

Our school community responds to the call!

Dear West Ottawa Families:

I hope this message finds you in good health. As I sat down to write this message, I was reminded of how much has changed in such a short period of time. While so much uncertainty remains, this much is clear: We have a wonderful and compassionate school community which continues to answer the call for support. The work we've accomplished despite the challenges thrust upon us – while often being isolated from one another – continues to amaze me.

Each district newsletter we develop is a celebration of the incredible people and programs associated with West Ottawa. While this edition is different in nature, due to the circumstances, it reinforces how important our staff and the programming they provide is to all of us. Therefore, I hope that the information contained within this newsletter

A letter from...



Supt. Tom Martin

ter serves not only as a welcome distraction, but as encouragement

for each of us to unite to care for our friends, neighbors and loved ones.

During the unexpected closure of our schools, hundreds of volunteers and district employees have spent countless hours assembling vital food supplies for delivery to our families daily and developing academic resources to help our students continue their progress. On the latter point, thanks to the support the district has received from the community during the most recent bond referendums, we have been able to shift fairly seamlessly to distance learning through our 1:1 Chromebook program. While the Chromebook program has been available in grades 6-12 since 2016, we recently distributed almost 500 Chromebooks to elementary school families. Because of your commitment to the community's children, our students are able to access the learning resources they'll

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Bond work begins at Harbor Lights

A school renovation project is serious when a hole is blown in an exterior wall large enough for a skid steer to drive through, as it was recently at Harbor Lights Middle School.

As Director of Building Services Tom Swifney describes it, it made sense on multiple levels.

"The selective demolition contractor brought a skid steer in with a jack hammer attachment on it, which made short work of the demolition of the existing block walls," Swifney explained. "They also used the bucket on it to haul the block and debris out, otherwise block by block would have had to have been hauled out with wheelbarrows and a ton of laborers. The skid steer speeds up production, reduces man hours and ultimately saves the district money."

And that was just the beginning.



Initial work in late December included asbestos abatement work.

All interior classroom and hallway walls were removed in the demolition phase of this initial bond work. By the time bond renovation work is completed at Harbor Lights, this level of intensive demolition and rebuilding will have taken place across almost 70% of the building.

Bonds passed by the West Ottawa community in both 2014 and 2019

have made this important work possible.

Originally built in 1961 as the first West Ottawa High School, the building served the district for many years as its flagship school. It was upgraded over the years, with major additions in the 1980s, including the Performing Arts Center and a new

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North Holland showcases Adventures in Learning

North Holland Elementary hosted its "Learning Showcase - Adventures in Learning" on Feb. 27.

Staff organized activities for students and families, with families receiving a passport that would be stamped with the completion of activities. Everyone started in the gym for read alouds, and then traveled to stations including: Creating with Classics (art and music), Adventures with Coding - Math - Reading - Writing - Science and Geography.

Creating Crystals, Adventures in Science, drew a large crowd. At this popular station, students created solutions from which crystals would precipitate out. Students who completed at least four activities entered their names in a drawing to win adventure themed books.



North Holland third grade teacher Renee Burget leads students in a crystal making activity.

Battle of the Books

Great Lakes competition encourages students to read culturally diverse books

The third through fifth grade students at Great Lakes Elementary embarked in their first ever Battle of the Books competition!

The idea of Battle of the Books came to Principal David Stefanich after he saw another area school tweet about their own competition. After some research and support from the upper elementary teachers at Great Lakes, a plan was formed to roll out Great Lakes Battle of the Books competition in early March.

Battle of the Books is a reading challenge and at Great Lakes the staff worked to identify a total of 30 high interest, culturally diverse books that will make up this year's battle. Third through fifth grade students signed up to take part in this battle.

The first part of the battle is the reading of the books. Each grade level had a list of ten books. Students needed to commit to reading four of the ten books in order to participate in the competition. For eight weeks, students were to read as

"Literacy continued to be a huge focus of what we do at Great Lakes and I think this has the possibility to be a really fun thing for our kids."

— Principal David Stefanich

many of the ten books on their list as they could. Prior to COVID-19, the library would have been staffed and held open for students to read twice during their recess period.

"We would have also held a lock in and read event after school in which students can stay late, eat some pizza and do lots of reading," Stefanich claimed.

