



A Community of Learners

Informational Memo-Winnetka Parents Institute

TO: School Board
Superintendent Kocanda

FROM: Kate Hughes, Communications & Community Relations Coordinator

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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 Winnetka community and New Trier Township;
- Incorporate feedback from parents and educators to inform session topics.

Highlights from 2018-2019

- ❑ [By the end of the 2018-2019 school year, 14 WPI sessions were held hosting 513 participants, a record number of guests.](#)
- ❑ [On average, 96% of participants indicated a better understanding of the topic based on evaluations.](#)
- ❑ Social Emotional Learning and device/screen time management were popular topics; offerings on these topics were increased in 2018-2019 based on parent and educator feedback.
- ❑ The District partnered with New Trier Township feeder schools, as well as New Trier High School, to co-host events and expand parent education offerings to benefit the greater North Shore community.

Alignment with the District 36 Shared Vision

The District 36 2019-2020 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 2019-2020 are designed to help educate and inform parents on an array of topics, most of which ultimately connect back to our Shared Vision and the District’s Social Emotional Learning goal.

In 2019-2020, intended outcomes for the WPI program include:

- ❑ Support the District’s Social Emotional Learning goal by offering sessions on this topic throughout the school year;
- ❑ Maintain at least 90% or greater indication that there was an increase in understanding by parents for WPI sessions;
- ❑ Support parent/teacher communication efforts;
- ❑ Proactively address questions and topics of interest that arise within the community (i.e. continue to partner with New Trier Township Instructional Coaches, New Trier Township Tech Directors, Apple Professional Development, Erikson Institute for Early Childhood Education, Common Sense Media);

- ❑ Collaborate with District partner Family Action Network on additional events featuring speakers focused on SEL and early childhood development topics;
- ❑ 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 applicable sessions 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, New Trier High School, Family Action Network, and other local organizations to share information on events that may be relevant to community members and future parents.

[The fall 2019-2020 WPI calendar is here.](#)