

# White and Blue Review

FEBRUARY 2014 🐾 *Education... That's the Point*

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



The excitement of second semester is upon us. Regardless if this year is a child's first day of kindergarten; a move from elementary to middle school; or a student's last year of high school, our schools and educators are ready to work with Mineral Point students to make sure every child has the knowledge and skills needed for success in college and career.

Mineral Point has a long tradition of excellent schools, something reflected in our students' solid performance on Advanced Placement and college entrance exams as well as our leading high school graduation rate. Despite our successes, the district must continue improving and make sure all of our students are well prepared for the realities of the global economy.

To continue moving education forward, the district is advancing several focus areas by setting goals through 2017. A comprehensive action plan is currently being developed for education reform in the areas of academic achievement, fiscal responsibility, community engagement, and technology. Specifics of this plan will be released in the near future as part of a culminating effort by a strategic planning committee comprised of residents, with and without children in the district, as well as teachers, administrators, and board members.

The District will set aggressive but achievable goals to increase students' chances of academic success. Together, we can make sure every child graduates ready for college and career.

Kindest Regards,

Luke Francois | [Luke.Francois@mp.k12.wi.us](mailto:Luke.Francois@mp.k12.wi.us) | 987.0740

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

## Bonnie Cox Retires After 42 Years

Bonnie Cox retired from driving bus after 42 years with the district. "Bonnie always greeted students with a friendly smile and a heartfelt goodbye for 42 years. She always placed student safety as priority, even in times when routes were taken under less than ideal weather conditions. Bonnie always followed the laws of the road and in addition to driving, acted as a mentor and a teacher. Bonnie taught students courtesy, discipline, effective communication, and safety. Bonnie concluded her tenure by writing each of her bus riders an individual note. Bonnie will be missed by Mineral Point Schools and First Student," said Superintendent Francois. 🐾



## IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 ..... From the Desk of Anne Palzkil;  
Message from Mitch Wainwright
- 3 ..... 21st Century School-Home Communication
- 4 ..... Bennett, Busch and Kelm, Herb Kohl Teacher  
Fellowship Nominees; Diefenbach and Wiegel  
Receive National Board Certification;  
PEP Update
- 5 ..... Mineral Point receives \$25,000 grant from  
the Wisconsin Technology Initiative;  
Winter Sports Season Update
- 6 ..... Nationally Recognized Speaker Visits Mineral Point
- 7 ..... MPHS Band headed to Orlando, Florida  
March 16th-22nd; FFA District Speaking Contest

**District Mission:** Grounded by our history, as one of the oldest publicly supported schools in Wisconsin, MPSD is the heart of a small community that educates and inspires our students for a bright future in a big world.

## Message from Mitch Wainwright

*Principal, Mineral Point High School  
& District Assessment Coordinator*



Lions and tigers and bears crowd easily be changed to meetings and musicals and athletics. Oh My! Our high school and students have been busy this winter. Semester exams have concluded and the second term is well under way. The speed at which the school year passes never seems to slow down. Soon we will begin the process of registering for classes for the 2014-15 school year. Our students have been tested on the field of play, in front of audiences while up on stage and in the classroom. Each test helps prepare our students for their next test and it does not matter if it is in the form of another game, performance or exam. Mineral Point High School is preparing our students for the future.

As we move toward the future we continually make adjustments along the way. Students have taken the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam (WKE) in the fall of the year. Next year the test will be directly linked to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and be called the Smarter Balanced test. This test will be more application based and ask our 3rd through 8th grade students to apply the knowledge they gain at school. There will also be a change for High School students. They will be taking part in a suite of tests known as Explore, Plan and ACT (EPAS). Our freshmen will take the Explore test in the fall and spring of the year, the sophomores will take the Plan test in the spring and all juniors will take the ACT test on the same day followed the next day by the Work Keys exam. The high school tests are meant to determine if our students are college or career ready. To help our students to be better prepared we will be testing them this spring to get some data to use to make improvements if necessary, to what we offer our students.

