Go Start the Bus  
Curt Bisarek | Superintendent

This was a chant that was often used by the student section of my high school. At the time our teams were pretty successful and the chant became pretty common. While I don’t think it was a great display of sportsmanship to yell “Go Start the Bus” to the opposing team as they were facing defeat, it has led to some good-natured joking between my wife and I. Her alma mater was often the recipient of this chant. I may remind her of that once in a while.

Most readers don’t want to relive my high school years, so the real purpose of this article is to talk about buses and the District’s transition to owning the buses.

Here’s the brief synopsis of the last year. In March of 2017, Bill and Dean Stenerson notified the District that after nearly 80 years of providing bus service they would be retiring from that. Therefore, the District needed to find another way to provide this essential function. The Stenerson’s had provided impeccable service for a long time and transitioning from them was going to be a challenging task no matter what happened.

Shortly after receiving the notification from Stenerson’s, we sent a Request for Proposals to 12 different transportation providers in Western Wisconsin. Only one provider expressed interest and we actually had an agreement on terms of a contract that would go for five years. However, for reasons beyond our control, that contractor had to withdraw their offer which left us with no bidders.

At this point, our concern became real. What if an outside party, knowing our situation, saw this as an opportunity to secure a contractor-friendly situation of no competition? With this possibility, the board of education voted to begin negotiations with Stenerson’s for the district to purchase their buses, inventory and bus garage. The district would now do something it hadn’t done in over 80 years.

Once an agreement was made on the purchase, we then posted an advertisement looking for a transportation director. After interviewing the two candidates, Bob Stekel was hired on July 17, 2017. In the weeks leading up to school he began learning routes, recruiting and training potential drivers, and getting acquainted with the responsibilities of the position.

To this point, the District is proud to have been able to take on this responsibility. Now that ownership is ours, we control costs moving forward. The Stenerson partnership was great for the District for many years and they were always respectful of the District’s financial situation. More than once they accepted a 0% increase in their contract knowing that funds were limited.

Getting students to and from school and other events is a tremendous responsibility and one we all take very seriously. Moving forward, we plan to continue to provide safe transportation for students, are greatly appreciative of our high-quality drivers, and will continue to seek ways to continue to improve.
The District would like to thank all community members that took the time to complete the community survey. We are grateful for the community’s continued support of the district, including our efforts to maintain the quality of educational programs our students and families have come to expect and our efforts to develop a plan to update our schools.

The community survey distributed to residents included potential improvement options explored by the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), which is comprised of parents, community members, and district staff. The goal of the survey was to receive community members’ feedback on the plans being considered, so that ultimately, the District can finalize a plan that meets the needs of our students and reflects the priorities of our taxpayers.

The survey response rate and feedback received was very positive. Below is a summary of the results.

**SURVEY SUMMARY**

- The survey was conducted in March 2018
- Residents within the district were mailed a paper survey. Each survey included a unique access code for those who preferred to take the survey online.
- 396 total responses
- 23% participation rate (Typical response rate is less than 20%)

**FUNDING TO SUPPORT OPERATIONS & FACILITY PLANS**

- 77% of all resident respondents stated “definitely yes” or “probably yes” when asked if they would support the renewal of the District’s $500,000 operational referendum
  - To maintain current programs and services for each of the next four years
  - No tax increase over the current level

- 65% of all resident respondents stated “definitely yes” or “probably yes” when asked if they would support a $3.7 million referendum for the base plan
  - To make improvements at the elementary school and middle/high school (base plan improvements detailed on next page)
  - Estimated annual tax increase of approximately $68 for each $100,000 of property value

- 33% of all resident respondents stated “definitely yes” or “probably yes” when asked if they would support an additional $4.9 million to build a gym and expand the middle/high school cafeteria
  - Additional project detailed on next page
  - An additional estimated annual tax increase of approximately $92 for each $100,000 of property value over the current level

**RESPONDENT SNAPSHOT**

- 90% were district residents
- 82% were non-staff
- 59% do not have children attending school in the district
- 54% feel the district has a positive impact on their home value
“57% of all resident respondents advised the School Board to consider pursuing a capital referendum to update our schools.”

**BASE PLAN IMPROVEMENTS**

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) reviewed the facility assessment, toured the schools, and studied enrollment projections and building capacity, as well as the educational needs of the District. The committee created a list of potential projects, but acknowledged that it may not be realistic to complete all of the needed updates at one time. Therefore, they have identified a Base Plan that includes the most critical needs of the District that could be funded through a referendum.

