

White and Blue Review

SPRING 2012 🐾 *Education... That's the Point*

Dear Family and Friends of the Mineral Point School District,

Spring is nature's way of saying "let's party."

~ Robin Williams



As I write this column, the quote above reminds me that I am really looking forward to spring, opening the windows, and hearing birds sing again. Let's enjoy all of the spring beauty that mother nature brings our way.

Recently, I had the opportunity to meet and interact with many in the community through my coffee with community, town hall meeting, letters, and phone calls. I am energized by a community that desires to be informed and knowledgeable about our schools and takes Pointer Pride in education. Upon accepting the role of superintendent it was shared with me that this community supports their schools and I would most certainly agree.

I want to make families aware that the open enrollment window has been extended. For families now living in our district who may be considering moving out of the district but wish for their children to remain in the Mineral Point schools or for parents from other districts wanting to enroll their students in our district, you may apply online at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/psctoc.html> through April 30th. We also have hard copy applications available in the District office at 705 Ross Street.

Please contact my assistant, Jean Flanagan at 987.3924 for information on open enrollment. The process is very simple, but the timeline is also strict. Any applications coming in after the deadline cannot be accepted per the open enrollment laws. So please mark your calendar and let us help you if you need assistance.

In closing, winter has been good to us if you like mild weather.

As my lovely wife, Tiffany, pointed to a golden willow tree, I was reminded of the lines of Robert Frost's poem *Nothing Gold Can Stay*:

*Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour...*

I look forward to seeing you at music and sporting events and other school activities that kick spring off. I regret that I will not be at the FFA banquet as I am scheduled to be out of town prior to learning of the event. I look forward to joining the banquet next year. 🐾

Kindest Regards,

Luke Francois

It is truly an honor to be Mineral Point's superintendent.

Luke Francois

Luke.Francois@mp.k12.wi.us | 987.3924

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Creating Fine Arts



Allison Chitwood (1st Grade)

District Mission: Our mission is to offer a high quality education that empowers all students with the knowledge and skills to become responsible citizens.

District Value Statements:

- Educational partnerships involving community members, families, students, and staff.
- Student achievement, personal growth, and lifelong learning.
- A safe, supportive, and accepting environment in which to learn.

Message from Mitch Wainwright

Principal, Mineral Point Middle/High School

March Madness is used to describe all the excitement generated around college basketball games that turn unknown teams, players, and coaches into heroes or heartbreakers. Each year millions of people watch their favorite teams hoping for a little miracle. Can my team make it to the “Final Four” or do I start dreaming of next year?



March madness is not just a college experience though. Each year high schools across the state go through an incredible journey of their own. Winter sport seasons come to an end, spring seasons begin, underclassmen hit the end of the winter doldrums and the seniors anxiously count down the final days in high school. Scheduling is underway, college applications and scholarship forms are being filled out. Letters of recommendation are being sent off to the far corners of the earth. Budgets are squeezed for the current year and trimmed for the coming one. Paperwork piles high on everyone’s desk as deadlines for everything under the sun seem to come due now. As students, staff and parents get run down sickness spreads like wildfire. Students are stretched, families are stretched and every time you get a chance to sit down to catch your breath three more things pop up that need your attention.

Now might just be the right time to pause and say, Thank You. Thanks for sending us your students every day. Thank you for supporting the total education of every student that comes to our school buildings. As hard as we are working inside the building we know that you are working just as hard or harder. The “Final Four” months of the school year are always hectic and we thank you for helping us do our jobs. Without the support of the parents and community we could not be in a position help our future, your students.

On behalf of the Mineral Point Schools, Thank You. 🐾

Mitch.Wainwright@mp.k12.wi.us | 987.2321

From the desk of Anne Palzkill

Mineral Point Elementary Principal & Director of Pupil Services

The **Farm to School initiative** has three main goals which include: *promoting childrens’ health by providing fresh, minimally processed foods in schools; strengthening childrens’ and our community’s knowledge about agriculture, food, nutrition and the environment; and to strengthen local economies by expanding markets for Wisconsin’s agricultural producers.*



How is the Mineral Point School District involved in the Farm to School initiative?

We are working with our food service program to begin sharing a monthly Farm to School product that students sample during lunch. These same products will eventually be featured in the schools’ menus. Our current food suppliers already have many local food source connections.

Next, community volunteers are stepping forward to support the start of an elementary school garden; the produce grown will be served in our school lunch program. We have been approached by the Southwest Regional Planning Commission at UW-Platteville to write a partner grant that supports an Americorp volunteer here in the Mineral Point School District. This person’s role would be to support a district-wide garden program, assist with educating students about nutrition and the environment, and to serve as a liaison between the school and local agricultural businesses. Our district Wellness Committee is hosting a childrens’ summer triathlon; the proceeds from this event will serve to fund an Americorp worker.