The second part of the Battle of the Books would have been the competition portion. In early May, once teams had been formed, students at each grade were to com-

pete against each other in a trivia competition in which the questions are derived directly from the grade level book lists. The hope was that this friendly competition would continue to motivate students to read and also read books that they might not normally have picked off the shelf.

"Literacy continues to be a huge focus of what we do at Great Lakes and I think this has the possibility to be a really fun thing for our kids," stated Stefanich. Hopefully, we can start this up again next school year.

Lakeshore creating encouraging atmosphere

Lakeshore is committed to providing its students with the safest and most encouraging atmosphere possible.

That is why its PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) team is working hard to move the elementary school in the right direction. This year, the Lakeshore PBIS team created a Sensory (calm-down) Room, wrote a grant for sensory buckets to be placed in each teacher's classroom (thanks to the amazing Sarah Schuch), and planned a Three R's (Respect, Responsible, Ready to Learn) Day to reinforce school wide expectations and positive relationships.

But it's not all about the "big" things this team has done for kids. It's more about the little things it and the entire staff do every day to remind Lakeshore kids that they are the most important part of our Lakeshore family.

Sensory Room

Lakeshore had the luxury of having an awkward space. Down the art and fifth grade hallway lies an unassuming, medium-sized office with a unique adjoining room. The space has always been used for storage, or an irregular office, because the adjoining room lies directly behind it. More and more, as the PBIS team has seen the social and emotional support needs growing for students, this space was becoming the solution.

The team got right to work transforming the space into a safe place with cushions, balance balls and boards, a tent, games to play, math work to focus on, yoga mats, and posters that highlight steps to take when you're feeling anxious or escalated. This once awkward office now serves as the perfect space to teach breathing techniques, calm-down methods, and strategies for self-regulation.

Three R's Day

On Jan. 27 the PBIS team planned its first "Three-R's Day." Classrooms began their day with a conversation and connection circle about what the morning would include, and then spent the rest of the morning circulating the hallways, gym, library, and cafeteria to revisit our school-wide expectations at each station. Classes then conclude



Mrs. Kuiper teaches kindergarteners calming techniques to help them be mindful of their bodies.



Staff notes to students

with another connection circle to discuss what they had learned throughout the day.

But as previously mentioned, it's the little things that make the difference at Lakeshore. It's mental wellness facilitator June Kuiper's monthly visit to every classroom. It's the fact that staff took the time to write every student in the school, and hang a letter of encouragement on their lockers. It's the fact that Mrs. Schuch wrote a grant to get sensory boxes for each classroom, so kids can try that before going to the sensory room.

Or the fact that many (if not all) teachers have "buddies" they check in with throughout the day. Teacher



Mrs. O'Brien leads students through a Three R's lesson.

Scott Follett has a first grader who visits his classroom when the student feels anxious, and teacher Noelia Wise has several students who have chosen her as "their person." She chats with them before school and reminds them to have a great day.

It's the green ticket store, and the golden ticket winners. It's the team effort. Every day.

The Lakeshore PBIS team is picking up steam, and can't wait to see what the future holds. Next year, the excitement continues with creating Lakeshore Families, and continuing to transform the school's hallways into sensory walks, and decorating with inspirational quotes.

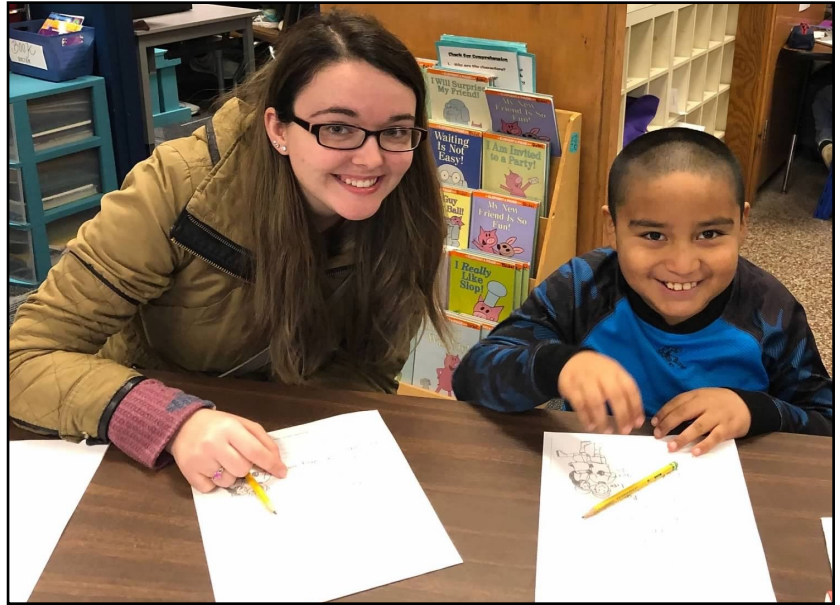
Woodside, Hope College benefit from pen pals

