

Eau Claire Area School District E-Newsletter

April 2015

District News for April 2015

Welcome to the Eau Claire Area School District's electronic newsletter. Parents will automatically receive a link to our newsletter toward the end of each month. Others may subscribe to our newsletter to receive the latest news from our district delivered directly to your email address. Please direct comments about our newsletter to Teri Piper Thompson at 715-852-4907 or via email at tpiperthompson@ecasd.k12.wi.us.



Good News from our Eau Claire Schools!

- Thank you to the Eau Claire Masonic Angel Fund for its generous donation of athletic shoes for students in our **Homeless Program!**
- Congratulations to **Northstar Middle School** teacher Ian Jolley for being chosen as the 2015 Junior Division Behring Teacher of the Year award recognizing outstanding National History Day teachers. Only one middle school teacher is selected each year in the state!
- **Memorial High School Jazz I** won the Class AA division recently at the Eau Claire Jazz Fest. In addition, three students, Tanner Binzcak, Emily Dasher and Katelyn Dasher, were selected to march with The Macy's Great American Marching Band in the 2015 Macy's Thanksgiving Parade. **The Memorial Concert Choir** was also invited to sing with the internationally acclaimed Wartburg College Choir at one of the choir's spring tour stops.
- **DeLong Middle School** students took first place in the Class AA 2015 State Middle School Math Contest. Mark Pepperl (with a perfect score), Stewart Porter and Nathan Stremcha were named

Join Us for Board Meetings!



Regularly scheduled meetings of the Board of Education are typically held the first and third Monday of the month at 7 pm. These meetings are held in the Board Room of the Administration Building at 500 Main Street. All meetings are open to the public except the closed session portion of the meeting. Minutes, meeting agendas, supporting documents and board committee information can be found on the district's web site at www.ecasd.us under Board of Education.

Upcoming board meetings are May 4 and May 18 at 7 pm. If you are unable to attend, watch our board meetings LIVE ONLINE at [Board Live Stream](#).



to the Class AA All-State 1st Team and Dalton Christopherson, Vance Emerson and Anna Haigh were named to the Class AA All-State 2nd Team.

- The Arc Eau Claire recently honored three ECASD staff for Outstanding Effort on Behalf of Children and Youth with Disabilities at its annual awards banquet. **Longfellow Elementary** physical education teacher Tom Dahl and first grade teacher Sarah Hundt and **Prairie Ridge Early Learning Center** general school assistant Seth Hoyer were honored for their work with Young Athletes, a preschool playgroup for kids ages 2-7.
- Three Odyssey of the Mind teams from the **Eau Claire Area School District** recently won the state championship in their divisions. **The North/Memorial High School** team coached by Sara Passint features students Hannah Crowell, Kate Mathias, Blake Rudd, Sergio Sigala and Zaria Whitacre. The **Manz Elementary** team is coached by Jana Armstrong and includes team members Beth Berger, Anna Blohowiak, Ellie Blohowiak, Anya Effinger, Mara Effinger, Maeve McGinley and Greta Steines. The **DeLong Middle School** team, coached by Jen Wiltgen, includes students Hannah Brunner, Scout Stokes, Alaina Stuve, Alex Waters and Lizzie Wiltgen. Both the high school team and the Manz team chose to attend the World Finals at Michigan State University. Funds are currently being raised for both those teams.

Getting to Know Us—A Staff Snapshot

Our board president, Rich Spindler, has been involved in public education for many years. Before running for school board, he was a member of the district's Parent Advisory Council and a member of the Demographic Trends and Facilities Committee. Spindler says, "I enjoyed discussing educational and policy issues which caused me to think I'd be interested in serving on the Board. In addition, I have a daughter in the schools and so also have an interest from that perspective. Considering all of the educational changes statewide and nationally, I felt an obligation to be more involved and to advocate for public education."

Many community members may wonder just what is involved in being a member of the ECASD school board. Spindler, now beginning his third year serving on the board, says it consists of a lot of emails and other communication. He communicates at least several times a week with our superintendent, Dr. Mary Ann Hardebeck, on planning future board meetings and discussing how to move forward with initiatives before the board. Spindler also receives communication from constituents with complaints, suggestions or compliments, which he also discusses with or passes on to the superintendent to address and respond. He shares information from the Wisconsin Association of School Boards on training and other opportunities with the entire school board and he attends many trainings himself. He also is a strong advocate for our schools and public education with both local and state legislators and members of the media.

About his role, he says, "Sometimes the hardest part is finding a way for all parties involved to empathize while not necessarily agreeing with others' views while encouraging everyone to react with greater understanding to those differences and then finding a way to move forward on common ground. Our



two biggest challenges right now are finding enough money in the budget to fund the programs our students require and sustaining a rewarding environment for our employees.”

Spindler says it’s important for the community to understand that the board doesn’t operate or run the district or our schools. He says, “That is why we hire a superintendent and other staff. Besides hiring and overseeing a superintendent, the board sets policy, approves the annual budget and provides a strategic direction that is in alignment with community values and educational research. It’s also important to understand the extreme budgetary challenges our district and most districts in our state face. We’ve been financially squeezed continually for many years, yet we are asked to do more and we have few options left. Our staff do an incredible job considering the multiple pressures placed on public education now.”

His favorite part of the job? “That’s easy. Being in the schools at events or in the classroom interacting with staff and the kids!” he says. He also mentions a phone call he received during his first month as board president. A parent called and said, “I need to talk to you.” Spindler’s reaction was, “Uh-oh.” Then the parent went on to pay an incredible compliment to a special education teacher who had gone over and above her job in helping his child. Says Spindler, “It made me so proud of our employees and our district. That encapsulates who we are and what the ECASD is about!”

Foundation Focus: Market Family Education Endowment Fund Supports DeLong Pilot Program



DeLong Middle School teachers, Janel Seaholm and Michele Brettingen, have a dream fitness program in mind. They pitched their idea to the Eau Claire Public Schools Foundation and the Recreation and Fitness (RAFT) pilot program has been up and running for three weeks thanks to a grant from the Market Family Education Endowment. Twenty girls are enrolled and on the move four days per week after school with *Mix it up Mondays*, *Tough it out Tuesdays*, *Thrilling Thursdays* and *Food & Fun Fridays*.



In the first three weeks the girls have been hiking, biking, using DeLong climbing equipment and playing fitness games while they learn about lifetime fitness and healthy choices in the kitchen at home and at school. They are seeking funds for a yearlong program and hope to expand it to be available at all three middle schools. ECPSF is

also working with other funding sources to find additional support for this great program. For information about grants and funded projects or to make a gift to the school or program of your choice please visit our [website](#) and like us on [Facebook](#).