

INSIDE YOUR SCHOOLS

A newsletter for our district residents.



FALL 2019

'A life-long learner': Meet our new Superintendent, Dr. Annette Freiheit

This area has always felt like home for Dr. Annette Freiheit.

Freiheit, who officially became the Superintendent of Winona Area Public Schools on July 1, 2019, is a Wanamingo, Minn., native. She holds two bachelor's degrees and a master's from Winona State University. For more than 25 years, she was an educator, administrator and principal in southeastern Minnesota schools.

And now, she is the leader of one of the region's largest school districts.

"I am very excited about the opportunity to lead WAPS and to work with the school board, staff, students, families, and community in continuing the district's commitment to excellence," she said.

Freiheit was approved in a unanimous vote by the Winona Area Public Schools Board of Education at its May 16 meeting. She is the first female to serve as permanent superintendent of Winona Area Public Schools.

Freiheit was most recently the Superintendent of Pine City Public Schools in Pine City, Minn., a school district of approximately 1,600 students in east-central Minnesota.

The rest of her career has been spent in southeastern Minnesota. She was an elementary school principal in the Hayfield School District for 14 years. She also served as an elementary school teacher in Hayfield, the Curriculum and Testing Director in Stewartville, the Graduation Standards Director for Fillmore

Central Public Schools and an elementary teacher for Kenyon-Wanamingo Public Schools.

Although she eventually followed a path in administration, Freiheit has never stopped learning. Prior to earning a Doctorate in Education from Hamline University in 2017, Freiheit also completed the coursework for Hamline's K-12 reading licensure program to better understand how students learn to read and how she could support teachers in best practices for effective reading instruction.

"I am truly a life-long learner," she said. "I have an insatiable curiosity and thirst for learning so that I can be excellent at whatever it is I am doing. I seek to be a role-model for

life-long learning for our staff and students."

Freiheit has a Master's in Educational Leadership from Winona State University as well as two bachelor's degrees — one in Elementary Education and another in Recreational Therapy.

In 2018, she received the Minnesota Association of School Administrators Region VI District Leadership Award.

In addition to being a superintendent, she is also a wife and mother of three children. Her husband, Dean, is a co-owner of a business in Rochester. They have a daughter and two sons.



New Director of Finance looking toward the future

Working for a public school district may not be on **Kristy Millering's** resume, but it certainly is ingrained in her DNA. The new Director of Finance for Winona Area Public Schools is the daughter of two public school employees.

"My mom was a paraprofessional and my father was a custodian in the Rochester Public Schools," Millering said. "My mom was the treasurer for the union group for the paraprofessionals and pretty much every single year I dealt with her going through the budgeting process, and union negotiations and hearing about the school, so I've always had a little bit of an understanding of the school, but I didn't know all the nuances behind it."

The importance of it all may also have been lost on Millering — at least at the time. But now that she has a daughter in school, that's no longer the case. It's one of the many reasons why she's embracing the challenge of her new position.

"As a parent, I realize the need to better the schools," said Millering, who lives with her husband and daughter outside of Lewiston. "Any role in the district can help the students."

Millering, who has a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting from Augsburg College and a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the University of Minnesota Duluth, comes to WAPS after eight years in finance at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, most recently as a Senior Internal Auditor. She also worked as an accountant for McNeilus Truck and Manufacturing and owned her own dance studio.

Millering believes that her range of accounting experiences will give her a solid foundation as she takes over financial control of the school district.

"Where can we build efficiencies?" she asked. "How can we make the way we do our accounting more effective? How can we provide better transparency? How can we look to the future, not just to solve the problem that we have today, but what is the problem we're going to have five years from now? Let's start developing a game plan for that."



New faces, new places

Ann Riebel

Community Ed Director

Maggie Maine

Jefferson Principal

Heather Millard

ECFE Coordinator

Isaac Matzek

WSHS Assistant Principal

Upcoming dates

Tuesday, Sept. 3: First day of school for elementary students (K-4), fifth-graders and WEB Leaders in the middle school and ninth-graders and LINK Leaders in the high school.

Wednesday, Sept. 4: First day of school for grades 6-8 and 10-12.

