



Dude, Where's My School... Now and In the Future?

By Tom DeKeyser | Superintendent & Middle and High School Principal

More precisely, where are Whitmore Lake Public Schools on the four areas of focus with which we evaluate each and every week and have committed to expanding: Budgets, Academic Programs/Achievement, School Safety, and Facilities/Infrastructure. And, where are the schools going in the future?

Let's start with district finances because it is a good indicator of stability and opportunity. WLPS ended the 2014-15 school year with a fund balance at 3.2%. In 2015-16, the fund balance improved to 6.6%. WLPS concluded this past school year, 2016-17, with a fund balance of 9.8%. And, our predicted balance at the conclusion of 2017-18 school year is 10.2%!

This steady improvement over the past few years has allowed WLPS to invest in academic programs aimed at improving the quality of education our students receive from our professional teachers and support staff. For example:

- High school students will have the opportunity to take Advanced Placement classes in computer sciences this year. This is the third year in a row we've added to our AP course selection.
- We have improved science programs through integrating a technology-based and interactive curriculum in physical, earth, and life sciences.
- 5th and 6th grade students will utilize Project-Based Learning on a daily basis.
- Students in pre-K through 2nd grade will be introduced and immersed in Mandarin Chinese through a partnership which brings teachers from China to our schools!

The access to finances doesn't just spell more programs for students. Our entire staff is committed to teaching your children in safe environments. All staff members will receive training on the state's new policies and procedures for keeping our students safe. Crisis teams of highly-trained staff will be established for each building.

In addition to receiving training in the physical care of students, our professional and support staff will be trained to better identify patterns of behavior which can lead to academic regression and classroom disruptions. We are committed to understanding the problems our students face and finding interventions which don't impede student achievement.

Finally, with the support of our awesome community, we are starting to use Sinking Fund resources to further improve facilities with updated and energy-efficient lighting and to make significant repairs to existing athletic fields. We look forward to expanding the improvement of facilities this year and next as we target the elementary school grounds and look for district-wide energy efficiencies to keep as many general fund dollars as possible in the classroom.

The 2016-2017 school year was a good year to be a Trojan... 2017-2018 will be a great year.