graders also currently participate in every-day, in-person learning on site. This helps incoming students connect with teachers and peers while acclimating to a new building with increased responsibilities.

The Waconia Learning Pod model meets MDH safety requirements for both hybrid and in-person learning. So if (or when) Carver County's COVID-19 situation changes, students experience minimal disruption to learning because they can maintain familiar student-teacher relationships within required spaces and schedules. Oliphant expressed appreciation for the administration's creative planning, the flexibility and tireless work of teaching staff, and the educational assistants who have been instrumental in supporting the new model so effectively.

What Happens on Wednesday?

At the elementary level, one Wednesday per month, all students have a distance learning day, as teams across the district collaboratively pace out curriculum standards and instruction for the next month. This ensures cohesive, equitable instruction across elementary school buildings.

For seventh through 12th graders, every Wednesday is designated as a Distance Learning Day for students. During this time, classes are run on a compressed schedule for the morning, so students may check in with teachers regarding questions or difficulties. Afternoons are reserved for professional collaboration to plan instruction for shared courses, or for teachers to pace out the future week's instruction to be delivered to students in-person, at home on one of their days away from school, and full-time distance learning students. Instruction content is driven by local curriculum and pacing guides that also embed state and/or national standards where applicable.

Schoology and Seesaw Connect School and Home

Seesaw (early childhood - grade 2) and Schoology (grades 3-12) are online “learning management systems” (LMS) through which students and families access course materials, assessments, and instructional resources. These learning warehouses organize course



content and communicate course expectations.

Not all school districts have the benefit of established learning management systems. Although ISD 110 has used Schoology for seven or eight years, with distance learning this spring, Schoology/Seesaw became central for students and families learning at home. Teaching staff developed more appreciation for the software's abilities to streamline classroom processes.

That's not to say Schoology is perfect. Locally and nationwide, there is pronounced feedback calling for more consistency in how Schoology is used. Sometimes, it feels “we are all over the board on resources that classroom teachers are using . . . which feels challenging and frustrating from an end-user standpoint for families and kids,” director of Technology Jeff Jeska noted. The district is aiming for Schoology to become more user-friendly, to decrease stress for families and students learning on their own. Furthermore, if distance learning becomes the only option, teachers will be ready to shift quickly to Seesaw and Schoology instruction resources.



Dedicated Attention to Virtual Learning

ISD 110 has many teachers up to the challenge of engaging students who aren't in a school building. Laketown Elementary physical education teacher Steve Marsden, who also instructs distance-learning fourth and fifth graders, encourages kids to be active through live Zoom workouts twice per week. Kids calendar-track activity, and access jump ropes, bean bags, and basketballs from Mr. Marsden, to work on the same skills as in-person students.

Spanish instructor Jose Martinez and his elementary students embrace technology to produce Padlet recordings that contain personal introductions in Spanish (“Sobre Mi”). Students create and share Google slides containing written and video descriptions of themselves, using Spanish. Señor Martinez even playfully produced a YouTube conversation with the llamas of Waconia (they happen to speak Spanish.)



Pandemic's Effects on Future of Education

Families and students know it can be difficult to be a self-directed learner. “The art of a good teacher is to be able to engage kids in a classroom setting, so this is the challenge of trying to do our best in a virtual way,” Oliphant said. “I am thankful we can return students in grades 7-12 to class twice per week. It underscores the value of learning from your peers, in a collaborative environment. Many kids learn best this way, and would probably say it's what they miss most about the school setting . . . but nothing looks as it did before and we have to do the best we can and know that every public school student across the nation is in a similar scenario.”



Jeska recognizes the pandemic will change education in many ways. Traditional classroom settings may not look the same. This may be a catalyst for change—and some people will feel this is good and some will not. Learning software holds the potential of providing more effective and timely feedback, so a student can better know what she did, how she did, then further learn or re-learn specific material. Learning software allows for differentiation and pacing, and we are all individuals who process differently.

WACONIA COMMUNITY EDUCATION BACK ON THE FIELD AND IN THE CLASSROOM

For nearly three months, the fields, courts, and classrooms that are usually buzzing with community education activity were silent. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, everything through Community Education was on hold.



“We started offering a few things in June and then built it from there. But now, we are back up and running, offering in-person and virtual enrichment classes as well as sports and preschool.”

