# White Blue Review

Winter 2015 **Education...** That's the Point

## POINTER PHOTO ROUNDUP

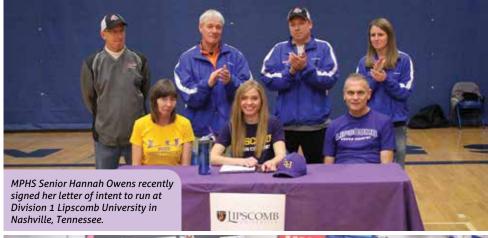


Local woodcarver, John Sharp, helped a fallen tree from the Oak Savanna be preserved as a natural playground piece for the school.













## **Graduation Rates Exceed State Average**

Luke Francois, Mineral Point District Administrator



raduation rates at Mineral Point High School continue to remain high, with 97 percent of Mineral Point students graduating in four years. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) recently released graduation rate figures for high schools across the state, showing

Wisconsin's high school graduation rates to be among the top in the nation.

The national graduation rate is 81 percent for the 2012-2013 school year. Wisconsin's 88 percent graduation rate is tied for second to only Iowa at 90 percent. Wisconsin's graduation rate has steadily been increasing from 87 percent for the 2010-2011 school year, 87.5 percent for 2012 graduates and 88 percent for the class of 2013.

"The goal of high school students is to graduate in four years. However, the district recognizes that some students may need more time. Sometimes students just need an additional semester or year," stated Superintendent Luke

"Mineral Point High School has implemented a practice that allows students the opportunity to redo or retake tests and quizzes to demonstrate proficiency. Additionally, missing assignments must be completed as a non-negotiable. These efforts most certainly contribute to ensuring all students remain on track to graduate," he added.

Francois is first to admit the expectation is that all students graduate with their peers on time. Until that goal is met, however, exceeding state and national averages is a most impressive accomplishment.

Mineral Point ranks second to Darlington with a 98.4% graduation rate. Other area school graduation rates include Iowa Grant 95.8%, Belmont 95.7%, and Dodgeville 95.7%. 🕏

## Students of the Month

October: Josh Berg and Blake Chambers November: Alec Schmitz and Ross Siegenthaler December: Winndie Darrow and Sy Staver January: Hannah Owens and Elise Powers

February: Richie Haase and Jordan Kittleson

White and Blue Review articles and photography credit to Joelle Doye, MPSD Communications Director, unless otherwise noted.

# **Message from Mitch Wainwright**

Principal, Mineral Point High School & District Assessment Coordinator



 $\mathbf{A}$ ccountability, assessment, college and career ready. You have probably seen or heard these words in the newspaper, on television. Legislators are promising that they can fix our educational system here in Wisconsin. What does this really mean for schools and school districts? Wisconsin's education system has been moving in a

direction that requires students to be tested more often to determine if they are prepared for heading into the world of

Currently our students are now tested in Kindergarten through second grade to determine how well they can read. Third grade through eighth grade students will be taking what is now called the Badger Exam. This will test their basic skills and the ability to apply that knowledge in math, reading and language usage. Fourth, eighth and tenth grade students still take the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam for science

High school students from ninth to eleventh grade take an exam from the makers of American College Testing (ACT). The ninth and tenth grade students take the ACT Aspire exam that tests readiness in English, science, writing, reading and math. They receive a three digit score based on national benchmarks. This means that ACT has tested an extremely large number of students and found a score range that if students hit they have gone on to be successful in college or at work. Because most Midwestern colleges use the ACT score as a predictor of success, the three digit number is then translated into a two digit ACT score. As an example, if a student were to score a 430 on the English test, ACT Aspire makes a prediction that the student would score somewhere in the range of 18 – 23 on the actual ACT test in that subject area. The student is also given a score of ready, close, or in need of support. The ninth grade students take this exam two times a year and the tenth graders take it only once. Every eleventh grade student in the state will take the ACT exam and Work Keys exam on back to back days. These two assessments will measure how ready a student is for college or work after high school.

If you talk with your children, I hope that you will see they are doing so many more and different things than what we did as parents when we were in school. We are asked to test the progress of our students more often to make sure they are learning what they need. That progress is reported out more often to the state and to the public to ensure we are accountable for the future.