**Hillsboro Elementary School**
- Replace the gym roof section and repair exterior stucco and masonry
- Update plumbing and electrical systems that have exceeded their service life, many of which are original to the building (1953 & 1963)
- Update core finishes, ex. paint walls, replace flooring and update lighting

*Estimated cost for Elementary School updates: $900,000*

**Hillsboro Middle/High School**
- Replace the heating and ventilation system that has exceeded its service life
- Replace the roof
- Repair exterior masonry and tuckpointing
- Remodel bathrooms to address Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) code compliance
- Update plumbing and electrical systems
- Update core finishes, ex. paint walls, replace ceilings and flooring on the stage and in hallways as well as update lighting

*Estimated cost for Middle/High School updates: $2.8 million*

**ADDITIONAL PROJECT**

The current gyms can no longer meet school and community needs. As a result of limited space, practices are being held early in the morning and late in the evening throughout the school year, and community use is very limited. Additionally, the middle/high School cafeteria could be redesigned to better meet students’ needs during the school day, serve as a large group instructional space, and provide a community gathering space for events.

**This project includes:**
- Building a practice gym with elevated walking/jogging track
- Expanding the cafeteria to create a student commons
- Creating a community gathering space that can be partitioned off from the rest of the school during non-school hours
- Adding presentation and audio systems
Wonders: A Guaranteed and Viable Literacy Curriculum, It’s no Wonder Our Students Are Growing

Missy Herek | Elementary Principal

What are our community of learners saying about our new resources? We asked a number of individuals what they thought about our new resources and here is what they had to say:

Kindergarten Team: “We love having such a rich, supporting, and resourceful curriculum! We are most excited about all of the different resources we now have which include differentiated leveled books, differentiated resources, and an abundance of phonics and phonemic awareness lessons. All of these wonderful resources help us to guide and support our kindergarten learners. We have noticed numerous gains made by our students since we started, around Thanksgiving, with Wonders and we are very excited to continue!”

First Grade Team: “We started our Wonders journey in January. We are most excited about our guided reading time, and the opportunities it is offering our students. We are able to meet with every student, every day, to work on skills that are developmentally appropriate. We can provide engaging text at our students reading levels. Although we are just a short time into the series, we are already excited by what our students are doing!”

Second Grade Team: “Wonders is Wonderful! Students are engaged with colorful stories filled with rich, expressive vocabulary in a variety of genre. We are excited about our guided reading groups. We have leveled our students so their needs are being met and they are reading books appropriate for their learning. With the help of our Title staff, these guided reading groups are small. Students enjoy the online activities that support the grammar mini-lessons that we teach. The colorful cards that introduce new vocabulary have pictures to aid in the understanding of each term. Learning has become exciting for all of us! The bar is high and students work hard to reach it. “

Third Grade: Our 3rd Grade team began our Wonders journey in January. The Wonders curriculum has been extremely beneficial to not only our students, but to us as educators. Wonders is jam-packed with wonderful content that includes engaging stories and effective resources that help our team of 3rd graders understand and excel at the concepts that are being taught to them.

Student: Gracilee Mounts likes all of the fun books she gets to read. You get to learn new stuff and learn how to read. We get new stories all of the time like, How Did the Beetle Get His Colors?” Gracilee’s parents, Andrew and Cassandra Mounts have observed her interest in reading increase and they like the home-school connections that have been made through literacy this year.

Mrs. Herek: “This year our Kindergarten-Third Grade students have had the opportunity to explore a comprehensive reading program that provides instructional resources to support literacy best practices. Wonders has a variety of materials that contribute to a deep understanding of how learning happens and explicitly focuses on introducing developmentally appropriate literacy skills at each grade level. The data we have analyzed from formal and informal assessments shows incredible growth for our students. Having only used the resources for a short time, we are looking forward to seeing the growth of our students from year to year.”

Parents: “Since the beginning of the school year we struggled with our son’s homework and he struggled in the classroom also. We
Education continues to be a hot topic in our country, with good reason. The educational landscape looks drastically different than when we were in school. While many of these changes have largely been for the better, those outside of schools don’t fully understand what these changes are and what they look like. Much of this comes from education’s overuse of acronyms. If you’ve gone to a parent-teacher conference in the last five years, you’ve likely heard of RtI, IEP, IDEA, SAT, ACT, AP, ESL, ELL, and so on. One that you’ve almost certainly heard of recently yet continues to be mostly misunderstood is PBIS.