TIFFANY NELSON
Community Education Director

In the fall, kids were playing volleyball, football, and soccer.

“It went really well,” Nelson added. “We didn’t allow fans for volleyball, and they did not play any other towns—it was all intermural. We were just glad to be able to get them on the court to have that game experience.”

For football, there was limited contact as it was all flag football. Soccer and football games did allow limited fans, but they needed to wear masks and social



distance. Now that most of the fall sports have wrapped up, looking ahead to winter, basketball and wrestling will start up mid-November to early December. Nelson said that they are trying to follow the guidelines of the Minnesota State High School League, and the MSHSL continues to tweak protocols.

“New guidance keeps coming in, such as now we can have some fans in the stands for indoor events. So we are working on figuring out how all of that will work,” Nelson concluded.

Involvement in Waconia Community Education programs is not up to last year’s participation rate, but it is getting there as Nelson and her team continue to look for new and interesting ways to engage with the community.



WILDCATS GET BACK ON THE COURT AND FIELD

In this year of unpredictability, activities that were once rescheduled for the spring were allowed to happen this fall. Even though seasons were shortened and COVID-19 protocols placed many restrictions on student-athletes and their fans, it was still great to see Wildcats back in action. *Photos Courtesy: Waconia Yearbook*

FOOTBALL



VOLLEYBALL



(L-R) Amelia Herold, Adorissa Kaeding, Aubrey Mair, Kate Ulrich, Maya Lindstrom, Madeline Lage.

GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY - SECTION 2AA CHAMPIONS

We are very fortunate to have some of the hardest working gals in the state at Waconia High School. The key to becoming section champions and a state qualifying team is the off season and the year-round grind to continue to “put in the miles”... this group of girls collectively ran thousands of miles to make this possible for their team. Not only are these gals freaky fast...they are also some of the most humble, kind and intelligent kids around...an absolute joy to work with as a coach.

All-Conference Honors - Amelia Herold, Adorissa Kaeding, Aubrey Mair, Kate Ulrich, Madeline Lage

All-Conference Honorable Mention - Maya Lindstrom

BOYS' CROSS COUNTRY

Very proud of our guys team this season. Although the “headlines” don’t show it...this is also a hard working group of kids who have made great advances individually. Like the gals’ team, it is also a very deep team of talent and this year it didn’t come

together for us. We have some young guns, lead out by Mason Behrens who is ready to lead and take this team into contention if they decide to do it. We had a great time working on their fitness...yet another awesome year running around the course.

All-Conference Honors - Mark Rud

All-Conference Honorable Mention - Mason Behrens

- Christian Gilbert, Coach, Boys' and Girls' Cross Country



BOYS' SOCCER

2020 Wright County Conference Champions

Waconia boys' soccer team earned a share of the Wright County Conference Championship for the first time since 2013. Waconia split the title with Orono, with both finishing conference play 6-0-2.

We asked the players to get in the weight room and compete, not just go through the motions but to actually get bigger, faster and stronger so we could compete with the state powerhouses in the postseason and not just the regular season. We are thrilled to get a conference title and we truly deserve what we worked for and the bounces we got along the way weren't luck, the good bounces were created by our hard work this past year.

- **T.J. Seim, Boys' Varsity Soccer Coach**



GIRLS' SOCCER

2020 Wright County Conference Champions

The Waconia High School girls' soccer varsity team won their fourth consecutive Wright County Conference title with an undefeated record of 7-0-2. Continuing on the success of the previous five years, the girls' varsity program has amassed an impressive 39-1-5 record in Wright County Conference play, with their lone loss dating back to October 1, 2016.

In a year in which health concerns forced the program to limit interactions and traditions such as team meals and bonding activities, players have rallied together around common goals of success on the field and support outside of the field. Reinventing ways to create synergy, the work of the leaders within the team has been tireless."

I couldn't be prouder of every player and coach in our program. By working together to overcome adversity, we are proudly embodying our district motto and proving to all that We Are One10!

