



THE BEACON

A Community Newsletter from the
Port Washington-Saukville School District

WELCOME TO THE BEACON!

I am honored to serve as your superintendent and proud to be a resident of Saukville, Wisconsin. Over the past nine years, I have grown significantly as an elementary school principal and director of teaching and learning in the Grafton School District.



As I step into this new role, I am thrilled to find the Port Washington and Saukville communities to be incredibly supportive and thriving. Experiencing this from within the Port Washington-Saukville School District has been overwhelmingly positive. The warm welcome from community members, including invites to speak with local service groups and outreach from former administrators and teachers, has been deeply appreciated.

In the past three months, I have set a goal of meeting with 100 stakeholders in 100 days. Thanks to the enthusiastic participation of our community, I exceeded this goal well within the timeframe. Our conversations have been rich and supportive, highlighting the strong traditions and accomplishments within the Port Washington-Saukville School District. There is so much to be proud of!

As I move forward in my role, I am focusing on communication, fiscal responsibility, and the Wisconsin Career Readiness Standards: Career Ready, Life Ready, and Learning Ready. While "Learning Ready" has always been a core focus for schools, the other two components ("Career Ready" and "Life Ready") are more recent areas of emphasis.

Our mission, "We educate all children to reach their greatest potential," means different things for each student. It is essential to provide opportunities that address these varied needs.

In the next phase of my transition plan, I will work with teachers to define indicators for success in the "Life Ready" and "Career Ready" strands of the Wisconsin standards. This process will involve collaboration with you—our community. What do we need from our schools and students? How can we best prepare them for a changing future? I look forward to working with our community, staff, and students to shape these aspects of our strategic plan moving forward.

The Beacon is our new community newsletter and will be our primary means of keeping community members informed about developments in PWSSD. However, please feel free to check out our website and district Facebook page to stay engaged with the exciting things happening in our district throughout the year. Thanks for reading!

Be Great Today!

Michael McMahon

www.pwssd.org

FALL 2024

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Community Connections



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PWSSD Conducts Key Safety Trainings

On June 26–27, first responders from the City of Port Washington, the Village of Saukville, and Ozaukee County joined PWSSD principals, other administrators, and staff to receive training on the Standard Response Protocol (SRP) and the Standard Reunification Method (SRM).

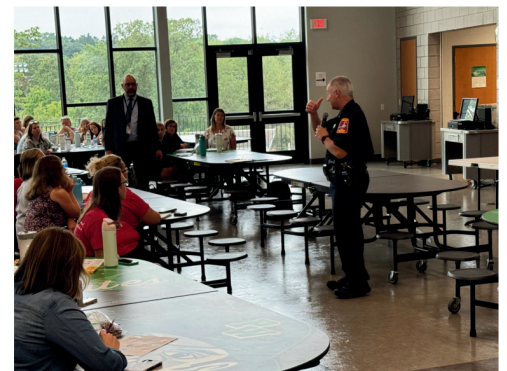
This training was conducted by the “I Love U Guys” Foundation. Over 40 individuals—including firefighters, police officers, sheriff’s deputies, emergency services personnel, and school staff—took part in the training.

Our district has adopted SRP. Students and staff will be trained this fall, and they will practice and drill the protocol. It’s based on an all-hazards approach as opposed to individual scenarios. Five specific actions can be performed during an incident, and a directive follows the action. Execution of the directive is performed by the active participants, including students, staff, teachers, and first responders.

The SRP is based on the following actions: Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuate, and Shelter. You will see signs with this information in every classroom and common spaces in the halls.

One crucial aspect of crisis response is the reunification of students with their parents or guardians in the event of a crisis or emergency. The Standard Reunification Method equips our schools with the necessary methods for planning, practicing, and achieving a successful reunification.

We are committed to ongoing planning and ensuring we have all the necessary resources in the event of a reunification. We will continue to train more staff and conduct another exercise in the spring. For more information about the “I Love U Guys” Foundation, visit www.iloveguys.org.



Community Members Invited to Take Survey



The Port Washington–Saukville Board of Education needs our community’s input on when to address the next phase of our facility improvement plan!

In 2015, voters approved a referendum that paid for additions and renovations at the high school and Dunwiddie Elementary. Over the past two years, the district reconvened the Community Operations Committee (COC), made up of staff, parents, community members, and local business owners, to define which projects should be included in the next phase.

This group helped prioritize district-wide needs that were not addressed in the 2015 referendum, such as Saukville Elementary, Thomas Jefferson Middle, and the swimming pool.

To learn more about our Community Operations Committee’s work, check out the [“Future of PWSSD” Page](#) on our website.



PWHS Concert Choir to Perform in Milwaukee

The Port Washington High School Concert Choir has been selected to perform with the Milwaukee Symphony at the Bradley Symphony Center! This opportunity was made possible through an audition process of the choir last year.