Mineral Point Schools, a great place to be! Mitch.Wainwright@mp.k12.wi.us | 987.0730

# From the Desk of **Brad Brogley**

Mineral Point Elementary Principal, Curriculum and Instruction



Ctudents in grades 3-8 **J**around the state of Wisconsin will be taking a new Math and English Language Arts (ELA) assessment in the spring of 2015. The name of this test is the Badger

Exam. This test will consist of two parts: a computer adaptive test, and performance tasks that will be taken on a computer but will not be computer-adaptive. Computer adaptive means that a student who answers a question correctly will receive a more challenging item, while an incorrect answer generates an easier question. By adapting to the student as the test is taking place, we will be able to quickly identify which skills students have mastered. This approach represents a significant improvement over traditional paper-and-pencil assessments such as the WKCE (Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination). The test window for the Badger Exam is March 30 to May 22, 2015.

The Badger Exam 3-8 is Wisconsin's Smarter Balanced Assessment. The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced) is a state-led consortium working to develop next-generation assessments that accurately measure student progress toward college- and career-readiness.

The Badger Exam also has a secure, online reporting system that provides assessment results to students, parents, teachers, and administrators. The reports generated will show student achievement and progress toward mastery of the grade level content in Math and English Language Arts.

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has recently released more information about the Badger Exam as well as a practice test. Here is the link for that information: http://oea.dpi.wi.gov/assessment/Smarter/ sampleitems Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. **\*** 

Brad.Brogley@mp.k12.wi.us | 987.0711

# **Two Mineral Point Teachers Being Considered for Kohl Fellowship**

The Mineral Point Unified School ■ District is proud to announce two of the four Herb Kohl Fellowship applications from all of the 31 school districts in CESA #3 that have been forwarded on to the state level competition are Pointers.





Matthew Nevers, high school band teacher, and Marcia Roberts, first grade teacher, are the chosen two.

The purpose of the Kohl Teacher Fellowship program is to recognize and support teaching excellence and innovation. The Herb Kohl Foundation's goal is to support teachers in pursuit of their unrealized goals for their classrooms or professional development. Fellowship recipients are chosen

for their superior ability to inspire a love of learning in their students, their ability to motivate others, and for their leadership and service within and outside the classroom.

"Being nominated for a Kohl Fellowship is a great honor," said Mineral Point Superintendent, Luke Francois. "I consider it one of the most prestigious recognitions available to teachers in the state of Wisconsin because nominees are nominated by parents and colleagues. It is simply a recognition of the great work that many teachers do, but often without notice. Matt and Marcia are very deserving of state level consideration."

The applications were recently read at the local level and the evaluation team reported it received several excellent applications. However, per CESA, a maximum of only five teacher and five student applications can be forwarded on for state consideration by the Department of Public Instruction.

Nevers and Roberts will have their applications read by the state selection committee at the end of January. The announcement of the winners will likely be made public in early March. Last year, 100 Wisconsin educators each received a \$1,000 grant for their school.

Recipients are selected by a statewide committee composed of civic leaders and representatives of education-related associations and the program's co-sponsors: The Wisconsin Newspaper Association Foundation, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Council of Religious and Independent Schools, and regional Cooperative Educational Service Agencies.

"The experiences that Matt provides for his students are outstanding," said Mitch Wainwright, Mineral Point High School Principal. "If you look at the number of musicians that have played at a state, national, and even international level, you will see an incredible opportunity for our students. Music has created these wonderful opportunities and Matt has provided the quidance for these students."

"I am continually impressed by Mrs. Roberts' work ethic and devotion to her students," said Brad Brogley, Mineral Point Elementary School Principal. "She does whatever it takes to ensure her students are learning and having fun while learning."

This program was established by retired U.S. Senator, Herb Kohl, in 1990. To date, the foundation has awarded nearly \$9 million to Wisconsin educators, students, and schools. \*

## **Telepresence**

Helpresence is a lifeline for rural schools. We are being tossed the life preserver and we have the chance to grab on."

These words were echoed by Mineral Point Superintendent Luke Francois at the conclusion of a January 26 meeting with other school leaders from Kickapoo, Pecatonica, and Riverdale schools.