- **Ivan Woyno, Girls' Varsity Soccer Coach**



GIRLS' SWIMMING AND DIVING

We have been able to compete in seven duals against Wright County Conference opponents and have an overall record of 3-4. We are gearing up for our Section Meet on Saturday, Oct. 24, which will serve as our only post-season meet. We are led by our captains, AJ Bierbaum, Ella Swanson, Jerica Warrington, Claire Canfield, and Jordyn Grotbo.

- **Ashley Westphal, Girls' Varsity Swim and Dive Coach**



GIRLS' TENNIS

Our first season was a great success. We started the year with 25 girls with 0 match experience so Coach Jensen and I knew we had our work cut out for us. But with a lot of hard work and perseverance the girls improved every step of the way. Each girl challenged herself to get better every day, and we loved seeing their improvement in all 11 matches they had.

Our season was highlighted by three individual varsity wins. The #2 doubles freshmen Avery Heyer and Ashley Bryfczynski won their second-ever match against a strong Jordan team. Our #2 singles, sophomore Rebeca Michels, won her first-ever varsity match against Glencoe-Silver Lake. Finally, in our section match against future yearly opponent Chaska, we had our #1 Doubles team of freshmen Avery Heyer and Ashley Bryfczynski win in a thrilling 2-set victory. We had many other individual wins in our junior varsity as well, with each win coming with gigantic smiles of joy and understanding their hard work in practice was finally paying off.

It was great to see leadership from beginning to end with the few upperclassmen we had. Our two captains were juniors, Allison Bloem and Kaethe Ludford. They stepped up and brought the girls together to become the amazing team they currently are. The majority of the team were underclassmen, with our entire varsity doubles teams comprised of freshmen by the end of the year. We did have two Seniors, Rehema Schiro and Sarah Golden, who got to join us for their only year in the program.

All of this would not have been possible without the leadership and amazing energy brought to the team by our assistant coach, Mike Jensen. He kept the girls working hard and learning, all while having fun. I thank all the girls and Coach Jensen for being a part of the inaugural season of Wildcat Girls' Tennis; we will all have these amazing memories to share for the rest of our lives.

- **Jeff Bessire, Girls' Tennis Coach**

Photos Courtesy: Waconia Yearbook

EDUCATING THE ONE10 WAY DURING A PANDEMIC

Once the 2020–2021 school year got underway, it was quite apparent that all of the planning and brainstorming that occurred over the summer was definitely paying off.

“This is a year like no other, with a lot of unknowns as this is all new to everyone,” Pat Devine, superintendent, Waconia Public Schools, said.



Once the plans were in place, district staff knew that it was a work in progress and continue to look for ways to adapt and improve. As was overheard in one of the multiple planning meetings, “This is what we know as of today, and as more questions are asked, more questions are discovered and the questions are endless.”

The questions of all the unknowns are ongoing as ISD 110 continues to search for the best solutions. Staff are working hard to refine and hone protocols and procedures, all in an effort to deliver the best education in the safest environment possible.

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All of our ONE10 staff could not be prouder of our students. They are all adapting to this new style of education so well.

At all age levels they wear their masks, they social distance, and they wash their hands and use hand sanitizer on a regular basis to keep everyone as safe and healthy as possible.



So many things about how students attend school had to change—starting with how to get to school, to where to sit in class, to how to stay separated in the hallways, to lunch, recess, and then getting back home.

“It was really important for us to be able to offer in-person school Monday through Friday for parents with kids in kindergarten through sixth grade,” Devine commented.

“ We are also very pleased with how the hybrid learning model is going, even with its challenges. We are always looking for ways to improve, and we know that distance learning can be difficult for some students. That is why we are constantly assessing how we are doing and then looking for improvements.”

PAT DEVINE
 District 110 Superintendent

Waconia Public Schools continues to monitor students and staff for any reported positive COVID-19 cases. ISD 110 had a few cases reported and the investigative process to ensure the safety for all is working. The district is working closely with Carver County Public Health, Minnesota Department of Health, and the Minnesota Department of Education. Information is shared on a “need to know” basis, and all those in close contact to the virus receive communication. This is done to protect the privacy of everyone involved. The district has let staff, parents, and students know that if they are aware of a positive case through other communication channels and they have not been contacted by us or Carver County Public Health, that is good news for them, because chances were minimal that they could have contracted the virus at school.



The state came up with a formula that locally tracks the amount of new COVID cases per 10,000 in a 14-day period. When calculated, that produces a number. Please see the graph below for how those numbers break down and why we are able to stay in our current model of education.

