

A Newsletter for the Community of Fitzgerald Public Schools

Fitzgerald

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FHS Achieves...

'Reward School' for the second consecutive year from the Michigan Department of Education! FHS is the only high school in Macomb County to have earned this recognition for two consecutive years. In an effort to boost student achievement, school officials applied for grant money, which funded the implementation of an intervention program, provided additional training for teachers, offered assistance to students struggling academically and purchased state-of-the-art technology.



FHS ninth-grade English teacher Paul Hrycaj teaches a lesson in front of an interactive projection board purchased through the School Improvement Grant. The wand in his hand chooses items on a board similar to a mouse on a regular computer.

During the 2009-2010 school year, school officials applied for and received a \$1.1 million School Improvement Grant to be used over a three-year period. This assisted in completely realigning the curriculum for FHS. Literacy and mathematics were the focus areas and coaches shared strategies with teachers. The investment in our staff and students have resulted in large dividends.

Message from the Superintendent

Fitzgerald Public Schools opened the 119th school year for students, parents and staff with a Back to School-Community Fair! We continue to value the traditions that have been established in this proud district and community but offer new events that will strengthen the unity and commitment to our heritage in education and in the City of Warren. More than 1,000 strong in attendance showed their support for the beginning of another year that is filled with optimism, commitment and support for academic achievement.

We are a district that is committed to providing opportunities for all students. Our summer programs for 800 K-12 students are a model for supporting children and young adults that thrive on the extended school year. We continue to encourage our students to participate in our advanced placement courses, early college program, dual enrollment in college courses and career technical education programs. For students that are interested in a global educational experience, we offer our partnership with the Jiading District in Shanghai that provides an exchange of cultures that includes a visit to China.

Our K-12 educational facilities continue to be among the best of Macomb County and in Southeastern Michigan. Our connection to technology in classrooms and across the district is a model for replication in the educational community.



Preschool: First School Experience for Many

Preschool is the first school experience for many children. To help make the transition a smooth one for children and adults, home to school teachers schedule home visits before the first day of school. There is no better place for a preschooler and their parent/s to meet the staff but in their own home where the child is most comfortable! Home visits are a great way to learn about the child's family and cultural background. This allows our staff to see the child relaxed and in their own environment. The staff works with children one-on-one; they share information with parents about the preschool program and answer questions they may have about school or child development. Home visits are a great way to build a trusting relationship between family and staff. Developing a strong, positive home school connection helps everyone ease into the routine of the school day.

At the conclusion of the home visit, the staff takes a photo of each child standing in front of his house and then posts the photos in the classroom for the children to see. What a great way to help children feel welcomed. As a result, children can't wait to come to preschool!



Magnificent Mound Park



The school year began with many dreams and ideas. This year at Mound Park teachers have gone the extra mile and sought out different ways to increase their resources to insure academic achievement.

There are many ways in which teachers may seek out resources. There are opportunities to receive extra grant funds for classrooms. This year the Mound Park staff were awarded twelve grants. The grants will help purchase additional materials such as supplemental reading programs, gym equipment, iPad Minis, and an assembly. The staff continues to seek out other ways to enhance students educational experiences at Mound Park.

The month of October was National Fire Safety month. The Warren Fire Department provided an assembly for third grade. Students were able to ask questions of the fire fighters about fire safety and the ever popular question, "How do I become a fire fighter?" They also discussed fire safety and what to do in case of a fire. Students wrote about the assembly with the firefighters to share what they learned.

In order to continue to enhance the educational experience for our students, Mound Park teachers will continue to seek resources.

Schofield Elementary Connects Learning to Life!



Schofield teachers recognize the importance of making connections between classroom learning and the world. Two unique opportunities were brought to students during the school day. On October 21, Mrs. Brady welcomed Senator Steve Bieda to Schofield Elementary. Senator Bieda met with all students from third and fifth grades. He identified the three branches of government at both the state and federal levels. He explained how the number of senators and representatives are designated for each state, the responsibilities of each branch, how they are elected, and the length of their term. This allowed students to begin to understand how the government works.

