



# Shawano School District COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

March 2024



Engage, Empower, Educate  
Every Student, Every Day, The Hawk Way

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## ‘Building’ Work Skills

### Partnership With Local Businesses Provides Students with Real-World Experience

Students in Mr. Greg Brown’s Residential Building class embarked on the construction of two duplexes that not only shaped the physical structures but also provided them with invaluable learning experiences.

The work based project took root in August 2022 with the collaboration of project contractor, Partner Choice Management, LLC and Cody Besset from Besset Construction.

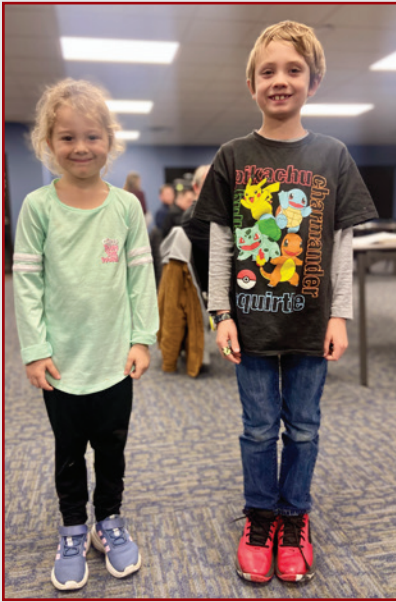
Over the past two years, a total of 52 students have developed their skills in various aspects of the construction including framing, floor framing, wall framing, roof framing, basement framing, electrical preparation, wire pulling, drilling holes, hanging drywall, siding installation, and window placement.



The hands-on involvement in these real-world projects not only enhanced their technical skills but also opened doors to scholarships, internships, and job opportunities. Four students, specifically engaged in construction-related activities, secured positions through the Wolf River School-to-Work programs this year.

Jean Darling, a local business owner, joined forces with the students and contractors in this endeavor, fostering a collaborative partnership.

As a result of this success, there are talks of a potential third project in the fall of 2024. Additionally, the team is exploring future prospects, including a spec house project, showcasing a commitment to community development and student growth.



## Students Advocate for Green Space

Young Voices Make an Impact at City Council Meeting

Ellie Bougie, a first grader, and Huck Goes, a second grader from LEADS Charter School, attended a recent City of Shawano Plan Commission meeting to voice their concerns over the city's plan to sell a section of the forested area located opposite their school. They also presented a petition backed by the second-grade class.

Their initiative highlights how students - even some of our youngest learners - are actively engaging with our community.

The sale only involved a portion of the land, and the Commission assured the students that their access would not be compromised. This was a real-life lesson, helping students learn the importance of citizenship and participation in our democratic processes.

Thank you to the Plan Commission members who took the time to respectfully listen to our students and help them in this "civics lesson"!

# Rural Virtual Academy Partnership

## New Partnership Will Allow Students to Receive At-Home Virtual Instruction

The Shawano School District Board of Education has approved a partnership with Rural Virtual Academy that will allow Shawano students to receive at-home virtual instruction through the Academy while remaining District students. The Board approved the partnership at its January 8 meeting.

Previously, students wanting to receive virtual instruction had to transfer out of the Shawano District through the open enrollment process. With the partnership in place, students will not have to transfer out of the district and can participate in District activities or classes.

Superintendent Kurt Krizan said that the District had been looking for a way to provide virtual instruction to District families for several years. After the shift to virtual instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic, families preferring to continue virtual instruction at home had no option other than to transfer out of the District.

### What is Rural Virtual Academy?

Rural Virtual Academy is a charter school based in the Medford School District. It offers K-12 instruction in core academics as well as electives and remediation and acceleration curriculums. The Shawano partnership begins with the 2024-25 school year.