These four districts, along with Highland, are proposing to enter into a consortium entitled BOOST to help increase educational opportunities for students and staff through the use of telepresence.

Telepresence is a high-definition, real-time interactive video technology system. This allows students to take classes from teachers who aren't physically in their school, and also enables teachers to collaborate easier with other professionals in the consortium.

BOOST is the acronym set to be used for the consortium, which stands for Building Opportunities and Occupations for Students Together.

"We feel this name really captures what we are trying to do and what we are all about," said Francois.

In addition to the ability of students to take classes from other high schools in the consortium, they will also have the ability to enroll in classes from higher learning institutions, such as Southwest Technical College and the University of Wisconsin-Platteville.

Some classes may be able to be counted for both high school and college credits, which is called dual enrollment credit.

"Rural schools are often lacking the curriculum and professional development that larger schools have," said François.

Kickapoo Superintendent Doug Olsen agreed, citing the discrepancy between urban and rural schools as "a fundamental unfairness."

Grants were obtained from the Wisconsin Technology Initiative to purchase the necessary equipment to successfully operate a telepresence program.

Mineral Point received \$75,000 initially, which bought one telepresence unit, placed SMART Boards in every classroom, bought document cameras, an interactive SMART table for 4k students, and SMART response devices.

An additional \$25,000 helped purchase an additional telepresence unit along with additional SMART boards.

The most recent grant just obtained in January will purchase another telepresence unit.

The consortium would continue to look for more grant opportunities and partnerships to help fund additional technology needs as they arise.

"We are also facing teacher shortages in certain subjects," said Francois. "Having a consortium would allow us to pool our resources in some of these areas."



Telepresence allowed Deb Soper's sixth grade students to go on a virtual field trip to the Penn Museum in Philadelphia.

"It is also important to educate our staff that this is not a threat to teacher jobs," said Olsen. "This is about increasing options for our students."

Francois agreed and cited a Minnesota consortium where the districts actually added full time employment due to its success

Virtual field trips are also a plus to telepresence. Prior to the holiday break, Mineral Point Middle School students took a virtual trip to the Penn Museum in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to watch an interactive presentation on mummy making in conjunction with their unit on Ancient Egypt. There is also a presentation scheduled with a Holocaust survivor.

There are some keys to making this endeavor successful, and at the core would be having a common school calendar and bell schedule with all schools in the consortium. The superintendents have met and drafted such a proposal, which would need individual school board approval.

Mineral Point School Board President Bob Oberhauser asked if the lessons were recorded and could be played back should a student miss class. Francois said right now the equipment they could afford to purchase through the grant secured does not have that capability, but is likely something to come soon down the road.

Mineral Point School Board Treasurer Matt Lindsey wondered what length of time commitment would the district enter into up front. François said it would be an annual agreement and thanked Highland and Pecatonica Superintendent Nancy Hendrickson for drafting the language that would serve to answer many of the technical questions.

This group of districts has been talking for sometime, developing this idea, and hopes to start this fall for the 2015-16 school year. The next steps would be for each district to take a formal proposal to its school board and obtain successful approval. Hopefully then, the districts could be in launch mode after spring break and begin developing student and teacher schedules around course offerings.

"We didn't want to move forward so quickly before we were committed and had a plan," said Francois. "We feel that time is now."

## **Project Lead the Way/State Education Convention**

Excitement continues to build at Mineral Point Elementary over the Project Lead the Way program, thanks most recently to a large grant received from Cummins Emission Solutions as part of its Community Development Grant program.

In addition, the district has received word that Ella Chambers, Drew Hottenstein, Caleb Wersal, Haylee Kearns, Alyssa Roelli, and Trapper Nafzger, along with teachers Livia Doyle and Judy Benish, were selected to represent the Project Lead the Way program at the Wisconsin State Education Convention Wednesday, January 21 in Milwaukee.

Through Project Lead the Way, students become problem solvers. They use structured approaches like the engineering design process and scientific method, and employ critical thinking. They apply STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) knowledge, skills, and habits of mind, learning that it is okay to take risks and make mistakes. As teachers and students learn and discover together, education becomes far more engaging.