Please know that educating your children, our students, is a great privilege. On behalf of the staff at MPHS, thank you for trusting us to do our very best. Mineral Point Schools, a great place to be! 🐾

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

## From the Desk of Anne Palzkill

*Mineral Point Elementary Principal & Director of Pupil Services*



It is hard to believe that the school year is half over! I want to graciously thank those elementary families that took time to respond to our fall "Parent Communication & Engagement" survey. Your responses are valued and have been taken to heart.

### Communication preferences

We found 47% of respondents preferred an email and 27% a written note for teacher communications. Others preferred a phone call or a face-to-face conference. There were 24% of you who expressed that the paperless *Pointer Press* was the most effective office communication tool, but it is clear that no one method works for everyone. Weekly classroom newsletters (18%) were appreciated as were Blackboard robo calls and emails. **What have we done to improve communication?** Like or follow our *Mineral Point Elementary Community* page on Facebook. This is not "hard news," but daily celebrations of learning and school climate events. The new district website [www.mineralpointschools.org](http://www.mineralpointschools.org) will provide easy information access and eventually house a feed for the *Pointer Press*. The community link on our website houses non-school activity contacts. The elementary now hosts two *Community Events Registration* nights per year. Community groups from Mineral Point and Iowa County can set up an informational table in the gym to join non-school activities. These may include, but are not limited to basketball, tennis, summer recreation, soccer, Shake Rag Alley, dance classes, 4H, and more.

### Parent engagement

A solid percentage of parents felt connected to our staff, but far fewer families felt connected to each other. **What have we done and what will we do to improve parent engagement?** We will continue to host community and family guests at our short, Friday assemblies. Music in our Schools month is looking exciting! Our *Hour of Code* night brought students and parents together to participate in a worldwide computer coding event. A recent school garden grant will provide further parent opportunities. Anyone interested in a parent-child cooking class? Over the past month, parents gathered to discuss and organize an after school program and the number of interested families is growing. We continue to support community service opportunities for our students, and we have welcomed over 70 volunteers into the building to date.

All of these exciting changes were made in response to the survey. The elementary staff is working hard to have all students achieve. It is also important to us that our parents and community feel the same sense of belongingness that we do each day of school. Please share ideas and ways that will help our students, staff, parents, and others to strengthen our school and community connections. 🐾

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

## 21st Century School-Home Communication 2nd Grade Pilots the Use of Facebook as a Daily Communication Tool

In our ever-changing, technologically advancing world, it takes more than a good school to educate children. According to a University of Illinois Extension study, "...children whose parents, or other significant adults, share in their formal education tend to do better in school." With this in mind over the summer we evaluated the effectiveness and efficiency of our current school-home communication. Looping, or teaching with the same class for two years provided us with the unique opportunity to try two different methods of communication with the same population and receive their perspectives on the two different models.

### Year one model

The first year of the pilot we implemented a traditional weekly newsletter. It included one grade level activity photo, important dates for the next week, and summarized skills taught that week.

### Evaluation of year one model

After surveying our parents about school-home communication we found that most parents felt very well informed about what his or her child was learning at school throughout the year. However, most parents responded that while they knew what generally occurred at school, they did not feel well informed about what happened on a daily basis in the classroom. From a teacher's perspective, we noticed that the weekly newsletter was easily lost amidst the shuffle of papers from school to home.

### Year two model

The second year of the pilot we replaced the weekly paper newsletter with daily posts on Facebook. Within 48 hours and before the school year had begun, we were connected with over half of our families and some community members. To date we are connected with 87% of our students' families and numerous community members.

To ensure the maximum amount of security and privacy for our students, the account was set up with the maximum security options that Facebook allows. This includes, but is not limited to: parents are not allowed to tag photos, only friends can see the photos we post, and only current parents, school personnel, and verified educational professionals are accepted as friends. Extended family members are accepted with written parental permission. Only students whose parents signed the district media release are ever pictured on Facebook.

