



## PRESS RELEASE

### Journalism Programs Launch Merged Student Outlet Combining Students at Wauwatosa East and West High Schools

WAUWATOSA Wisconsin - Student journalism programs launched a merged student outlet, *The Tosa Compass*, combining students at Wauwatosa East and West High Schools on Friday, November 20th.

Student leadership teams at each school manage their own staff while communicating with students across the district to tell stories amplifying the voices of young people in the community. The program launched merged and redesigned social media accounts and a website as platforms to share their student centered stories.

“Student journalism is incredibly important, now more than ever. Putting together a district wide journalism program will help ensure that diverse student voices are heard, and I’m incredibly lucky and proud to be a part of that,” Wauwatosa East senior and student leadership team member Ava Beisenstein said.

Wauwatosa West English and Social Studies teacher and journalism adviser Christopher Lazarski proposed the idea to merge the outlets to the advisers of Wauwatosa East’s journalism program over the summer. Since then, students have met with others across schools over Zoom and communicated via email and text to coordinate the merging during the time of COVID-19.

“We have learned a lot about teaching and learning from our experiences during the COVID-19 shutdown and our current hybrid environment,” Lazarski said. “The teachers at Tosa West and Tosa East believe it is possible to authentically connect and engage and train students at two different schools to work as journalists to tell stories about their individual schools and our community.”

Wauwatosa East English teacher and adviser of *The Cardinal News* since 2014, Megan Sampson said readership of East’s long standing print publication has been dwindling in recent years. When COVID-19 hit, Sampson said it was clear a print only publication would be impossible during the school year and felt that going digital and merging would help sustain the program for years to come.

“It’s not that there isn’t a place for student journalism anymore, but it’s a matter of making the journalism feel meaningful and dynamic in the community,” Sampson said. “We were struggling to do that with our print publication and smaller pool of readers. The more I thought about that and the overall state of journalism education in our district, the more I realized we could all benefit from pooling our resources.”

Students and teachers involved believe the merging will provide enhanced real world opportunities for students to improve their journalism skills while elevating the often underrepresented voices of students in the community.

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