



2013 Award Recipient

Pewaukee School District

The Pewaukee School District (PSD) is the smallest K-12 educational system in Waukesha County, Wis. (outside Milwaukee), with an enrollment of 2,760 students. PSD includes four schools (two elementary schools, one middle school and one high school) housed on an 85-acre campus that serves students from both the city and village of Pewaukee. The district is staffed by 296 employees and operates under a budget of \$28.6 million.

Meeting High Standards for Performance

- Despite having one of the most rigorous public school graduation requirements (28 credits) in the state, PSD achieved a 97.4 percent graduation rate in 2012-2013 and had a higher graduation rate from 2008 through 2012 than other county, state and nearby high-performing districts. A key measure of college and career readiness, the percentage of PSD students attending a two- or four-year college increased from 78.8 percent in 2006-2007 to 91.9 percent in 2011-2012. This compares favorably to the county (84 percent), state (74.1 percent), and nearby high-performing districts (85.1 percent).
- All PSD schools have met the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standard, a measurement defined by the federal No Child Left Behind law that annually determines student, school and district academic performance.
- PSD has increased its advanced placement (AP) offerings from nine in 2006-2007 to 17 in 2013-2014. Its AP exam pass rate of 76 percent in 2011-2012 was higher than the county (73.9 percent) and the state (68 percent). PSD's ACT composite scores of 23.4 outperform both the state (22) and national (20.9) averages.
- PSD's economically disadvantaged students surpassed the performance of similar students in the county, state and nearby high-performing schools on the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concept Examinations (WKCE) reading proficiency tests by achieving 45.5 percent proficiency compared to scores below 33 percent.

Satisfied Parents, Involved Students

- Parent and student satisfaction surveys show PSD parent satisfaction with communication ranged between 91.5 percent and 94.8 percent at the four schools in 2012-2013, while the national average was 74 percent. Parent satisfaction with educational quality during the same school year was 93.8 percent.
- Extremely low dropout and truancy rates, along with high levels of student volunteering, demonstrate the effectiveness of the district's efforts to engage students. PSD's low dropout rate of 0.09 percent



Highlights

- PSD's mission—"Opening the Door to Each Child's Future"—is the foundation for its empowering approach to teaching and learning. Teachers use leading indicators, benchmarks and multiple assessments to tailor classroom instruction to best serve the needs of each student.
- Despite having one of the most rigorous public school graduation requirements (28 credits) in the state, PSD achieved a 97.4 percent graduation rate in 2012-2013 and had a higher graduation rate from 2008-2012 than other county, state and nearby high-performing districts.
- Action plans are developed to ensure the accomplishment of PSD's strategic objectives and are reviewed every 90 days. PSD completed 98 percent of its action plans in 2012-2013.
- PSD was named by the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* as one of Wisconsin's Top 100 Workplaces for the years 2011, 2012 and 2013. Staff satisfaction ratings for salaries, benefits and engagement/involvement all far exceed the national averages.



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exceeds those of the county, state and nearby high-performing districts by a factor of five to 15. PSD's truancy rate of 0.40 percent is between three to 22 times better than the county, state and nearby high-performing districts. Seventy-six percent of PSD students volunteered in 2012-2013, more than double the national average. Total volunteer hours increased from 9,932 in 2007-2008 to 26,083 in 2012-2013.

Strategic Planning Yields Quality Education

- Through strategic planning, PSD identified and implemented a number of innovative practices to increase student achievement, including personalized learning, a 1:1 laptop initiative for Grades 5 and higher, blended courses that combine face-to-face and online learning, a community volunteer program, an elementary world language study, and innovative student schedules that maximize learning time.
- Action plans are developed to ensure the accomplishment of PSD's strategic objectives and are reviewed every 90 days. Budget, staffing and professional development plans are aligned with strategic initiatives, and school improvement plans are created at each individual school to support the district's goals for teaching and learning. PSD completed 98 percent of its action plans in 2012-2013.

Winning Team from Engaged Leaders, Empowered Staff

- PSD's mission—"Opening the Door to Each Child's Future"—is the foundation for its empowering approach to teaching and learning. PSD's Curriculum Review and Design Process enables district leaders and teachers to work collaboratively to create an environment for individualized student learning. Teachers use leading indicators, benchmarks and multiple assessments to tailor classroom instruction to best serve the needs of each student.
- PSD was named by the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* as one of Wisconsin's Top 100 Workplaces for the years 2011-2013. Staff satisfaction was 73.1 percent for salaries, 81.5 percent with benefits, and 91.6 percent with engagement and involvement—all far exceeding the national averages.
- PSD regularly surveys its staff to evaluate leadership effectiveness. In 2012-2013, 96 percent of staff members responded positively to the statement "the district leadership has a positive future vision for PSD." Additionally, 98 percent responded positively to the statement "the district leadership provides quality education to students."
- The superintendent deploys a 360-degree feedback survey to all employees to obtain actionable feedback. Recently, 95.86 percent of employees said they were satisfied that the superintendent promotes use of an effective strategic planning model to plan for the future, and 97.42 percent were satisfied that she advocates for the district with the community at large. In 2013, she was named Wisconsin Superintendent of the Year.

- The PSD Board of Education deploys a governance system to review and achieve fiscal and management accountability, transparency in operations, and protection of stakeholder interests. PSD's senior leaders rigorously promote ethical behavior, including ethics training for new employees. The school district has achieved 100 percent compliance for key fiscal, ethical and legal measures related to open meetings laws, ethics management and safety training.

Top Grades for Fiscal Responsibility

- PSD demonstrates strong financial performance. The district's Moody bond rating, an indicator of fiscal strength, was raised from "Aa3" to "Aa2" in 2010, while ratings for many districts in Wisconsin and throughout the nation dropped.
- Recognizing that fiscal integrity is based on having a fund balance to utilize as working capital, PSD has increased its fund balance from just over \$300,000 in 1997-1998 to nearly \$4.6 million in 2012-2013. This represents a working capital fund making up 17 percent of the district's operating budget.

A Valued Member of the Community

- Stakeholders in the community are kept apprised on how well PSD is meeting its mission through regular reports, newsletters, meetings, videos, new employee orientations, supplier reviews, social media and the district's website.
- PSD shares its facilities for community events free of charge, maintains a scholarship fund and provides many hours of community and volunteer service from staff and senior leaders.

For more information:

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