

FLEX ACADEMY

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



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MESSAGE FROM MS. SCHMIDT

We have had a great start to the 2023-2024 school year. Each year we challenge ourselves to reflect on the past and plan for the future while looking at data, our enrollment, the strengths of our staff, and most importantly the families we serve.

We have started our year strong with many opportunities with involvement and support for our families. This has included orientation and LCD for our learner coaches to ensure we are working as a true triad. We have also had many parents who have accompanied Flexcursions which provides great learning experiences outside the classrooms. We also had many families participate in our Family Game Night. These are all experiences that reinforce the importance of our Flex Academy community and strong partnerships with our families.

We have held 2 informational sessions and are always finding creative ways to get the word out about Flex Academy. If you know anyone who is looking for more information, send them to us.

Enjoy our first quarterly newsletter of the school year and check out our website for more information. Thank you for your support!

~ Heidi Schmidt, Principal of Flex Academy



For our first Career Day, students learned about and explored the different careers that are in our District!





We will Learn,
Serve, and Be
Well!

STAYING TRUE TO OUR PILLARS

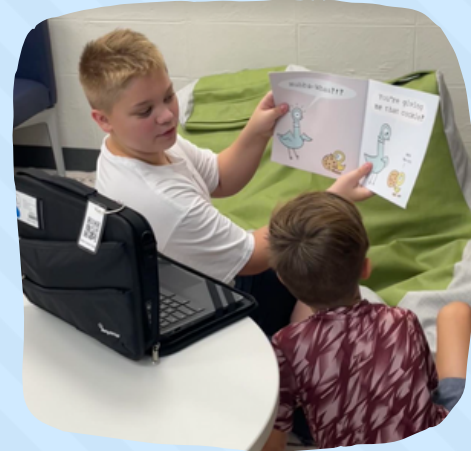
HOLLY LEMM- 4-5 GRADEBAND TEACHER

We're excited to share the enriching experiences from our recent Pillars Day! For those new to our community, Pillars Day is a quarterly event where our students immerse themselves in Service Learning and Health and Wellness activities.

During our first Pillars Day of the school year, students embarked on a meaningful Service Learning Project, delving into the needs of our community. Collaborating with St. Paul Elder Services, our students read virtually to the residents and crafted placemats, fostering a warm sense of community. To enhance our understanding of senior citizen needs, our students conducted research, delving into aspects such as mental health, engaging activities, the importance of human connection, and the benefits of reading to the elderly. What made this experience even more enriching was the collaboration between different grade levels. Younger students partnered with older ones, working together on their research endeavors. The morning culminated in thoughtful reflections, where students shared their newfound knowledge with their peers, deepening their understanding of the project's impact.

In the afternoon, our focus shifted to Health and Wellness. Students learned about the dimensions of wellness, which range from social, emotional, and physical for Kindergarten through fifth grade, to include intellectual, environmental, and spiritual dimensions for our sixth through eighth graders. To empower our students in goal-setting, they learned how to create SMART goals, ensuring that their aspirations are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. The day concluded with engaging activities: a nature scavenger hunt for younger students and a creative 'Me Tree' exercise for older students, celebrating their unique qualities and support networks.

At Flex Academy, Pillars Days exemplify our commitment to holistic education, nurturing empathy, compassion, and individuality. We eagerly anticipate our next Pillars Day, where we'll continue instilling these essential values and empowering our students to create positive change.





WHO IS MS. DE CLEENE?

