

February 2018

A message from the superintendent

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Greetings from Dean Gorrell, Superintendent of the Verona Area School District. Thank you for taking some time to read the third update from me this year. These updates will mostly be centered on matters pertinent to our school district but will also touch on state and national matters that are in the news and applicable. I encourage you to contact me with questions you have about any of the information shared in these updates. My contact information is at the bottom of this update.

Every opportunity I have, I'm going to repeat our District mission: ***Every Student Must Succeed.*** Why is that our mission? Because we, the Board of Education and every staff member believe ***no*** child is expendable.

Local Updates:

BIG THREE – This year we are focusing on three main initiatives across the District. In each of my newsletters I will be providing a brief update on all of those initiatives which are:

Building for 2020: We are approaching a milestone moment in our planning / designing of our new high school. On March 5th, VASD is slated to present and review the building and site design in front of the City of Verona Plan Commission. We have already made the submittals necessary for City staff review and are in the process of addressing their comments and questions. Assuming approval of the building and site plans, as well as approval of what is known as the Certified Survey Map, we anticipate starting the earth-work soon after March 5th. In fact, it is likely you will see mobilization of earth-moving equipment on to the site sooner so as to avoid weight restrictions on roadways that take place on many roads during the spring thaw. Lastly, we are in the planning stages of a formal groundbreaking ceremony and will share those details once they are fully formed. After nearly a year of planning and design work, we are eager and excited to start building! [To access much more information on Building for 2020, click here.](#)

Continuous Improvement: The Board has just started the process of developing a five-year Strategic Plan. This Plan will identify key priorities and outcomes and become the guide for work with each of our schools' Continuous Improvement Teams, Implementation Teams, and the Administration and Board of Education. This process is projected to be completed by late May / early June and we will keep you posted on our progress.

- **How can you get involved?**
 - You should have received an email last week with a link to our annual family perception survey. The District believes each family member has a voice and a shared responsibility in the success of your schools...and part of that responsibility is utilizing your input on this annual perception survey as a major piece of our improvement efforts moving forward. Please take the survey before the Feb. 28 deadline.
 - Thanks to those of you who responded to join a strategic planning focus group or the planning committee. Those of you serving on focus groups have already received confirmations for your meetings taking place this upcoming week! We also had a wonderfully overwhelming response of interested individuals for the planning committee. While we'd love to include each and every person, we need to ensure our group consists of a manageable number of members and is also representative of our district demographics. Those who shared interest in the committee will receive confirmations the first week of March. We appreciate all family members who offered their time!

Personalized Learning: Another email was sent to you last week inviting you to our first of many community information nights on the topic of personalized learning. [Click here to read more on this event.](#) We're very excited to be bringing this 'personalized learning experience' to you on February 27th. It is structured as a drop-in event so even if you have only 15 minutes, I am certain you would find it informational and worth your time.

WINTER WEATHER SCHOOL DELAYS / CANCELLATIONS: Earlier this school year I sent a letter to parents providing detail on our weather-related school delays / cancellations procedures and considerations. [Click here to view that information.](#) *Also, and this is most important,* if school is not delayed or cancelled, and you think conditions for your child / specific situation are unsafe, you absolutely have every right to keep your child at home.

State Updates:

Early College Credit Program (ECCP): The 2017 – 2019 state budget bill included a provision known as the Early College Credit Program (ECCP). Effective for the 2018-19 school year, a high school student (grades 9 – 12) in a public or private school in the state would be permitted to enroll in an institution of higher education (IHE) to take one or more nonsectarian courses, for which the student may earn high school credit, post-secondary credit, or both. An institution of higher education includes an institution within the University of Wisconsin System, a tribally controlled college, and a private, non-profit institution of higher education located in Wisconsin. Technical Colleges are not included in this definition. Students may begin enrolling the fall of 2018, but those students must notify their school district by no later than March 1, 2018. This was the same deadline that existed under the Youth Options program which is now replaced by ECCP.

Under current law, if the student is taking the course for both high school and college credit, the public school district where that student resides is to pay for 75% of the cost of the course and the IHE picks up the other 25%. Students who don't pass the course are responsible for paying the entire cost. The legislature is currently reevaluating that cost sharing arrangement as an unintended consequence for some districts may be that they limit or eliminate these kinds of course options for students. At this time, however, the law as written still stands. For more information, please contact your child's school counselor.

Start College Now Program (SCNP): Students interested in enrolling in a technical college will do so not through ECCP, but through a program referred to as the "Start College Now" program. The enrollment process is similar to the enrollment process used under the Youth Options program. This program (SCNP) is available for students who have completed 10th grade, are considered to be in 'good academic standing' and may not be eligible if there is a history of disciplinary problems. Under this program, tuition, books and fees are to be paid for by the school district. Students who fail the course must repay the school district. For more information, please contact your child's school counselor.

Thank you for taking the time to read this update. Please feel free to contact me with questions / comments you may have about any of the information provided here. **If you would like to host a coffee** (a small group gathering – no more than 20 total) and include me as your guest speaker to talk about matters related to VASD, please email kloepik@verona.k12.wi.us!

Kind regards,

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