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IMPORTANT DATES

Board of Education Meetings

Thursday, June 10 &
Tuesday, June 29, 2021
7 p.m.

For more information on
KPS board meeting locations
and format, please visit our
website at kalamazoopublic-schools.net/boardmeetings.

June 1 / 7:30 p.m.
KAMSC Senior Recognition

June 2 / 6 p.m.
Loy Norrix Graduation

June 3 / 6 p.m.
Kalamazoo Central Graduation

June 4 / 6 p.m.
Phoenix Graduation

June 7 / 6 p.m.
KILP Graduation

June 8 / 6:15 p.m.
Adult Education Graduation

June 10 / Half Day
Grades K-11

June 11 / Half Day
Last Day of School

June 28
Summer Readiness
Session 1 Begins

July 19
Summer Readiness
Session 2 Begins

Members of New Task Force Seek to Improve Equity, Justice Across District

Members of the district’s new Equity Task Force say they are eager to begin examining how the district operates through a lens of equity and, ultimately, justice.

Superintendent Dr. Rita Raichoudhuri announced the names of the district’s 16-member Equity Task Force in April.

“I am delighted to serve on this Equity Task Force team,” said Dr. Micole Dyson, principal of Woods Lake Elementary: A Magnet Center for the Arts and the district’s newly named director of elementary education. “Philosopher and educator Mortimer J. Adler believes that there are three ideas that we judge by and three that we live by. We judge by truth, goodness, and beauty, and justice, liberty, and equality are the ideas that we live by with truth being the greatest.

“Equity is applied justice, and education that is inequitable is miseducation because it violates one of the truths that we live by, namely justice.”

Raichoudhuri said the district was pleased to receive 125 applications for the task force, indicating an unexpectedly high

(continued on page 3)

Gary Start Celebrates 37 Years with KPS, a Career with a Before-and-After Moment

Gary Start worked for a public accounting firm for five years before deciding to join Kalamazoo Public Schools.

As he was preparing to leave his accounting job, a client warned that he’d be back. “You won’t make it a week,” the man told Start, who relays the story with one of his rumbling chuckles.

“Thirty-seven years later, I can tell him he’s wrong.”

Start will retire on June 30 after almost four decades with the school district, where his titles have ranged from assistant director, starting in 1983, to co-director, director, and assistant superintendent of business and finance; deputy superintendent for business, communication and operations; interim super-



Gary Start

intendent — and back to deputy superintendent for the past year. He served as interim superintendent for the 2019-20 school year after then-Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice was named the State

(continued on page 8)

Cindy Green: 36 Years of Working to Improve Opportunities for All Students

Cindy Green began her career as a special education teacher and that dedication to serving students with special needs has been an excellent foundation for her current role as assistant superintendent for teaching and learning services, overseeing the district’s efforts to meet the educational needs of all students.

“In my first central administration office role in special education, there was such a need to ensure that all students were at the table and to help people understand that all students could learn,” Green said. “The instructional challenges I faced as a special education teacher, working to make sure all children have what they need to learn, helped me a lot in this role.”



Cindy Green

Green will retire in June after 36 years with Kalamazoo Public Schools. The Board of Education has named Dr. Amy Vondra as the new assistant superintendent for Instruction

(continued on page 9)

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This Has Been a Year of Challenges and Opportunities

Class of 2021, this has not been an easy year. You know this. We, the caring adults in your lives, know this.

The challenges have been immense. The classes that were the most rigorous of your K-12 career were made more difficult given the unexpected circumstances of COVID-19, which resulted in a year of online learning.

As challenging as that was, the greater challenge was to spend your senior year largely isolated from each other during a time traditionally marked by celebration and friendship and the social whirl of dances and games and shared memories.

Those are losses that I know you feel deeply.

You had great plans for this year. This year has been a reminder for all of us — not just you — that plans rarely go as, well, planned. That does not always feel great. We spend our whole lives planning, wanting every-

thing to be perfect, wanting to tick things off the list as if there is a gold star for completing the list.

But, sometimes it is not the events around you that define you, but your response to them that has the greater impact on your lives.

It's not a new concept, many leaders have emphasized that point.

Booker T. Washington, educator and founder of Tuskegee University, said, "Success is to be measured not so much by the position one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome." And St. Francis of Assisi said, "Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible."



Dr. Rita Raichoudhuri, Superintendent, Kalamazoo Public Schools

"Whatever obstacles you encounter in the future, remember the wisdom you gained this year."

This year has not been the senior year that you expected or wanted but I hope that you took the time to make it your year, whether it was by dedicating yourself to keeping those grades up — or even exceeding your past grades; or finding ingenious new ways to connect with others like hosting online DJ sets or playing interactive online games; or reading more; or developing a new talent like playing guitar.

Perhaps it was the year that you built your social-emotional skills and are facing the future with more self-awareness, better self-management, more empa-

thy, the ability to better manage relationships through stronger communication, or the ability to make healthier decisions.