"This is a win-win," said Krizan. "First, this opportunity is about how to provide a quality program with this style of instruction to students who thrive online. Also, the opportunity to partner with another district is a cost-effective solution. We are not starting from the ground up. Finally, it allows our resident students to enroll back into our local schools, which avoids the cost to the district for students open-enrolling out. It is a great win for all."

In addition to accommodating those District students who want virtual instruction, the partnership with Rural Virtual Academy may allow District students access to courses the District is unable to offer.

**“This partnership with Rural Virtual Academy will allow us to provide more courses to our students. This is all about the opportunities that Shawano students will have.”** ~ Superintendent Kurt Krizan





# Professional Learning Communities are Making a Difference in Shawano Schools

## How Shawano Staff are Collaborating for Continuous Improvement

Now in the 3rd year of implementation, Professional Learning Communities, or PLCs, continue to make a difference in the success of Shawano Schools. As Superintendent, Kurt Krizan, shared with staff, “Our single initiative is continuous improvement and behaving as a Professional Learning Community is what drives our work.”

### Collaboration on Early Release Days

Early release days provide teams of teachers time to collaborate on “every student, every standard,” prioritizing instruction, reviewing student achievement data and adjusting future instruction accordingly.

### Growth in Standardized Testing Scores

An area to celebrate is the growth that Shawano Community High School obtained during state standardized testing during the 2022-23 school year. Growth is a measure of how much a student’s test scores increased from one year to the next. Shawano Community High School’s students experienced growth above the state average in the area of Math. The High School Math PLC attributes this growth to the work they do during PLC time each week.

### Opportunities for Professional Coaching

Utilizing ESSER funds, staff have been able to attend Professional Learning Communities and Rtl at Work Institutes. These dynamic conferences offer renowned speakers and time to plan with professional coaching. The teams that have attended these conferences have returned to lead their peers in renewing their commitment to the PLC process where teachers are helping each other become better teachers.

### A New Mindset

Brandi Sperberg, a teacher at Hillcrest Primary School, shared, “I learned many things to take back to my colleagues. What stood out most to me was changing ‘my students’ to ‘our students’ and ‘me’ to ‘we.’ All staff can work together to improve the students as a whole, meeting all needs, not just academics.” The next group of learning leaders will travel to Minneapolis in March 2024 for the Rtl at Work Institute.

Next year, PLCs look forward to weekly early release time. In the words of high school math teacher, Sienna Eimmerman, “Our department thrives on PLC time.”



### Personalized Instruction for Kindergarten Students

As a result of PLCs, Kindergarten students received personalized and targeted instruction tailored to their specific learning needs and proficiencies. The focused support during Hawk Time helped them meet essential learning objectives to achieve further growth, with the flexibility to adjust groups ensuring ongoing adaptation to their evolving needs. This collaborative, needs-based instruction model fostered a more supportive and effective learning environment, directly contributing to each child’s educational progress and success.

# VOTE APRIL 2<sup>ND</sup>



**The Shawano Community School District is asking our community an important referendum question on April 2, 2024, about our District's future.**

The referendum proposes an investment which will improve our schools by addressing educational space needs, current building and site condition issues, and facility maintenance needs.

Goals of this referendum were determined based on overall needs and priorities. These goals include:

- Maintain current facility assets at Hillcrest, Olga Brener, and Shawano Community High School
- Better utilize current facility assets
- Act on opportunities to expand education opportunities and programs created by current enrollments
- Plan for growth created by school choice through open enrollment, school choice through changes in private education availability, and community growth
- Update areas of facilities unchanged for more than 20 years
- Provide child care services to attract families, students, and staff

After careful consideration of the most critical needs and the feedback you provided through the community survey, we are proposing a Two-Phase Master Plan to achieve these goals.

