

# Nature Hill Intermediate Sets the Precedence as a State Leader A True Model for Digital Technology Day and Beyond

Digital Learning Day is a nationwide celebration of innovative teaching and learning through digital media and technology. The purpose is to engage students and provide them with a rich, personalized educational experience unlike the typical daily routine. Leading the way in Wisconsin was Nature Hill Intermediate School in Oconomowoc which set the stage as a solid example of a 21st century model of superior public education.

Inspired by the open minded highly innovative NHI staff, the halls were abuzz with students running their own business and plan for the day. Using everything from iPods, iPads, cameras, and cell phones. Students geared themselves to take on the challenges of the day.

Eighth graders had the task of exploring the school as part of "The Lewis and Clark Mystery Adventure." Created by social studies teacher, Erik Jappinen, and inspired by the journey of America's famous explorers, students digitally documented school from a new perspective. Jappinen explains "The students were asked, 'What color is the wall in the main staircase of the building?' It was this simple question that sparked a very complex discussion. How much do we really know about the small details in our school and how much attention do we pay to the world around us specifically our own school our own familiar community?" Students spent the day disguised as explorers traveling through the school with a new appreciation for the small details otherwise missed each day. Digital photography was used to document each area of the school

and create digital "journals" which can now be posted on the web.

In seventh grade kids are using QR Codes which was the brainchild of science teacher, Tim Bohlman. Using a pre-created map of the school, students scanned each QR code with their smartphones and continued to move from point to point solving mysteries and answering questions in an attempt to be the first to make it around the school and solve the QR mystery.

The theme for sixth grade was "WHAT CAN I DO IN A DAY?" With cell phones in hand, students sent texts to group members, had conferences with DPI about changing school hours, had EDMODO (an online social networking tool) conversations to track progress, and used flip cameras documenting each step of the process. Some highlights of this event were when a local car company EWALD, arrived with a 2012 full loaded Camaro. Additionally, Triple Infinity, an original student created hip hop beat box rap group, was able to secure a show at the local coffee shop, ROOTZ, in downtown Oconomowoc. The students recorded several songs, made videos, and posted them on YOUTUBE. "It has been a dream of mine to be able to write music," sixth grade poet/musician Kate Eichstaedt explains. "Our teacher set up a digital mixer and electronic bass in the classroom, and let us make our dream come true. Plus we have a gig to show off our work!" Super Skype was the pinnacle activity of the day's events. Students in a sixth grade classroom met up with an entire class of third graders from Meadow View Elementary.



Inspired by the collaboration of Julie Palm (third grade teacher) and Michael Krill (sixth grade teacher), the two groups used Skype to work together to better understand the process of book clubs used in the daily Reader's Workshop model. The second Super Skype of the day was in a seventh grade art class lead by artist and teacher, Karen Reiland, she touched based with her brother and fellow Language Arts teacher in St. Louis. As the St. Louis students shared their poetry, the Nature Hill seventh graders created sketches inspired by the figurative language being shared.

Nature Hill Intermediate School in Oconomowoc truly defines what Digital Learning Day can and should be in Wisconsin. What was unique about the day's events were the number of different activities all

happening under one roof. Letting go of the daily structure and letting the school run a plethora of highly engaging activities was the essence of the importance of Digital Technology Day. "We challenge your school to expand the walls of the typical classroom and put the right and proper tools in the hands of all your staff, parents, and students. What we accomplished in a day is something we want the state of Wisconsin to accomplish every day," explains Michael O'Connor NHI Principal. "It was truly the impact of the students' willingness to embrace the process that made this day so special. Tools make the difference only if the structures are in place to harbor the types of activities we see at our school. The future is today, yet we continue to keep our eyes on tomorrow."

# Schools



REBECCA SEYMOUR/SUBMITTED PHOTO

**GREENLAND SPIRIT** - Oconomowoc's Greenland Elementary School teachers and staff worked their hamburger buns off during last Tuesday's McTeacher's Night at McDonald's. The two-hour event helped raised funds for the school's student council. Lynn Clemans, (from left) Lori Ellis, Pam Biesboer, John Flannery, Judy Powell and Ellen Maynard were some of the super stars that helped raise \$500 for their school.