At Waconia Public Schools, our Learning Pod model for grades K-5, along with our sixth-grade in-person model, meet the guidelines for both in-person and hybrid scenarios so, hopefully, ONE10 won't have to be moving models too much for these grades. Currently, in grades 7-12, ONE10 is in a hybrid model and the Carver County COVID-19 numbers show the district will stay in that model for some time.

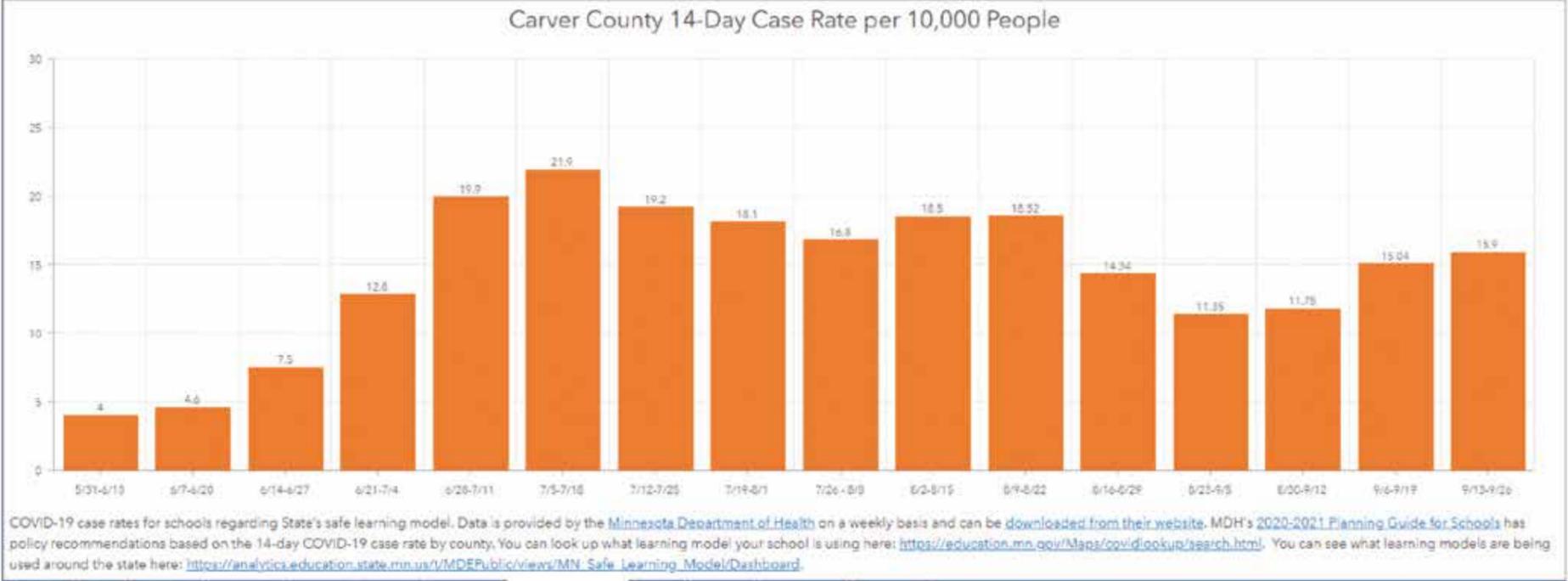
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Devine concluded, “I continue to be amazed how our students, staff, and parents have rallied and adapted in these uncertain times. We truly are ONE10!”

TWO WACONIA SENIORS RECOGNIZED NATIONALLY

Two Waconia High School seniors have been recognized by the College Board for their performance on the PSAT test.

Kate Ulrich was recognized as a National Merit Semifinalist, which places her in the top 1% of the 1.5 million juniors who took the test last year. Kate will advance to the next round of the selection process in hopes of being named a National Merit Finalist.

Bram Fitzsimonds was recognized as a National Merit Commended Scholar, which places him in the top 3% of the 1.5 million juniors who took the test last year.