What is Mineral Point 2020? Last week, a small group of people gathered to discuss the community needs and issues around the Farm to School initiative. Mineral Point 2020 will be an ongoing effort to connect families, food producers, and local businesses now and in the future. If you are interested in volunteering in our school garden, working at this summer’s childrens’ triathlon, or sharing your Farm to School ideas, please contact Anne Palzkill. 🐾

Anne Palzkill | Anne.Palzkill@mp.k12.wi.us | 987.2024



Reo Bossert (Freshman)



Katelyn Heins (Senior)

IMPORTANT CONTACTS:

- Luke Francois** | District Administrator **987.3924**
- Mitch Wainwright** | MS/HS Principal..... **987.2321**
- Anne Palzkill** | Elem. Principal/
Director of Special Education/Pupil Services **987.2024**
- Todd Schmitz** | Student Transportation **987.3911**
- Andy Palzkill** | 7-12 Guidance Counselor **987.2372 Ext. 335**
- Carla Rand** | PK-6 Guidance Counselor..... **987.3814 Ext. 254**

What if the Referendum Fails?

By Luke Francois

I want to provide some insight as to what is at stake on April 3rd. Like so many school districts in Wisconsin, we are in a crisis situation. We are asking voters to cast their ballot for \$1.1 million annually to keep the school functioning as it currently does. Let me explain why I describe our situation as a crisis and what would happen if the April 3rd referendum fails.

Jobs Would Be Lost

Our projected annual budget for 2013 is \$8.39 million (which is the same as the budget for the current year). Cutting \$1.1 million from the \$8.39 million budget is a reduction of 13%. To cut \$1.1 million, we will essentially need to reduce staffing by approximately 20%, because 30% of the budget are fixed costs and 66% of our budget is staffing. Your school district employs 125 people, many of whom live here in town. If the referendum fails, close to 25 district employees will lose their jobs.

Problem With Hoping For A Second-Chance Referendum

I heard it suggested that if the referendum fails, the district could simply ask for another referendum for either a lesser recurring amount or a non-recurring referendum. Not only has the School Board made no such decision, but given the timing, the district will have no choice but to go forward with a reduction in force if the April 3rd referendum fails.

A recently passed law (Senate Bill 2) requires that by May 1st the district must send teachers a preliminary notice of non-renewal if there's a possibility they will be let go in a reduction in force. If the notice is not given, then teacher contracts automatically renew and the district would be obligated to pay the teachers for 2012-13. So, if the referendum fails, the district has a limited window to determine which teachers will be retained and which will be non-renewed since staffing for the coming school year is set in place by July 1st.

If the school board decided to have a second referendum – which it has not done – the earliest possible date to hold it would be August 14th, which is six weeks after the district's non-renewal decisions. So, the suggestion that the current

referendum should be bypassed in favor of the vague possibility of a second referendum ignores the harsh reality that the failure of the April 3rd referendum will have a devastating effect on our workforce. It will force the district to non-renew valued teachers who will then look for work elsewhere.

Recurring Safeguards for Recurring Referendum

Please rest assured that this recurring referendum will not give the district a blank check to act frivolously. Each and every year going forward, your locally elected school board needs to vote on whether to use that money. The public is invited to attend the levy-setting meeting which takes place in November. You can express your approval or disapproval of the budget and the tax levy before it is set. And, if years from now the state aid for public schools increases, state imposed revenue caps will require the school board to lower the tax levy accordingly.

You have an administration and a school board committed to keeping costs down and keeping your property taxes down. For example, even if the referendum passes we will lower the budget after the first year by making spending cuts. We will remain vigilant in looking for efficiencies, regardless of the referendum's outcome. And to help the public feel comfortable with the recurring aspect of this referendum, your school board is in the process of setting forth policies that require the district, and future boards, to act with fiscal restraint, every year, on a recurring basis.

Our goal is to remain a beacon of educational excellence. That is what our citizens and students have come to expect, and we feel, is our duty to provide. Our mission is to provide opportunities that help all of our students reach their academic and personal potential. We believe that we will not merely endure but prevail through this difficult and uncertain time. The referendum question is a critical question before the community.

We thank you for reading this and staying informed.

