

# Virtual School makes graduation a real experience

## ***Grantsburg, WI - June 4, 2008 -***

Nine related Insight School of Wisconsin students received their diplomas at a graduation ceremony held at the UW-Stevens Point on Sunday, June 1.

According to Superintendent Joni Burgin and school board Vice President David Dahlberg - both of whom attended the graduation to hand graduates their diplomas - students and parents were excited to be part of the first graduation of the virtual school.

"The Insight graduation was an historic event," Dahlberg told the other board members at their Monday night meeting.

Dahlberg said attending the graduation ceremony made the nine seniors and other Insight students, who came from all over the state to attend, real for him. "They're no longer virtual kids," said Dahlberg.

Burgin's impression of the Insight graduation was that it showed how successful the virtual school has become in its short time of operation, "When you take a look at what we have built in a year, it's pretty amazing," He told the board.

Burgin reported that executive director Jeff Bush foresees enrollment increasing from 150 students last year to 400 plus for the coming year. Burgin went on to quote statistics estimating 50 percent of students will be online learners by 2019. "We definitely have seen that trend here," said Burgin.

### **In other board business**

Elementary Principal Katie Coppenbarger and middle school Principal Brad Jones reported to the board on the success of the first year of a three-year, Steve Dunn staff-development project. "All staff says it has made a positive difference in overall teaching and the students' writing." Jones told the board the strategies teachers have learned have been successfully applied in other classes as well. According to Jones, Dunn's coaching and observation of teachers have opened up lines of communication. Coppenbarger agreed, saying teachers talk about what is working and are collaborating with each other more. "One of the biggest benefits of the training is teachers encouraging each other," said Coppenbarger.

The principals told the board Dunn has been very impressed with how Grantsburg teachers have implemented his program. Dunn, who travels all across the country, told them Grantsburg can be proud of its topnotch teachers.

The board heard the building and grounds committee's recommendation for the drainage problem at the high school football field. Board member Jim Sundquist met with Tom Russell of Point of Beginning Engineers from Eau Claire and suggested a two-step approach to fixing the problem. Russell then recommended first rolling and compacting existing topsoil on the north end of the field before proceeding with a more expensive drainage system. Russell said he would contact several local landscape and paving firms "to coordinate the work. If this doesn't work Russell recommended removing five strips of sod and installing an underground tiling system.

Installation of the underground system could jeopardize the use of the field in fall so the committee recommended going with the two step approach in the hopes it would alleviate the problem more quickly and at less cost.

The transportation committee reported that a one-year contract agreement had been reached with the district bus drivers which the board then voted to approve.

The board also voted to approve policies for the Insight School of Wisconsin's policy manual and district policies on Title I Family Involvement and Student Selection, homeless youth, service learning, blogging and bullying.

In staff changes, the board approved, with thanks for his service, the resignation request by third-grade teacher Dan Bell. Bell leaves the district to accept a principal's position. The board also approved a contract for Andrew Schulz for the position of five-12 band director.

The last day of school for students is Thursday, June 5, and Friday, June 6, for staff. Summer school begins on Wednesday, June 11.