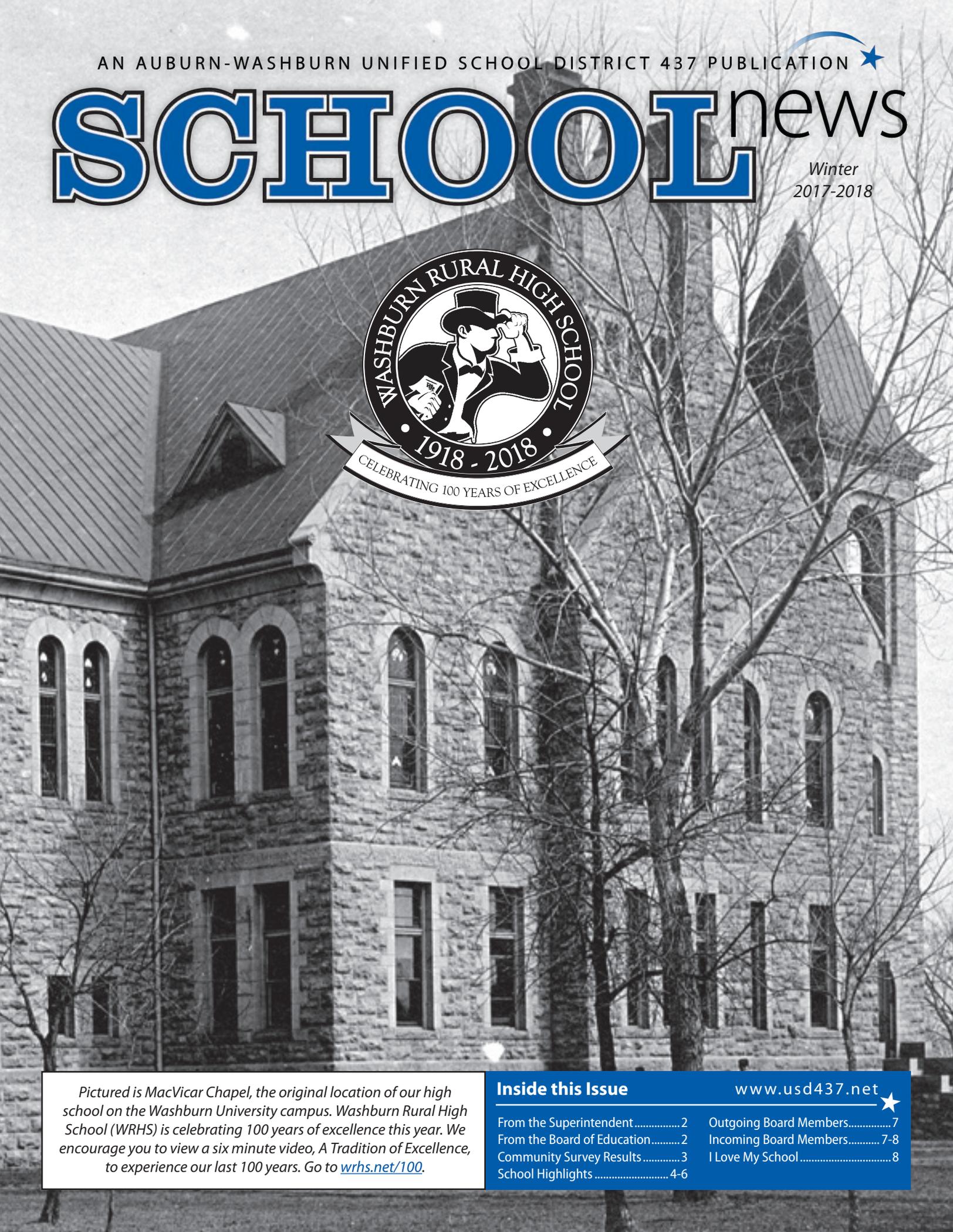




SCHOOLnews

Winter
2017-2018



Pictured is MacVicar Chapel, the original location of our high school on the Washburn University campus. Washburn Rural High School (WRHS) is celebrating 100 years of excellence this year. We encourage you to view a six minute video, A Tradition of Excellence, to experience our last 100 years. Go to wrhs.net/100.

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Dr. Scott McWilliams, *Superintendent of Schools*

Meeting Student Needs through At-Risk Funding

Legislators approved a new school funding formula last legislative session. For the first time, the formula fully funds all-day kindergarten. This is a wonderful addition to the formula because it provides financial support to our youngest students.

