

INDEE PRIDE



Independence School District Newsletter

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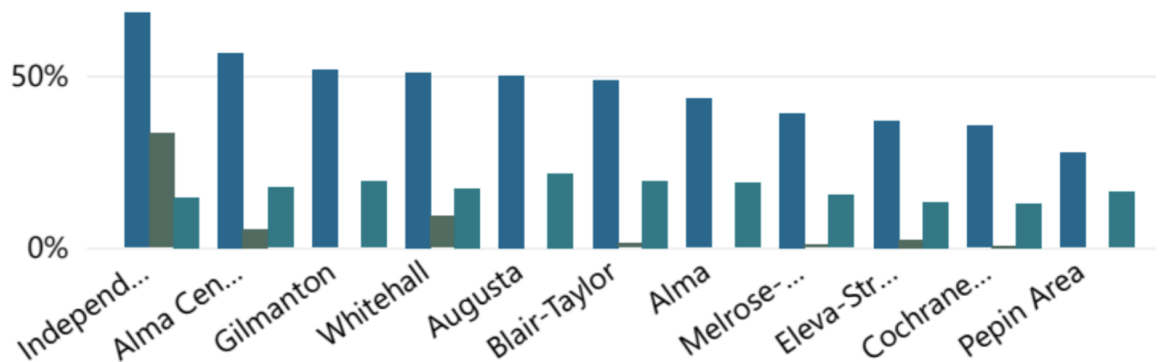


As I write this newsletter article we have almost reached the midpoint of our school year. Like any good business, taking time to reflect on progress towards your goals is important, and we use a variety of data points to do so. I will share some of our data reflecting our academic progress, and share additional data showing our financial status. Finally, I will end by sharing some information about our upcoming operating referendum in April 2025.

Before I share some of our academic data, I would like to show a graph that I recently found with some important information on eleven out of twelve Dairyland Conference schools. The one school not included is Eau Claire Immanuel. The graph shows some different demographics of our conference schools. The first bar represents the percentage of economically disadvantaged students in each school. It is based on the number of students that qualify for the free or reduced lunch program. The next bar (middle) represents the percentage of English language learners (ELL's). The last bar represents the percentage of students with disabilities. These are students that participate in special education and have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Demographics

● % Economically Disadvantaged ● % English Language Learners ● % Students with Disabilities



The reason I want to share this graph with you is so you understand the differences in each district with the students we serve. When the school report cards are released each year, we are often compared to neighboring school districts, some of which are in our conference. I feel that the graph reveals some pretty important information to consider when interpreting the results of the state report cards. As you can see, we have more economically disadvantaged students and more ELL students than any of the other schools. Our diverse student demographic makes our work more challenging and especially important. Taking everything into consideration, I am happy with the direction our district is going academically. We

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have a plan, and as our staff gains more experience and our newer curriculums take hold, we are starting to see some good growth in several areas. A few recent examples of that are: elementary math, middle school math, and high school science.

*In the last newsletter I reported on the progress we have made since our last referendum (August 2022). We focused on three things: maintaining current high quality educational programming; rebuilding fund 10 to avoid short-term borrowing; and competitively compensating our staff in an effort to attract and retain them. I still believe that we have been successful in addressing all three areas and much of that is due to the support from our community. We have maintained programs, we rebuilt our fund 10 account (similar to a checkbook for a household) close to the recommended amount of 20% and have avoided short-term borrowing, and our staff turnover has drastically decreased. Prior to the 2022/23 school year, many of our staff members were leaving for more compensation. In the 2020/21 and 2021/22 school years we lost a combined total of more than half of our staff. When considering experience, local professional development with curriculums, and overall knowledge of our students, losing that many staff could have been detrimental. The past two years the number of staff members that have left has drastically decreased. We all know the positive impact that a teacher can have on a child's education. Furthermore, when you consider the things I mentioned earlier - experience and knowledge of curriculum and students - it takes time to rebuild when someone leaves. As you can see, our community gave us the necessary resources to address this and it has led to a positive outcome.

I would also like to add that in the first year of our referendum (2022/23), we didn't levy the full amount. We levied what we needed (\$800,000 of the available \$900,000) showing our fiscal responsibility. We understand the level of trust that is given when we are successful with a referendum, and we always consider the impact that those additional resources will have on our students AND our community. Another positive piece of evidence to demonstrate our current financial status is that we are in our third year of a three year operating referendum, and our mill rate (\$6.62 per \$1,000 of assessed value) is the second lowest in our conference (using 11 schools). Only C-FC has a lower mill rate (6.23). The additional funds from our referendum have had a positive effect on our aid from the state, and in turn, has lowered our mill rate.

We have had an operating referendum every year since 1997 except for one year, the 2021-22 school year. That was the year we had to utilize our fund 10 account (household checkbook) in order to continue to maintain our educational programming. Due to the way schools are funded, operating referendums have become the norm for many schools across the state. In fact, last year about a third (131) of the 421 public school districts in Wisconsin went for an operating referendum. Many of the remaining two-thirds of districts already had operating referendums that didn't need renewal that year. Some local examples of those are: Independence, Blair-Taylor, and Whitehall. Why are so many public schools relying on their taxpayers to pass operating referendums recently? There are a number of reasons: declining enrollment, school funding not keeping up with inflation, and the underfunding of special education to name a few. We are working to address the complicated school funding system and have made some progress recently. Educating our youth is extremely important to our future, and we are thankful for the community support that we have to provide a quality education for all students in the Independence School District.

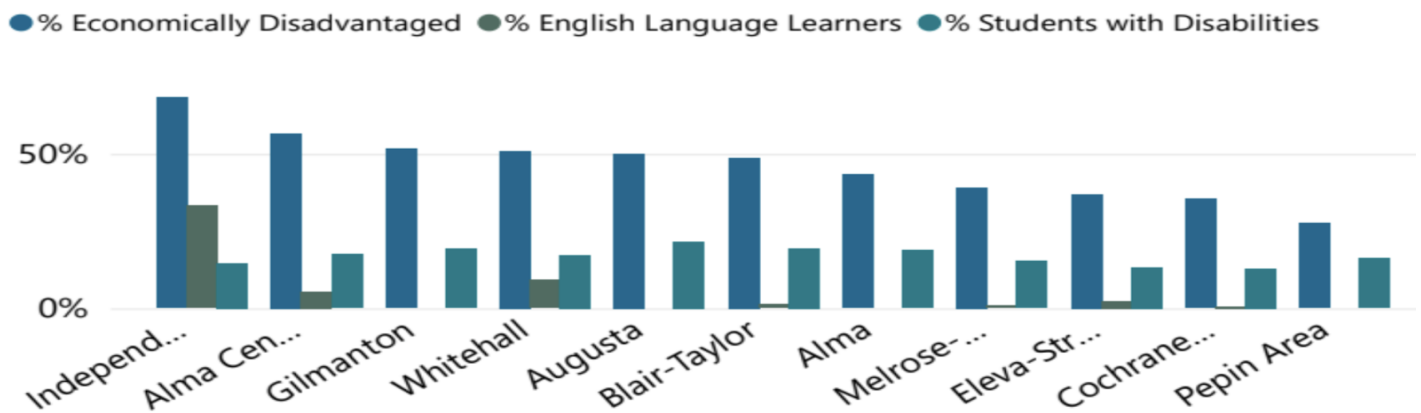
As I have already mentioned, we are in our third year of a three year operating referendum. Our current referendum expires on June 30, 2025. This April we plan to ask our taxpayers for another three-year, \$900,000 per year, operating referendum in order to continue to maintain educational programming, and competitively compensate our staff in an effort to attract and retain them, and to maintain our facilities. Our preliminary numbers show that \$900,000 per year will provide us with the necessary funds and help us to continue to offer high quality staff and programming to educate our future and maintain a relatively consistent mill rate. We plan to engage our community in the process by assembling a group to help inform the public, and by offering some presentations. THANK YOU for the trust and support that you have given us with operating referendums in the past. We are looking forward to the opportunity to work with our community over the next few months to lead another successful referendum.

9-12 DIRECTOR/ADMINISTRADOR DEL DISTRITO

Mientras escribo este artículo, casi hemos llegado a la mitad del curso escolar. Como en cualquier buen negocio, es importante tomarse un tiempo para reflexionar sobre el progreso hacia los objetivos, y para ello utilizamos una variedad de datos. Compararé algunos de nuestros datos que reflejan nuestro progreso académico y compartiré datos adicionales que muestran nuestra situación financiera. Por último, terminaré compartiendo información sobre nuestro próximo referéndum operativo en abril de 2025.

Antes de compartir algunos de nuestros datos académicos, me gustaría mostrar un gráfico que encontré recientemente con información importante sobre once de las doce escuelas de la Conferencia Dairyland. La única escuela que no está incluida es Eau Claire Immanuel. El gráfico muestra algunos datos demográficos diferentes de nuestras escuelas de la conferencia. La primera barra representa el porcentaje de estudiantes económicamente desfavorecidos en cada escuela. Se basa en la cantidad de estudiantes que califican para el programa de almuerzo gratuito o reducido. La siguiente barra(en medio) representa el porcentaje de estudiantes que aprenden inglés (ELL). La última barra representa el porcentaje de estudiantes con discapacidades. Se trata de estudiantes que participan en educación especial y tienen un Plan Educativo Individualizado (IEP).

