

Windber Area School District  
2301 Graham Avenue  
Windber, Pennsylvania 15963  
(814) 467-5551  
www.windberschools.org

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Permit # 5  
Johnstown, Pennsylvania

# Excellence *for All* **REPORT • 2011** *to the* COMMUNITY

**W** Windber Pride.  
Experience It.



*Every student. Every day.*





*Windber Area School District Board of Directors (Seated L-R) Joe Felix, Treasurer; Steve Kormanik, Vice President; Tim Tokarsky, President; Cindy Orlovsky, Secretary; (Standing L-R) Rob Marhefka, Gene Shaffer, Keith Vasas, Glenn Gaye, Sr., Barbara Holovka*

# Message from the...

## SUPERINTENDENT

For many of us, the new year is an ideal time to plan for the months ahead. At Windber Area School District, we have been working for several years to develop a comprehensive approach that will prepare your children and grandchildren and those of your neighbors and co-workers for success in the future.

With all the talk of a global economy, Windber believes true globalization starts at home. As educators, we must first recognize and nurture the individual talents of students before we send them out to conquer the world. That means producing graduates who are problem solvers, communicators, collaborators, and innovators in any walk of life or career path of their choosing, here in Windber or around the globe.

As you will read in this inaugural issue of the Windber Area School District Report to the Community, Windber has high expectations for students with respect to attendance, performance, and achievement—in and out of the classroom. All of the district's resources (technological, human, and financial) are geared toward the individual. Be it advances in technology, quality programming, or forward-thinking policies and procedures, it is our students and what we can do to help each child maximize his or her potential that drives our efforts.

Rick G. Huffman  
Superintendent

## BOARD PRESIDENT

Ours is a community that recognizes the tremendous value of a quality education, and the Board of Directors of the Windber Area School District, administrators, and faculty have always worked hard to make sure our children receive the best education possible. To that end, this publication aims to give you, our partners in the educational process, insight into new curriculum and strategies for meeting the diverse needs of students, as well as district operations and aspirations for the future.

As Pennsylvania tightens its belt and new legislative leaders are sworn in, there is a strong likelihood of significant financial challenges to every school district in Pennsylvania – including ours – over the next several years. State subsidies for education may be frozen, or more likely, reduced. This is an eventuality the district has been anticipating and preparing for in recent years.

As the state budgeting process moves forward, we invite you to check our website for updated information. In December, the district also launched an official Facebook page, a popular forum for sharing information, schedules, and images of students and teachers engaged in academic and extracurricular activities and special events. The pages to follow are an extension of that commitment to involve the community in our children's education. After all, it is ultimately in their hands that Windber will continue to prosper and evolve for generations to come.

Tim Tokarsky  
Board President

# Table of Contents

## WASD AT A GLANCE

Mission Statement.....	4
By the Numbers.....	4

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

PSSA News.....	5
New Math Curriculum.....	6
Multifaceted Literacy Curriculum.....	6
Reading Counts!.....	7
New Library Lounge.....	7

## BEYOND TEST SCORES: STUDENT LIFE

Windber PRIDE.....	8
Center Stage.....	9
New Strings Program.....	10
Forensics.....	10
Science Olympiad.....	11
Sports/Athletic Accolades.....	12

## QUALITY WORKFORCE

Experienced Faculty.....	13
Staff Accomplishments.....	14
HEAL® Program.....	14

## ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Where Your Tax Dollars Go.....	15
--------------------------------	----

## LOOKING AHEAD

Technology & Engineering Education.....	16
Revised High School Schedule.....	16
New Attendance Policy.....	17
Comprehensive Facilities Study.....	17

## DISTRICT DIRECTORY





Windber students prepare for careers in biotechnology at GJCTC.

# WASD at a Glance

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Windber Area School District is to ensure all students the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to solve problems, communicate effectively, and be responsible citizens, while preparing for a life of continual growth and learning through a premier educational environment.

## BY THE NUMBERS

- Total enrollment is: **1,289** (Elementary - 624; MS - 237; HS - 428).
- Average class size is: **22** (elementary); **20** (middle school); and **20** (high school).
- Faculty/aide to student ratio for K4 and K5 is **1:10**. (All K4 and K5 classes have a classroom aide.)
- Roughly **2** out of every **5** students or **42%** are income-eligible for free or reduced lunch.
- **68** or **16%** of students in grades 9-12 receive specialized career and vocational training at the Greater Johnstown Career and Technology Center.
- WAHS offers **17** courses in which students can earn college credit, including: **14** courses through the Accelerated College Education Program at Pennsylvania Highlands Community College; one dual enrollment course through Mount Aloysius College; and two courses offered on-site at the Somerset campus of Allegany College of Maryland.
- On average, **83%** of WASD graduates further their education at two-year and four-year colleges and other post-secondary training programs.
- College-bound students at WASD had an average total SAT score of **1,005** in 2009 and a high score of **1,450**.
- WAHS is a three-time Bronze Medal recipient of U.S. News & World Report's annual listing of America's Best High Schools.

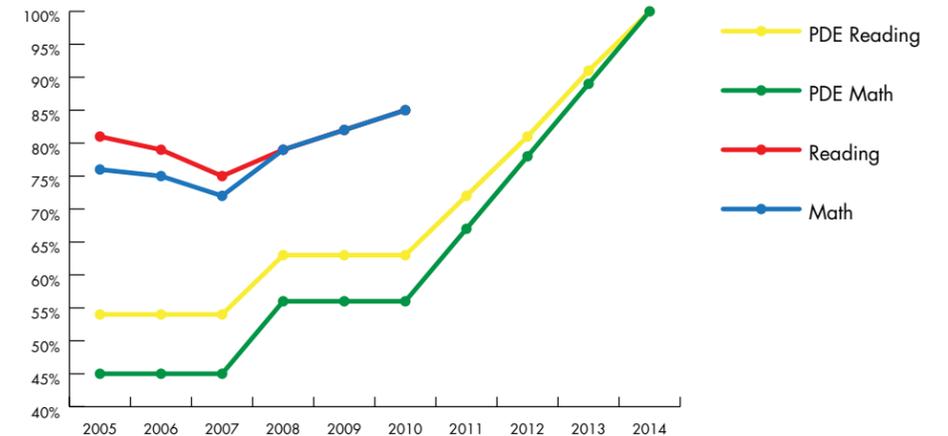
# Student Achievement

## STUDENT PSSA SCORES IN MATH, READING OUTPACE STATE AVERAGES

The 2009-2010 Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) confirms what administrators, teachers, and students have known all along—Windber Area School District ranks among the best districts in the state for proficiency in math and reading.

