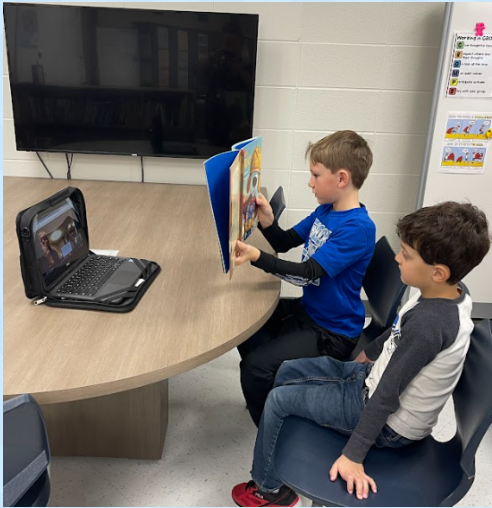


FLEX ACADEMY

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



During our Quarter 2 Pillars Day Flex Students spent the morning with a focus on Service Learning. Our Students were paired with a buddy and read books virtually to the residents at the St. Paul Home in Kaukauna. In the afternoon we focused on Health & Wellness and had Chef Shaw from Taher come in to teach students safe knife skills

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MESSAGE FROM MS. SCHMIDT

It is hard to believe we are at the midyear point. We have had many great learning experiences this past quarter as well as family activities.

This year has truly been an opportunity to bring back some of the traditional activities and components of Flex Academy and finding new ways to ensure we are inclusive to the needs of our families. One example of this would be our Popcorn with Peeps versus Parents. This allows us to share the greatness of Flex with others as well as invite all students to participate.

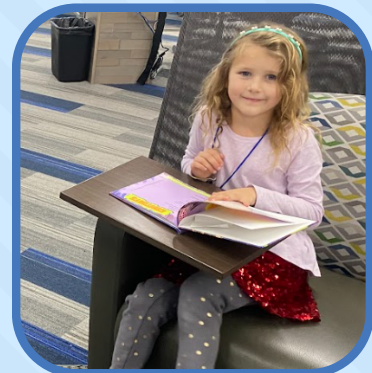
We have had new families join our school throughout the second quarter and look forward to additional third quarter. We are working hard to market our school and appreciate all of the word of mouth recommendations from you.

Enjoy our second quarterly newsletter of our 22-23 school year and check out our website for more information. Thank you for your support!

~ Heidi Schmidt, Principal of Flex Academy



Our K-3 Students have enjoyed being able to utilize the library to check out books!





We will Learn,
Serve, and Be
Well!

STAYING TRUE TO OUR PILLARS

KELLY LAMERS - K-1 GRADEBAND TEACHER

When a charter school is developed, they create a plan that holds them true to what their mission is. This plan is then developed into the contract that the DPI (Department of Public Instruction) uses to monitor how the school operates. This contract is our agreement as a school to specify exactly what we are doing, what we have the right to do, and the responsibilities we hold as educators.

When the Flex Academy was just an idea and being developed, the original team sat down to create the mission and vision of what they were hoping to foster within this alternative education model. They built their model around the 3 Pillars: Personalized Learning, Service Learning, and Health & Wellness. As our original contract states, "The mission of Flex Academy is to provide a "Flex"ible learning environment promoting student success and total wellness through the use of a personalized approach to learning. The Flex Academy will support all learners in developing the communications, curiosity, and critical thinking skills needed for 21st-century success."

With those thoughts in mind, as a school, we are continually mindful of the fast pace of the education world and needing to stay innovative with the times. Our original contract has reached the time period where we need to sit down and revise or edit some of the pieces that may not match how our school is functioning at this time. In order to ensure that we are staying true to our Pillars and incorporating a range of views and voices, we have included our Governing Council and parent representatives to a contract review board.

To start our conversations, we as a staff sat down and looked through each part of the contract to see what aspects we do not match. Our conversations extended into collaboration with Ms. Heidi Schmidt, the Flex Academy Principal. Which she then connected to pieces and benchmarks we need to ensure that we are meeting. She developed a befitting plan to address changes and updates that we felt needed to happen. Once each of the pieces were in place, all people in relation to the contract review were brought together.

As a group, we met 3 collaborative evenings to have constructive conversations about what particular aspects within the contract had been, what we were proposing to change it to, then ultimately what it should be changed to. After some valuable conversations, we were able to develop an outline of revisions and edits to update to the position we are in at the moment as a school.

