

# White and Blue Review

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

## Dear Family and Friends of the Mineral Point School District,

It is with great joy that I send you season's greetings. This has been a very special year.

Let me say what a privilege it has been to work with the staff at Mineral Point Schools and the community at large. I am grateful for the experience of working with outstanding educators and dedicated service personnel.



As a school district, we should be thankful that we have been permitted to be of service to others. We have helped students learn how to learn—and learn how to live. The glory of education is the opportunity it gives us to work with and help other people.

This is a time of year for rejoicing and for rededication. A quote from Henry Van Dyke says it well: "Time is too slow for those who wait, too swift for those who fear, too long for those who grieve, too short for those who rejoice, but for those who love, time is eternity."

Now is the time to reflect on our blessings and to recharge our spirits. May these holidays also be a time of recreation and relaxation with family and friends, that is so important as we prepare to face the challenges and opportunities that come again in January.

Happy holidays! 🐾

Kindest Regards,  
Luke Francois

Luke.Francois@mp.k12.wi.us | 987.0740

### Phone Number Changes

Please note the new telephone numbers for the school district. Clip this out and save it for future reference.

**District** 608.987.0740      **Middle School** 608.987.0720  
**High School** 608.987.0730      **Elementary** 608.987.0710



**The Oak Savannas:  
A Natural and Educational Resource**

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**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

Many times throughout the school year we pause for a moment to reflect on the changes we made, and try to determine if they make us better or detract from what we want to accomplish. In my last article I talked about a change to our schedule that would allow for an ACCESS period at the end of the day. This period was designed to give students and staff an opportunity to work together (access to each other) to improve the educational environment. Progress reports and quarter grades are good times to look at whether or not this period is making an impact. Every Monday, teacher's check on the grades of all students assigned to their ACCESS period. Any late or missing work is called to the attention of the students and efforts are made to correct any issues. If a student is struggling in a class they will fill out an E-Pass and go to that class for additional help. I am proud to say that because of this change in our schedule, there is a huge decline in the number of D's and F's earned by students and it is believed to be at an all time low. When our students are successful in the classroom they are eligible to compete in athletics and extra-curricular activities. Students are also passing the necessary credits for graduation which means that fewer and fewer students will need to repeat a failed class. This is directly linked to the School Report Card that the state released earlier this fall. The more we can help students be successful in the classroom the more successful they will be outside of the school building. Mineral Point has always worked hard to provide an excellent educational experience, now we are in an even better position to help even more students. 🐾

Mitch Wainwright  
Mitch.Wainwright@mp.k12.wi.us  
987.0730



## From the Desk of Anne Palzkill

Mineral Point Elementary Principal & Director of Pupil Services

We are in the midst of an exciting time here at Mineral Point Elementary. Our talented staff and a handful of new initiatives are combining to support the success of every single student in our building.



Our new reading series, Journeys, was implemented across grades 1-5. The stories are culturally diverse, beautifully illustrated, and the materials are up-to-date with both fiction and non-fiction selections. Most significantly, our reading curriculum is aligned. Language Arts skills are built upon each other and increase in complexity as your child progresses through the grade levels. Our teachers continue to use instructional methods like leveled readers, Literature Circles, book clubs, and writing projects to extend or remediate language arts instruction. To enhance our reading program, we will soon roll out Accelerated Reader for grades K-5. The students will be able to read books at their level (zone of proximal development), or beyond, and take web-based vocabulary and comprehension tests to assess their understanding of the story. The intent of this program is to motivate all of our students to improve their reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. With Journeys and Accelerated Reader we are excited to see how our students' language arts skills grow.

We are in the fourth year of using the Investigations math curriculum. It is a solid series that reinforces basic as well as higher order thinking skills. We look for ways to remediate or supplement our math instruction to meet the individual math levels of our students. All Pre K-5 students have web-based, 24 hour access, to www.IXL.com. This program works to support our math program by giving students practice with Common Core math concepts. To date, our elementary students have completed over 134,838 problems; I am confident that we will reach 500,000 by the end of the school year. The partnership of solid math classroom instruction and targeted practice will help our students be successful math students.

Pulling all of this together are our new Professional Learning Communities (PLC's). PLC's are teams of teachers that gather weekly to analyze student progress from weekly assessments (formative assessments) and use that information to guide the next week's instruction. The idea that "one size fits all" for classroom instruction no longer works with the new state and federal accountability mandates. The elementary staff is working hard to meet these student-centered expectations. They have tackled new curriculums and programming to assure achievement for all students. This work does not happen without the dedication and professionalism of our teachers.