## Ordering up McFun at McDonald's McTeacher's night

By REBECCA SEYMOUR  
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The Oconomowoc McDonald's, with the help of area educators dished up loads of food and fun to a very full restaurant and playland area during McTeacher's Night last Tuesday evening.

The local McDonald's partnered with Fox6 News to sponsor the event, provid-

ing Oconomowoc's Greenland Elementary School faculty, students and parents with the opportunity to increase school pride, while also generating funds for their school's student council.

For more than two hours, 20 Greenland teachers and support staff helped work the counter and drive-through and also greeted patrons as they entered a packed McDonald's.

All their hard work paid off as McDonald's donated a percentage of the sales made during the event, totaling \$500 to the elementary school.

"The staff at McDonald's was incredible - our staff felt very welcome and appreciated," said Greenland principal, John Flannery. "We are incredibly fortunate to have such a supportive parent community at Greenland. The participation and excitement surrounding McTeacher's Night was fantastic and our staff did an amazing job organizing the event and representing Greenland school."

## Symposium helps students plan for life after high school

By DONNA FRAKE  
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**Oconomowoc Area School District** - Students in their junior year at Oconomowoc High School, and their parents, are invited to attend a workshop on post-high school planning on Monday, March 12.

The annual event offers presenters from various areas that will provide information to help students plan avenues to explore after graduation.

The school has been holding its Junior Symposium annually since 2004.

"We have always had a terrific turnout and the feedback from parents has been wonderful," OHS counselor Scott Bakkum said.

The event offers the opportunity to investigate options for life after graduation, whether the student is interested in continuing education at a college, tech school or pursuing a career in the military.

"We will welcome presenters from the UW-System, private colleges/universities, technical colleges and financial aid. We also will have the military branches represented as well," he explained.

The symposium will be structured similarly to those hosted in the past.

A scheduling timeline for the workshop provides the opportunity to go to three of the sectionals offered. The sectionals will include speakers who are experts in their area and will provide a presentation and offer opportunities for questions.

There will also be more time for questions and information gathering during the booth time before and after the sectional presentations.

"Over the years, we have continued with a similar format, but we changed the venues a bit this year as to where the sectionals will be offered," Bakkum said.

"We are going to be using the Oconomowoc Arts Center and the 'Vic' for the first time this year," he said, referring to the rehearsal area

in the OAC.

This year's junior class is made up of 350 students.

"It is an evening for parents to get information on post-high school planning and ask questions regarding options their child might be considering upon graduation," Bakkum said.

"We will also have brochures and information from the counseling department regarding post-high school planning and ACT testing," he added.

Also offered at the workshop is information on paying for college.

"This year we also have a sectional on Scholarship Solutions, that we are very excited about," Bakkum said.

"Scholarship Solutions is a sectional presented by Brad Baldridge. He is a college-funding consultant that provides information to par-

ents on financing a college education. I think parents are more likely now with these economic times to be looking for information on how to best help their child with college expenses," he explained.

Last year the symposium included a college test prep section, but that has been dropped from the current event schedule.

"The ACT sectional was offered last year, but we won't have a sectional this year. We did however introduce ACT Prep classes this year at OHS with good success. The numbers went up with each class offered," Bakkum explained.

The Junior Symposium begins at 6 p.m. with a general session in the OAC. Sectionals should begin approximately at 6:15 p.m., he added.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

**RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE** - The Milwaukee Times 27th Annual Black Excellence Awards, held Friday, Feb. 24, recognized Deanna Burton, principal of Ixonia Elementary School. Burton was honored with an award for Extraordinary Achievement.

# FOCUS *in the Classroom*

## A Lemonade War to remember at Park Lawn

According to students and staff at Park Lawn Elementary School, one of the best times of the year is during One School, One Book, now a tradition at their school. Thanks to the school's PTA, every Park Lawn family and staff member received a copy of "The Lemonade War" by Jacqueline Davies. Everyone also got a calendar to help them stay connected with book-focused activities happening throughout the month of February. No matter where you went in the school, students and staff could talk about their common reading experience.