There were losses this year. But I'd like to suggest that among the losses, there were opportunities to gain skills and insights that you had never even considered. While those might not be the things you thought you needed this year, they can still be valuable lessons that will serve you well in the future. Whatever it was, I hope there was something that will help you remember this not just as a year that took something from you — but as a year in which you claimed accomplishments.

Because the truth is, whether or not you face another pandemic — and let's hope none of us do — life will always be filled with bumps and stumbles, roadblocks and detours, losses and trials. If the plan does not go as planned, what will you do?

What I hope is that when you face those problems you will be able to draw on the strength and resilience that you have developed this year. I want you to always remember how smart you are, how capable you are, how many talents you have, and I want you to believe in your ability to take care of yourselves and others with compassion and grace.

I offer my congratulations to the Class of 2021 — and to all of our students and staff — for completing the most challenging year through grit and hard work. I am in awe and forever grateful for your determination this year. It has been an inspiration to me.

Class of 2021, congratulations on your graduation. Whatever obstacles you encounter in the future, remember the wisdom you gained this year. There is great strength there. My best wishes to you in all that you do.

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Members of New Task Force Seek to Improve Equity, Justice Across District *(continued from page 1)*

interest in the work the group will undertake.

“The responses to the application questions demonstrated that we have a truly passionate group of people in Kalamazoo committed to finding solutions to our equity challenges,” Raichoudhuri said. “These 16 members represent a balance of stakeholder groups and diverse identities, cultures, races, genders, religions, a cross section of age groups from the 20s to the 70s, and a rich variety of life and professional experiences.”

In addition to Dyson, the members of the Equity Task Force, listed alphabetically by last name, are:

Chris Aguinaga, principal of Loy Norrix High School;

Nkenge Bergen, director of Student Services and KPS parent

Dorla Coleman-Bonner, director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for the City of Kalamazoo;

Patricia Carlin, mental health provider and staff member at Northeastern Elementary;

James Devers, executive director of Communities in Schools of Kalamazoo and former KPS parent;

Deb Evans, KPS teacher, Hillside Middle School;

Christina Getachew, KPS parent;

Angela Gross, a Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency bilingual support staff member, parent advocate, and KPS parent;

Jen Young Heymoss, from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, a former KPS teacher, and soon-to-be KPS parent;

Matt McCullough, director of Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development for KPS and KPS parent;

Kawther Mohammed, a bilingual/migrant paraprofessional at Milwood Magnet School and KPS parent;

Jason Morris, former KPS Board of Education trustee and KPS parent;

Bridget Timmeney, researcher with The W.E. Upjohn Institute and KPS parent;



Chris Aguinaga



Nkenge Bergen



Doria Coleman-Bonner



Patricia Carlin



James Devers



Dr. Micole Dyson



Deb Evans



Christina Getachew



Angela Gross



Jen Young Heymoss



Matt McCullough



Kawther Mohammed



Jason Morris



Bridget Timmeney



Adrian Vazquez-Alatorre



Laird Walker

Adrian Vazquez-Alatorre, executive director of El Concilio; and

Laird Walker, KRESA social emotional learning and restorative justice coach.

Aguinaga said, “In the words of state superintendent and former KPS superintendent Dr. Michael Rice, different students have different needs and need different resources. For too long our one-size-fits-all, equal approach, hasn’t been able to address the impacts that individual trauma, systemic racism and generational poverty have had on individual students. I hope that we can refine our practices so that we can better tailor solutions for each student.”

Devers said he represents not just CIS but the voice of KPS graduates and community members. He is a Kalamazoo native who grew up in the Northside, Eastwood, Edison and Douglas neighborhoods and attended eight KPS schools.

“My interest in successful outcomes for students who have lived in the same neighborhoods and attended the same schools that I did is deeply personal,” Devers said. “I hope to add the perspective of my personal experiences as a KPS student and more recently as a guardian, including the things that were helpful

and harmful for my and others’ school and life journeys. My ultimate hope is that my involvement with the Equity Task Force will help KPS become a more equitable school system – not just in terms of equitable resource allocation, but ultimately in terms of equal outcomes for students.”

Raichoudhuri announced plans to form the task force in the summer of 2020 after the murder of George Floyd. In December, she put out a call for applications, saying the purpose of the team would be to “eliminate and dismantle racism and other forms of intolerance and discrimination within the district’s practices, policies, goals, curriculum and culture to support positive and meaningful impact in Kalamazoo.”

The application said, “Team members should have the ability to exercise empathy and build strong trust, collaboration and communication among diverse identities and membership.”

The task force represents a diverse cross section of the district and the community. Nine out of the 16 members are people of color, including members who identify as black, Latinx, Native American, Asian, and Middle Eastern/Arab. Two members identify as LGBTQ, and six identify as male and the

others as female.

