

Parent Supplement Handbook

2015-2016



A Collaborative Learning Community

Choosing to lead with respect, confidence, and passion

From the FWA Staff

Welcome, parents and families! We're so glad that you're part of the Fox West Academy (FWA) community, and during this, our fifth year as a school, we look forward to all of the great learning that we'll be doing together with your students. We are different from other schools in many ways including our methods and our integrated approach to learning, but ultimately we're here to provide an exceptional learning experience for your child.

Parent Supplement Handbook

Fox West Academy remains similar to the Hortonville and Greenville Middle Schools in its policies and mission; however, there are a few purposeful differences in the area of curriculum, teaching methodology, and classroom structure. This handbook supplement is intended to explain these differences.

Hortonville Area School District Mission Statement

Our community ensures that every student learns at the highest level.

Fox West Academy Vision Statement

Fox West Academy provides project based learning opportunities to ensure that every student learns at their highest level and chooses to lead with respect, confidence, and passion.

Values

Self-reliance, Choice, Leadership, Community, Honesty.

Program Commitment

- Developing students as leaders
- Curriculum is integrated, student-driven, and project based
- Technology used to connect, create, and contribute
- High expectation for parent and community involvement
- Emphasis on learning together as a community

Address

220 Warner Street

Hortonville, WI 54944

Web address: www.foxwestacademy.org

Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/foxwestacademy>

Contact Information

(920)779-7929	Classroom
(920)779-7922	HMS/FWA Front Office
(920)779-7923	Office Fax
(920)779-7928	Attendance Line

School Staff

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Our Story

Fox West Academy began as a response to the Hortonville Area School District's Strategic Plan. In the fall of 2010 Fox West Academy and its District was awarded a Wisconsin Department of Instruction planning grant of \$175,000 for the purpose of designing a charter school that would provide choice to parents and students in the area of curriculum, teaching, methodology, and classroom structure.

The Hortonville Area School District was awarded two additional grants totaling \$350,000 to implement its vision. The plan turned into a reality when Fox West Academy opened its doors to student in September of 2011 with the mission of providing:

- Project based learning
- Integrated STEM curriculums such as Project Lead the Way
- 21st century learning skills curriculum
- Leadership development opportunities
- Field-based learning opportunities
- Innovative technologies for students to connect, create, and contribute
- Service learning project involvement at school and in area communities

Fox West Academy is proud to offer 6th-8th grade project based learning as a charter school associated with Hortonville Area School District and in partnership with Hortonville Middle School.

Schedule

FWA students have the same start and finish times as HMS. Our schedule follows a similar timeline to allow for students to participate in HMS exploratory classes such as art, chorus, band, health, computers, and Spanish.

A typical day at FWA is divided into two parts. Half of the day has a more “traditional” feel; however, most of the instruction is still very hands-on. All students have a math and somewhat traditional reading course, plus one other individual subject which rotates with the changing projects (referred to as “Core” learning). The essential skills class focuses on developing leadership skills such as responsibility, collaboration, organization, and communication. Extended Learning Time, (or ELT) is designed to provide supplemental instruction and additional targeted assistance. Portions of each day are focused on project time (see the sample schedule on the next page for details), which involves all three grade levels.

Students learn through projects and in core subjects led by the team of three advisors (with exception of Algebra being taught by Mr. Hall). This being the case, questions or concerns regarding a class would be best address to the team of advisors at foxwestacademy@hasd.org. The advisor with the best understanding of the situation will respond back.

Approximately every six weeks we have a new theme that integrates the core standards and the end result is a presentation night where students share their projects with the public.

Science Curriculum

In the Hortonville Area School District, middle school students focus on different areas of science based on grade level. For example, HMS and GMS students in 6th grade study weather, water, and living things; 7th grade science incorporates geology, astronomy, and classification; and 8th grade science learning includes matter, energy, and ecosystems.

Because of the way we integrate science with project based learning, we explore science on a three year rotational cycle. For the 2015-16 school year, we’ll be exploring life science (biology), earth science (geology), and space science (astronomy). In addition, well also focus significantly on the scientific method and the engineering process as we incorporate aspects of Project Lead the Way.