Demographics



La razón por la que quería compartir este gráfico con ustedes es para que puedan entender las diferencias en cada distrito con los estudiantes a los que servimos. Cuando se publican las boletas de calificaciones escolares cada año, a menudo nos comparan con distritos escolares vecinos, algunos de los cuales están en nuestra conferencia. Siento que el gráfico revela información bastante importante para tener en cuenta al interpretar los resultados de las boletas de calificaciones estatales. Como pueden ver, nosotros tenemos más estudiantes económicamente desfavorecidos y más estudiantes ELL que cualquiera de las otras escuelas. Nuestra diversa demografía estudiantil hace que nuestro trabajo sea más desafiante y especialmente importante. Teniendo todo en consideración, estoy feliz con la dirección que está tomando nuestro distrito académicamente. Tenemos un plan y, a medida que nuestro personal adquiere más experiencia y nuestros nuevos planes de estudio se afianzan, estamos empezando a ver un buen crecimiento en varias áreas. Algunos ejemplos recientes de ello son: matemáticas de la escuela elemental, matemáticas de la secundaria y ciencias de la preparatoria.

*En el último boletín informé sobre el progreso que hemos logrado desde nuestro último referéndum (agosto de 2022). Nos centramos en tres cosas: mantener la programación educativa actual de alta calidad; reconstruir el fondo 10 para evitar préstamos a corto plazo; y compensar competitivamente a nuestro personal en un esfuerzo por atraerlos y retenerlos. Sigo creyendo que hemos tenido éxito en abordar las tres áreas y gran parte de eso se debe al apoyo de nuestra comunidad. Hemos mantenido programas, reconstruimos nuestra cuenta del fondo 10 (similar a una chequera de casa) cerca del monto recomendado del 20%

9-12 DIRECTOR/ADMINISTRADOR DEL DISTRITO

y hemos evitado los préstamos a corto plazo, y nuestra rotación de personal ha disminuido drásticamente. Antes del año escolar 2022/23, muchos de los miembros de nuestro personal se iban para obtener una mayor compensación. En los años escolares 2020/21 y 2021/22 perdimos un total combinado de más de la mitad de nuestro personal. Al considerar la experiencia, el desarrollo profesional local con planes de estudio y el conocimiento general de nuestros estudiantes, perder tanto personal podría haber sido perjudicial. En los últimos dos años, el número de miembros del personal que se han ido ha disminuido drásticamente. Todos sabemos el impacto positivo que puede tener un maestro en la educación de un niño. Además, si tenemos en cuenta las cosas que mencioné antes (experiencia y conocimiento del plan de estudios y de los estudiantes), lleva tiempo reconstruirse cuando alguien se va. Como puede ver, nuestra comunidad nos proporcionó los recursos necesarios para abordar esto y ha dado como resultado un resultado positivo.

También me gustaría agregar que en el primer año de nuestro referéndum (2022/23), no recaudamos el monto total. Recaudamos lo que necesitábamos (\$800,000 de los \$900,000 disponibles), lo que demuestra nuestra responsabilidad fiscal. Entendemos el nivel de confianza que se brinda cuando tenemos éxito con un referéndum, y siempre consideramos el impacto que esos recursos adicionales tendrán en nuestros estudiantes Y nuestra comunidad. Otra evidencia positiva que demuestra nuestro estado financiero actual es que estamos en nuestro tercer año de un referéndum operativo de tres años, y nuestra tasa impositiva (\$6.62 por cada \$1,000 del valor evaluado) es la segunda más baja en nuestra conferencia (utilizando 11 escuelas). Solo C-FC tiene una tasa impositiva más baja de (6.23). Los fondos adicionales de nuestro referéndum han tenido un efecto positivo en nuestra ayuda del estado y, a su vez, han reducido nuestra tasa impositiva.

Hemos tenido un referéndum operativo todos los años desde 1997, excepto por un año, el año escolar 2021-22. Ese fue el año en que tuvimos que utilizar nuestra cuenta del fondo 10 (chequera de hogar) para seguir manteniendo nuestra programación educativa. Debido a la forma en que se financian las escuelas, los referendos operativos se han convertido en la norma para muchas escuelas en todo el estado. De hecho, el año pasado, aproximadamente un tercio (131) de los 421 distritos escolares públicos de Wisconsin optaron por un referéndum operativo. Muchos de los dos tercios restantes de los distritos ya tenían referendums operativos que no necesitaban renovación ese año. Algunos ejemplos locales de ellos son: Independence, Blair-Taylor y Whitehall. ¿Por qué tantas escuelas públicas dependen de sus contribuyentes para aprobar referendums operativos recientemente? Hay varias razones: la disminución de matriculación, la financiación escolar que no se mantiene al ritmo de la inflación y la financiación insuficiente de la educación especial, por nombrar algunas. Estamos trabajando para abordar el complicado sistema de financiación escolar y hemos logrado algunos avances recientemente. Educar a nuestros jóvenes es extremadamente importante para nuestro futuro, y estamos agradecidos por el apoyo de la comunidad que tenemos para brindar una educación de calidad a todos los estudiantes en el Distrito Escolar de Independence.

Como ya he mencionado, estamos en nuestro tercer año de un referéndum operativo de tres años. Nuestro referéndum actual vence el 30 de junio de 2025. Este abril planeamos pedir a nuestros contribuyentes otro referéndum operativo de tres años por \$900,000 por año para continuar manteniendo la programación educativa y compensar competitivamente a nuestro personal en un esfuerzo por atraerlos y retenerlos, y para mantener nuestras instalaciones. Nuestras cifras preliminares muestran que \$900,000 por año nos proporcionarán los fondos necesarios y nos ayudarán a continuar ofreciendo personal y programación de alta calidad para educar a nuestro futuro y mantener una tasa de milésimas relativamente constante. Planeamos involucrar a nuestra comunidad en el proceso reuniendo un grupo para ayudar a informar al público y ofreciendo algunas presentaciones. GRACIAS por la confianza y el apoyo que nos han brindado con los referendums operativos en el pasado. Esperamos tener la oportunidad de trabajar con nuestra comunidad durante los próximos meses para liderar otro referéndum exitoso.

Wisconsin's New Reading Law: What Families Need to Know

We are excited to share important news about a new state law designed to support young readers. Wisconsin Act 20, also known as the Right to Read Act, will take effect in January 2025. This law aims to ensure that all students can read proficiently by the end of third grade. Here's what this means for our students and community:

What Is Act 20?

Act 20 outlines steps schools must take to provide high-quality, science-based literacy instruction and interventions for students in 5K-3rd grade. It includes new and stronger requirements to ensure students are supported in reaching their full reading potential, including:

- **Early Literacy Instruction:** Schools must deliver strong, science-based literacy instruction coherently across 5K-3rd grade core instruction for all students.
- **Early Literacy Assessment:** All students in grades 4K-3 will be screened using a literacy screener selected by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI).
- **Diagnostic Assessments:** Students who score below the 25th percentile on the screener will receive additional diagnostic testing.
- **Reading Interventions:** Students who score below the 25th percentile on the screener will receive targeted interventions to improve their reading skills.
- **Family History Survey:** Diagnostic assessments will also include a survey about family reading challenges.
- **Personal Reading Plans:** Each student scoring below the 25th percentile on the screener will have an individualized plan to guide their progress.
- **Progress Monitoring:** Schools will monitor weekly progress and communicate with parents/caregivers after 10 weeks of interventions to discuss possible next steps.

How Is Independence School District Preparing? Curriculum and Instruction

Independence has some of the most highly rated literacy curricula in place that meets the requirements for Act 20. Our teaching staff uses common preparation and collaboration time at least once weekly to ensure these materials are used to their full potential with our students.

Assessment

The DPI has chosen aimswebPlus as the benchmark tool for 4K-3rd-grade students. To prepare for this change, our district began using aimsweb. Plus this fall, ensuring a smooth transition into the new system. While implementing this new tool, we will continue using Renaissance Star for reading and math assessments, as well as for monitoring progress and meeting the goals of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

Looking Ahead

Parent-teacher conferences in February 2025 will include opportunities to ask questions about these changes. Our reading specialist and English learner coordinator will be available to provide guidance and discuss how we can work together to support every student's success.

We are committed to ensuring learning for all and that every child becomes a confident and capable reader. Thank you for your partnership as we navigate these exciting changes and strive for excellence in literacy education.