This year's theme is "Brilliant Bernstein," and the choir will combine with two other choirs from Wisconsin and the Milwaukee Symphony to perform Bernstein's "Chichester Psalms" and selections from "Candide."

"I feel extremely honored for the invitation to perform with the Milwaukee Symphony and can't wait to work with the directors and other choirs. This opportunity gives us students a chance to improve our musicianship and perform with one of the best symphonies in America. I am grateful our district and community support the arts and this valuable program."

- Hadley Schwenzen, Choral Officer

The performance will take place on February 26, 2025 at 10:15 a.m. at the Bradley Symphony Center, located in downtown Milwaukee.



PWHS Seniors, Graduates Earn Scholarship Awards

Our high school continues to increase scholarship awards available to high school seniors. This past June, we again reached an all-time high in funds awarded to both high school seniors and PWHS graduates from previous years.



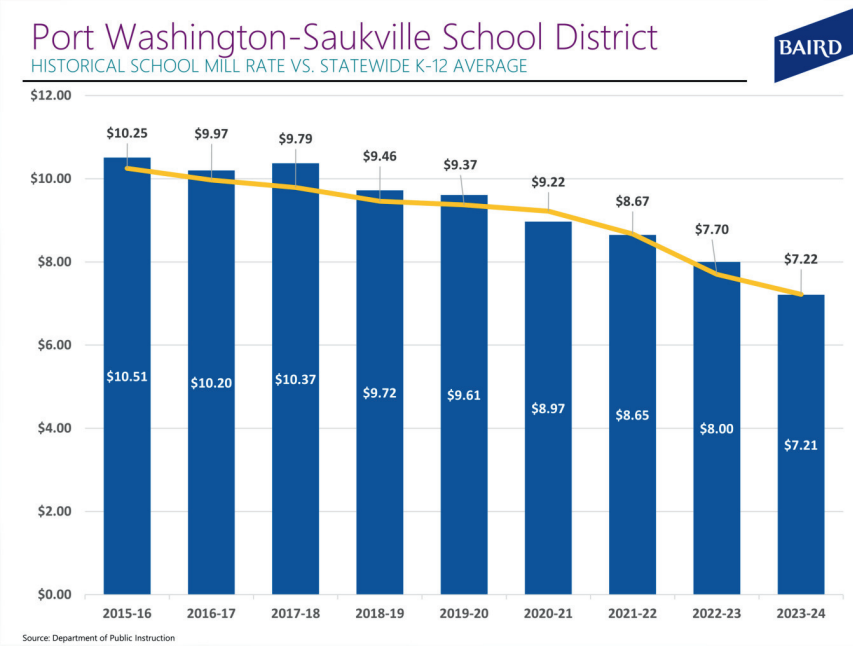
At the high school level, we were able to award over \$370,000, and at the college level, we were able to award over \$112,000.

"To see the continued growth in our scholarship foundation is yet another sign of our two communities supporting youth in our schools," said Mark Bichler, PWHS Scholarship Program Chair. "Our graduates of PWHS will someday fully understand the head start they have received from this program. Students are being rewarded for their hard work and interest in areas that also help to give back to the communities of PW-S."

District Property Tax Rate Continues to Decline

The mill rate (or property tax rate) for the Port Washington-Saukville School District continues to decrease, sitting at \$7.21 per \$1,000 of equalized property value for the 2023-24 school year. That's more than a 31% decrease from the 2015-16 school year.

Overall, the district's mill rate remains consistent with (or a little below) the state average on a yearly basis.



Building Highlights

Principals share their favorite highlights from the first weeks of school!

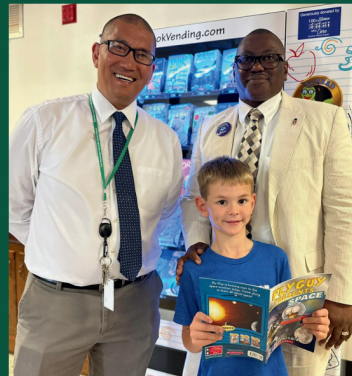


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Saukville Elementary

SES held a ribbon cutting for its new book vending machine, made possible through funding by the Saukville Parent Association, the Ozaukee County 100+ Women Who Care, and the Richard Schulze Foundation.

The Assistant State Superintendent, Dr. Williams, and Kirsten Coenen from the Ozaukee chapter of 100+ Women Who Care joined students and staff to officially unveil this exciting new resource!



Dunwiddie Elementary

The Kind Kids Day fundraiser, organized by the Dunwiddie Parent Connection, is off to a great start! Students and staff have already raised nearly \$14,000 and students have completed 205 acts of kindness. Pictured right is the donation tracker by grade level and the Tree of Kindness, created to show the acts of kindness pledged by students.



Lincoln Elementary

LES had an amazing start to the 2024-25 school year. Students came to school ready to learn on the first day. They were greeted by this wonderful group of educators!



