



**WAUWATOSA** SCHOOL DISTRICT  
• Your Educational Community •

# **Professional Learning Communities**

School Collaboration Wednesday Reports  
September/October 2008



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The Wauwatosa School District Professional Learning Community Report is published by the Communication Office. Additional copies of this report can be downloaded from the district's website at [www.wauwatosaschools.org](http://www.wauwatosaschools.org). Comments and suggestions regarding this report can be directed to:

Communication Office  
12121 W. North Ave.  
Wauwatosa, WI 53226  
(414) 773-1020

# School Directory

The Wauwatosa School District has a neighborhood school system with nine elementary, two middle and two high schools. The district also operates a charter school, the Tosa School of Health Science & Technology. In addition, the district operates at various facilities at the Milwaukee County Medical Complex and adjacent county institutions.

<b>East High School</b> Nick Hughes, Principal	7500 Milwaukee Ave., 53213	(414) 773-2000
<b>Eisenhower Elementary</b> Kristin Bowers, Principal	11600 W. Center St., 53222	(414) 773-1100
<b>Jefferson Elementary</b> Tom Seidl, Principal	6927 Maple Terr., 53213	(414) 773-1200
<b>Lincoln Elementary</b> Dean Nemoir, Principal	1741 Wauwatosa Ave., 53213	(414) 773-1300
<b>Longfellow Middle School</b> Jason Galien, Principal	7600 W. North Ave., 53213	(414) 773-2400
<b>Madison Elementary</b> Lori Lester, Principal	9925 W. Glendale, 53225	(414) 773-1400
<b>McKinley Elementary</b> Mark Carter, Principal	2435 N. 89th St., 53226	(414) 773-1500
<b>Plank Road Programs</b> Dave Boxill, Administrator	9501 Watertown Plank Rd., 53226	(414) 257-7128
<b>Roosevelt Elementary</b> Frank Calarco, Principal	2535 N. 73rd St., 53213	(414) 773-1600
<b>Tosa School of Health Science &amp; Technology</b> Jenny Keats, Principal	1060 Glenview Ave., 53213	(414) 773-1900
<b>Underwood Elementary</b> Michael Leach, Principal	11132 W. Potter Rd., 53226	(414) 773-1700
<b>Washington Elementary</b> Anthony Bonds, Principal	2166 N. 68th St., 53213	(414) 773-1800
<b>West High School</b> Patricia Luebke, Principal	11400 W. Center St., 53222	(414) 773-3000
<b>Whitman Middle School</b> Jeff Keranen, Principal	11100 W. Center St., 53222	(414) 773-2600
<b>Wilson Elementary</b> Jenny Keats, Principal	1060 Glenview Ave., 53213	(414) 773-1900



## Superintendent's Office

Dear Wauwatosa Families and Community Members,

This school year is off to a fantastic start. There is a lot of work taking place throughout the district that is geared toward improving student achievement. From implementation of initiatives outlined in the district's Long Range Plan to the completion of a curriculum audit, the district continues to take the steps necessary to give students the tools necessary to reach their goals. In addition to the work surrounding the Long Range Plan and the curriculum audit, teachers in the district have been forming Professional Learning Communities and taking advantage of scheduled collaboration time on Wednesdays.

Collaboration time is a structured time for teachers to gather, review student achievement data, create action plans and evaluate the effectiveness of their instruction. Teachers throughout the district have been able to use this collaboration time to form professional learning communities that are focusing on continued improvement of student achievement. This is exciting because collaboration time is the best professional development for our staff. Research has shown that professional development time is the single best way to improve student achievement.

To help keep you up-to-date on what is happening in the Professional Learning Communities at each school, principals have been asked to provide regular reports. The reports are meant to provide you with a snapshot of some of the work being done by staff members as they utilize the collaboration time on Wednesdays.

I hope you will take a moment to read through these reports. Of course, if you have any questions, comments or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. And be sure to watch the district's website for continued updates on collaboration time.

Thank you for your continued support of the Wauwatosa School District.

Sincerely,

Dr. Phillip Ertl  
Superintendent

# High Schools

## **East High School**

**Nick Hughes, Principal**

The Wednesday collaboration meetings at East High School have been focused on establishing the building goal in reference to improving reading performance for students across all curricular areas. Each collaborative team has developed its individual goal to help support and address the desired academic improvement of the building goal. The teams have used the information from this fall's MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) testing to get a better understanding of how reading can be incorporated into all curricular areas. Prior data from the WKCE, PLAN and ACT tests have also been analyzed to help establish the strength and weakness patterns for reading in the school performance history. District and outside reading specialists are assisting the teams by providing additional reading strategies and resources to various departments.