Woodside Elementary teacher Kristen Bickel knows that giving students a "real" reason to write will improve the quality of their writing.

Hope College Professor Dr. Tony Donk knows that giving his college students the opportunity to read the writing of second graders will improve their understanding of literacy development.

Combining their knowledge, Bickel and Donk have teamed together for the past 15 years to create pen-pals between their students. Every two weeks, the second grade students send letters to their pen-pals and then anxiously await a reply. The reply they receive is a typed letter from a Hope College student.

Receiving the letters helps the second graders to visualize quality and organized writing. Beyond what they are learning, the second graders gain an understanding of what college might be like just ten short years away!



Samuel Dzib-Santos with his Hope College pen pal.

Sheldon Woods celebrates students' hard work

The Sheldon Woods community works hard to ensure that all students have a quality education. They also work hard to make sure that these efforts are celebrated.

So throughout the winter months several events were held that allowed students, staff, and families to get together to acknowledge all of the hard work and have some fun.

One of these events was Donuts with Grown-Ups. Students were able to invite family members to school to enjoy coffee, juice, and donuts. Donuts with Grown-Ups was organized by Sheldon Woods PTO and it allowed students to enjoy some time hanging out with family members in the building they are so proud of.

Another event organized by the PTO was the Glow Party. Staff, students and their families were invited to hang out after school on a Friday and enjoy a variety of activities. Students could climb a rock wall, play putt-putt golf, get their face painted, dance, and eat pizza and cotton candy. There were many in attendance and everyone had a blast.

The final event was the Celebration of Learning. This was organized to highlight all of the wonderful opportunities and learning experiences provided at Sheldon Woods. The theme was Bee Part of the Fun. Attendees



Donuts with Grown-Ups allowed students to hang out with family.

were able to move from station to station exploring activities such as Bee a Reader, Bee Creative, Bee Active, Bee a Problem Solver, and Bee a Scientist.

Principal Dennis White believes that this kind of celebration is important because, "Our staff provides exceptional instruction and our students are learning at high levels every day. It's important that we get together to celebrate them."

Secretary Angie Dick, parent of a Sheldon Woods student, agreed.

"As a parent and staff member at Sheldon Woods, I know how important it is to feel a part of the com-

munity within your child's school. The events that are held at Sheldon Woods such as the color run, glow party, and Donuts with Grown-Ups, are great ways for students, parents, and our staff to build relationships. These relationships create a sense of community and a positive atmosphere within the walls of our school. The community that is built fosters school spirit and pride. Sheldon Woods has a strong school pride; though small, we are mighty in community and our students are positively impacted by the sweat and heart that goes into each event."

PBIS takes a new twist at Waukazoo Elementary

PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports) is alive and well at Waukazoo Elementary.

The building's theme is FAMILY, with even the Waukazoo PBIS logo being a FAMILY tree. Within that theme, there are nine "roots" to guide the focus, one for each month of the school year.

As part of the teaching of PBIS the building for the past several years has held monthly PBIS assemblies. This year the building's PBIS Team decided to flip the script on the traditional principal-led assemblies and created the opportunity for grade-level teachers and students to run the show.

The first Friday of each month Waukazoo students, from kindergarten all the way through 5th grade, have led the remainder of the building's 475+ students in a lesson about the chosen "root". This year's assemblies have featured some outstanding activities including:

For August/September the root was Belong(ing), with Principal Samuel Lemmon and all classrooms leading the assembly. Every classroom helped create a "We Are A Waukazoo Family? Go WO!" Banner to show we all Belong.

