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## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## OVERVIEW OF THE 2018-19 SCHOOL YEAR

**Kimberly, Wis. – September 25, 2019**– Last school year, the students and staff within the [Kimberly Area School District \(KASD\)](#) had many successes. The District and community has a tremendous amount of pride in the recognition and awards received at the local, state and national level for academics, the arts, co-curricular activities and athletics. KASD is an example of a low-spending and high-achieving public school district.

Below are highlights of what students and staff accomplished in the 2018-19 school year:

### Academic Achievements

- [Kimberly High School \(KHS\)](#) earned a Level 1 Pacesetter Award from the Wisconsin Advanced Placement Advisory Council for a fourth year in a row.
- More than 500 students took 858 Advanced Placement (AP) exams last school year. Seven KHS students were named National AP Scholars; this is the highest level of AP recognition.
- Klaire Kulas, a 2019 graduate, was recognized as a Kohl Foundation Student Initiative Scholar.
- Nine KHS students were selected for the Fox Valley Medical Mentoring summer program, an elite job shadowing program where students are picked based on academic rigor, teacher recommendations and essays.
- Ethan Thao, a 2019 graduate, participated in the “Leaders A’Hmong Us” student conference. This two-day event brought community resources together in one place to provide Hmong students and families an opportunity to engage in rich content in education, leadership, arts and culture.

- The [J.R. Gerritts Middle School \(JRG\)](#) Yearbook class earned the 2018-19 National Yearbook Program of Excellence Award from Jostens.
- Allison Weiher, a student at JRG, was honored by Northwestern University’s Center for Talent Development to celebrate her achievement in the Midwest Academic Talent Search.
- Seven KHS students participated in the African Heritage Emerging Student Leaders Institute where they were involved in culturally relevant learning experiences that empower them to be successful and reach their potential.
- Collin Van Cuyk, a 2019 graduate, earned a prestigious National Merit Scholarship. He was awarded the National Merit University of Texas at Dallas Scholarship and is studying actuarial science at the school.
- Kimberly’s Finance and Investment Challenge Bowl Teams swept the regional competition, taking first, second and third place.
- Twelve DECA students advanced from the state competition to the International Development Conference Competition in Orlando. Student Jon Carl earned 1st Place in the Entrepreneurship Innovation Plan at the state competition.
- Cora Phillip and Stella Campbell, both third graders at [Woodland Elementary School](#), placed in the Wisconsin Rural Water Association’s water conservation poster contest. Cora earned 1st place and Stella won 2nd place for their grade level.

### **Achievements in the Arts and Co-curricular Activities**

- JRG students Olivia Bergstrom, Ava Knudson and Julia Loritz had their artwork selected for the Youth Art Month Exhibit at the State Capitol.
- A record-breaking 51 Scholastic Art Awards were earned by 26 KHS students, including six Gold Key Awards.
- KASD was once again named one of the “Nation’s Best Communities for Music Education” by the National Association of Music Merchants Foundation.

- The Kimberly High School Band performed during the 75th Anniversary Celebration of the commissioning of the USS Wisconsin battleship in Norfolk, Virginia.
- The Fox Cities Stars Girls Hockey Team (a co-op team that includes five Kimberly High School students) brought home their first State Championship in a double overtime thriller.
- The Kimberly High School Boys Track and Field Team earned a 3-Peat State Championship.

### **Innovating to Meet Changing Needs**

- As a way to connect what students at J.R. Gerritts Middle School are learning in the classroom with job opportunities in our community, school staff organized a Community Connections event. This is just one example of the new and expanded Academic and Career Planning (ACP) resources being implemented in the District.
- Students at Kimberly High School experienced a history lesson like no other when Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 351 - Appleton brought their “Reflections of Vietnam” educational outreach program to the school.
- Based on parent input, the schools’ Picture Day process was studied and improved in order to be easier for families. The changes were rolled out for the 2019-20 school year with very positive results.
- Work continues on the District’s Plan for Excellence 2018-2023. This five-year plan combines the community values of respect, honesty, responsibility and kindness with the four focus areas of developing problem solvers, raising achievement, promoting social and emotional well-being, and preparing students for college, career and life.

