



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **West Bend School District Head Start Recognized as a Program of Excellence by the National Head Start Association**

WEST BEND — The West Bend School District Head Start program has earned the National Head Start Association's Program of Excellence Accreditation, one of only 11 Head Start programs of the 1,600 in the country to receive the accreditation.

This prestigious national designation from the National Head Start Association (NHSA) is earned only by those Head Start and Early Head Start programs that consistently demonstrate extraordinary excellence and outstanding work in early childhood development. Head Start is a federally funded program that provides comprehensive early learning, health, and family well-being services to low-income children from birth to age five to help them succeed in school and life.

The West Bend School District Head Start program is a vital resource for Washington County families. Services are offered at no cost to eligible families with children ages birth through five. Classes are offered at the Rolfs Education Center and Kettle Moraine YMCA in West Bend and the Jackson Area Community Center in Jackson. Currently, the program is fully enrolled with 121 students.

To earn the accreditation, there was a three-month application process. The staff demonstrated that the West Bend School District has met 44 indicators of excellence that designate high quality:

- highly-experienced and educated staff;
- meaningful partnerships with parents and families;
- state-of-the-art programming;

- quality services that reflect and respond to the aspirations and needs of children and families;
- sound leadership;
- effective and efficient management;
- transparent and sound fiscal stewardship; and
- informed, responsible, and responsive program governance.

“This national recognition by the NHSA celebrates the West Bend Head Start team's tireless commitment to providing life-changing support, demonstrating that the program is truly a beacon of excellence for our community,” said Jaime Malsom, program administrator.

The Head Start mission goes far beyond the classroom, fostering the academic, social, and physical development of children through high-quality early learning, health services, and family well-being activities. The West Bend School District is one of only four public school districts in Wisconsin to offer this program and has served as its grantee since 1978. The West Bend School District Head Start supports students and their families by providing:

- Comprehensive Education: Age-appropriate learning experiences that help children develop crucial communication, cooperation, and problem-solving skills, preparing them for kindergarten and success in life.
- Health and Wellness: Free medical, dental, vision, and hearing screenings, as well as nutritious meals and snacks, promoting a healthy start.
- Family Support: Staff actively partner with parents, offering resources and training to strengthen family well-being and inspire confidence and independence in every child.

The West Bend Joint School District #1 is proud to serve more than 5,000 students and their families from the city of West Bend, villages of Jackson and Newburg, and townships of Barton, Polk, Trenton, Jackson, West Bend, and Addison. We strive to ensure that every student is given the opportunity to reach their potential through academics, the arts, and co-curricular activities. Within our community-based 4K program, Head Start program, five elementary schools (K-4), one intermediate school (5-6), one middle school (7-8), and two high schools (9-12), families can expect a caring, inclusive learning environment that supports the development of the whole child. Visit [www.west-bend.k12.wi.us](http://www.west-bend.k12.wi.us) for more information.

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