Stakeholder groups include KPS employees, parents, and community partners. Eight out of the 16 members indicated that they are affiliated with multiple stakeholder groups. Eight are parents, seven are community partners, and seven are KPS employees. The KPS employee group includes teachers, school staff, school leaders, and district leaders.

“For many years I have been advocating and supporting services and programs that are needed in the Latinx community,” Vazquez-Alatorre said. “As a member of the

Equity Task Force, I will be working with every member to ensure that we continue creating greater equity changes and opportunities in our school district that support all families and students. As a very diverse school district, equity is very important for families and students that face many challenges in school and in the community.”

The task force began its work on May 26 with a half day of learning about how brain psychology impacts bias. The task force is expected to work on issues of equity and inclusion in the district for the next 18 months.

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Facilities Department Busy Preparing for 2021–22 School Year

Even with in-person learning on hold for the school year, the Kalamazoo Public Schools facilities department has been busy with construction projects and preparing for students to return to their schools as safely as possible in the fall.

Key to the district’s plans for next year, KPS has been working with the engineering firm of Tower Pinkster to install bipolar ionization in all occupied spaces, such as classrooms, offices, cafeterias and gymnasiums, said Karen Jackson, supervisor of facilities for the district.

The district has spent about \$1.3 million for the air cleaning

systems that create positively and negatively charged particles to remove viruses and help disinfect surfaces.

The district has also purchased 100 portable bipolar ionization units for use in spaces which do not have access to fresh air supplies, such as storage rooms that have been converted to offices.

The district has also approved bipolar ionization units for its fleet of school buses. The units are being installed in the buses 20 units at a time, with plans for installation to be completed by the start of the 2021–22 school year. All the district’s bipolar ionization units have zero ozone emissions.

“We’ve done a system evaluation of all air systems and are making improvements to them as well as flushing our water systems,” Jackson said.

The district has purchased \$700,000 worth of custodial equipment such as backpack vacuums, floor machines, carpet extractors, and restroom cleaners. That does not include the cost of cleaning supplies and items such as the 300,000 disposable

face masks that the district has purchased, Jackson said.

In instances where buildings are occupied, custodians have been wiping down high-touch areas such as doors, chairs and light switches every four hours. The district has also upgraded its energy management system, which controls heating and cooling in the buildings, including items such as vents, fans and CO2 sensors.

“We’re in pretty good shape. We have things that need to be upgraded and we always will. Systems have a life cycle,” she said. “But, we’re fortunate that our bonds help us replace equipment on a regular basis.”

Some of the other work that the facilities department will be completing over this spring and summer:

- EDISON ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE ACADEMY
- Demolition of Edison Elementary, Boys & Girls Club, Transportation Garage and Office buildings
 - Extensive site work including underground utilities, structures, etc.

- Construct new building
- Purchase new furniture, equipment and technology equipment

INDIAN PRAIRIE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- Install digital marquee sign
- Remodel main entry and office to create a secure vestibule
- Replace ramps to portable classrooms

KALAMAZOO CENTRAL

- Replace concrete walks
- Replace resilient track surfaces
- Replace elevator in 3-story section
- Rebuild loading dock
- Replace overhead garage doors at grounds storage building
- Replace cafeteria flooring
- Replace drinking fountains
- Remodel locker rooms, shower rooms and toilet rooms
- Install additional 20 amp circuits on both sides of football bleachers

LINCOLN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES SCHOOL

- Replace remaining exterior doors, frames and hardware

- Replace sections of damaged plaster in auditorium
- Replace classroom flooring
- Replace stair handrails
- Replace heating pumps,
- Replace drinking fountains
- Replace auditorium sound system

LINDEN GROVE MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Replace laminate countertops in media center and computer lab with solid surface
- Replace cafeteria lighting with LED type
- Install infrastructure for updated classroom a/v systems

MILWOOD MAGNET SCHOOL

- Replace gymnasium roof
- WASHINGTON WRITERS’ ACADEMY
- Install security cameras

WEST MAIN SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

- Replace asphalt parking lot
- Install digital marquee sign
- Add exterior sun control awnings at office windows



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Inquiries by students and/or their parents/guardians should be directed to:

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(269) 337-0161

All other inquiries should be directed to:

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Dr. Rita Raichoudhuri

Loy Norrix Teacher James Johnson Named Regional Teacher of the Year

Loy Norrix High School social studies teacher James Johnson has been named the Regional Teacher of the Year for Region 7 by the Michigan Department of Education.

Johnson has worked at Loy Norrix for six years and teaches U.S. history, AP U.S. history and current events. He is also the varsity softball coach at Loy Norrix.

"I was nominated by a parent from last year, and the nomination seemed to stem mostly from how I handled the transition to virtual teaching last year," Johnson said. "It was a nice surprise in October when I found out that I had been nominated."