Later that week, Mr. Gary Ghareeb, creator of the “Native American Experience: Bringing the Museum to You” transformed our media center into a true learning experience! Our fifth grade classes were treated to a hands-on, exciting presentation on Native American life. Mrs. Agueros arranged for the presentation that reinforced the current fifth grade social studies curriculum by allowing students to see and feel authentic artifacts, hear stories and participate in the Native American culture. Students enjoyed the presentation and received compliments from Mr. Ghareeb regarding their intellectual questions and the connections they made to their learning.

While we have many good classroom resources, allowing students to actively participate in learning is an invaluable opportunity! Both presenters provided support for our social studies curriculum through exciting and unique presentations.



Westview's Bees

Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible

The start of the school year is always full of anticipation; new teachers, new classrooms, new friends. To help children feel comfortable at Westview, one of the first things we do is to develop the sense of community. There are three rules that make for a successful Westview community: Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible. Along with learning the procedures of the classrooms, students practice the community rules beginning with Behavior Olympics. Students move from station to station learning what being safe and responsible looks like in various areas of the school such as hallway, cafeteria, bathroom and playground. Everyone at Westview strives to follow our three Bees. By following these expectations, students and staff create an environment in which they can successfully teach and learn.



Throughout the year staff recognize students who consistently set a good example by their actions are acknowledged. These Super Bees are students who follow the rules, work hard at their academics, and practice qualities like honesty and tolerance to help make Westview a better community. Every month students who have shown these qualities are nominated by their teachers for recognition at an all school assembly.

The assembly is exciting! Everyone wants to be a Super Bee. Students' names are called and they proudly walk to the stage. Students, teachers and parents clap and cheer for the Super Bees. Each student receives a certificate that acknowledges his/her achievement. The principal also congratulates them for being Super Bee role models! Westview Elementary, it is our community from the minute we walk into the school and it is made stronger by our Super Bees.

FHS Presents at State and Local Conferences

As most of you already know, Fitzgerald High School has been named a 2013 "Reward School" according to the Michigan Department of Education rankings. This marks the second consecutive year that FHS has earned this distinction. FHS administration and staff are very proud of the work that has been accomplished over the past few years. In fact, they are so proud that we have taken their story on the road. FHS has been asked on several occasions over the past couple of years to share our successes with other groups of educators from around the state. We have also been the focus of multiple case studies that have been completed based on our progress from a persistently low achieving school to a reward school in a short period of time. However, it was not until recently that we began to receive additional calls regarding our willingness to present our school's story.

A couple of examples of the opportunities that we have enjoyed include: a team of administrators and teachers were asked to present at the MTSS Institute Fall Conference (Multi Tiered System of Support) held at Saginaw Valley State University. The presentation offered a small glimpse into the multi-tiered literacy program here in the building.

We will also once again be presenting at this November's Michigan Department of Education School Improvement Conference being held in Lansing. The presentation for the November Conference will be an overview of the FHS journey and highlight the school improvement process within the building. All of these opportunities are wonderful but the staff and students clearly understand that our accountability continues. We look forward to continuing our consistent growth while remaining focused on long-term achievement. If it so happens that we get asked to present our school's achievements in the mean time, we will look forward to that as well!



L. Davis, R. Smith, and K. Cerrini

Chatterton Middle School Celebrates its First Pride Day

On the October 24, 2013 over 420 Chatterton students participated in our first Pride Day. Students who demonstrated good citizenship since the beginning of school were rewarded with a fun-filled day of activities. Over the course of an hour, each grade enjoyed doughnuts, juice, music and games. In addition, students created achievement lanyards to recognize their behavior and academic success. Throughout the year, students will continue to have the opportunity to earn special beads for their lanyards. These same students were also eligible to participate in our first dance of the school year.



