

# Bulldog Bark



September 2020

## Join Us for Virtual ReCONNECT!

ReCONNECT is being rescheduled as a virtual event for **October 6, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.**, due to the circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic. Everyone's welcome! Whether you attended previous CONNECT events or not, please consider joining our discussion. We will be evaluating what we do well and what we can improve upon to strengthen our school district and community as a whole!.

The event will recap the highlights of CONNECT 2019, overview the priorities of CONNECT 2019 and the progress made with each, and solicit reactions and suggestions that will assist us as we move forward.

ReCONNECT will be available via a virtual platform and by phone. Attendees will participate in small group activities similar to the original CONNECT event. Drew Howick who led our initial Connect in November, 2019 will be joining us on a virtual platform to lead the conversation once again.

Please set time aside! It takes all members of the community to keep our school district strong and healthy. We look forward to learning from our whole community once again, including parents, students, staff, business people, and anyone else who is part of the Peshtigo School District! If you are a Peshtigo citizen, you are welcome. You don't have to have school age children to attend. Your input will be valued!

## New Staff Spotlight: Welcome Aboard!

### Mr. John Bell

Mr. Bell is our new assistant principal at the PELC! He and his wife, Nikki, have three daughters and a son: PJ, Beatrix, Finley, and Ira. His experience includes working with the school districts of Oneida, Appleton, and most recently, Mishicot. He's looking forward to making connections and getting the new school year off to a good start!



### Mrs. Kate Willett

Mrs. Willett is our new PELC principal. She and her husband, Rob, have two daughters: Alice and Aida. Mrs. Willett has teaching and leadership experience in the Denmark School District which included regular and special education. She is excited to work and build partnerships within such a warm community!



### Ms. Megan Dubrock

Ms. Dubrock is our new middle school special education teacher. Her experience includes being a YMCA summer camp and after school coordinator and she came to us from the Marinette School District. She is excited to work with middle school students as they move into this next stage in their lives!



### Ms. Kelly Nemec

Ms. Nemec is our new PELC art teacher. She and her husband, John, have three sons: Lex, Levi, and Lincoln. Ms. Nemec taught in Menominee and most recently at Oconto Elementary. She loves the energy and enthusiasm of students at this time of year as school restarts!



## New Staff Spotlight

### Mrs. Pam Beschta

Mrs. Beschta is our new seventh grade English teacher and eighth grade life skills teacher. She and her husband, Bob, have three sons and two granddaughters with two more grandchildren on the way! Mrs. Beschta comes to us from St. Anthony Catholic School in Oconto Falls. She is looking forward to helping her students become stronger learners, communicators, and citizens!



### Ms. Michaela Newberry

Ms. Newberry is our new high school guidance counselor. She and her fiancé, Ben, have a puppy named Utley. Ms. Newberry comes to us as an experienced counselor from Menominee Junior/Senior High School. She is most excited about meeting all the new students!



## Peshtigo Parent Spotlight: We're Listening!

In Peshtigo one of our most valuable assets is our parental support! Recently, we had the opportunity to speak with Lisa Maxwell, who along with her husband Thomas, are parents to three children spanning our district. Aleiah is a third grader at our Peshtigo Elementary Learning Center. Elizabeth is a 7th grader and Lorelei is starting high school as a freshman this year at the Peshtigo Middle/High School.

We wanted to know how parents felt when the governor closed our schools and sent kids home and how it impacted the family. Lisa said "There were times I felt ill-equipped as a parent. Our kids are used to excelling and mastering concepts, but with distance learning this resulted in intense anxiety and massive frustration". Confusion with math classes meant, as a parent, she had to learn new concepts so she could help teach her children. In some situations, communication was limited and the teaching platforms were so varied from teacher to teacher, it was hard to know how to navigate. She shared, "At times we felt like the teaching and the support wasn't there for our older children with some classes".

In contrast, Mrs. Maxwell felt like many teachers, especially at the elementary level, didn't make the same assumption. They knew the younger kids would need lots of contact and lots of emotional support. "Both Mrs. Gard and Mrs. Nolde were wonderful in working with our daughter last spring! They went to great lengths to personalize learning for their students. They touched base with students frequently, and provided personalized feedback to students". The communication displayed by Mrs. Nolde and Mrs. Gard included emailing lessons with back-up support strategies which was very helpful for parents.

"Mrs. Fendrick also would go out of her way to monitor my daughter's work and send positive notes home. My daughter's sixth grade teacher, Mrs. Jornlin, was highly responsive. I remember one instance when Elizabeth was confused about an assignment, and within the span of an hour, Mrs. Jornlin set up a class Google meeting and clarified the issue for the whole class."

Mrs. Maxwell said, "It seemed like there was an assumption that older students are so much more tech savvy that they can be left alone. Even though many older students are more responsible and tech savvy, they still want to feel supported. They want to feel safe. It's easier for students to feel lost. As we move forward with this hybrid schedule for the older kids, I would love to see overcommunication. Especially if we have to switch to 100% virtual learning for the older children, **there is no such thing as too much communication!**"

To Mrs. Maxwell and all of the other parents out there: we want you to know we've learned from our experiences last spring. We're making much more of an effort to communicate. All teachers at the older levels are all using the same platform, Google Classroom, to be more consistent for students and parents. We're better prepared to teach virtually if that is needed. Our "Forward Together" plan is to keep teaching all of our kids with in-person classes. At the Middle/High School level, we are using the A/B schedule to socially distance. We have built in the Wednesday schedule for extra help for students and parents alike.

Parents fearful of what will happen if we go 100% virtual for the older kids should know that teachers will be teaching live from school using Google Meet four days a week, following kids' normal schedule. They will have full instructional classes Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. We are all a team. This is new for everyone...but teachers are listening and learning too. We're going to keep moving forward, "Forward Together"!