



SCHOOL DISTRICT of SHEBOYGAN FALLS

Expect the Exceptional

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE RESIDENTS OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SHEBOYGAN FALLS | SPRING 2019

Universal Design for Learning in Action: Different Paths to Learning

A classroom of third graders at Sheboygan Falls Elementary School had a choice to make. They were starting a lesson about how to edit a piece of persuasive writing. Teacher Matt Daniels directed the students to “think about how you work best.” They could choose to work on a computer and watch a video, or work directly with the teacher.

Within minutes, each student made a choice. Many had settled on chairs or on the floor in the back of the classroom, Chromebooks open and headphones in place to eliminate distractions. The others gathered around Becky Barros – who co-teaches the class – and listened intently as she went over the lesson.

The rules for the assignment were the same for each student, however, when using the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework to structure the lesson, students could choose the way they interacted with instruction and how they delivered their finished writing



UDL helps students understand their individual learning styles.



Students choose the right tool for their own learning.

project. “Learning takes learners down different paths. UDL allows teachers to empower their learners and provide accessibility for ALL.” Barros explained.

“UDL allows teachers to empower their learners and provide accessibility for all.”

Training in UDL has been ongoing for

three years. This is the first year that Daniels and Barros have designed their lessons using UDL. “We found a huge difference in student engagement,” Barros said. Students who chose the online method of delivery used their Chromebooks to access the lesson instructions via a recorded video online and worked individually. Students who chose whole group instruction first listened to a teacher explain the

lesson in a group, then worked independently.

Daniels said students are free to use different applications to produce their work, too. Some may use a word processing application like Google Docs. Others may choose the voice recognition feature of Google Read and Write where they can dictate into the computer. “It’s about giving students whatever resources they need to be successful,” Daniels said.

At the end of the lesson, all students completed a check list of assigned tasks and handed their work to the teachers. “That’s why UDL is powerful. It uses the tools that the students know, and turns them into an educational experience,” Barros said.

WE INNOVATE

UDL Means Finding the Right Tools for Learning

Based on scientific research about learning, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) calls for all learning experiences to accommodate the individual learning needs and/or limitations of students while they all pursue a particular learning outcome.

As part of a multi-year project, Sheboygan Falls teachers are learning and using the UDL framework to rework the way lessons are delivered to all students. This is year three, and the focus is on how to better use technology to increase accessibility.

In addition to classroom teachers’ use of technology, Canvas Learning Management System was introduced District-wide. Canvas is an online space where teachers store and share resources for students making materials accessible online 24/7. Parents and guardians can view the materials, helping families plug into classroom activities to support learning.

A Special Kind of Support

Mary Hammarlund is an active high school student, involved in many co-curricular activities and pursuing a part-time job. Diagnosed with autism at age three, Mary struggles with social skills and communication.

For students on the autism spectrum, appearing different isn't easy. Mary's personal story about learning to thrive with her autism has been a journey, and one she willingly shares with others.



"I want everyone to know that even if it seems that I'm different, I'm really not that different from everyone else and I have a potential to succeed," said Mary.

She and her mother, Amy, credit Mary's success to the supportive teachers from early childhood through her current junior year who helped her develop strategies to deal with some of the manifestations of her autism.

April is National Autism Awareness Month and Mary presents about autism to other students. She tells her story to inform them about autism and to challenge the misconceptions and myths that may exist.

Now, like other high school students, she is thinking about her future plans. Mary wants to go into teaching and follow in the footsteps of one of her role models, Sheboygan Falls Middle School teacher Jodie Miles.



Junior Mary Hammarlund shares her personal story to help demystify autism for her peers.

"I want to go into special education," Mary said. "I struggled a lot when I was younger and she helped me a lot. I hope I can be an example to others like she was an example for me."

Read Mary's full story online at the district's website www.sheboyganfalls.k12.wi.us.

Follow your dreams, Mary!

WE SUPPORT THE WHOLE CHILD

Working Together to Address Mental Health for All

Social and emotional well-being is crucial if students are to succeed academically. Emilie Dahm, District Director of Student Services, said that like everywhere, mental health concerns are here in Sheboygan Falls, too.