An Evening with ELL Families

On Wednesday, October 9, FPS Student Services Director Dawn Bruley invited families of our English Language Learners to participate in an informational meeting. Both students and parents participated in the get together. The meeting was well received and participants were very engaged. As with most gatherings, the floor was open for questions or comments. Parents of all cultures want their childr to experience academic success. Questions revolved around services that the district might provide to assist their student with school and state testing, transportation for their children to ensure daily attendance and nutritional meal information for sustainability throughout the full day of learning. In addition, they expressed their concern regarding accessibility to translated information. They are committed to remaining informed and connected to the education of their child/ren.

We all want our children to receive a quality education that will support our students through life!

Back to School Clothing and Supplies Provided to 453 Students



In an effort to help keep children warm this winter, Operation School Bell, a philanthropic program of the Assistance League of Southeastern Michigan, recently provided 453 elementary students with new clothing and school supplies. Held at the Neigebaur Center, over 100 volunteers emptied hundreds of boxes, set-up racks, and arranged a variety of clothing, transforming the gymnasium into a store for students.

Making for a personal shopping experience, volunteers helped each student choose their very own warm winter coat, hat, gloves, pants, tops, underwear, socks, hygiene kit and book. In addition, each child received a shoe voucher and a new duffel bag packed with all their new school clothing and supplies.

Partnerships with businesses and organizations, community volunteers and generous contributors made all this possible. Joining together with Assistance League members, Rochester Mini Storage Company and U-Haul Trucking provided trucks to transport clothing and supplies. Not only did the Assistance League volunteers help students, but so did General Motors Financial employees. All of the volunteers helped students shop for that perfect coat which brought smiles to hundreds of our elementary children.

This on-going program not only provides necessary clothing to keep children warm on their way to school, but has helped improve self-esteem and school attendance. For the past three years, more than 1,000 students have benefited from the Operation School Bell program.



DISTRICT-WIDE HIGHLIGHTS

First Annual FPS Back to School - Community Fair



DISTRICT WIDE POINTS OF PRIDE:

- Reading Intervention provided daily for every child grades K-5
- New Phonics Program for grades K-2
- 3-5...
- Math Intervention classes weekly & Family Math Intervention Night
- Short throw projectors providing interactive learning in all classrooms for K-12
- Green School status awarded to Mound Park, Schofield and Chatterton Middle School; Westview Elementary received the Evergreen award, the highest award given to Green Schools!
- 18 grants awarded to staff through the Assistance League of Southeast Michigan



2013 Fitzgerald Theatre Proudly Presents:

Written by Jim Jacobs & Warren Casey

Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc., NY

GREASE™

December 5, 6 and 7, 2013 at 7pm

Fitzgerald High School Auditorium

Ticket Prices: Students: \$3/General Admission: \$6

MOUND PARK:

- Parents of Mound Park (P.O.M.P.) designed and built a new float for the homecoming parade. Many hours of work went in to the awesome float; parents, students and staff were very proud of their work.
- Mound Park held the annual Title I Halloween dance on Wednesday, October 24. Over 400 people enjoyed trick or treating and dancing.

SCHOFIELD:

- MCC tutors provide translation of all parent communications in Bengali.
- Active PTO raised over \$3,100 for student field trips and PBIS Rewards.

WESTVIEW:

- Congratulations to the Westview Eco-crew who help keep our school green!
- Every student in Mrs. Cardno's 5th grade classroom exceeded expectations in the Accelerated Reader program this past month.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER:

- Fitzgerald Early Childhood Center has increased enrolment in the Great Start Readiness Program from 64 students to 96 students, including a full day program for 16 students.
- Fitzgerald Early Childhood Center earned a Four Star rating in the State of Michigan's Great Start to Quality Preschool Rating Scale.