ISD 110 PRINCIPALS DESCRIBE START OF SCHOOL YEAR 2020-2021

Elementary school principals Ann Swanson (Bayview), Keith Baune (Laketown), and Khuzana DeVaun (Southview), along with Shane Clausen (Waconia Middle School) and Mark Fredericksen (Waconia High School) provide answers to questions below, as the district embarks on this most unusual school year.

How are students at different age levels in your building reacting to the start of the school year?

Elementary Principals: It has been an extremely positive start to the school year for our K-5th grade students. The students and staff are excited to be back in school, either in person or distance learning. The students are smiling under those masks and are happy to be learning with their friends in their pods, at specials, and recess.

WMS Principal Clausen: Middle school students overall are genuinely excited to be back in school interacting with staff and friends. They really missed each other. Seventh- and eighth-grade students often reply they want to be here more than two days a week, although they understand why they can't.

WHS Principal Fredericksen: Students have been fabulous; they've been willing to roll with every change and modification we've made. They've adjusted to wearing masks and have embraced our efforts to keep the classrooms and building sanitized and safe (even though they've struggled with the concept of social distancing). While there's far less energy in the building with only 650 students here at any time, students have demonstrated resilience and perseverance.

How are teachers feeling about adapting the instruction for the model(s) in your building?

Elementary Principals: K-5 staff are meeting monthly to adapt the Curriculum Pacing Charts and Outcomes. At the start of the year we put a strong emphasis on language arts, math and social-emotional. The older grades are incorporating science and social studies. All teams, across the three Elementary Principals, work together to keep the expectations the same for all students, including distance learners across the district.

WMS Principal Clausen: Adapting instruction or distance learning has required the re-writing of many lessons and activities. Working collaboratively and sharing tasks among teacher teams has helped, but teachers still feel very short of the additional time needed to modify the curriculum. Distance delivery takes more time, and time spent with on-site safety protocols take away from instructional time and there has to be scrutiny on what must be taught versus what may be taught. Assessments in a virtual/electronic world have also become a challenge to ensure the accuracy of what students have learned and how to best intervene when learning hasn't happened.

WHS Principal Fredericksen: The hybrid model has proven to be more challenging than we expected. The A-B schedule, along with full-distance students, has required teachers to juggle and balance curriculum and expectations continuously. Teachers have been working incredibly hard, with many of them describing it like being back in their first year of teaching.

Is the expectation the same for the delivery of curriculum to students, no matter what the delivery model?

Elementary Principals: We have the same expectations for both learning models; however, the instructional models differ due to the manner in which students are accessing the curriculum. The expectation for meeting or exceeding the MN Standards remains the same for both learning models.

WMS Principal Clausen: There was an expectation in the Spring of 2020 to limit classes to 30 minutes of instruction and learning activities per day during all distance learning. The 30-minute limitation is not the case this year, and teachers are planning to deliver close to 90% of the curriculum they cover in a standard school year. It is estimated that 10% of usual instructional time will be spent on safety protocols and time lost to distance learning in the full distance and hybrid models in seventh and eighth grade. The typical brain development of middle-school-age children is a challenge for students in full-time distance and hybrid learning models. At home, students have struggled to be independent learners, stay engaged, and organize themselves. Executive functioning skills are a major stage of brain development during these middle school years.

Might expectations shift, with shifts to different learning model(s)?

Elementary Principals: When students shift to the 100% Online Distance Learning Model, it is expected that parent support for daily learning will increase. Young children need parent support to log into their learning modules and complete their assignments. Young children also need support with time management and developing independence in driving their own learning.

WMS Principal Clausen: Yes, if we were to move to distance-only instruction, the amount of curriculum coverage would most likely diminish. A move to fully on-site for seventh and eighth would allow for more instruction and better learning.

What social-emotional supports do you see being commonly provided to students in your building?

Elementary Principals: At all three elementaries we utilize the Second Step curriculum for social-emotional learning. With students returning after being out of the building for six months, all staff have worked hard to meet students where they are at, to meet their social and emotional needs. The first unit of study in the Second Step curriculum was a community-building unit that allowed staff to start building strong relationships with all of their students.