Friday Sept. 21 and Saturday, Sept. 22: Homecoming weekend

Friday, Oct. 4: No school (teacher workshop/professional development)

Thursday, Oct. 17-Friday, Oct. 18: No school (MEA conference).



W-K program receives grant money

Nancy Brown, executive director of the Winona Community Foundation, recently presented **Dawn Waller Lueck**, Principal of Washington-Kosciusko Elementary School, and **Annette Freiheit**, Superintendent of Winona Area Public Schools, with a donation of \$52,716 — the third and final installment of a donation that has funded a kindergarten literacy program at the school.

The donation is possible thanks to the Lyndon and Jennie L. Pierce Educational Fund within the Winona Community Foundation. W-K previously received donations for \$46,992 in 2017 and \$50,005 in 2018.

The grant money allows the school to employ two literacy educational assistants to focus on reading in kindergarten, with an end goal of having all W-K students reading at grade level by the third grade.

“Our kindergarten students come to us with such varying levels of exposure to print and language,” Lueck said. “This helps us to get all students equal access to the necessary foundational skills for reading success.”

Lueck said she hopes this program will serve as a model to replicate in other elementary buildings using Title I funds.

For more information on the Winona Community Foundation, visit winonacf.org.



#WinhawkProud

A look at the past, current and future Winhawks who are doing amazing things in our community and beyond.



WSHS grad wins bronze medal at Pan Am games

Travion Clark, a 2013 Winona Senior High School graduate, helped the USA Rugby Men's Sevens national team win a bronze medal at the Pan American Games in Peru in July.



Clark, who first started playing rugby only a year ago, scored five tries on the weekend, including a hat trick in a key victory over Chile.

Clark also scored a try in a

thrilling 24-19 extra time victory over Brazil in the bronze medal match.

WSHS swimmer receives All-American recognition

Jack Herczeg, already an all-conference and all-state swimmer, was officially named an All-American swimmer by the National Interscholastic Swimming Coaches Association in July. The honor is given to the top 100 swimmers in the nation in each event.

Herczeg's time of 45.38 seconds in the 100-yard freestyle ranks him in the top 100.

The honor caps off a season in which the Class of 2020 star

was a double state champion, winning the 50 and 100 freestyle at the MSHSL Class A state meet in March. He also swam with Winona's second-place 200 and 400 freestyle relay teams.

Former coach inducted into Hall of Fame

John Ruggeberg, who helped the Winona Senior High School boys and girls cross country teams win 23 conference titles, 16 section titles and four state titles during his three decades as an assistant and head coach, was inducted into the Minnesota Cross Country Coaches Association Hall of Fame at a ceremony Aug. 5.

SCHOOL BOARD SPECIAL ELECTION SET FOR NOV. 5

A special election for the District 4 seat on the Winona Area Public Schools Board of Education will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2019.

Only people who live in District 4 may vote. A district map is available at winonaschools.org.

Election Day voting will be held from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 5 at: National Guard Armory, 1303 Homer Road, Winona, MN, 55987

Absentee voting will take place at: Winona Area Public Schools District Office, 903 Gilmore Ave., Winona, MN, 55987.

Absentee voting will be held from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, Sept. 20 through Friday, Nov. 3, and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday, Nov. 4.

For absentee voting by mail, call 507-494-0861.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION!



The work around Winona Area Public Schools didn't take a break this summer thanks to the community's support of a \$9.42 million bond referendum in November of 2018.

The passage of the referendum has allowed the district to enhance safety and security for students, staff and guests, improve accessibility for people with disabilities and address critical facility needs.

Some of the referendum projects will be completed this year while others will start and finish in the summer of 2020.

Mike McArdle, Buildings and Grounds Director for Winona Area Public Schools, said the projects are all running smoothly, and he has been in constant contact with Wold Architects and Engineers, the firm in charge of the referendum projects, as well as the contractors in charge of the individual projects.

"I have to give a lot of credit to the people in our community," McArdle said. "They made an enormous investment in our youth."

Follow the progress of the construction with updates at winonaschools.org, and be on the lookout for a special edition of Inside Your Schools later this year highlighting the referendum work. Thank you to the community for supporting students in Winona Area Public Schools.