### **Student Health and Wellness**

- As a local pilot for the United Way’s Providing Access to Healing (PATH) for Students, KASD students in grades 5K-12 are able to access quality mental health services year-round.
- Students at Westside and Janssen Elementary Schools rose up to “The Great Kindness Challenge Week.” They spent the week focusing on and performing as many acts of kindness as possible around their school and community.

- Students at [Westside Elementary](#), [Mapleview Intermediate](#) and JRG Middle School participated in Walk to School and Bike to School events. These events encourage students to be active in a social setting while learning how to be safe during these activities.
- The Triumph Program, a partnership of the Kimberly, Kaukauna and Little Chute Area School Districts, celebrated three years of providing educational and on-site mental health services.
- Life-Force, a student group at KHS that focuses on making healthy choices, organized a unique health fair for seventh graders at JRG.

### **Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)**

- JRG was named the top performing middle school at the Mathematical Problem Solving Contest at UW-Oshkosh. Seventh grader Riley Matz earned second place for his grade. Allison Weiher, eighth grade, and Nick Logan, tenth grade, both earned third place.
- The Architectural, Construction and Engineering (ACE) Academy at KHS completed its seventh school year with 98 students enrolled, including 18 seniors who graduated in June.
- The KHS SkillsUSA Welding Fabrication team of Brandon Gardner, Henry Musich and Maxwell Johnson received second place at state. Jacob Doering took second place in the Individual Welding Skill contest and was awarded a \$5,000 scholarship for his achievement.
- Abby Doleysh, a fourth grader at Woodland Elementary School, won third place in her age category in the Wisconsin round of the 2019 International Aviation Art Contest.
- The Rube Goldberg Machine Team took fourth place at the national engineering contest with their Super Mario Brothers themed machine.
- HACKAppleton teams from Kimberly High School brought home second and third place at the second annual computer science competition.

### **Professional Development and Recognition**

- Luke Smith, a technology education teacher at KHS, participated in a “Train the Teacher” welding program at Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC). Along with other continuous improvements to the

manufacturing curriculum and facilities, the Welding Technology 3 course now aligns with the FVTC Dual Credit program.

- Dave Lamers, principal of [Woodland Intermediate School](#), was one of only 16 principals in the state to receive a Leadership Award from the Kohl Foundation.
- Master's degrees were earned by two teachers: Shea Kitzman, a teacher at Westside Elementary School, and Emily Behnke, a teacher at JRG.
- Megan Berger and Martin O'Donnell, both teachers at JRG, attained their National Board Certification. This certification is teaching's highest professional credential. The District now has 13 National Board Certified teachers on staff.
- Twelve staff members, who had over 303 years of combined experience, retired during the 2018-19 school year. Eleven staff members were inducted into the 25 Year Club.
- KASD earned first place in the Large Companies Division of the Fox Cities Marathon based on having the highest level of staff participation for a large-sized organization with 70 employees participating on 14 relay teams.

### **Community Service and Partnerships**

- Students at the [4K Center for Literacy](#) collected 258 pounds of pop tabs, which equaled \$129 for a donation to the Ronald McDonald House.
- Student council members from [Janssen Elementary School](#) spent an afternoon cleaning up litter at Lindberg Park in honor of Earth Day.
- Families at Woodland School collected 74 pairs of pajamas for those in need.
- All four elementary schools (Janssen, [Sunrise](#), Westside and Woodland) and Mapleview Intermediate School raised over \$49K for the American Heart Association's Kids Heart Challenge (formerly called Jump Rope For Heart).