If you have any further questions, please contact:
Mrs. Zwiefelhofer, Ms. Gruber, Mrs. Susa, and Mr. Moore



NUEVA LEY DE LECTURA DE WISCONSIN: LO QUE LAS FAMILIAS NECESITAN SABER

Nos complace compartir importantes noticias sobre una nueva ley estatal diseñada para apoyar a los jóvenes lectores. La Ley 20 de Wisconsin, también conocida como la Ley del Derecho a Leer, entrará en vigor en enero de 2025. Esta ley tiene como objetivo garantizar que todos los estudiantes puedan leer de manera competente al final del tercer grado. Esto es lo que significa para nuestros estudiantes y nuestra comunidad:

¿Qué es la Ley 20?

La Ley 20 describe los pasos que deben seguir las escuelas para brindar instrucción e intervenciones de alfabetización científica de alta calidad para estudiantes desde el kinder hasta el tercer grado. Incluye requisitos nuevos y más estrictos para garantizar que los estudiantes reciban apoyo para alcanzar su máximo potencial de lectura, entre ellos:

- **Instrucción de alfabetización temprana:** Las escuelas deben impartir una enseñanza de la lectoescritura sólida y basada en la ciencia de forma coherente en la enseñanza básica de 5k a 3 grado para todos los alumnos.
- **Evaluación de la alfabetización temprana:** Todos los estudiantes en los grados 4K-3 serán evaluados utilizando un evaluador de alfabetización selecciona do por el Departamento de Instrucción Pública de Wisconsin (DPI).
- **Evaluaciones de diagnóstico:** Los estudiantes que obtengan una puntuación por debajo del percentil 25 en la evaluación recibirán pruebas de diagnóstico adicionales.
- **Intervenciones de lectura:** Los estudiantes que obtengan una puntuación por debajo del percentil 25 en el cuestionario recibirán intervenciones específicas para mejorar sus habilidades de lectura.
- **Encuesta sobre los antecedentes familiares:** Las evaluaciones de diagnóstico también incluirán una encuesta sobre los problemas de lectura de la familia.
- **Planes personales de lectura:** Cada alumno que obtenga una puntuación por debajo del percentil 25 en el evaluador tendrá un plan individualizado para guiar su progreso.
- **Seguimiento del progreso:** Las escuelas supervisarán el progreso semanal y se comunicarán con los padres / cuidadores después de 10 semanas de intervenciones para discutir los posibles pasos a seguir.

¿Cómo se está preparando el Distrito Escolar de Independence?

Currículo e Instrucción

Independence cuenta con algunos de los programas de alfabetización mejor valorados que cumplen con los requisitos de la Ley 20. Nuestro personal docente utiliza tiempo de preparación y colaboración en común al menos una vez por semana para garantizar que estos materiales se utilicen en todo su potencial con nuestros estudiantes.

Evaluación

El DPI ha elegido aimswebPlus como la herramienta de referencia para los estudiantes de 4K-3 grado. Para prepararse para este cambio, nuestro distrito comenzó a utilizar aimswebPlus este otoño, asegurando una transición sin problemas en el nuevo sistema. Mientras implementamos esta nueva herramienta, continuaremos usando Renaissance Star para las evaluaciones de lectura y matemáticas, así como para monitorear el progreso y cumplir con las metas de los Programas de Educación Individualizada (IEP).

Mirando hacia el futuro

Las reuniones de padres y maestros en febrero de 2025 incluirán oportunidades para hacer preguntas sobre estos cambios. Nuestro especialista en lectura y coordinador de aprendices de inglés estará disponible para proporcionar orientación y hablar cómo podemos trabajar juntos para apoyar el éxito de cada estudiante.

Estamos comprometidos a asegurar el aprendizaje para todos y que cada niño se convierta en un lector confiado y capaz. Gracias por su colaboración en estos emocionantes cambios y en nuestro esfuerzo por alcanzar la excelencia en la alfabetización.

Si tiene alguna pregunta, por favor póngase en contacto con:

Sra. Zwiefelhofer, Sra. Gruber, Sra. Susa, y el Sr. Moore



The Effects of a Phone-Based Childhood

What we are learning

In our August newsletter, we shared that our school board was taking decisive action regarding cell phone use in our school building and that phones would be essentially banned during the school day. The goal was to limit distractions to learning and encourage positive social interactions between students and teachers, both very much in line with the growing nationwide concerns about the effects of cell phone use.

Jonathan Haidt, in his 2024 book *The Anxious Generation*, cites that since the 2010 rollout of smartphones and social media, there has been a 135% increase in major depression in teen girls and a 161% increase in teen boys. The percentage of US college students since 2010 diagnosed with anxiety rose by 134% and depression by 106%. But what is the connection to cell phones? In part, Haidt offers these considerations:

1. *Social Deprivation.* Although cell phones may connect us faster and to more people, the level of connection is typically superficial and easily lost. We can unfriend someone with a click. Prior to smartphones, we had to talk to people using eye contact and body language, and it was harder to 'unfriend' someone. We can now connect to everyone in the world and be disconnected from everyone around us.
2. *Sleep Deprivation.* Not getting enough sleep affects concentration and mood. A 2017 study cited that less sleep increases the likelihood of depression. While we may have had technology-related distractions before smartphones, they can now go everywhere, including the bedroom.
3. *Attention Fragmentation.* Students get almost 100 alerts a day for average users, or one about every five minutes. Heavy users may get an alert every minute. Buzzing smartphones are a distraction, and shifting attention in a classroom usually means losing focus on learning. It is the app designers' job to get peoples' attention, and our teachers can't compete with that.
4. *Addiction.* Creators of apps do everything they can to hook users and they create rapid reward loops that trigger the urge to look and see what feedback users have received (positive or negative). Teens are driven by emotions, novelty, and reward, which makes them vulnerable to social media addiction.

What Our School Is Doing

Since the beginning of the school year, our staff has worked hard to implement the new district policy with repeated and varied forms of communication to students and families, and follow through on the consequences for the few student offenders. The good news is that over 90% of grades 6-12 students have adjusted well to the new expectations. Only 14 students (out of over 200) have two or more documented violations. While many students are likely not happy about the elimination of cell phone use during the school day, they have respected the rules of the school, and our general student body should be commended.

While we continue to remain consistent and vigilant in the enforcement of this policy, we also have been observant of the effects of this change, noticing that students socialize more, especially during breakfast and lunch. We have also noticed less teacher energy is spent on managing phone use in classrooms, resulting in less teacher stress and more focus on learning.

While it will take more time to analyze the new policy's effects on student learning, the policy has been effective in garnering the results hoped for during the school day.

What Parents Can Do

Most adults reading this grew up with childhood/adolescent memories based on playing with others and having a lot of freedom to socialize and take on responsibilities outside the home. Adults reading this also likely learned and held values and beliefs that came from family and close friends. The childhood/adolescent experience in the last 10-15 years looks much different for many young people. Smartphones can now keep children and adolescents busy for hours, and relationships with strangers online can take the place of relationships with family and friends in their own homes or schools, replacing dialogue and sense-making about the world with those closest to them. The influence of smartphones and social media is undeniable.

Many parents may feel their hands are tied in regard to their children/adolescents' cell phone use and that phones are now simply an expected part of our lives. Smartphones moved into all of our lives quite quickly, leaving little time for us to analyze and prepare for how to do this well.

Aside from the easy access to smartphones, why has their use become so prevalent in young people's lives? Heidt (2024) gives us two reasons to consider: 1) Parents have come to believe that sheltering their children from perceived outside threats is important and keep-



ing children close is important to their safety. While there are some real threats in the outside world, there are arguably more good influences than bad ones. There are also just as many negative threats online, although they are easier to disguise and go unseen. 2) As adults have become busier, it has been increasingly easy to occupy a child with a screen and easy to become naive to the ill effects of that choice. Additionally, adolescents may cite that "all of their friends have smartphones," so they should also created a sort of pressure that many parents aren't sure how to respond to.

So what can parents do? Here are some things to consider:

- Wait on smartphones until after age 14 and hold firm to the pressure to do so earlier
- Wait on social media until after age 16 and hold firm to the pressure to allow it earlier
- Add in more regular time to play and participate in activities that foster independence
- Limit phone use and help children/adolescents find replacement activities. Help young people make time for friends, time to play, and explore.
- Consider:
 - Create phone-free spaces in your own homes (like we did at school). Start small if you need to. But start and be ready for pushback and a transition period that may be uncomfortable.
 - Work with your child/adolescent and think of something new they want to do with their time, something they haven't done before (i.e., walk the dog, go to the store, or run an errand alone). If a child fails, they learn; if they succeed, they gain confidence. Commit to this challenge over several weeks to build independence and confidence.
 - Create varied and multiple opportunities to talk as a family and work through conflicts carefully. Young people have learned to start and end friendships online easily and quickly. It is important that they learn the importance of working to maintain relationships.

