

C E L E B R A T I N G S T U D E N T - A T H L E T E S U C C E S S

SPRING 2024

CARDINAL CONNECTIONS
A PUBLICATION OF THE PRESCOTT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Highlights
of this
Edition

SCHOOL DISTRICT FINANCE & REFERENDUM IMPACT

Mike Matzek, Prescott School Board President

Greetings fellow community members. With the culmination of the 2023-24 school year, the anticipation of hot summer weather, green lawns, and trips to the lake will soon be a reality for many of us. Personally, it will be a season of graduation parties, especially with my oldest son graduating from PHS this year. A word of advice to younger district families - enjoy these years with your kids. Spend as much time and energy with them as you possibly can because it passes by so incredibly fast!

On a more serious note, I want to share with you the state of where the district is at in terms of finances, programming, and services. As you know, the board approved a ballot question to ask the community for \$1.2 million of additional funding that was intended to bridge the gap between our fairly-flat operational expenses and the increasing revenue shortfall from the state. On April 2nd, this referendum question failed by 12 votes, a margin of less than 0.3%. As each of us tries to internally digest and analyze this razor-thin outcome, the school board and admin team have been working tirelessly to make reductions needed in order to reach a balanced budget for the start of the upcoming school year. This includes cuts across the entire organization that will impact all three pillars of the district: Academics, Athletics and the Arts. The school board has approved the following reductions to date:

- **Reduced one section per grade for K through 5, increasing our class sizes by roughly 5 to 6 kids per section.** Although every item on this list is significantly important, the hit here will undoubtedly impact the classroom environment.
- **Eliminated in-town busing within the 2-mile school radius.** Busing within this radius is not required by law and does not impact our core ability to provide an education, but it does pose a safety concern for young students who will now be walking to and from school.
- **Reduced middle school choir, gifted and talented, and 6-12 math interventionist** resulting in fewer programming opportunities and services for students.

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BOARD PRESIDENT UPDATE

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2024 HONOR STUDENTS

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FOR THE LOVE OF READING

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LECTURES COME TO LIFE!

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**RECOGNITION OF PSD
EMPLOYEES & RETIREES**

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2024-25 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

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Photography Credit: Faun Stanton



Prescott High School

CLASS OF 2024 LAUDE RECIPIENTS

Summa Cum Laude



ALAYNA ALLSOP



STELLA ANGER



AVA FRANCO



ANIKA FREDERICKS



OKSANA HAAS



MACKENZIE HEGLAND



CULLEN HUPPERT



NINA JONES



SOPHIA MURPHY



ABIGAIL OVERLAND



AVERY PATTRIDGE



MEGAN RICHTER



SOPHIA RIPLEY



GRACE RYAN



TESSA SCHMIDT



BRECKIN SCHOMMER



KIANNA SEVERSON



CLINTON SIZEMORE



ELISA STERUD



NOLAN THOMLEY



FAITH VANHOLBECK



ALESSANDRA WARP



Prescott High School implemented the Laude System in 2022 to promote academic exploration and recognize students for their proficiency levels in coursework. This system utilizes a point-based approach that considers both advanced course achievements and cumulative GPA to determine a student's score and laude level at graduation:

SUMMA CUM LAUDE - With Highest Distinction

MAGNA CUM LAUDE - With Great Distinction

CUM LAUDE - With Distinction

The Laude System encourages students to tackle challenging coursework during their high school careers and prepare for higher education.

Magna Cum Laude



Students left to right: Gavin Thoen, Tyler Marko, Ava Budworth, Cecelia Meier and Bridget Van Loon.

Cum Laude



Students left to right: Lila Posthuma, Taylor Holub, Marissa Shelstad and Bayla Langer.



PSD'S LIBRARY MEDIA TEAM FOSTERS A PASSION FOR THE PAGES

For those of us who recall the 1970s-80s “Reading is Fundamental” campaign, a trip to the school library may have looked something like this: sit quietly while the librarian read a storybook, learn facts about the Dewey Decimal System, practice returning a book to its proper place, then peruse bookshelves to check out your “find” by signing your name to a card and turning it in.

The student library experience forty-plus years later differs greatly. With technology as the quickest means to attain information, the roles and responsibilities of our Library Media Specialists Erica Keezer (K-5) and Joan Simon (6-12) have expanded exponentially.

Ms. Keezer starts keyboarding with the kindergarten classes and students learn word processing in 2nd grade. She shared, “The level of technological expertise that we expect of today’s students has rapidly increased.” Students also receive instruction on digital literacy and discerning credible sources of information.

Along with skills development, technology has provided students access to a multitude of materials: eBooks, audiobooks, databases, digital content and more.

