



January 2022



The BRIGHT SIDE



Lansing School District

2022 District Showcase

Virtual • Feb 27 • 12-3:00 p.m.

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LSD MAGNET PROGRAM

Students Return to the Classroom After Online Start to Learning in 2022

Due to the high positive COVID-19 rate in the Lansing area and out of an abundance of caution, the Lansing School District started 2022 with virtual learning. Families' picked-up technology at each school during the week of January 3, 2022 and then used the devices to connect with teachers who worked virtually from their classroom for the first week of the new year.

"The decision to start 2022 online was easier than the actual implementation of getting technology and electronic devices into the hands of our families," said Lansing School District superintendent Ben Shuldiner. "But it was the right thing to do and we made it happen. Our success really required an incredible effort by our team of teachers, administrators, staff, and parents. Thanks to all of you!"

The school district arranged meal pick-up's for families during the first week of January thanks to the district food provider SodexoMagic.

"We are back in the classroom now in Lansing and hope to stay there. We will continually monitor the COVID-19 numbers and make important decisions throughout the year," superintendent Shuldiner continued. "We know students learn better and are safe in school, so we will do everything possible to continue to work together to provide a great education to students in the Lansing School District."

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Riddle Students Learn About Electricity

Riddle third graders received a visit from Megan Doherty and Rowland Cornish of FD Hayes Electric Company. Students were introduced to the concept of electricity by identifying items in their homes and around school that run on electricity. Megan and Rowland also spoke to the kids about what electricians do on a day-to-day basis and had the kids brainstorm how math and science is used to perform the work.

The most fun was had after the discussion. Students experimented with creating lemon-powered clocks. All students were able to get their clocks working and at the end of the lesson they received the title of "Junior Electricians." Way to go Riddle Rhinos!



Thank you FD Hayes Electric for the visit!
To learn more, click [here](#).

The Next Generation of Manufacturers

Did you know that Governor Gretchen Whitmer declared the week of Sept. 26 to Oct. 2, 2021 as Manufacturing Week? It was a time to celebrate Michigan's more than 11,000 unique manufacturing companies, which account for over 600,000 jobs and over \$98 billion of annual revenue in Michigan.

In honor of the occasion, engineering and robotics students at J.W. Sexton High School were visited by two General Motors employees who specialize in mechanical engineering.

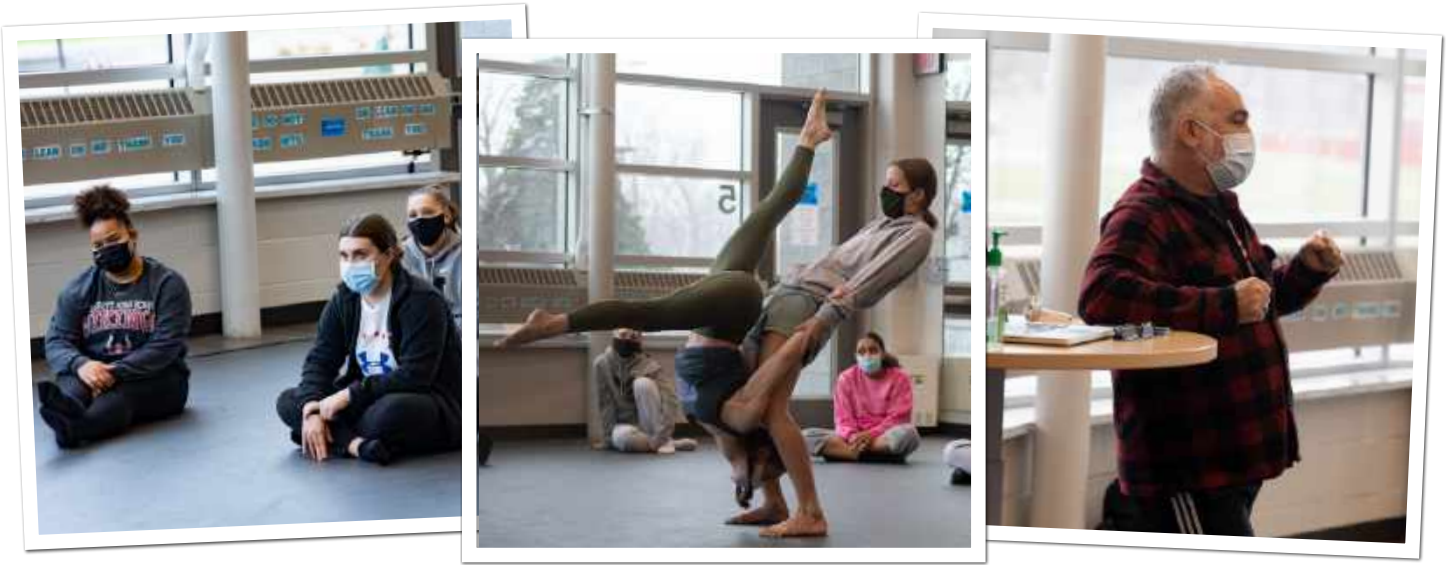
It was an eye-opening experience for students. They learned about the role engineers play at GM in all areas from vehicle and assembly line design to stamping, welding, quality control, and production, which is the final step that leads to the moment when each vehicle rolls off of the assembly belt.