In Auburn-Washburn, we have offered full-day kindergarten to families since 2002 and have absorbed the unfunded one-half of the program in our budget since that time. Now that the new formula pays for full-day kindergarten, the dollars that have been “freed up” in our budget have been reallocated to address “at-risk” student needs.

At-risk is defined by things like: students not working on academic grade level, failing courses, high rate of absenteeism, insufficient mastery of skills, and social, emotional, and behavioral needs that cause a student to be unsuccessful at school. We

are now able to provide additional educational opportunities that are above and beyond what is offered to all students to address at-risk needs. Using the dollars reallocated to address at-risk needs, we have integrated the following positions and strategies for the current 2017-18 and upcoming 2018-19 school years:

- Academic interventionists in grades K-8 to provide individual student and small group instruction,
- Full-time social workers in each school to address social, emotional, and behavioral student needs,
- Assigned school psychologists to each building,
- Instructional facilitators to support curriculum, instruction, and assessment strategies,
- Strategically assigned behavior interventionists,
- Increased early childhood opportunities,
- College and career development coordinator to identify and align student career interests with local businesses and potential internships,
- School-based mental health facilitator to provide support and leadership to counselors, social workers, psychologists, and principals.

▶ [continued on page 4](#)



Trisha Brooke-Fruendt, *Board of Education President*

Welcome to the second semester of the 2017-2018 school year! As this year’s Board of Education President, I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to a few of our outgoing Board of

Education Members and welcome to our new Board Members.

With the elections now taking place in November, this has changed the timing as to when Board of Education member’s terms begin and end. This year we had three members whose terms expired. These were Dr. Terry Carney, Jim Gartner, and Amanda Keifer.

Dr. Terry Carney served on the Board of Education for eight years. He served on the Capital Outlay sub-committee and the Construction sub-committee for the last bond issue. Representative Jim Gartner served on the Board of Education for 10 years.

He served on the Budget and Audit sub-committees. Amanda Keifer served on the Board of Education for two years. Amanda applied for her position after Harold Houck resigned from his position. Amanda served on the Personnel and Strategic Accountability sub-committees. I and the other Board of Education members would like to thank all three of them for their dedication and service to the board and to the district. They will be missed.

Let me welcome our three new Board of Education members: Jacquie Lightcap, Bryan Smith, and Michael White. All three were elected in the November election and took the oath of office on January 8, 2018. I and the existing Board of Education members are looking forward to getting to know the new members and working with them on current and future issues. We are excited and look forward to representing USD 437 as your Board of Education.

Thank you for your support and we look forward to Inspiring, Challenging and Preparing – Every Child Every Day.★

Auburn-Washburn Community Feedback Survey Results

Auburn-Washburn used the services of a valid, external source to conduct a Community Feedback Survey to determine current views on the district's performance, Strategic Plan 2021, and other topics of interest. From mid-December 2017 through early January 2018, a statistically reliable telephone survey was held with 400 randomly selected heads of household living in the Auburn-Washburn School District. We are extremely pleased with the survey results overall, but will thoroughly review them to seek opportunities to improve.

Respondents were asked to give a letter grade of A, B, C, D, or F on the 15 factors listed to the table on the right. Using a 5-point weighted scale rating, factors that scored 3.80 or higher are the statistical equivalent of a "B" (or better).

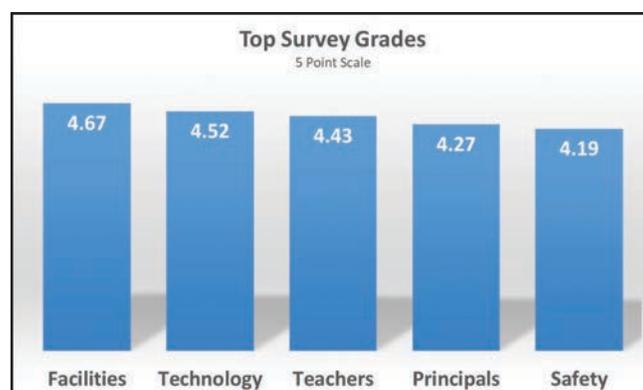
Factor	5-point scale rating
Quality of school facilities	4.67
The quality of the technology available to students	4.52
Quality of education overall	4.48
Performance of district teachers	4.43
Preparation of students for college, vocational or career training, or employment	4.35
Performance of school principals	4.27
Safety of students in the district	4.19
Performance of the superintendent	4.19
The district's record on fulfilling promises	4.13
Efforts of the district to report its plans and progress to citizens	4.08
Class size, meaning the number of students in each classroom	4.05
Performance of the Auburn-Washburn Board of Education	4.05
The district's responsiveness to citizen concerns	3.98
Value received for the tax dollars spent	3.97
Efforts of the district to involve citizens in decision-making	3.67
Overall grade = 4.22	

Respondents showed strong support when asked to grade their perception of the district's performance at the two-year point of the district's five-year Strategic Plan. The table below shows how each goal ranked from the highest score to the lowest.