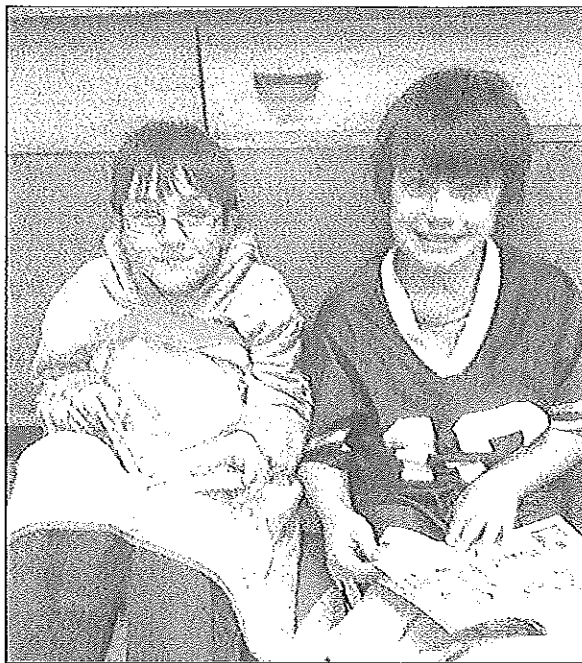
According to a letter sent home to families, one of the primary goals of the One School, One Book program was to build a community of readers at the school and at home. Reinforcing life lessons was also part of the curriculum.

In "The Lemonade War," readers found out about a brother who is people-smart and his sister, who is math-smart. With just five days left of summer vacation, they launched an all-out war to see who can sell the most lemonade before school began. The book tracks their brother/sister arguments and competition, which made it easy for students to connect with.

Reading specialist Andrea Finger said that the book includes math, social situations and word definitions at the beginning of each chapter. "The short chapters made it possible for busy families to sit down and read a chapter every night for 14 nights," she said.

During February, classrooms took part in trivia questions given in the morning on PKL-94, the school's own television station. School staff took turns reading each chapter so that families could stay connected with the book, in case parents were not available on a specific night. The chapters were posted on the school website.

Principal Joan Marley



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Nate Thorson (left) and TJ Narloch enjoy reading time on a beach towel. Comfortable spots were found on floors throughout Park Lawn as students celebrated One School, One Book on Feb. 23.



Samantha Erstad (left) and Samantha Sorensen take advantage of reading time at the celebration for One School, One Book.

wrote that the book also reinforced the school's theme that encourages children to build each other up and be bucket fillers instead of bucket dippers (the story, "Have you filled your bucket?" appeared in the Nov. 23, 2011 edition of Oconomowoc Focus).

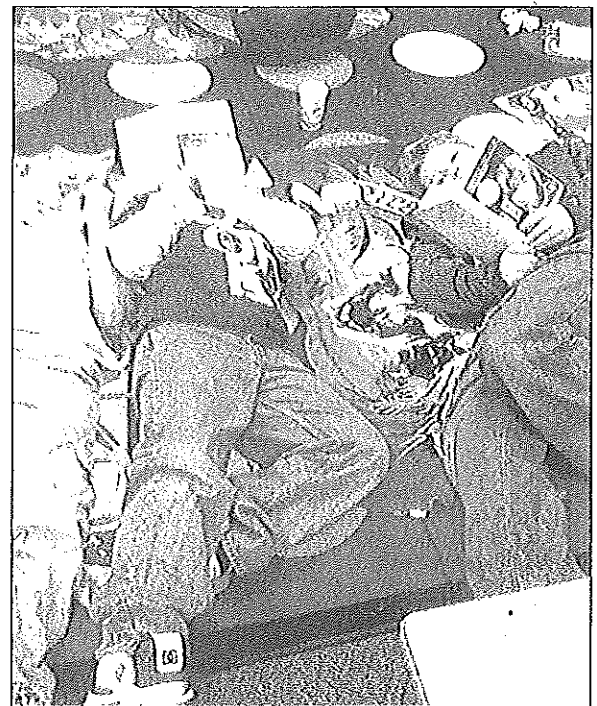
Part of the One School, One Book program was the desire to raise money for a good

cause, so classrooms took part in a "Box Top, Milk Cap War" which supported the school's playground project. Congratulations to the kindergarten class of Patricia Attie who won that competition; in addition, \$1000 was raised for the Park Lawn playground during the three weeks of One School, One Book.

