

Hello Everyone-

As I reflect on 2023 and think about hopes for 2024, I'm constantly reminded of my gratitude to work and live in this community and to serve the island through the work we do here at the school. Your support for our students and school has an incredible, positive impact.

Your support for our school can be witnessed in many ways: Whether cheering from the sidelines at an athletic event; attending dramatic performances; mentoring our Island youth; or any of the myriad of other ways. Our community consistently demonstrates its support and encouragement - your involvement in our students' lives is amazing. Such a positive community presence has a profound influence on our students, teachers, and school.

I'd like to take this opportunity to share some of the goodness you help to bring to our school/community. I'll begin with what we have to offer our students. Preparing our Island youth for their futures means providing them with first-class curricular and extracurricular opportunities. As the smallest public school district in the state, many people assume our students' opportunities are limited, but not so ... at all.

Our students have incredibly dedicated educators who are able and ready to respond to every student's learning needs. We accelerate student learning when we can and provide specific, targeted intervention instruction to every student needing to close proficiency gaps in their learning. Our teachers offer their time to make sure they are available should students have any questions before or after school.

Our high school students have access to Youth Apprenticeships, online learning through Wisconsin Virtual School, Start College Now, and the Early College Credit programs through NWTC and WI Colleges & Universities. We have had students take trades, foreign language, advanced placement (AP), culinary, medical, and a wide variety of other courses.

Our students also have had a wide variety of athletic and academic extracurricular opportunities including, soccer, trap shooting, basketball (our boys are two-time tournament champions in the Great Lakes Islands Basketball Tournament), baseball, softball, forensics (last year five of our students made it to the State Competition), the Academic Decathlon, the Yearbook Club, Student Council, and drama (with an enormously entertaining performance of Shrek Jr, The Musical).

Our students have also been involved in several STEM opportunities. We have competed in the Samsung, Solve for Tomorrow competition (we were state winners in 2018-19 and 2021-22, state finalists in 2019-20 and 2022-23, and earned an honorable mention in 2020-21 - winning \$31,500 for our district, plus invaluable professional development for our STEM teachers). Our students have also dominated the SeaPerch ROV Competition, earning spots at the Regional event since the 2019/20 school year. Three of our teams have earned their places at the International competition in Maryland.

We're always looking for ways to add more opportunities for our students and for ways to partner with our community. This year we added a Crochet Club for students and family members, an adult Fab-Lab/Shop class for community members (where people were able to sign up for evening classes in our fabrication/shop to work on their projects), and a Youth Basketball skills development class for our younger students. Our student council brought back the Polar Express Christmas event and organized & coordinated the Holiday Breakfast for our Island seniors/community. We're also looking to add a Volleyball Club and Yoga Class opportunities this year. We're also restructuring the Community Service/Volunteering our high school students do, so we encourage (and recognize) the good work our students do in our community.

At Washington Island School, we aim to keep earning your trust and continue to build and strengthen our community connections. We are eager to partner with our community members and businesses that are interested in doing good things for our students, their families, and our community. If you're interested in joining us, we'd love to hear from you!

We have an outstanding team working together to prepare our Island Youth for their futures; I'm proud and grateful to be part of it. Our future looks bright with two of our teachers welcoming new babies this school year and several more "Future Bucks" in our community!

Once again, on behalf of our Island school's hard-working students and dedicated staff members, thank you for your support.

Appreciatively,
Tim Verboomen (Washington Island School District Administrator)