In October the root was Kindness with the fifth grade leading the assembly. Each Waukazoo student received "A Little Spot of Kindness" (tied in with the book of the same title).

November's root was Gratitude and the first grade led the assembly. Each classroom created Gratitude Jars to

show how much we care about each other at Waukazoo.

December's root was Tradition(s) and the fourth grade led the assembly. Students led the school in a classroom created ABC book about all the Traditions at Waukazoo.

January's root was Perseverance and the third grade led the assembly. Students led the school in a movement activity (tied in with the book "Elephants Cannot Dance") to describe how everyone at Waukazoo can show Perseverance.

February's root was Compassion and Lower Montessori led the assembly. Students led Waukazoo in the sharing of affirmations about their Compassion and kicked off the Purple Power fundraiser.

March's root was Teamwork and Upper Montessori led the assembly. Students led Waukazoo in an activity, tied in with the Coin Challenge benefitting Puerto Rico relief, that showed how Teamwork can make a difference.

April's root would have been Encouragement and Kinder/Kinder Montessori would have led the assembly.

May's root would have been Endurance and the second grade would have led the assembly.

June's root would have been "We are a Waukazoo Family" and Principal Lemmon and staff would have led the assembly.

While these assemblies have been a great way for students to take a piece of the ownership in the PBIS



Upper Montessori used a "Go WO" mosaic to teach about Teamwork.

process, the real key to each "root" has not been lost. Students are routinely using terms like Compassion, Kindness, and Perseverance and their daily actions are also demonstrating their understanding of these concepts. The students at Waukazoo have not only been able to create entertaining, informative, and memorable assemblies but they have also been able to lead their peers in embracing the PBIS "roots" and making the building a better place.

"Great job Waukazoo students, your leadership has been impressive and transformative!" Lemmon said. "Go WO!"



Lower Montessori led a Compassion assembly.

West Ottawa junior named Boys and Girls Club Youth of the Year

There was a decided West Ottawa influence at this year's 25th Youth of the Year celebration at the Boys and Girls Club of the Greater Holland Area.

All six nominees this year hailed from West Ottawa High School, with junior Ebony Roach being named Youth of the Year. Other nominees were Conner McBride, Esli Mendoza, Fredy Rincon Perez, Julissa Salcedo and Janelly Vazquez. The six nominees for the award provided a heartfelt speech at the celebration.

Ebony has taken advantage of the opportunities offered at West Ottawa High School and has excelled in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities. Ebony has taken numerous advanced courses such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and Honors, all while maintaining

a 3.9 grade-point average.

She is also involved at WOHS and in the community, with one example being her engagement in the Renaissance Club at WOHS. This group spearheads the school's positive behavior initiatives through activities such as Anti-Bullying Week, Good Morning Sunshine, Exam Cram and much more. Ebony has been a leader in WO Renaissance, working to recognize students and staff at West Ottawa.

"Ebony shows the Renaissance spirit in everything she does, promoting kindness and positivity with everyone she meets," said WO Renaissance teacher Jennifer Brenner.

Teacher Emily McComb, who also oversees WO Renaissance, noted "Ebony's leadership skills have grown as a member of WO Renais-



Ebony Roach

sance. The positive energy, willingness to step up and help with projects, and her laughter and smile, brings so much joy to our classroom. She has truly stepped out of her comfort zone and knows what it means to be a positive leader."

West Ottawa embracing positive behavior

West Ottawa Public Schools has embraced Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) to help create a safer and more effective learning environment.

PBIS is about teaching students how to behave and handle social situations to get the most out of their educational experiences. Staff members are continually working to have systems in place to implement a consistent school wide approach to improve their ability to teach and support positive behavior for all students.

A district leadership team meets twice a year to help build capacity within all West Ottawa buildings. The leadership team keeps the buildings up to date with new initiatives and research on best practices as well as guidance on the district expectations. Building PBIS teams meet monthly and have three half-day meetings to set goals, review data, and plan for the individual building needs.

Each building at West Ottawa Public Schools has these systems in place:

"PBIS is about teaching students how to behave and handle social situations to get the most out of their education experiences."

