



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE TOMORROW RIVER

DISTRICT OFFICE

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Annual Meeting - October 24, 2011 Superintendent's Message

I would like to begin by stating that even though the 2010-11 school year was framed by financial as well as political challenges, as a community and district, we kept our focus on what is best for our children. We maintained a positive attitude marked by perseverance and resilience. The following provides you with highlights of our 2010-11 year and goals for the 2011-12 year.

Academics:

Professional Development: The District continues to provide professional development through CESA 6 (Cooperative Education Service Agency) focused on aligning our curriculum to Wisconsin State Academic Standards and National Core Academic Standards. The District has begun transitioning to Build Your Own Curriculum (BYOC) as a vehicle for recording this work. This program represents an upgrade from the CMS4Schools which was used previously. This new version of curriculum mapping allows teachers to connect with other teachers within the district, the state and the nation to share ideas and expertise. BYOC has the additional capability of generating assessment data specific to content, teacher and student. During the 2010-11 school year, the District took steps to incorporate the Information Technology Literacy Standards into the written curriculum and into classroom practice. As we move forward, we will build on this initiative and add Social-Emotional Learning Standards into the curriculum as a means of addressing the "whole learner". This SEL initiative will also enable us to address the new Response to Intervention (RtI) requirements.

Test Scores: Our state test scores for all grade levels remain solid and in most cases, higher than state and national averages. To view all Wisconsin school testing and performance reports, please visit the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) web site at <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us>. This site archives all data collected by the DPI related to our district.

Awards, Scholarships and Grants: During the 2010-11 school year, the Association of Wisconsin School Administrators and the Department of Public Instruction awarded Amherst Middle School "Exemplary Middle School Honors" for being in the top 10% of the state with Reading scores.

Kathy Garske, grade 2 and Cindy Evans, Title I Reading, received a Pat Bricker Memorial Award for Educational Research. The award was presented at the Wisconsin Reading Association Convention and honored their research of best practices and assessment for striving readers.

"Teaching Tomorrow's Children"

Forty students, representing the graduating class of 2011, were awarded 105 scholarships for a grand total of \$457,502.00 (a new record). In addition, two Amherst H.S. students were National Merit Semi-qualifiers this past year.

Kathy Garske and Karoleen Glenzer wrote and received a Target Grant totaling \$2,000.00 for a home to school reading connection entitled "Building Bridges". Part of the funds will be used to buy books to be given to elementary students as a means of encouraging reading at home.

Library: One indicator of success for a school is evidenced through the use of the library. The Library circulation for the Amherst middle and high school has seen an increase over the past five years from 3,155 during 2006-07 to 5,985 during the 2010-11 school year which represents a 90% increase. The newly installed Destiny Quest catalog system allows students to track books read, create reading lists for themselves and recommend books to friends.

Technology Initiative: The District continues to advance the use of technology to support and enhance education. This past year we purchased and installed 11 additional interactive whiteboards and supported the educational use through teacher training. This leaves only 10 classrooms without this technology.

Athletics:

Amherst had teams, as well as individuals, receive state and national recognition for their accomplishments during the 2010-11 year.

At the Team Level: Basketball – The Boys' Basketball Team was the CWC Champions and the Division 4 Regional Champions. The Girls' Basketball Team was named the CWC Champions. Bowling - The Boys' Bowling Team was conference champions for a second consecutive year. The Girls' Bowling Team finished in 3rd place at the State Tournament. Overall, bowling had 4 conference all-star qualifiers, 1 conference all-star team coach – Steve Cieslewicz, 5 state singles qualifiers, and 3 bowlers who qualified for National Competition in Las Vegas.

At the individual level: Jared Lutz placed 7th for Division 4 Cross-country Track at state; Katy Rutz placed 6th for Division 2 in shot put and placed 8th for Division 2 discus at state; and, Logan Hermson placed 2nd for Division 3 for 135 lb. weight class in wrestling at Regionals.

Extra-Curricular: The following are some of the successes of our students beyond the classroom:

Music: Almost 100 students marched in the Stevens Point Holiday Parade and Memorial Day Parade; 12 students were selected to participate in the CWC All-Stars Honors Choir and Band; Over 250 students (grades 4-12) participated in concerts, pep bands and other music events such as Wisconsin State Music Association Solo & Ensemble Festival.

FBLA: Two students were chosen to compete at the National FBLA level. Samantha Chesmore competed in technology, and Soren Anderson competed in Marketing.

Student Council: The H.S. Student Council hosts a blood drive in conjunction with the Red Cross. Last spring's drive surpassed the donation goal. It should be noted that most donors are Amherst students and represents their way of giving back to the community. Two Amherst students, Susie Carlson and Taylor Gordon, coordinated two additional community blood drives with the Red Cross.