Individual department teams are actively reviewing and updating the learning targets for specific classes. This work has generated many important discussions about the curriculum, lesson pacing and the need for common assessments to measure student learning. Some departments have started to meet with the staff at West High School to coordinate the curriculum across the district. Staff members continue to share lessons and strategies that have been effective for them with colleagues as part of the focus on improving the learning of all students.

## **West High School**

**Patricia Luebke, Principal**

West High School departments have been using their meeting times on Wednesdays in a variety of ways. Each department is reviewing and developing the standards and benchmarks for each course taught in the department. As expected, different departments are at different stages in the process, but all are working from the framework of the following questions:

- What do we want our students to know?
- How will we know when they have learned it?
- What will we do if they have not learned it?
- What do we do if they've already learned what we want them to know?

Departmental collaborative teams are using these guiding questions to establish targets and benchmarks for their courses, develop and analyze common assessments that will help inform instructional practices, and plan for interventions and instructional strategies to improve student learning. For example, the English department is working on standards and benchmarks for all courses, common assessments for some course standards and strategies for improving student reading performance across the English curriculum. The world languages department is working on the use of technology as an instructional strategy across their courses, and the physical education department is working on revamping the way their courses are organized to better meet student needs. All departments have been introduced to the use of MAPS data as part of their analysis of student progress and are using this information to better understand their students as learners.

## Middle Schools

### **Longfellow Middle School** **Jason Galien, Principal**

Since opening of the 2008-2009 school year, Wednesdays have had a new meaning for staff and students alike. Last year, the Board of Education and the Wauwatosa Education Association agreed to make a commitment to provide schools more time to collaborate. A cornerstone of PLC (professional learning communities) is time for collaboration. Each week, teachers at Longfellow Middle School work in vertical teams to develop and refine course curriculum. Vertical teams composed of sixth, seventh, and eighth grade teachers who teach the same subject spend time answering the question, “What do we want students to learn or be able to do?”

With increased collaboration time, teachers have the opportunity to design course curriculum that is rigorous, relevant and designed to increase student learning. Teachers began the year doing a curriculum inventory. The core subjects of math, science, social studies and communicative arts are all off to a good start. Teachers are committed to designing and improving course curriculum so that our students enter high school well prepared. Moreover, today’s students arrive to school with more background knowledge than ever before. As a result, vertical team members must also ensure their curriculum is connected and focused on developing students’ skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The staff and administration of Longfellow Middle School recognize that along with increased time to collaborate comes increased accountability. Through effective two-way communication, we are working together as a unit focused on continuous improvement. We are working very hard to increase student performance on both local and statewide assessments. We believe our work in collaborative teams on Wauwatosa Wednesdays will help move our district forward in this endeavor.

### **Whitman Middle School** **Jeff Keranen, Principal**

At Whitman Middle School we have used Wauwatosa Wednesdays to learn the tenants of successful professional learning communities. As a building we have taken the first step necessary in creating a PLC (Professional Learning Community). Our grade levels are looking at what do we as a building want our students to know and acquire as a result of their experience at Whitman Middle School. We want all our professional staff to understand our standards and bench marks related to all of our subject areas. In order for this to happen our grade levels and allied arts teachers have been examining our curriculum, state standards, and having professional discussions related to the standards we wish to teach to.

In addition to establishing standards our building has been learning and using MAPS testing to gather data to aide in the development of instructional strategies. As a building we are learning what this data tells us related to student progress. From this data we can better meet the needs of our students.

Finally, our building has a reading goal. Our student learning committee has used early release to work on building-wide strategies to enhance all of our students reading ability. Our professional staff has valued the time available to collaborate and develop the necessary tenants to ensure the success of PLC's.

# Elementary Schools

## **Eisenhower Elementary** **Kristin Bowers, Principal**

Grade level collaborative developed Norms, Commitments, Team Goals, and Individual Goals. Staff completed Essential elements of PLC reality and read an article on Formative Assessments. Specialists met with grade level teams as well as in collaborative teams within their specialty. Staff participated in MAPS training as to how to access data and use data when creating SMART Goals. Karen Hartman, JK-5 Communicative Arts Content Team Leader, provided a discussion about Reading Interventions and the Communicative Arts Curriculum/Alignment process. Selected staff attended various district trainings in the area of Special Education and Reading Intervention programs.