PBIS stands for Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports. Educators cannot assume that all students come to school with the necessary skills to be successful - both academically and behaviorally. The objective isn’t to punish, but rather to teach students common expectations and intervene when necessary for those who struggle.

PBIS and RtI (Response to Intervention) go hand in hand. PBIS is a framework for implementation of research-based interventions to enhance positive behaviors in all students. RtI uses the same model for improving academic performance. Like RtI, PBIS uses data to drive decisions about interventions and supports for students. We know that academics impact behavior and behavior impact academics. Both use this three-tiered model.

The lowest tier, referred as Tier 1 or Universal Systems, include interventions, supports, and systems that all students have access to. For academics, this is our curriculum that is available for all students. For behavior, these are your school-wide expectations for students to follow. For Hillsboro students, we expect students to Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe. Typically, 80-90% of students are successful in Tier 1. This means they understand the content in class for RtI and are able to follow the rules with minimal intervention and support for PBIS. If there are behaviors at the universal level that are not being met, teachers will reteach the expected behaviors and practice, if needed.

Some students are not able to be as successful with the universal systems in Tier 1. They struggle with the content in class or they have frequent minor to moderate behavior problems. When this happens, different interventions and supports are needed. Students who need these additional supports make up Tier 2. Typically, only about 10-15% of students are in Tier 2 at any given time. These students will have frequent progress monitoring to gauge what supports and working or if there needs to be a different strategy. The goal is to move students out of Tier 2 and back into Tier 1 where they are able to follow the universal expectations.

The final tier is Tier 3, which typically is for about 5% of the student population. Students in this tier need intensive strategies and supports. Students in Tier 3 will have a specific, monitored behavior plan to follow. Staff who work with this student will meet regularly to gauge progress and modify the plan as needed. The goal for a student in Tier 3 is to be able to gradually release from intensive strategies and move to less intensive supports in Tier 2.

The district has been a PBIS school for a couple of years now. We continue to send staff to additional training to best support our students in each tier. The PBIS team continually looks at data to determine what behaviors are most frequent and where they occur most often to ensure safety for all our students. We continue to grow in our understanding and implementation of PBIS and will continue to strive to teach our students the very best academically and behaviorally.
Unique Opportunity for Hillsboro Students
Barbara Olson

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum defines the Holocaust as “the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators.” In 1933, when the Nazis came to power in Germany, there were over nine million Jews living in Europe. Twelve years later, when Allied forces defeated Germany in 1945, only three million Jews remained alive in Europe. Each survivor has a unique set of events which he/she lived through. On Monday, March 26th the members of the sophomore class were able to participate in an unforgettable experience when they spoke/interacted with a Holocaust Survivor. This video conference concluded a cross-curricular unit taught by Mrs. Madden (10th grade English), Mr. Nugent and Mrs. Olson (10th grade U.S. History). In the weeks preceding the discussion the students learned background information about the Holocaust, analyzed a variety of primary sources, read Elie Wiesel’s autobiography, Night and watched Steven Spielberg’s award winning movie Schindler’s List.

This year students had the honor of speaking with Mr. Amrom Deutsch. Mr. Deutsch was born on August 8, 1925 in Sighet, Romania. During the presentation Mr. Deutsch shared his story of survival, which began when Amrom was 14. Hungary annexed Romania in 1940 and Amrom recalled the anti-Jewish policies beginning then. These policies intensified when German forces occupied his homeland in 1944. Amrom was 18 when he was sent to a work camp not knowing what happened to his family/friends. After five weeks, the Nazis were ready to evacuate the local Jewish population so Amrom was returned to Sighet. He found his family, and other Jews, living in horrible conditions in a ghetto. The ghetto was “liquidated” the next day and he was sent by cattle car to Auschwitz, where he became prisoner A3146. After nine days at Auschwitz he was moved to Buna and eventually to Bergen-Belsen, where he remained until he was found in a semiconscious state by British forces in 1945. After spending four months in a hospital he returned to Bergen-Belsen, where he met his future wife. They were married on January 1, 1946 and became the first couple to be married in Bergen-Belsen after the war. They remained at the camp until they emigrated to the United States in 1949.

When Mr. Deutsch finished speaking Hillsboro students were given the opportunity to personally interact with him during a question and answer session. Mr. Deutsch left the students with words of advice. He wanted the students to “live a clean life - to take advantage of the good life they have and to make good choices.”

Students found this experience touching and worthwhile. In post-videoconference reflections students wrote:

“After today I am a witness of the Holocaust.”