Achieving proficiency in a core subject means students are performing at or above grade level. The Pennsylvania Department of Education mandates that all students reach 100% proficiency in math and reading by 2014. And Windber is well on its way.

A six-year, PSSA comparison shows the district's combined scores for all grades have steadily increased since 2007 and are on track to meet the state's target. WASD has consistently met AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) measures for school attendance, graduation rate, and PSSA proficiency and participation since 2005.



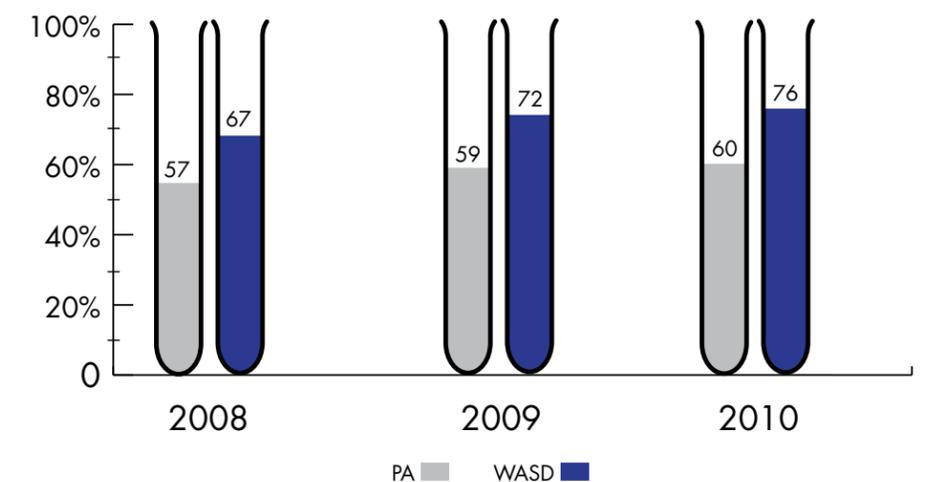
### How do Windber students stack up against their Pennsylvania counterparts?

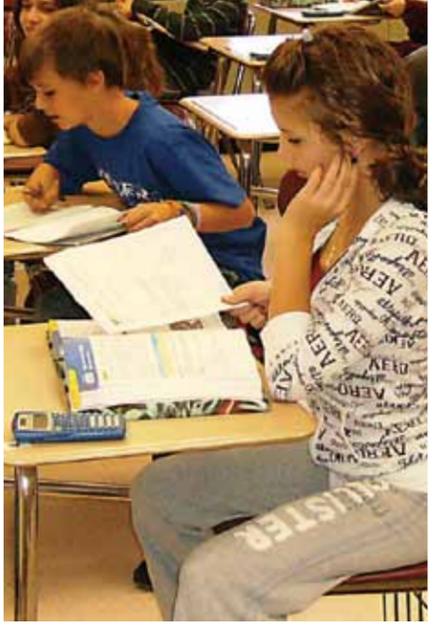
- In 2010, combined PSSA scores in reading and math ranked Windber Area Elementary in the top 9% of 1,665 elementary schools statewide, according to SchoolDigger.com.
- Nearly 95% of Windber 3rd-graders performed at or above grade level in math. That's a full 10 percentage points above the state average!
- Among 856 middle schools across the state, Windber Area Middle School placed in the top 25%.
- Windber Area High School's combined reading/math scores placed it in the top 24% of the state's 673 high schools.
- In reading alone, the middle/high schools scored better than 80% of other Pennsylvania schools in 2010.

92% of Windber 4th-graders scored at or above grade level in science on the 2010 PSSA.



Windber students have continued to make gains in science proficiency since 2008, the first year science was included in the PSSA. In 2010, the district's combined science scores outpaced the state average by 16 percentage points. Whereas the state average has increased only 3% over the past three years, Windber students have improved their scores by nearly 10%.





## NEW MATH CURRICULUM LINKED TO HIGHER SCORES

Math makes sense at Windber Area Elementary School. In fact, math scores among elementary students have steadily improved since 2007. The district attributes that upward trend to a new curriculum that, unlike traditional approaches, doesn't teach core concepts once and move on. Commonly referred to as Everyday Mathematics, the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project (UCSMP) teaches in a spiral direction, in that it revisits basic skills every few weeks while emphasizing problem solving, everyday applications, and use of technology and reading in mathematics. UCSMP was introduced at Windber Elementary six years ago. With each group that was exposed to the curriculum, WASD has seen a jump in math scores. In fall 2010, the district implemented the curriculum in grades 6 - 8 and is piloting the project with a group of 9th-graders as well. Eventually, the district will incorporate UCSMP throughout the upper grades. The ultimate goal is to help Windber graduates better compete in 21st century educational and workforce settings by becoming capable problem solvers, communicators, and collaborators—tenets of the UCSMP curriculum.

*Windber middle schoolers are introduced to UCSMP's everyday math approach.*

## MULTIFACETED LITERACY CURRICULUM MAKES READING AND WRITING SUCCESS POSSIBLE FOR ALL STUDENTS

One size does not fit all when it comes to learning to read and write. Windber Area School District has been reviewing evidence-based literacy curricula in anticipation of adopting a new, cohesive reading and writing program for grades 1 - 5. The district began a formal shift to more differentiated instruction during the 2009-10 school year with a pair of complementary research-based methods. *The Daily Five* is a series of literacy tasks

(reading to self, reading with someone, writing, word work, and listening to reading) that students complete daily while their teacher meets with small groups or individuals. *Kid Writing* integrates phonics instruction across the curriculum and encourages children to express themselves through writing—without the fear of misspellings and improper punctuation.

New in 2010-11 is *Handwriting Without Tears®*, a research-based program that recognizes that children who are nervous about putting their ABCs down on paper may try to avoid it. *HWT* uses developmentally appropriate, multisensory tools and strategies to put children at ease. Also new to grades 1 - 5 is *Spelling Power*. *Spelling Power* uses highly successful review and retention techniques to help students master the rules of spelling while learning how to spell up to 5,000 high-frequency words. Lastly, *Four Square Writing Method* essentially picks up where *Kid Writing* leaves off and refines the writing process for older students in grades 3 - 5.

Each component of the interim literacy curriculum at Windber Elementary is built to best practices for reading and writing. The program will enable teachers to better reach students of varied skill levels, according to Elementary Principal **Lisa James**. Rather than teaching to the middle and failing to meet the needs of those students that are behind or advanced in their abilities, Windber has put in place a framework that prevents young readers from falling through the cracks. The next step is to implement a leveled reading program that enables children to read and excel at a level and pace that fosters individual reading success.