### Why Facebook?

- With over 1 billion monthly users, Facebook is likely to be a communication tool that parents already use
- Allows us to send out quick reminders about next day events or needed materials for projects

- Ecologically and financially responsible way to provide daily communication about what was learned at school

- Models and embraces responsible use of social media
- Invites parents in for a "fly on the wall" perspective with daily photos and videos of students learning and working
- Allows us to explain to parents the academic vocabulary and strategies that have been taught in the classroom
- Allows us to share links to videos, songs, websites, etc. that were used as a teaching tool during the day
- Students who were absent have a way to find out what happened during the day

### Mid-year evaluation of year two model

After surveying our parents and other Facebook friends, we found that the majority preferred Facebook over the traditional newsletter as an effective school-home communication tool. The top reasons why parents said they preferred Facebook were:

1. Pictures and videos helped them feel more connected to school
2. Increased school-related conversations at home
3. Provides reminders of important events, dates, etc.
4. Builds community awareness and support for the school

**"Being able to see what my child is doing is great. I feel like I am part of her day."**

### Not every system is a perfect system

While Facebook communication seems to be highly effective and efficient for most, there are some for whom this is not a preferred method. To ensure that these families still receive similar communications we print off the posts weekly to send to those families. Additionally we have implemented a suggestion from the survey and have recently begun sending posts and photos to families via e-mail.

Overall Facebook has proven itself to not only keep parents informed about what their children learn at school in a year, but has also filled the daily communication gap that we noticed with the traditional newsletter. Today's parents want to be actively involved in the day-to-day activities of their children. By using "academic networking" tools, such as Facebook, Twitter, etc., we have made communicating school news in a timely manner more effective and efficient. The effectiveness of using Facebook is best stated by one of our parents, "...it seems to be much easier to access and gives some really positive tools to help us as parents to help where we can." 🐾



## Bennett, Busch and Kelm, Herb Kohl Teacher Fellowship Nominees

Ilka Bennett, Laura Busch, and Susan Kelm were nominated for The Kohl Teacher Fellowship program that recognizes and supports teaching excellence and innovation in the State of Wisconsin. From the CESA 3 area, Ms. Busch and Ms. Bennett were selected to advance and compete at the state level. The State Selection Committee will meet early February and the Kohl Foundation will announce Fellowship recipients in March. 🌟

## Diefenbach and Wiegel Receive National Board Certification

The mission of the National Board is to advance student learning and achievement by establishing the definitive standards and systems for certifying accomplished educators, providing programs and advocating policies that support excellence in teaching and leading, and engaging National Board certified teachers and leaders in that process. To date, more than 106,000 teachers in all 50 states and 1,000 teachers in the state of Wisconsin have achieved the profession's highest mark of accomplishment through a rigorous, performance-based, peer-review process. Earning the certification is usually a one- to three-year process. It requires completing four teaching practice portfolio entries and six assessments of content knowledge, skills, and practice.



In addition to current Nationally Board Certified Members of Dan Rhode and Rachael Schroeder the District now recognizes Kimberly Diefenbach and Penny Wiegel as National Board Certified. 🌟

## PEP Update

Several years ago PEP began using the Hassle Free Fundraiser as a way to raise money for improving and advancing technology in Mineral Point schools. We decided to keep the program as simple as possible. Our kids didn't have to sell anything, community members didn't have to buy anything, there was no event to attend or arrange and the full amount of your donations went to enhancing the experience MP students had in the classroom. The Hassle Free Fundraiser is not held every year, but has raised over \$10,000 since 2011 and we thank those of you who have contributed to the cause. That money has purchased Smart Boards for classrooms, hand held response systems and Math Intervention Kits, just to name a few recent things.

PEP has also raised money through Scrip gift card sales and Schoolmall magazine sales. These projects have helped to provide some of the following: financial support for Science Night, field trip admission and transportation costs for classes from pre-K through high school, parent education workshops, classroom supplies for teachers (carts, counter tops, storage bins etc.), the PEP Good Citizen scholarship to graduating seniors (Anna Cevellinger, Cheyenne Ferrell, Jordyn Dolphin), new playground equipment, Pointer Props notebooks, Nooks for the IMC, a staff appreciation lunch, IXL and BrainPop website membership fees, graphing calculators for high school math classes, registration fees for staff educational development workshops, devices to connect iPads to Smart Boards, PC monitors and a speaker for the Safe & Caring schools program.