Johnson is one of 10 Regional Teachers of the Year for the state. Honorees share their experiences and knowledge as they work with stakeholders to strengthen Michigan's public schools. This year, MDE received more than 275 nominations for teacher of the year from students, staff, and community members. The 2021-22 honorees were chosen for their



The Michigan Department of Education has named Loy Norrix social studies teacher James Johnson the Regional Teacher of the Year for Region 7.

dedication to the teaching profession, as evidenced by their commitment to their students and track record of service in the teaching profession, according to the MDE.

Johnson grew up in Metro Detroit and earned a bachelor's degree in psychology as well as a master's degree in education and his teacher certification

from the University of Michigan.

"I knew I wanted to do something that worked with the community and worked with people, but I didn't realize that would be teaching until my sophomore year in college, when I took an intro to education course," Johnson said.

He completed his degree in psychology and then worked for a year with Americorps before returning for his certification and master's.

"I liked connecting with people and having those lightbulb moments when something clicks with a student and they learn a skill," Johnson said. "Those are the best parts of teaching."

It was more challenging to find those moments during the pandemic, but the key to success for Johnson was sticking with the basics, keeping a routine for students, and emphasizing good communication with families from the beginning of the pandemic.

"I don't think there's any one secret to being a good

teacher," Johnson said. "Any good teacher has to desire to do it. I think that with any job, you need to be deliberate and have good planning. You have to be committed to doing the work and doing it well."

The RTOYs are candidates for the Michigan Teacher of the Year. They comprise the Michigan Teacher Leadership Advisory Council (MTLAC). The MTLAC works with MDE to provide input on proposed policies and initiatives, and help to share valuable information and resources with their colleagues.

"The Regional Teachers of the Year play key roles in their schools and communities, and also in our statewide effort to improve our schools," said State Superintendent Dr. Michael F. Rice. "They offer insights about the needs of our 1.5 million school children and more than 90,000 educators. We are grateful for their leadership and dedication to the teaching profession and look forward to working with them during the next school year."

New Hands-On Exhibit



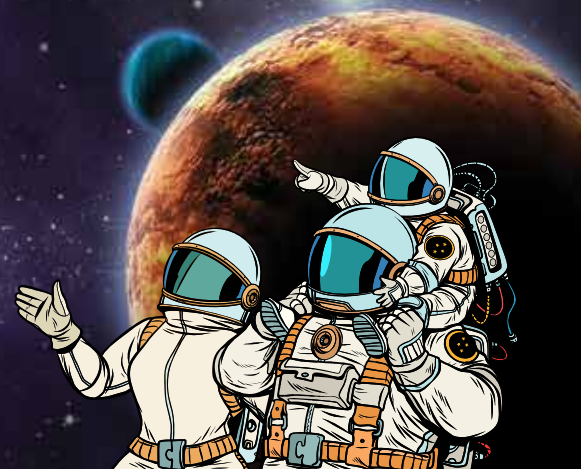
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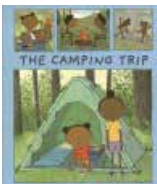
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KPS Librarians Recommend: Great Summer Reads

Summer is here! Enjoy some rest and fun, and challenge yourself along the way.

Elementary (Grades PreK – 3)

The Camping Trip by Jennifer K. Mann

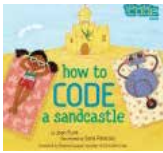


Aunt Jackie invites Ernestine and her cousin Samantha to go on a weekend camping trip. Ernestine has never been camping before, so she is really excited — until she gets out there in nature and finds that camping is hard.

She learns to challenge herself to get out of her comfort zone.

How to Code a Sandcastle

by Josh Funk, Illustrated by



Sara Palacios

On the last day of summer vacation, Pearl tries to build the perfect sandcastle, but Frisbees, puppies, and waves keep getting in the way. Pearl and her robot Pascal decide to break the problem into manageable steps and use fundamental coding concepts such as sequences and loops to build their sandcastle.

Middle (Grades 4 – 7)

Shirley & Jamila Save Their Summer



by Gillian Goerz

Jamila is new to the neighborhood and does not know anyone until she meets Shirley. Shirley is a detective and the adventure begins when Oliver asks for help finding his missing gecko. Not everything is easy, but the girls work together and find out what friendship means.

right with G'ma and his concern means the trip is not what he thought it would be.

Camp (part of the Click series)



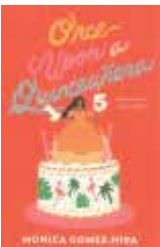
by Kayla Miller

When Olive and Willow attend summer camp together it should be easy and fun — after all, they are already friends. However, Olive is quick to make new friends and Willow struggles and clings to Olive. Can their friendship survive summer camp?

Young Adult (Grades 8 – 12)

Once Upon a Quinceañera

by Monica Gomez-Hira



Needing to earn her last high school credit, Miami teen Carmen Aguilar takes an unpaid internship with a party company and learns that she must partner with her ex-boyfriend Mauro and perform at her estranged cousin's quinceañera.