Why This Is Important

In addition to the concerns already mentioned, there are others-some very sensitive, that are important to consider. According to Haidt (2024):

Boys seem to be more affected by:

- Multiplayer video games can become addictive, and boys can become irritable and unhappy when not online, withdrawing from family and school.
- Susceptibility to porn addiction due to the easy online access

Girls seem to be more affected by:

- Visual social comparisons in a shallow way that emphasizes looks
- Perfectionism
- Relational aggression
- Sexual predation and harassment

When we adopt a phone-based life, we reject almost everything known for centuries about a life well lived. Building community and fostering love, forgiveness, joy, patience, humility, calm, and mindfulness are more difficult when we spend countless hours consumed by what marketers have been hired to do---capture our complete and undivided attention through online platforms. Screens rob us of real advancement and the building of a rich and good life.

The remedy to all of this may best be summed up by the word-**connectedness**. People who are more connected seem to be less affected by social media negatives (isolation, loneliness, mental health, etc.). We can help children and adolescents become more healthy and connected by setting boundaries for phone use and screen time and building more time for interaction and exploration. Our school is committed to this most important work, and we hope you are too.

Haidt, J., & Pratt, S. (2024). *The anxious generation: How the great rewiring of childhood is causing an epidemic of mental illness*.



LOS EFECTOS DE UNA INFANCIA BASADA EN EL TELÉFONO LO QUE ESTAMOS APRENDIENDO

En nuestro boletín de agosto, contábamos que el consejo escolar iba a tomar medidas decisivas en relación con el uso del teléfono móvil en nuestro edificio y que los teléfonos quedarían básicamente prohibidos durante la jornada escolar. El objetivo era limitar las distracciones en el aprendizaje y fomentar las interacciones sociales positivas entre alumnos y maestros, con la creciente preocupación nacional por los efectos del uso del celular.

Jonathan Haidt, en su libro de 2024 *The Anxious Generation (La generación ansiosa)*, cita que desde el lanzamiento en 2010 de los teléfonos inteligentes y las redes sociales, se ha producido un aumento del 135% en la depresión mayor en chicas adolescentes y del 161% en chicos adolescentes. Desde 2010, el porcentaje de estudiantes universitarios estadounidenses diagnosticados de ansiedad ha aumentado un 134% y el de depresión un 106%. Pero, ¿cuál es la conexión con los teléfonos móviles? En parte, Haidt ofrece estas consideraciones:

1. *Privación social.* Aunque los móviles nos conectan más rápido y con más gente, el nivel de conexión suele ser superficial y se pierde fácilmente. Podemos perder la amistad con un clic. Antes de los teléfonos inteligentes, teníamos que hablar con la gente utilizando el contacto visual y el lenguaje corporal, y era más difícil «perder la amistad» con alguien. Ahora podemos conectarnos con todo el mundo y desconectarnos de todos los que nos rodean.
2. *Privación de sueño.* No dormir lo suficiente afecta a la concentración y al estado de ánimo. Un estudio de 2017 citó que dormir menos aumenta la probabilidad de sufrir depresión. Si antes de los teléfonos inteligentes teníamos distracciones relacionadas con la tecnología, ahora pueden llegar a todas partes, incluido el dormitorio.
3. *Fragmentación de la atención.* Los estudiantes reciben casi 100 alertas al día para los usuarios promedio, o una cada cinco minutos aproximadamente. Los usuarios intensivos pueden recibir una alerta cada minuto. El zumbido de los teléfonos inteligentes es una distracción, y cambiar la atención en un salón de clases suele significar perder la concentración en el aprendizaje. El trabajo de los diseñadores de aplicaciones es captar la atención de la gente, y nuestros maestros no pueden competir con eso.
4. *Adicción.* Los creadores de aplicaciones hacen todo lo posible para enganchar a los usuarios y crean bucles de recompensa rápida que desencadenan el impulso de mirar y ver qué comentarios han recibido los usuarios (positivos o negativos). Los adolescentes se dejan llevar por las emociones, la novedad y la recompensa, lo que les hace vulnerables a la adicción a las redes sociales.

Lo que está haciendo nuestra escuela

Desde el comienzo del año escolar, nuestro personal ha trabajado duro para aplicar la nueva política del distrito con repetidas y variadas formas de comunicación a los estudiantes y las familias, y el seguimiento de las consecuencias para los pocos estudiantes infractores. La buena noticia es que más del 90% de los alumnos de 6 a 12 grado se han adaptado bien a las nuevas expectativas. Sólo 14 alumnos (de más de 200) tienen dos o más infracciones documentadas. Aunque es probable que muchos alumnos no estén contentos con la eliminación del uso del teléfono móvil durante la jornada escolar, han respetado las normas de la escuela, y nuestro alumnado en general debe ser elogiado.

Si bien seguimos siendo coherentes y vigilantes en la aplicación de esta política, también hemos sido observadores de los efectos de este cambio, notando que los estudiantes socializan más, especialmente durante el desayuno y el almuerzo. También hemos observado que los maestros dedican menos energía a gestionar el uso del celular en el salón de clases, lo que se traduce en menos estrés para los maestros y más concentración en el aprendizaje.

Aunque llevará más tiempo analizar los efectos de la nueva política en el aprendizaje de los alumnos, la política ha sido eficaz a la hora de obtener los resultados esperados durante la jornada escolar.

Qué pueden hacer los padres

La mayoría de los adultos que leen esto crecieron con recuerdos de infancia/adolescencia basados en jugar con otros y tener mucha libertad para socializar y asumir responsabilidades fuera de casa. Los adultos que leen esto probablemente también aprendieron y mantuvieron valores y creencias que provenían de la familia y los amigos cercanos. La experiencia de la infancia/adolescencia en los últimos 10-15 años es muy diferente para muchos jóvenes. Los teléfonos inteligentes pueden mantener a los niños y adolescentes ocupados durante horas, y las relaciones con extraños en línea pueden sustituir a las relaciones con la familia y los amigos en sus propios hogares o escuelas, sustituyendo el diálogo y la creación de sentido sobre el mundo con las personas más cercanas a ellos. La influencia de los teléfonos inteligentes y las redes sociales es innegable.

Muchos padres pueden sentir que tienen las manos atadas en lo que respecta al uso del teléfono móvil por parte de sus hijos/adolescentes y que los te-



léfonos son ahora simplemente una parte esperada de nuestras vidas. Los teléfonos inteligentes se introdujeron en todas nuestras vidas con bastante rapidez, dejándonos poco tiempo para analizar y preparar cómo hacerlo bien.

Aparte del fácil acceso a los teléfonos inteligentes, ¿por qué su uso se ha vuelto tan frecuente en la vida de los jóvenes? Heidt (2024) nos da dos razones a tener en cuenta: 1) Los padres han llegado a creer que proteger a sus hijos de las amenazas externas percibidas es importante y mantener a los niños cerca es importante para su seguridad. Aunque existen algunas amenazas reales en el mundo exterior, podría decirse que hay más influencias buenas que malas. También hay muchas amenazas negativas en Internet, aunque son más fáciles de disimular y pasar desapercibidas. 2) A medida que los adultos se han vuelto más ocupados, ha sido cada vez más fácil ocupar a un niño con una pantalla y fácil volverse ingenuo ante los efectos nocivos de esa elección. Además, los adolescentes pueden aducir que “todos sus amigos tienen teléfonos inteligentes”, por lo que también deberían crear una especie de presión a la que muchos padres no saben muy bien cómo responder.

Entonces, ¿qué pueden hacer los padres? He aquí algunas cosas a tener en cuenta:

- Esperar a que los niños tengan teléfonos inteligentes hasta después de los 14 años y mantenerse firmes ante la presión de hacerlo antes.
- Esperar a los 16 años para usar las redes sociales y mantenerse firme ante la presión de permitirlo antes.
- Añadir más tiempo para jugar y participar en actividades que fomenten la independencia.
- Limitar el uso del teléfono y ayudar a los niños/adolescentes a encontrar actividades de sustitución. Ayude a los jóvenes a dedicar tiempo a los amigos, a jugar y a explorar.

considere:

- Crea espacios libres de teléfonos en tu propia casa (como hacemos en la escuela). Empiece poco a poco si es necesario. Pero empiece y prepárese para el rechazo y para un periodo de transición que puede resultar incómodo
- Trabaje con su hijo/adolescente y piense en algo nuevo que quiera hacer con su tiempo, algo que no haya hecho antes (por ejemplo, pasear al perro, ir a la tienda o hacer un mandado). Si el niño fracasa, aprende; si tiene éxito, gana confianza. Comprométase con este reto durante varias semanas para fomentar la independencia y la confianza.
- Cree oportunidades variadas y múltiples para hablar en familia y resolver los conflictos con cuidado. Los jóvenes han aprendido a iniciar y terminar amistades en Internet con facilidad y rapidez. Es importante que aprendan la importancia de trabajar para mantener las relaciones.

Por qué es importante

Además de las preocupaciones ya mencionadas, hay otras, algunas muy delicadas, que es importante tener en cuenta. Según Haidt (2024):

Los hombres parecen verse más afectados por:

Los videojuegos multijugador pueden volverse adictivos, y los chicos pueden volverse irritables e infelices cuando no están conectados, aislándose de la familia y la escuela.