The sale of prepackaged School Kits has been another PEP project for the last several years. This is another small fundraiser for our group and any profits from it are used to purchase school kits for local families in need of assistance in getting these items for their children.

Over the last 3 years, PEP has provided almost \$20,000 in extras for the students and staff of MP schools. We sincerely thank all of you who have supported PEP! While The Pointer Education Partnership strives to be more than a fundraising organization, your financial donations to the Hassle Free Fundraiser and purchase of Scrip gift cards contribute greatly to enhancing the education of our young Pointers!

To learn more about PEP attend a meeting scheduled the 2nd Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. in the Mineral Point High School Library or contact President Paula Schuetz at pointer-pep@gmail.com. 🌟

## Mineral Point receives \$25,000 grant from the Wisconsin Technology Initiative

The Mineral Point School District is the recent recipient of a \$25,000 grant from the Wisconsin Technology Initiative to help reduce the financial barriers of integrating instructional technology into the Mineral Point classroom.

The grant will be used to develop learning in students through an engaging environment through the purchase of interactive white boards, document cameras, and a telepresence. Interactive whiteboards allows for multiple students to approach the board and learn through touch by interacting with lesson. Document cameras transfer two dimensional images to the interactive white board allowing for students to manipulate information on a piece of paper. Telepresence allows for students to share course content between buildings without having to travel and take virtual field trips across the state, country or world.

"The technology received will make it easier for the classroom experience to come alive through engaging and interactive lessons offered through different technologies. Our students will greatly benefit from this gift for years to come," said Luke Francos, Superintendent. "I am very excited to take our first live virtual field trip via telepresence to a museum in Washington DC for example. An experience such as that is not something Mineral Point students would normally get to do."

"We knew Mineral Point district would understand the importance and would put the technology to good use," said Mike Kerr, Executive Director of Wisconsin Technology Initiative. "We are excited to see the positive results that will come from this project."



The Wisconsin Technology Initiative was established in 2010 by John P. and Tashia F. Morgridge to improve academic achievement by providing funding for the advancement of instructional technology in learning environments throughout the state of Wisconsin.

### About Wisconsin Technology Initiative

The Wisconsin Technology Initiative provides funding to K-12 schools to advance the use of technology in learning environments throughout the state of Wisconsin. Formed by John P. and Tashia F. Morgridge, Wisconsin Technology Initiative is a continuation of the Morgridges' commitment to their home state and to higher education. Among other things, they have supported scholarships at Alverno College in Milwaukee, at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and they provided the founding gift for the Fund for Wisconsin Scholars. Learn more at: [www.WisconsinTechnologyInitiative.org](http://www.WisconsinTechnologyInitiative.org) 🌟

## Winter Sports Season Update

The winter sports season is in full swing entering the month of February. Along with the month of February brings the WIAA tournament series. The MPHS winter season sports teams are all experiencing successful seasons and are excited to enter tournament play.

Following is the WIAA tournament schedule for February and March:

<b>WRESTLING:</b>	
<b>Saturday, February 15:</b> Regionals at River Ridge	
<b>Tuesday, February 18:</b> Team Sectionals at Royal	
<b>Saturday, February 22:</b> Individual Sectionals at Necedah	
<b>February 27-29:</b> Individual State Tournament	
<b>Saturday, March 8:</b> Team State	
<b>BOYS BASKETBALL:</b>	
<b>Tuesday, February 25:</b> Regionals	
<b>Friday, February 28:</b> Regional Semis	
<b>Saturday, March 1:</b> Regional Finals	
<b>Thursday, March 6:</b> Sectional Semis at Richard Center	
<b>Saturday, March 8:</b> Sectional Finals at Baraboo	
<b>March 13-15:</b> State Tournament – Kohl Center, Madison	
	Resch Center, Green Bay
<b>GIRLS BASKETBALL:</b>	
<b>Tuesday, March 4:</b> Regionals	
<b>Friday, March 7:</b> Regional Semis	
<b>Saturday, March 8:</b> Regional Finals	
<b>Thursday, March 13:</b> Sectional Semis at Verona	
<b>Saturday, March 15:</b> Sectional Finals at DeForest	
<b>March 20-22:</b> State Tournament – Resch Center, Green Bay	

## Nationally Recognized Speaker Visits Mineral Point

Carla Rand, K-6 School Counselor

On Wednesday, January 29, Michael McGowan, a nationally recognized speaker, spoke to all the students in the Mineral Point School District. He also offered a nighttime parent presentation for those who were interested on the subject of respect and responsibility.