Students were challenged to make connections between the things they are learning in their classes to the work that engineers perform in the field.

The message from the presenters was loud and clear—today's manufacturing careers are high-tech, in high-demand, high-paying, require high levels of skill, and are hugely rewarding.

Sexton would like to thank the Capital Area Manufacturing Council and General Motors for the visit.





Inlet Dance Visits Everett Dance Students in Their New Studio

Everett Senior Dance Company enjoyed a two-hour advanced dance workshop with Inlet Dance Theatre in their new studio space from ahead of winter break.

The workshop included understanding how to partner with other dancers in a variety of ways, including advanced collaborative movement and improvisational skills, with a strong message that dance is open to anyone regardless of how they look or identify.

Last Year, Inlet Dance Theatre hosted an online collaboration that saw students working independently on their own themes that related to the common thread of the global pandemic, encouraging students to focus deeply on how they had been impacted, but also honor and celebrate their individual stories.

Inlet Dance Theatre is one of the region's most exciting professional contemporary dance companies, based in Cleveland, Ohio. Founded in 2001 by Founder and Executive/Artistic Director Bill Wade, Inlet embodies Wade's longstanding belief that dance viewing, training, and performing experiences may serve as tools to bring about personal growth and development.

Inlet's collaborative artistic staff build the company's solid reputation for uplifting individuals and engaging new audiences via performances and educational programming.

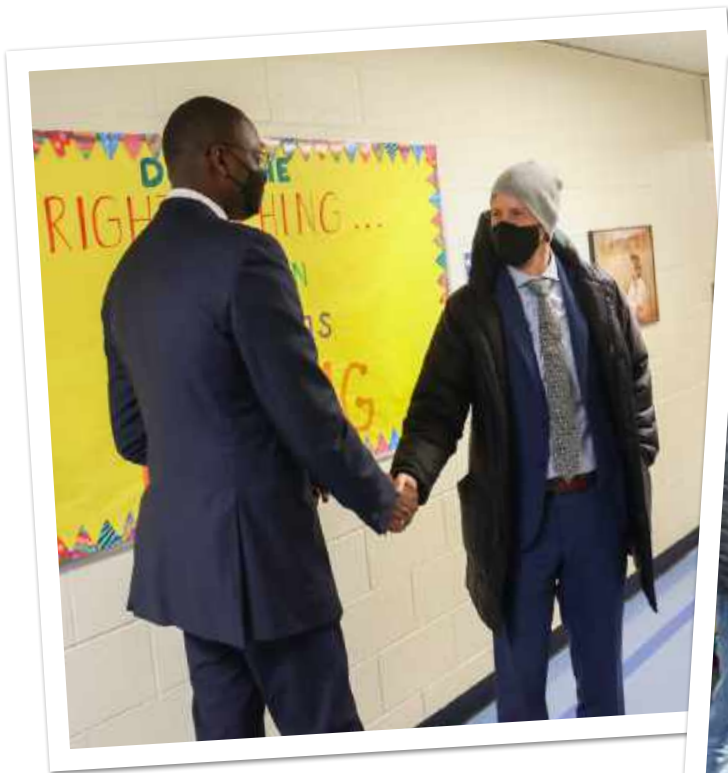
For more information on Inlet Dance Theatre, click [here](#).