Love is a Revolution

by Renee Watson



Nala Robertson reluctantly agrees to go to an open mic night with her friend Imani, but finds herself falling for the cute emcee Tye. This love story is not only about romance but about how to show radical love to the people in your life, including to yourself.



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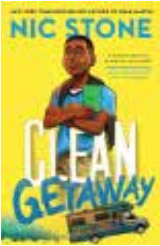
Camp Tiger



by Susan Choi, Illustrated by John Rocco

A family goes camping at the remote Mountain Pond and happens upon a talking tiger. The youngest boy, ruminating on starting first grade, finds strength in the tiger who leads the family through the woods on a grand adventure and helps the family connect.

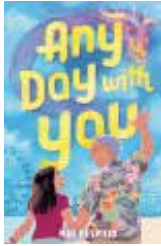
Clean Getaway



by Nic Stone

When G'ma shows up in the driveway with a new RV, Scoob thinks a road trip seems like a great adventure. With a box of treasures including a Green Book, G'ma and Scoob take off to explore. However, Scoob starts to notice that something is not quite

Any Day With You



by Mae Respi-cio

Attending a summer creative arts camp, Kaia and her friends make a movie that is inspired by the Filipino folktales that her Tatang (great-grandfather) tells.



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Lorenzo Robertson Joins Loy Norrix as New Varsity Football Coach

Building strength and building relationships — that is the direction new coach Lorenzo Robertson plans to take to build the Loy Norrix football team.

Robertson, who is a native of the Detroit area, has been named the new varsity football coach at Loy Norrix. He comes to Kalamazoo from Robichaud High School in Dearborn Heights, where he was the head coach for one year. He previously worked for the football program in Bloomfield Hills, serving in a variety of roles such as varsity defensive coordinator, offensive coordinator, and JV head coach for 20 years. He is also a firefighter with the Detroit Fire Department.

“My first goal is getting the team stronger — program wide, from eighth graders who will be coming in as freshmen to seniors,” Robertson said. “We’re in the weight room three times



Lorenzo Robertson

a week, getting stronger. They can see who is working and struggling with them. It builds a culture where they know who they can count on. They see me there and other kids there, and they know he’s going to be right

next to me when it gets tough. If you have the right culture, rebuilding a program will take place organically.”

Robertson played football through high school. When he went to Michigan State University, he planned to walk on the football team, but he hadn’t physically prepared for Division 1 play — after a few practices, he quit and focused on his classes.

“That is one of my biggest regrets in life,” he said. His younger brother started all four years at University of Pennsylvania. “I’d watch him and the jealousy hit me. I had offers from smaller schools but I wanted to be with my friends. It taught me a lot.”

He’s excited to meet students and potential players at Norrix.

“I think we’ll get some kids who want to play football no matter what, and there will be other kids who want to see

a winner and join a winner,” he said. “All I can give them is what I’ve done so far and where I’ve been, because we haven’t hit the field. At this point, I just need to let them know there is a new playbook, a new system, and a new way of doing things.”

He’s reaching out to his athletes through Zoom meetings, and he plans to communicate with parents through at least three parent meetings each season, so he can get to know them and so everyone gets to know him.

Already he can tell them that academics matter as much as performance on the field. At Robichaud, there were great students, but many struggled in class, he said. He organized a study hall for the team, and he’s proud that he did not have one ineligible student when it came time for the school’s play-off game.

“I am going to consider my-

self a failure if it doesn’t work out for them, whether on the football field or in the classroom.”

He’s still recruiting and encourages any student — male or female — to reach out to him through the athletic department if they’re interested in playing. His goal is to be as open as possible to students, staff and families. The program needs “all hands on deck” to build excitement for this new phase in the program’s history. This is an opportunity to build something special for the players, he said.

“I don’t know if I am a typical football coach, but I want to make football fun from the weightroom to practice to the games. If I don’t laugh at least once in a practice something is wrong,” he said. “I played my games. I played my football. Now, it’s about these players and their memories. I want them to remember football as the time of their lives.”



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Gary Start Celebrates 37 Years with KPS, a Career with a Before-and-After Moment *(continued from page 1)*

Superintendent of the Michigan Department of Education.

The most memorable moment in his 37 years was easily the announcement of The Kalamazoo Promise, Start said.

“I always like to say I had two careers with the district: before The Promise it was about downsizing and cutting and after The Promise we’ve been flourishing relatively,” Start said. “The Promise was a stabilizing force and helped us grow enrollment, which we’re reliant on for revenue.”

Before The Promise, Start, who is responsible for making decisions that keep the district financially solvent, said the district was in a punishing downward spiral. Like most urban school districts, KPS was losing students.

“If you lose enrollment, you lose revenue — then you have to cut the budget, which leads to further decreases in enrollment and revenue,” he said. “You’re always cutting things that you intentionally didn’t cut the year before.”

