



The Richardson School

BOBCAT BEAT

Fall 2021

Commit | Respond | Educate

10 Years of TRS



The Richardson
School

A MyPath Company

On March 7th, 2011, The Richardson School (TRS) opened its doors to its very first student in West Allis, Wisconsin. Since that day, TRS has grown to five locations and has served just over 500 students. TRS is proud to be celebrating 10 years of living out its mission to “be the change for students, their families and districts.”

We hope you enjoy these fun facts from each TRS campus along with the staff pictures:

TRS opened its fifth and newest location in **Appleton** on February 5th, 2021. It is the first school to have installed the immersive and interactive Play Lü. This state-of-the-art system engages students’ minds and bodies in a unique and fun way with math, science and sports games, just to name a few.

Every year, **TRS-Madison** hosts an Academic Showcase in which students present to families, districts and other IEP team members. TRS-Madison also pioneered a new service in response to the months of virtual education during the pandemic called Bobcat Study. This program combined facilitated academic support with enrichment and social skill activities.

Have you ever attended a Science Fair at **TRS-Brookfield**? If so, you have witnessed the pride on students’ faces as they’ve shared the culmination of their hard work on their classroom project. Maybe you have even sampled treats made by the students and served during a Bobcat Bistro event. **TRS-Brookfield** is hopeful to bring those experiences back in-person this school year.

TRS-Beloit is the only TRS to have relocated its entire campus to a new building. That massive move provided a sprawling five-acre lot and more building space for creative supports such as a multi-sensory ocean room. **TRS-Beloit** is also the only campus to support students from Illinois, and is approved by both the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the Illinois State Board of Education.

Since opening in 2011, **TRS-West Allis** has supported students from 47 different school districts, traveling as far as 64 miles (one way) to attend. Its urban location has offered opportunities to partner with local organizations such as the YMCA for swim lessons and Alverno College for music therapy.

More stories, pictures and videos celebrating TRS’ 10th Anniversary are available on our Facebook page: www.Facebook.com/TheRichardsonSchool.

The Richardson School is committed to continued evolution and expansion, and remains grateful for the opportunities to positively impact the lives of its students and their families.

Appleton



Madison



Brookfield



Beloit



West Allis





The Lab

A Messy Sensory Experience



The Richardson School prides itself on meeting students where they are. We do this by incorporating sensory boards throughout the school, utilizing hallways as “runways”, creating areas for students to take constructive movement breaks and trying whatever ideas staff can come up with that may meet or support a student’s needs. Our sensory rooms provide an ideal place for students to go to relax, swing and get the proactive and regulating input they require to successfully navigate their day.

At TRS-Appleton, we recognized the importance of having a space for students to get “productively messy”. Our staff want to provide opportunities for students to engage with a wide variety of sensory materials, but having an area that is both easy to clean and separate from the bean bags and swings can be hard to find. Dan Fourness, Appleton’s Day School Director, spent the summer creating a new sensory room for this very purpose. When asked about it he said “Every teacher wants to be able to do these things with their students, but hesitates to do it in their classroom. This gives them a space to engage in “messy” sensory experiences.”

The old elementary locker room was converted into a sensory room affectionately referred to as “The Lab”. Students are able to explore a variety of experiences in the lab: shaving cream on the floor or tables to draw with, wipe over, spread out, squish between, etc.; water tables and a waterfall to manipulate the water and investigate cause-and-effect relationships; and a sand table to build and sift.

As we get more students, more sensory stations will be added to meet their needs. We are very excited about the potential of The Lab to not only capitalize on a student’s interest, but to develop new interest areas as we identify supports that could help them when they transition back to their home school district!



2021 Camp Dates:

November 26th

December 23rd - 31st

During school breaks TRS provides a therapeutic, community based program which provides structured activities for individuals ages 5-21 with a wide range of disabilities. Call your local TRS to find out more!





A NEW ROLE TRAUMA INFORMED AT TRS: SUPPORTS



Kitty working with a student at our Brookfield Campus

In 2021, the position of Trauma Informed Supports Director was created at The Richardson School (TRS) with the goal of balancing efforts and supports in education with those in therapeutic and behavioral approaches. The vision, timing and implementation of this new role carry significant impact for TRS and its students.

