



## Just Imagine

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For more information, please contact:

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Winneconne, Wis. — Winneconne Community School District is planning for the future with the creation of a school district-wide privately funded endowment fund. This privately funded, long-term approach will help to address the cycle of budget shortfalls that have been experienced from time to time.

Several years ago, the District and the Winneconne community began a journey to set our schools apart as a destination district. Great strides have been made, most noticeably the building of the new STEAM center and the Winneconne Community Arts Center (WCAC). Along with the physical evidence of the journey have been great student outcomes: a 100% graduation rate in 2017 and 2018; having the 4th highest achieving 4K-12 public school district in Wisconsin in 2016-17 (results for 2017-18 have not been released); and having the District Significantly Exceed Expectations on the State report card.

The District continues to be financially proactive and to actively engage the community. The Winneconne Area Community Foundation (WACF) and local community members have teamed up to form a group called Winneconne Champions. The Winneconne Champions are committed to exploring ways that private funding can enhance school programming and provide long-term financial stability to the District.

The first major project of the Winneconne Champions was to create a District-wide Endowment Fund held at WACF. The Endowment Fund is special because all donations to the fund contribute to the fund's principal and are never spent. Only the interest or earnings on the principal can be spent, at the discretion of the School Board. The benefit of this approach is that in the long term—ten, twenty or even fifty years from now—the earnings of the Endowment Fund will provide flexible funding for the District to use as needed, independent of state funding.

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**Winneconne Area Community Foundation**

*An affiliate of the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation*

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There are already many examples of how private funding enhances programs offered at the District. Two recent projects are the Heidi Jerabek Memorial Piano, which was purchased with private donations held in a fund at the WACF as well as the new weight room, which was also built as the result of private donations. What you may not know is that both these projects will continue to have their own funds at WACF to support the cost of ongoing maintenance, which alleviates that burden on the District.

A few other examples of groups and causes that have funds at WACF to support their long term success are: Winneconne Area Education Fund (teacher grants), Winneconne School District Extracurricular Fund, Winneconne Community Arts Center Fund (WCAC Fund), WCSD Emotional Wellness/Mental Health Fund, WCSD Athletic Field Improvement Fund, Heidi Jerabek Memorial Piano Fund and several others, including many scholarship funds.

"Community involvement has always been part of the success of our District. Now, we want to give members of the community who want to support the District's work in the long-term an opportunity to do that with private donations." Peggy Larson District Administrator.

WACF President Mike Vaughn adds: "With the creation of the Endowment Fund, donors also have the option to leave a legacy gift in their estate plan that will give back year after year, decade after decade. This is a great way to give to the District in a lasting way."

All of the funds are held at WACF, an affiliate of the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation, where they are pooled together and professionally invested for the maximum return on investment. This means more growth for the long-term. If you are interested in donating to any of the existing funds, or starting a fund of your own, or would like information on how to include these funding options in your estate planning, please contact Mike Vaughn, President of WACF by phone at 920-789-8514 or email: [mvaughan@fortifibank](mailto:mvaughan@fortifibank). Donations to any fund are tax deductible and can be mailed to WACF P.O. Box 476 Winneconne WI 54986. Please clearly indicate on the check which fund should receive the donation.

The Winneconne Area Community Foundation benefits charitable organizations in the Winneconne Community School District, which includes Larsen, Winchester, Poygan and Buttes des Morts. An affiliate of the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation, a 501(c)3 nonprofit, donors enjoy maximum tax benefits. For more information, please call 920-426-3993 or go to [www.OshkoshAreaCF.org](http://www.OshkoshAreaCF.org).

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