**Highly effective teachers + teamwork + rigorous curriculum expectations + top notch instruction = success for all students!** 🐾

Anne Palzkill | Anne.Palzkill@mp.k12.wi.us | 987.0710

### IMPORTANT CONTACTS:

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| <b>Luke Francois</b>   District Administrator .....   | <b>987.0740</b> |
| <b>Mitch Wainwright</b>   MS/HS Principal .....   | <b>987.0730</b> |
| <b>Vickie Dahl</b>   Middle School Administrative Support .....                               | <b>987.0720</b> |
| <b>Anne Palzkill</b>   Elem. Principal/<br>Director of Special Education/Pupil Services ..... | <b>987.0710</b> |
| <b>Todd Schmitz</b>   Student Transportation .....  | <b>987.3911</b> |
| <b>Andy Palzkill</b>   7-12 Guidance Counselor .....  | <b>987.0733</b> |
| <b>Carla Rand</b>   PK-6 Guidance Counselor .....   | <b>987.0710</b> |

# Educational Reform Impacts Mineral Point

Congress is debating the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), or better known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), that requires all students to be proficient in reading and math by 2014. Since many states are realizing that, although progress is being made, meeting that goal is unlikely, they are turning in applications for waivers to give them more flexibility in meeting that target in exchange for several educational reforms:

- College/career readiness
- Reformed accountability systems (including a new state test and district report cards)
- Tie-in of teacher and principal evaluations to student outcomes, and
- Reduced duplication in reporting efforts

Wisconsin's Department of Public Instruction (DPI) announced July 6 that its waiver to NCLB has been accepted by the federal government. Changes that the Mineral Point School District can expect are as follows:

## ***WKCE to be Replaced***

As part of increased testing standards, the State is working on a Smarter Balanced test, a more rigorous alternative to the current Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam (WKCE). However, since that test is not ready, student WKCE scores will be converted, based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) standards. While it is expected that scores may initially dip into lower proficiency levels for students statewide, percentile rankings will be consistent with previous year's tests, providing an opportunity for teachers to measure academic growth over time. It is likely that a child who was Advanced last year, may only be identified as Proficient, though their actual knowledge and skills have not decreased.

## **Four High School Students and Two Middle School Students Chosen for NBA Honors Band**

Congratulations to Stephanie Walrack, Carson Gilbert, Elizabeth Myers, and Stephanie Prochaska for being chosen to the 2013 National Band Association All State Honors Band and congratulations to Addy Chambers and Julia Jimenez on being selected for the NBA All State Junior Honors Band.

The National Band Association Honors Band is held once a year and students are nominated from all over the state. This is the first year Mineral Point has ever had four students chosen for the high school all state band. Students are selected based on director nominations and on rankings at solo and ensemble participation and participation in other groups such as the WSMA State Honors Band and the Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestra.

The honors band is held at the Lincoln High School Auditorium in Wisconsin Rapids on Friday, January 18 and Saturday, January 19 for high school participants and Saturday, January 19 for middle school participants. The concert, which includes both high school and middle school, will take place at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 19.

***Once again congratulations to Stephanie, Carson, Elizabeth, Stephanie, Addy and Julia! 🐾***

## ***District Report Cards***

Districts will be rated based on test scores and indicators such as graduation rates, absenteeism and test participation. A combination of factors will give Districts their total score which will place them on a spectrum between the green-colored "Significantly Exceeding Expectations" level down to the red-colored "Persistently Failing to Meet Expectations" level. Additional changes include subgroup cell sizes being reduced from 40 students to 20 (making it easier for educators to pinpoint areas to improve), and Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) levels changing to Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO). Districts not meeting AMO, or having at least one red flag in a non-testing indicator CANNOT be in top half of the color spectrum.

## ***Evaluations***

All public school teachers and principals will have student outcomes (multiple measures) count for half of their evaluation, with the rest coming from educator practice. Individual educator ratings are confidential and in no way will be reported publicly.

## ***When does this start?***

- Late Fall 2012 – District report cards and ratings were released publicly (using Fall 2011 converted scores) and are now available on the District's website
- Late January/Early February – Parents will receive their students' test scores based on Fall 2012 WKCE tests converted to NAEP scores.
- 2013-2014 – Field testing of Smarter Balanced Test
- 2014-2015 – Full implementation of Smarter Balanced Test, and teacher/principal evaluation system

More resources are available at:

<http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/acct/accountability.html>

<http://nationsreportcard.gov/educators.asp>

# Athletic Department and Middle School News By Vickie Dahl

## Scoreboards

After 17 years, the scoreboards have been replaced in the high school and middle school gymnasiums thanks to the partnership between the Mineral Point School District and the following businesses: [Farmers Savings Bank](#), [Gorgen Funeral Home](#), [Ivey Construction](#), [Pepsi](#) and [Ross Soil Service](#).