WMS Principal Clausen: Last year we started the implementation of our Connect Advisory program to provide WMS students opportunities to connect with themselves, their advisor, their classmates, and their community. In the area of "connecting with themselves," we purchased Second Step, an anchor curriculum resource, to support instruction of social and emotional skills to middle school students. During spring distance-learning, we eliminated Connect instruction to alleviate teacher and student expectations and to allow greater focus on academics learning. Reflecting on the experiences of last spring, we felt that the components of Connect needed to be in place this year to better support students during these challenging and unpredictable times. Connect advisors have between 20-22 students assigned to them for a 25-minute daily class period both live and virtual. Second Step lessons are grade-level specific and delivered by all Connect teachers with consistency. Each child has an advisor to help them stay on track and offer support, instruction, and guidance on a daily basis.

Could you describe how staff have been leveraged in new/different ways, to support the current learning model(s) in your building?

Elementary Principals: District 110 made a commitment to design an instructional model so that our youngest learners could attend school every day while following MDH & MDE safety protocols. We were able to achieve this for grades K-6 through creative design and resourceful staffing. Adjustments to staffing that were necessary to create this model include reading specialists and Title I staff being reassigned to other teaching/assistant duties, including learning pod educational assistants and a full-time distance learning teacher for each elementary grade level. Overall, it has been an all-hands-on deck approach, and the entire staff has been very flexible and working extremely hard to ensure each day runs smoothly.

WMS Principal Clausen: Clearly, our teachers and support staff are doing an amazing amount of work and stretching themselves to make this year the best possible learning experience for students. We have examined our standard operations to determine what can go away to create more time for teachers to create, communicate, and correct student work. There is clearly increases in all three with the need to create distance learning activities, answer increased student and parent questions through email and Schoology, and evaluate learning progress. Teachers clearly need more time this year and are finding it is challenging—there is only so much time teachers have in a day. The Wednesday all-distance learning days are invaluable. We have also eliminated some teacher collaborative times and reduced morning meetings to a bare minimum. Our sixth-grade model has required us to develop up to four additional sections, and we were able to accomplish this without any major additions to staffing. We are fortunate to have three large group spaces that allow learning groups to safely "double-up" with the addition of a second licensed teacher or an Education Service Professional (ESP). A few of our ESP schedules have been adjusted to better support the sixth-grade instructional model.

Do you have other observations to share about the start of this school year?

Elementary Principals: The start of the school year reminds us of the power of human connections—the feeling of belonging, feeling secure, and developing deep relationships with others. District 110 staff has done an incredible job of understanding the importance of a child's emotional well-being. All staff have made it a priority to find new ways to build warm, caring, and long-term relationships with our students and their families. Compliments to District ONE10 staff for your commitment and mindfulness in ensuring our children love coming to school each day, In-Person Learning or Distance Learning. We are truly grateful!

WMS Principal Clausen: WMS students have been amazing at learning and following the safety protocols of social distancing, mask-wearing, and sanitizing surface areas in their learning environments. We don't expect to avoid positive COVID cases, but we do expect to isolate them. The students and staff have exceeded the expectations of making the safety of themselves and others the priority. We are fortunate to have such respectful and caring students and an amazing and flexible faculty. It was challenging to make schedule adjustments to open school safely, but now that we are up and running, the new routines are starting to take shape and feel more normal every day.

WHS Principal Fredericksen: The year has been unlike any other in our history. We've been forced to re-examine and adjust every routine and procedure that we've used in the past, and as soon as a new procedure is developed we've made more adjustments. It's been like building a sandcastle at the beach; as soon as you think it's done the next wave comes through and washes it away. As challenging as that's been, many of the modifications have been improvements on what we used to do. Looking at all the changes, it's hard to imagine that education will ever look and feel exactly the same.



Students and staff at the **Waconia Learning Center** have adjusted well to changes in routines and procedures, according to lead administrator Tim Koschinska. Students receive nearly every-day, in-person instruction (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday) via the hybrid model. Wednesdays are dedicated distance days, for students and staff to gain experience with distance learning, should the need arise to pivot to that model.

Students in the **Waconia Transitions** program are attending two days per week in person (Wednesday and Thursday), with some distance learning, according to Paul Tordoff, director of special education. The program is working well for the students, and it has provided access to a couple of community employment locations.