Start said with the an-



Gary Start and his wife Deb Start attend the KPS employee retirement dinner in 2016.

nouncement of the scholarship for all KPS graduates who meet residency requirements, the district grew by 1,000 students in the first year of The Promise.

“We somehow had the resources to serve those kids. It took the efforts of a lot of people to make sure that was the case.”

He is also proud of the work

he has done on eight of the district’s bond issues throughout the years. “I drive through the city and see the things we’ve constructed, and I am extremely grateful to the taxpayers for supporting us.”

The major projects have included the building of Prairie Ridge, Linden Grove, the trans-



Gary Start, then interim superintendent, greets his granddaughter Lillian Start on the first day of school at King-Westwood Elementary School.

portation center, Washington, and the north face of Milwood elementary, as well as significant enhancements to the historic structures at Parkwood-Upjohn and Woodward.

He also was instrumental in the 2005 push for an enhancement millage within Kalamazoo

County, the first such millage to pass in the state. More recently, Start helped restructure and make more equitable the county’s special education funding formula. In 2018, he was an integral voice in the district’s teacher contract negotiations, which significantly boosted the entry-level salary for teachers.

Start was a founding board member of the Middle Cities Risk Management Trust and has been a long-time member of the Michigan School Business Officials and the Association of School Business Officials International. In 2019, he received the MSBO Distinguished Service Award.

Superintendent Dr. Rita Rai-choudhuri said, “Gary has been instrumental in bringing me up to speed on the various workings of the district. He has been patient and a good teacher. His contributions to the district (and really the state as a whole) will always be remembered. I’m going to miss Gary, but I know he has some fun things planned in retirement.”

After retirement he anticipates spending time on his boat and being with his grandchildren. He also wants to spend time with the horse that he recently bought. Back in high school and college, Start was a barrel racer and when he moved to Detroit for work after college he sold the last two horses he owned, but “always thought I’d have another horse.”

With two knee replacements, he’s not riding any more, but enjoys training the animal from the ground, giving her treats, and watching his grandchildren ride.

In his 37 years, he’s worked with five superintendents and attended more than 800 school board meetings. He’s looking forward to retirement with some relief, but also looking back with tremendous pride.

“Kalamazoo Public Schools is an outstanding school district that serves all kids. I think that’s important to all of our futures. That has been extremely rewarding.”

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Cindy Green: 36 Years of Working to Improve Opportunities for All Students *(continued from page 1)*

and Student Services.

“Cindy Green is a fierce advocate for children and is persistent in ensuring the best possible outcomes for them,” said Superintendent Dr. Rita Raichoudhuri. “She has been a great source of support and learning for me during my first year as superintendent. I’m going to miss Cindy and her institutional knowledge. But knowing her, she will always be connected to making an impact for the district’s children in some capacity.”

Green grew up in Battle Creek and came to Kalamazoo to attend Western Michigan University. She said she always knew she wanted to work for KPS. Her late husband, Jeff, was a KPS graduate, and they wanted their children to attend KPS because of its diversity.

Her passion has always been for teaching children — and especially those children with special needs.

“I have always been curious about how people learn and always fascinated as to how to make sure everyone can learn,” Green said. “I had a great aunt who had some cognitive issues and that was curious to me. I saw some students with special needs in my church as well, and in school it bothered me that they were hidden in a room off the gym. That didn’t seem right to me.”

After graduating from WMU, she began working in adult education with students who had developmental disabilities, eventually being hired as a special education teacher in 1984.

Eventually, she moved into administration, first as assistant principal at Woods Lake Elementary, before becoming supervisor of special education for Gull Lake Schools for a year. She returned to KPS in 1999 and served as director of special education for KPS, assistant superintendent for student ser-

“All kids need to have the opportunity to learn. When you have high expectations that they can, they do.”

vices, and assistant superintendent of teaching and learning services.

Although her passion was teaching, she saw administration and collaboration as a way to make systemic changes in the education system. “No one single person or one single event makes change. It takes systemic, deep-seated efforts,” Green said.

It was not until the Every Child Succeeds act of 2001–2002 that there was a push to ensure all students learned, she said. No longer could districts allow students to drop out because their needs were ignored, whether actively or passively.

“It wasn’t easy. It didn’t work overnight,” Green said. “Teachers needed help creating detailed learning plans. Suspensions had to stop being an option. We had to learn what

kind of personnel we need to help students — and when. We took things in small chunks and learned how to build something bigger.”

Fighting for the inclusion of all students at all levels of the district included working with the district’s attorney before the announcement of The Kalamazoo Promise to ensure that all students were eligible for the scholarship — even those who might have been suspended or expelled at one time.

“It helped us up the game for everyone. We know that all kids can learn. All kids need to have the opportunity to learn. When you have high expectations that they can, they do.”