*Title 1 reading teacher Rebecca Lear reviews literacy fundamentals with kindergarteners.*



## READING COUNTS! PROMOTES INDEPENDENT READING, IMPROVED PERFORMANCE

Rather than turn off children to reading by forcing them to tackle books that are above or below their ability simply because they are in a particular grade, Windber Area School District implemented Scholastic's Reading Counts! program in grades 6 - 8 in 2009-10. The independent reading program uses a research-based evaluation tool to identify each student's appropriate reading level. It was so well received at the middle school, the district is in the process of assessing students in grades 9 - 12 this year. Reading Counts! works by motivating students with suggested reading choices that match their interests and reading levels, while reinforcing comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency skills. The program also provides teachers with a proven strategy that tracks students' success on the books they read—in and out of school.

*For 10th-grader David Beahr and other WASD students, Reading Counts! promotes independent reading while reinforcing literacy skills.*



## MS/HS LIBRARY ADOPTS NEW LOOK, APPROACH TO PROMOTE LITERACY

If you haven't toured the library at Windber Area Middle/High School since you were an undergrad, you might think you walked into a Barnes & Noble instead (minus the café). The library now features oversized, comfortable chairs and coffee tables to create informal and inviting reading and study areas where students can relax while paging through a good book, completing assignments or studying for an exam. The goal was to usher the library into the 21st century and broaden students' perspective and appreciation of the role literacy plays in our lives.

The district is also exploring e-books and audio books and hand-held electronic reading devices such as Amazon Kindles and Apple iPads to strengthen student reading and comprehension skills. Research shows such tools can help keep students interested, increase the number of words they read per minute and improve comprehension by enabling students to grasp concepts more quickly. In December, WASD began to integrate hands-on iPads into the Special Education curriculum. The library currently has two Kindles of its own.

*Windber students gather in one of library's new reading areas.*

Other changes include a re-energized library club whose 20 members have signed on to more actively promote literacy by hosting reading events, book talks, and contests throughout the 2010-11 school year—and beyond. Teacher/Librarian **Dina McClain** is also collaborating with teachers to increase cross-curricular use of the library. With the wealth of information that is available electronically via the Internet, the library staff is committed to helping students learn how to evaluate and access quality information and best utilize those resources for inquiry-based, critical thinking and problem solving research tasks.



*Freshman Nadine Carr uses a Kindle to catch up on her reading as she prepares for the Spring Reading Competition.*



# Beyond Test Scores: *Student Life*



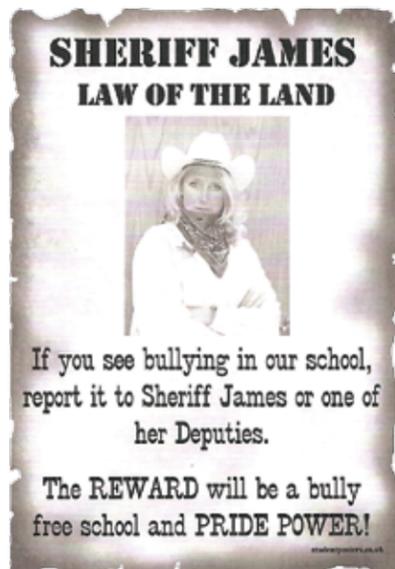
Students use video editing applications to create anti-bullying videos as part of the daily news project.

## ANTI-BULLYING PROGRAM INSTILLS PRIDE IN STUDENTS OF ALL AGES

Reports of suspected bullying of students at Windber Area School District shot up last year, not because the district experienced an increase in bullying—just the opposite. What the district has seen is greater understanding, awareness, intolerance and involvement among students in stopping bullying by speaking out.

In 2009-10, Windber Area School District implemented the renowned Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. Known among Windber staff and students as the PRIDE (Peers Respecting Individual Differences Everywhere) Program, the anti-bullying initiative reinforces its message through classroom meetings and discussion sessions every two weeks, as well as special events, activities, and community outreach efforts.

PRIDE kicked off with two phenomenal assemblies at the elementary and middle/high school levels. At the elementary school, the event took on a Wild West theme, complete with “Wanted” posters of faculty and teachers in cowboy garb.



At the middle/high school, students were treated to a high-energy lip-sync program featuring teachers and students. Although Mr. P's Max All-Stars (Cory Pavlosky and his 7th-grade girls basketball team) won the trophy for best performance, the group

decided to share the honor with 9th-grader **Zac Anderson** whose animated rendition of “Hey Soul Sister” by Train brought students to their feet.

More recently, PRIDE has gained momentum with student-led videos that coincide with Olweus lessons and are aired throughout the district as part of daily announcements. The videos, produced and edited by Marketing and Multimedia students at the high school, help students of all ages understand the damage bullying can cause by conveying the harsh reality of bullying. An expanded MTV-style video is currently in the works. “The Windber Experience” brings together students from different cliques and grade levels to show kids they have things in common with people they never expected. Windber PRIDE is everywhere!

*Mr. P's Max All-Stars Deliver Award-Winning Performance.*



All-Stars share top honors with solo performer Zac Anderson.

## PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES TAKE CENTER STAGE AT WASD

Students interested in the arts, particularly those who enjoy the thrill of performing before an audience, have increasingly more opportunities to explore and refine their talents at Windber Area School District. Sixty students in grades 1 through 12 make up the cast of *The Wizard of Oz*, which will be performed February 4, 5 and 6 at Windber High School Auditorium. By incorporating elementary students into the high school production, the Drama Club hopes to instill a love of the arts that will grow with students throughout middle and high school. In addition to welcoming younger actors to the stage, the journey to Emerald City features students from neighboring Shade-Central City School District, a partner in the production.

Windber offers a number of extracurricular clubs and activities that foster artistic and academic growth. The Windber Area High School Marching Band has earned a reputation as one of the finer small competitive marching bands in the eastern United States. The band has been among the top scoring competitive marching bands in the Johnstown/Somerset/Altoona area, winning Tournament of Bands Chapter XI Championships in 2002, 2003, 2005 and 2009.

Since 2000, the Windber Marching Band has competed yearly in the Tournament of Bands Atlantic Coast Championships, placing in the top 10 among 25 finalists at six of these prestigious competitions.

WASD doubled the size of the 6th-grade choir and expanded the 7th- and 8th-grade and high school choirs in 2010-11. **David Morus**, the district's new director of choirs, has also taken steps to create more opportunities for competitive and community performances including forming a Show Choir, participating in a show choir festival in partnership with other area schools, and taking part in a Music Performance Assessment through the Pennsylvania Music Educator Association (PMEA). Windber students regularly participate in Songfest at the elementary level, County Chorus at the junior and senior high levels, and various PMEA honors ensembles such as District and Regional Choirs and yearbook clubs and activities.