The cost of maintaining the old scoreboards and replacement parts becoming difficult to obtain, made it necessary to purchase new scoreboards. The gymnasium is used for our middle school and high school athletic programs as well as a number of community youth athletic programs.

The Mineral Point School District and the Athletic Department would like to thank the business partners who donated money to make the new scoreboards possible.



## Scorer's Table

The Mineral Point Athletic Department is in the process of replacing the scorer's table which is used for many of our athletic events in the main gym. Once again, partnerships with [Mound City Bank](#) and [Upland Hills Health](#) will make the new scorer's table a reality.

## Curtains

Mineral Point Athletics received a gift to add a new gymnasium curtain divider and replaced an old curtain divider displaying wear and tear from heavy use. The District would like to thank the [Boys and Girls Basketball Boosters](#) for donating money for the new curtains and their continued support of our basketball programs.

I would also like to thank Roger Palzkill and Alf Jacobson for the removal of our old scoreboards and for supervising the installation of the curtains and scoreboards.

## Middle School Happenings

The Middle School Staff is looking into a new schedule for next school year. The staff is striving for more of a "true" Middle School in more than name only. Some of the options that are being studied are Four-Block Schedule (and variations), Equal Core Periods, Encore Periods, Intervention and Enrichment Period, Encore Scheduling Options and Math Scheduling Ideas.

Something new that has been implemented this year is a Lunch Hour Study Hall. Students who have missing assignments report to this study hall during their lunch period.

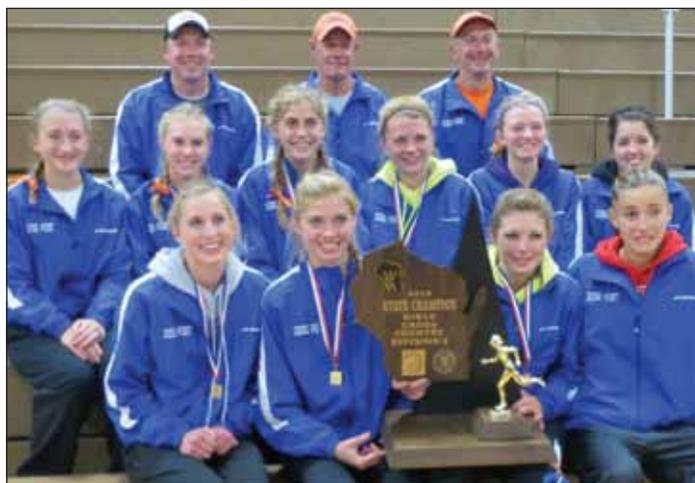
As a result, the staff has recognized a reduction in the amount of missing assignments and in improvement in student's academic performance.

At the Middle Level, we are also using a discipline point system. If students accumulate too many discipline points, it may affect whether they can participate in a reward activity or the end of the school year field trips.

## DODGE-POINT 3-PEAT

The Dodge-Point Girls Cross Country team won their 3rd consecutive Division 2 State Championship at the WIAA State Cross Country Meet held at the Ridges Golf Course in Wisconsin Rapids on October 27. Mineral Point's Anna Eisenzimmer and Hannah Owens competed on the State Tournament Team. Anna finished 4th and Hannah placed 8th.

Dodge-Point Boys Cross Country placed 7th in Division 2 at the State Meet. Mineral Point High School athletes who competed at the State Meet were Tannler Ames and Ian Ewers. 🐾



Front: Anna Eisenzimmer, Hannah Owens, Brittany Rhyner, Mairin Cahill  
Back: Caitlyn Bauer, Mary Hanson, Megan Hottmann, Kylie Greenheck, Emily Philipps, Emilee Grunow  
Coaches: Matt McGraw, Joe Hanson, Denny McGraw.

## Students of the Month Fall 2012

October

**Robby Chubb • Katie Kelm**

November

**Jordyn Dolphin • Stephanie Walrack**

December

**Nolan Barrette • Caitlyn Qualley**

# The Oak Savannas: A Natural and Educational Resource

By Don Hay

## What is an Oak Savanna?

Before the Cornish miners, Mineral Point and its surrounding area featured lightly forested grasslands with widely spaced tall oak trees. The oak savanna provides an example of life before the settlers arrived. It is now one of the rarest ecosystems in the world. The Mineral Point School District is proud to be the steward of two oak savannas and prairie restorations.