Community Involvement:

We are proud and fortunate to have a very involved community. For instance, we had 58 volunteers helping out at the elementary level. Three foster grandparents each work 20 hours per week and support a total of 16 classrooms. We also have 2 volunteers from the Retired Senior Volunteer Program that provide direct classroom support. Retired volunteers have had a long history of involvement within our elementary school.

The elementary P.T.O. continues to provide a great deal of financial and personal support of initiatives that impact children at the elementary and beyond. They have been instrumental in the acquisition of technology that directly supports educational initiatives for the enhancement of learning. It is due to their efforts along with a personal donation from a community member that we have interactive whiteboards in every elementary classroom. In addition, they support H.S. initiatives such as our Drive One 4 Schools project and district efforts such as the passing of the operational referendum.

Buildings, Grounds & Safety:

The Tomorrow River School District's Buildings & Grounds and Safety Committee joined together this past year as a means of being more efficient since many decisions overlap. The following represent some of the initiatives of this joint committee:

During the 2010-11 school year, the fire alarm system was upgraded and revised emergency management procedure cards were installed in each classroom. In addition, the district participated in a Portage County Emergency Management meeting regarding upgrades to the Code Red emergency notification system. The MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheets) were updated and distributed them to appropriate areas to provide for easy reference and access. Smoke detectors were installed in the elementary hallways per fire codes related to open 'cubbies' bringing the elementary up to the new standards for fire safety.

The in-school bleachers were overhauled and the field bleachers were replaced with four portable sets that will be used on-site for football, baseball, and softball. Concrete pads were poured for the field bleachers and designed for wheel chair or lawn chair use for attendees who cannot access a bleacher.

This summer, at the recommendation of the Technology Committee, the infrastructure of our computer system was upgraded to increase our capacity, speed and ability to support related upgrades such as the phone system, camera system, and fire alarms. This is part of a three phase project that enables us to continue to move ahead in the use of technology for education. Our ultimate goal is to provide a one-to-one (individual laptops) learning environment for our students supported by a wireless network. We are working diligently to find a funding source, such as grants, to support this initiative.

Personnel:

As the 2010-11 school year came to a close, we experienced a greater than average number of personnel changes. We had more than the usual number of retirements, and number of people leaving the district for personal and/or professional reasons. The result was the hiring of 21 new employees. All teaching positions were filled with highly qualified personnel. Each employee brings a new perspective, new skills, and a new opportunity for students. We miss each former employee and wish him or her well, and at the same time, we welcome each new employee to our team.

Finances:

As we are all aware, this past year has been one of the most challenging of financial times in memory, and no one has been exempt from the impact. This impact was felt by each and every taxpayer, as well as the school district, and varied widely depending upon the municipality. One thing, however, has remained constant during these challenging times: the positive support from the community. That support was evidenced most profoundly through the combined efforts of many individuals and groups who came together to help us to pass the operational referendum. Thanks go out to all of those who were a positive influence on our success – silent and vocal individuals, parents and grandparents, Amherst Believes in Children (ABC) group, the PTO, Tomorrow River Education Association, Board of Education, Administrative Team, H.S. Student Council and many others.

The success of the referendum allowed us to continue to offer quality educational opportunities to all of the children in the School District of the Tomorrow River. Thank you on behalf of each and every child present, past and future.

Looking Forward:

As we reflect on the 2010-11 school year, we are proud and grateful for our successes. We also realize that we cannot rest on our past, but need to continue to reinvent and improve on our work. The following mission statement and goals set the stage for the 2011-12 school year.

2011-2012 Mission Statement and Goals: As we embrace the trust and responsibility of the community for educating the children of the district, the Tomorrow River Board of Education and Administrative Team developed the following mission statement and corresponding set of district goals for the 2011-2012 school year.

The School District of the Tomorrow River Mission Statement

Every child, every year will...

... feel valued by a caring adult as a person as well as a student.

... be given educational opportunities that are rigorous, challenging and engaging and designed to enable him/her to reach the highest level of achievement.

... be provided with opportunities to enable the maximizing of his/her social and emotional potential.

Adopted 9-26-2011

2011-2012 Goals

- *Continue to develop long and short range facilities and site planning to ensure educational and financial stability.*
- *Complete a written K-12 curriculum reflective of best practices while expanding educational offerings and support to ensure all children are provided the opportunity to attain their highest level of success. Enhance and differentiate curriculum through the use of technology.*
- *Enhance communication and interaction within the school and community.*

Adopted 9-12-2011

We recognize that the challenges we will face this school year will be high. We also recognize that this community has a long history of facing challenges in a proactive manner. We at the Tomorrow River Schools will continue to seek means of holding spending down while maintaining quality education for our students. We thank you for your involvement and support. Please feel free to visit our schools whenever you can and to share ideas that will help us to offer the best educational opportunities for our students.

Sincerely,

“Teaching Tomorrow’s Children”

LeAnn Chase, District Administrator

“Teaching Tomorrow’s Children”