Sue Forster, early childhood program supervisor, sees smiling, happy children who are thriving in school and parents who are relieved to have a consistent schedule and help with teaching important lifelong skills that are learned in early childhood. Staff have donned personal protective equipment, remained vigilant with social distancing and cleaning protocols to ensure safe learning environments, and embraced technology to deliver in-class lessons to students learning at home via live online streaming—all while teaching the district's youngest learners about ways to identify and appropriately cope with feelings.



Social stories have been developed to teach about changes in our world that may cause fear, anxiety, worry or sadness. We are making connections between peers to provide opportunities for friendship skills to develop.”

SUE FOSTER
Early Childhood Program Supervisor

CommunicAT

FALL 2020



KEITH BAUNE NAMED PRINCIPAL OF LAKETOWN ELEMENTARY



Keith Baune was named principal of Laketown Elementary over the summer. Baune moves over to Laketown from Waconia Middle School where he was the assistant principal.

How has the year been going so far?

I am so appreciative of the warm welcome I have received from the Laketown family, it is truly an honor and a privilege to be the principal at Laketown Elementary. The past few months have really highlighted the amazing partnership between ISD110 and our community. I am so proud of all the hard work, creativity, and dedication displayed by staff and families that allowed for Laketown learners to return to the building this fall. Although many procedures are different, the commitment to ensuring a safe and positive learning environment for all students remains.

What is your professional experience?

I am entering my 14th year in education, including time as a fifth grade teacher, a district-wide instructional coach, and the previous three years as the assistant principal at Waconia Middle School.

I received my bachelors in elementary education from Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall, Minnesota. In 2010, I completed my Master's Degree in Educational Leadership at Concordia-St. Paul and completed my Specialist Degree and K-12 Principal Licensure in 2012 from Minnesota State University-Mankato.

What is your hope for Laketown?

My hope for Laketown is that we continue to be a place where every child feels a sense of belonging and can grow academically, socially, and emotionally. As we state each day in the Laketown PRIDE pledge, Laketown elementary is a community of learners where every child matters and every moment counts.

Please share something about your family.

I feel blessed and am grateful to live and work in the Waconia community with my wife, Aleela and our two children. Aleela is in a manager role for a local medical device company in the field of heart rhythm clinical research. Our daughter, Adella, is currently a third-grader at Laketown and our son, Eli, is 4 years old and a future Wildcat. As a family, we enjoy spending time together exploring everything that Carver County has to offer. We can often be found on the trails of the Carver Park Reserve and the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum.

GO WILDCATS!

SIX CANDIDATES RUN FOR THREE OPEN SCHOOL BOARD SEATS

The Waconia School Board has three open seats on the seven-member board. Cathy Thom is stepping down after starting on the school board in January 2009. The four-year term for Dana Geller, who is currently the school board chair, is up. The third seat, currently held by Ken Varble in a temporary role, is also on the November ballot.

The *Waconia Patriot* newspaper did a question-and-answer session with all candidates; the link is on the website, isd110.org. The district also posted videos on the website of candidates who submitted them.



Alycia Myers



Mark Murphy



Dana Geller



Seth Waterhouse



Amanda Hayford



Luke DeBoer

2020-2021 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

- 3 Election Day
- 6 End of Quarter 1 - WMS
- 24 End of Trimester 1 - K-5/WHS
- 25 No School K-12
- 26 No School K-12
- 27 No School K-12
- 30 No School K-12

DECEMBER

- 10 WMS Conferences
- 23-31 No School K-12
Winter Break

JANUARY

- 1 No School K-12
Winter Break
- 18 No School K-12
- 21 End of Quarter 2 - WMS
- 25 WHS Conferences (Evening)
- 27 WHS Conferences (Evening)

FEBRUARY

- 4 K-5 Conferences
- 5 No School K-12/K-5 Conferences
- 15 No School K-12
- 25 WMS Conferences (Evening)

MARCH

- 1 WMS Conferences (Evening)
- 4 End of Trimester 2 - K-5/WHS
- 5 No School K-12
- 8-12 No School K-12
Spring Break

APRIL

- 2 End of Quarter 3 - WMS
- 5 No School K-12
- 19 WHS Conferences (Evening)
- 21 WHS Conferences (Evening)

MAY

- 30 Graduation - Class of 2021
- 31 No School K-12
Holiday

JUNE

- 2 Last Student Day

For All Academic Calendars and High School Activities Calendars visit isd110.org