## High School Oak Savanna

You may have noticed the black, barren moonscape on your left as you travel up the driveway toward the Mineral Point High School. In case you are wondering, it's all part of a plan – a plan to enhance and care for our oak savannas.



Shortly after the high school was built in 1996, an oak savanna was planted on 9 acres next to the school. In November of this year, the Mineral Point School Board approved the planting of an additional 11.6 acres of prairie, on the land adjacent to the existing high school oak savanna.

This project is funded by a grant from The Nature Conservancy, one of the nation's largest conservation organizations.

We began this project with a controlled burn to help prepare the site for planting in the spring. A prairie fire is a pretty spectacular sight, and even though photos don't fully capture the spectacle, these shots will give you a sense of what it looked like.



Image provided by Ryan Fox

Additional site preparation will be done in the spring, and the new acreage will be seeded with a wide variety of prairie plants, including native grasses and forbs.

## Elementary School Oak Savanna

The Don Hawkins Community Oak Savanna at the Mineral Point Elementary School has been undergoing restoration since 2004. This site includes several varieties of mature oaks, some estimated to be more than 150 years old. And, there are plenty of young oaks sprouting from the acorns dropped by the ancient trees.



In May of this year, high school students worked with elementary students to plant over 200 prairie plants. This winter, students will scatter seeds on top of the snow. These seeds will work their way into the ground and by spring they will create an even richer array of native prairie plants.

You may also have noticed the newly constructed stone and wood informational kiosk. The kiosk is designed to provide a focal point for the entrance to the savanna, and will guide visitors onto the trail. This spring we will be adding informational signage describing the types of plants and animals that flourish in the savanna. This will further enhance the educational value of the site.

## Why Are These Sites Important?

In today's technologically driven world, our children spend increasing amounts of time working on computers, texting on cell phones, or watching television. Spending time outdoors in the natural environment is even more important than ever. These two oak savannas provide a convenient learning laboratory for our students. We already use the sites as part of our school curriculum, and we plan to identify additional ways to incorporate them into the learning process.

## How You Can Help

A "Friends of the Oak Savanna" group is in the process of forming. This group will work to maintain the savannas and find ways to make them more useful for our schools and community. Individuals can participate in many different ways, including: helping students with projects, working in the savanna, attending educational events, loaning equipment, or donating funds. If you are interested in participating, please contact either Don Hawkins 608-987-3428 or Don Hay 608-987-1522.

And, most importantly, be sure to spend some time in the savannas. Any season is a good time for a visit. Go for a walk, bring your dog, experiment with snow shoeing or cross country skiing, or just stop to admire the beauty of these magnificent landscapes. 🐾

## Music Boosters

The Mineral Point Music Boosters wish to congratulate all the middle and high school band and choir students on an outstanding winter concert and thank Mr. Nevers and Mr. Tredinnick for all the hard work they put into preparing the students for the concert. If you enjoyed the musical offerings provided by our students, we urge you to check out the SWAL Honors band concert at Iowa Grant HS on January 5, 2013 and the SWAL Honors choir concert at Ithaca HS on January 26, 2013 as well. At this time, both the music teachers and music boosters are gearing up for the music department spaghetti supper fundraiser on Tuesday, January 29th. Please put this date on your calendar and come support our music programs. In addition to the spaghetti supper, there is a boys' basketball game against Darlington that night. Funds raised by the spaghetti supper will go toward routine booster expenses such as scholarships and band/choir trip contributions as well our next big goal: new music stands for the band room. The next music booster meeting will be on January 3, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. in the band room and will involve planning for the spaghetti supper. We really need the involvement of more parents in music boosters, especially those with middle school or freshman or sophomore students. Many of us currently actively involved in music boosters joined when our kids were middle schoolers and now have children who will be graduating in the next two years. Without music boosters, the teachers will be hard pressed to produce the level of performances we just enjoyed if their time is taken up with many of the organizational tasks handled by the boosters. Getting involved in the spaghetti supper is the perfect way to join in and see what we're all about so please stop by our next meeting. Hope to see you there! 🐾

For events and yearly  
school calendar info:  
[www.mp.k12.wi.us](http://www.mp.k12.wi.us)

Dear Families,

In light of the recent school shooting tragedy in Connecticut, many of our children will have questions or concerns about their own safety. There are no easy answers about this kind of news, but it is important for families to try to explain what has happened in order to help ease their fears and anxieties about their personal safety. To guide families through difficult discussions about school violence, the National Mental Health Association offers the following suggestions:

**Encourage children to talk about their concerns and to express their feelings.**

Some children may be hesitant to initiate such conversation, so you may want to prompt them by asking if they feel safe at school. When talking with younger children remember to talk on their level. For example, they may not understand the term "violence" but can talk to you about being afraid or a classmate who is mean to them.