Hello! My name is Ashlyn De Cleene and I am the new 6th, 7th, and 8th grade band teacher at the Flex Academy. I am from Wrightstown where I went to Wrightstown High School. In high school, I was involved in volleyball, basketball, and Spanish clubs. During the summer of my Junior year, I had the opportunity to travel to Costa Rica. I then attended the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Here I gained so much knowledge while spending time in a range of classrooms. I worked with infants all the way up to 6th-grade students. During my free time, I enjoy traveling, coaching basketball, and spending time with family and friends. This past summer I was able to travel to the Grand Tetons and Yellowstone National Parks. A fun fact about me is that I am new to the Flex Academy, but I taught 6th grade last year just a few classrooms down the hall from my current classroom. The community that comes with working at the Flex has really stood out to me so far this school year. The staff, students, and families have welcomed me with open arms and I greatly appreciate it. Flex stands out to me because of the flexibility that the school allows, as well as the core beliefs that we follow. Flex's ability to prioritize service learning, personalized learning, and health and wellness is providing so many different skills to our learners. Students grow upon their knowledge of the pillars and it becomes second nature. At the end of last school year, I was invited to the Service Learning Fair. While walking around and seeing how each Flex student is serving others and their community, I knew this was where I wanted to be. I am so excited to learn and grow here at the Flex Academy!

A Little Q&A with Ms. De Cleene

Q: What is your favorite ice cream flavor?

A: My favorite ice cream is blue moon or anything caramel

Q: What got you interested in teaching?

A: I always enjoyed working with kids while babysitting when I was in middle school and high school. When I got to high school I decided I wanted to work with students and help them learn and grow.

Q: What's your "dance like nobody's watching" song?

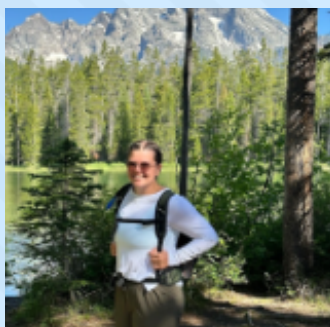
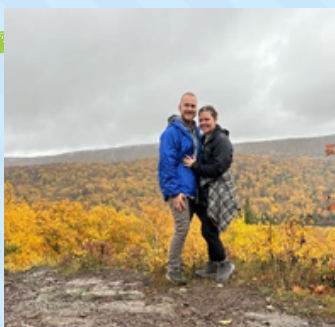
A: I would say that my go to is "I Gotta Feeling" by the Black Eyed Peas.

Q: What is your favorite Movie?

A: My favorite movie is Mamma Mia.

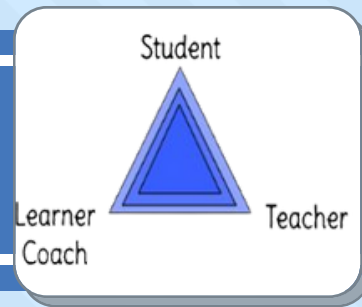
Q: What is one thing on your bucket list?

A: To visit Greece, which is inspired by watching Mamma Mia.



SUPPORTING LEARNER COACHES

KELLY LAMERS K-1 GRADEBAND TEACHER



Welcome! Welcoming a new school year. Welcoming new students. Welcoming new families and Learner Coaches. Each new school year can bring so many new emotions and experiences for all. Well this year, as we welcome a new school year, we welcomed an old tradition with a new school year twist.



Before our students begin their learning journey for the school year, we welcome their Learner Coaches to prepare and support them the best way we can. The first way that we build that support is through our time together at Learner Coach Orientation. For this year's Orientation, we decided to bring back an old structure that we utilized of creating intentionally to connect with new families. Offering them the morning of Orientation to just speak to them, our school, and the expectations of them for the school year. This was a wonderful way for them to ask the questions they were unsure about, find support in their new peers, and understand all of the ins and outs. As the morning was coming to an end, we welcomed our "veteran" Learner Coaches for a luncheon together. Again, this time was intentionally set to partner new and veteran families around a table to connect and collaborate together. When our meal was finished, we headed into each specific Gradeband meeting rotation, where teachers presented to Learner Coaches the Gradeband expectations. Our day was filled with welcoming smiles, hearts, and joy for what the year has in store for all!

As we continually look for ways to support each of our students, Learner Coaches, and families, we welcome our Triad Conferences. A "Triad" at the Flex Academy includes the Gradeband Teacher, Student, and Learner Coach. Each role within the Triad has specific job expectations for the school year. At our first Triad meeting of the school year, we connect on what those expectations are, who the student is, and what they can look forward to within our classroom that school year. These are a wonderful time for connection and collaboration.

