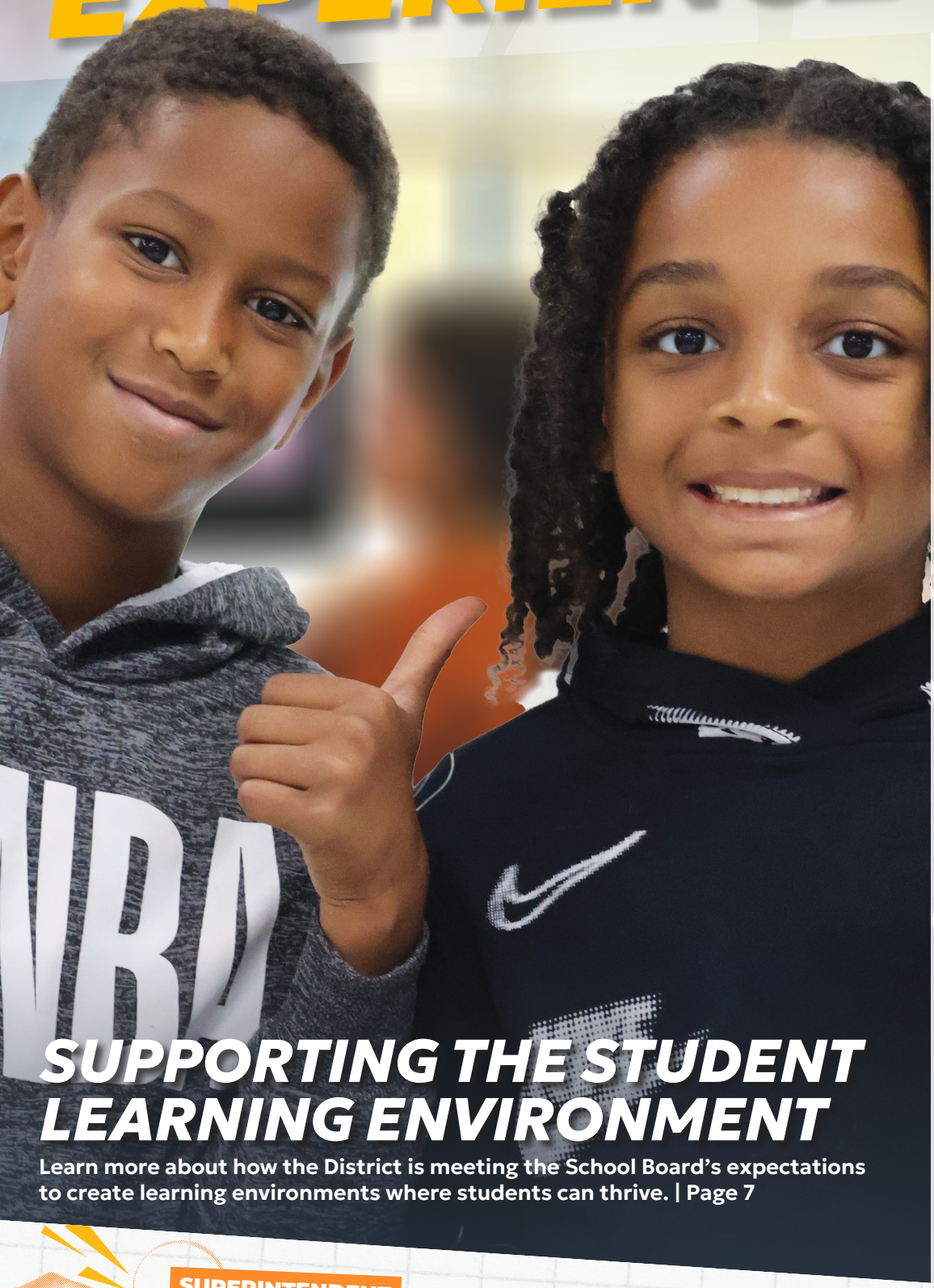
THE SUN PRAIRIE EXPERIENCE

A Community Newsletter

Escanee este código QR para leer esta publicación en español.



SUPPORTING THE STUDENT LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Learn more about how the District is meeting the School Board's expectations to create learning environments where students can thrive. | Page 7

SPRING 2026

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Sun Prairie Area School District
Futures depend on us...every child, every day.

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH

sunprairieschools.org/SPASDSupSearch

Learn more about steps the Board of Education has taken to begin the search for our next superintendent. | Page 3

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Sun Prairie Area School District Community,

As you read through this newsletter, I hope you take pride in the incredible programs, students, and people who make our District such a special place. We are proud of the progress our students are making, and this publication highlights just a small snapshot of the meaningful work and strong results happening across our schools. We also hope it demonstrates the thoughtful use of community resources and return on the investment you make in our schools every day. Thank you for your continued partnership and support as we work together to ensure that every student has the opportunity to learn, grow, and succeed.

With appreciation,

Dr. Brad Saron, Superintendent



ENROLL NOW!

We are making plans for staffing classrooms next year.
If you have a new neighbor or friend or know of a family who has moved to Sun Prairie recently, please encourage them to enroll their child(ren) as soon as possible for the 2026–2027 school year. Learn more about the enrollment process by clicking the **ENROLLMENT** icon on the District home page.

Sun Prairie Business & Education Partnership

The **Sun Prairie Business & Education Partnership (BEP)** is a group of local businesses and educators who work together as volunteers in the schools, helping students build the skills and confidence they need for tomorrow's workforce.

Whether you want to share your expertise, connect with students, or support hands-on learning, there's a place for you. This volunteer-led group has many simple ways to get involved.

SCAN TO GET INVOLVED!

Working Wednesdays: Connect with students about your company or industry during high school lunch periods, sharing either current jobs or possible career paths.

Reality Rocks: A large-scale financial literacy simulation (like the game of *Life*) serving 600+ students

First-Grade Reading Buddies: Encourage reading for first-graders and help build their home libraries

Student Recognitions: Celebrate young learners at elementary schools' monthly recognition events

Student Employee Excellence (SEE) Awards: Recognize outstanding student workers at area businesses

Adopt-a-Class: Support 4th-graders in developing essential workplace soft skills

With the SP Chamber of Commerce: Participate in Student Job Fairs in the spring

With current SPASD programs:

- **Employment Preparation:** Support resume, application, and interview skill development during the student day - their "WIN time"
- **Business Leadership Academy:** Host students working on authentic projects for your business







The Sun Prairie Business & Education Partnership, Inc. is a registered 501(c)(3) charitable organization, EIN 39-1719723.