Students also display creative self-expression and build communications skills through participation in art, creative writing, performance, stage crew, video, forensics, journalism, and yearbook.



The Windber Marching Band wows Ramblers fans with a powerhouse half-time show.



### Follow the Yellow Brick Road to the Windber HS Office for Tickets!

The *Wizard of Oz*, will be performed at Windber High School Auditorium February 4 and 5 at 7 p.m. and at 2 p.m. Sunday February 6. Presale tickets are \$5 for students, seniors and adults. Tickets at the door will be \$6 for students/seniors and \$8 for adults. Reserve your seat today!

Cast members block a scene for Windber Area High School's production of *The Wizard of Oz*.

## DISTRICT ADDS PILOT STRINGS PROGRAM FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLERS

In an effort to further enhance Windber's instructional offerings in music and performance arts, the district is in the process of launching a pilot strings program for middle school students. New in 2011, 6th-graders will have the chance to learn the violin, viola, cello, and/or bass. Students and parents were invited to check out the instruments at a meeting in January. Nearly 30 children expressed interest in participating in the pilot program. Strings and gifted teacher **Sarah Peckjian**, who joined the faculty at WAsD in fall of 2010, is leading the pilot program. Peckjian is an accomplished violinist with experience in classical, fiddle, and blue grass music.

In order to make the program accessible to students of all income levels, the district will both rent instruments for students to use, as well as connect families with affordable rent-to-own options for those children who wish to have an instrument of their own. A joint concert with musicians from Richland School District's Strings Program is planned for March. Peckjian hopes early enthusiasm among students for the pilot project will lead to a fully endorsed and expanded program for the 2011-12 school year.



*Aspiring student musicians check out instruments for Windber's new Pilot Strings Program.*

## SCIENCE OLYMPIAD PROPELS STUDENTS TO GREATER ACHIEVEMENT

American 15-year-olds are losing ground in science and math achievement compared to their peers around the world, according to the National Science Board's *Science and Engineering Indicators 2010* report. The finding reinforces the need for schools to maximize student interest in science by providing learning opportunities that challenge young minds to new heights.

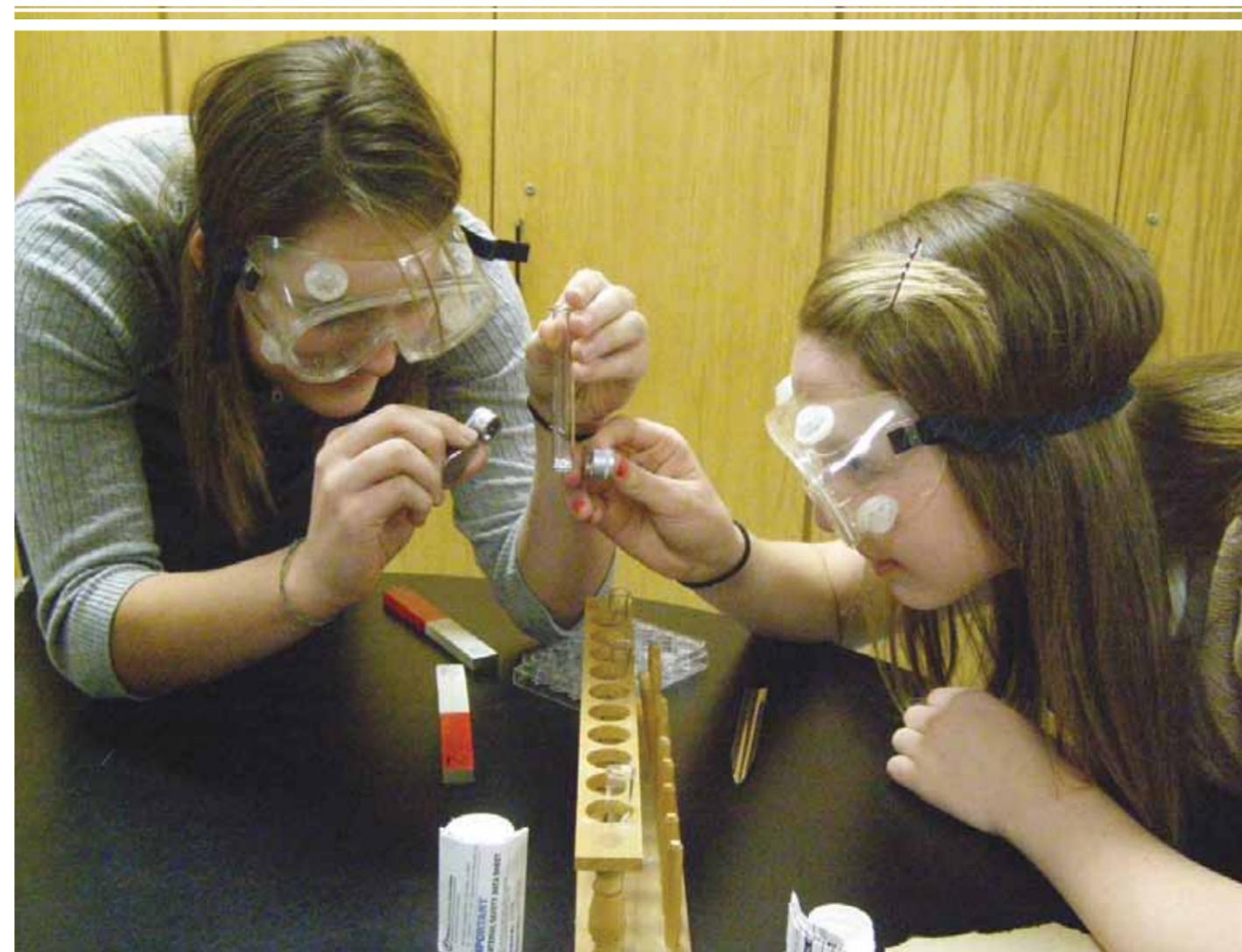
At WAsD, participation in the Science Olympiad has grown steadily over the past five years. Nearly 30 middle school and high school science students are spending their Mondays after school preparing for the regional competition, which will be held in March at California University of Pennsylvania. This is the first time in a while that the district has entered two teams. Students' goal is to make it to the state and national competitions later this year. Olympiad teams compete in up to 23 events that test their skill and knowledge in areas including anatomy, chemistry, experimental design, physics and robotics. To prepare, Windber students have researched, designed, built and tested bottle rockets, aquifers, bridges and towers, and musical instruments made from plastic pipes.