As she prepares for retirement, she’s excited to travel and spend time with her daughters and other family, to explore her family’s genealogy, and — being the consummate educator — to keep learning, maybe taking dance lessons or taking up pickleball.

“I wish the best for all students and staff for the future and look forward to all the great things being done in KPS to continue. I appreciate everything that has been provided for me to be a member of this team.”

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El Sol and Pfizer Strengthen Partnership to Enlighten Students

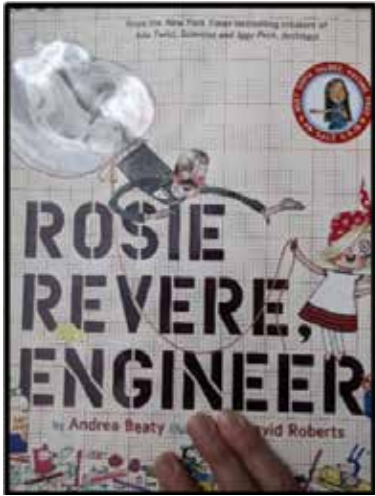
Even during a year of virtual instruction, El Sol Elementary has found a way to maintain a valuable connection with the Pfizer Latino Community Colleague Resource Group.

El Sol and the Pfizer volunteer organization formed a partnership in 2018 and have worked hard to maintain the close relationship throughout the challenges of this school year.

“This has been an amazing opportunity for our students to not only see themselves reflected in the diverse employees of Pfizer, but to also see first hand how you can make a difference and benefit the entire world through science and engineering,” said El Sol Principal Dr. Natalie Wilson.

As the school year started, Blanca and Chris Skelding, who are engineers for Pfizer and co-chairs of the Pfizer Latino Community CRG, contacted the school to see how the group could continue to support El Sol students.

In September, the CRG provided every student and staff member with hand sanitizer and a calendar called “Yo Me



Pfizer employee Blanca Skelding reads a book to students at El Sol Elementary for National Reading Month.



Cuido (I Take Care of Myself),” with monthly tips in English and Spanish on how to stay safe and healthy during the pandemic. In addition, each student received white boards, dry erase markers, erasers, and clear plastic write-on/wipe-off sleeves to use while participating in virtual instruction at home.

Pfizer CRG members helped the school mark National Reading Month in March by volunteering to read books in English and

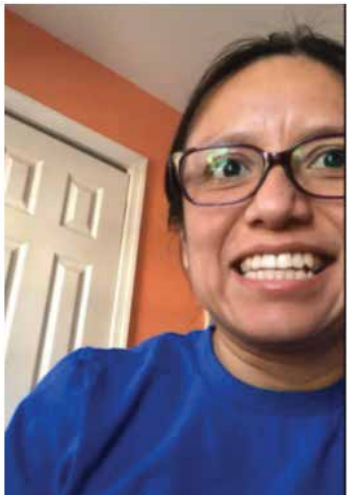
Spanish to any virtual classroom that requested it.

After listening to a story about a child who moved to the United States from Venezuela, fifth-grader Noah Bautista said, “I liked that they were talking about differences, and that differences are ok.”

The guest readers chose amazing stories that celebrated different cultures and highlighted characters who showed interest and creativity in STEM — scienc-



Pfizer employee Mirna Zaragoza reads a book to students at El Sol Elementary as part of National Reading Month in March.



es, technology, engineering and mathematics — which allowed some of the Pfizer volunteers to talk about their roles in the development, testing, and production of life-saving medicines.

The Pfizer volunteers gave each student their own copy of the bilingual book “Curious George Goes to a Costume Party / Jorge el Curioso va a una Fiesta de Disfraces,” with text in English and Spanish.

“At Pfizer, our Latino Community Colleague Resource Group is committed to investing time and efforts to support our Latino communities. For example, with our campaign ‘Yo Me Cuido,’ we are reinforcing the importance of self-care dur-



Kailee Vinasco reads to students in a partnership between El Sol Elementary and Pfizer.

ing this pandemic.” said Steven Arriaga, Pfizer Latino CRG leadership team member. “These inspiring community partnership events serve as examples of our Pfizer values of equity and joy in action.”

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Homemade Pita Bread

This month, I share a recipe for homemade pita bread. This Middle Eastern bread is surprisingly easy to make at home. It pairs beautifully with my homemade hummus recipe — which I'll share soon.

— Chef Samuel Dunn

Ingredients

2 cups lukewarm water
4 teaspoons active dry yeast
1 teaspoon honey
6 cups all-purpose flour, divided (or if you prefer a whole wheat pita — 3 cup all-purpose flour and 2¾ cups whole wheat flour)
2 to 4 teaspoons kosher salt
4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Directions

1. In a large mixing bowl, add 2 cups lukewarm water and stir in yeast and sugar until dissolved. Add ½ cup flour and whisk together. Place in a warm place

15-20 minutes, uncovered, to form a loose sponge.