The Lansing School District & EV Nation Present

The Story of a Legacy

Everett Dance Documentary Premiere

5:00 p.m. this Saturday at Everett! Click here to get your tickets NOW!



Lieutenant Governor Gilchrist Lends Lyons Elementary a Helping Hand

When Principal Jaimi Nedziwe joined the Lyons Elementary team, she observed students who were struggling with food insecurity.

"Students were looking for extra items from breakfast and lunch to take home," said Principal Nedziwe. "I wanted to find a way to help my students and families. I remembered working at other schools in the district and providing students with weekend survival kits, so I reached out to the organization, Weekend Survival Kits (WSK). They gladly accepted our school into the program and the following week, students went home with food bags."

Weekend Survival Kits (WSK) services about 2,700 students in 55 schools in three Michigan counties. The Lansing School District has the largest number of students in need. Every other week, food bags full of non-perishable food items are delivered to participating schools for distribution to students. At Lyons Elementary, 85 students currently take advantage of weekend survival kits.

In December, Lyons food bags were delivered by a special guest visitor, Lieutenant Governor Garlin Gilchrist! The Lt. Governor went to Weekend Survival Kits and loaded food bags in his car and then transported them to Lyons.

At Lyons, Lt. Governor Gilchrist delivered food bags with some student helpers and spoke to them about their thoughts on receiving weekend survival kits. Gilchrist also visited Ms. Trumble's third grade classroom, where he worked with students on multiplication and shared some tips with the class vice president! Lt. Governor Gilchrist also took extra time to talk with some Lyons staff members and he enjoyed a great conversation with Lansing School District Superintendent Ben Shuldiner.



For more information about the Weekend Survival Kit program, click [here](#).



Amanda Valdez, Medical Assistant - on the Front Line in Schools, Keeping People Safe

Since the pandemic started, the Lansing School District has made it their top priority to keep students, teachers, and staff as safe and healthy as possible. There are many actions the district is taking to achieve this healthy Lansing goal, and staff like a medical assistant named Amanda Valdez who works at the Eastern High School clinic help at every step of the way.

Valdez' work as a new medical assistant has been a tremendous asset during the COVID-19 climate. Amanda had decided to go back to school to receive her medical assistant degree because she wanted to help others. "I sat at home in quarantine for that first year of COVID-19, and at the end I was like, 'this is crazy, I can help,'" said Valdez. "I was originally in the restaurant and bar industry, and it didn't look like the Green Door where I worked was going to open up anytime soon because it was a live music establishment. I have always wanted to return to school, but working full time and having kids just never made it possible, but during COVID-19 it seemed like the perfect time!"

When working with children now at the Eastern High health center, Valdez says that a part of her mission is to explain to students a little more about COVID-19 when they get anxious. Her message could include keeping young people informed on symptoms, lessening the panic they may have when encountering someone who has been diagnosed as COVID-19 positive, and ultimately trying to make people feel secure with what is going on in the health world today. Helping keep district kids healthy has been an amazing experience for her so far.

"My experience in the Lansing School District has been excellent," said Valdez. "Working as a medical assistant is more rewarding than I ever dreamed it could be. Some of the rewards are just knowing that I am helping to keep the kids, families, and staff safe in the Lansing community."

Thanks to our district medical staff who have been fighting on the front lines for the health of our district family.

Congratulations to Jody Taratuta and Our SodexoMAGIC Team!

Congratulations to Jody Taratuta and the entire Lansing School District SodexoMAGIC team for receiving the 7th annual YMCA Kellie P. Dean Healthy Living Partnership Award.

"SodexoMagic would like to thank our partners, the City of Lansing, the Boys and Girls Club, Dean Transportation, Head Start program, and of course the Lansing School District for helping us serve over two million meals during the pandemic," said Taratuta, head of food service in Lansing.

The key characteristics for award consideration are demonstrating a commitment to improving and expanding access to healthy living opportunities for everyone in the community; developing and delivering a sustainable program model; and demonstrating a commitment to partner, collaborate, and work with others. The entire SodexoMAGIC team embodies these characteristics, and the district is thankful to have such a wonderful partnership!