The concept and foundation for the role of Trauma Informed Supports Director has been in development over the past three years. This potential area for growth in TRS' supports was identified in the opportunity to ensure its modalities and therapeutic approaches are consistently applied across all campuses. In addition, the role will provide oversight and guidance with tangible supports such as sensory rooms and sensory tools, as well as documentation such as crisis cycles.

The timing of this position coming online coincides with TRS' expansion into a new geographic area (Wisconsin's Fox Valley in February, 2021) and plans to grow to even more locations in the years ahead. As TRS campuses increase in number and distance from each other, the fidelity of its therapeutic approaches is vital to the success of its students.

While all the planning looked good on paper, finding the individual with the right qualifications and drive to implement the role was key. This past June, that final piece was solidified as Kitty Berkovitz accepted the position. Kitty brings a wealth of knowledge to the role, having served in various leadership positions across three MyPath companies in the last 13 years. TRS Executive Director Kevin Silkey shares, "Kitty's unwavering passion for student success and commitment to TRS' therapeutic approaches in both practice and as a trainer is exactly the right fit for what TRS needs."

For her part, Kitty envisions creating a team that would provide specialized observation, support and brainstorming for TRS students across all the sites. She shares, "Having multiple staff whose sole focus is guidance and direction around our therapeutic modalities would elevate the quality of our behavioral supports."

2021 has provided an example of how the vision, timing and implementation of the Trauma Informed Supports Director role has affected TRS in a way not even imagined when the role was in development. The recent addition of Ukeru to TRS' therapeutic supports has required dedicated, guided and ongoing training from Kitty to ensure its success. Mr. Silkey sees this new role continuing to bring best practices and knowledge back to TRS. "We need to push ourselves to offer better supports, which is all geared toward taking even better care of the students."



"Be the change you wish
to see in the world"
-Gandhi

Our Motto:

Be the change



Our Mission:

Be the change for
students, their families
and districts



Our Vision:

For all students to develop
skills for academic and
behavioral growth,
allowing them to return to
their home school settings.



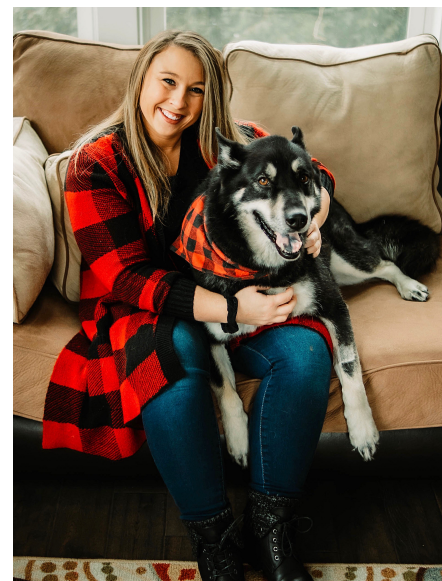
BOBCAT HIGHLIGHTS:

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Marissa Bekken



My love for the field of special education began with my mom. She was a special education teacher and I always helped her when my school had off when I was in middle and high school. She demonstrated a sense of pride in her work that I rarely saw in other careers. While I was in college, my MyPath journey started as an employee in the PAC program at Paragon. I loved getting to know all of our clients and becoming more confident with a range of disabilities. I had the privilege of taking our clients in the community to enjoy different experiences. I found out about The Richardson School during one of my graduate classes at UWW and loved the idea of being in a school that focused completely on helping students with special needs. I applied right away and little did I know, I would be staying within the MyPath family. I have been at TRS for nearly 5 years now. I love the challenge of finding the “aha” moments that completely change the way students learn and

perceive school. I have been fortunate enough to grow within this rewarding company. I requested a low functioning high school room upon interviewing and was assigned to a high functioning middle school room. To say I was pushed out of my comfort zone is an understatement—and I completely loved it! However, I definitely credit my level of patience to my sassy 9 year old husky. I taught in the middle and high school classrooms before getting the opportunity to move up and step into the Special Education Supervisor role. I am very excited to take on this new challenge and work closer with our families and districts!



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WEST ALLIS

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