FROM THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION

Dear Sun Prairie Area School District Community,

On behalf of the Board of Education, thank you for the opportunity to serve our students, families, and taxpayers. We deeply value the trust you have placed in us, and will continue to do our best to authentically represent you in all our work.

A Year of Change and Challenge
This has been a challenging year for our District and our Board, and we believe it is important to acknowledge that openly. Over the past 12 months, the Board has experienced significant turnover, including the recent appointments of Dr. Isaac Sung and Dr. Danny Miller. We appreciate their willingness to step forward to serve during a complex time. Their commitment reflects a shared dedication to our students and community.

We also recognize the deep harm and loss of trust caused by recent events at SP West. We know this has been painful for students, families, and staff. The Board is committed to learning from this and taking meaningful action to restore confidence and accountability.

Student Safety and Community Trust
Above all else, our responsibility is to ensure that every student is safe, supported, and able to learn. Student safety must be the foundation of all we do. This Board will take action to rebuild trust with our community through authentic transparency and genuine accountability to ensure the well-being of our children always guides our decisions. We know rebuilding trust will take consistent action, open communication, and shared responsibility. While this year has tested our District, it has also strengthened our resolve to lead with integrity and care.

Our Ongoing Commitments
As a Board, we remain focused on our core responsibilities: faithfully representing the community who elected us, serving as responsible stewards of public funds, and overseeing the direction of the district through strong policies that ensure District resources are used effectively, equitably, and transparently in support of Every Child, Every Day.

Thank you for your continued engagement and partnership. We look forward to moving forward together.

With appreciation,

Diana McFarland

Diana McFarland, President, Board of Education



School Board Members (left to right):
Bryn Horton, Colleen Uhlenkamp, Amanda Davis, Diana McFarland, Melissa Grayson, Dr. Isaac Sung, Dr. Danny Miller

SCHOOL BOARD
COMMUNITY VOICES

The School Board's **Community Voices** group met twice in the fall. This group has spent time around changes to the Appeal to the Board of Education form, equity updates to Board policies, and strategies for community involvement in upcoming Board projects. We are grateful to everyone who has volunteered to be part of the 2025–2026 Community Voices group. Registration for the 2026–2027 Community Voices group will start spring of 2026. Stay tuned!





Looking Ahead: Leadership Transition
At the end of this school year, Dr. Saron will conclude 11 years of service to the District as our superintendent. We are grateful for everything he has done to improve our District during his time with us. This transition also presents a valuable opportunity: For the first time in many years, we will be conducting a **superintendent search**. The Board of Education is excited to reimagine the future of our District through robust community engagement with a deliberate and inclusive process. We hope you will share your voice with us throughout this process.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! **Focus Groups** will be held in February for staff, high school students, adults with children in our schools, and community members. An **Online Survey** will be available starting Feb. 16. Visit the District website to learn more, including the times, dates, and locations of focus groups.

The Board has partnered with Hazard, Young, and Attea (HYA), a national consulting firm, in the search for the next superintendent for the Sun Prairie Area School District, and it plans to select the next superintendent **by April 30, 2026**.



REMINDER TO VOTE TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2026

Three candidates are running for two available seats in the upcoming spring election. Each seat carries a three-year term. Dr. Danny Miller has announced that he will not seek re-election.

Because the number of candidates does not exceed the number of seats by more than twice as many, there will be no Spring Primary election. Names on the ballot (alphabetically) will include:

Gary Benjamin, Kaleena Stephan, and Isaac Sung

STUDENT EXPERIENCES GOAL
Educational experiences in Sun Prairie will be rigorous and aligned to standards. Exceptional experiences include student goal-setting, active student participation in their learning, and multiple opportunities and means to demonstrate their learning.

SUN PRAIRIE "EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS" ON ANNUAL DPI STATE REPORT CARD

Learn more about the District's performance on one of the state's performance measures.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) recently released **the annual state report cards for all public schools and districts in Wisconsin.** These report cards show how schools are doing in key areas and help us celebrate successes and find ways to improve.

This year's report cards are based on data from the 2024–2025 school year. It is important to remember that state report cards are just one way to measure progress.

The report cards are based on four main areas:

1. Achievement: How well students perform in English Language Arts (ELA) and math on state tests.
2. Growth: How much students improve in ELA and math from year to year.
3. Target-Group Outcomes: Results for students with the lowest test scores.
4. On Track to Graduation: How well students are progressing toward graduating on time.

These scores are combined into a single overall accountability score ranging from 0 to 100. This number is not a percentage or a traditional grade. Instead, it places each school into one of five ratings.

You can find our District and school report cards on the DPI website. Click the green box, type "Sun Prairie," and you will see our results.

2024–2025 State Report Card Key Insights
We are proud to share that this year, Sun Prairie Schools earned a rating of "Exceeds Expectations" for the 2024–2025 school year and marked four years in a row of improvement!

Here are some key insights:

- As a District, we are above the state average in English Language Arts (ELA), graduation rates, and 8th-grade math.
- Our ELA growth is much higher than the state average (79.3 locally compared to 66.0 statewide).
- Our Overall District Score is rated as "Exceeds Expectations."
- Our growth score shows that our students are improving faster than students in about 83% of districts statewide.
- Of our 15 schools, 7 are rated "Exceeds Expectations," up from 6 last year.
- In ELA, all student groups performed above average.
- We are below the state average in math, math growth, and chronic absenteeism.
- Sun Prairie East and West High Schools are both rated as "Exceeds Expectations."
- All three middle schools improved their overall scores and are rated as "Meets Expectations."
- Prairie Phoenix Academy did not meet expectations this year, after seven years under an alternative rating system.
- Our elementary schools continue to make progress, with schools that had lower scores last year showing improvement this year.

Continuous Improvement
These insights do not tell the whole story, but they show that we are moving in the right direction. We are committed to continuous improvement across all schools and departments. You can learn more about our improvement plans and see past school and District report cards on our Strategic Framework web page.





STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

All across the District, Sun Prairie students are doing great things both in and out of the classroom.



CENTRAL HEIGHTS MIDDLE SCHOOLERS CARE FOR THEIR COMMUNITY

Central Heights Middle School's Student Council **collected donations during caregiver conferences for the C.A.R.D.S closet,** a free clothing resource for families affiliated with the Sunshine Place. Donations will be used to supply some much-needed clothing items for the community. We love to see our students caring and supporting others.

MEGAN EGSTAD SCORES SPORT HEADLINES AGAIN

Congratulations are in order for Sun Prairie East senior **Megan Egstad**. Next year, she will be taking her talents to the University of Illinois, where she will compete in wheelchair basketball. Megan was recognized at a School Board meeting in December. Previously, as a junior, Megan won the 400 meter, 800 meter, and shot put events last year and led Sun Prairie East to the wheelchair team title. Her hard work and dedication have paid off and will take her far.