- **Phase 1** - The community votes on a \$54,500,000 facility referendum April 2, 2024, to address all facilities except the middle school
- **Phase 2** – After April 2024, the District works towards resolving the needs at the middle school with the future goal of a second referendum
  - ◊ Determine community support for improving the existing middle school or building a new middle school with further long-range planning including community listening and feedback sessions
- **Phase 2** – After April 2024, further investigate the future of the pool



**Watch for your Referendum Mailer in February**

**Community Referendum Open Houses | Shawano Community High School**

**Thursday, February 29<sup>th</sup> | 5:30pm – 7:00pm**

**Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup> | 5:30pm – 7:00pm**

**Monday, March 18<sup>th</sup> | 5:30pm – 7:00pm**

**[www.shawanoschools.com/page/referendum-2024](http://www.shawanoschools.com/page/referendum-2024)**

## The projects being proposed and included in this referendum are:

### Hillcrest Primary School

- Update immediate infrastructure and maintenance needs
- Remodel 7,552 square feet to house child care program and update educational spaces
- Add additional playground space and equipment

**\$5,200,000**

### Olga Brener Intermediate School

- Update immediate infrastructure and maintenance needs

**\$4,400,000**

### Shawano Community Middle School

- Update critical infrastructure and maintenance needs
- Perform minimum work to protect the building and extend its useful life
- Address roofs, envelope repairs, and electrical code issues

**\$2,300,000**

### Shawano Community High School

- Update immediate infrastructure and maintenance needs
- Remodel 7,602 square feet of collaboration spaces, two science labs, and 35 classrooms to update educational environment
- Update the performing arts center to include the addition of 10,467 square feet, including new seating, orchestra pit and update lighting, as well as rigging and audio systems for auditorium and performing arts
- Construct additional space of 2,936 square feet for technical education
- Construct additional and remodeled space of 15,828 square feet for the fitness center, including community space

**\$30,000,000**

### Swimming Pool Repairs

- Minimum maintenance needs (liner, pool deck, and minimal equipment)

**\$500,000**

### Safe Routes to Schools Site Work

- Address vehicle and pedestrian issues and needs at all school sites

**\$3,000,000**

### Fitness and Athletic Fields

- Track and field event space
- Synthetic turf football/soccer field
- 2,000 seat grandstand with pressbox and storage
- Entry plaza and concessions/restroom facility

**\$9,100,000**

### Total of All Projects

**\$54,500,000**



What will this referendum cost me and my family?

Impact on Homeowner \$0 Annually





## #ShawanoProud

SPOTLIGHTING OUR STUDENTS

### COZY UP & READ

Olga Brener students were joined by local law enforcement, corrections, and public safety professionals to learn about their careers, hear their stories, and enjoy some thrilling reading material.

### HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL

This February, Shawano Community High School Theatre presented an incredible musical performance of *Hello, Dolly*.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL FORENSICS

Nine students from the Shawano Community Middle School Forensics team competed in Marion and scored a gold ribbon, advancing them to the Middle Level 2 in Manawa.

### SHAWANO WRESTLING

Shawano Hawks Wrestling earned their 6th consecutive year as Bay Conference Champions.

### FUTURE BUSINESS LEADERS

Nine Shawano Community High School students will be attending the State FBLA Competition this spring. Additionally, SCHS sophomore, Morgan Evans, was elected to the Wisconsin State FBLA officer team!

### YOUTH ART ON DISPLAY

Three SCHS students' artwork was selected to be on display at the Neville Museum in Green Bay this February.

## Seeking 'Sources of Strength'

### High School Initiative Works to Combat Mental Health Challenges

If you are frustrated or sad, you have resources to help yourself. You just have to recognize them. That's the message of the Sources of Strength initiative at Shawano Community High School.

The program is designed to remind students and staff that they have tools to use to combat mental health challenges like depression. The national suicide prevention initiative focuses on eight sources of strength: mental health, physical health, generosity, positive friends, family support, mentors, healthy activities, and spirituality.

"We all have these sources but we don't always use them," said teacher Kris Johnson, who helps coordinate the effort.