- Identified school wide behavioral expectations
- A teaching matrix for behavior
- Lesson plans for the teaching behaviors matrix
- An acknowledgement system for behavior
- Clearly defined and consistent consequences for behavior
- A data system for behavior

West Ottawa also has current partnerships with Mosaic Counseling, West Michigan Psychological Services, as well as health care support from Holland Hospital for additional mental health supports for students.

Based on the 2018-19 school year data, West Ottawa was recognized

by the Michigan Department of Education for its Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) for positive school outcomes for behavior. All buildings received either the bronze or gold designations from MDE. Earning bronze were Great Lakes, Lakeshore, Pine Creek, Sheldon Woods and Waukazoo elementaries, Harbor Lights and Macatawa Bay middle schools, and West Ottawa High School. Earning gold were Lakewood, North Holland and Woodside elementaries.

Gold designation represents the school wide scores greater than or equal to 70% for all three behavior tiers. The Bronze designation indicates school wide scores greater than or equal to 70% for Tier 1.

WOEF helps teachers provide lasting lessons

Last fall, inspired by Trauma-Informed Education training, teacher Sarah Schuch from Lakeshore Elementary applied for a West Ottawa Educational Foundation (WOEF) grant to create Sensory Bins.

Each bin includes thinking putty, bands, calming jars, stress balls, and a soft stuffed animal. The children enjoy using them as tools to help them concentrate better in class or as a calm break. Every classroom at Lakeshore Elementary received a bin, including the office, resource rooms and preschool classrooms.

In the Spring 2019 grant cycle, physics teacher Cherylyn Weyhmiller applied for and was awarded a WOEf grant for Vernier Equipment designed to study factors affecting electrical resistance. Through this hands-on lab experience, Weyhmiller's students learn how length, cross-sectional area, and material type affect the electrical resistance of metals — an important principle that not only carries over to college-level physics courses, but to a wide range of science and engineering fields.

These unique lab experiences teach lasting lessons and help generate life-long interest in STEM. Weyhmiller is a strong promoter of experiential learning who has made use of the unique educational opportunities WOEf offers.

The West Ottawa Educational Foundation is supported by the generosity of people like you. To learn more about how you can help and/or donate, please visit woef@westottawa.net



Above, Lakeshore Elementary first grader Jude Harned finds the sensory bin's glitter jar calming.



Left, West Ottawa High School Junior Kennedy Dumas and other students learn from physics teacher Cherylyn Weyhmiller how to use the Vernier equipment.

Panther Packs help building community

Pine Creek program helps build social, emotional skills

Pine Creek Elementary students and staff implemented a new opportunity this year called Panther Packs, which have helped build community and student's to learn social and emotional skills.

Thirty one staff members oversee multi-age groups, which have made it possible for the groups to remain small, and meet each month. Each group has about 10-12 students and has a mixture of students from each grade level, young kinder through fifth grade.

Panther Packs were launched in November with a lesson and activity on gratitude. Other themes have included perseverance, empathy and kindness.

"My favorite activity was building cell phone towers," said a fifth-grade student. "We had to work together as a team and persevere to build a tower out of toothpicks and marshmallows that was strong enough to hold our pack leader's cell phone."

For one extra special Panther

Pack, Pine Creek's Student Leadership team raised money so each Panther Pack could make a fleece blanket for a young person in the hospital, through

an organization called Fleece and Thank You.

When PBIS specialist Elizabeth VanderWege first organized the Panther Packs for Pine Creek, her primary goal was to give students and staff a way to connect and build

"It has been wonderful to see how excited everyone is and to already see the benefits in such a short time."

— Elizabeth Vanderwege



Speech pathologist Kari Koster's Panther Pack members show perseverance while building the cell phone tower. From left to right are Abdiel Garcia-Feliciano, Gadiel Gil-Herrera, Irene Campos, Marely Bernal-Penilla and Jeremiah Morris.

a positive community outside of traditional academics.

"Now students and staff both look forward to Panther Packs to engage in learning together in a different way," VanderWege said. "It has been wonderful to see how excited everyone is and to already see the benefits in such a short time."

Pine Creek has already seen many positive benefits to Panther Packs in the first year, said Principal Krista Visser. Students have made many positive connections with other staff members in the building.