"Project Lead the Way at the elementary level is a natural fit for our school and community," said teacher Livia Doyle. "Our young students are eager to explore and ask questions. They want to be challenged in ways that are engaging and hands-on. Involving students at a young age in STEM activities builds confidence, grows interest, and puts them on course for strong accomplishments in middle school, high school, and beyond."

Students at a recent assembly described Project Lead the Way as "fun," "a great learning experience," and "exciting" and "hands-on."

This \$21,616.50 grant will build upon the existing program to personalize the experience for each child.

Last school year was the pilot for the program and assigned 4-5 students to use one VEX kit, which is a robotic kit that is made up of modular parts that allows students to design and create an almost infinite number of different robots. Project Lead the Way recommends two students to each VEX kit. Additionally, the elementary uses iPad mobile devices to complete the 12 modules annually. Project Lead the Way recommends a ratio of one iPad for each pair of students. The grant will help purchase more of the necessary supplies so more students can be engaged at the same time at the recommended ratio.

Prior to involvement at the elementary, Cummins has also been instrumental in assisting the high school with their Project Lead the Way program through a grant spread out over the past three years.

"We have had great success at the high school, and I am excited to build on what we have started here," said Dennis Horn of Cummins. "I would also like to add the excitement we have to continue the strong partnership that we have formed



Trapper Nafzger, Drew Hottenstein, Caleb Wersal, Haylee Kearns, Alyssa Roelli and Ella Chambers are shown presenting Project Lead the Way at the State Education Convention in Milwaukee.



Employees from Cummins received Thank You cards from each grade level for their generous donation to Project Lead the Way.

over the years. I look forward to the great possibilities that lie ahead."

"Last year I attended a recognition ceremony where the Department of Public Instruction awarded Cummins with the distinguished honor of being recognized as one of five industry leaders that have committed to partnering with schools," said Mineral Point Superintendent Luke Francois. "Cummins continues in this same tradition and I am simply amazed at how well the company takes pride in the community in which it resides, as well as in learning for children in its area. I want to personally thank Dennis Horn and his leadership team for shepherding this grant effort on behalf of Mineral Point Elementary."

For the 94th annual State Education Convention, Mineral Point Elementary is among 14 other districts that were chosen from a field of nominations state wide to be highlighted at this event

"A direct result of Cummins' efforts finds Mineral Point sharing Project Lead the Way for elementary students with school board members across the state of Wisconsin," said Francois. "As only one of a dozen schools across the country implementing the project in year one, it is safe to say that Mineral Point Elementary is leading the nation in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) curriculum."

## **Equalization Aid**

Luke Francois with contributions from Karen Kucharz Robbe, DPI

How does the state determine the amount of state aid to give schools and how much money should be levied from local property taxes? The answer is complex, even to those that serve as a business manager for schools, due to the complexity of the state's equalization aid formula. An attempt to simplify the equalization aid formula follows.

First, a historical perspective is helpful. The Wisconsin Constitution on Education states in Article X, Section 2, "The legislature shall provide by law for the establishment of district schools, which shall be as nearly uniform as practicable; and such schools shall be free and without charge for tuition to all children between the age of 4 and 20." Section 4 continues, "Each town and city shall be required to raise by tax, annually, for the support of common schools therein. ..."

In layman terms the state has a responsibility to create district schools as nearly uniform as practicable. The district schools are to be free and funded by local property tax. The Wisconsin Supreme Court has defined uniformity as "character of education" and not the total amount of dollars spent. However, funding "character" cannot result in too great of a disparity of cash or districts will be deemed not to be uniform.

In modern-day Wisconsin, the primary funding source for public schools is the property tax, however, property values across the state are not uniform. Therefore the state is challenged to define "uniformity."

Uniformity does not mean the same amount of state aid for all districts. Buse verses Smith stated that the state couldn't recapture aid from local property taxes and redistribute to schools. However, the state can use state aid to uniformly distribute dollars to schools if it is related to local property value.

As a result, the more local property value the less aid a district receives from the state. Likewise, the inverse relationship is true whereas the less local property value in a district the more aid a district receives from the state. The property tax base is used to determine a district's ability to support expenditures. Therefore the state uses an equalized value or fair market value for calculations and NOT assessed value.