Windber has traditionally done well at the regional competition. Two Windber teams took home silver medals in both the middle and high school divisions in 2009-10. The previous year WAsD won the gold in the middle school division.



*Exploring the World of Science*

*Brandi Levernight and Sarah Hartman test chemicals as they train for the "Crimestoppers" portion of the Science Olympiad.*



## FORENSICS' POPULARITY TRIPLES OVER PAST FIVE YEARS



*WAsD Forensics Team members celebrate award-winning performances at a district competition last year.*

The Forensics Program at WAsD began with a handful of students five years ago. Today, the team boasts a dozen students in grades 9 - 12 and regularly competes in local, district, regional, state and national competitions. Students can compete individually or in teams in categories such as: Oral Interpretation of Literature; Dramatic Performance, Duo Performance, Extemporaneous Speaking; Oratorical Declamation; Original Oratory; and Public Forum Debate. So far in 2010-11, Windber's team is off to a great start. Three students recently won first place honors at a district competition in the categories of humorous drama, persuasive, and declamation. Coaches say a true testament to the program is that students who begin forensics as freshmen invariably stick with the program through their senior year! The Pennsylvania High School Speech League tournament will be held in March at Susquehanna University.

## WINDBER SPORTS RESONATE WITH STUDENTS, COMMUNITY



Over the years, Windber Area School District has earned a reputation for producing highly competitive and successful sports teams. Maybe that explains why one in three students at the middle school and high school levels is involved in one or more athletics programs. On an annual basis, 248 student-athletes in grades 7-12 participate in nearly a dozen sports: baseball, basketball, cheerleading, cross country, football, golf, soccer, softball, tennis, track and volleyball. Each sport has had teams and individuals who have excelled on the field, court, track and greens.

*Varsity Volleyball celebrates a championship season.*

## ATHLETIC ACCOLADES

*Early 2010-11 Ramblers sports highlights include:*

**Varsity Volleyball** went undefeated in the regular season in 2010, capturing both the WestPAC Conference and District 5 "AA" Championships. The Lady Ramblers advanced to the Elite 8 in the State Tournament and finished the season ranked #7.

**Varsity Golf** won the WestPAC Tournament, as well as the WestPAC Conference Championship with a 7-1 league record. **Adam Mihalko** was selected to the WestPAC All-Conference team by virtue of his top 5 performance at the WestPAC Tournament. This is Adam's third straight year as a WestPAC All-Conference member.

**Varsity Tennis** finished the season with an impressive 13-2 overall record. **Katie Tokarsky** earned the District 5 Singles Championship and advanced to the PIAA Tennis Championships.

**Varsity Cross Country** freshman **Annalee Tokarsky** set and broke

her own school record for cross country repeatedly in 2010, finishing the season with a best time of 20:50.

**Junior Varsity Football** went undefeated in 2010, earning a record of 6-0-1.



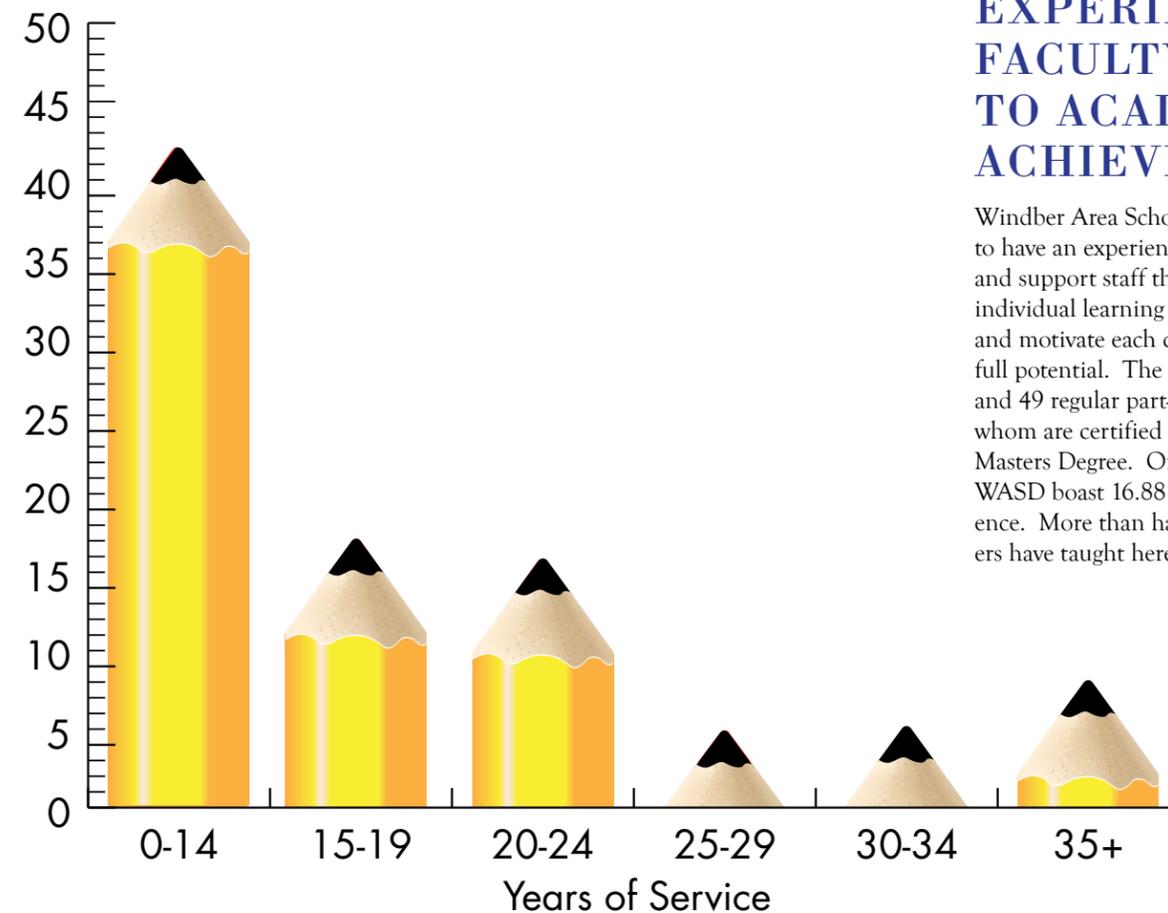
*Congratulations WestPAC Conference champions!*



*Second-grader Megan Ott completes a workbook page with direction from teacher Jesse Tallyen—one of 93 certified teachers that make up WASD's faculty.*

## Quality Workforce

### WASD Teachers - Years of Service



## EXPERIENCED FACULTY A KEY TO ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Windber Area School District is fortunate to have an experienced and dedicated faculty and support staff that strive to meet the individual learning needs of our students and motivate each child to reach his or her full potential. The district has 125 full-time and 49 regular part-time employees, 93 of whom are certified teachers, 58% with a Masters Degree. On average, teachers at WASD boast 16.88 years of teaching experience. More than half of the district's teachers have taught here for 15 years or more.