For more information regarding the April 3rd referendum, please go to our website at www.mp.k12.wi.us and click on Referendum Information. 🐾

What is this image? An image like this is called a "QR code." It represents the web address (URL) for <http://www.mp.k12.wi.us/>

Mobile bookmarking: A QR code enables you to bookmark a web page with your mobile phone quickly and easily. With a QR code there is no need to type the full URL into your phone, instead you simply scan the image. Your phone reads it, converts it back into the URL and stores it as a bookmark. Then you can use your phone to go online to that page.



What you need:

- A mobile phone with a camera.
- A mobile phone with internet access if you want to go straight online.
- A QR code reader installed on the phone.

(There may not be a QR code reader for some models of mobile phones.)

Hitting the Books

By Dan Rhode, Special Education Teacher

READ 180 is an intensive, reading intervention program used in 15,000 classrooms across the U.S. In 2010, the Mineral Point School District was fortunate in being able to use Federal Stimulus funds to purchase the program and to train staff in its' implementation. Without this money, our district would not have been able to afford this program.

“Read 180 has helped me by making me a better speller. It also helped me find the courage to write the book that I always wanted to write.”

The program consists of the latest topic software that contains high-interest videos that emphasize content area topics. Each is designed to motivate students and build a background for reading. The software tracks progress in comprehension, fluency, spelling and vocabulary. The program also involves teacher directed classroom instruction and independent reading using wonderful paperbacks and audio books. The students work for a 90 minute block of time. The ultimate goal of READ 180 is for students to be able to read grade level material independently, with confidence and fluency in all subject areas.

Since September 2010, over 50 students, grade 6-12, have participated in the program. The results so far have been exciting, with many students who were reading at least two years below grade level, all making excellent progress and many becoming proficient. The program is intense but the motivation to be a stronger reader is evident in all students involved.

“From my point-of-view, I really like Read 180 because it helps your reading level and forces you to learn things. When I first started in this class I thought I wouldn't like it. That all changed after a few weeks. When I started my reading level was really low but after a few months, my reading level is at grade level. Having 20 minutes of silent reading does help, I thought I would never read, but I have already finished 5 books.” 🐾



3rd grade G/T reading competition participants.

Creating Fine Arts

By Jessie Van Overmeer, Elementary and HS Art Teacher

The month of March is National Youth Art Month, so we are excited to share some of the things going on in the Mineral Point Schools art program.

At the fourth grade level we are working on a number of collaborative projects. Before the winter break, the fourth grade made clay tiles to be mounted on the wall in the elementary art room. After a discussion about quilts, each child was able to develop their own square to be part of a larger piece that includes all of their work. They are currently working on creating their own Claymation in groups of four or five students. We will use PowerPoint to create our final piece.

Follow this and much more by checking out what is going on in the elementary art room at mpelementaryart.blogspot.com. Many pieces of student work have been photographed and uploaded for you to enjoy. Feel free to download photos of your child's work and use them however you would like.

The new buzz in the elementary art room is about the future Elementary Art Club for 4th and 5th grade students. The direction of the club will be somewhat dictated by the student's interest and availability, but we are hoping to begin meeting this month and have some final pieces for sale during the All School Fair on May 21st. The High School Art Club, as well as high school and middle school art classes, will also have items on display at the High School/Middle School building at that time.

In an effort to bridge the efforts at the Elementary and the High School, our kindergarten classes teamed up with the high school art classes to create valentines for our veterans this past February. They were able to create 200 valentines and delivered them to our local Madison Veterans' Hospital.

We would also like to celebrate the accomplishments of some of our very talented students. On February 18th our high school students competed at the Tri-state Regional High School Art Exhibit. There were 10 participating schools from the tri-state area, with each school eligible to enter 4 pieces of artwork. Out of the 40 pieces of art work, Mineral Point had 2 students, Todd Tibbits and Emily Ramsey, place in the top ten to go onto the state level in Madison. Justin Prochaska and Rhiannon Allbee were honored this year with being Artist of the Month through the Roundtree Gallery in Platteville. Congratulations to all of you! 🐾



Celebrating School Breakfast Week

By Cindy Roalfs, District Food Service Coordinator

National School Breakfast Week was held March 5-9. During this week a "Taste of School Breakfasts" allowed free samplings of what our district is offering for school breakfast.



Elementary students enjoyed story time reading from Grandparent volunteers as well while enjoying their complimentary samples of the "Taste of School Breakfasts."

The School Breakfast Program requires each school to meet federal dietary guidelines which dictate no more than 30 percent of calories from fat and less than 10 percent from saturated fat. Each breakfast must provide 1/4 of the recommended daily allowance of protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, iron, calcium, and calories. School meals must be served in age appropriate portions as well. School meals are healthier than ever before with the addition of fresh fruits and veggies, whole grains, reduced sodium, low fat dairy, reduced or zero trans fats, and baked items rather than fried.