- Mapleview’s Secret Service Club performed many charitable acts during the school year, such as: packaged four tons of potatoes at Feeding America, baked seven dozen cookies and made 12 blankets for those in need during the holiday season, and volunteered at St. Paul’s Elder Home.
- The Building Construction 2 Class at KHS completed a new shelter at Sunset Park in Kimberly for their community-based project.
- KHS students volunteered their time and talents to paint themed-backdrop panels for the Village of Kimberly’s baseball fields.
- District employees donated over \$14,000 to United Way’s fundraising campaign.
- Through the FORE! Our Kids Golf Outing, more than \$16K was raised to support alcohol and drug-free student activities.

### **Financial Stewardship of Taxpayer Funds**

- The property tax rate (mill rate) was reduced six consecutive years.
- In the last five years, the tax levy was reduced from \$16.8 million to \$15.2 million.
- Home values remain strong and the real estate market is very competitive in the District.
- KASD invested \$3.9 million into energy efficiency updates, such as: lighting, heating, ventilation, air conditioning equipment and solar panels on the roof of Kimberly High School. These projects will save on annual utility costs over the useful life of those facilities.
- Over one million square feet across 21 District facilities is maintained and improved through a 10-year capital improvement plan.
- In order to continuously improve the health care options available to staff, the District decided to change providers at the KASD Health & Wellness Center. The new provider expanded the hours and services offered in order to realize more cost savings in the future.

### **Challenges**

- Safety continues to be a high priority for the District. A comprehensive and district-wide safety review was performed by the Wisconsin School Safety Coordinators Association. The District has implemented several changes to improve safety and security, and more are planned for the future.
- In order to increase safety for students and staff, all schools in the District implemented buzz-in entry systems. All visitors (including family members, volunteers and vendors) are required to follow the buzz-in procedure during the school day.
- The District has been feeling the effects of teacher and substitute teacher shortages and continues to work on ways to retain and recruit highly qualified staff.
- There are continued concerns about vaping and e-cigarette use by youth in our community and schools. One in five Wisconsin high schoolers use e-cigarettes, according to the Youth Tobacco Survey 2018.
- Based on District and test score data, math continues to be a focus area for improvement for all grades.
- A study projected a decline in student enrollment starting in the 2017-18 school year. However, the decline was not seen until 2018-19 when we started the school year with a slight decrease of 14 students. By maintaining high quality academics, activities, arts and facilities, KASD strives to remain a destination district for local families. Although overall enrollment was slightly down, the 4K program had its highest enrollment during the last five years at 314. Student enrollment trends are closely monitored because a decline in enrollment would have financial and staffing implications.
- Long-term funding from the state continues to be uncertain, in addition to private school voucher changes that directly increase the local tax levy.

“We are fortunate to have a supportive community, dedicated teachers, great families and hard-working students,” said Robert Mayfield, Superintendent. “By all measures, we are a high quality public school district and will strive to continue to improve for our children and their families.”

Mayfield noted that the District continues its work toward the goals in the Plan for Excellence. Staff also continue their focus on developing problem solvers at every grade level. Additionally, work is being done to increase student engagement to increase ownership in their learning.

However, there are challenges that persist for the District. State funding continues to be uncertain and makes long-term budget planning very difficult. Rising health insurance costs continue to be the most challenging budget item. There are also challenges within the community which affect our students, including mental health concerns and developing a culture of acceptance, tolerance and understanding for diversity.

“Reflecting on the past school year builds excitement for the year ahead,” said Mayfield. “We continue to focus on helping every student reach their potential.”

### **About the Kimberly Area School District**

The Kimberly Area School District is a progressive public school district committed to providing the best possible education available to students. Its responsibility is to help lead the way in developing well-rounded students and future citizens. The District wants every student to be given the opportunity to reach their potential through academics, the arts and co-curricular activities. It encompasses approximately 17 square miles and serves over 5,100 students in one 4K center, four elementary schools (5K-4), two intermediate schools (5-6), one middle school (7-8) and one high school (9-12). To learn more about the Kimberly Area School District, call (920)788-7900 or visit [www.kimberly.k12.wi.us](http://www.kimberly.k12.wi.us).