## Teacher's notebook

Important details of One School, One Book:

- It can be challenging to find a book that interests yet is accessible to children in 4K through fourth grade. There are "one book" sites online that can offer ideas.
- The value of parents reading to their children is tremendous. At the end of the month, parents noted that they wished the program would continue.
- Building a community of readers is invigorating. Students of every grade could connect with each other. Teachers could be asked about a chapter by students not in their class; support staff were also included!



Students in the fourth-grade classroom of Joel Nelson took over the classroom with their comfortable reading spots.

# Reading streak brings author to town

Oconomowoc celebrates official Love of Reading Week

By PAIGE BRUNCLIK  
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City of Oconomowoc - Oconomowoc is in love - with reading. The city will cele-

brate its affinity with literature and the benefits you gain from cracking open a book this week.

Mayor Jim Daley officially proclaimed Feb. 13-18 as Love

of Reading Week in Oconomowoc, and the city will play host to author Alice Ozma, who is having a special breakfast with some serious readers.

Ozma's book, "The Reading Promise: My Father and the Books We Shared," inspired a reading streak at Silver Lake and Nature Hill intermediate schools. Students have pledged to turn pages with their parents for 100 days. More than 300 families have participated in the school's official Reading Streak; families that complete the streak will meet Ozma during a pancake breakfast.

Everyone is invited to meet Ozma at a public book talk and signing at 10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 18, at the Oconomowoc Arts Center.

Bookstore owner Lisa Baudoin shared her excitement about the upcoming event, which, she said, is a culmination of community support.

"It's one of those times where it all comes together and shows how close the community is," said Baudoin.

It was Baudoin who shared Ozma's book with an Oconomowoc Area School District

teacher who was so inspired by the book she began working with other teachers to formulate ways they could encourage their students to read more. For the last several months, students in fifth through eighth grades have spent at least 10 minutes a night reading with their parents. Target Corp. also provided a \$1,000 literacy grant to the Streak Committee to help bring Ozma to share her experiences from the book.

According to information from Books and Company, when Ozma was in fourth grade, she and her father set out to see whether he could read aloud to her for 100 consecutive nights. On the hundredth night, they shared pancakes to celebrate, but it soon became evident that neither wanted to let go of their storytelling ritual. A "streak" ensued, and Ozma's father read aloud to her every night until the day she left for college.

Ozma's book is a series of vignettes about her relationship with her father and the life lessons learned from the books he read to her.

Saturday, Feb. 18, will be

## IF YOU GO

What: Celebration of Love of Reading Week, with book talk and signing by author Alice Ozma  
When: 10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 18  
Where: Oconomowoc Arts Center, 641 E. Forest St.  
Cost: Free

Oconomowoc's celebration of creating a stronger reading relationship. Daley will sign his proclamation - which was written by a group of intermediate school students - at City Hall. The families that successfully accomplished the 100-day reading streak

will head to a pancake breakfast sponsored by First Bank Financial Centre with Ozma. Books and Company also awarded each student that completed the reading journey with a gift certificate. And to encourage continued reading, Oconomowoc Public Library will be at the breakfast to issue library cards.

Baudoin said what's ensued from her putting Ozma's book in a teacher's hands is impressive.

"I'm just so proud of the kids and the community for putting this together and making it happen," she said.



## 'Annie Jr.'

7 p.m. March 8-10, 1 p.m. on March 10, OAC

### Reader's Theater

Theatre on Main presents old time radio show entertainment with "The Abominable Snowman" and "The Whole Town Is Sleeping" at 2 p.m. on Sunday, March 11 at the theater, 25 S. Main St.