"Teachers have three loves: love of learning, love of learners, and the love of bringing the first two loves together." ~ Scott Hayden

Thomas Jefferson Middle School

TJ Middle School hosted the annual Cowbell Classic on September 12. Twelve teams of 747 runners from around the area gathered for the race event on the Simplicity grounds.



Port Washington High School

The annual PWHS Freshman Respect Retreat was hosted by the Youth Frontiers on Tuesday, September 10. The tradition is essential in building community among students, with relationships anchored in one of the district's core PBIS pillars: respect.



PWHS AP Nate Hinze Wins 3rd Gold!

Congratulations to PWHS Assistant Principal Nate Hinze on achieving his third Paralympic gold medal after winning the men's wheelchair basketball game against Team Great Britain at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games on September 7, 2024!

Scan the QR code to read the full story!





Congratulations to our Retirees!

The following staff members retired at the end of the 2023-24 school year. We thank them for their years of service to PWSSD, and we wish them the very best in their retirement.

| Name | Building | Years of Service |
|--|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Hal Landing, Custodian | Saukville Elementary | 36 Years |
| Pamela Higgins, Teacher | Port Washington High School | 34 Years |
| Julie Dornburg, Administrative Assistant | District Office | 33 Years |
| Amy Greisch, Teacher | Thomas Jefferson Middle School | 33 Years |
| Wendi Muehl-Sabinash, Teacher | Port Washington High School | 30 Years |
| Kristine Hansen-Kajtna, Teacher | Port Washington High School | 27 Years |
| Karen Gall, Teacher | Lincoln Elementary | 26 Years |
| Susan Penkwitz, Coordinator | District Office | 25 Years |
| Jeffrey Callies, Teacher | Port Washington High School | 25 Years |
| Jocelyn Voeller, Teacher | Saukville Elementary | 18 Years |
| Terry Krueger, Teacher | Port Washington High School | 6 Years |



Left to Right: Amy Greisch, Julie Dornburg, Karen Gall, Jeff Callies, Jocelyn Voeller, Wendi Muehl-Sabinash, and Pam Higgins

Not pictured: Hal Landing, Kristine Hansen-Kajtna, Susan Penkwitz, and Terry Krueger

"I am very proud to have been an educator in the Port Washington-Saukville School District for 33 years. It is a place filled with many opportunities for students to thrive and grow. My own children attended these schools, and I couldn't have asked for a better environment for them thanks to all the dedicated educators. Wishing this year's students and staff a great school year!"

- Amy Greisch, Retiree

Congratulations to our 25-Year Service Award Recipients!

Left to Right: Cyndi Makos, Jeff Callies, Connie Hildebrandt, Joy Nirode, Judy Heinzen, Kathy Tubbs, and Kristen Levy

Not Pictured: Laura Didier and Mike Perket



Welcome, New Teachers & Staff!



Celebrating Jonas Fechner's Academic Achievements

Congratulations to Jonas Fechner on earning a perfect score of 36 on the ACT! Following graduation, Jonas plans to attend a four-year university, with potential options including several East Coast schools, universities in California, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is deciding between pursuing engineering or business.

"Engineering fascinates me because I've always been strong in math and physics, but the business classes I've taken have opened me up to finance or economics," he says. "I know that, whatever I choose, I'll enjoy it."

In addition to his ACT achievement, Jonas is a National Merit Scholarship Program Semifinalist. This places him among the top 1% of U.S. high school seniors. Jonas now has the chance to become a finalist and potentially earn a National Merit Scholarship, with winners being announced in 2025.

Best of luck, Jonas, in all your future endeavors!



PORT WASHINGTON SPIRIT WEAR STORE

GRAND OPENING SALE

20% OFF Sitewide Code **SPIRIT20**

SIDELINE STORE

Exclusions apply.

Scan the QR code to check out the grand opening sale of our online district store!





Port Washington-Saukville School District

100 W Monroe Street
Port Washington, WI 53074



2024-25 PWHS Athletic Hall of Fame Inductees

Port Washington High School is proud to announce the inaugural Athletic Hall of Fame, recognizing the outstanding achievements of individual athletes, coaches, and distinguished contributors who have played a vital role in the success, tradition, integrity, and promotion of PWHS athletics.

The Hall of Fame inductees were honored during halftime at the football game on Friday, September 13, and at a formal banquet ceremony held on Saturday, September 14, at PWHS.

Congratulations



Al Urness



Beth Huston



Carol Goeden



Duffy Brelsford



John DeMerit



Ray "Buzz" Buivid



Sam DeMerit



Shirli Flack



Visit our website to learn more about the PWHS Athletic Hall of Fame program and to submit your nomination.



Paint on Port: 'Branching Out'

Check out the latest on the Paint on Port community mural project! Scan the QR code to watch an amazing video of this project in action.