SP EAST FFA MEMBERS RECEIVE HIGHEST NATIONAL HONORS

Sun Prairie East FFA members joined four other area FFA chapters to attend and participate in the **98th National FFA Convention** in Indianapolis, with more than 67,000 FFA members from around the nation. Students toured a variety of agricultural businesses, attended leadership workshops, and listened to speakers. Sun Prairie East students Daniel Reid and Keegan Pagel earned their American Degrees, the highest degree awarded to FFA members across the nation. They received this for their years of work in agriculture-related projects.

SP EAST GIRLS SWIM DELIVERS TOP-20 FINISHES AT STATE

The **Sun Prairie East girls' swim team** ended its season with a successful run at the WIAA Division 1 state meet. Cardinal senior Samantha Camp finished her standout career with her fourth straight state appearance, placing 9th in the 100 breaststroke. The 200 medley relay team of Becca Elliott, Elena Budde, Natalie Brandl, and Samantha Camp earned 16th place, while the 400 freestyle relay team of Elliott, Budde, Elaina Nicodemus, and Camp secured 20th place. Congratulations on an amazing season!





SP WEST STUDENTS BUILD A HOME AND THEIR CAREER SKILLS

SP West students have spent the last semester **building a home** for Don Simon Homes while gaining credit and construction skills. The course, taught by home construction teacher Michael Lucas, provides educational resources for students to learn how to build a single-family home, including reading technical drawings, knowledge of safety skills and tools, and job-site procedures. These students are exposed to residential construction to prepare them for employment in the industry.

SP WEST VOLLEYBALL PLAYER RACKS UP NATIONAL AND STATE ACCOLADES

Congratulations to SP West volleyball player **Sari Marks** for her many achievements this season. The setter/outsider hitter was named the Big 8 Conference player of the year, made the First Team All Conference 2025, and was recognized by the American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) on the All Region team for the 2025 season. Marks was also a first-team recipient of the AVCA Best & Brightest Award. This award honors individual high school senior student-athletes who excel on and off the court. Sari also made the Wisconsin Volleyball Coaches Association First Team All-State for Division 1 and was one of only 120 to be honored with a spot on the All-American third team by AVCA. In September, she reached 1,000 career assists.



CAST OF GUYS & DOLLS INSPIRES THE NEXT CLASS OF ACTORS

The Sun Prairie West High School **cast of *Guys and Dolls*** planned a theater experience for the District's annual Kids Camp, which led 4th–8th graders through acting, singing, and dancing activities. The camp was led by the cast and director of the musical, Heidi O'Toole. Students ended with a short performance for parents to demonstrate the skills they had learned.





WESTSIDE STUDENTS ARE HOME ALONE PROS

In a partnership with UW-Extension, 4th- and 5th-grade students at Westside Elementary earned their **Home Alone Pro certification**. During the 2-hour course, students learned how to stay safe and confident when they may need to be home on their own. They practiced creating a safety plan, identifying trusted adults, understanding house rules, and knowing what to do in an emergency. This is part of the District's goal to empower students with classroom and real-life skills that build independence, responsibility, and confidence.

Madison Mosley and Jamal Stone are 2020 graduates from Sun Prairie High School, and they are both making big moves on Broadway stages. Coincidentally, in the 2020 Senior Superlatives, Jamal and Madison were named Most Likely to be on Broadway. Madison made her Broadway debut in October as Lydia in the production of *Beetlejuice*. The alumna will be performing in the musical's North America Tour through 2026. Jamal is part of the cast of the Broadway musical *Some Like It Hot*, which visited the Overture Center on its North America tour. It was a homecoming performance for the Sun Prairie graduate, as he performed at the Overture in high school during the Jerry Awards for the production of *Seussical the Musical.*

OUR DISTRICT PROUDLY SUPPORTS MILITARY FAMILIES

We are dedicated to supporting our military families and the unique challenges they face.

We are grateful to all veterans for their service to our country and to all military families for the sacrifices they make in support of that service. We stand in support of the military families living in our District, and **we take seriously the responsibility of providing unmatched educational opportunities to students of military households while accommodating their unique needs.** To support military families and children in our District, we have designated a liaison, Shelley Joan Weiss, who helps connect families to available resources. We also have a designated web page, under the "Families" tab, where you can access further information. As a District, we are dedicated to supporting our military families and the unique challenges military students face.

April is the Month of the Military Child, when we honor the military children in our District and throughout the United States. We invite everyone to wear purple during the week of April 11–15th as a visible way to show support and thank military children for their strength and sacrifices. Purple references the joint environment of the military, encompassing all service branches, Active Duty, Reserve, National Guard, and Veterans.

PURPLE UP FOR MILITARY KIDS

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IGNITE IMPACT

$13,000 in SPEF grants empower students to support community organizations.



High school students are provided with real opportunities that impact their communities and their careers. **SP East and SP West students in the ACCEL Business Leadership Academy partnered with local nonprofits to write grant proposals for the Sun Prairie Education Foundation.** Students and the nonprofits learned if their grant was awarded during the first annual Ignite Impact event. Six grants were awarded for a total of more than $13,000. Students whose grants were selected will start volunteer work to make their project proposal a reality. Ignite Impact provides students with a chance to learn practical business skills, create change in Sun Prairie, and strengthen relationships with local businesses.

CTE PROGRAM OPENS DOORS BEYOND GRADUATION

Career and Technical Education (CTE) helps prepare students for post-secondary opportunities.

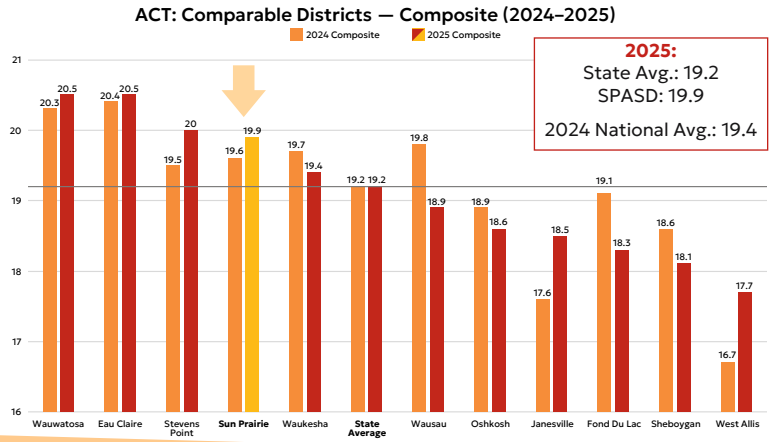
At the Sun Prairie Area School District, we believe in preparing our students not just for graduation but for success in their future careers. Our **Career and Technical Education (CTE) program** offers hands-on learning experiences, real-world skills development, and pathways to fulfilling careers. We are committed to helping students bridge their experiences from high school to a career plan and post-secondary training, with opportunities like work-based learning, the Youth Apprenticeship Program, career and technical education courses, and dual credit partnerships with institutions such as Madison College and the University of Wisconsin–Madison.