#### Students Spotlighting Mental Health in School

The program highlights one source each month. Students organized a coin drive to raise money for a staff member who was ill as a way of focusing on generosity. To highlight mental health, students created a wall display with examples of healthy ways to cope with mental health challenges.

In September, students observed Mental Health Day by organizing a day-long program of events with outside speakers and representatives of more than 20 community organizations, agencies and the resources they offer.

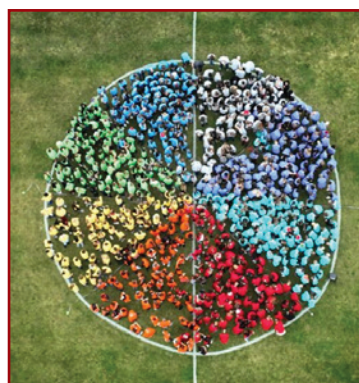
#### About Sources of Strength

Sources of Strength was launched at the school several years ago by ThedaCare, which provided resources and training for staff. It lapsed during the COVID pandemic but was revived last year by a group of students.

In addition to highlighting the Sources of Strength, the effort lets students know that there are adults at school they can trust and who will help when they are in crisis.

"To have someone you can go to is key," said Stacey Homan, who helps Johnson coordinate the program.

Some students may not learn about these techniques and resources at home so having them available through school is critical, she added.



**SOURCES OF STRENGTH** is a student led, upstream suicide prevention program that focuses on 8 sources of strength. This means that instead of waiting until adolescents are at their breaking point, we want them to learn about their sources of strength before they need them.



Questions? Please email Kris Johnson at [kjohnson@shawanoschools.org](mailto:kjohnson@shawanoschools.org)



## Vending Books - Not Snacks - in Shawano

### New Book Vending Machines are Encouraging Reading

New vending machines offer elementary school students not candy, not chips, but a far healthier snack – books.

Book vending machines have been installed at Hillcrest Primary School and Olga Brenner Intermediate School. Students celebrating birthdays or other special occasions are given tokens, which they use in the machine to get a book.

Hillcrest Principal Aaron Manders says the machines are a big hit. “It helps encourage our kids to keep reading,” he said.

#### How Students Can Earn Vending Machine Tokens

Students receive tokens for the machine on their birthdays or when they complete certain reading goals.

At Olga Brenner, tokens are given to students selected as students of the month as well as to students celebrating birthdays or half birthdays.

“We’ve been looking at something to use that would affect all of our children,” Principal Matt Peterson said.

#### How Shawano is Paying for the Book Vending Machines

Each school purchases books to place in their machines. The parent teacher organization at each school helps pay for the books. Schools also receive points to use on books during their Scholastic Book Fairs.

At Hillcrest, students raised money to buy the book machine through their annual Knowledge-A-Thon. Each spring, students take home 100 questions to answer, seeking pledges on how many questions they will answer correctly. The machines cost \$6,500.

Peterson said that the school also hopes to collect enough money to personalize the machine by “wrapping” it in decals featuring the school colors and mascot.



*The goal is to **increase literacy** by creating a rewarding experience.*

*Rewards students for **good behavior** with a take-home book.*

***Excites students** to receive a book with a trip to the vending machine.*

*Helps to build an **in-home library** for students while increasing reading engagement.*

*It serves as a constant reminder of the **importance of books.***





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[www.shawanoschools.com](http://www.shawanoschools.com)

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## It's Time To Enroll in 4K and 5K!

**4K & 5K ENROLLMENT NOW OPEN FOR  
THE 2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR**

Shawano School District stands out for its  
commitment to education, providing all-day 4K  
and 5K programs.

### **Not a Resident? Join us in Shawano!**

The deadline to submit applications for open  
enrollment is April 30 at 4 pm.

### **Learn more.**

To learn about Enrollment or to  
schedule a tour, call 715-526-2192  
(Ext. 3121).

[www.shawanoschools.com](http://www.shawanoschools.com)



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