Mike hesitates to use the word bullying. He believes it is over-used and doesn't really describe much of the behavior that we see. Bullying is described as intentional acts to hurt someone physically, emotionally or socially and most often involves a power imbalance of some sort between aggressor and target. Mike believes that much of what we see isn't bullying but is best described as plain "mean" behavior. Not because we have mean children (although some mean people exist in most environments) but because many of our children lack the skills needed to interact with others in a warm and respectful way.

Why do our students lack these basic skills that most adults had drilled into them as children? Mike McGowan points to our current culture to blame. There are many factors in society now which limit children's opportunities to learn and practice the many social skills needed to interact with others in a respectful and responsible way. One of these factors is individual bedrooms. No longer do most children share a bedroom with a sibling or two. They do not have the opportunity to learn and practice sharing, negotiation and conflict resolution. The way children and adults alike are tuned into technology with a variety of devices available to them, often in their own bedroom, takes away the opportunity to learn and practice good communication skills, including listening skills and the respectful communication of feelings. Children's repeated exposure to many episodes of their favorite TV shows where sarcasm and snarkiness prevail. Often the meanest characters on these shows are the ones who are most popular and receive the most laughs. They don't see how being the responsible, kind character pays off.

What can we as parents and educators do? We have to work extra hard and diligently to teach our students the relational skills they lack and give them the opportunities to practice them. We can't let the mean behavior and the sarcastic comments slide by without noticing them and using these as opportunities for teaching and practicing. We can't let the little behavior problems go unaddressed as they tend to grow into bigger behavior problems. We have to acknowledge

**“We have to work extra hard and diligently to teach our students the relational skills they lack and give them the opportunities to practice them.”**



that while our society and technology has made many things easier and has increased our skills in many areas, it has equally made some things harder and taken away our children's opportunities to learn and practice the basic relational skills that are needed to form strong and healthy relationships with others.

Both students and parents alike enjoyed Mr. McGowan's entertaining way of helping us recognize what is behind some of the problematic behavior we see in our young people. Helping us see the path we must take to help our students and children become the respectful, happy and productive citizens we all want them to be. We now know that we cannot assume that children possess the relational skills we want them to have. We can't assume that when they do not exhibit these desired behaviors it is because they are children with "bullying" behavior. Their interactions are often mean, not because they are mean, but because this is the type of behavior they are exposed to on a repeated basis and so this is what they learn. We need to counteract these lessons with our own on a daily basis to give our kids the opportunities to learn and practice the skills we desire them to have. 🌟

## MPHS Band headed to Orlando, Florida March 16th-22nd!

Where would you picture 60 high school students and 12 chaperones at 5:00 a.m. on a Sunday morning? Hopefully in bed, but on March 16th, you will see them all bright eyed and bushy tailed boarding two coach buses headed down to Orlando, Florida and setting sights on Walt Disney World and Islands of Adventure at Universal Studios. The students have a jam packed week ahead of them in which they will be performing a concert at Downtown Disney and participating in the "You're Instrumental" workshop at Epcot. During the "You're Instrumental" workshop, a Disney cast member (professional musician) works with the band and teaches them what it entails to be a professional musician in the recording industry. Following the clinic, students will be presented music they have never seen before, and have just one hour to put it all together before we are "third" by Disney to perform and record the soundtrack for one of their movies.

If you happen to be in Orlando on Wednesday, March 19th at 1:30 p.m., you should come on down to Downtown Disney's Waterside Stage and listen to the Mineral Point High School Concert Band in concert. The band will be playing works

## FFA District Speaking Contest

On January 29th, the Mineral Point FFA attended the District 12 FFA Speaking Contest at Peconica High School. There were 17 participants from Mineral Point competing against FFA members from 7 other schools.