"The more positive adult relationships a student has the better!" Visser said. "In addition, students have connected with other students in different grade levels. The older students looked out for the younger students in the lunchroom, on the playground and in the hallways. The older students stepped up to be positive examples for the younger members of their Panther Pack."

Lakewood embraces Project Learning

Lakewood Elementary has been striving this year to bring Project Based Learning (PBL) and Design Thinking into each of its classrooms from pre-K through 5th grade.

Each Lakewood teacher has had the opportunity to receive a day of futurePREP'd Design Thinking / PBL training through the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District's (OAISD) futurePREP'd Program. Through this training, teachers have had the chance to look at what they are doing in their classrooms and bring in new strategies that allow their students to connect with the community and industry. Teachers have even planned new projects to implement with their students.

An example of this is how the 2nd grade team had Joel Schoon-Tanis (Artist of "Lulu" and "The Long Walk") launch its Water Awareness Project. Students in Susan Douglas' and Jennifer Hopkins' classes will investigate the driving question of "How can we create awareness about water in our community?" Once they become water experts and learn everything they need to know about water, they will develop ideas on how to create awareness of water and its importance in our community. Next they will create a solution and present it to an authentic audience which will consist of a representative of the City of Holland and Ottawa County.

SAIL Instructor Denise Smyk and 4th Grade teacher Amy VanAllsburg have also been working on a PBL project with Haworth and their 4th graders. Students are working in teams to look at how they could re-design one of their computer labs at the school to help with learning. They were able to visit Haworth, conduct interviews and brainstorm ideas. Students will have the opportunity once they have completed the Creative Sequence, which is the futurePREP'd Design Thinking Model, to pitch their ideas to an authentic audience.

Along with this, both Amy and Denise have completed two years of Design Thinking training with the OAISD futurePREP'd Program Sundae School and continue their work by participating in the futurePREP'd FUZE Program each summer. Denise also uses the futurePREP'd De-



Paul Hilarides, Grace Diel, and Joe Roudebush discuss their Project Based Learning project.

sign Thinking Model to partner with several other community organizations and businesses in her SAIL Program. Denise continues to serve as a teacher leader with the futurePREP'd program.

"Teachers are excited to do this

work to help their students build their 21st Century Skills4Success," said Principal Michael Ghareeb." Lakewood staff has embraced PBL to help bring more relevance and career exploration opportunities to their students."



Gavriella Arredondo, Jocelyn Gaerte and Ariana Murphy work on their project.

Macatawa Bay creating a culture of kindness

Most people acknowledge that the middle school years are not the easiest, both for middle school students and their parents! To ease that situation, Macatawa Bay created a culture of kindness through its "Be the Good" challenge in February, which continued in many different ways!

For the "Be the Good" Challenge, students were challenged to serve their school, community and world through community service projects along with their Academy (homeroom) classes at Macatawa Bay. During the first three weeks in February, projects slowly took shape as the hallways slowly became covered in brightly colored posters to support the endangered Hawksbill Turtles and pop can drives were held in classrooms.

Other highlights of the drive to "Be the Good" included:

- Pine Creek Elementary visits to make a difference in the day of elementary friends. On four different days, students from Mac Bay visited students to read with several classes of younger students.
- Taking laps on the track to honor a service member that has passed away this last year. In honor of them, each person in Carrie Lehocky's class took an individual lap and carried a flag with their name on it.
- Mrs. DeWitt's Academy worked to help rid our classrooms, hallways, and common areas of germs. They scoured the school (door knobs, drinking fountains, desks, and other various surfaces) with sanitizer. They also made special deliveries of classroom care kits that included Kleenex, hand soap, sanitizing wipes, and vitamin C drops.
- Jessica McDonald's Academy created posters to raise aware-



Pine Creek student Ezra Clay (right) reads with a Macatawa Bay student.



Oscar Correa-Morales

ness about endangered species. They collected cans and bottles from students and teachers in the lunchroom and the classroom to raise money. The money was donated to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) to support their efforts to save endangered animals.

- Carrie Ledet's choir classes did various activities and projects that help lift, motivate, inspire and move our teachers. We wanted to let them know we care and show them some "love" during the month of February.
- Tim Olson's Academy coordinated a run for the Purple Power Project. Students took laps and were supported by donations. Over \$165 was raised for Van Andel Institute and the Purple Power committee gave his entire class free tickets to the game for their contribution!