- Susceptibilidad a la adicción a la pornografía debido al fácil acceso en línea

Las mujeres parecen verse más afectadas por:

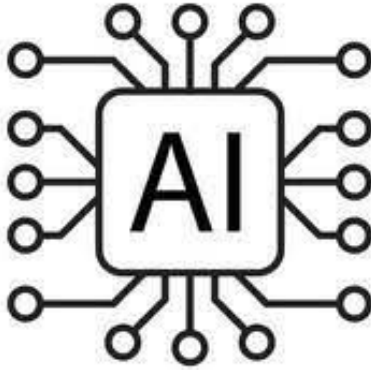
Las comparaciones sociales visuales de forma superficial que enfatizan la apariencia

- Perfeccionismo
- Agresión relacional
- Depredación y acoso sexual

Cuando adoptamos una vida basada en el teléfono, rechazamos casi todo lo que se conoce desde hace siglos sobre una vida bien vivida. Construir una comunidad y fomentar el amor, el perdón, la alegría, la paciencia, la humildad, la calma y la atención plena es más difícil cuando pasamos incontables horas consumidos por aquello para lo que se ha contratado a los vendedores: captar toda nuestra atención a través de plataformas en línea. Las pantallas nos roban el avance real y la construcción de una vida rica y buena.

El remedio a todo esto puede resumirse en la palabra **-conectividad**. Las personas que están más conectadas parecen verse menos afectadas por los aspectos negativos de las redes sociales (aislamiento, soledad, salud mental, etc.). Podemos ayudar a los niños y adolescentes a estar más sanos y conectados estableciendo límites para el uso del teléfono y el tiempo de pantalla y creando más tiempo para la interacción y la exploración. Nuestra escuela está comprometida con esta importantísima labor, y esperamos que usted también lo esté.





EMBRACING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN OUR SCHOOL: A SUPPLEMENT TO LEARNING AND GROWTH

As technology continues to evolve at an incredible pace, one of the most exciting advancements in education is the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI). At our school, we are taking a forward-thinking approach by implementing AI as a tool to supplement our teaching methods, enhance student learning, and support our staff's professional growth.

Rather than replacing traditional teaching practices, AI is being used as a valuable supplement. Teachers are able to leverage AI to personalize learning experiences, helping students to receive tailored lessons that cater to their individual needs. For example, AI-powered platforms can track a student's progress, identify areas of difficulty, and suggest additional resources or practice exercises. This could allow teachers to focus on providing the support students need in real-time, while AI handles some of the more repetitive or administrative tasks. With more time to focus on what matters most, our educators can continue to inspire and support their students in creative, impactful ways.

Our commitment to AI doesn't stop at its implementation in the classroom. The staff is also deeply invested in understanding and utilizing AI technology. We recognize that AI is continuously evolving, and to keep pace with these changes, our educators and administrators are actively engaging in discussion, research, pilot programs with neighboring school districts, and attending local AI related professional development opportunities.

By staying informed about the latest AI advancements, our school can ensure that its integration remains purposeful and effective. Teachers and administrators are exploring new ways to incorporate AI into their work.

We are also fostering a culture of collaboration, where staff can share their experiences and insights on using AI tools. This collective learning ensures that our school remains adaptable and innovative as we grow together with this technology.

AI is still in its early stages in education, and we are just beginning to scratch the surface of its potential. As we continue to implement these tools, we aim to strike a balance between technology and human connection. AI will never replace the heart of education—the relationships between teachers and students—but it can amplify and enrich those connections.

Our school is excited about the future of AI and the opportunities it holds for both students and staff. We will continue to explore, learn, and adapt, ensuring that AI serves as a positive and supportive force in our educational journey.



YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP

Independence High School is proud to participate in Wisconsin's Youth Apprenticeship (YA) program. Over the past three years, Independence has had 34 students complete a YA program. Developed by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, the YA program offers juniors and seniors a unique opportunity to earn a paycheck while gaining hands-on experience in a career field of interest. Students learn industry-approved skills from designated mentors at participating employers while actively engaging in the day-to-day tasks of the occupation. In addition to their work experience, students complete related coursework to deepen their knowledge in the field, while also continuing their core classes and working toward graduation. To fulfill the required 450 paid hours, students can incorporate work time into their school day and work over school breaks. Upon completing the hours and demonstrating proficiency in the occupational skills, students earn more than high school credit and an industry-recognized, state-issued certificate - but also develop their employability skills, build lifelong professional relationships, and an opportunity for continued employment!

Youth Apprenticeship pathways are available in 16 career cluster areas:

- Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources
- Architecture & Construction
- Arts, A/V & Communications
- Business Administration
- Education
- Finance
- Government Administration
- Health Science
- Hospitality, Tourism & Lodging
- Human Services
- Information Technology
- Law, Public Safety & Security
- Manufacturing
- Marketing
- Science, Technology, Engineering & Math
- Transportation, Distribution & Logistics



Current sophomores and juniors that are interested in the program for the 2025-2026 school year can submit an application to discuss the opportunity further at <https://www.tremptvalleycoop.com/ya>

For further information or questions, please contact:

Kara Bradley 608-864-0300
bradlkar@whitehallsd.k12.wi.us



MANUFACTURING DAY 2024

On October 15th, the 6th graders from Independence Public School attended Ashley Furniture's Manufacturing Day. They were able to learn about the history of Ashley, get an extensive tour of the advanced manufacturing facility, and participate in a team-building educational game. Students learned about a variety of careers throughout the day. Thank you to Ashley Furniture for a wonderful learning experience.



Indees Attend "Design Day" at Ashley Furniture Industries

Ashley Furniture Industries hosted a Design Day event on November 13th. Five students from Independence High School participated in the day. They met designers in the areas of graphic, product, and interior design, and also took a tour of the facility. Students shared the following reflections about their experience:

"I liked hearing from the presenter who designs the buildings. That's something I may be interested in doing in the future."

Jaelyn Pronschinske

"I didn't know there were so many different areas. It was interesting hearing how they all work together. I also learned that there's a lot of competition out there."

Jose Cantu Lucio

Thank you Ashley Furniture Industries for providing this unique opportunity for our students!



DAIRYLAND CONFERENCE HONORS MUSICIANS SELECTED FROM INDEPENDENCE HIGH SCHOOL

Nine musicians from Independence High School represented our school on Saturday, November 9th, 2024, at the Dairyland Conference Honors Concert in Whitehall, Wisconsin. The concert took place in the Whitehall Memorial Auditorium at 5:00 PM.

Each year, all of the music directors of the Dairyland Conference come together in a non-competitive setting to nominate music students to build a concert band and concert choir. The band and choir directors submit names of qualified student musicians to the pool of possible members and then select the players and singers basing the selections on playing experience, instrumentation, solo and ensemble experience, and other musical qualifications.

The students all met for the first time as a choir and band on Saturday morning. There they met their guest clinician and started to rehearse. After a day of meeting new musicians like themselves and hours of rehearsing, the honor students presented a fantastic concert that evening in Whitehall's auditorium.

Representing the IHS Band this year:

Grant Klimek, tuba
Dilan Dallman, alto saxophone
James Carrillo Taylor, baritone saxophone
Lucas Halvorson, euphonium
Jocelyn Sandoval Reyes, tenor saxophone
Mareni Xochicale, alto saxophone
Kendra Klimek, clarinet

Representing the IHS Choir this year:

Yoliaris Franco Diaz, soprano
Fahlynn Maples, soprano



ALUMNI PANEL

On Friday, December 20th, we were delighted to welcome back three Independence Alumni for a panel presentation on career paths. Kayla Lyga, Dayton Keenan, and Jessica Gregerson spent the morning sharing their educational and career journeys with our 8th-12th grade students.

Their inspiring stories were filled with many great messages, including how hard work and dedication helped them overcome obstacles along their paths. The response from the student body was very positive. We plan to continue having the annual panel in the future. If you are an Indee alumni interested in participating, or know of someone that might be, please contact Mrs. Gruber at 715-985-3172 ext. 110 or through email (gruberj@indps.k12.wi.us). Any and all educational and career paths are welcome!



Kayla (McKeeth) Lyga (2008) has carved a remarkable path in the legal field, from her academic beginnings at Winona State University to William Mitchell College of Law. Following her time at William Mitchell, Kayla further expanded her expertise as a Judicial Law Clerk, gaining invaluable insight into the inner workings of the court system. Initially working as a Judicial Law Clerk, to her current position working as a lawyer in the Public Defenders office, she represents individuals facing felony charges. Her work in the criminal justice system is not only a career but a calling, as she fights to ensure that every client receives a fair trial, regardless of their background. Kayla's journey is an inspiring reminder of how hard work, resilience, and a commitment to fairness can lead to success in the pursuit of justice.