But that is not all. The state equalization aid formula, in addition to property value, takes into account the number of children to educate. But that too is not all. The equalization aid formula is a cost-sharing formula that incorporates property value, number of students to educate, AND spending. The equalization aid computation is actually three individual computations that are summed together to get the district's total equalization aid.

The three district factors that determine how much state aid is received are shared costs (spending), membership (students), and the property tax base (ability to pay). The three state factors that determine how much state aid a district receives are cost ceilings, guaranteed property valuations per member,

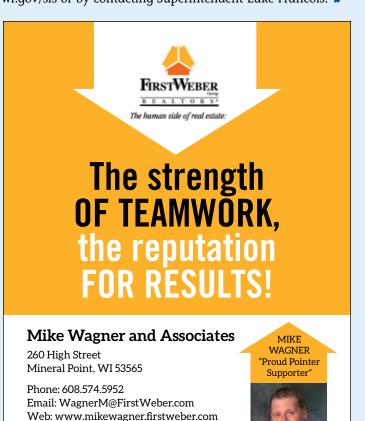
and the amount of money available to distribute. The state's equalization aid formula becomes more complex once primary, secondary, and tertiary aid is introduced.

For now, equalization aid takeaways are as follows:

- 1. One (1) pot of money is split over 424 school districts based on district values, membership, and expenditures. Changes in individual district's data affect each other's aid.
- 2. Equalization Aid membership (resident students) is an average of the September and January full time equivalency counts for students, plus 100% of summer school full time equivalency.
- 3. Depending on district value-per member, some districts increase their aid by increasing expenses, while others decrease their aid by increasing expenses. It is important to know where your district is in the formula. (Mineral Point increases aid when increasing expenditures)

The state's break down of expenditures that are funded by state general aid and property tax are as follows: State General Aid 44%, Local Property Taxes 43%, Federal Aid 5%, Categorical State Aid 3%, and Local Miscellaneous Receipts make up the balance or 5%.

If you have questions regarding Mineral Point's Equalization Aid formula, more information is available at http://sfs.dpi. wi.gov/sfs or by contacting Superintendent Luke Francois.



"Serving all of Southwest Wisconsin"

## WINTER SPORTS UPDATE

#### Boys Basketball | Alec Schmitz, senior captain



Eleven games in, we're still undefeated! Our conference record has big wins over other top teams Darlington and Cuba City. So far, we've had a nice home stretch with great home crowds. We've shared the ball really well through the first half of the season and played very experienced with many veterans leading the team. Our success has come through playing

with a lot of speed and good three point shooting. Our goals are conference, regional, and sectional championships, which really come into play over the next half of the season. Some games that have stood out are the big conference wins, as well as a non-conference battle against Southern Door. Cuba City and Southern Door are games that we made comebacks after large deficits to win the game. Against Darlington, we started out slow and had a huge third quarter to take control of the game. The second half of the season will be mainly important conference games. We are currently ranked third in the Associated Press Poll.

### Girls Basketball | Clara Chambers, junior captain



The 2014-15 girls varsity basketball season is off to a great start! We are currently 11-3 overall. All three of those losses came from teams ranked number one in their respective divisions (Barneveld D4, Cuba City D3, Dodgeville D2). Other than that, we have been a very dominant basketball team. During our 10 game winning streak, we have knocked out two teams

ranked #2 in the state (Fall River and Belmont). Our victories also include wins over D2 schools who are much bigger than us. With all of this success, we've had to battle injuries to key players on our team. As we finish off the second half of our season, our goals are very much alive--our goals of being conference champs and making a run in the post season. We continue to work hard, and make each other better, to accomplish these goals.

## **Gymnastics** | Winndie Darrow, senior

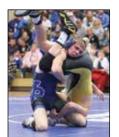


Our gymnastics season has started out really well this year! With our new additions, Lauren May, Martina Steffes, Alyssa Belling, Hannah Mettlach, and Katie Henson, we are so much better. Our first invite was in Baraboo and we did very well. We won our next meet in Prairie du Chien and had a lot of people place on events. At our next home meet everyone

was at the top of their game and almost beat the school record. Recently we have had a number of injuries. Martina Steffes injured her elbow, Tori Palzkill found out she has a bulging disc in her back, and Miranda Weber found out that her spine is twisted. Hopefully she'll be able to compete soon.