Research shows that students who eat breakfast perform much better academically, have better test scores on test days, feel better with less absenteeism and perform better physically. This annual celebration of the School Breakfast Program was established in 1989. It gives schools an opportunity to highlight the importance of the breakfast program and the benefits to starting the student's day off right.

Currently, breakfast costs \$1.25 and is only payable through the student's food service account. There is one hot breakfast option and two cold breakfast options offered each day. The hot breakfast changes each day while the cold options remain the same. Questions regarding breakfasts or the school lunch program can be directed to cindy.roalfs@mp.k12.wi.us.

Below is a list of the school breakfast offered at the Elementary/MS/and HS.

Cold Breakfast

Option 1: Cereal Bar, Yogurt, Fruit or 100% Fruit Juice, Milk

Option 2: Cereal Bowl, Yogurt, Fruit or 100% Fruit Juice, Milk

Hot Breakfast:

Mon: Breakfast Bagel Sandwich with Egg/Sausage/Cheese
Fruit or 100% Fruit Juice AND Milk

Tue: Pig in the Blanket on a Stick
(Sausage and Pancake) with syrup
Fruit or 100% Fruit Juice AND Milk

Wed: Combo Bar (Breaded Egg/Ham/Cheese/Diced Potatoes)
Fruit or 100% Fruit Juice AND Milk

Thu: Mini Waffles w/syrup • Yogurt Cup
Fruit or 100% Fruit Juice AND Milk

Fri: Biscuit/Sausage/Egg/Cheese
Fruit or 100% Fruit Juice AND Milk 🐾

Providing Guidance to Our Students

By Andy Palzkill, 7-12 Guidance Counselor

My name is Andy Palzkill and I am in my first year as the 7-12 School Counselor in the Mineral Point School District. As a graduate from Mineral Point High



School in 1995, I started my career as a school counselor, working in the Darlington School District for the past nine years. Now, I feel fortunate to have the opportunity to return to my hometown as counselor.

There is certainly a lot of pride in the Mineral Point Community and I am very proud to be a "Pointer." My experiences growing up in Mineral Point and going through our school system were very positive and prepared me to be successful in my life. My primary goal is to provide all of our students with a positive school experience and make sure they are prepared for life after high school.

As a school counselor, my role is to advocate for our students. I am student-focused and work to provide each student with opportunities to be successful. Through classroom presentations, small group meetings, and individual student meetings, I work hard to ensure that our students are informed and have the ability and resources they need to make good decisions about their future.

It is a very exciting time in the Mineral Point School District! We have an outstanding teaching staff and new administration that is providing wonderful leadership. We are working hard to provide new opportunities for our students and to make Mineral Point Schools the very best. 🐾



Rene Sporle (Senior)



Breanna Blume (Senior)



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Budget Timeline By Luke Francois

The budget development process this year is more challenging than in other years as preliminary work needs to prepare for two scenarios dependent on the outcome of the April 3rd referendum. An approved budget by the board on May 14 is also time sensitive to address any required staffing reductions. Under the law it is required that renewal notices be received no later than May 15 of each year and teachers must return their contracts no later than June 15. The District will meet frequently with the finance committee and board to prepare the budget. Please find the budget development timeline below. 🐾

2012-13 Budget Development Timeline

March 2012

- Hold budget informational/engagement sessions with staff
- Begin process of identifying and refining potential budget reductions, efficiencies, reprioritizations and new/enhanced revenue potential
- Review staffing for inclusion in the 2012-13 preliminary budget

April 2012

- Solicit input / feedback on budget discussion items & budget strategies with finance committee
- Finalize staffing for inclusion in the 2012-13 preliminary budget

May 2012

- Present budget plan proposal to BOE
- Approve budget plan [BOE] May 14, 2012
- Begin to implement actions resulting from approved budget plan

July 2012

- Review initial draft of 2013-13 preliminary budget with Finance Committee and BOE
- Approve 2012-13 preliminary budget [BOE]

October 2012

- Adopt 2012-13 budget and certify tax levy [BOE] – October 8, 2012



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Teacher Appreciation Week By Luke Francois

Annually the first week of May is set aside to honor those who have chosen the vocation that makes all other professions possible; a teacher. I personally can think of teachers that influenced me and I am sure that you are able to as well. A teacher I was most fond of made me understand that they knew more than me and therefore I was capable of more, and anything but my most honorable effort was unacceptable. Teachers believed in me and I felt supported.