This process has ensured that we are making the appropriate changes and updates so that our school continues to thrive in our environment. Ensuring that our students are meeting growth from where they are at. While also extending their knowledge to learning about themselves, their community, and the world around them. Ultimately, fostering our community of Learners as the whole-child.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

WHERE ARE THEY NOW: XANDER BERRY



We decided to feature Zander Berry, a former Flex student, who went on to graduate from LCCPA in 2020. He is now a full-time lead instructor at The Academy for Martial Arts Leadership in Appleton and has been back to Flex to teach martial arts and skills such as integrity, perseverance, and leadership during our Pillars Days.

How long were you a student at Flex Academy? What did you choose to do for high school and what have you been doing since graduation?

I started at the Flex academy in 5th or 6th grade, so I was there for 3 or 4 years I believe. I went to LCCPA for high school and I did a bit of college after graduating, but decided to go into full time work.

Why did your family choose Flex Academy and why did you choose a charter school for high school?

I chose the Flex Academy mainly because it was a work at your own pace style learning. Which means that if work was too easy, I could work ahead which helped me stay challenged and grow in my learning. I chose a charter school for the very same reason. It was a very easy transition and in LCCPA, I was able to mainly learn about a career path I was interested in.

How do you feel Flex Academy prepared you for the next step of LCCPA? For after high school?

Flex Academy was amazing because the structure of the 2 schools was so similar that the transition was a breeze. I was actually given a great opportunity when I finished 8th grade half a year early. I was able to start working on high school curriculum right away and start earning credits for high school too.

Why do you think more students should choose LCCPA after Flex Academy?

Honestly, it seems like the smarter choice. If you can work hard and excel in your classes in LCCPA, then you will have more time to take other classes that interest you and can actually help you in the future, like college or a job. You can take extra career classes of your choice, you can go on career trips to local businesses to see how it works in the real world, you can job shadow, you can even work at a job that fits your career choice and earn credits for it. There's probably more that I can't remember but to me, the LCCPA is the obvious choice for those looking to best prepare themselves for the future.

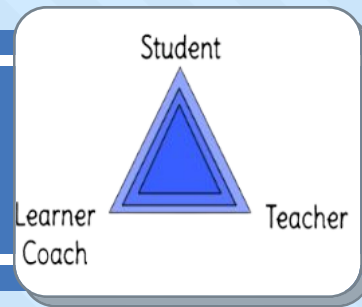
Any last thoughts you want to share with families about how Flex Academy prepares you for your future?

I tried out about 4-5 other public and homeschooling programs and none of them came even close to how well the Flex Academy helped me prepare for the future. Most other places are just there because they have to be, but at the Flex Academy they care about you and are willing to put in the effort to help you be successful. I wouldn't recommend any other place.



SUPPORTING LEARNER COACHES

HOLLY LEMM 4-5 GRADEBAND TEACHER



Learner Coach Development is one way we support and collaborate with our Learner Coaches at Flex Academy. Each quarter we dedicate time to come together as a community and discuss resources to support our students.

As we all gathered virtually for the second quarter LCD we shared our favorite coffee mug and learned about our Fork Farms hydroponic system. Students have taken ownership of growing three varieties of lettuce in our school farm. They test the water daily to decide if nutrients need to be added or if the PH needs to be adjusted. So far students have completed two harvests totaling 210 heads of lettuce.

Hide and seek was next up on the docket of our virtual meeting. Learner Coaches were asked to find a resource on our Flex Parent Page, a website for all things Flex, and then shared where they found it. This gave Learner Coaches an opportunity to explore our website with teacher guidance explaining the importance of each section as we have updated many of them.

The second half of our virtual LCD we split into smaller groups. Earlier in the quarter all Learner Coaches chose an article from a selection to become an expert in that area. The articles correlated with our Social Emotional Learning topics we are focusing on with our students throughout the year. Their options were self awareness, collaborative communication, initiative, mindsets to change the world, and critical thinking barriers and how to overcome them. The breakout rooms included at least one representative for each article and a Flex teacher. Learner Coaches shared their take on the article and how to utilize what they learned at home with their child(ren).

After each LCD we ask Learner Coaches to share feedback through a Google Form to assist us in preparing for future LCD and reflecting. Our feedback from this past LCD is that Learner Coaches are enjoying the smaller groups to discuss and build connections. They are also wanting to be more intentional with their questions, so we are taking questions from Learner Coaches to help guide us in our next LCD during quarter three.



All students K-8 have enjoyed being able to assist in planting, maintaining, and harvesting from our Fork Farms hydroponic garden. Students in K-3 start by planting the seeds and 4-8 have focused on testing the PH levels daily and harvesting. A majority of what we have planted and have harvested has gone to our school kitchen to be utilized on the lunch line.