Although our focus during a given grade level year may differ for our students as compared to HMS and GMS counterparts, over the course of three years at Fox West Academy students will be exposed to the same science themes and concepts as their non-FWA peers. It is important to note that if a student transfers into or out of Fox West Academy there may be areas of science that were not covered in great depth during their abbreviated time with us.

In addition to the standard science curriculum, we are proud to offer Project Lead the Way’s Gateway to Technology science curriculum to our students. This technology-rich program focuses on problem solving and engineering through design and modeling, and incorporates themes and areas found traditional science.

2015-2016 Fox West Academy Schedule
Project Rotation 1 – October 20th

Period	Time	6 th Grade	7 th Grade	8 th Grade	8 th Grade Specials
1	7:55-8:44 announcements 7:55 (49 min)	CORE -Science Mr. Hall	Reading Mr. Lundstrom	Exploratory K	
2	8:46-9:30 (44 min)	Read Koenecke	CORE Mr. Hall	Exploratory L	
3	9:32-10:16 (44 min)	Project Block Mr. L lead Mrs. K support Geography & Government	Exploratory L	CORE Mr. Hall	
4	10:18-11:02 (44 min)		Exploratory K	Read Mr. Hall	
5	11:04-11:46 (44 min)	Exploratory H	Project Block Mr. L lead Mrs. K support Geography & Government		Read 180
6	(as noted right)	Lunch & Recess 11:48-12:22	Lunch & Recess 12:36-1:08		
		Exploratory 12:24-1:08			
ELT	1:10-1:40	ELT (Extended Learning Time) Additional learning support and/or			
7	1:42-2:26 (44 min)	Math Koenecke	Math Lundstrom	Algebra Hall	Geometry/ Pre Algebra to Spanish
8	2:28-3:12 (44 min)			Pre Algebra Hall	Spanish German for Algebra

Leadership Curriculum

To be effective in the 21st century, students need to become proficient in core subjects; however, it is also becoming increasingly important for them to gain proficiency in essential life skills. FWA students learn and apply Stephen Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, as presented by Sean Covey in the book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens*. Principles presented include:

- Taking responsibility
- Time management
- Relationship building
- Conflict management
- Listening and speaking
- Working in teams
- Problem solving
- Respecting diversity
- Making healthy choices

Throughout each project students are provided necessary opportunities practice and develop these skills along with their academic subjects.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

COLLABORATION	Communication	<i>Overall:</i> Articulates thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively.	<i>Listening:</i> Receives, attends to, interprets, and responds verbal messages and nonverbal cues	<i>Speaking:</i> Communicates messages appropriate for situation and audience; participates in conversations; uses nonverbal cues to enhance communication
	Teamship	Works effectively with diverse teams; be helpful and make necessary compromises to accomplish a common goal; encourages positive interaction amongst group members		
	Stewardship/Service	Acting responsibly with the interests of the local and larger community in mind; recognizing and considering biases and cultural differences; values actions that positively impact others		
LEADERSHIP	Organization	Follows a system of maintaining materials and timelines to efficiently achieve the goals of a specific problem or project		
	Time Management	Creates strategic plan of action; prioritizes tasks as urgent or non-urgent; self-starter		
	Ethics	Demonstrates integrity personally, at school, and in the community (honesty)		
	Identifying Strengths	Sees where individuals' talents can be most effectively applied		
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	Responsibility	Dependable, actively engaged, and able to follow-through to completion; sets well-defined, realistic goals (effort)		
	Respect	Honors others' opinions, ideas, values, and feelings		
	Accountability	Accepts responsibility for one's own actions and outcomes		
	Self Management	Uses feedback and self reflection to guide behaviors and improve work		
THINKING SKILLS	Problem Solving	Assesses and frames problems; identifies possible reasons for discrepancy and devises a plan to resolve it; revises plan based on new findings		
	Critical	Evaluates, selects and uses resources for research; plans, designs, executes, evaluate solutions, and identifies improvements; looks for connections between subjects		
	Creative	Sees and expresses things in new and imaginative ways; being curious; taking risks, and stepping past what we know		
LITERACIES	Civic/Social	Participates actively in promoting the public good, the environment, and democratic ideals		
	Information/Digital Literacy	Uses digital equipment and resources to enhance learning, productivity, and creativity		
	Wellness	Chooses behaviors that contribute to the health and well being of one-self and others: social, emotional, physical, spiritual health		