Collaborative teams at Eisenhower have been setting norms and goals and analyzing data. They have been studying formative assessments and trained on how to access and use MAP data to create goals. They have also participated in the development and revision of our JK-5 Communicative Arts standards and been trained in using the new reading interventions.

Staff also used this time to evaluate current teaching practices, determined where support in reading and math will occur and set up flexible groups in the area of reading and math.

## **Jefferson Elementary** **Tom Seidl, Principal**

The implementation of early release Wednesdays by the School Board has been invaluable time for the staff at Jefferson School.

The district focus/goal this year is on reading, and we have been meeting as PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) to look at the standards and benchmarks in communicative arts. We have also looked at data from last year's WKCE and this year's MAP tests to target student needs. The expansion of reading interventions within the district has been of great benefit to many students at Jefferson, offering multiple options for children at most grade levels. Giving teachers extra time to work specifically on strategies to improve student learning is and will continue to make a difference in learning for students at Jefferson.

## **Lincoln Elementary** **Dean Nemoir, Principal**

This year's early release Wednesdays has been time well spent by the staff at Lincoln. The districts goal for this year is on reading, and we have been meeting as a staff and in PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) to create our school goals and to look at the standards and benchmarks in communicative arts. To help with our reading, we learned how to do a better "Read Aloud" with our classes. All PLCs have created a goal related to our school goals and staff is focusing on them weekly. We have also looked at data from MAP tests and WKCE tests to help us identify individual student needs. Teachers have said that this time to focus on student achievement is going to make Lincoln even a better school than it already is.

**Madison Elementary**  
**Lori Lester, Principal**

As a staff, the Early Release time has allowed Madison School to work in our Professional Learning Communities to grow professionally and build a strong collaborative work culture. This time has been beneficial as we focus on improving our instruction by sharing best practices and most importantly, our goal of improving student learning.

After our teams were established and group norms created, we began the work of determining our school goals based on the triangulation of data from MAP scores, WKCE and teacher assessments. Once our school goals were complete, each team set their goals for student learning. We have had the opportunity to review our MAP scores and collaboratively plan prescriptive lessons to improve learning for all children. In the area of reading, we reviewed best practices for shared reading and implemented strategies to achieve the goals set by each team for our students. In the area of math, some teams have had the opportunity to go in depth in the EDM series to review checking progress, to score constructed response collaboratively and to create plans for co-teaching. Some teams have begun the task of creating common assessments for their grade levels. This will allow teams of teachers to collaboratively score student work, look for strengths and weaknesses in the learning and to make the appropriate adjustments in the curriculum, instruction, unit or lesson. Early Release time has been great for our team because we have time to be reflective about our teaching and make improvements for student learning.

**McKinley Elementary**  
**Mark Carter, Principal**

The staff at McKinley Elementary School has found the collaboration time on Wednesday afternoons to be invaluable as it gives us a chance to focus and organize all of our efforts on student achievement. Our collaboration time has been used to:

- Develop a building goal that pertains to improving student literacy.
- Develop grade level SMART goals that will help McKinley meet its building goal.
- Train teachers how to use the MAP assessment to obtain and analyze data.
- Plan for student academic interventions.
- Inservice teachers on best practices in reading instruction.
- Have teachers collaborate and develop common curricular expectations and develop common formative assessments.
- Provide inservice on what teachers do in PLC's (analyze data, study standards, develop common assessments, select instructional strategies, implement their plan, analyze student work, adjust instruction to meet needs of individual students).

At McKinley our collaboration time will be used to continue to focus on establishing benchmarks, clarifying essential learning outcomes, developing common assessments, analyzing data and planning for instructional strategies and interventions that meet the needs of all of our students.

**Roosevelt Elementary**  
**Frank Calarco, Principal**

Roosevelt has been getting a lot of mileage out of its collaborative meeting time on Wednesdays this year. Here is a summary of what has taken place so far:

- Grade level teams along with specialists developed team norms. This process really enhances the effectiveness of team meetings. Teachers also created blocked Communicative Arts and Intervention/Extension times to meet the needs of all learners. Teachers then read the article “The Rest of the Story” about how to use Intervention/Extension time and did a jigsaw with their teams.
- Teacher received staff professional development on effective reading strategies by the school’s reading specialist.
- Teachers received professional development on the four essential questions of PLCs and classroom practices by the school’s learning coordinator.
- JK, SK and first grade teachers worked in collaborative teams to begin creating their SMART goals. They worked on answering the following questions: What assessments they would need to complete their SMART goal? When will all the teachers finish administering assessments? What additional data will they need to write their goal? What standards documents might they need to identify and write essential knowledge and skills?
- Second through fifth grade teachers were trained on how to use data from MAP tests to inform their classroom instruction. They then worked with their grade level teams to take a closer look at the MAP data.
- Elementary specialists met as teams to start to develop their norms and brainstorm ideas for their SMART goals.
- The elementary specialists across the district met as teams to identify essential knowledge and skills they believe are most important in their content area.
- SK and first grade teachers met at the district level to receive training on several different literacy strategies.
- JK teachers met at the district level to collaborate on things the district does to promote enrollment into the JK program.
- Special education and EEN staff received MAP training during this time.
- Second through fifth grade teachers worked on creating eight to ten standards in Communicative Arts that every student should know and be able to do. Afterwards, they worked with their grade level teams to mine assessment data in order to identify areas of weaknesses.
- JK-fifth grade teachers started writing their action plans and SMART goals.
- First through fifth grade teachers received training on Everyday Math online services. More specifically, learned about math games that students can work on at home and at school to increase their knowledge of mathematics.

**Underwood Elementary**  
**Mike Leach, Principal**

**September 2008**

Set the ground work for PLC’s through group norming, team building and working on what our Underwood Professional Learning Community needs to focus on this school year. We wrote building goals for reading and math. Each team has written action steps towards the Underwood School Goals in these areas.

*Continued on next page*

*Underwood Elementary, continued*

**October 2008**

Work in Professional Learning Communities was more collaborative for each team. Teams meet as a vertical team across grade levels (JK-SK, 1-2, and 3-5 grades, Special Education). Each team broke into grade level discussions and began to look at math assessments. Teachers began to examine pre- and post-test data in math. Grades 3-5 have used this data to begin the use of flexible groups based on need for their classroom instruction during their common blocks of teaching time. MAPS data has also been explored and we will continue to use the data to help inform instruction by individual student.

We have also started to plan for WKCE tests by organizing testing groups, reviewing, proctoring and targeting students for interventions. We are also working on an achievement initiative to build student confidence and motivation. Students have been setting goals and then taking action steps toward goal achievement.

**Washington Elementary  
Anthony Bonds, Principal**

We have efficiently used our staff development days (Early Release/PLC time) this year to methodically discuss questions like: What is our purpose (mission)? What are our hopes and dreams for students who attend Washington (vision)? How must we behave and what must we do in order to accomplish our hopes and dreams for students (values and beliefs)? Which academic areas should we focus our time and energy this year (goals)?

During the first few staff development days we laid the foundation that is required for the formation of effective collaborative grade level teams. Since then grade level teams have met to examine student data, select specific areas of improvement, discuss grade level and professional goals, develop common assessments and/or share strategies and ideas.

The formation of collaborative teams has greatly improved our ability to focus everyone's talents and energies on identified areas of improvement. For example, the fourth grade team used their time to determine the reading area/strand with the greatest standard deviation on the MAP assessment which was given to all second through fifth grade students. After they discussed and identified the area (analyzing informational text), they created four differentiated groups of students based on the students' MAP scores, called a RIT score. They then determined how and when they were going to meet with the groups and what instructional strategies they were going to use with students to improve achievement in this area.

**Wilson Elementary and Tosa School of Health Science & Technology  
Jenny Keats, Principal**

At Wilson and the Tosa School of Health Science and Technology, PLC time has been a valuable resource to improving student learning. Teachers are working with each other as grade level teams as well as cross grade level teams. One of the greatest benefits of this type of planning has been to differentiate and further individualize instruction for our students. This time has also been invaluable to teachers as they plan for the new expanded literacy blocks for students as well as implement the new Every Day Math curriculum. Our Learning Coordinator, Library Media Specialist, and reading specialist have been especially helpful in focusing our PLCs on goal-setting, interpreting data, planning instructional interventions and improving student literacy across grade levels. Our next meeting will involve sharing our goals and best practices with the entire faculty to continue to improve instruction for all students at Wilson and the Tosa School School of Health Science & Technology.

# MISSION STATEMENT

United with parents and community,  
the Wauwatosa School District  
delivers an outstanding education  
that equips and inspires our students to  
conquer their challenges now and in the future.



# BELIEF STATEMENTS

- We believe all students can learn and excel.
- We believe in respecting and promoting diversity.
- We believe in continuous improvement.
- We believe that positive relationships are a foundation of successful schools.
- We believe everyone has the right to emotional and physical safety.
- We believe there is an essential unity between the community and its school district.
- We believe in excellence.



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