Dayton Keenan (2015) has built a dynamic and successful career in the electrical industry, grounded in a wealth of experience and hands-on learning. His journey began after high school when he attended Associated Training Services in Sun Prairie, where he gained crucial skills that set the stage for his professional development. Dayton worked a variety of jobs, gaining firsthand experience and a strong work ethic that would prove essential throughout his career. His determination and ambition led him to join the prestigious International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Union, where he began his journey as an apprentice lineman. Over the years, Dayton's role evolved, and he gained a diverse range of expertise. From lineman and groundsman to operator and foreman, he embraced every challenge and opportunity to grow. His progression within the industry highlights not only his technical proficiency but also his leadership abilities, as he took on more responsibilities which include a key role in overseeing projects. Dayton's story is one of hard work, perseverance, and a deep commitment to his craft. He serves as an inspiring example of how dedication and continuous learning can lead to success in the skilled trades.

Jessica (Brandt) Gregerson (2010) has taken a diverse path to establish herself in the criminal justice field. Just three weeks after graduation, Jessica made a move to California, setting the foundation for a career rooted in dedication and passion for public service. In California, she pursued an Associate of Arts degree in Administration of Justice at Chabot College in Hayward, CA, graduating in 2012. Determined to expand her expertise, Jessica continued her studies at California State University—East Bay, earning a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice Administration in 2015. Jessica's early career saw her working as a private Security Officer for the Harbor Bay Isle Owners Association in Alameda, CA. During her two years there, she honed her skills in security and law enforcement while actively applying for positions with police departments across the San Francisco Bay Area. In 2017, Jessica made the decision to return to Wisconsin, where she joined the Jackson County Sheriff's Office as a Corrections Officer. Her career quickly advanced, and she became a Deputy Sheriff, demonstrating her unwavering commitment to the law and community. Her journey continued in 2019 when she moved to the Trempealeau County Sheriff's Office as a Corrections Officer. Jessica's hard work and leadership abilities led her back to Jackson County, where she now serves as a Corrections Sergeant.

AMERICAN LEGION ORATORICAL SCHOLARSHIP CONTEST

Congratulations to Miranda Najera for participating in the American Legion Oratorical Contest on November 4th. Contestants must prepare and present a memorized 8-10 minute speech on the United States Constitution. This is Miranda's second year in the contest, with two first-place awards earning her over \$1500.



Miranda moved on to the County level in December and earned an additional \$500.



Our local American Legion Post 186 makes this annual event possible. We are so grateful to them for providing this opportunity for students to learn and earn money for their future education.

This annual contest is open to ALL Indee high school students in any grade, making it one of the largest awards available to our students. We hope more students will take the time to prepare for this and register for next fall's contest.

TRI 1 HONOR ROLL

FRESHMEN

Jose Damian Mendez
Hannah Ekern
Breeley Kampa
Katelyn Kampa
Carson Klimek
Audrianna Kniseley
Natalie Konter
Viririana Morales Cervantes
Lia Sandoval Reyes
Evelyn Suchla
Allie Sylla
Hadley Sylla
Harper Symicek

SOPHOMORES

Chase Back
Miriam Cano Alejo
Ingrid Castro Acosta
Alisyn Conrad
Jonathan De la Torre
Shauna Dejno
Danika Ekern
Emily Hovey
Dalton Jasin
Emmalee Jasin
Catherine Kampa
Sophia Kampa
Grant Klimek
Hunter Kreibich
Evelyn Lopez Cano
Daisy Maldonado Ortiz
Arturo Manuel Mendoza
Fahlynnne Maples
Olivia Matchey
Miranda Najera
Jaelyn Pronschinske
Sarah Roskos
Nora Schank
Talon Sobczak

JUNIORS

James Carrillo Taylor
Owen Gierok
Avery Halama
Arabelle Kniseley
Nancy Maldonado Ortiz
Naydi Morales Cervantes
Jacob Pieper
Coltyn Pronschiske
Jocelyn Sandoval Reyes
Morgan Schank
Nolan Schank
Preston Solberg
Taylor Sylla

SENIORS

Kia Back
Andrew Bragger
Whitney Brenny
Dilan Dallman
Lilian Davis
Kassidi Dejno
Carlos Flores
Adian Gaier
Hannah Gierok
Lucas Halvorson
Kendra Klimek
Sam Marsolek
Jenniffer Martinez Garcia
Angie Matute Martinez
Luke Pientok
Nathan Pyka

WELCOME NEW IHS MEMBERS

This fall, junior and senior students who met academic requirements were invited to apply for Independence Honor Society. They completed an application to showcase their leadership roles, community service involvement, and character. Eight students were selected this year. A big congratulations to seniors Angie Matute Martinez, Nathan Pyka, and Kendra Klimek, and juniors Nancy Maldonado Ortiz, Avery Halama, Taylor Sylla, Naydi Morales Cervantes, and Jocelyn Sandoval Reyes. They join existing members Hannah Gierok, Kassidi Dejno, Kia Back, Whitney Brenny, and Charlie Baize.



In addition to honoring and celebrating students' achievements, Indee Honor Society focuses on giving back to the school and Independence community through helping at school events and community events. Students also tutor their peers during our intervention and enrichment periods during the school day. Every year, we plan community service days in both the fall and spring, sending groups of middle and high school students around town to help with projects and clean-up. If you know of a family or business who could use some help, please contact the school office or email guzaa@indps.k12.wi.us. Members are always looking for new ways to better serve our community, and are open to ideas and suggestions!

HOLIDAY DRIVE

This holiday season, our Student Council came together to spread cheer and make a difference in our community by organizing a successful holiday drive benefiting the TCHCC (Tri-County Health Care Center) facilities. Thanks to the generosity of students, faculty, and staff, we collected a variety of donations to help bring holiday spirit to over 250 residents across multiple TCHCC locations. The donations included cozy blankets, clothes and toiletries, all aimed at brightening the lives of those spending the holidays in care facilities. Our efforts were a heartwarming reminder of the power of community and compassion. A huge thank you to everyone who contributed and supported this initiative, making it a memorable and meaningful holiday season for all!



Winter 2025
www.indps.k12.wi.us



HALLOWEEN HAUNTED HOUSE

This October, the Student Council joined forces with the Independence Lions Club to bring the community a thrilling Haunted House experience! Held at the school gym, the event was a spine-chilling success, drawing in families and friends eager for a night of fright and fun. Students worked tirelessly to create an eerie atmosphere with creepy decorations, fog machines, and terrifyingly realistic haunted rooms. Volunteers from the Lions Club helped support the event and provided candy and books to those in attendance. The Haunted House was a fantastic way to celebrate the season and strengthen the bond between our school and the community. A huge thank you to everyone who helped make this event a spooktacular success!



DRAMA CLUB TO *LES MISÉRABLES*

Members of the Indee Drama Club embarked on a wonderful experience to the Orpheum Theater in Minneapolis to see the iconic musical *Les Misérables*. The breathtaking performance, set against the stunning backdrop of the historic theater, left all inspired and moved by its powerful storytelling and beautiful music. Before the show, the group dined on local Vietnamese cuisine, where they were treated to a delicious array of authentic dishes. From pho to spring rolls, the rich flavors and vibrant spices introduced everyone to a new culinary experience. This trip was not only an opportunity to witness off-broadway theater, but also to experience a little of the big city and new culture!

SPRING SPORTS UPDATES AND INFORMATION

Mark your calendars! *Winter Athletic Banquet is Monday, March 3rd at the Independence High School. Snacks will be available at 6:30 pm with the awards presentation beginning at approximately 7:00 pm. Student-athletes are encouraged to dress up for this event.*

Spring Sports are just around the corner, too. These are the following dates for practices to begin:

- Monday, March 10th - High School Track and Field (in the gym) at 3:45 pm
- Monday, March 17th - High School Girls Softball at 3:45 pm
- Monday, March 24th - High School Boys Baseball **TEAM** practice at 3:45 pm.
- Coach Bartingale will give more information about pitching practice
- Monday, March 31st - High School Boys Golf practice at 3:45pm

Please remember that your student-athlete needs to have an updated physical and necessary paperwork handed into the office prior to the first day of practice.

WINTER CO-OP UPDATES

As we begin to plan for the next two-year agreement, the survey that was shared on December 3rd, collected feedback from both school districts. With 105 respondents to the survey, 82% of responded were supportive of continuing with the winter co-op for boys and girls basketball. Roughly, 70% of feedback was positive from the adults, athletes and communities about the first two years (2023-2025). Programs were praised for building relationships between our communities not only within the athletes, but also in the stands with parents and adults. Many had mentioned that it allows both schools to be more competitive and gives our athletes a more appropriate competition level intersquad to develop their skills. We considered all the feedback to develop the 2025-2027 Agreement.

Thank you to our community, parent and student athletes for completing the survey and providing feedback. Below you'll find the comparison between the 2023-2025 Co-op Agreement and the 2025-2027 Co-op Agreement.