CHATTERTON MIDDLE SCHOOL:

- The CHAMPS philosophy is being implemented in all classrooms to create a common language throughout the school and create a positive environment for students.
- CHARGER CASH is being used to recognize students for positive behavior choices. This same cash can be used at our CASH SHACK each week to purchase rewards.
- Over 170 staff, students and family members attended our Lincoln Test Drive Fundraiser during Parent/Teacher Conferences.
- Over 80% of all Chatterton students are on track to meet their 40 Book Challenge goal for the year.

FITZGERALD HIGH SCHOOL:

- FHS proudly welcomed over 41% of our parents to the Trimester I's Parent/Teacher Conferences held on October 24.
- FHS staff members competed in a walking challenge that stretched nearly around the globe when all steps were totaled.
- FHS had a 100% testing participation rate for current 9th graders on the Social Studies MEAP in October. This perfect percentage shows that students and families are taking state assessments seriously.

Message from the Superintendent

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The Board of Education has established high expectations for themselves and the team of individuals that have been selected to care for and educate the children in the Fitzgerald community. The highly educated staff of administrators, teachers, counselors, social workers and psychologists is committed to establishing strong relationships with our families and students while providing an exceptional academic program. The district is also very fortunate to have a dedicated clerical, custodial and maintenance staff that support the vision and mission of the district. Our bus drivers ensure that students safely arrive to school and return home each day. The entire team values our responsibilities and works tirelessly to supporting all students toward success beyond high school.

Our K-12 educational facilities continue to be among the best of Macomb County and in Southeastern Michigan. Our connection to technology in classrooms and across the district is a model for replication in the educational community. The highly educated staff of administrators, teachers, counselors, social workers and psychologists is committed to establishing strong relationships with our families and students while providing an exceptional academic program. The district is also very fortunate to have a dedicated clerical, custodial and maintenance staff that support the vision and mission of the district. Our bus drivers ensure that students safely arrive to school and return home each day. The Board of Education has established high expectations for themselves and the team of individuals that have been selected to care for and educate the children in the Fitzgerald community. The entire team values our responsibilities and works tirelessly to supporting all students toward success beyond high school.

Our strong and effective Pre K-12 program is behind the recognition that Fitzgerald High School has earned for the second consecutive year from the Michigan Department of Education. FHS is the only high school in Macomb County that has earned Reward School status for two consecutive years.

FOCUSING ON TOMORROW

FHS Achieves continues from page 1

FPS' Superintendent Barbara VanSweden said, "The efforts paid off," she continued by saying, "It's leadership that has set the tone." FHS Principal Shultz states, "I have the best teaching staff in the country." Thanks to our staff, we were recognized for being among the highest five percent of schools making the most gains in student achievement.

Important Dates

Nov. 27:	Half Day - Thanksgiving Break
Nov. 28-29:	Thanksgiving Break
Dec. 6:	Half Day
Dec. 23-Jan. 3:	Holiday Break
Jan. 6:	CLASSES RESUME
Jan. 20:	SD - No School for Students
Feb. 11:	CMS Parent/Teacher Conferences
Feb. 13:	FHS Parent/Teacher Conferences
Feb. 12:	Mid-Year Count Day
	ELEM P/T Conferences by Invitation Only
Feb. 17-21:	Mid-Winter Break
Mar. 4-6:	MME Testing
Mar. 6:	Half Day

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That recognition confirms the strong commitment to students and families by our staff and Board of Education.

The year will continue to unfold as we explore new opportunities that will support our students toward academic success. We will always value the traditions that make our district unique but we must explore new options that support our students to be productive citizens in a global society. The traditional school calendar had met the needs of families that were established in a farming society; however, many years ago we moved beyond that way of life in this area. The discussion continues as we explore shortening the summer break to six weeks and offering more frequent short breaks throughout the year. The next few months, we will provide more information about the balanced calendar.

Best wishes for a school year that is full of academic successes!

Barbara VanSweden

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