Strategic Plan 2021 Goals (Student Goals and/or District Priorities)	5-point scale rating
Goal 6: To provide safe and well-maintained facilities	4.41
Goal 1: To challenge every student academically, to improve academic performance	4.39
Goal 3: To recruit, hire, develop, and retain student-centered staff	4.26
Goal 2: To prepare students to develop Skills for Success (i.e. soft skills, life skills needed after high school)	4.18
Goal 5: To implement efficient, financial, operational, and energy conservational practices	4.17
Goal 4: To provide timely, accurate, and relevant information to stakeholders	3.92

Lastly, the decision made three years ago to stop accepting students who reside outside the district's boundaries appears to have resonated well with the cross-section of residents who participated in the survey. A total of 79% called it either "an excellent decision" or "a good decision."

The review the complete survey, please visit the district website at usd437.net. ★



Auburn Elementary & Jay Shideler Elementary

Last fall, Art Teacher Charleen Stessman created a project tied to the eclipse for her students at Auburn Elementary and Jay Shideler Elementary. The project involved recycled plastic bottles in either warm colors (sun) or cool colors (moon). The bottles were then cut into spirals and assembled all together into a hanging sculpture. The finished work represents the two sides of the eclipse.

The students started the project by studying Glass Artist Dale Chihuly. Stessman said the project sparked many conversations among students about the impact light has on color and objects. Like many art experiences, she said the students explored and discovered concepts that were far from where they set out.

The project involved all students in grades K-6 at the schools. It gave them the opportunity to work together to create one collaborative work of art. The sculptures were hung in common areas in the school when completed. Long after the project, students were still being impacted. Stessman said students would come to her and say “I saw the eclipse today” as the sculpture would turn and catch the light, slowing moving from sun to moon. ★



Indian Hills Elementary

About 145 students at Indian Hills are involved in a project that is bringing generations together. One time each month, kindergarten and first grade classes visit their neighbors in the Aldersgate Village retirement community. Visits are rotated so that the residents get visitors once a week. Kindergarten Teacher Lizabeth Ginder said, “When we visit, we generally sing a seasonal or holiday song, read a book, make a craft, and visit with our friends for about 40 minutes.”

“The students love going. They love to go see the residents,” said Kindergarten Teacher Jamie Bazil. “They are really bonding with the residents now and talking to them more and more each time they go.” She said they call them “Grandmas and Grandpas at Aldersgate.” Bazil said the residents also enjoy the visits. “You can tell by their facial expressions that we have brightened their week by visiting them.” She said the students’ parents also are happy that they



are teaching the kids the importance of giving back to the community. ★

From the Superintendent

► *continued from page 2*

Our approach to meeting at risk needs is collaborative, data driven, and strategic. The strategies listed are providing additional, targeted support to students and they align perfectly with the student goals outlined in the district’s Strategic Plan 2021. We are thrilled that dollars have been reallocated in the new school funding formula to better address at-risk needs. ★

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To receive the lowest possible postal rate, *School News* is sorted by postal routes for delivery. All routes within the Auburn-Washburn school district receive copies. Because some routes cross into adjoining school districts, some residents outside of USD 437 may receive the publication. We regret any inconvenience this may cause. ★



Farley Elementary

A new therapy dog is making a “splash” at Farley Elementary. Splash is a standard poodle that joined the Farley family at the start of 2017-2018. Fourth Grade Teacher Karah Hight is Splash’s handler. Splash has added so much to the culture and climate of the school according to principal Dr. Marcy Cassidy. Splash can sense when a student is anxious and provides comfort and has a great calming effect. Students love petting Splash, reading to her, and just having her around. Both the students and the adults in the building have benefited from her, according to Cassidy. The Farley Elementary PTO provided funding to help the school acquire Splash, and they are grateful for the tremendous support they have provided. The school is sponsoring a “Splash of Kindness” where everyone can recognize acts of kindness with a paw print. ★