2023-2025 Co-op Agreement (GBB, BBB)	2025-2027 Co-op Agreement (GBB, BBB)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host Schools: Independence identified as the WIAA host for girls basketball and Gilman-ton identified as the WIAA host for boys basketball. (<i>Host schools are responsible for submitting participation numbers and other paperwork details.</i>) • Recognized as the "Independence-Gilman-ton Indees" • Practices: practices will be split between the two facilities to prevent "late practices" of the past. • Schedule of Games: hosting "home" events will be shared between each school based on this breakdown: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 Indee home games, Gilman-ton will have the remainder of home games (3, 4 or 5 depending on total number of home games) • Utilizing both facilities • Expenses: cost will follow a predetermined cost-sharing model and include: transportation (away games only), uniforms, coaches, officiating fees, supplies, etc. 	<p>Host school, practices and normal conference game schedules and cost-sharing model will be the same.</p> <p>The 2025-2027 Changes are: All Tournament games will be hosted in the Independence facilities for both boys and girls basketball.</p>



SCHOOL BOARD/ SCHOOL CALENDAR

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SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

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SCHOOL CALENDAR JANUARY—JUNE 2025

January						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			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	

1 New Year's Day
1 Vacation
2 School Resumes
24 Inservice

February						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						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	

6 PT Conferences 4:00-8:00
13 PT Conferences 4:00-8:00
14 No School

March						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						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					

6 End of 2nd Trimester
7 Inservice
10-14 Spring Break
26 Act Date

April						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		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			

9-10 Forward Testing 3-8
17 Inservice
18 & 21 Easter Break

May						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				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

24 Graduation
26 Memorial Day

June						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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					

5 End of 3rd Trimester/Last
12:40pm Dismissal
6 Inservice (1st Snow Make-
up)

Legend

	Holiday		Inservice		Parent/Teacher Conf
	Orientation/Registration		Vacation Day		End of Trimester
	TVC Inservice		Summer School		Summer PD
	ACT Dates/Forward Testing		2:52 Dismissal for Collaboration Time		

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Date provided "as is" without warranty

3 Transition Days

169 Student
192 Teacher
194 New Teacher
5 Holidays for teachers

1st Trimester 56 plus 3 transition days
2nd Trimester 59
3rd Trimester 54
169



SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER COMPETES IN IRONMAN

Brian Bautch competed in the Ironman Marathon held in Hawaii this past fall. This is quite an accomplishment that required extensive training and commitment. Congratulations Brian!

Winter 2025
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UPCOMING EVENTS

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COMMUNITY BREAKFAST

The Independence FFA invites you
to celebrate
National FFA Week with us

Thursday, February 20th, 2025

Serving: 6:30-8:00 am

Enter through the shop and come and enjoy
a meal prepared by the FFA members.

Please RSVP by February 11th to:
meyerj@indps.k12.wi.us or call 715-985-3172



MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Independence FFA
Donkey Basketball

Friday, February 14th

Games start at 7pm in the High School Gym

Make it a date night and join us for a meal.

*Pretickets will be sold by FFA members
or available at the door*



More information will be available closer to the date



🩸 Giving Blood ❤️
Warms the Heart

BLOOD DRIVE

WEDNESDAY MARCH 19th

11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Independence High School Gym



INDEPENDENCE DRAMA CLUB
PRESENTS:

INDEE CABARET

Saturday, April. 26th
6:00 p.m.
Independence High School

Performance of Musical Theater Songs While
Enjoying a Delicious Spaghetti Dinner

Admission:
\$10 Children/Seniors \$15 Adults

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FINANCIAL AID FOR COLLEGE—EASIER THAN EVER

If your child is going on to a 4 year college, technical college or a trade school after high school graduation it is time to apply for Financial Aid. Student financial aid is provided by the federal government, the State of Wisconsin, outside scholarship sources and college campuses to help all students attend the college (2 or 4 year) of their choice. Most aid is based on financial need and is designed to help meet the difference between the cost of college and your family's ability to pay.

The form that needs to be completed in order to receive some of this aid is called the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and can be found at: <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>

There have been major changes to simplify this process and make it more accessible to all families.

Some things to remember:

- Apply early--before April 2nd is recommended
- Income **tax information is required** before a formal aid package can be offered.

Support for completing the FAFSA:

- [College Goal Wisconsin](#)
- [Your college level financial aid office](#)

HIGH SCHOOL SCHEDULING FOR 2025-2026 OPPORTUNITIES ARE ENDLESS

It is an exciting time as our 8th-11th grade students prepare to make choices for their next year of learning. Scheduling materials, including the master schedule draft, Trempealeau Valley Cooperative options, college options, and course descriptions, were shared with students on January 10th and are always available on our school website under Schools>High School>High School Course Selection Information.

Students also heard from a panel of upperclassmen who have all created unique and rigorous schedules about how and why they made the choices they did.

Scheduling/Planning conferences with students and parents begin in late January. We hope all of our students will dream big and plan for the future they wish to have. Independence may be a small school, but it holds great possibilities for all.



ATTENDANCE POLICY

All parents are reminded to call the school by 9:00 a.m. on the day of your child's absence. Failure to notify the school by 9:00 a.m. may result in a disciplinary action for the student. We appreciate your cooperation on this. Again, if parents do not call, then we will call to confirm the fact that parents know where their children are (either at home or school), and that our children are safe. Thanks for your cooperation.



HIGH SCHOOL SCHEDULING FOR 2025-2026 LAS OPORTUNIDADES SON INFINITAS

Es un momento emocionante, ya que nuestros estudiantes de 8 a 11 grado se preparan para tomar decisiones para su próximo año de aprendizaje. Los materiales de programación, incluido el programa maestro, las opciones de la cooperativa de Trempealeau Valley, las opciones universitarias y las descripciones de los cursos, se compartieron con los estudiantes el 10 de enero y siempre están disponibles en el sitio web de nuestra escuela en Escuelas>Escuela secundaria>Información de selección de cursos de la escuela secundaria.

Los estudiantes también escucharon a un panel de estudiantes que han creado horarios únicos y rigurosos sobre cómo y por qué tomaron las decisiones que tomaron.

Las conferencias de programación/planificación con estudiantes y padres comienzan a fines de enero. Esperamos que todos nuestros estudiantes sueñen en grande y planifiquen el futuro que desean tener. Independence puede ser una escuela pequeña, pero ofrece grandes posibilidades para todos. Comuníquese con la Sra. Woychik si tiene alguna pregunta o inquietud.



Una meta sin un plan es solo un deseo.

POLÍTICA DE ASISTENCIA

Se recuerda a todos los padres que llamen a la escuela antes de las 9:00 a. m. el día de la ausencia de su hijo(a). El no notificar a la escuela antes de las 9:00 a. m. puede resultar en una acción disciplinaria para el estudiante. Agradecemos su cooperación. Nuevamente, si los padres no llaman, llamaremos para confirmar el hecho de que los padres saben dónde están sus hijo(a) (ya sea en casa o en la escuela) y que nuestros niños están seguros. Gracias por su cooperación


BADGER GIRLS STATE 2025

In June, Mareni Xochicale (daughter of Cris Xochicale and Yeni Choncoa Tepole) and Avery Halama (daughter of Jason and Jennifer Halama) will represent Independence at Badger Girls State on the UW Oshkosh campus. Students at Badger State stay busy with everything involved with operating a state, including running for elections and conducting business at city, county, and state levels. Students will also participate in fun social activities and enjoy visits from our state's governor and other state-level officials. This powerful experience builds leadership and teamwork skills that develop character, critical thinking, and confidence while fostering friendships and connections that can last a lifetime.

We are thankful for the sponsorship of local community groups, including our American Legion Auxiliary Unit 186, American Legion Post 186, and Independence Lions, that makes this opportunity possible.

Badger State is offered annually to all Juniors. Applications are accepted in late fall.






Independence Public School Memorial Scholarship Fund

The purpose of the Independence Memorial Scholarship Fund is to support and encourage students to continue their education by granting yearly scholarship awards.

The Independence Public School Memorial Scholarship is a fund of the Eau Claire Community Foundation.



DONATE TODAY >>>

Send your donations to Eau Claire Community Foundation, 306 S. Barstow St. Suite 104, Eau Claire, WI 54701 or donate online at www.indps.k12.wi.us, the School District of Independence. Please note the Independence Public School Memorial Scholarship Fund on your check.

Everyone, Every Day

Did you Know?

Did you ever find yourself not being able to attend a concert or event that one of your family members are a part of? Well, don't miss another event! Many of the events, including concerts, special presentations and graduation, are live streamed using the school's Polycom camera. On the day of the event, log into the school's website (www.indps.k12.wi.us) and on the left side of the page there is a link called Indee TV Live. If you are not available to watch it live, you can also click on the link Indee TV and there are archived events listed.

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www.indps.k12.wi.us



THURS, FEBRUARY 6TH

4:00 - 7:00 PM



**DURING PARENT
TEACHER CONF.**

**HOSTED BY
HISTORY CLUB
\$6.00 A MEAL**

**PARENT TEACHER
CONFERENCES**

4:00 PM - 8:00 PM

**Thursday, February 6th &
Thursday, February 13th**

ENTER THROUGH CAFETORIUM DOORS



UPCOMING EVENTS PRÓXIMOS EVENTOS

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INDEPENDENCE SCHOOL DISTRICT

● 4K REGISTRATION

~**FEBRUARY 28TH** 1:00pm-6:00pm

For all students starting 4K for the 2025-2026 school year. Come and meet your teachers and see your classroom!