The 8th grade quiz bowlers that competed were Team 1 Katie Fitzsimmons, Mollie Siegenthaler, Amanda Murphy and Madison Bowers Team 2 Melany Brieno, Molonte Johnson, and Jacob Moellers Team 1 placed first and will move onto the sectional speaking contest. In this contest 8th grade FFA members compete against teams from other schools to answer questions about FFA facts. It is the first speaking competition open to them in their FFA career.

Hannah Parkinson placed first and Tammie Loken placed 2nd in The FFA Creed Speaking contest and both will be advancing to sectionals. The Creed Contest involves reciting the FFA Creed from memory and answering a series of questions about the Creed.

In Extemporaneous Speaking Debbie Heath placed first and will be moving onto the sectional contest. Scott Pitz placed 3rd. The Extemporaneous contest consists of a student drawing an Agricultural related topic and preparing a 5 minute speech on that topic.

The Job Interview contest had Rachel McCoy placed 1st and will be moving onto the sectional contest. Dakota James placed 4th. The Job Interview Contest is a very practical contest that has the FFA member interview for an agricultural related job.

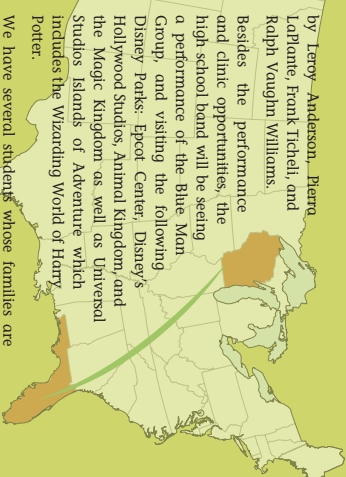


The Discussion Meet contest had Reid Suddeth placing second and moving onto the sectional contest. Hollie Schmitz placed 3rd. In discussion meet the FFA members are gathered at a table and discuss solutions to an agricultural issue.

In the prepared speaking contest Paula Pitz placed 1st and Elizabeth Moellers placed second and both will be moving onto sectional Competition. In the Prepared contest FFA members memorize an Agricultural related speech and present it to a panel of judges.

Mineral Point FFA was represented very well at the contest and did outstanding job. Congratulations. The Sectional FFA speaking contest will be held on March 12th at Darlington. 🌟

We have several students whose families are under financial constraints. If you would like to sponsor a student so they can take part in this event, please contact Mr. Nevers at the high school through email: matt.nevers@mp.k12.wi.us or by phone, 987-0730. 🌟



Mineral Point Unified  
School District  
705 Ross Street  
Mineral Point, WI 53565  
Phone: (608) 987.0740  
Fax: (608) 987.3766

*The White and Blue Review  
is published by the Mineral Point  
Schools. Available in alternative  
formats by request.*

## Interested in advertising in the White and Blue

**Review?** We welcome  
advertisers. For ad size and  
rate information please  
contact **Luke Francois** at  
Luke.Francois@mp.k12.wi.us  
or 608.987.0740.

For events and yearly school calendar info: [www.mineralpointschools.org](http://www.mineralpointschools.org)



**Committed  
to helping our  
Communities  
Grow**

Visit us today and meet the  
bank that's right for you.

LOCAL,  
INDEPENDENT,  
HOMETOWN BANK  
A Full Service Bank  
in Mineral Point  
(608) 987.3321

Offices in  
Dodgeville (608) 935.9988  
Hollandale (608) 967.2211  
Edmund (608) 623.2434  
Ridgeway (608) 924.4531  
Mt. Horeb (608) 437.2265  
or Toll-Free (888) 443.3226  
[www.farmersavings.com](http://www.farmersavings.com)



*Rates are low...*

*Contact Jenny  
in Mineral Point  
to Refinance Today!*

*Proud to be here for you*



640 Dodge Street  
(608) 987-3800



**MOUND CITY BANK**

Interested in advertising in the  
White and Blue Review? 608.987.0740



**BREWERY CREEK**  
Mineral Point's own  
brewpub restaurant

GOOD FOOD  
GOOD BEER

Since 1998  
...

Open year round  
23 Commerce Street | 608-987-3298

[www.brewerycreek.com](http://www.brewerycreek.com)