We have great teachers in the Mineral Point community. They inspire us each day by the things they do for kids in classrooms. They deserve great affirmation, respect, and honor for what they do. Not only are they great educators, but they are greatly involved in our community as leaders and in helping causes that make Mineral Point the special community that it is.

Every student's dream begins with a teacher, and for that we are deeply indebted. 🐾

Events 2012 Calendar For more events and yearly school calendar information: www.mp.k12.wi.us

HIGH SCHOOL EVENTS:

April

- April 6-13 NO CLASSES - Spring Break
- April 17 Skills USA State Competition, Wisconsin Dells
- April 20 Forensics – State

May

- May 3 National Honor Society Awards, 7:30 p.m., HS Cafetorium
- May 11 CRT (Collaborative Release Time)
School begins at 10:00 a.m.
- May 12 SWAL Large Group (Band and Choir)
Contest at Iowa Grant
Dodge-Point Show (FFA)
- May 17 HS Events Calendar – Senior Awards/Scholarship Night, 7:00 p.m., HS Gymnasium
- May 20 HS Music Awards Concert and Reception, MP Opera House, 3:00 p.m.
- May 21 All School Fair
- May 25 HS Graduation, 7:00 p.m. HS Gymnasium
HS Band to Perform at HS Graduation
- May 28 NO CLASSES – Memorial Day
HS Band to Perform in Memorial Day Parade

June

- June 7 Last Day of School
- June 8 Last Day of School OFF 210 PLAN

July

- July 4 HS Band to Perform in 4th of July Parade

MIDDLE SCHOOL EVENTS:

April

- April 6-13 NO CLASSES – Spring Break
- April 20 7th & 8th Grade Band to the Kalahari Band Festival, Wisconsin Dells

May

- May 4 MS Musical “Honk,” 7:00 p.m.
- May 5 MS Musical “Honk,” 2:00 p.m.
- May 8 MS Spring Concert, 7:00 p.m.
- May 11 CRT (Collaborative Release Time)
School begins at 10:00 a.m.

- May 12 SWAL Large Group (Band and Choir)
Contest at Iowa Grant
Dodge-Point Show (FFA)
- May 21 All School Fair
- May 28 NO CLASSES – Memorial Day
MS Band to Perform in Memorial Day Parade

June

- June 6 MS Awards Program, 1:00 p.m., followed by Grade 8 Graduation, 2:00 p.m.
- June 7 Last Day of School
MS Field Trips
- June 8 Last Day of School
M.S. Academic Improvement Day

July

- July 4 MS Band to Perform in 4th of July Parade
- July 9 Summer School Starts

ELEMENTARY EVENTS:

April

- April 6 -13 NO CLASSES – Spring Break

May

- May 11 CRT (Collaborative Release Time)
School begins at 10:00 a.m.
- May 18 Kindergarten Car Show
- May 21 All School Fair
4th-5th Grade Chorus Performance –
All School Fair – 7:00 p.m.
5th Grade Band Performance –
All School Fair – 7:00 p.m.
- May 28 NO CLASSES – Memorial Day

June

- June 1 Fifth Grade Graduation and family picnic
Kindergarten to Henry Vilas Zoo, Madison (Rain Date Monday, June 4th)
- June 5 Fifth Grade trip to Kohl Center & Camp Randall
- June 7 Last Day of School
Afternoon Field Day

July

- July 9 Summer School Starts

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is published 4 times a year
by the Mineral Point Schools.
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Luke.Francois@mp.k12.wi.us
or 608.987.3924.

MP Students of the Month

By Andy Palzkill

Mineral Point has been honoring seniors for many years with recognition as students of the month. The Kiwanis Club of Mineral Point sponsors this activity and students are recognized at the monthly Kiwanis meeting. This meeting takes place at the Pointer Café at 12:00 on the first Tuesday of each month from October thru May.

Academic success and grade point average are primary criteria for this honor. Students are primarily nominated to be a student on the month based on their class ranking. Teachers vote and select their choice for this honor beginning with the top ten seniors by class rank. Other factors, such as character and work ethic, also certainly play into the decision-making and voting of our teaching staff. 🐾

Students of the Month 2011-2012

October – **Hannah Lawinger** and **Travis Steffes**
November – **Hannah Goninen** and **Morgan Pittz**
December – **Jessica James** and **Cassidy Ottoway**
January – **Brady Tibbits** and **Emily James**
February – **Katy Cleary** and **Anyka Sprain**
March – **Mariah Haase** and **Cheyenne Ferrell**

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