GOVERNANCE COUNCIL

HEIDI SCHMIDT- FLEX ACADEMY PRINCIPAL

Little Chute Area School District hosts two charter schools, Flex Academy and Little Chute Careers Pathways Academy, which are collaboratively supported by the Governing Council. This Council meets monthly with their agendas and minutes found on the LCASD website.

This year our format includes a specific focus that both charter schools will present at each meeting. In November we focused on student achievement and January's focus was how each school offers personalized learning opportunities..

An updated contract for Flex Academy has been approved and submitted to DPI.

We are currently open to adding interested community members to our Council. If you have any interest in being part of our Governance Council, contact our GC president, Carl Rambo, crambo@littlechute.k12.wi.us

These meetings are open to the public. Here are the remaining meeting dates:

- February 6, 2023
- March 6, 2023
- April 12, 2023
- May 1, 2023
- June 7, 2023



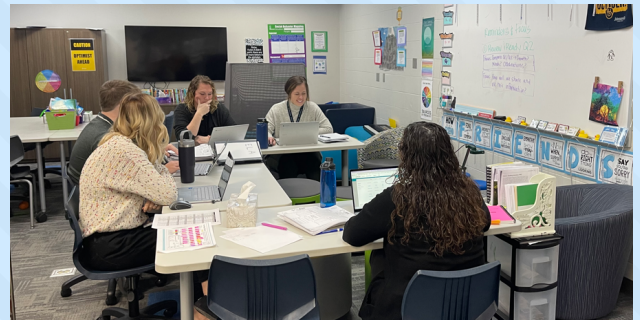
INCREASING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

SARAH SHELESKI- K-8 SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER

Flex Academy Data Driven Professional Learning Community

"The most valuable resource that all teachers have is each other. Without collaboration, our growth is limited to our own perspectives." - Robert John Meehan

Flex is unique in a plethora of ways: from our Flexcursions -community based learning experiences to the blended learning model at school and at home learning days with a Learner Coach to the intentionality our staff is able to have during our Friday Collaboration Days.



Each Friday, staff members have a full day of collaborative planning revolving around the logistics of running a charter school to putting the personalized element into each student's learning experience. During this time, we meet as a PLC (Professional Learning Community) to review data that includes student work, test results, and common "I Can" assessments that measure student's ongoing learning through their home and at school learning. Through this model, we are able to monitor and continually measure student growth and student needs and best plan to support students while at school. Through this process, we engage with a continued focus on these essential questions:

- What is it we expect students to learn?
- How will we know when they have learned it?
- How will we respond when they don't learn?
- How will we respond when they already know it?

The final product of our PLC time is seen through the results students are showing academically as well as socially and emotionally. With the unique small group setting and ability to personalize student learning experiences based on ongoing data review, students receive weekly personalized learning time targeted on filling learning gaps, verifying grade level expectations, and enhancing their learning.

Flex Academy provides a unique learning environment for all students to explore, grow, and flourish. As Clay Bedford shared, "You can teach a student a lesson for a day; but if you can teach him to learn by creating curiosity, (s)he will continue the learning process as long as he lives."



HIGHLIGHTS

FLEXCURSIONS

Before winter break we had the chance to explore the Neville Museum in DePere. In the morning students in grades 4-8 had the opportunity to solve Mystery lock boxes. Students had to find clues in the exhibits to help them solve the code on their lockbox. K-3 students went on a tour of the museum's exhibits. In the afternoon all students went on a scavenger hunt throughout the museum looking for the given close-up pictures.

FALLEN TIMBERS

Upon arriving at Fallen Timbers K-3rd grade began our day by playing bird migration game which inevitably got all the student covered in snow as well as the teachers and volunteers. K-3rd then went on a nature hike which ended with us shaking trees and creating our own winter snowstorm. While this was going on 4th-8th grade was competing against each other in a winter obstacle course. We ended our day by creating bird feeders out of pine cones.

PILLARS CLUB

In December during pillars club students had the opportunity to create their very own gingerbread house. Students created beautiful gingerbread palaces as well as some unintentional demolition sites due to broken gingerbread and car rides home. Students still showed their perseverance and creativity at our gingerbread construction site.

WINTER GATHERING

We began our winter gathering with an amazing brunch provided by Taher, which led us up to the main event. Students began performing the 10 carols we had been practicing this quarter with our big finale being the 12 days of "Flexmas" which was written by the Flex staff. After caroling families engaged in activities such as creating paper snowflakes, winter coloring, don't break the ice, jumpy puppets, and SLIME.

INFORMATIONAL NIGHTS

All families interested in enrollment at the Flex Academy are required to attend an Informational Meeting prior to receiving an enrollment application. An upcoming meeting is on February 20th. Meeting registration information can be found on the Flex Academy Website. We hope to see you there!