Our Library Media Specialists, Teacher-Librarian Donalee Meyer, and classroom teachers seek out and facilitate opportunities to improve reading skills and foster a love of reading for enjoyment. Elementary parents have attended Family Read Together events and local authors have visited to explain their writing process to students and share their works. For many years, students at the elementary level completed a reading challenge outside of the school day. They read over 500,000 minutes during the challenge’s most successful year!

Prescott Intermediate School took part in the One School, One Book program last fall by reading the book *Rump*. The months-long project of activities and contests culminated with an exciting author visit and luncheon for 12 lucky students. Afton Apples has graciously donated funds to support this program again in the fall of 2024.



Students and One School, One Book selection, *Rump*

At the middle school, students are encouraged to join Battle of the Books. Participants have a list of required titles to read and keep a summary of to access for the “battle.” In competition, student teams earn points by answering questions about the books and play several “rounds” against different teams. At the end, points are totaled and the two teams battle for the win. Students then have the opportunity to compete in the State Battle.

Donalee Meyer coordinates the Accelerated Reader Program at the middle school. The objective of AR is to enhance reading proficiency for all skill levels. “AR empowers students who select their own reading materials and the genre, topic, length and style that interests them,” said Mrs. Meyer. Students earn AR points by reading and then taking quizzes which have point values assigned based off a book’s level and word count. There is a celebration at the end of the school year for students in the 100 Point Club. Some accomplish this the first quarter and others by the fourth quarter. “It’s a goal that many students are determined to do, motivated to accomplish, and proud to achieve.”

Under the supervision of Libby Syverson, PHS students use the library for a variety of purposes: distance learning, independent study and getting assistance with various Chromebook issues.

“Books are simply portable magic.”

A Battle of the Books team is ready for action!

Students can also join Book Club, Guys Read Club or the Writer’s Block which offers an opportunity for students to write creatively. “The best way to foster a love a reading is by ensuring that students have access to a wide variety of books. Student choice is the key.” stated Mrs. Simon.

Media Specialists predict the future of libraries:

Mrs. Simon: “Print and digital books will exist side by side - kind of like an escalator and a flight of stairs.”

Ms. Keezer: “Physical books will exist for at least one more generation, but then students who are accustomed to reading eBooks will make them obsolete. I hope that it does not happen in my lifetime!”

Guys Read Book Club





LIVING LECTURES

MODELING HISTORY'S STRONG CONNECTION TO CULTURE

Passing by Room G7 on any given American History lecture day, you may witness an unexpected historical figure delivering the lesson. Students' eyes and ears are engaged while Babe Ruth, a Salem Witch, King or a Southern Belle recounts the experiences and significant events of their respective time periods.

Prescott Middle School's 8th Grade teacher, Aria DeWuske, has taught in the district for six years and was inspired to "dress the part" during her WWII unit to make lectures more relevant for students. She saw her poster of Rosie the Riveter (an icon who symbolizing women's work in factories and shipyards during WWII) and decided to shock the kids the next week and dress like her. She shared, "I was a bit unnerved— but it was a hit!"

She continued to refine her teaching skills the following year and dressed-up occasionally. "When COVID hit, schools went to virtual teaching from March-June, an extremely difficult period to teach in, so there were no living lectures," she said.

Returning in the fall proved disheartening for DeWuske due to no assemblies, no eating in the lunchroom, no fieldtrips nor dances. Deflated, she remembered Rosie's perseverance, "I can dress in a mask, wear outlandish makeup and hairdos." She visited area Goodwill stores, stocked up and wore a costume each week of the 2020-21 academic year!

A. ROSIE THE RIVETER - WWII UNIT

B. A WIDOW - CIVIL WAR UNIT

C. ANNIE OAKLEY - WILD WEST UNIT

DeWuske attended Bethel University for her dual teaching licensure in K-12 Art and 5-12 Social Studies, studied abroad and taught English to students in Tripoli. She started coordinating outfits to the current theme as a 7th Grade Art teacher in Cottage Grove, prior to her position at PSD, "Dressing up is like a time machine for students. It creates a curious, energetic vibe, improves classroom behavior and is a great conversation starter," she commented.

In addition to Social Studies, she teaches an 8th grade careers class in which students begin learn about basic economics and personal finance. The course culminates with resume and cover letter writing, job interviews and the "Real Game" simulation. In the latter, students envision life in the future and mimic adult milestones: buying a car and house, planning a dream vacation, surviving a natural disaster and more. The end goal of the 'Game' is to manage their finances in order to retire with \$100,000.

DeWuske is currently completing a Master of Arts in Differentiated Instruction from Concordia University, Saint Paul. Students will undoubtedly reap the benefits of new and innovative teaching strategies that she has acquired from the program.