SPASD SEES IMPROVEMENT IN ACT SCORES

Sun Prairie students outperformed both the state and national average ACT composite scores.

Our District continues to show growth as demonstrated by ACT composite scores. The SPASD average score improved in 2025 to 19.9. Students in Sun Prairie outperformed the state and national averages, and our District is in the top third of comparable districts in Wisconsin.



STUDENT LEARNING ENVIRONMENT GOAL

The educational environment establishes the conditions where every child feels welcome and able to succeed. In order to create the necessary conditions for learning, educators create spaces where the classroom community accepts and supports the development of all students as people, where learning partnerships thrive between students and adults, and where there is an established culture of care.

CREATING AN ***EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT***

Operational Expectation 10: Student Learning Environment meets School Board expectations.

In November, District Superintendent Dr. Brad Saron presented **Operational Expectation (OE) 10: Student Learning Environment** to the School Board. OE 10 has been monitored and reviewed to ensure that the District's learning environments are focused on a culture of care, allowing every student to feel welcomed and able to succeed, in and out of the classroom, where students, parents, caregivers, and staff are valued and respected. During the 2024–2025 school year, the administrative team determined that 7 board expectations are "in compliance," with 1 board expectation noted as "in compliance, with exceptions noted."

Compliance of OE 10 is evidenced and accomplished through the instructional framework, social emotional learning evidence, bullying prevention programs, safety and security trainings, SP Academy, Courageous Conversations implementation, Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NVCI) plans, school handbooks, Standard Response Protocol & Raptor training partners, the C. H. Bird Turnaround Plan, Behavior Matrix agendas, and privacy processes.

Strategic actions for OE 10 and improving learning environments in the 2025–2026 school year include:

- reinforcing data privacy training and procedures, and reviewing incident response steps to prevent recurrence
- continued support for and monitoring of the C. H. Bird Turnaround Plan



- deepening the conditions in place to reduce and minimize the frequency of behaviors on school property that disrupt learning, are disrespectful, and/or are dangerous

We are grateful for every member of our Leadership Collaborative for their remarkable work in partnership with our teachers, SEAs, instructional assistants, educators, and staff. OE 10 represents the collective efforts of our 1,300 staff in service of our students.

SUMMER SCHOOL: ***WHERE SUMMER'S COOL***

Be ready for learning and engagement: Summer School registration opens in April.

SPASD Summer school registration will open on April 1, 2026. There are many opportunities for continued learning over the summer for all students, from 4K to 12th grade. Students have the opportunity to strengthen their skills in math, reading, physical education, art, music, tech ed, and many other areas through a wide variety of enrichment classes aligning with core content area standards. Additional learning opportunities include a middle and high school orientation and the Sound of Sun Prairie, an extracurricular marching band composed of students in grades 8–12. Summer school is a great way to keep connected with friends, get ahead on learning objectives, and spend time outdoors. The first day of summer school will be Wednesday, June 24.



Both Sun Prairie East and Sun Prairie West High Schools were ranked in the top 20% of high schools in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report* this past fall. In addition to the nationwide ranking, SP East placed 85th out of 549 for high schools in Wisconsin, with SP West placing not far behind at 106. The rankings are based on college readiness, college curriculum breadth, state assessment proficiency and performance, underserved student performance, and graduation rate.

We are so grateful for our amazing staff for the hard work they do every day to support students, help them be their best selves, and provide them with access, opportunities, and excellence like nowhere else. And we are incredibly proud of our students for working hard to succeed in and out of the classroom.

Sun Prairie East and West High Schools are both on Niche's 2026 list for Best Schools. SP East placed 27th out of 495 for the best public high schools in Wisconsin, with SP West placing 63rd. Both schools were also recognized among the most diverse public high schools in Wisconsin. **Our District also ranks in the top ten school districts in the Madison area,** placing 8th out of 29.

The nationwide company Niche creates in-depth profiles of schools based on achievements and academic standards, reviews, and ratings. The rankings are based on key statistics from the U.S. Department of Education.

MEASURING PROGRESS

District scorecards highlight growth and transparency.



At a meeting in the fall, the School Board reviewed **school and department scorecards** from the 2024–2025 school year. A scorecard is a District tool to track the strategies being used to make progress toward meeting the expectations set by the Board. Board members and members of the public attended workshop presentations, moving among three different rooms to learn from directors and principals from Central Heights Middle School, Sun Prairie East High School, Northside and Horizon Elementary Schools, and our Technology department. The directors and principals presented their scorecard work from the 2024–2025 school year, discussed their "glows" and "grows," and showed the work they are focusing on this year in their schools. Participants recorded their "ahas" and "wonderings," which were shared with schools and departments to help guide future conversations about the work.

In response to feedback and to make our student results more transparent, we have condensed the data from each school's scorecard into a one-page document called a Data Dashboard. Each school's Data Dashboard is available on the school's web page, and the entire collection is available on the District's Strategic Framework web page.

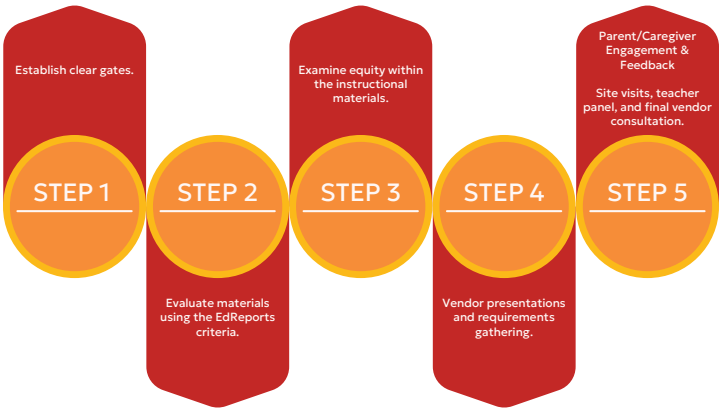
WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD OUR MATH FUTURE

The District has embarked on a continued journey of curriculum renewal in partnership with families.

Our District's commitment to academic excellence is a continuous journey, not a destination. As part of our ongoing Curriculum Renewal and Design Process, we have been deliberately working through **a multiphase review of mathematics materials** to ensure that our classrooms have the best possible resources.

