



A Community of Learners

Informational Memo: Winnetka Parents Institute

TO: School Board
Superintendent Kocanda

FROM: Kate Hughes, Communications & Community Relations Coordinator

October 23, 2018

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.

Through the WPI program, the District seeks 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 parents as to what they would like to see addressed in WPI sessions, such as Social and Emotional Wellness; Progressive Education; and the New Trier Experience. By the end of the 2017-2018 school year, 19 WPI sessions were held hosting 314 participants. On average, 97% of participants indicated a better understanding of the topic based on evaluations.

Alignment with the District 36 Shared Vision

The District 36 2018-2019 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 2018-2019 are designed to help educate and inform parents on an array of topics, all of which ultimately connect back to our Shared Vision.

In 2018-2019, intended outcomes for the WPI program include:

- [Support the Home-School-Community Partnership component of the Reaching ALL Learners Goal;](#)
 - Maintain at least 90% or greater indication that there was an increase in understanding by parents for WPI sessions. [In 2017-2018, 97% of parents indicated that session they attended increased their understanding on the topic.](#)
 - Increase attendance to 350 guests ([baseline in 2017-2018=314](#));
 - Collaborate with the Department of Student Services to plan and promote three WPI sessions for parents pertaining to student support in and out of school;
 - Increase courses focused on Social and Emotional Wellness to four per semester;
- Make a tangible connection between the District’s Shared Vision and WPI topics;
- 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;
- Continue to expand the scope of WPI attendees to include more future parents, grandparents, neighbors, etc.;

Next Steps

The District will continue to disseminate WPI information via communication platforms (i.e. website, newsletters, 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 2018-2019 WPI calendar may be found [here](#).