# STAFF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## PSSA Teacher/PDE Committees

Teachers who were selected to participate had to prepare a resume and work through a rigorous selection process. Participation on these committees affords educators the opportunity to be in on the foundational workings of PSSA development.

**Bob Culp** – Science Committee

**Chris Hudak** – State-level Review Committee

**Bob Christner** – Health/Phys Ed Committee

**Scott McClain** – Math Committee

## Keystone Technology Integrators

Teachers who earn the designation Keystone Technology Integrator bring to the classroom content, motivational, and management expertise to capture students' imaginations and harness learning in children.

**Dawn Elchin**  
**Lance McGough**  
**Joe Podrebarac**

High School physics teacher **Dawn Elchin** and math teacher **Joe Podrebarac** were two of only 100 educators statewide to be selected to attend the 2010 Keystone Technology Integrators Summit. Mrs. Elchin was also selected as a Keystone Mentor, one of only 20 educators to earn this distinction.

## Distinguished Educator Honors

Teachers who achieve Distinguished Educator Honors from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have been nominated as outstanding teachers by former students who have attended or are attending MIT.

**Scott McClain**  
**Dawn Elchin**



The HEAL® Program kicks off with an evidence-based drumming session shown to reduce stress and employee burnout.

## HEAL RAISES TEACHER AWARENESS, PROVIDES STRATEGIES TO BETTER TEACH AND REACH STUDENTS

Teachers at Windber Area School District broadened their perspective of students and self last year with a research-driven, pilot professional development program called HEAL—Holistic Educational Approach to Learning. The HEAL® Program, which was launched in partnership with Windber Research Institute and Windber Medical Center, included four day-long workshops aimed at helping teachers recognize the many outside factors that can impact a child's ability to learn before he or she ever steps into the classroom. The program touched upon everything from teachers' own physical and emotional well-being with sessions on holistic health and the mind-body connection to teaching the whole child with training on brain research and child development. HEAL also featured in-depth sessions on the impact of generational poverty and risk factors such as neglect and abuse and how to build resiliency in children so they can rebound from life's many obstacles.

Teachers participated in pre- and post-program surveys and follow-up assessments to measure increased awareness of various topics, as well as application of strategies and techniques in the classroom. For example, nearly every teacher, 98%, stated they could identify at least one student, or five or more students, from generational poverty whose

patterns and thinking they better understood as a result of Phase III of HEAL. Furthermore, 60% made a point of providing extra support and encouragement to at least one of those students as a result of the program.

Concepts introduced in year one of HEAL are continuing in 2010-11 with more targeted training in a classroom adaptation of author Gary Chapman's The Five Love Languages of Children and BrainSMART, a brain-based professional development program that translates the implications of brain research into tools for teaching and learning.

Teachers collaborate during an interactive refresher course on child development as part of Phase II of HEAL.