This process has been underway for some time, driven heavily by the expertise of our educators. Building on the research and evaluation already conducted by our teachers, we recently took a significant step to expand the conversation to our broader community.

MATH MATERIALS ADOPTION PROCESS STEPS



In mid-December, as the latest step in this timeline, we hosted two interactive open houses. As part of our two-way communication initiative, these events were held at Meadow View Elementary and Northside Elementary—sites strategically chosen to center the voices within our Title I schools and Dual Language Immersion (DLI) programs.



These evenings provided a vital space for collaboration. Parents and caregivers were able to:

- engage in dialogue with the educators on our Math Steering Committee, who have been piloting and analyzing these resources
- preview materials from the three finalists: enVision Math, Imagine Learning, and i-Ready
- provide written feedback to be included in the formal review data

This community input was then reviewed, summarized, and treated as critical data alongside the technical evaluations provided by our teachers.

By layering community perspectives on top of educator expertise, we are ensuring that this adoption is not a decision made in isolation. It is the result of a transparent, comprehensive process designed to center the voices of the people who matter most: our students, our teachers, and our families.

We invite you to learn more about our Math Steering Committee's adoption process by scanning the QR code and watching a brief video.

GETTING AN EARLY START

Our District has learning opportunities for 3- and 4-year-olds.

EARLY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR 3-YEAR-OLDS



Before kids get to SP4K, they have many different opportunities available to them. The options provided here are for information purposes only and do not imply a District endorsement of all programs. Not all programs have connections to the Sun Prairie Area School District. Community Schools offers Preschool Playgroups, where parents may drop off children ages 3–4 who are not yet eligible for 4K for a few hours a week. Head Start is another excellent program, as well as the Parks & Recreation's Playgroups. Children who are suspected of having delays in development have access to a special birth-to-3-year-old program created by the UCP of Greater Dane County. For a more extensive list of opportunities and information, visit the District website under "Departments" and then "Student Services & Special Education."

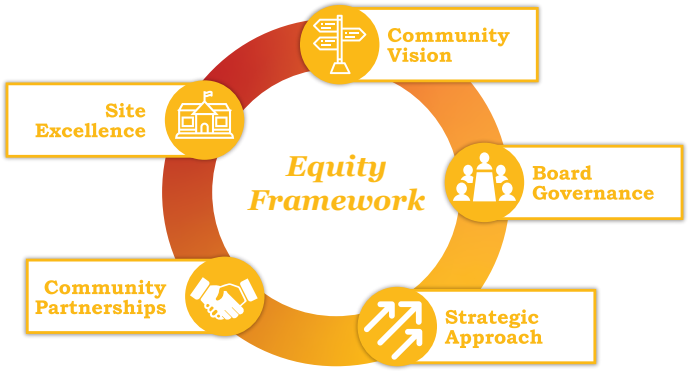
Our strong, inclusive 4-year-old kindergarten program, SP4K, lays the foundation for a child's future success and strengthens the fabric of our school community. SP4K provides an opportunity to build trust, share resources, and establish meaningful partnerships that can last throughout a child's education. All of our SP4K locations provide developmentally appropriate, play-based learning experiences that nurture curiosity, creativity, and early literacy and numeracy skills to support the whole child academically, socially, and emotionally.

The enrollment process for the 2026–2027 school year opened on February 10, 2026. Our District's SP4K program gives all children access to a high-quality early learning experience at no cost to families.

SP4K: THE BEST WAY TO START YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION JOURNEY



OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUITY



The SPASD Equity Framework details and informs our equity work to help all students succeed. We will continue to use our Equity Framework to guide how we apply strategies in a systematic manner across our departments and schools to ensure authentic equity transformation. The Equity Framework informs the District scorecard, from which fixed strategies cascade to department and site scorecards that include the systemic action steps for equity. To learn more, visit our District website and select "Equity Framework" under the "District" tab.

EXPANDED SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH TRIBAL MEMBERSHIP

Sun Prairie students with tribal membership under Title VI are eligible for new services.

Through a **partnership between the Sun Prairie Area School District and the Ho-Chunk Nation Education Department**, eligible students can receive free tutoring and academic support. This program provides one-on-one and group tutoring, mentorship, advocacy, and family/community support to help strengthen student learning. For more information and to sign up, visit the Ho-Chunk Nation Education website. Sun Prairie students with tribal membership represent eight different tribes that span the nation.



Community Schools was proud to partner with Indigenous students and leaders to host the **Sun Prairie Indigenous Peoples' Day Gathering.** The gathering featured dancing, traditional music, food, and educational resources. It was a time for building connections, storytelling, and celebration. We are honored to uplift and be in community with our Indigenous neighbors and friends.

CELEBRATING JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE

The Department of Systemic Equity and Inclusion (DSEI) is proud to share that, as part of our long-range efforts to expand and elevate diverse heritages across the District, **Jewish American Heritage Month will be recognized in May** as the newest heritage and awareness month elevated by DSEI.

Jewish American Heritage Month honors and celebrates the rich history, culture, and contributions of Jewish Americans to our communities, our nation, and the world. Throughout the month, students, staff, and families are invited to engage in learning, reflection, and dialogue that deepen understanding and appreciation of Jewish identity, traditions, and lived experiences.

JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH



On December 3rd, students, staff, and community members gathered at the Sun Prairie West Performing Arts Center to celebrate the **Hmong New Year**. This celebration held extra meaning as this year marks 50 years since Hmong people first began resettling in the United States. The event featured Panhia Thao (Miss Grand Hmong) as a guest speaker, raffle drawings, a student fashion show, musical performances, traditional Hmong games, and a line dance. Students brought to life the beauty, history, and values that have shaped generations of Hmong people. Their voices, creativity, and courage were at the heart of this event. Thank you, all, for supporting our students, and for helping us honor 50 years of Hmong history, culture, and community in the United States.

In October, Meadow View Elementary was the site for an outdoor **District-wide event celebrating Hispanic culture.** There were community resources, music, dancing, games, food trucks, and activities for all ages. Thanks to the collaboration among Community Schools, the Department of Systemic Equity and Inclusion, the Multilingual Learners & Dual Language Immersion Departments, and Northside Elementary School, we created an atmosphere where our families were welcomed to celebrate their heritage.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The 2026 Black History Month's theme is **Threads of Tradition: A Century of Black History Commemorations**. Nearly 100 years ago, Dr. Carter G. Woodson established Negro History Week in 1926, planting the seeds for what we now celebrate as Black History Month. What began as a courageous act of truth-telling has grown into a powerful tradition that honors our past, affirms our identity, and inspires our future. For a century, the commemoration of Black history has been both memory and movement—a living legacy carried forward through scholarship, art, music, faith, storytelling, and activism. Each generation has added its voice and its brilliance, strengthening our collective story and ensuring that the contributions, resilience, and humanity of Black people are never erased, silenced, or forgotten.



