October 1, 2019

THE BRIGHT SIDE

Lansing School District
OFF AND RUNNING

We’re already cruising through a fantastic school year! Rich with opportunity and delivering strong results for kids, the Lansing School District family is more energized than ever.

As we move into October, we continue to urge Lansing families to connect with their teachers and school leaders often. We want to know how things are going, so we can work as a team to help deliver strong, student-centered results. Thanks for all you are doing to make the 2019–20 academic year a great one!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Building Literacy: Third graders at Gardner International Magnet School are hard at work, building their literacy skills.
Deputy superintendent Dr. Mark Coscarella has taken the helm as the acting superintendent for the Lansing School District following the retirement of Yvonne Caamal Canul earlier this month.

Coscarella, who has been Lansing’s deputy superintendent for five years, has lived and worked in the capital city his entire life. Prior to joining the district, he spent more than a decade leading statewide school improvement efforts at the Michigan Department of Education. He began his career as a first grade and middle school teacher.

“I am very excited to have this opportunity to lead the Lansing School District through this next transition,” Coscarella said. “We’ve been doing so much good work here in recent years, and we have the strong support of our entire community. Now, as we begin working toward what’s next, we have a lot to look forward to.”

First up on Coscarella’s agenda? A series of listening sessions at each and every one of Lansing’s schools.

“I am eager to get out into the classrooms and offices in which our incredible district team is working, so I can hear what they’re celebrating and planning for,” Coscarella said. “Our conversations will help inform a strong district-wide approach to lasting improvement, which ultimately benefits all our students.”

**Strategic Planning**

Coscarella also is working to facilitate the district’s strategic planning update. First adopted in 2014, the plan is ready for its 2020-2025 iteration.

“Part of the reason Lansing has been so successful in recent years is that we have a thoughtful strategic plan in place,” Coscarella said. “Our board has engaged with district leaders and staff to develop a series of core objectives and activities that are designed to move student achievement and ensure operational success. We use the plan as a guidepost to help us make good decisions every single day.”

To move the process forward, Coscarella has already begun seeking input from staff. During the coming months, the plan will be refined and updated before being adopted by the board at one of its public meetings.

“We want to make this process as positive and open as possible,” Coscarella said. “This plan may have the Lansing School District’s name on it, but it is really an instrumental tool for shaping the way our community is going to grow during the next five years. Our school district is responsible for helping shape the local workforce, which helps determine Lansing’s future prosperity. It’s something we all need to be part of, and I look forward to helping move the process forward as effectively as possible.”
A group of artists from the Wharton Center and elsewhere in the Lansing community descended upon Riddle Elementary on September 12 to showcase their talent and engage with students.

“We were chosen to be the recipient of a Pay-It-Forward event in honor of 9/11 day from the ‘Come From Away’ cast at the Wharton Center and our community partners from Lansing State Journal,” said Riddle literacy teacher Andrea Valo.

Students were able to hear and play drums and specialized instruments, mold with clay, move with the music, make poetry, write their words as a journalist, and dress up as characters.

“Students also learned a dance move from the play itself, learning about the special people in Gander, Newfoundland of Canada,” Valo said. “It was here that 7,000 people had emergency landings during the grounding of planes on 9/11 and the generous people of Gander took them all in until they could fly home again.

“Our Riddle students had an exciting morning learning with all of the artists!”
The Dwight Rich School of the Arts re-opened for students on September 9, nearly two years ahead of its original opening date.

“The school needed a number of infrastructure repairs—a new roof, K-1 wing, HVAC, and performance spaces, to name a few,” said acting superintendent Dr. Mark Coscarella. “With the community’s support of the bond in 2016, we were able to move forward on these critical needs.”

Following the district’s receipt of a federal magnet grant, however, the district was able to expedite construction by two years.

“Our team put in a lot of extra work to help get the building ready for this fall,” Coscarella said. “Our students are thrilled to be in such a dynamic, artistic environment where they can express themselves creatively while they are learning core subjects.”

District leaders were on hand to welcome students to their first day in the new school.
And the Emmy Goes To....Rudy Valdez, Lansing Eastern H.S. Graduate!

L–R: Sam Bisbee, Rudy Valdez and Theodora Dunlap pose with the Outstanding Exceptional Merit In Documentary Filmmaking Award for 'The Sentence' in the press room during the 2019 Creative Arts Emmy Awards on September 14, 2019 in Los Angeles, California.

Lansing Eastern graduate Rudy Valdez was honored with a 2019 Emmy award from the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences on September 22, 2019.