Pauline South Intermediate

This February, Pauline South is hosting a STREAM Fair that will feature presentations, projects, and displays in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, art, and math. “Our first goal for students is that they will become aware of and explore various aspects of science, technology, engineering, art, and math in areas that interest them,” said Terry Hime, instructional interventionist. Hime has worked to create the fair along with Lisa Duncan, Angie Triggs, Amy Pavlik, Tannus Juencke, Taylor Lynch, and Robin Dixon. “We want our students to be creative and show their classmates and community members what their interests are and use their creativity to display what they have learned,” Hime said. The STREAM Fair will provide a forum for students to share their unique abilities and also demonstrate how STREAM is an important part of their life. “We love having opportunities to interact with people in our community, especially when it involves celebrating how great our Pauline South students are and the wonderful potential they all possess,” Hime said. ★



Pauline Central Primary

Third graders at Pauline Central had a special reason to read the book *Wonder* and then take a field trip to see the movie. Makayla Hainline is a PC student who has Treacher’s Collins syndrome, like the story’s character. Makayla was featured on WIBW-TV news and in the *Kansas City Star*. At her mom’s request, Makayla’s teacher Jolleen Thorpe read the book to her class. “As we got further into the book, I thought it would be a great opportunity if our students could go see the movie,” Thorpe said. To help with funding the field trip Thorpe reached out to Advisors Excel who generously pledged to cover half the cost. The PTO provided additional funding to make the trip possible for all 130 third graders. “The students were thrilled,” said Thorpe. “I really do believe that this was such a positive opportunity for both Makayla and all of our students. I hope all of our students go forward seeing the positive in everyone, and more deeply appreciate each other’s differences.” ★



Wanamaker Elementary

The English Language Learners (ELL) program at Wanamaker Elementary School continues to grow. “I currently provide services for nine different languages representing students from 11 countries,” said ELL teacher Nicole Quiett-May. “One of the most positive benefits I see for the students in our program is with their self-esteem,” Quiett-May said. “Academics aside, having a safe place to go during the day where they can ask questions, speak without worrying someone will notice their mistakes and be with other kids who ‘get it’ is very relaxing to the kids.” One of Quiett-May’s favorite experiences with ELL students takes place almost every year when the first snow falls. “I love when I have a new student, since most come from a country that doesn’t get snow. I love watching their faces as they finally see the snow coming down,” she said. The school spelling bee demonstrates how far and fast the students advance academically. “Out of the top six finishers this year, four were ELL students,” Quiett-May said. “I think that is pretty awesome!” ★



Washburn Rural Middle School

Students at Washburn Rural Middle School are getting the chance to create video games. Seventh graders are introduced to game design and the software used to build games. Eighth graders get a more in-depth experience through the a three-week project called Video Game Design. This is part of the Technology and Engineering Applications class taught by Alex Willis.



“For the first project, the students recreate the classic game of Pong,” said Willis. Designing a maze is the second project where students begin to use problem solving skills as they design the layout and obstacles within their game. Students use a software by Microsoft called KODU. It is a free download from Microsoft.

“This is great for the students who want to continue designing games at home,” Willis said. For the final project,

students choose from either an adventure, puzzle, sports, or racing game and work through the design and creation. They also create a game cover for packaging mockup. Students share their creations with fellow students for testing and feedback. Students who complete the Video Game Design project will have a basic understanding of video game design. This includes multiple learning skills that includes

reflection, logical thinking, questioning, imagining, analyzing, evaluating, problem solving, and improvising.

“Toward the end of the semester, we have a game day,” Willis said. “We spend the class period playing the games that the students have made. It gives them a chance to show off their work!” ★

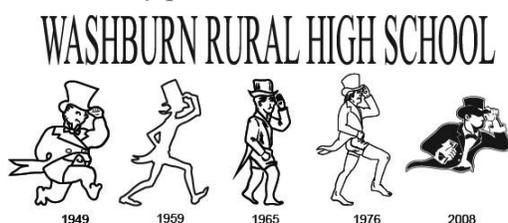
Washburn Rural High School

As patrons of Washburn Rural High School, we are inviting you to participate in one of the most significant milestones that our school will ever experience: our Centennial Anniversary. The last century has been steeped in tradition, success, and pride. We are confident that tomorrow will bring even greater achievements for our students and community.

The graduates of Washburn Rural High School have enriched American life through professional contributions in the fields of medicine, entertainment, law, public service, education, and research. Year in and year out, our athletic and activities programs distinguish themselves on state and national levels. Additionally, we are routinely recognized as one of the finest high schools in the United States by publications such as U.S. News & World Report or Newsweek. While all of these are outward signs of our commitment to excellence, what defines and sustains us is the community we serve and the support we are given. Now we are asking the community to

join us in securing the promise of the next century for our students.

