



***For release the week of: January 21, 2019 (or as soon as practical)
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Superintendent's Corner...

It is hard for me to believe that we are fast approaching the mid-year mark of the school year. It seems like only last week I was sharing my excitement for the first day of the 2018-2019 year. Great things continue to happen presently at MAPS and in the community as we prepare for the future.

Eighth Grade Visitation to Merrill High School

Eighth grade students are closer to transitioning as next year's freshman with their tour of Merrill High School on January 8. For several years, the high school has provided their introduction of what eighth graders can expect as a high school student. We have discovered that a face-to-face tour of the actual MHS location is more effective than a video presentation, which has been tried in the past. Therefore, MHS gladly provides transportation for all PRMS and parochial school eighth graders to be onsite to witness first-hand the many opportunities they will be provided.

The tour allowed students to visit each elective area to assist them in making better course selections for next year. During the tours, they were given a welcome and overview by Mr. Murray, then divided into smaller groups. Groups were assigned to Link Crew leaders and were guided to each of the elective class departments. Prospective freshman learned about the courses offered in each department as well as the specific classes they could choose as a first year high school student. Presentations in each department were given by both teachers and current MHS students.

Over the years we have found that the face-to-face tours were most effective and we received a great deal of positive feedback from both students and teachers again this year. We look forward to welcoming the Class of 2023 to Merrill High School in eight short months!

Youth Mentorship

MAPS is proud of our partnership with the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northcentral Wisconsin (BBBS) as we recognize the benefit in positive mentorship for our students. The 2018-2019 school year has seen an exceptional increase in the number of young students matched.

Merrill's own Lexi Grzanna, the Enrollment and Match Support Specialist supporting our area, began her position in August and already has a caseload of sixty matches. This includes four Bigs with Badges and four community-based adults. She is currently processing additional matches which should begin in February. Two of the matches being finalized include male Bigs which is a demographic demonstrating great need and one that is being targeted. To illustrate

BBBS's progress, the average caseload capacity in our community prior to making Lexi's position full-time was thirty-five matches!

BBBS experienced a successful turnout at T.B. Scott Library for a Match Activity on Tuesday evening, January 15 with T.B. Scott Library hosting a scavenger hunt and snowflake making activity, including a visit from Kiva the Therapy Dog. BBBS will continue to incorporate more Merrill area activities as their program grows in our community.

It is also worth noting that Beth Kohnert, Program Director of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northcentral Wisconsin, has also become an Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Interface Master Trainer. She will be assisting with ACEs trainings in Merrill.

Friday, January 25, BBBS will be holding their Second Annual Big Fish Fry at the Sawmill from 4:00-7:00 p.m. to celebrate the kickoff to Bowl for Kids Sake. They will also be hosting the Big Chill Bag Toss at the Sawmill on Saturday, January 26, 2019.

BBBS's biggest fundraiser, Bowl for Kid's Sake, will be held on February 23, 2019 at Les & Jim's Lincoln Lanes. All are welcome to bowl and help them raise the money needed to support their growing program in the Merrill Community.

While the BBBS of Northcentral Wisconsin has been doing great things for quite some time, it is also important to mention that there has been considerable support for youth mentorship from our community members. The Merrill Mentoring Committee, a subgroup of the Aware and Active Citizens, began discussing strategies for supporting our young people requiring mentoring support approximately sixteen months ago. BBBS Executive Director Jerry Lyon responded by creating a full-time Enrollment and Match Specialist for Merrill and the response has been very positive.

A special thank you to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northcentral Wisconsin and to the following community members: Dave Vachavake, Jerry Lyon, MHS Principal Shannon Murray, PRMS Principal Ryan Martinovici, Trina Knospe, Laura Forster, Heather Young, Erik Pfantz, Kyle Gulke, Chuck Bolder, Katie Knospe, John Greenwood, Derek Woellner, Ed Wayda, Mike Ravn, Justin Novitski, Karen Nocco, Josh Klug, Renee Krueger, Debbie Moellendorf and Dee Olson.

John Sample
Proud Superintendent