



Barrington High School Principal Steve McWilliams

A Journey from Student to Principal

STEVE MCWILLIAMS HELPS LEAD WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION AT BHS

THE TWO-WEEK PERIOD between prom and graduation is perhaps Steve McWilliams' favorite time of the school year. "Beyond celebrating the accomplishments of the senior class, the excitement and anticipation for the future flows from each of our graduating seniors," McWilliams said.

It's an excitement he felt 26 years ago, as he walked across the stage at the old Poplar Creek Music Theater to receive his diploma from Barrington High School. McWilliams was active as a student at BHS, participating in football and

track. He was also one of the editors of the yearbook. When he graduated, he knew he wanted to one day work as a high school teacher and coach. After four years at Drake University, he went on to teach biology at Streamwood High School for one year.

Then in 1998, five years after he graduated from BHS, McWilliams had the opportunity to return home. "It was an easy decision," McWilliams said. "There were teaching positions that I was qualified for and I had the opportunity to work directly with the teachers I admired as a student."

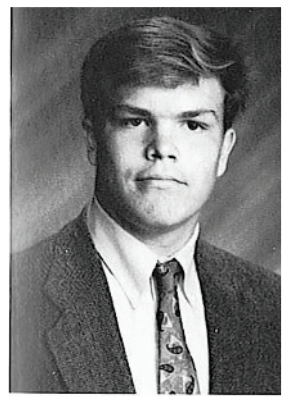
For the next 10 years, he held several positions at BHS including: science teacher, dean, district safety and security coordinator, and associate principal. In July 2008, he was named principal, a title he never imagined when he was walking the halls as a student, or even as a new teacher. "Frankly, when I first started teaching here, my only aspiration was to be the best possible teacher and coach for the students at Barrington High School," McWilliams said.

Now in his 11th year as principal, McWilliams is a well-known face among the nearly 3,000 students



PHOTO: ROB JOHNSON

Principal Steve McWilliams gathers with seniors for a class picture on the football field in May 2015.




Stephen McWilliams - Football 1,2,3, captain 4, Track 1,2, captain 3,4, Wrestling 1, Yearbook 3, editor 4, "The average do and look for recognition, the best let the recognition come to them." -Jon Madden

and 350 staff members at BHS. From being a staple in the stands at BHS athletic events, to making various cameos in the annual spring musical, you could say McWilliams is experiencing Barrington High School all over again, but from a brand-new lens. "I was not involved in performing arts while in high school, so the musical cameos have been an opportunity to see the dedication and hard work it takes to develop a show as big as the musical," McWilliams said.

Though his cameo in this year's production of "Into the Woods" was nothing short of Tony Award-winning, McWilliams says his biggest source of pride is the world-class education BHS provides for its students. Earlier this school year, BHS was recognized by the College Board as an Advanced Placement Honor Roll School. Barrington 220 was one of just 373 school districts nationwide to earn a spot on the honor roll. To be included, BHS had

to, since 2016, increase the number of students participating in AP courses, while also increasing or maintaining the percentage of students earning AP Exam scores of 3 or higher.

"The recognition is an indicator of our efforts to help prepare students for their postsecondary path," McWilliams said.

On May 31, when members of the BHS Class of 2019 receive their diplomas at Willow Creek Community Church, McWilliams will stand on stage to shake hands with all 752 of them. And while he knows it's hard not to feel that excitement and anticipation for the future, he says if he could offer one piece of advice to his 1993 self, it would be this: "The process is just as important as the destination. Enjoy the process." 

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Samantha Ptashkin is the Director of Communication for Barrington 220 schools.

About Principal McWilliams

- BHS Graduation Year: 1993
- Education:
- Bachelor of Science-Drake University
- Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction-Concordia University
- Master of Arts in School Leadership-National Louis University
- Currently completing doctoral studies at Aurora University
- Favorite Quote: "Few things in life are as enjoyable as when we concentrate on a difficult task, using all our skills, knowing what has to be done." -Howard Gardner