COMMUNITY OF EXCEPTIONAL AND DIVERSE EDUCATORS AND STAFF GOAL
Strive to proactively recruit, retain, and engage diverse and exceptional talent.

CELEBRATING AN A+ TEACHER

Joel Coyne is the Wisconsin 2026 Teacher of the Year.

Joel Coyne, Business and Marketing teacher from Sun Prairie East High School, was named the **2026 Teacher of the Year** by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. On May 5th, a surprise assembly was held at Sun Prairie East High School to announce the recognition. Mr. Coyne empowers and engages his students with the knowledge they need to go far once they leave his classroom. His commitment and engagement with students are unmatched.

Mr. Coyne was asked what this recognition means to him and said, "In a District where I am surrounded by excellent and caring educators, I am both honored and humbled to be named the Wisconsin Teacher of the Year. This is my fifteenth year in the District, and while I have learned, grown, and become a better teacher, my fundamental reason for being an educator has not changed. Teaching is where I feel I have the greatest opportunity to affect change. Change that, in both small and large ways, can improve someone's life and help make the world a better place."

This year, Mr. Coyne will meet with the 56 other Teachers of the Year with representatives from all U.S. states, territories, Washington, DC, and the Department of Defense. His upcoming travels provide "a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to elevate and celebrate the innovative, life-changing education programs offered here in Sun Prairie."



Mr. Coyne with State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jill Underly

As Mr. Coyne mentioned, his reason for being an educator remains the same – the students. He, along with teachers Maria Archie and Erica Dimka, has collaborated with more than 60 businesses and nonprofits across the Sun Prairie community to allow students to work on real needs with impact beyond the school walls, while businesses and organizations benefit from fresh perspectives and high-quality deliverables. The program is always interested in developing new partnerships.

Overall, for Mr. Coyne, "being Teacher of the Year means uplifting stories that show how education changes lives and creates opportunities. The year ahead will be exciting and full of new challenges, but at its core, this role is about sharing the joy of learning and doing more good."

ROOTED HERE: ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Jenna Boberg makes history as our District's first female Athletic Director.

At the District, we love to recognize our staff who are alumni, and our "Rooted Here" series on social media does just that. From walking the hallways as a student to supporting students as a staff member, Jenna Boberg has always been rooted here. **Ms. Boberg (class of 2007) now gives back to our schools as the first female Athletic Director in the District.**

Ms. Boberg started in the District as a physical education and health teacher at Cardinal Heights, where she stepped into the middle school Athletic Coordinator position and also coached middle school volleyball, basketball, and track. When SP West High School opened, she shifted over to high school PE and health. While teaching and coaching, she pursued her master's degree in Athletic Administration from Ohio University.

Ms. Boberg became interested in athletics and leadership as a student in high school, when she was involved in sports and activities and was a TA in the athletics office. When asked who inspired her, she credited a Sun Prairie coach.

"Doug Maughan was in his first years of coaching when I was an upperclassman, and I distinctly remember his positivity and encouragement that gave me the confidence to succeed as an athlete. He was one of the reasons I wanted to become a teacher."



In her role as the Associate Director of Athletics & Activities, Ms. Boberg manages daily operations, plans for the years ahead, ensures that all programs are properly staffed and remain in full compliance with WIAA membership guidelines, mentors coaches and student-athletes, and collaborates with families and the community. She said her favorite part is "when I get to see the students in action and competing!"

When asked what it means to her to be the first female Athletic Director in the District, Ms. Boberg said, "I know that I have worked really hard to get where I am, and I am very proud to serve in this position as a role model for any other females, including my two daughters who may want to work in sports leadership someday!"

We love seeing our alumni continue to make an impact in our schools!

SETTING THE STANDARD FOR ***STAFF WELLNESS***

Our District has established itself as a national leader in employee wellness, delivering award-winning programs, measurable outcomes, and transformative care that redefine what's possible in workplace well-being.

A Best-in-Class Onsite Wellness Clinic

The District's Employee Wellness Clinic at the Historic Hilltop Campus represents a strategic investment in comprehensive, accessible healthcare that delivers exceptional results. This year alone, the clinic has:

- delivered large-scale preventive care, administering approximately **2,000 flu and COVID vaccinations** through targeted outreach clinics
- expanded specialty care access through dedicated screening and consultation days for skin cancer, menopause, urology, men's and couples counseling, and student physicals
- pioneered integrated wellness coaching addressing healthy lifestyles, women's health, and behavioral health needs

The clinic's impact is undeniable: With a **90% average fill rate** for Behavioral Health Coaches and Clinical Providers, it has generated nearly **$1,000,000 in annual claims avoidance savings** while maintaining a perfect track record of **100% of patients rating their visits as "good" or "very good."**

National Recognition: WELCOA Platinum Excellence Since 2021

SPASD has maintained the prestigious Platinum Award from the Wellness Council of America (WELCOA) since 2021, **a distinction that has been held by fewer than 10 organizations nationwide.** After earning this elite recognition initially in 2021, the District was reawarded Platinum status in 2024, extending this designation through 2027. This sustained excellence over multiple award cycles distinguishes SPASD as not just a program that achieved greatness once, but one that **continuously evolves and maintains the highest standards in workplace wellness.**

In fact, SPASD's influence extends far beyond District boundaries, with Superintendent Dr. Brad Saron and Wellness Coordinator Karyn Richmond **actively shaping state and national discourse on strategic wellness implementation.** Most recently, both served as featured panelists at the Wellness Council of Wisconsin's Annual Conference in December 2025.

Through visionary leadership, strategic partnerships, evidence-based programming, and unwavering commitment to employee care, SPASD has not simply created a wellness program; **it has built a culture of thriving that serves as a blueprint for organizations nationwide.**



The Block family outside of the SPASD vaccination clinic. Jillian Block is the principal at Northside Elementary, and Derek Block is a science teacher at SP West High School. Their three kids attend SPASD schools.

WELCOA
WELL WORKPLACE PLATINUM



Jenny Herman, Agricultural teacher and FFA advisor at Sun Prairie West High School, was recognized as the WEA Member Benefits Outstanding Educator at a Badger football game this past season. Bucky Badger stopped by her classroom in November to surprise her with the news. The Outstanding Educator title highlights the impact teachers have on students and their commitment to their local community. Ms. Herman finds unique and active ways to engage her students with course materials, and she is incredibly involved with the Sunshine Place. Her passion and excellence for teaching make her especially deserving of this award.