Valdez and his co-producers earned recognition for exceptional merit in documentary filmmaking for their work on “The Sentence,” which is Valdez’ own story of his sister’s imprisonment for a crime committed by her deceased ex-boyfriend. Although she was later pardoned by President Obama, she was caught up in the machinery of federal mandatory minimum sentencing laws—and it’s a story Valdez wanted to tell.

“It’s all about a promise I made,” Valdez told The Bright Side last year, when his film premiered at a place close to his heart—the Lansing Eastern High School auditorium. “I promised my family that if they were going to be open and honest and vulnerable, I was going to make something good out of it. I worked hard to keep that promise.”

The film, which was largely shot right here in Lansing, has since won top awards at major film festivals, including Sundance. It was picked up by HBO and aired in the fall of 2018.

“During all the negotiations, I thought, what better place to premiere the film than where I started the creative process, right here in Lansing Eastern High School.”

True to his word, Valdez premiered the film a year ago.

“This is a story about where I’m from,” Valdez said. “Even though I’ve moved away, this is home. It will always be my home.”
The members of Congregation Shaarey Zedek in East Lansing came together this fall to provide school supplies for Lansing students.

“Our congregation has a Tzedakah committee, which is all about social action and charitable giving,” said Rachel Asbury, who is a member of the congregation. “This year, we offered our members several activities to participate in, and they began bringing in supplies for Lansing students, as well as practical resources for babies and children.”

Tzedakah is an integral part of Jewish teaching. The Hebrew word translates literally into “justice,” and guides members of the faith to share what they have with others, so that all may become self-sufficient.

“It’s very important to me and the people on our committee to have a positive impact,” Asbury said.

Asbury’s daughter, Daphne Merryman, MSW, chairs the committee.

“Community action is very important to her,” Asbury said. “We have a longstanding commitment to supporting teens in foster care and also to provide winter clothing, socks, and blankets to the homeless.”

The Tzedakah committee also gives to the Greater Lansing Food Bank and Haven House.
Attwood Fourth-Graders Visit Lake Michigan Shore

On September 10, a remarkable initiative pioneered by the Lansing Schools Education Association helped Lansing elementary students experience Michigan’s extraordinary natural resources.

The Lake Michigan Project provided a completely free day trip to Saugatuck Dunes located along Lake Michigan.

Dean Transportation donated two 55-passenger motor coaches to transport students, staff, and chaperones.

Once at the state park, the students were divided into three groups to explore the dunes, explore the coast, and play interactive outdoors games. The dune and water hikes were led by volunteers from Michigan Department of Resources and Lansing retired educator Dave Brigham. Additionally, an environmental course from MSU will be sending students to observe and assist.

Box lunches were provided by private donors, as were small snack items.

Photos from the day have been shared with Attwood educators to use with their technology labs to have students do some creative follow-up reports or other demonstrations of learning.

Data supports that although Lansing students live relatively close to the Lake Michigan shoreline, many have not had the opportunity to explore and learn about it first hand. With that in mind, The Lake Michigan Project was formed with supportive community partners and resources.

This year’s partners and donors included:
- Camron Gnass Traction Agency
- Kellie Dean Dean Transportation
- Dave Brigham Retired, Lansing
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources
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- LSEA

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More than 400 students in grades K-6 are expected to come together at Lansing Community College from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, November 2, for STEAMfest.

Lansing Community College invites local students to enjoy a fun and exciting day exploring STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) through a variety of over 50 hands-on activities, with an emphasis on a learning, non-competitive experience.

Free parking will be available in the Gannon Ramp, 600 N. Grand Ave. Check-in and events will be held in the Arts & Sciences Bldg.

STEAMfest 2019
November 2, 2019
9 AM - 1 PM
Arts & Sciences Bldg.
LCC Downtown Campus
419 N. Washington Square
Lansing, MI 48933

The event is free. To learn more or register, please visit this site.
Forest View School Receives Grant from Dart Foundation

A new Forest View Elementary Schoolyard Habitat will be built, thanks to a Dart Foundation grant totaling $4,940.

Teacher Jamie Balanowski has been awarded this grant to support the implementation of K-3 project-based learning initiatives.

Forest View School is working to bring learning back outside to nature and bring nature inside the classroom. With the help of the State of Michigan’s Department of Natural Resources, Forest View students are extending their learning to such settings as the school’s own backyard, nature centers, zoos, museums, and parks.
What’s Next?
District Shares Upcoming Bond & Sinking Fund Infrastructure Projects

Thanks to strong voter support for the Lansing School District in 2016 and 2019, funds are available for several upcoming construction and infrastructure projects. Read below to see what’s next at your school!