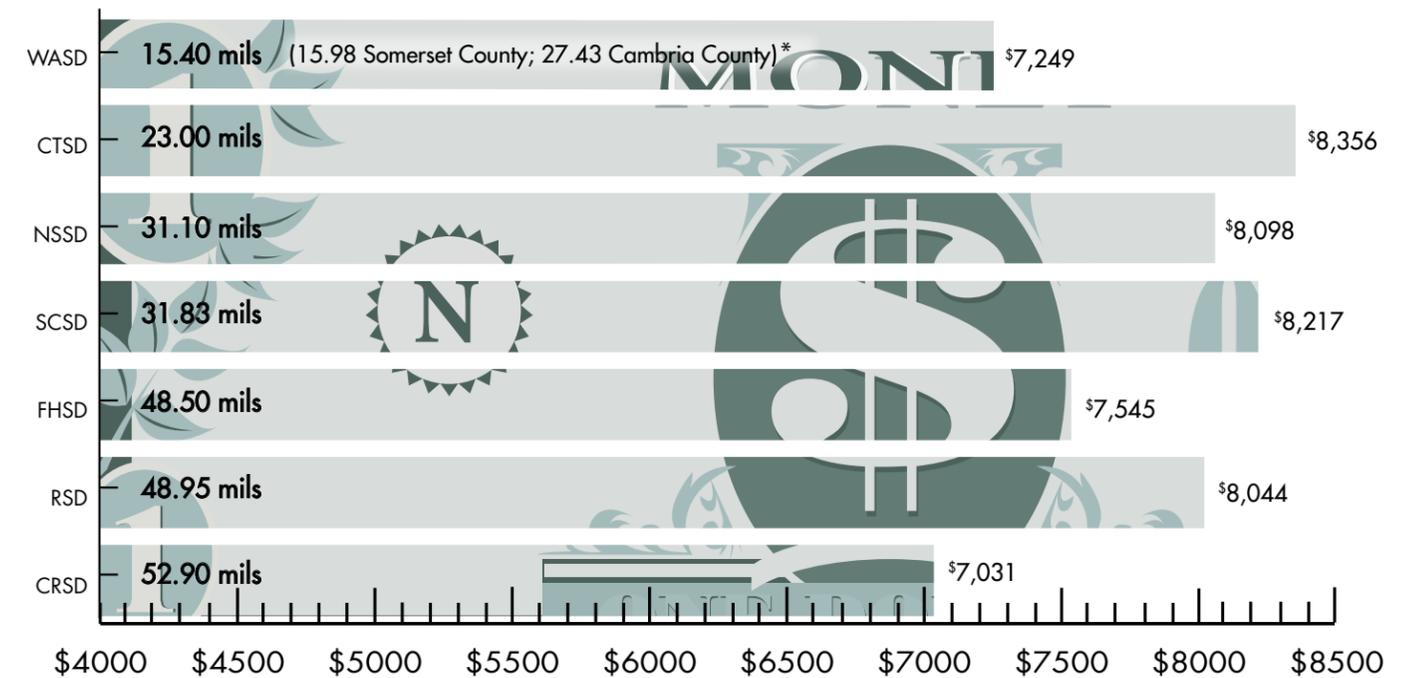


# Organizational Effectiveness

## Where Your Tax Dollars Go

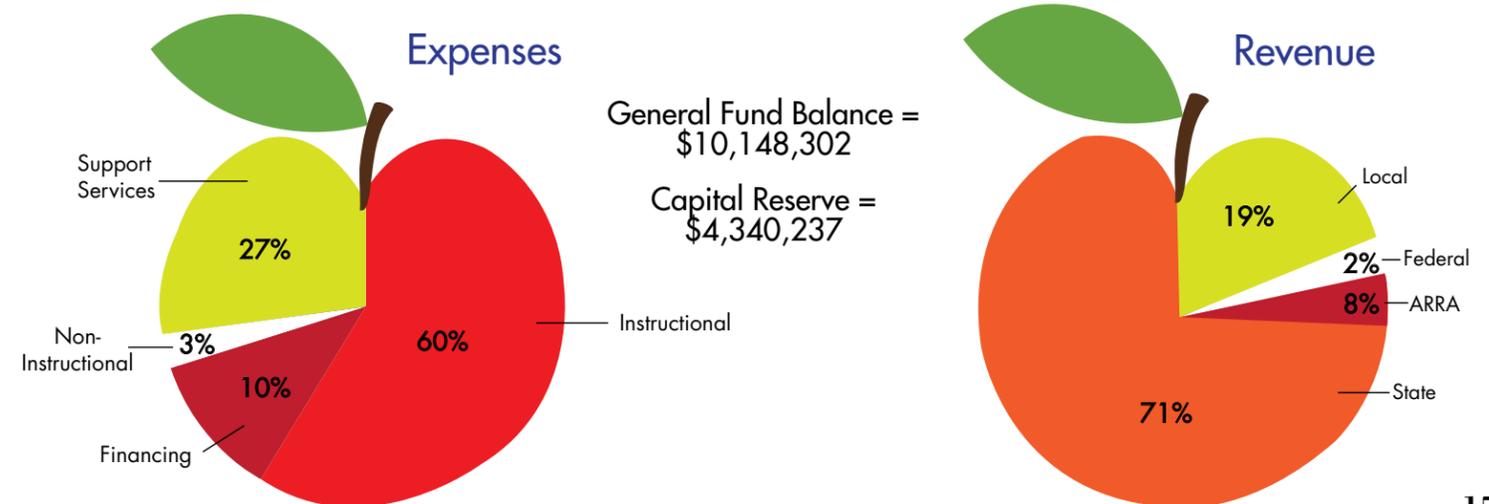
The 2010-11 school year marks the first time in nearly three-decades that Windber Area School District raised taxes to help offset the cost of educating our young people. The current tax rate stands at 15.98 mils in Somerset County and 27.43 mils in Cambria County, up slightly from 15.40 and 26.1375 respectively in 2009-10. Still, out of 500 school districts in Pennsylvania, WASD ranks 498 in lowest taxes. When compared to other districts in our area, Windber residents pay between one- and two-thirds of millage rates in most neighboring communities, yet our children benefit from a per pupil cost of education that ranks second for dollar value of education per mil.

## Annual Average Education Cost per Pupil for 2009-10



\*2010-11 millage rates (A county-wide reassessment of property taxes in Bedford County resulted in a reduction from 52.90 to 9.73 mils in the Chestnut Ridge School District for 2010-11.)

WASD's expenditures for 2009-10 were \$15,198,397; revenue was \$14,854,127. Your tax dollars made up about 15% of the district's revenue. Other local sources accounted for 4%. Funding from the federal government added another 2%, and ARRA Stimulus funds comprised 8% of total revenue. The vast majority of funding, nearly three-quarters of the district's total revenue, came from the state. Our fund balance, which generated approximately 2.47% interest last year, and capital reserve have traditionally been used to offset expenditures and keep millage rates low. Those reserve funds will take on added importance if state education dollars are frozen or reduced.



# Looking Ahead

## REVAMPED TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION TO INCORPORATE ENHANCED ENGINEERING CONCEPTS, GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN SCHEDULING



*Teacher Dave Dzurko engages students Sierra Buchan and Jake Wissinger in a lesson on robotics and automation.*

A new 3D printer, which was installed in September 2010, actually creates 3D plastic models of students' designs. Other exceptional teaching tools include CNC plasma cutting machines, enhanced robotics materials, and state-of-the-art software packages.

Although technology education at Windber has traditionally incorporated basic engineering concepts, the new curriculum aims to provide students with more in-depth instruction, rather than a general overview of engineering fundamentals—and at an earlier age. Middle school students will participate in experiential, problem-solving activities based on Pennsylvania's "Engineering by Design" curriculum. The program, which builds upon the district's existing 6-week technology education classes, is intended to give students a better glimpse of engineering and related fields so they can make more informed choices when selecting science, math and technology courses in high school. At the high school level, the flexibility of new 9- and 18-week tech and engineering courses will enable more students to experience the program.

High-tech occupations top the list of fastest growing careers over the coming decade, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Windber Area School District has answered the call with a restructuring of our Technology Education Department. Elements of the revised Technology and Engineering Education

curriculum, which will formally take effect in 2011-12, are designed to take the district's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Initiative to the next level. The curriculum includes greater emphasis on robotics, electronics, mechanical drafting, 3D modeling, and mechanical engineering.

## HIGH SCHOOL SCHEDULE CHANGE TO EMPHASIZE CORE SUBJECTS, EXPAND ELECTIVE OFFERINGS

Overall scheduling of high school classes will take on a new look next year. Similar to modifications made at the middle school level in 2009-10, the schedule will go from nine periods, each with 43 minutes of instruction time, to an eight-period day with 57 minutes allotted for each class. What that means is an additional 50 hours of instructional time in core subjects of English, math, science, and social studies! The change is phase one of a comprehensive reorganization of course offerings and electives by departments. In an effort to further challenge students with more advanced and diverse courses, WASD eventually plans to offer AP or Advanced Placement classes in core subjects and expand students' selection of electives. The reorganization also includes an increase in the number of credits required for graduation from 22 to 26. Also planned is a series of 16 seminars, four per year, where students are exposed to topics such as personal finance, enrichment activities, study skills, and technology and engineering education.

*Students during a change of classes at the high school.*



## NEW POLICY IMPROVES ATTENDANCE, REDUCES UNEXCUSED TARDIES



*As a result of the new attendance policy, students are spending more time in the classroom and in labs, just like teacher Doug Miller's 8th-grade Earth Science class.*

To receive a quality education, students must first come to school—and in the first half of the 2010-11 school year, more of them did just that. As of early December, Windber students in grades K - 12 had attended 955 more school days in the first 12 weeks of this school year compared to the same time period last year. This reflects a 23 percent drop in absenteeism from 2009 to 2010. Unexcused tardies dropped an astonishing 72 percent during the same time period.