Grading and Assessment

FWA uses skill-assessment rubric grading rather than a letter grade system. Our 4-point rubric scale is used to assess assignments and skill sets for curricular areas:

4 – **Exemplary:** serving as a desirable model; representing the best demonstration of skill and understanding possible.* *If solely basing on percentage accuracy, 4 indicates 95% or greater demonstration of understanding.*

3 – **Proficient:** competent to well-advanced demonstration of understanding; 80%-94.9%

2 – **Developing:** consistent basic demonstration of skill; 70%-79.9%

1 – **Beginning:** very limited demonstration of skill or comprehension; 60%-69.9%

**Earning a rubric score of 4 would be indicative of "115% effort."*

Additional abbreviations to be aware of:

BLU - *Below (acceptable) Level of Understanding, <60%; assignment/test has been completed, but will require additional practice or demonstration of understanding.*

NHI - *Not Handed In/Not Completed when due*

INC - *Incomplete due to illness, absence, or extenuating circumstances. Student is responsible to follow up with instructor within 2 weeks; failure to do so will result in NHI*

RE – *Redone/resubmitted for improved score.*

Specific assignments may use a modified version of the 4-point scale; these assignments and rubric scores are posted on [Skyward](#) (please contact HMS office if you need your parent Skyward login information).

Project Presentation Nights

An essential aspect of project based learning is to share student learning and efforts with a live audience; for this purpose students present a summary of their project to families and friends during Project Presentation Nights. These showcase events typically run from 6:00 to 7:00 with snacks afterward. The schedule for the 2015-2016 school year is as follows:

Tuesday, October 20

Monday, December 21

Thursday, February 18

Tuesday, April 19

Wednesday, May 25

Visit our website under the Parents tab and follow the Project Showcase link to see examples of some projects from previous years.

Staying Informed

There are numerous ways to stay informed at Fox West Academy. In addition to Skyward grades, Skyward alerts, a monthly HMS/FWA e-newsletters, and e-mails from staff, FWA staff highly encourages parents to visit the *Daily Agenda* page found under the Students tab of our website at www.foxwestacademy.org This link is updated daily to help keep you informed what your child is learning as well as expected homework and learning responsibilities.

With the large amount of work completed using computers at school we will be having students share their computer work on Google Docs with both parents and advisors. As always, if there are questions and concerns please do not hesitate to the entire team of advisors at foxwestacademy@hasd.org or by calling (920)779-7929.

Field Experiences

FWA values the learning that can take place outside of the classroom walls as much as the learning that takes place inside of it. In addition to short, local field experiences related to specific projects and core learning, FWA provides the opportunity for students travel out-of-state as a class.

During the 2015-2016 school year the following trips will be offered:

6th grade travels to [Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center](#) Monday, September 28th through Wednesday, September 30th

7th grade travels to Washington DC for Veterans Day Saturday, November 7th through Wednesday, November 11th

8th grade travels to a location (yet to be announced) May 5th through 10th, 2016

Fund raising opportunities will be explained at the beginning of the school year to cover the costs associated with the trips. Trips focus on learning core topics in a very relevant way. Although highly encouraged, these trips are not required.

Family Involvement

FWA values the involvement of families and community members. There are several ways to be involved in FWA.

One way to be involved is through FIE (Families Involved in Education). With the involvement of parents, FIE helps raises funds and organize events that support the mission/vision of Fox West Academy.

An additional way to be involved is through volunteering with a variety of school activities when requested throughout the year. Examples of such activities range from chaperoning field trips to mentoring in the classroom. All volunteers are required to fill out a volunteer form which can be obtained in the HMS front office.

Exit Protocol

Due to the nature of project based learning at Fox West Academy and the unique opportunities and challenges that students experience as they take on more responsibility for their learning, we ask that parents work with the Fox West Academy staff to address concerns as they arise.

Once a commitment to attend Fox West Academy is made, there are several steps that we respectfully request a family to follow in the event that a student wishes to transfer out of Fox West Academy. The protocol for transferring a student out of Fox West Academy is as follows:

1. **Contact and meet with Fox West Academy staff** to outline concerns in order to attempt to address issues and establish a timeframe for implementing necessary strategies.
2. **At least two subsequent conversations** with FWA advisors to assess strategies utilized to address student, family, and advisor concerns and determine potential ways of moving forward.
3. Contact Fox West Academy staff and **schedule a meeting with the acting administrator (principal) and FWA advisors** to discuss student's potential exit from FWA.
4. **Arrange placement** for student and sign/submit required student withdrawal forms.
Please note: Placement for students exiting Fox West Academy is dependent upon student residency in relation to the Hortonville Area School District east and west boundaries. To determine whether you are within range of Hortonville or Greenville Middle School, please view our district information webpage.