"There is a lot of stress in our world, and that spills over into school. That's not unusual. We want to be sure that when people are in our schools, we are all alert to all of their needs," said

Dahm. "We are seeking to raise awareness about mental health issues realizing that there is much yet to do," she said.

As an initial focus, Britne Lorge,

elementary and middle school counselor, with Ben Koepsell, high school counselor, provided trauma-sensitive schools training for all staff, intended to raise awareness of the effect of trauma on students. Recent brain research has discovered that being exposed to trauma on a regular basis changes the way the brain works in children and adults and can shut down the ability to learn.

Trauma can be a parent's divorce, the loss of a job or the death of a family member. It can also be sexual or physical abuse. Trauma and mental

health issues can affect school staff as well as students. "Everyone sees it in a different way," Lorge explained. "It's trauma when it's something someone can't move on from."

"We are seeking to raise awareness about mental health issues realizing that there is much yet to do."

In addition to the training, Lorge, Koepsell and other

district professionals are part of the district's mental health committee. The team is developing lists of community resources and making connections that can be shared with parents and others. A sub-committee is also working on the roll-out of social emotional learning standards.

"The important thing is to focus on the whole person," said Lorge. "We're trying to stress that social and emotional learning happens in every classroom, every day. School counselors can't do it all so we all need to work together."



All staff received a self-care kit that kicked off the theme "Wellness Let's Do This Together". The kits contained suggestions for recognizing and reducing stress for oneself as well as tips for classroom teachers to use with students, and others.

WE ARE COMMUNITY

SFHS Students Sample Career Options while Gaining Real-life Lessons

As students explore the academic and career pathways available at the Sheboygan Falls High School, students learn many important lessons. Some lessons prepare students for a career: All lessons prepare students for life as an adult.

Business Education

SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT MARKETING

Sheboygan Falls High School business education teacher Jim Conklin helps students turn a love of sports into a job. The Sports Marketing course introduces students to business-related career options in the sports and entertainment field. Students learn what it takes – not to make the team – but how to help the team become a successful business.



Family & Consumer Science

HANDS-ON CAREER EXPERIENCES

When sampling possible careers, Family and Consumer Science high school students don't just read about them. They do them. Students considering a teaching career work with younger students in the classroom. Aspiring fashion designers design and create new items of clothing out of jeans. Budding chefs plan and prepare meals for groups of hungry diners.



Building & Construction

ON-SITE HABITAT FOR HUMANITY BUILDS

Building and construction trades students had the opportunity to work on two Habitat for Humanity Homes in Sheboygan County. The students worked alongside Ed Hughes and Habitat mentors, from pouring a basement to window and drywall installation and carpentry work throughout the homes.



Preparing to Save Lives

REAL-TIME LIFEGUARD TRAINING

Aquatic Center lifeguards participated in a joint training with Sheboygan Falls First Responders. Participants practiced responses to a variety of different head, neck, and spine injuries which could occur at the pool. Both groups learned ideas and strategies to better prepare them in the event of an emergency.





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On to Their Futures

Seniors presented their English 12 projects and spoke to visitors about the problem they researched and the solution they proposed at the Senior Showcase held on Wednesday, March 20 in the high school cafeteria and the surrounding hallways. The topics ranged from environmental issues to mechanical issues to educational issues. Students chose topics at the beginning of the second semester and have been working toward the showcase since then. The Class of 2019 will graduate on June 2, 2019. Best of luck to all!

Fulfilling Our Promise: Expect the Exceptional

- **COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES** range from literacy and math to digital communication, technology skills, one-to-one devices, agricultural education, academic and career planning, music, art, performance, athletics, advanced placement, and more.



- **THE FOUR Cs** – collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and communication – are a part of every day.
- **AS PARTNERS WITH FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY**, our dedicated staff support the whole child and meet the needs of individual children, in safe learning environments.



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For enrollment information, to arrange a tour, or to ask questions, contact Julie Hahn at (920) 467-7893 or jmhahn@sheboyganfalls.k12.wi.us.

www.sheboyganfalls.k12.wi.us