**OHS symphonic and varsity band concert**  
7 p.m. March 13, OAC

**OHS wind symphony concert**  
7 p.m. March 15, OAC

**Girsa - Traditional Irish music**  
7:30 p.m. March 17 - OAC

**Cabaret Café - Voca de America**  
7 p.m. March 23 and 24, OAC Little Theater

**OHS/NHI/SLI Orchestra Concert**  
7 p.m. March 27, OAC

**OHS IB art show**  
March 17 through April 4  
6 p.m. March 17, reception, OAC lobby

## APRIL

**'Fugue'**  
7:30 p.m. April 13-14, 20-22 and 27-29, Theatre on Main

# Tomorrow, tomorrow ... see Nature Hill's production of 'Annie Jr.'

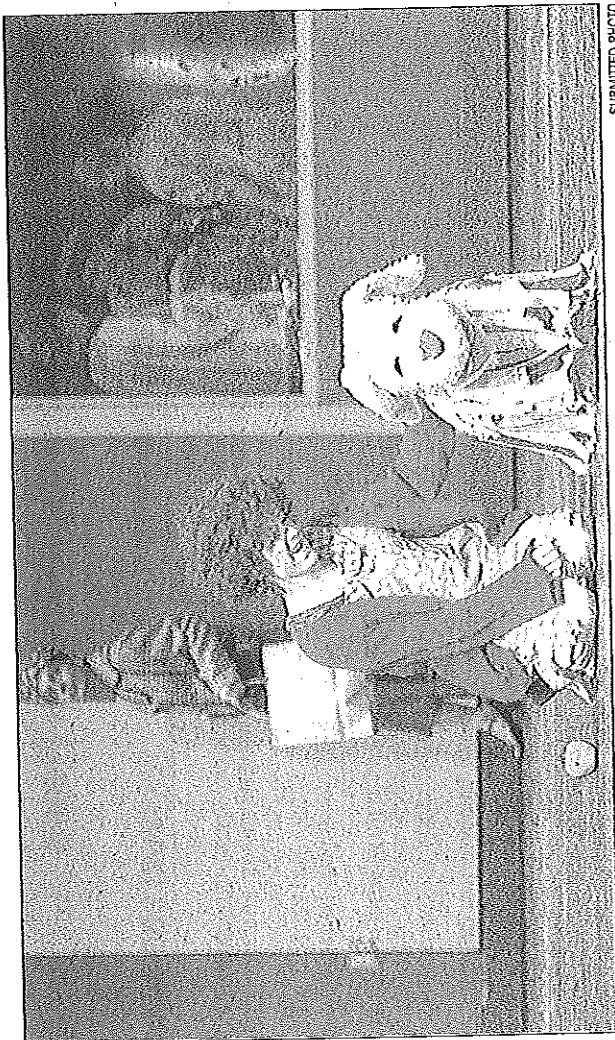
If you were a child who grew up in the '30s, you're well aware of a little red-headed orphan who stole the hearts of many. People headed to Broadway and movie theaters to see this adorable little red headed girl go from rags to riches and cheer her on as she defeated the bad guys.

Now, a whole new generation is learning the story of Annie. For 82 students at Nature Hill Intermediate School, they're doing more than learning the story, they're becoming the story. They are learning first hand all of the on-stage and behind-the-scenes secrets that it takes to make "Annie Jr." a Broadway hit, or at least a hit at the Oconomowoc Arts Center (OAC).

"Annie Jr." will be performed by Nature Hill Intermediate School at 7 p.m. on March 8, 9 and 10 at the OAC. There is also a matinee at 1 p.m. on Saturday, March 10.

There is reserved seating for all performances. Tickets are \$8 and are available at the Nature Hill Intermediate School office during regular school hours. Tickets will also be sold at the OAC prior to each performance.

Like the real Broadway show and movie, more than 100 fifth- through eighth-grade students competed for the leading roles in November. Annie is such a well-known show because of its popularity on Broadway and the movie



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Seventh-graders Mollie Cargill portrays Annie and Katherine Aasen as Sandy while in the background eighth-grade student Anna Turner portrays a shopper strolling by the NYC Chorus in Nature Hill Intermediate School's production of "Annie Jr." on stage March 8-10.

starring Aileen Quinn, Carol Burnett, and Albert Finney. The Nature Hill Annie Jr. production is a family show for children of all ages.

Director Amy Jappinen and Vocal Director Beth Kauffeld, both teachers at Nature Hill, are enjoying their fourth collaboration. They come at this production with a team approach. Adding to their team is Karen Reiland, costume designer, and daytime art teacher. As the cast and crew of students watch their teachers

working together on a common project and goal, they see and learn the importance of team work.