- A.** BABE RUTH - ROARING 20s UNIT
- B.** A DICTATOR - WWII UNIT
- C.** KING GEORGE III - AMERICAN REVOLUTION UNIT
- D.** A COMBAT NURSE - WWI UNIT
- E.** SOLDIER IN GAS MASK - WWI UNIT





CELEBRATING EMPLOYEE MILESTONES

At the close of each school year, Prescott School District takes time to recognize and celebrate the contributions of our retirees and congratulate employees for their milestone years of service. We thank you for your dedication to improving the lives of the many learners you have impacted over the years and collective efforts to help achieve PSD’s mission to prepare lifelong learners for future success by engaging students, staff, families and the community.

OUR RETIREES	35 YEARS <i>of SERVICE</i>	30 YEARS <i>of SERVICE</i>	25 YEARS <i>of SERVICE</i>	5 YEARS <i>of SERVICE</i>
JAY BARTSCH (32 YEARS) BARB BOWEN (24 YEARS) SUE GERDES (3 YEARS) PAMELA OLSON (28 YEARS) LORI PEDRETTI (34 YEARS) TIM RUNDQUIST (29 YEARS) LUANN SABELKO (23 YEARS)	JEFFREY RYAN	DONALEE MEYER	HELEN RAEBEL	ANDRE MARSHALL AVERY POTHOFF JULIE SYVERSON CHERYL VANLOON DANIEL BRUNKHORST GEOFFREY SNYDER JENNIFER LANGER KIMBERLY BENJAMIN KYLEE ARMBRUST MATTHEW LEIFELD MEGAN WILLIAMSON NICOLE JODARSKI SARAH SCORE SHANA CLAUSON SUZANNE LINDER TODD TILSON VANESSA MAIONE
	20 YEARS <i>of SERVICE</i>	15 YEARS <i>of SERVICE</i>	10 YEARS <i>of SERVICE</i>	
	COREY MORNING MIKE HOIKKA MICHAEL KOSMALSKI	AARON MARSHALL	MATTHEW MARKO	

Market & Johnson has been on site since early May to implement the final items from the 2022 Bond Referendum. Major projects consist of:

- New roofs at Malone Elementary and the Middle School
- Reconfiguring the Main Office to the front of Malone Elementary
- Updating/replacing HVAC
- Replacing boilers and unit ventilators
- Exterior brick work at the Middle School, and track replacement at the Middle School Varsity site.



**We will communicate updates regarding building and facility inaccessibility in a timely manner.

2024-2025

Approved Academic Calendar

* August 27-29 - R2L - Ramp Up to School

September

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

October

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

November

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

December

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

January

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

February

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

March

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

April

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

May

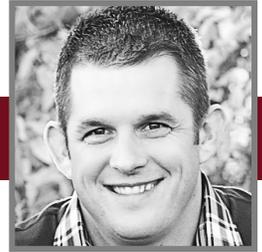
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

June

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

- First/Last Day of School
- No School Students (PD Day Staff)
- No School Students & Staff

From School Board President, Mike Matzek



- **Eliminated C-team athletic contests.** This means larger teams and fewer competitive games for our younger athletes
- **Eliminated food service support for St. Joseph's school.** We value our relationship with St. Joe's. They have been a tremendous partner with us in providing educational opportunities for students.
- **Theater performance budgets will be reduced like all programs and departments.** This will decrease the staffing able to assist and run plays and musicals.

**The total amount eliminated is roughly \$1.85 million, approximately 10% of our operational budget.

Why did we have to cut more than \$1.2 million? As we were preparing for the April 2nd referendum, we identified \$650K to cut that would help bridge the state funding gap so we would not have to ask the community for more than we needed. This was an effort to keep the tax impact at a more acceptable level, and message to the community that we are trying to be as fiscally responsible as possible with your tax dollars.

Where does PSD go from here? Now that we project a balanced budget, our admin team can start preparing for what programming and services look like this fall. This effort takes time and preparation by all administrators and staff in order to provide a much different-looking, yet quality education to our students who deserve nothing less but the best:

- #1 in the Middle Border for Academics
- Top 10% Academics in the state
- Top 15% in Student Growth in the state

The school board will also examine how the reductions impact our ability to achieve these high expectations. We will carefully consider new options, be mindful and respectful of the outcome on April 2nd, and make decisions on which areas need additional funding to bring back. Our work here is just beginning.

I would like to thank the Community of Prescott for sharing their feedback with us throughout this entire process. As a board and administration team, we are constantly refining our strategy to deliver a top-tier education with the challenge of managing an extremely tight budget from a lack of public school funding from WI legislators. We will do our best to attain the right balance. I wish you all a happy and enjoyable summer, as my fellow board members and I continue to listen, discuss, and make prudent decisions on behalf of the community we value and represent.