In conjunction with all of the events and celebrations which will occur throughout the coming year, we are undertaking an ambitious fundraising initiative on behalf of our students. Every dollar we raise will go to benefit our students in one of two ways: through the establishment of a scholarship for first generation college and technical school students and through supporting a technology implementation in an after-school program that directly benefits elementary students in our school district. With the ever-increasing costs of post-secondary education and rising levels of child poverty, both initiatives are timely and necessary.



Visit wrhs.net/100 to see how you can contribute to our fundraising efforts. There you can also catch our special centennial video and get complete details on the WRHS 100th anniversary celebration. ★

Thank you to our Outgoing Board of Education Members



Dr. Terry Carney

The most rewarding part of my time on the Board was serving on the Construction review committee during the bond construction projects. It was a little more of a time commitment, but I enjoyed brainstorming ideas to help get projects done on time. However, I've been most enlightened by the fact that school boards may help offer

some insight or guidance to school district protocols, but the real work is done by administrative staffs. And, getting to compare 437 to other districts, we are very lucky to have the right people in the right places. So, on behalf of my kids, myself, and the board members I've worked with, thank you to you and everyone at SEC.

resources from teachers and the administration staff. The board was also very involved in creating a new five year strategic plan, which is the district's roadmap for continued success. The most rewarding experience though was the ability to interact with all the great teachers and classified staff that we have in our district. They are all true professionals and have the same goal, which is to have the best school district in the state. I am very lucky to have worked with my fellow board members, bright dedicated people who put children first. I also want to thank the administration for all the help and providing the information, so I could make the best possible decisions for the district. Thanks for the opportunity to serve.



Jim Gartner

There were numerous rewarding experiences while serving on the Auburn Washburn School Board for almost 10 years, but let me mention a couple. One would be overseeing the allocation of the bonding that the patrons approved in 2007.

It was very rewarding to see all the improvements that we made throughout the district with a new elementary school and additions to all schools including many infrastructure projects. Another would be the introduction of the common core curriculum, which included many hours of research and



Amanda Keifer

The most rewarding thing for me in serving on the Board of Education was the opportunity to be an advocate for all students regardless of their situation. It was an honor to represent our patrons who reflect a myriad of backgrounds. I was honored to serve and am so thankful I had the opportunity to get to know our amazing administration. I appreciate the day-to-day effort our administration, teachers, and staff commit to our district's students and could not be more impressed. We are so fortunate to be a part of one of the best school districts in the state, made so, by those efforts. Thank you again for the opportunity! ★

Welcome to our Incoming Board of Education Members



Jacqueline Lightcap

My mom, dad, grandmother, and great-grandmother were teachers, so education was always a priority in our home growing up. Now that I'm a parent, I have gained even more respect and appreciation for the work of our public schools. I have two students who attend school in the district (one is in 8th grade and the other in 5th grade). I have been very involved in their schools since our oldest child started kindergarten, and I currently serve on the Executive Board of the PTO at Farley. As I learned more about what the school board does by observing the meetings, I realized I wanted to be more involved on a district-wide level. I spoke

with Jim Gartner, the current seat holder for my position, and found out he was not going to run this time (after many years of excellent service) so the timing seemed to work out!

We have so many excellent things happening in our district right now, and I want to do what I can to support that and add my voice to the decision-making process. I think the perspective of a mom with students in the district is pretty important. I also think many parents, just like me, are so busy with the day-to-day activities of our children that we often don't feel like we have time to know what the school board is doing, let alone the larger statewide issues that affect how the Board's decisions are made. I hope parents, teachers, staff, students, and community members know that

► *continued on page 8*



Incoming Board of Education Members

► *continued from page 7*

their school board members are accessible and approachable and willing to hear their concerns and questions. We are a voice for our community and welcome input.



Bryan Smith

My kids had a great experience in the school district. With my youngest graduating from high school last spring, I felt I was in a position to give back to the school district. I also have experience parenting a child with Asperger's and felt I could offer some insight on this issue as a

school board member.



Michael White

I have always had a strong interest in being a member of the 437 Board. I have been involved with the PTO and Site Council at the high school and decided I wanted to be more involved with the Board of Education. As a volunteer coach and church youth leader, I have always had a desire to help young people and thought this would be a good way to help them succeed. ★

I Love My School

We want to hear your stories about how Auburn-Washburn staff have made a difference for you and your students. For a limited time, we are collecting short video clips of parents, students, and patrons describing what makes Auburn-Washburn schools great.

So get out your phone and record your comment now and send it to communications@usd437.net. We will compile some of the comments and share them on our websites, Facebook, Twitter, etc. ★

