

November, 2008

Bits and Pieces of HUHS Information

Instead of authoring an article focused on a single subject, I thought it might be helpful for readers to receive in writing a snapshot of Hartford Union High School through “Bits and Pieces” of information. In so doing, I am hopeful the items will not only be informative, but also contribute to readers’ understanding of the current, as well as the around-the-corner challenges facing the school district.

- In large part not only because of the declining enrollment, but also the gap between new annual state aid and inflation, the school board has reduced expenditures by approximately \$1.2 million over the span of the last two budgets. As you will note in the bullet indicating enrollment, the trend will continue into our short term future.
- The high school’s current enrollment is 1,645. We gained 11 students in the 2005-2006 school year; lost 34 students in the 2006-2007 school year; lost 18 students in the 2007-2008 school year; lost 45 students in the 2008-2009 school year; and are projected to lose 68 students in the 2009-2010 school year; and are projected to lose an additional 38 students in the 2010-2011 school year. We anticipate our enrollment flattening out, if no surprises, in school year 2011-2012.
- The Federal Government has chosen to not fund special education program costs over the last 34 school years at the promised percentage level. If the federal government were to do so, the district would acquire approximately \$638,833 to offset costs in the 2008-2009 school year.
- Based on our Action Research, interviewing parents choosing to open enroll their students elsewhere, we have discovered that most choose to do so because of a perception that Hartford Union High School lacks “the rigor to provide students access to colleges/universities as compared to our neighboring school districts.” Perception is far from the truth and will be addressed sooner rather than later. To aggressively hold our borders, the board has authorized the creation of a marketing plan for implementation in the 2008-2009 school year.
- The board has made a commitment to maintain a multiple pathway high school,¹ in essence, a program designed for students in grades 9 – 12 with differing abilities and goals, including advanced placement, college in the schools, world language, and honors classes, as well as technology education and engineering courses, and other outstanding elective opportunities.
- We have fifty-one (51) courses that provide learners with college credit within the framework of the district’s education plan. The number is not dissimilar to our contiguous school districts.
- Hartford Union High School receives students from seven public K-8 districts and nine parochial K-8 districts. Of the group, no two offer learners the same educational experiences from grades K – 8. The situation creates challenges for 9th grade teachers and each incoming freshman class. However, over the last three years, some of the K-8 feeder districts are sending 8th graders to the high school to access 9th grade courses in the areas of mathematics and world Languages, ultimately opening the door for those learners to access upper level/college course work. Students are also recommended for accelerated science upon entry in the 9th grade at HUHS by an 8th grade teacher.
- 75 % of our professional staff have a masters degree or beyond.
- 95.5% of our students graduate from high school; 81% go on to higher education after graduation; 74% of our advanced placement scholars earn scores of 3 or higher on advanced placement tests; 53% of our students participate in fine arts - - music, art, theater; and 77% of our high school students participate in a co-curricular activity.

- Hartford Union High School student-to-computer ratio is 2.5.
- Hartford Union High School offers one of the most extensive music programs in Wisconsin. High school students can participate in band, orchestra, choir, and specialized ensembles.
- Through the district's gifted and talented program, a variety of services are offered in response to student needs, talents, and interests.

¹ The term comprehensive high school is old fashioned and confusing. And, when using "comprehensive high school" to describe HUHS, most staff, parents, and students make up their own definition, oftentimes misrepresenting our true program/services, aligned with our mission. Instead, I, along with many others across this country today, use the term "multiple pathways" which in the past was referred to as a "comprehensive high school." So, what does the "multiple pathways" tag mean to me:

- We have clear pathways available for learners:
 - (1) the four year college/university,
 - (2) the technical college, and
 - (3) the world of work or service to country.

In all cases, the programs and options must be rigorous, relevant, built on a foundation of positive relationships, and aligned with providing learners access to the knowledge/information in order to transition successfully beyond high school.

- We must make sure that all pathways, programs, and services are modified, adjusted annually, and aligned with the changing nature of all three clear options available to learners (the message I have been delivering focuses on becoming far more nimble and flexible, accepting that change is a normal part of our world of work). And, we must ensure that learners have the opportunity to move in and out of the pathways over time, providing the maximum flexibility possible to modify and adjust future plans while both at HUHS and in life thereafter.

To be sure, I have listed today's pathways; however, if we are going to provide learners with the tools needed to ultimately become a part of this country's future quality work force, other pathways will certainly surface. And if failing to recognize and create on our own (on a far faster change timeline than today), in my opinion, public schools will not survive (or change will be forced into our lives/programs/services from the outside). The choice rests in our very capable hands.

For more information about Hartford Union High School programs and services, call, write, or send an e-mail to: Michael L. Kremer, Ph.D., Superintendent, Hartford Union High School, 805 Cedar Street, Hartford WI 53027. Phone: 262-670-3200 or E-mail: michael.kremer@huhs.org
A variety of other information about Hartford Union High School is also available on our web site at: <http://www.huhs.org>

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