District marks 18-19 with amazing accomplishments

The 2018-19 school year was punctuated with major successes including: the passage of a $316 million bond, positively affecting every District facility; earning District-wide AdvancED re-accreditation with the receipt of an overwhelming positive report, and addressing the social-emotional needs of children by launching a Therapy Dog Program.

The District Leadership Team, staff members and parents were integrally involved in these amazing achievements that will buoy the organization for years to come. The WLCSAD administrators defined the District’s mantra of Every Child, Every Day for our staff, parents and community. Every Day is our intentional commitment to creating a safe and inclusive culture and community where we: prioritize instruction, foster meaningful relationships, value and empower each learner, and create growth opportunities for all. Other notable highlights for the 2018-19 school year includes:

• Welcoming Champ, the District’s first Therapy Dog who works at Guest Elementary School.
• Honoring cancer survivors and victims, and community veterans at wonderful Pink Out and Salute the Troops events.
• Unveiling the newly built Wall of Fame and recognizing Kirsten Haglund, WL Western graduate and 2008 Miss America, and Niles Freeland, former coach and teacher.
• Praising Laura Doran, Loon Lake Elementary teacher, for saving a choking student in a heroic instinctual action.
• Continuing a tradition of generous giving at every school supporting many local, national and global organizations.
• Appointed Stephanie Kapan to the Board of Education, thanked Kathy Lyall for her 11-years of Board service, and welcomed several new administrators and staff members.
• Congratulated Dr. Sheryl Kennedy, former Geisler Middle School principal, on being elected to the Michigan House of Representatives.
• Congratulated three National Merit semifinalists, Geethika Bodanapu and Megan Coden, WL Central, and Maureen Lippitt, WL Northern.
• Thanked several Eagle Scouts for their selfless service to the community, especially Kyle Wilkinson, WL Northern, who designed, built, and installed three Little Free Food Pantries which are free standing cabinets so people can take or donate food at Guest, Walled Lake, and Wixom Elementary Schools.
• Commended the District’s long standing German exchange programs at our high schools, and several international trips were offered for high school students.

Our students, staff, parents and community earned and received too many awards and accolades to mention them all in this Annual Report. We encourage you to review all the information on the District website, www.wlcsd.org.

We are forever grateful for our supportive community.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Gutman
Superintendent of Schools
Walled Lake Consolidated School District (WLCS) earns AdvancED Accreditation

WLCS has been accredited by the AdvancED Engagement Review Quality Assurance Team. Some staff from Commerce, Guest, Meadowbrook and Oakley Park Elementary Schools, Walnut Creek Middle School and Central and Western High Schools hosted the AdvancED team. Several other staff, Board members, community members and parents spent time with the evaluators answering questions about the educational system and processes the District follows to ensure it is continually improving towards providing the best education for our students.

AdvancED is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that conducts rigorous on-site reviews of a variety of educational institutions and systems to ensure that all learners realize their full potential. Mark Hess, executive manager of Instruction, Technology and Data Analysis with WLCSD, said, “The goal of AdvancED is to validate a District’s commitment to continuous improvement. To be named an accredited district, we had to demonstrate adherence to a number of performance standards and quality assurance measures.”

The AdvancED team consisted of educators from Michigan, Indiana, West Virginia and Florida. The lead evaluator, Vicki DeMao, Ph.D., from Indiana, said: “Walled Lake Schools should maintain the fantastic, positive school cultures that support ‘Every Child, Every Day,’ which result in a clear sense of pride among all stakeholders.”

District emphasizes academic rigor for students

Walled Lake Schools curriculum provides students with learning experiences based on a rigorous foundation of skills, knowledge and understanding in all areas of language arts (reading, writing, speaking, listening and literature), mathematics, science, social studies, science, health, physical education, visual arts, vocal and instrumental music, technology, career and technical education and world languages. The District’s mission statement promises all students the opportunity to learn to their maximum potential and realize their full potential.

How students are assigned to the schools

In addition to the regular K-12 program, the Walled Lake Consolidated School District provides educational alternatives and opportunities for students as well as meeting special education needs. We also offer more than 20 college-level Advanced Placement (AP) courses within the high school curriculum and have numerous students from all three high schools earn college credit through our post-secondary program. In addition, Walled Lake Western High School is an authorized International Baccalaureate World School offering the Diploma Programme for 11th and 12th-grade students. IB World Schools share a common philosophy - a commitment to improve the teaching and learning of a diverse community of students by delivering a challenging, high-quality program of international education. During the 2017-2018 school year, 205 11th and 12th grade students were enrolled in one or more of the 23 International Baccalaureate subjects offered at Walled Lake Western for a total of 953 enrollments. Twelve IB Diploma Candidates graduated in 2018, seven of whom earned a full IB diploma.