“Talking to Amrom helped me with the realization that this really happened to people. I learned that nothing is too hard to overcome.”

“I learned to appreciate my family and everything I have in life.”

“Even though there are many articles and pictures out there, it is nothing like hearing someone talk about it who experienced it.”

“Our next step as a generation is to continue to tell this survivor’s story because that is what the victims of the Holocaust deserve.”

This experience is provided by the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, California. A special thank you to Dan Thompson for his assistance in arranging this experience and for providing technical support during the video conference.

Reality Daze 2018
Barbara Olson

On Wednesday, March 14th members of the senior class attended Reality Daze 2018. This simulation has students apply real life money
management skills as they “live” a month on their own, paying traditional bills and dealing with unforeseen circumstances fate throws at them.

To prepare, students chose a career they were interested in and researched what an entry level salary in that field would be. They were then randomly assigned a “life status”, which meant they could have a spouse, children, student loans, credit card debt, etc.

Students found this experience fun and rewarding and gave the following feedback on post-experience reflections:

“Groceries are expensive!”
“Invest as soon as you can!”
“Wow, kids are expensive!”
“When you are living on your own money goes out fast - budgeting is important.”

“You need to expect the unexpected.”
“A person has to be careful with their money.”

**Meemic Foundation Grant Recipient**

Upon recommendation from Principal Missy Herrick, Reading Interventionist Lori Cherf applied for a Lakeshore Materials grant from The Meemic Foundation. Ms. Cherf originally applied for $38.00 to purchase two sets of Reading Discussion Clips. To her surprise, the Meemic Foundation awarded her $100.00 to purchase additional items to support her classroom through the Lakeshore Learning Company. Ms. Cherf selected various Bingo games, Reading Discussion Clips and a Can Do Figurative Language game. The items will be shared with colleagues and used during reading intervention and

Ms. Scharfenberg is also a recipient of the The Meemic Foundation grant worth $500. This money will go to buying materials for science cross curricular solar system art projects at the elementary school.

Roy Hinz of The Meemic Foundation recommends that educators apply for the grants they have available. As more teachers apply, the number of grants awarded is increased. Currently, The Meemic Foundation is taking applications for a $100 Back-to-School grant and a $500 Traditional grant.

The Meemic Foundation
H-Club donation
Shannon Chute
H-Club donated over $2100 to charities this year including Toys for Tots, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, and the local H.O.P.E. foundation. They also donated a water bottle filling station to the Middle School wing.

FFA News
Mollie Biermeier - Hillsboro FFA Advisor | Ag Instructor
FFA Pancake Breakfast is April 28th All Proceeds go to the Hillsboro FFA!
When: April 28th 6-11 A.M
Where: High School Cafeteria

Pancakes, Sausages, Eggs, Hash-browns, Applesauce, Milk, Juice, Coffee, and Cheese.

Prices:
12+ - $5
12 and under - $2
5 and under - FREE!

Mollie Biermeier - Hillsboro Clay Target Club | Ag Instructor
Started a new clay target team There are 25 students have joined Hillsboro’s new Clay Target Club coached by Mollie Biermeier and Dan Green. They Club will be competing on Sundays at LaValle Sportsmans Club. Safest High School sport. Clay Target Club is one of the safest high school sports and allows students of all abilities to compete.
Congratulations to the 2017-2018 HHS National Honor Society members

*Indicates new member

**Seniors**

James Anderson  
Lydia Benish  
Drew Bisarek  
Courtney Fanta  
Paul-Andrew Griffin  
Annaliese Haas  
Jack Holthe  
Sydney Johnson  
Carly Krajco  
Ashton Mislivecek  
Carlee Onsager  
Brandt Parker  
Paige Rynes  
Tyler Weber

**Juniors**

*Payton Auel  
Dane Bach  
Lauren Banker  
Brookelyn Borchardt  
Jacob Brockwell  
*Erin Hackl  
Hope Huffman  
Elle Kinnison  
*Hunter Landrath  
Jacob McCoic  
Peyton Miller  
Brooks Mitchell  
Jessica Mitchell  
Garrett Sagert  
*Nicole Salisbury  
Nicholas Stekel  
Paige Stull

**Sophomores**

*Molly Crandall  
*Aaron Frederick  
*Cade Jensen  
*Sierra Johnson  
*Hannah Munson  
*Abigail Nemec  
*Grace Stockwell  
*Trent Thorson  
+Savannah Urba