Windber Area School District attributes the improvement to a new, more stringent attendance policy that aims to raise individual students' academic performance now and in the future. The policy, which went into effect in September 2010, was two years in the making. After monitoring attendance rates for two consecutive school years, a team of administrators, teachers, nurses, counselors, office personnel, and the local magistrate reviewed the data and developed a policy to strengthen attendance rates. The approved policy meets Pennsylvania Department of Education attendance and Child Accounting requirements. In addition, it includes a state-mandated truancy elimination plan and a well-developed protocol to notify parents when a child has exceeded the number of allowable absences.

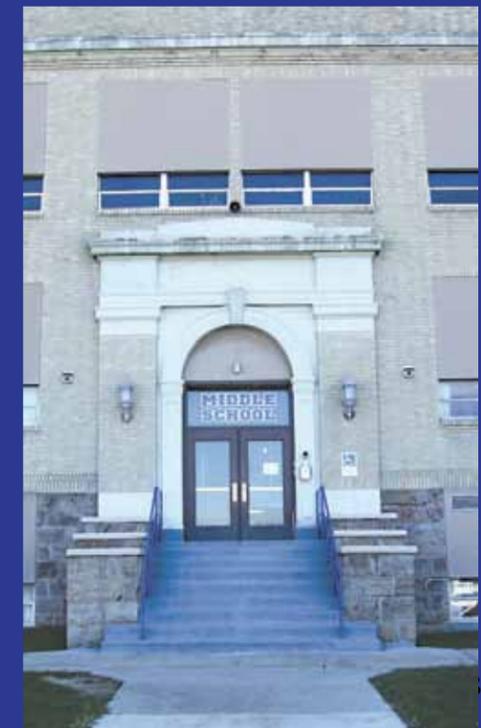
Although the district's grade-by-grade attendance rates already exceeded the state's goal of 90 percent, some attendance rates in 2010-11 are topping 97 percent. What that means is more students are getting greater instructional time, which research suggests is a strong predictor of heightened student achievement.

## DISTRICT PLANS COMPREHENSIVE FACILITIES STUDY

Windber Area School District serves more than 9,000 residents from Windber and Paint Boroughs and Paint and Ogle Townships in Somerset County, as well as Scalp Level Borough in Cambria County. Our children are educated at two sites central to the district—an elementary school in Paint Township and middle/high school complex in Windber Borough. In 2010, WASD contracted the Monaco Group of Pittsburgh to begin a study of sites utilized for the district's extracurricular activities. The study is the first component of an ongoing review of district facilities.

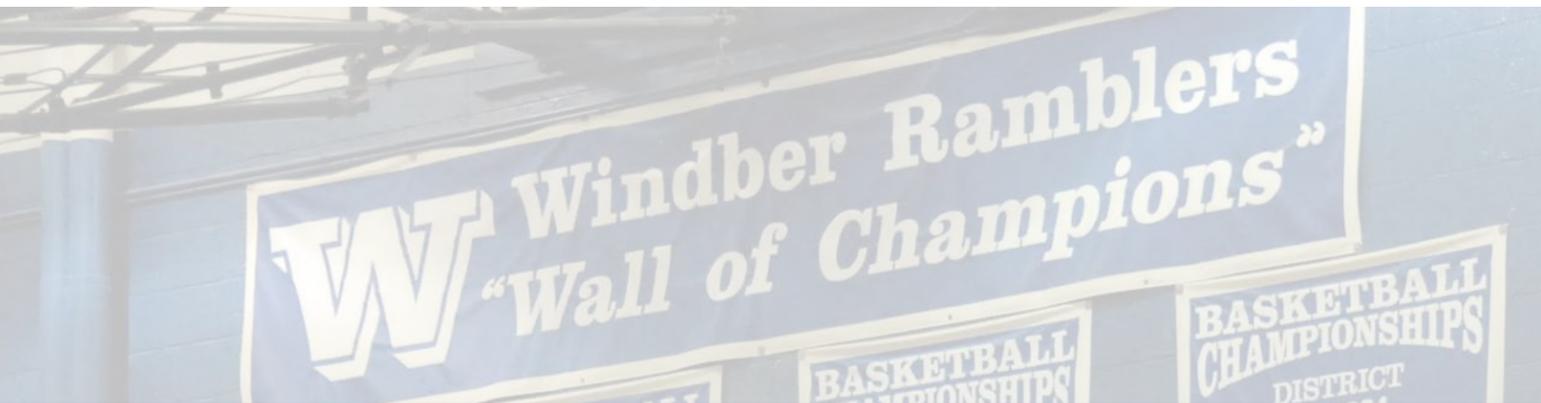
Now 12 years old, the elementary school remains a safe, inviting and eco-friendly educational setting complete with geothermal heating and cooling. Although the middle/high school complex is well-maintained, clean, and functional, the core building's age and multiple additions present numerous challenges. The middle school section dates back to 1924, the third floor of which has been unusable for two decades due to non-compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (not elevator accessible) and fire prevention and safety regulations (no sprinklers). The high school portion was added in 1963, and the administrative annex was built in 2004. Later phases of the review will examine infrastructure such as wiring, plumbing, and heating systems. The district will invite residents to review various phases of the study as they are completed starting in 2011.

*A front view of the Windber Area Middle School, which dates back to 1924.*



# District Directory

# Photo Gallery



## Windber Area Elementary School

Lisa James, *Elementary School Principal*  
421 Sugar Maple Drive  
Windber, PA 15963  
(814) 467-5596

## Windber Area Middle School

Douglas A. Ledney, *Middle School Principal*  
2301 Graham Avenue  
Windber, PA 15963  
(814) 467-4620

## Windber Area High School

Ralph J. DeMarco, *High School Principal*  
2301 Graham Avenue  
Windber, PA 15963  
(814) 467-4567

## District Administrative Offices

2301 Graham Avenue  
Windber, PA 15963  
(814) 467-5551

Rick G. Huffman, *Superintendent*  
Glenn J. Gaye, Jr., *Director of Education*  
Frank Tallyen, *Technology Coordinator*  
Jennifer Shuman, *Special Services Coordinator*  
Randy Roxby, *Facilities Manager*  
William Jablon, *Food Services Coordinator*

## Board of Directors

Timothy Tokarsky, *President*  
Steve Kormanik, *Vice-President*  
Cindy Orlovsky, *Secretary*  
Joseph Felix, *Treasurer*  
Glenn Gaye, Sr.  
Barbara Holovka  
Robert Marhefka  
Gene Shaffer  
Keith Vasas  
Sam Clapper, *Solicitor*