Lisa Young, owner of and instructor at Hansing's School of Dance, will again be part of the team this year. With the familiar songs of "Tomorrow," "Maybe," "Hard Knock Life," "I Think I'm Gonna Like It Here" and "Easy Street," the score lends itself to a variety of dance styles.

On this student-centered production, students serve on

the technical crew, performing the cues for running crew, sound, and lighting. Students and parent volunteers have also been involved in constructing and painting the set which includes the many buildings you would have seen along New York's 5th Avenue in 1933. It was designed by Quinn Betts Playte and John Kyle. Contact the Nature Hill Intermediate School office at (262) 569-4949 for more information.

# Documents outline Title IX complaints

Schools accused of discriminating against girls

By JOE TROVATO  
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Five area school districts facing Title IX complaints fail to "provide opportunities for girls to play sports in numbers substantially proportionate to their enrollment," according to copies of those complaints obtained by Lake County Publications through a Freedom of Information Act request.

The five districts — Kettle Moraine, Oconomowoc, Mukwonago, Waukesha and Elm Brook — "cannot show a history and continuing practice of program expansion (for girls), nor do they accommodate the interests and abilities of female student athletes," the complaints say.

In short, as letters from the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) to the superintendents of each school district state, "the complainant alleges that the district discriminates against female student athletes at the high school by denying them an equal opportunity to participate in interscholastic athletics."

The districts all received letters from the OCR in early February informing them of the forthcoming investigations. Lake County Publications broke that story and subsequently filed the FOIA request with the OCR to determine what violations the complainant alleged against each district.

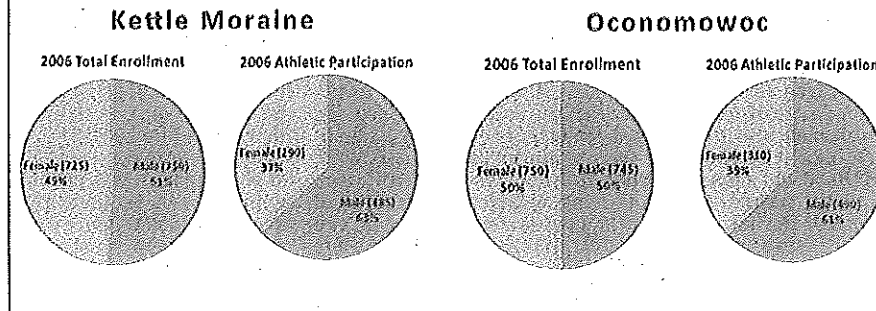
Those documents indicate that the complainant — whose name is redacted from the documents — alleged that each school district failed Title IX's "three-part participation test."

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of federal financial assistance.

## Kettle Moraine complaint

The Kettle Moraine School District offers 12 WIAA sanctioned sports for boys and 11 for girls, according to the complaint. The district also offers girls' lacrosse, alpine ski racing, rugby and field hockey as club sports, which are not taxpayer-funded.

## Total enrollment compared to athletic participation



The complaint against KM cites numbers from 2006 and 2008 as evidence that the district does not provide opportunities for girls to play sports in numbers substantially proportionate to their enrollment — prong one of the three-part test.

In 2006, 750, or 51 percent of the student body at Kettle Moraine High School was male, while 725, or 49 percent, was female. Of the 775 student athletes that year, 485, or 63 percent were male, while 290, or 37 percent, were female.

The complaint states there is a participation gap — the difference between the percentage of females enrolled and the percentage of female athletes — of 12 percent.

If the number of male athletes remained the same, the high school would need to create an additional 175 athletic opportunities for females for participation rates to be proportionate to enrollment, the complaint said.

Data collected from 2008 show a similar situation, though the participation gap had closed slightly, to 9 percent.

The complaint also alleges that KM has added only one new sport for girls to its budget in the last 26 years — ice hockey in 2009. And despite shrinking the participation gap from 12 to 9 percent, the complaint states, "this decrease cannot be explained by the addition of any sports being added to the district athletic budget."