FWA Governance Council and Committees

The governance council of Fox West Academy (in cooperation and agreement with the Hortonville Area School District) has authority for oversight of the budget, curriculum, school policies and overall operation of Fox West Academy. The staff of Fox West Academy works closely with the governance council to develop policies, identify and help provide learning opportunities, and address concerns for the benefit of Fox West Academy and its students. Specific procedures and responsibilities are defined in the charter school contract, bylaws, and policies, which are available online or by request.

Our Fox West Academy committees also offer opportunities for involvement. These committees provide valuable input and guidance in areas of developing curriculum, building community partnerships, innovations, family involvement, and public relations. If you are interested in learning more about the governance council, or if you would like to get involved as a council or committee member, we invite you to please visit www.foxwestacademy.org or contact us at foxwestacademy@hasd.org.

Governance Council Members

Lorie Claybaugh - President
Stephanie Halverson - Vice President
John Brattlund -Treasurer
Susie Lamers - Secretary

Jenni Koenecke
Kevin Jakubek
Mark Stae

Frequently Asked Questions

Adapted from Fox West Academy Meet and Greet Summary Meetings

How does bussing from Greenville work?

Greenville students ride the high school route and will receive specific information at registration.

Will purchase of new band/PE shirts be required for GMS students?

PE shirts from GMS work fine at Fox West Academy.

Can HMS and former GMS students use the padlock they purchased when registering at the Middle School?

Students are welcome to bring combination locks over from GMS and HMS, but we ask that students provide the combination for their padlocks when registering or during the first days of the new school year.

Will Fox West students be eligible for honor roll recognition?

Students will be recognized for accomplishments on a quarterly basis within Fox West Academy independently of District honor roll acknowledgements.

Will students be able to use personal electronics/handhelds and laptops from home?

Students are not required to own their own handheld devices or laptops; however, all students are invited and encouraged to use available resources and electronics – including personally owned devices – to enhance and supplement learning experiences. Use of handheld devices and laptops allows students to have more comprehensive access to technology and also provides additional learning experiences to more fully understand the potential these devices have for research, communication, and computation. Use of all technology will be monitored by Fox West advisors, and restrictions may apply as determined necessary.

Can students use Wi-Fi to access the internet on personally owned electronics?

The Hortonville School District has adopted a “bring your own device” policy that allows and encourages use of personal electronics for educational use. Students have the option of logging in as a guest user with a content filter which blocks inappropriate internet material from being accessed.

How will I know what my student needs to be doing and what he (or she) is working on?

We send regular updates and calendars regarding assignments, projects, and deadlines. This year we are also encouraging parents to create or link a G-mail/ Google Drive account so that our students can easily share their files with moms and dads who wish to see work in progress.

What options for learning and study will be available for summer learning?

Students have access to MathHelp.com online math program. Khan Academy is an additional online resource available to anyone. Additional games and practice for developing skills in the area of communication arts is also available (more information will be sent out via email).

How do Fox West Students learn math and Reading?

Reading and language arts (aka, Communication Arts) are more traditional in instruction, while math uses a variety of strategies including online computer programs (MathHelp.com) and individual and small-group assistance and instruction.

Who is the teacher for each grade level?

Because of the flexible nature and integrated curriculum of project based learning at Fox West Academy, no particular grade level will be permanently assigned to a teacher; rather, throughout the year, each student will be receiving instruction from all three Fox West Academy teachers depending on the emphasis at the time.

What type of laptop, computer platform, operating system, or programs should we buy?

Microsoft Windows 7 is used at Fox West Academy primarily, but most programs will also be compatible with multiple formats, including many tablets; we also have a small number of iMac workstations available in order to expose students to both of the most widely used operating system platforms. All students will use Google Drive and Microsoft Office Suite for document and presentation creation and development (a student version of Microsoft Office can be purchased at a reasonable price, and we will provide more information if you are interested in this option).