

School Leadership
Mark Fennema, *Principal*

Heather Sattler, *Literacy Coach*

Mary Anne Wickersham,
Community Liaison

Governance Board

Leo Vinitzky, *Chair*
FedEx Ground

Committees

Student Achievement

Heather Sattler, *Co-Chair*
Kim Theisen, *Co-Chair*

Operations

Terry Pier, *Chair*
Jason Franklin
Marcella Lemberger

Personnel

Sharon Ebel, *Chair*
Heather Sattler
J.O. Chenault

Marking/Fundraising

Vanessa Parkinson
Kristee Yardley, Alverno
Barb Gustin, Rexnord
Jana Rodman, FedEx Ground
Stacy Schoen, M&I

Student Engagement

Steve Cullison, *Co-Chair*
Kim Theisen, *Co-Chair*
Jason Franklin
Megan Kenyan

Parent Engagement

Vanessa Parkinson, *Chair*

Student Council

Steve Cullison
Megan Kenyon
Kim Thiesen
Malory Vos, *Student Liaison*

Partners/Contributors

aline, llc
Alverno College
Bill & Melinda Gates Fdn
Bastante, LLC
Great Lakes Constructivist
Consortium

6700 N 80th St.
Milwaukee, WI 53223
(414) 393-3898
maryanne.wickersham@gmail.com
(414) 698-0017 - cell
Video Relay 1-866-327-8877
TTY 1-800-947-6644

FOSTER AND WILLIAMS

High School of the Visual Arts and Communication



Background

Foster and Williams High School of the Visual Arts and Communication provides an intimate, language-rich environment that challenges deaf and hearing students to stretch their limits and make real-life connections to learning. Our primary purpose is to provide a safe, nurturing environment while supporting students to reach high academic standards.

In July, 2005 Foster and Williams High School was founded as a bilingual and bicultural high school under the Small Schools District Initiative. In January, 2008, we realized our vision of employing Project Based Learning as the primary learning strategy.

We use cutting-edge technology as part of the learning process, including video conferencing, smart boards, video production and website building. Our computer to student ratio is 1:2. All of our students use e-mail regularly, access web-based programs for math, reading, and project management, and use internet resources to conduct research.

Mission

Foster & Williams is an innovative small bilingual and bicultural school that uses Project Based Learning and the visual arts and technology to graduate students who are prepared to achieve success in post-secondary education and career pursuits.

Visions for the Future

- **Foster & Williams** is nationally recognized for its cutting-edge learning environment, effective integration of deaf and hearing cultures and award-winning student projects.
- **Students** are leaders in their fields of interest, build healthy families, and catalysts for positive change locally and globally.
- **Families** are fully engaged in their students' education.
- **Communities** are committed to our students by contributing talent and resources.

Small Bilingual, Bicultural Environment

Foster and Williams offers a relationship-rich environment, where the student-teacher ratio is 25 to 1 and parents have a go-to advisor to find out how their student is doing overall or in specific classes.

Foster and Williams promotes the immersion of two distinct cultures: Deaf and hearing. Students help facilitate culture transfer and exchange by interpreting classes where deaf and hearing students work together and collaborate.

Foster and Williams is the only American Sign Language (ASL) immersion school in Milwaukee, where ASL is taught as a class and fulfills the foreign language requirement for graduation

Visual Communications and Technology Focus.

Our students are visual learners. Our students learn visually in a world that relies on the Internet and complex communications networks and requires the ability to interpret images, whether the icon is on a car's dashboard or navigation windows on websites. Knowledge of the visual environment and the ability to analyze images are essential for students to succeed as contributing members of society.

Project-based Learning = Academic Achievement + Teamwork + Critical Thinking.

We use the Project-based Learning Model (PBL). Through this real-world learning process, students have an opportunity to pursue interests while meeting academic standards, developing critical thinking skills, learn how to work in teams and applying newfound knowledge in a meaningful manner which inspires lifelong learning.

Achievements since 2006

- **80%** of students passed an ASL (American Sign Language) class.
- **90%** of students showcased their learning in a presentation, demonstrating proficiency of state standards.
- Through collaboration with Media Makers, Inc. **students produced a DVD** used to promote the school and a **public service announcement (PSA)** for Project Ujima. Next: a PSA for House of Peace in 2009.
- Six **students were finalists or award winners** in these competitions: MPS Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Writing Contest sponsored by, MTEA-UWM School of Education Celebration of Art Show and a National Deaf Artists Competition.
- Our **climate survey of a sample of students:** 74% usually look forward to coming to school, 72% think teachers give them challenging work, 70% think that Foster & Williams teaches them to value, respect and tolerate differences in others, and 76% have a computer at home and 70% of internet access.
- Our **climate survey of a sample of parents:** 84% think Foster & Williams has high expectations with regard to student achievement, 100% are aware of learning targets for their child, 100% feel they have input and 100% feel Foster & Williams has a friendly and welcoming atmosphere, is focused on learning and offers classrooms that are safe and orderly.

Goals for 2008-2009

- Increase proficiency in reading, math and writing by 5%.
- Achieve Wisconsin State Standards through project-based learning.
- 100% of students receive quarterly assessments and data drives instruction.
- Empower the Student Council to implement strategies that result in 5% fewer suspensions.
- Reach our enrollment goal of 230 students for next year.
- Increase family attendance at Parent/Teacher conferences by 300%.

We Need Your Help

- 25 **volunteer tutors** to spend one hour weekly reading with students who are not at grade level.
- **Partnership with retailer(s)** to secure project supplies at no or minimal cost to school.
- Volunteer to finish **organizing our library** and establish system for use.
- Volunteer to secure items and organize **home economics, craft and performance rooms**.
- 20 **yoga mats** for after school gym program for students and staff.

Get Involved!

- **Visit!** See hands-on learning in action by a mix of hearing, deaf and hard of hearing students and staff.
- **Give!** Your time, money and talent can make a huge difference.
- **Learning opportunities!** Internships, field trips and service learning opportunities help our students see themselves as active members of our society.

Contact Mary Anne Wickersham at maryanne.wickersham@gmail.com to become involved.