● FUTURE INDEE MEET AND GREET 1:00pm-6:00pm ~**FEBRUARY 28TH**

For all children 2 1/2-4 years old. This is an opportunity for our future INDEES to come meet teachers and see the school. You can also learn about services in the community for families with young children.

Please call to register for your child's visit by February 7th
715-985-3172

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DISTRITO ESCOLAR DE INDEPENDENCE

● INSCRIPCIÓN DE 4K

~**28 DE FEBRERO** 1:00pm-6:00pm

Para todos los estudiantes que comienzan 4K para el año escolar 2025-2026. ¡Ven a conocer a tus maestros y ver tu salón de clases!



● FUTURO INDEE-CONOCER Y SALUDAR 1:00pm-6:00pm ~**28 DE FEBRERO**

Para todos los niños de 2 años y medio a 4 años. Esta es una oportunidad para que nuestros futuros INDEES vengan a conocer a los maestros y a ver la escuela. También pueden obtener información sobre los servicios que ofrece la comunidad para familias con niños pequeños.

Por favor llame para registrarse para la visita de su hijo(a)
antes del 7 de febrero al **715-985-3172**

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UPCOMING EVENTS PRÓXIMOS EVENTOS

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ELEMENTARY
AND
MIDDLE SCHOOL

SUMMER SCHOOL

2025

SAVE THE DATE!

June 16-July 3

MORE INFORMATION COMING SOON!



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ESCUELA ELEMENTAL
Y SECUNDARIA

ESCUELA DE VERANO

2025

¡RESERVE LAS FECHAS!

16 de junio - 3 de julio

¡MAS INFORMACIÓN PRÓXIMAMENTE!



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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Independence School District is accepting applications for the following coaching positions.

Spring 2025 Season (Due February 1st)

Assistant Softball Coach

Sport specific background knowledge and experience is expected. Responsibilities of coaching staff would include but is no limited to:

- Completing WIAA required rules and videos exams
- Support the head coach in fostering a positive team environment
- Assisting in planning and carrying out practices to develop skills and techniques
- Attend and provide in-game support and feedback, analyze gameplay.

Fall 2025 Season:

Head Volleyball Coach

Sport specific background knowledge and experience is expected. Responsibilities of coaching staff would include but is no limited to:

- Completing WIAA required rules and videos exams
- Recruiting and encouraging student athletes to participate in athletic activities
- Design and carrying out practice plans that focus on skill development and team strategies.
- Evaluate and select team members for varsity, junior varsity and c teams
- Communicate with parents, players and school personnel
- Working with the Athletic Directors on scheduling, transportation, code of conduct
- Keeping inventory and preparing requisitions for each season.
- Promoting sportsmanship amongst athletes, parents and fans

Persons interested in a coaching positions should submit a cover letter along with two letters of recommendation to

Jenna Sonsalla, Athletic Director
Independence Public School
23786 Indee Blvd, Independence, WI 54747

or via email at sonsallaj@indps.k12.wi.us

Positions are open until filled.



CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE

www.indps.k12.wi.us is the web address for our dynamic website which is changing and evolving. We are hoping to make our website a 1-stop spot where parents find information on school, school events, forms, the school calendar, lunch menu, and more. Where students find resources. And where anyone can go to find information on our district, where you can access our community link and find information on our Indee Booster Club, the Fitness Center, a link to our Volunteer page, current and past newsletters, School Board minutes, videos, and more.

Announcements on TCC Station

Viewers can tune into 18-84 or HD channel 884 to view school announcements.

Newsletter Copy Editor/Production Editor

Tracy Halama

Editorial Administrator:

Mr. Paul Franzwa

SCHOOL DELAYS AND CLOSINGS DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

School District of Independence

ANNOUNCEMENTS WILL BE MADE ON THE FOLLOWING STATIONS:

Whitehall

102.3 FM

Winona

KWNO 1230AM

KAGE Country 1380AM

KAGE-95.3FM

CD Country 99.3FM

Soft Rock 101.1 FM

Eau Claire

WEAUX FOX 48

I-94 94.1FM

WAXX 104.5FM

WAYY 790AM

COOL 92.9FM

Z-100 100.7FM

WEAU TV 13

The Mix 98.1 FM

Eau Claire Cont.

B-95 95.1 FM

ROCK 92.1 FM

News Talk 880 AM

Sports Radio 1400 AM

WQOW TV 18

Moose Country 106.7FM

SportsTalk 105.1 FM

LaCrosse

KICKS 106.3

WIZM 1410AM

Z93 93.3FM

WKBT TV 8

WLAX FOX 25

WXOW TV 19

www.indps.k12.wi.us www.lacrosserradiogroup.net www.wxow.com/closings www.weau.com/weather/closings

Student safety is the primary consideration in making a decision relating to school delays or school closings. Normally, one of three decisions is made. The first may be a late start. In this case a two-hour school delay is our standard procedure. The second decision we may make is to close school for the day. The third decision is an early release from school, normally at 1:00pm.

We realize that parents have to make childcare arrangements for the day. Therefore, we will try to make school delay or closing decisions the night before, if possible. In the event it's not possible, we will strive to make a decision by 6:00am.

SCHOOL MESSENGER – A communication system (phone and/or email) used to deliver information to parents and/or guardians as soon as possible.



Clipart Sources Throughout Newsletter

<http://www.google.com>

USE OF OUR SCHOOL

The following are Adult/Community Opportunities to use our school:

- Walking and community exercise 5:30am-7:30am and 4:00pm.-10:00pm. (Background check and school pass from the school required, stop in school office during regular school hours.)
- Meeting Rooms and Athletic facilities can be reserved by filing a Facilities Request form available at the school.
- Weight room with a membership (stop in to Student Services)

Independence Public School & Western Dairyland's Retired and Senior Volunteer Program



EAGLE'S NEST PANTRY

STUDENTS AND FAMILIES
MAY CHOOSE FOOD ITEMS TO
TAKE HOME ONCE A WEEK.



*Funding provided by:
Great Rivers United
Way, Feed My People and
private donations.

Donations Accepted:
Eagles Nest Pantry
PO 125 Independence, WI
54747

Call for more info 715-985-3172

EARN CASH FOR SCHOOLS WITH BOX TOPS

TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

For over 25 years, Box Tops for Education has given families an easy way to earn for schools with products they already buy. Today, you can find thousands of participating products throughout the store—and all you need is the Box Tops app.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:



BUY
BOX TOPS
PRODUCTS

Earn for schools with the brands you love.



SCAN
YOUR
RECEIPT

Use the BoxTops app to submit your receipt within 14 days of purchase.



EARN
CASH FOR
SCHOOLS

BoxTops products are identified and earnings are credited online.



ONLINE SHOPPERS CAN EARN WITH BOX TOPS, TOO!

Whether you order groceries for delivery or pickup, shop through your store's app, or request an email receipt at checkout, you can earn for your school no matter where you shop.

SEE PRODUCTS & LEARN MORE ABOUT
THE BOX TOPS APP AT BTFE.COM

DON'T HAVE THE BOX TOPS
APP YET? DOWNLOAD IT NOW



School-Based Mental Health Counseling

WHAT Caillier Clinic OFFERS?



1-to-1 Counseling Sessions



Available during the school day

The application includes the
need for insurance information.

CONTACT a principal, Mrs. Woychik
or Mrs. Gruber for more information

715.985.3172

www.caillierclinic.com

CAILLIER
CLINIC

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www.indps.k12.wi.us



thank you

Thank you to the following families for their memorial gifts. These donations will fund the Independence Public School Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Donation from:	In memory of:
Jerry Halama	Marcus Woychik
Barry & Judy	Conrad Halama
Unknown	Marie Kloss
Amy Begley	Brian Kulig
Julie Pronschinske	Dora Jean Blaha



EXHIBIT C

Official Referendum Ballot

April 1, 2025

Notice to Voters: If you are voting on Election Day, your ballot must be initialed by two election inspectors. If you are voting absentee, your ballot must be initialed by the municipal clerk or deputy clerk. Your ballot may not be counted without initials. (See end of ballot for initials).

If you make a mistake on your ballot or have a question, ask an election inspector for help. (Absentee voters: contact your municipal clerk).

To vote in favor of a question, make an "X" or other mark in the square next to "Yes," like this: ☒

To vote against a question, make an "X" or other mark in the square next to "No," like this: ☒

School District

Question: Shall the School District of Independence, Trempealeau and Buffalo Counties, Wisconsin be authorized to exceed the revenue limit specified in Section 121.91, Wisconsin Statutes, by \$900,000 per year for three years, beginning with the 2025-2026 school year and ending with the 2027-2028 school year, for non-recurring purposes consisting of operational and maintenance expenses?

☐ Yes

☐ No

The newsletter of
Independence School District
Independence, WI 54747



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