\$4,000 Honorarium to Be Paid to Teachers Over The Next Two School Years

The Lansing School District and the Lansing Schools Education Association (LSEA), MEA, NEA are excited to announce an agreement to continue implementing creative strategies and measures to recognize and reward the current LSEA members' tremendous efforts and value to the District and Community.

The agreement will provide Lansing teachers currently employed in the district with four individual payments of \$1,000 each for a total of \$4,000. These payments will be paid per semester through the 2022-23 school year. New teacher employees who join the district in the next two school years are eligible for a prorated payment.

"We understand the hard work and dedication our teachers and our staff do each day for not only the district, but our community as a whole," said Superintendent Ben Shuldiner. "This is just one of many ways we can show our appreciation."

"This shows not only the appreciation and dedication to our current members but also the commitment the Lansing School District has for the future," said Chuck Alberts, teachers union LSEA President.





Ariel Rodriguez Peña Promoted to Director - and Still Working with Middle Years

Many people in the Lansing School District family know Ariel Rodriguez Peña as a school administrator with a big smile and pleasant laugh. The former Principal at North school and Gardner K-8 International Magnet school now holds a higher administrative position and serves as the Director of Academies and Middle Years in the Lansing School District.

"I love this job, it's really going great," said Rodriguez Peña, who took on the new role this past year.

A native of Cuba, Ariel started working in the school district many years ago.

"When I arrived from Cuba, my first job was as a Youth Coordinator at the Refugee Development Center in partnership with the Bilingual Department of the Lansing School District, so I have actually been in education for a long time. I worked as a bilingual assistant at Gardner and as an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher at Eastern High too," said Rodriguez Peña. "In fact, nearly everyone in my family has been a teacher or educator."

"My new position as Director of Academies and Middle Years means I get to do a lot of coaching with other administrators and teachers," Rodriguez Peña said. "This really is an educational coaching position, and I love it! My job is like being a principal with ten schools, running operations and supporting other administrators. I get to talk to parents too."

"The level of expert administrators we have in Lansing is incredibly high," Rodriguez Peña added. "I have always told my friends in Cuba that the United States has many great opportunities for everyone, and the diversity in Lansing schools and opportunities provided here are amazing."

Rodriguez Peña would like to see more support and recognition nationally for public education, and he believes society should honor the important role teachers play in our world.

"I am here to stay in Lansing in public education," Rodriguez Peña said. "My career goal is to stay here and enjoy a long career working in the Lansing School District. I'm excited to be working in my hometown."



From Left to Right: Juan Li, Li Korreck, and Xinwei Cen working with students in their respective classes

Post Oak Academy Welcomes Three New Mandarin-Speaking Teachers

Post Oak Academy welcomed three new Mandarin speaking teachers this past fall as part of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program. This program gives students up to age 12 international exposure, including classes in speaking Mandarin Chinese. Using a 50/50 immersion design, children learn to read, write, and speak in both English and Chinese. Each of the newly hired teachers integrates Chinese speaking into their classrooms daily.

Juan Li moved from Utah to Michigan to be a kindergarten teacher at Post Oak. In Utah, Li spent seven years teaching for the Chinese Dual Immersion program.

"I was really excited to learn that Lansing also had an immersion program, which is the reason why I joined Post Oak Academy," said Li.

Li Korreck is in her first year of teaching 1st grade. Korreck's goal for the class is to offer the most authentic experience possible for her students. Korreck uses her background in China and England to share with students what a typical day of primary school looks like in those countries.

"It is a joy to teach at Post Oak Academy," said Korreck. "Our well-established structure promotes a global appreciation mindset for students to understand cultures around the world."

Xinwei Cen began as a teacher in the Philippines, then went back to China to teach International Baccalaureate Chinese. From there, she came to the United States and took another immersion program position in Alaska. Cen is now teaching 5th grade for her first year in the Lansing School District.

"I am so excited to be part of the Lansing community," Cen said. "I am really looking forward to a new adventure!"

The Post Oak Academy International Baccalaureate Chinese Immersion program was established in 2006. For many years, instructors in the program have guided and inspired students to be global citizens who are prepared to take on the world.