Cynthia Bell Jimenez, principal at Meadow View Elementary, received the Charles L. Hopson Racial Equity Principal Leadership Award. This award recognizes leaders who are purposeful, innovative, brave, and effective instructional leaders and who champion the professional growth of culturally relevant teachers. Her equity work at Meadow View is focused on creating spaces and opportunities for people to achieve their goals. We are so proud of her work and to have her in our school community.

COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GOAL

Excel in how we collaborate and communicate with all careholders, and build relationships that promote positive outcomes for students.

RACE THROUGH THE PRAIRIE WITH SPASCO

Join the Sun Prairie Area School Community Organization on June 20th for their first community-wide fundraiser.

The Sun Prairie Area School Community Organization (SPASCO) brings together the school-community organizations (SCOs) of all nine Sun Prairie elementary schools to support students, teachers, and staff. SPASCO believes our community is stronger together than we are apart and works to ensure that every school has equitable community support.

Join the Sun Prairie Area School Community Organization (SPASCO) for Race Through the Prairie on June 20, 2026. This is an Amazing Race–style community event that brings together teams of kids, adults, and families to support our schools. Teams will solve clues, complete fun challenges at local landmarks, and test their teamwork and creativity as they race across Sun Prairie. The race will conclude with a free community celebration with music, food, and activities for everyone. Prefer to stay in one spot? SP West High School will host kid- and family-friendly challenges throughout the day and join the celebration at the end.

Team registration opens in February 2026. All proceeds benefit Sun Prairie elementary students, teachers, and schools through SPASCO. To sign up to be a sponsor, volunteer, or form a team, scan the QR Code.





10 YEARS OF CONNECTION

Our District's Homeroom *podcast comes to an end after a decade of insightful conversations with SPASD staff.*

In January, **Superintendent Dr. Brad Saron's podcast, *Homeroom,*** aired its final episode after ten seasons. The podcast has been an excellent way to hear about what is happening in the District, and it served as a chance to meet teachers and staff. On the District website, under the Community tab, you can find our podcast archive, where you can listen to past episodes. This has been a great way to connect with the District and community.

Thank you to our partners at the Sun Prairie Media Center, to host Todd Milewski, and to our listeners for making *Homeroom* possible for this past decade.

LISTEN NOW

INTRODUCING HMONG CONNECTIONS

Our Hmong Advisory Group has now become Hmong Connections, a new community-centered space for Hmong families.

We are excited to announce **Hmong Connections,** a new community-centered space where students and families can come together to learn, celebrate, and explore what it means to be Hmong. The bi-monthly meetings will provide opportunities to celebrate Hmong culture and grow together as a community.

The first session was held on Monday, January 19th. During this session, families heard inspiring stories from a Hmong storyteller, explored Hmong poetry as a form of self-expression with a special guest speaker, and created a 2026 vision board together as a family.

An RSVP is required for these sessions as space is limited and supplies will be provided for all participants. We welcome Hmong families to join us in starting the new year with connection, learning, and inspiration!



COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Sun Prairie Community Schools transforms a school into a place where educators, local community members, families, and students work together to strengthen conditions for student learning and healthy development. Community Schools identifies the root causes of challenges negatively impacting students, and then organizes in- and out-of-school resources, supports, and opportunities so that young people in our community thrive.

Our Community Schools are Northside, Creekside, Westside, C. H. Bird, and Prairie Phoenix Academy.

In 2026–2027, Community Schools will add two additional elementary sites. These sites will be selected by a committee of community members and staff. New sites will be announced in early June.



SPARKING CURIOSITY

Students engage in hands-on projects at C. H. Bird's after-school STEAM Club.

C. H. Bird launched an **after-school STEAM Club** this past fall, where students engage in hands-on projects led by UW–Madison students from the field on which the project is based. This 8-week program is made possible by a partnership with Jamarek and UW and is free for students.

Jamarek President/CEO Pape Samb (center), leads students in building paper stoplight circuits.

EMPOWERING FAMILIES

Northside runs a Caregiver Learning Series based on survey-driven data.

To support parent engagement, Northside is running a **Caregiver Learning Series** based on survey-driven data. The first class of this series was called EMPOWERED, and was run by Andrea Koster from Touchstone Karate. It was a self-defense class designed to strengthen, equip, and empower women.

One attendee shared this about her experience:

"I truly loved it! It was amazing how strong the sense of community could be built in an hour. I felt like you could visibly see the confidence grow in each participant as the night progressed, myself included. The skills are so valuable, but hearing the stories and life impacts really stuck with me. I went to my volleyball game after and immediately taught the girls on my team what I learned. Just think about that exponential impact that it can have if each woman from the class tells a few people, and so on, so forth. Andrea is an absolute powerhouse and inspiration of a woman, and I couldn't have thought of a better instructor for this class. Thank you for putting it on!"



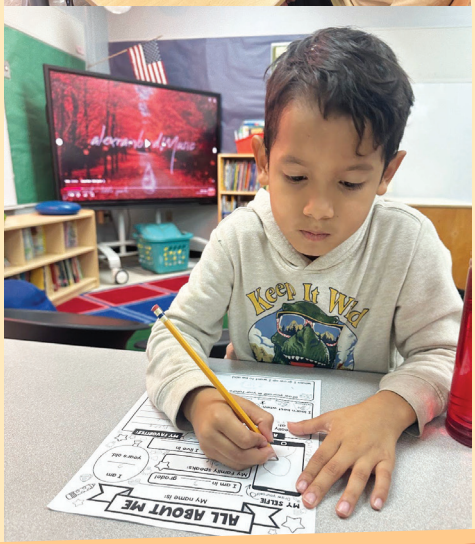
KIDS ACHIEVE TOGETHER

Westside's KAT program reaches a record 60 students.

Since 2017, **Westside's Kids Achieve Together (KAT) program** has been a place where Wildcats feel safe, cared for, and inspired. This year, KAT has served 60 students, its largest group yet. Each afternoon, kids are welcomed with a free snack. Then they dive into Power Hour, a full hour of academics with 20 minutes each of literacy, math, and writing to further learning. Students also explore enrichment activities, from cooking to hands-on projects that spark creativity and confidence. Families tell us their children don't want to miss school because "I have KAT today!" That excitement and sense of belonging is what makes KAT more than a program—it's a community where every child can thrive. This comprehensive after-school program is free for families and is funded by the federal 21st Century Community Learning Center grant.







FINANCE AND FACILITIES GOALS

Prioritize the investment of our resources to support the educational experiences in and out of the classroom, the student and staff physical environment, and the teams serving our organizational mission.

