



# Washington Island School District

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## **Hello Washington Island Parents/Families-**

Well, we're in full swing and it's shaping up to be another year of learning and fun!

I just did the math and discovered that, as of October 19th, we are approximately 18.5% through this school year already. The remaining 81.5% of our year certainly has a lot to live up to if we intend to keep up the current pace of learning, growing, achieving, and succeeding! September and October were very busy, productive, fun months of school on the island.

### **The Community Picnic**

This school year is off to an excellent start. Our first-day-of-school community picnic was an enormously successful celebration of our students and school. Thank you to everyone who was able to join us that first day. We hope hosting a back-to-school event, like the picnic, will become an annual tradition. For those who weren't able to attend, we hope to see you there next year!

### **Exciting Opportunities**

September was also filled with many exciting opportunities here at school. Our fifth through twelfth grade students participated in some citizen science by tagging butterflies and collecting samples to aid scientists in researching *Ophryocystis Elektroscirrha* (OE), a debilitating protozoan parasite that infects monarchs. Our ninth and tenth graders had an opportunity to go on a field trip for their history classes. Those students visited the Jacobsen museum to get a first hand glimpse of island history, learning where those artifacts fit into the historical timeline. Our students will also be joining our island community members and senior citizens with a Packers themed lunch in the community gym on September 23rd. We look forward to another similar opportunity with them around Christmas time. In other news, some of our high school students contemplating college will be attending our first Wisconsin Education Fair.

Our students will have access to over 150 organizations (colleges, universities, US military branches, and even specialty schools) on September 28th. Steve Waldron will be working with our third and fourth graders on identifying plant species in Big and Little Marsh Natural Area, learning more about predator vs prey, and more. September is already a very exciting month of learning and fun for our students.

### **Citizen Science**

Our islander student-scientists continued delving into citizen science opportunities with a visit to Gathering Ground this month. Over the years our students have helped maintain their experimental plantings, recorded the growth of varietal chestnut trees to determine the optimal species to grow here in our unique biome, and learned a great deal about agriculture in our community and region. Mrs. Jones followed up the students' September citizen science (Butterfly Tagging) with "Middle School Monarchs," a study in natural beauty well worth stopping by school to see for yourself. Our island artists have created some remarkably beautiful art! Some of our younger student scientists also had another day of outdoor learning with Mr. Waldron out at the Jackson Harbor Ridges.

### **Future Opportunities**

Following the Education Fair they attended last month, our high school students will have two more unique chances to explore future career opportunities. Our 9th and 10th graders were invited to CR Meyer for a day of hands-on learning about working in the trades positions ranging from general construction laborers to engineers and architects. Students learned about the many opportunities available, the education and/or training required, and what kinds of livelihoods such positions can provide. And, our 10th graders will be participating, for the first time ever, in [Manufacturing Day](#) in Sturgeon Bay on October 27th. Our student will be touring three companies. We will get to visit [Hatco](#) (bringing opportunities to develop new skills to utilize new technology such as press brakes and laser systems with robots, automation on laser systems, the development of co-bots -collaborative robots, AMR's -Automated Mobile Robots, and automation of workflow activities); [TTX](#) (a full-service supplier of complete engineering support, evaluation, testing, design, fabrication, installation, and start-up & field service); and [Cadence](#) (creating products like a highly sophisticated automation cell, that inserts stamped, sharpened blades into a molding process that results in a subassembly used in laparoscopic surgical devices.

## **Gaga Ball**

Our independent study tech students completed the island's first "Gaga Ball" pit, which has been a huge hit here at school. Gaga Ball is a fast-paced, high-energy game our students play in an octagonal "pit". The game is a kind of less aggressive form of dodgeball played with a soft plastic ball. Played correctly, the game combines dodging, striking, running, and jumping, while trying to hit opponents below their knees with the ball. Players need to keep moving to avoid getting hit, making it a fun, easy way for our students to be active during recess and lunch rec times. If you know anyone attending our school, be sure to ask them about Gaga Ball.

## **Partnering with our school**

We continue to look for new ways to partner with you -our community- to continue giving our students ever more exciting, memorable, and meaningful opportunities. If you have any ideas for how we might be able to work together, doing good things for our students, please contact us at school. We look forward to hearing from you.

## ***You're Why We're Here!***

We're here to serve our students, their families, and our community. I'll be posting frequent updates here on our website. Our teachers are also encouraged to reach out to families early and often, and we hope that you will feel welcome in our school and comfortable sharing your ideas, concerns, comments, and questions. We are excited to be working with you this year!

Enthusiastically,

Tim Verboomen & The Washington Island School Staff

Tim Verboomen

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