Year after year we have received positive feedback from our families in the ways that we are continually supporting and guiding each of them through the expectations, layout, and pieces that all make Flex, Flex. This is something that we as a staff have found pride in knowing that when a family chooses to join our school community they are taking on a whole new role and dynamics for their family. Our school community has continually welcomed a new year and support!



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 hearing from students and parents about their experiences at our charter schools. By ensuring that our meetings begin with a student or family spotlight, we can increase our perspective on family experiences and help focus the work we do as a council.

We are currently open to adding interested community members with new perspectives to our Council. If you would like to hear more about 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:

- December 4, 2023
- January 3, 2024
- February 5, 2024
- March 4, 2024
- April 1, 2024
- May 6, 2024
- June 3, 2024



INCREASING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

SARAH SHELESKI- K-8 SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER

We are not going to ask if you have ever set a goal...but we are curious, why do you set goals? Maybe your reasons are similar to those of us at Flex.

At Flex Academy, we are encouraging each other to become goal-setting champions. Together, we are encouraging each other to find direction, identify what is important, measure progress, stay motivated, and grow.

With the support of their Learner Coaches and teachers, students are setting goals and monitoring progress throughout the school year about the Flex Pillars - Personalized Learning, Service Learning, and Health & Wellness.

Quarterly, all students set a personalized Health and Wellness goal around one of the following areas: physical, emotional, social, spiritual, intellectual, or environmental. Throughout the quarter, students intentionally work towards their goals, document their progress, and then reflect at the end of each quarter. All progress, regardless of whether the goal was accomplished, is celebrated and new goals are set for the following quarter. In addition, students create a driving question related to a community need and work throughout the school year toward a service learning project that is meaningful to them. At the end of the school year, we come together as a community to celebrate and showcase through a Health and Wellness and Service Learning Fair.

Similarly, staff members at Flex are setting data-driven goals and working collaboratively to grow together. We collect multiple data pieces at the beginning of each school year and create a schoolwide goal related to increasing student outcomes. Goal creation is strategically created after analyzing data from a reading progress check, iReady ELA and Math placement assessment, and review of previous student data. In addition, each staff member sets a personal growth goal following the completion of a survey completed by students. As students drive our goal-setting process, we too drive their goal-setting process, so that as a community, we are motivating, encouraging, and growing together!



HIGHLIGHTS

PILLARS DAY

At the start of the school year for our first Pillars day, we had the opportunity to do our first form of service as a school. We were able to match up a 4-8 with a K-3 and have them read a story to the elderly at the St. Paul Elder Services. While students were reading to the elderly others were creating placemats for them. In the afternoon we talked about Health and Wellness where we did many different activities to work on being healthy and well.

GAME NIGHT

A Flex Family Favorite, families brought in their favorite family game to share on game night this year! It was a great opportunity for families to play, work collaboratively, and also have fun with a bit of some friendly competition.

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 January 23rd. Meeting registration information can be found on the Flex Academy Website. We hope to see you there!

TEAM BUILDING

We started the school year dedicated to building peer relationships with some fun! Our kindergarten through third grade students went to the Warrior Jungle and fourth through eighth grade students went to Badger Sports Park.

PILLARS CLUB

Students started out our first after school club with painting with apples and apple yarn art. Students used apples to create a masterpiece painting. When students finished their painting they began weaving yarn to create apples.

FLEXCURSIONS

Our first Flexcursion this year we went to the PAC to see the performance Step Afrika. This performance showed us part of the African culture of Stepping which is a type of dance. The following week we had our first experience at Fallen Timbers. At Fallen Timbers K-3 worked to identify different types of trees by their leaves and how different plants can spread their seeds. We also stopped for a short visit to the Ashwaubenon School District to view their Fork Farms, we went to Air Force Academy Gymnastics