Graduation rate reported

Walled Lake Schools’ 2017-18 graduation rate, the most current available, is 92.17%. The 2016-17 graduation rate was 92.17%. The Michigan Department of Education has developed a new method for calculating the graduation rate using a four-year cohort formula. This system tracks students from the year they enter ninth grade until they graduate.

Walled Lake Central’s 2017-18 graduation rate was 93.46%.

Walled Lake Northern’s 2017-18 graduation rate was 98.34%.

Walled Lake Western’s 2017-18 graduation rate was 93.40%.

Community approves the largest bond in WLCS history

The Walled Lake Schools community supported and approved the 2019 Building, Infrastructure, and Equity Bond. The unofficial results were 7,219 Yes; and 3,220 No votes with 10,439 residents voting and 92.17% approved.

“This bond translates to an improved, upgraded and competitive advantage for Walled Lake Schools’ students and community. The fact that the community overwhelmingly supported it, 2-1, of one largest bonds in the state is a clear indication that the Walled Lake Schools residents and school community believe in our mission and want to invest in buildings that will support learning for our children for many years to come,” Kenneth Gutman, superintendent, said.

“I want to thank Tim Lynch and Jenn Ludwig and the entire Citizens Committee who demonstrated an unwavering commitment and passion for this effort. They communicated their support in a professional manner throughout the election. Now, we move forward, begin planning the various phases of the effort, and collect additional collaborative ideas for our projects.”

The WLCSD administration and Board of Education began work on this major bond with these significant activities taking place in the 2018-19 school year:

• At the May 16, 2019 Board of Education meeting, the Board approved both the architectural company, TMP Architecture, Inc., Bloomsfield Hills, Mich., and construction management company, George W. Auch Company of Pontiac, Mich.

• As of June 13, 2019, the Board of Education announced the successful sale of its 2019 School Building and Site Bonds in the amount of $54,420,000 as authorized by the voters of the School District on May 7, 2019. The 2019 School Building and Site Bonds, representing the first series of bonds pursuant to such voter authorization. The rating agency cited the School District’s large and growing tax base with above average resident income levels and solid management that has demonstrated willingness to make expenditure reductions in their rationale for rating of the School District at this level. With this first bond sale, Walled Lake Schools is poised to begin the planning for the bond projects to improve our schools for our community. I thank Teri Les, assistant superintendent of Business Services for her work with our financial experts to ensure this first bond sale went smoothly,” Kenneth Gutman, superintendent said.

• In June of 2019, TMP Architecture conducted planning meetings with the Walled Lake Elementary School and Walled Lake Western High School communities to begin the first phases of the planning process.

We are committed to keeping our community apprised of our progress as we rebuild Dublin Elementary School, significantly renovate Walled Lake Western High School, build an Early Childhood Center to attract and retain our youngest learners, and make significant changes in each of our buildings.

Guest El. welcomes Champ, the District’s first therapy dog

After several months of extensive training, Champ the therapy dog, a brown Labrador Retriever, arrived at Guest Elementary School in March of 2019. Students, staff, and community members conducted a welcome and ribbon cutting ceremony and Champ wore a vest which displays her business sponsors, including a local vet, a pet food store, and groemer.

There are no additional costs incurred to the District for the care of Champ, with the exception of an insurance rider that the school District obtained.

Champ provides physical, social, cognitive, emotional and environmental support for students. “It has been said that dogs motivate us to play, be affectionate, seek adventure, and be loyal. In the time we have had Champ, she inspires us to be all of these things and so much more!” Michelle Fiebke-Lang, Guest principal, said.

Diesel Elementary School will be completely rebuilt on the same property.

Dublin Elementary School will be significantly renovated.

2018-19 Enrollment

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Mission Statement

The mission of Walled Lake Schools, in partnership with parents and community, is to become the best educational system in America so all students demonstrate they are caring, responsible and knowledgeable citizens.

Early Childhood Center will attract and retain our youngest learners.

How students are assigned to the schools

Students are assigned to buildings by specific street address and geographical areas as predetermined by the administration and Board of Education.

2019 All State high school band members.

Monica House, Guest El. teacher, initiated the therapy dog program. Pictured with Michelle Fiebke-Lang, Guest E. principal and Kenneth Gutman, WLCSD superintendent.