**Talk honestly about your own feelings regarding school violence.** It is important for children to recognize they are not dealing with their fears alone.

**Validate the child's feelings.** Do not minimize a child's concerns. Let him/her know that serious school violence is not common, which is why these incidents attract so much media attention. Stress that schools are safe places. In fact, recent studies have shown that schools are more secure now than ever before.

**Empower children to take action regarding school safety.** Encourage them to report specific incidents (such as bullying, threats or talk of suicide) and to develop problem solving and conflict resolution skills. Encourage older children to actively participate in student-run anti-violence programs.

**Discuss the safety procedures that are in place at your child's school.** Explain why visitors sign in at the principal's office or certain doors remain locked during the school day. Help your child understand that such precautions are in place to ensure his or her safety and stress the importance of adhering to school rules and policies.

**Create safety plans with your child.** Help identify which adults (a friendly secretary, trusted teacher or approachable administrator) your child can talk to if they feel threatened at school. Also ensure that your child knows how to reach you (or another family member or friend) in case of crisis during the school day. Remind your child that they can talk to you anytime they feel threatened.

**Recognize behavior that may indicate your child is concerned about returning to school.** Younger children may react to school violence by not wanting to attend school or participate in school-based activities. Teens and adolescents may minimize their concerns outwardly, but may become argumentative, withdrawn, or allow their school performance to decline.

**Keep the dialogue going** and make school safety a common topic in family discussions rather than just a response to an immediate crisis. Open dialogue will encourage children to share their concerns.

**Seek help when necessary.** If you are worried about a child's reaction or have ongoing concerns about his/her behavior or emotions, contact a mental health professional at school or at your community mental health center.

*Source: National Mental Health Association*

If you have any questions, please contact a school counselor or principal. We know this is a difficult time for our nation and our Mineral Point community. We are available to help and support our children. 🐾

Sincerely,  
Luke Francois

## What do we Value at MP Elementary? By Anne Palzkill

This fall, I asked the staff to list those actions that we value the most each day here at Mineral Point Elementary. We asked ourselves what we wanted our students to feel, see, experience, and do while here at school. Our original list of expectations was long and each item was important to educating our students. We completed a building-wide vote and the four elements in the banner to the right won! Clearly, **learning** is our primary focus. Each student and staff member is an important and invaluable part of our school; we all **belong** here. All of us agreed that our building is most successful when everyone is **respectful**. And most importantly, the elementary staff values that all of our students will **achieve** academic success. These building values carry a simple, yet powerful message that make our building an outstanding place for Mineral Point's youngest students. 🐾



## Meet Julie Pompos: Mineral Point School Nurse

I came to Mineral Point School District as a seasoned healthcare professional with more than 25 years of experience from a variety of settings ranging from clinical, educational, management and administrative. I had an outstanding record as a school nurse for Milwaukee Public Schools for five years before making the decision to relocate to a rural environment. One main reason for relocating stemmed from my desire to work collaboratively with family and community members rather than a large multilayered bureaucracy.



People generally do not realize that school nursing goes way beyond band aids. In the United States nearly 20% of school aged children pre K through 12th grade possess either an identified disability or chronic health problem. The presiding health complication is asthma; followed by obesity, anaphylaxis, mental health concerns, high risk behaviors and extreme social/family issues. I have been able to address these complications within Mineral Point's student body. Once these students were identified it was necessary to create individual health plans, draft emergency management plans for potential adverse events and communicate this information with school staff members. Since the beginning of the school year I have been co-teaching a 10th grade health class, this has been a great opportunity to get to know the students on a

more personal basis. I have been busy drafting district wide policies and procedures as well as developing an electronic database for student health information for tracking and report writing. We recently purchased a state of the art computer based vision screening program that has been producing outstanding results.

Historically, this is the first time the School District has had a full time nurse on staff. At the beginning of the school year, I assessed all the buildings for risk management concerns, I found all the buildings in excellent condition with highly experienced and a well informed team of building management personnel. The administrative team of professionals and all the office personnel has been fantastic and extremely supportive. It is exciting to see the initiatives I proposed and have been working on are materializing.

In a short period of time I feel as though many positive measures have been implemented for the overall needs and success for student health matters.

I look forward to further improvement. A couple short term goals would include conducting more health related training sessions and partner with community members to enhance emergency intervention training for continuity of care for students. My involvement with committee work has been rewarding and I anticipate great things happening in the future. 🐾

**THE DOG DAYS ARE(N'T) OVER**

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A portrait of Jenny, a woman with short blonde hair and glasses, wearing a red top.

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