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<tr>
<td>Beekman</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumberland</td>
<td>Replace boiler</td>
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<tr>
<td>Everett</td>
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<td>Spring 2019-Summer 2021</td>
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<td>Wexford</td>
<td>Plumbing, mechanical, electrical, lighting, fire, doors, windows, façade upgrades</td>
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<td>Summer 2021</td>
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Everett New Tech High students placed in the top three at the Reo Town Art Attack Youth Competition on September 15.

The REO Town Art Attack offered awards, workshops, art vendors, and more. This year's poetry competition was held in collaboration with The Poetry Room.

The Lansing students earning recognition at the event were Mikese May, Laura Henson, and 2019 New Tech graduate Julia Tominski.

Competitions were open to all youth ages 5-20.

Photos courtesy of The Poetry Room
Local motivational speaker Dr. Eric Thomas visited Sexton High School to speak to students on August 27.

Thomas is a critically-acclaimed author, educator, pastor, an audible.com Audie Awards Finalist and a world renowned speaker. He has consulted college athletic and professional teams within the MLB, NBA, NFL and MLS.

His messages to Lansing Sexton students helped rally energy for students as the new school year got underway.

Thomas was born in Chicago, IL and raised in Detroit, MI. Born to a single, teenage mother, he was a high school dropout who lived homeless on the streets of Detroit for two years.

While he was homeless, he met a preacher who inspired him to go back to school and eventually change lives.

His work with teens and adults is nationally recognized and has served to inspire local teens as the 2019-2020 school year gets underway.
New Late Start, After-School Options Announced

We are excited to share the addition of new options for Late Start Wednesday programming as well as 7-12 after-school options.

We have added transportation to Lewton Elementary School for those who would like their child to attend Foster Community Center on Late Start Wednesdays.

We have also added transportation to Woodcreek from Gardner so our students may participate in the All City Band and Choir groups rehearsing at that time.

Finally, something brand new this year, is an after-school ‘day care’ address option for our 7-12 families. Students from Eastern, Everett or Sexton who are interested in attending the new teen after-school Lansing Parks and Recreation programs at Letts or Schmidt Community Centers may now provide that address for after school drop off.

Dream Big! We’ll get you there.

PARENT COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

What is PCAC?
The Lansing School District Parent/Community Advisory Council is a district wide council consisting of parents, teachers, principals, and community members who come together on a monthly basis to discuss parents’ interests, concerns, and to share important district information.

Who can attend meetings?
Any parent/guardian of a Lansing School District student as well as community leaders and citizens of the Greater Lansing Area that recognize the need for parental and community involvement in our children’s education.

Why attend PCAC?
You will have the opportunity to provide important input to leaders in the Lansing School District.

Questions about PCAC? Please call Eldon McGraw, Director of Communications and Outreach, at (517)755.1036

Find Us Online! www.lansingschools.net/PCAC

2019-20 PCAC SCHEDULE

9/24/19 | 6:30-8:00 p.m. | Shirley M. Rodgers Admin Bldg.
Strategic Plan update

10/22/19 | 6:30-8:00 p.m. | Eastern School tour/Eastern Flex/Student Success Academy

12/3/19 | 6:30-8:00 p.m. | Post Oak School tour/World Language presentation/ Financial empowerment presentation

1/28/20 | 6:30-8:00 p.m. | Dwight Rich School tour/Innovative Arts and Fitness presentation

2/25/20 | 6:30-8:00 p.m. | Woodcreek Montessori Montessori update and climate and culture presentation

3/24/20 | 6:30-8:00 p.m. | Dr. Evans Welcome Center PCAC Summer Showcase.

4/28/20 | 6:30-8:00 p.m. | Everett Bond and sinking fund update

5/26/20 | 6:30-8:00 p.m. | Riddle Title 1 required presentation and year end reflections.

Find Us Online! www.lansingschools.net/PCAC
IMMUNIZATIONS COUNT
THAT’S WHY WE’RE OFFERING A NO COST IMMUNIZATION DAY!
Sponsored by the Lansing School District Nursing Department and the Office of School Culture

OCTOBER 3, 2019
1:00 - 4:00 P.M.
@ Dr. Eva L. Evans Welcome Center
2400 Pattengill Ave.

QUESTIONS?
Call the Nurse Department at (517)755.4964

In partnership with
Eighth-grade students in Gardner International Magnet School have been working cooperatively to research the United Nations for an informative essay project in English.

The Everett Dance Company enjoyed performing at Mayor Schor’s Neighborhood Resource Summit on September 24. The summits were designed by neighborhood groups to provide citizens direct contact with community resources in their neighborhood.

The Lansing School District hosts these quarterly events, which serves hundreds of Lansing residents. The next event will be held November 19, 2019, at Wexford Montessori School.