"We are so proud of the contribution that Macatawa Bay students made through this initiative for the community," said Principal Kristin Graham. "The goal of teachers and principals is that these acts of service become a common occurrence in our building! We are committed to sharing our culture of kindness at Macatawa Bay with the entire West Ottawa district!"



Demolition phase complete. Next up, new construction with larger classrooms and new windows are among the many improvements.

Bond work begins at Harbor Lights Middle School

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science wing on the north side of the building. Now close to 60 years old, Harbor Lights has begun a two and a half year renovation project that will effectively gut every academic hallway and classroom, and rebuild them from the ground up.

In late December 2019, 6th grade teachers moved out of their dedicated hallway to other empty classrooms as their wing was the first hallway to begin renovation work. Initial steps to begin demolition took place over the holiday break, including asbestos abatement and the construction of temporary firewalls. Heavy demolition began in earnest in January of 2020.

At the end of this school year another major shift will take place. Sixth grade teachers who are currently occupying temporary classrooms in the north wing of the building will move to an empty bank of classrooms at Macatowa Bay Middle School for the entirety of the 2020-21 school year. Harbor Lights 7th grade teachers will move into the rooms vacated by the 6th grade team so that demolition and con-



All interior classroom walls along with the hallway walls were removed.

struction can continue on the south wing of Harbor Lights. Mac Bay will serve all West Ottawa Class of 2027 6th graders for one year next year as construction ramps up at Harbor Lights.

Major projects still slated at Harbor Lights include a complete renovation of the kitchen and cafeteria, addition of a new office and secure entry,

and the completion of all new classrooms with increased square footage, heating and cooling system improvements, and new lighting. These upgrades are substantial and will create learning spaces for teachers and students that are more safe, more flexible, more energy efficient, and ultimately more conducive to student learning.



1138 136th Avenue
Holland, MI 49424
616-786-2050

Remote Learning Resources
can be accessed at:

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wops-online-resources/](https://www.westottawa.net/wops-online-resources/)

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Our school community responds to the call!

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need to continue their development for the rest of the school year. The district's remote learning plan can be found on our website – www.westottawa.net (click on the blue "announcement" bar at the top of the page).

I realize that many parents are working from home while helping their children with schoolwork, and I recognize this can pose a challenge. However, I hope for many it represents an opportunity to become even more engaged in your children's education – and that can have a tremendous impact on their success moving forward. On behalf of the District, I cannot thank you enough for your commitment.

Updates related to COVID-19 have understandably dominated our conversations and impacted many of our areas of focus. To that end, I'd like to update you on two initiatives that are critical to the district and the community.

First, given your ongoing support to improvements across the district, I wanted to keep you apprised of the work under the bond initiatives the community approved last year. Planning and design continue on our stadium and Performing Arts Center and both projects remain on schedule thus far. Work is also on schedule on the secure

"I hope for many it represents an opportunity to become even more engaged in your children's education – and that can have a tremendous impact on their success moving forward. On behalf of the District, I cannot thank you enough for your commitment."

entrance and restroom improvements at Sheldon Woods Elementary, as well as the addition of two classrooms and conversion to geothermal heating at Pine Creek Elementary. Those improvements should be completed in time for the first day of the new school year, pending any potential delays resulting from our current situation. Finally, while demolition on the sixth-grade wing is complete at Harbor Lights Middle School, work has been put on hold until the "Stay Home, Stay Safe" executive order has been lifted. We know how important these improvements are to our students and staff and we are committed to expediting their completion.

Second, after weeks of discussion and in light of the health risks surrounding COVID-19, the Board of Education has decided to postpone the ballot ini-

atives originally set for May 5 to August 4. Information regarding the ballot initiatives will be provided well in advance of the vote in August. We apologize for any inconvenience, but the health and well-being of our community is our first concern.

I want to thank you again for the patience you have demonstrated over the past several weeks, and would ask for your continued understanding as we implement the remote learning plan. I am honored to be your superintendent and grateful to serve West Ottawa Public Schools. Please stay safe and healthy.

My Best,

Thomas K. Martin
Superintendent of Schools