ENROLLMENT GROWS BY 80 STUDENTS

Our District's enrollment continues to be volatile.

Since the Third Friday pupil count, **the District has increased enrollment by 80 students,** which is a positive trend. However, because these enrollments occurred after the official count date, the District does not receive funding for those students in the current year. The funding for these 80 students would have been approximately $465,000.

80

Our District's official enrollment grew by **80 students** since the Third Friday Count.

The additional funding for these students would have been **$465,000.**

MEADOW VIEW ACCIDENT BRINGS COMMUNITY TOGETHER

A car crashed into Meadow View Elementary. The response brought together people from across the community.

In the early morning of November 26th, a car crashed into Meadow View Elementary. While the building sustained some damage, no one was injured. Students and staff were not in school due to Thanksgiving break. Thankfully, the District Buildings and Grounds Department was able to assist with the cleanup, and a huge thank you goes to Findorff for their quick response to repair the damage. **The Meadow View and Sun Prairie communities rallied to help support moving the classroom that was affected by the accident.**





OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

A member of our Facilities and Grounds Department leads students in a very special outdoor lesson.

John Paynter, "Mr. John," from the Facilities and Grounds department, planted an apple tree in an outdoor classroom and invited young scholars to engage and participate in the activity. It was a great learning experience for our preschool and SP4K scholars, as well as teachers. Mr. John shared about soil, worms, trees, and the importance of nurturing them all. It was amazing to see the excitement and engagement exhibited by students. This was a great example of how we can build connections across our school community. The outdoor classroom, including the apple tree, is a project being funded through a Sun Prairie Education Foundation grant.







Thank you to our partners at Bank of Sun Prairie for their support and sponsorship.

300,000+
Volunteer Hours

700+
Grants Awarded

Celebrating
— 20 YEARS —
SUN PRAIRIE EDUCATION FOUNDATION
SPEF Unlocking potential
2005-2025

200,000+
Students Impacted

20+ YEARS OF
Unlocking Potential!

SPEF Fuels Extraordinary Learning....







In 2025, SPEF funding helped FFA students host 4th-graders at Statz Farm for a day of hands-on farm discovery and brought the barnyard to the SPWHS campus, giving students an up-close look at agriculture and animal care. SPEF funding also helped teachers at Token Springs reimagine their playground into a 4k outdoor learning space where students can explore, create, and grow.



Inside the Classroom...

Mental Health–focused Legacy Fund provides a therapy dog to bring comfort and connection to kids.

Students win first place at National Energy Saving competition with SPEF-funded resources.





and Everywhere Sun Prairie Kids Grow!

With programs like IGNITE IMPACT, FOOD FOR THOUGHT, and grants that bring educators' ideas to life, we are impacting kids' futures across SPASD.

FUEL THE FUTURE WITH US! theSPEF.org

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Our District ended the 2024–2025 fiscal year with **conserved funds** of approximately

↑$276,000

rather than the originally projected

$3 MILLION

deficit.

This reflects both cost-savings measures and the careful work of our staff in managing spending. This allows the District to contribute to our fund balance. You can view the independent audit of our District's finances on our Business Services web page.

Sun Prairie Area School District

501 S. Bird Street
Sun Prairie, WI 53590

Why did I receive this newsletter? The Board has expressed a specific expectation that the District share information with our community. We are proud to highlight the work being done by our staff and students. While this publication is available online, it has a broader reach if we send it to all homes in our District. We utilize bulk mailing, which is a more cost-effective way for us to reach our whole community, including those who do not currently have students in our schools, than if we used targeted mailing.

WE ARE LISTENING

If you have questions, please contact us.

DISTRICT SUPPORT CENTER
501 S. Bird Street, Sun Prairie, WI 53590
608-834-6500 | sunprairieschools.org

SUBMIT A QUESTION VIA THE DISTRICT WEBSITE

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SCAN THIS QR CODE TO GIVE FEEDBACK THAT WILL HELP US IMPROVE OUR COMMUNICATIONS.

2026 UPCOMING DATES

FEBRUARY
- **Friday, February 27:** No School

MARCH
- **Monday–Friday, March 23–27:** Spring Break

APRIL
- **Wednesday, April 1:** Summer School Registration Opens
- **Tuesday, April 7:** Election Day
- **Friday, April 10:** No School
  May be used as a make-up day if we exceed 3 snow days this year.

MAY
- **Saturday, May 9:** Sun Prairie East Prom
- **Friday, May 15:** No School
  May be used as a make-up day if we exceed 3 snow days this year.
- **Saturday, May 16:** Sun Prairie West Prom
- **Monday, May 25:** No School

JUNE
- **Wednesday, June 3:** Last Day of School for SP4K
- **Thursday, June 11:** PPA Graduation: 1:00 p.m.
- **Thursday, June 11:** Last Day of School for K–12
  Dismissal Times:
  Elementary Schools: 11:10 a.m.
  Middle Schools: 12:05 p.m.
  High Schools: 12:15 p.m.
  Prairie Phoenix Academy: 11:50 a.m.
- **Friday, June 12:** SP West Graduation: 5:00 p.m.
  SP East Graduation: 7:30 p.m.
- **Wednesday, June 24:** First Day of Summer School

JULY
- **Thursday, July 23:** Last Day of Summer School

SEPTEMBER
- **Tuesday, September 1:** First Day of School for K–12
- **Tuesday, September 8:** First Day of School for SP4K

No student may be unlawfully discriminated against in any school programs, activities or in facilities usage because of the student's sex (gender identity, gender expressions, and non-conformity to gender role stereotypes), color, religion, profession, or demonstration of belief or non-belief, race, national origin (including limited English proficiency), ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, homelessness status, sexual orientation, age, or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability. Harassment is a form of discrimination and shall not be tolerated in the District. It is the responsibility of administrators, staff members and all students to ensure that student discrimination or harassment does not occur. (SPASD District Policy JB)

The Sun Prairie Area School District ("District") does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of sex in any education program or activity that the District operates. Title IX's requirement not to discriminate in any education program or activity extends to cover, but is not limited to, District students, certain admissions processes, and District employment. To access the relevant policy and procedures, you can go to the District's website. For inquiries regarding how Title IX and the federal Title IX regulations apply to the District please contact the District's Title IX Coordinator(Director of Student Policy & School Operations) at 501 S. Bird Street, Sun Prairie, WI 53590, 608-834-6624, or by email at titleixcoordinator@sunprairieschools.org.

The Sun Prairie Experience is published by the Sun Prairie Area School District. The District Support Center is located at 501 S. Bird Street, Sun Prairie, WI 53590. 608-834-6500
Visit the District website for more information: sunprairieschools.org