



A Community of Learners

Informational Memo: Winnetka Parents Institute

TO: School Board
Superintendent Kocanda

FROM: Kate Hughes, Communications & Community Relations Coordinator

October 17, 2017

Background & Overview

The Winnetka Public Schools has a longstanding commitment to parent education via efforts such as the Winnetka Parents Institute (WPI), which offers a series of District and school-specific discussions and events, providing education and information about the District's philosophy and practices to the Winnetka community.

In 2016-2017, the District had an increased strategic approach to planning and communicating Parent Education topics in order to:

- Make a tangible connection between the District's Shared Vision and WPI topics;
- Enhance consistency in communication throughout the school community;
- Provide an opportunity for the "Community of Learners" in Winnetka to engage together and learn about a variety of topics;
- Support parent/teacher communication efforts;
- Proactively address questions and topics of interest that arise within the community;
- Incorporate feedback from the District's 2016 Survey to determine WPI sessions. Parents referenced Math; STEAM; Social and Emotional Wellness; Progressive Education; and the New Trier Experience as key areas of interest and all of these areas were themes of Winnetka Parents Institute events in 2016-2017. [By the end of the 2016-2017 school year, 18 WPI sessions were held hosting 421](#)

participants. On average, 98% of participants indicated a better understanding of the topic based on evaluations.

Alignment with the District 36 Shared Vision

The District 36 2017-2018 WPI program continues to align with the “all learners” element of the District’s Shared Vision.

- The reference to “all learners” in our Shared Vision is not limited to students, but our entire community.
- Through a robust offering of WPI sessions and concerted communication efforts, the District is able to support parents to enrich their own knowledge on various topics, as well as learn best practices to **support, challenge, and empower** their child at home.
- The WPI events planned for 2017-2018 are designed to help educate and inform parents on an array of topics, all of which ultimately connect back to the goals outlined in our Shared Vision and areas of focus for *Future Ready D36*.

In 2017-2018, intended outcomes for the WPI program include:

- Make a tangible connection between the District’s Shared Vision, the importance of *Future Ready D36*, and WPI topics;
- Maintain consistency in communication throughout the school community;
- Provide an opportunity for the “Community of Learners” in Winnetka to engage together and learn about a variety of topics;
- Continue to support parent/teacher communication efforts;
- Proactively address questions and topics of interest that arise within the community, specifically in the area of social and emotional wellness;
- Expand the scope of WPI attendees to include more future parents, grandparents, etc.
- Maintain at least 90% or greater indication that there was an increase in understanding by parents for WPI sessions.

Next Steps

The District will continue to disseminate WPI information via communication platforms (i.e. website, newsletters, video, and social media). Principals will continue to work together to coordinate communication efforts on important topics in school e-newsletters. The District will maintain its WPI event calendar and subsequent videos of each session via the WPI webpage. Additionally, attendance and satisfaction will be measured after

WPI sessions. The District will also continue to partner with The Alliance for Early Childhood and other local organizations to share information on events that may be relevant to community members and future parents.

The fall 2017-2018 WPI calendar may be found [here](#).