The complainant alleged that the district failed part three of the test as well, which measures whether a school accommodates the interests and abilities of the underrepresented sex. The complaint cites the existence of girls' club sports in lacrosse, alpine skiing, rugby and field hockey.

KM Superintendent Pat

Deklotz did not respond to a phone call seeking comment before press time.

## Oconomowoc complaint

The complaint against the Oconomowoc Area School District claims that it, too, fails all three parts of the Title IX participation test.

The district supports 10 WIAA sanctioned sports for boys and 10 for girls, while also offering girls lacrosse and alpine ski club teams.

The Oconomowoc complaint cites enrollment and participation numbers from 2006 and 2011.

In 2006, Oconomowoc High School enrollment was evenly split between the sexes, with 750 female students and 745 male students. Some 800 students participated in athletics that year — 490 males, or 61 percent of all athletes, and 310 females.

With an 11-percent participation gap, the complaint argues that the high school did not provide opportunities for female athletes proportionate to their enrollment. It goes on to say that if male participation remained unchanged, the high school would have needed to create as many as 180 additional participation opportunities to achieve proportionality.

The 2011 numbers look similar, with a 10-percent participation gap. The complaint said 176 opportunities would have to be added for females to achieve proportionality.

Like Kettle Moraine, Oconomowoc's participation gap decreased in the two compared years, but the district has not added a female sport to its budget in the last 28 years, leading the complainant to conclude that Oconomowoc, too, fails prong two of the participation test.

Specifically, the complaint points out that the WIAA began sponsoring girls ice

hockey in 2001-02, but the high school has no team.

In the third test, the complainant argues that, like Kettle Moraine, Oconomowoc fails to effectively accommodate the interests and abilities of its female students. The club lacrosse and alpine skiing teams indicate there is evidence of interest in creating varsity WIAA-sanctioned teams supported by tax dollars. Furthermore, the complaint chides the district for not offering any kind of program for girls rugby or field hockey.

Oconomowoc Superintendent Patricia Neudecker said the district is cooperating with the investigation, but she thinks the district's programs comply with the law.

Of the complainant, Neudecker said, "It appears that there's one person that is asking the same information of five schools in our area. I don't know specifically what the issue or the motive is, but obviously under Title IX, it's looking at equity mostly for girls, obviously. So I can only assume that it's somebody that's interested in either protecting and upholding that, as we all should, or finding ways to require schools to add sports."

## Previous Title IX complaints

The recent allegations are not the first for the area. The Arrowhead Union High School District faced Title IX complaints in 2008, when it was alleged that the girls' field hockey program did not receive the same resources as boys' sports teams. Ultimately, the investigation concluded that improvements to the girls' field hockey and softball fields would settle the complaint.

A second complaint against Arrowhead in 2009 led the district to fund a girls lacrosse program and a girls

## WIAA FEMALE SPORTS AT OHS

Basketball  
Cross country  
Golf  
Gymnastics  
Soccer  
Softball  
Swimming  
Tennis  
Track  
Volleyball

\*Source: OCR administrative complaint

## WIAA MALE SPORTS AT OHS

Baseball  
Basketball  
Cross country  
Football  
Golf  
Hockey  
Soccer  
Tennis  
Track  
Wrestling

\*Source: OCR administrative complaint

## WIAA MALE SPORTS AT KMHs

Baseball  
Basketball  
Cross country  
Football  
Golf  
Hockey  
Soccer  
Swimming  
Tennis  
Track  
Volleyball  
Wrestling

\*Source: OCR administrative complaint

## WIAA FEMALE SPORTS AT KMHs

Basketball  
Cross country  
Golf  
Gymnastics  
Hockey  
Soccer  
Softball  
Swimming  
Tennis  
Track  
Volleyball

\*Source: OCR administrative complaint

alpine skiing program.

The OCR describes itself as a "neutral fact-finder, collecting and analyzing relevant evidence." The filed complaints do not necessarily mean the districts are in violation of Title IX, only that the OCR is investigating them.

A complaint can be resolved before the conclusion of an investigation if the school district remedies the complaints against it. The school districts have expressed a willingness to resolve the issues and cooperate with OCR.