Everyone on our team brings something special. Alyssa discovered that she can do uprises on the bars and that she can do front handspring front tuck. Lauren came into the season with huge spunk and attitude. She shows it off perfectly on all of her events. Claire Polinag has some really cool moves on floor. Once the music kicks in she pops it like no other. Hannah Mettlach has done so many things she never thought she could do, and she is so much fun to be around. Katie Henson has improved all season. She is one of a kind and I'm very proud of her and everyone else on the team. We look forward to the conference meet in Platteville on February 14, sectionals at Mt. Horeb, and hopefully state at Wisconsin Rapids!

## Wrestling | Frank Baker, senior captain



The Mineral Point High School wrestling season began on November 17. We have good numbers with a good number of returning starters from a year ago.

December was a long, grueling month. We had thirteen matches in two weeks. It started with a win over River Valley 45-25. Later that week, at our first home

meet against SWAL rival Riverdale we won 48-18. The highlight of that night was at 145 pounds where Brandon Forseth beat a returning state runner-up from Riverdale 4-3. The Watertown Early Bird Scramble brought two champions, and the 100th career win for senior Ross Siegenthaler. We continued the next week with a dual meet win over Darlington 46-21, and a third place finish at the Dells Duals tournament. Scott Pittz beat a defending state champion in overtime 4-2. Next came the Badger State tournament where we had two second place finishers, Scott Pittz and Nate Cody. Badger State was followed by a dual win over Sugar River. To end December we went to the Merrill Northern Exposure tournament. The two day event was a good learning experience for the whole team. After a slow start we finished the tournament in eighth place.

January has been a good month. We have continued our winning ways in the SWAL with two wins over Boscobel and Cuba City. Our most recent tournament, the Geneseo, Illinois Invitational, was one of the toughest of the year. We returned with five place winners and another 100th career win, this time for junior Scott Pittz.

We finished out the regular season with a dual win against Iowa-Grant and a loss to Fennimore. Then the tournament series starts with the conference tournament in Richland Center. As a team, we are looking to get back to the Fieldhouse in Madison for the Team State Tournament in March. We would like to thank our fans for your amazing support throughout the year!

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Education... That's the Point Winter 2015 7

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## Fundamentals of Sportsmanship Vickie Dahl, District Athletic Director

With the WIAA tournaments quickly approaching, I would like to remind our fans of the fundamentals of sportsmanship. The WIAA defines sportsmanship as "Playing by the established rules of the contest; competing with one's best efforts without drawing attention to one's self with celebratory displays; losing without excuse or complaint; winning without gloating; cheering in a positive manner that does not disrespect, taunt, ridicule or attempt to intimidate anyone; and respecting the game, event and others."

The WIAA lists five fundamentals of sportsmanship on their website

# 1. Gain an understanding and appreciation for the rules of the contest.

Being well informed is essential. Know the rules. If you are not knowledgeable about the rules, refrain from expressing opinions on decisions made by officials, coaches, and administrators.

#### 2. Exercise representative behavior at all times.

The true value of interscholastic competition relies upon everyone exhibiting behavior which is representative of a sound value base. Your behavior influences others whether you are aware of it or not.

#### 3. Exhibit respect for the officials.

The officials of any contest are trained, impartial arbitrators who perform to the best of their ability. Mistakes by all those involved are a part of every contest. We should not rationalize our own poor or unsuccessful behavior by placing responsibility on an official. A rule of good sportsmanship is to accept and abide by the decision made.

#### 4. Openly display respect for the opponent at all times.

Opponents are guests and should be treated cordially. Be a positive representative of your school, team, or family.

#### 5. Display pride in your actions at every opportunity.

Never allow your ego to interfere with good judgment and your responsibility as a school representative. Regardless of whether you are an adult, student, player, coach, or official this value is paramount since it suggests that you care about yourself and how others perceive you.

Sportsmanship reveals character regardless of the final outcome! You can view more on sportsmanship and the WIAA at wiaa.org. \*\*