2. Add salt, olive oil, and all of the remaining flour.

Stir until mixture forms a sticky mass, about 5 minutes.

3. Dust a clean working surface with a little bit of flour. Knead lightly for a few minutes or until smooth. Cover and let the dough rest for 15 minutes, then knead again for a couple more minutes. The dough should be a little bit moist, you can help it with a little dusting of flour, but be careful not to add too much flour.

4. Coat the mixing bowl with olive oil. Turn the dough a couple times in the bowl to coat with oil. Cover the mixing bowl tightly with plastic wrap then lay a kitchen towel over. Put the bowl in a warm place for 1 hour or until the dough doubles in size.

5. Deflate the dough and



Chef Samuel Dunn

place it on a clean work surface. Divide the dough into 10 to 12 equal pieces and shape them into balls. Cover with a towel and leave them for 10 minutes to rest.

6. Using a floured rolling pin, roll each piece into a 8-9 inch circle and about a quarter-inch thick. It helps to lift and turn the dough frequently as you roll so the dough doesn't stick to the counter. (If dough starts to stick, sprinkle a tiny bit of flour). If the dough starts to spring back, set it aside to rest for a few minutes, then continue rolling. Repeat with rest of dough.

7. Heat the oven to 400°F and place a heavy-duty baking pan or large cast iron skillet on the middle rack to heat. Working in batches, place the rolled-out pitas directly on the hot baking sheet. Bake for 5 minutes on one side, and then, using a pair of tongs, carefully turn pita over to bake for 2-3 more minutes on the other side. The pita will puff up and lightly brown. Serve warm.



Grades 4-6: June 14 - July 2 | Mon- Fri | 1 pm - 5 pm

Grades 7-9: July 12 - Aug 6 | Mon- Fri | 9 am - 2 pm

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- July 25** - **CODA BLUE** • Classic Rock
- Aug. 1** - **BRONK BROS.** • "A Rockin' Hillbilly Extravaganza"
- Aug. 8** - **TYPO** • Rock • Country • Pop • Urban cover favorites
- Aug. 15** - **KARI LYNCH** • Country • Americana • Pop • Rock
- Aug. 22** - **ZION LION** • Reggae
- Aug. 29** - **THE UNKNOWN'S** • Classic Rock cover music

In case of questionable weather, a decision will be posted on Facebook by 4 p.m. Sunday afternoon.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: www.pawpawdda.com

Seniors Pick up Caps, Gowns and Yard Signs



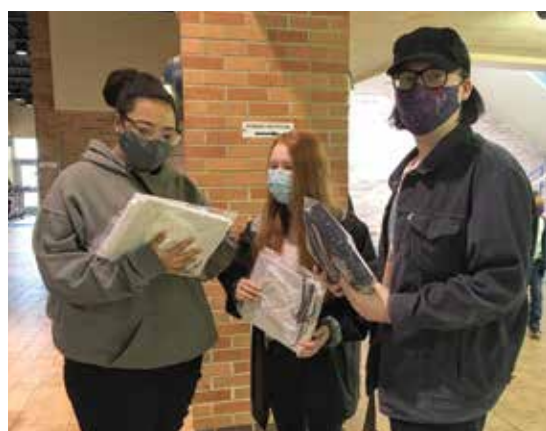
Senior Khyra Dilley picks up a sign and cap and gown at Loy Norrix.



Megan Jones models her cap and gown at Phoenix High School.



Ja'Mari Jackson poses with the senior signs at Loy Norrix.



Danyelle Hagan, Sarah Gruber and Jonathan Gruber check out their caps and gowns at Loy Norrix.



Josratu Bangura is a proud to be graduating from Loy Norrix.



Eliana Adams and Loy Norrix Dean of Students Erin Anderson pose for a photo at the Loy Norrix cap and gown pick up. Photographer Marcel Coleman snaps the photo.



Jasmine McDonald poses for a photographer from Lifetouch Studios.

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Seniors Pick up Caps, Gowns and Yard Signs



Kalamazoo Central principal Valerie Boggan poses for a photo with seniors Marlon McRae Jr. and Jaden Blanchard.



Ashanti Brown, Ashanti Crosby, and Shamara Brown are ready to graduate from Kalamazoo Central.



Leona Carter snaps a selfie with her son Cameron Carter, who is graduating from Phoenix High School.



Konye Nichols is a proud Kalamazoo Central senior.



Terrance Herring will be graduating from Phoenix High School in June.



Gracen Martini-Zeller speaks with Melissa Nesbeitt of The Kalamazoo Promise office, while Daylen Johnson-Streeter checks in with Trenae Dunnigan at the Kalamazoo Central cap and gown pick up.



Lacey Weston picks up her senior sign along with her cap and gown from Kalamazoo Central.

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JUNE 27	INDIKA - <i>Reggae</i>

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Artists' Corner

Errin Corstange, the art and digital media teacher at Milwood Magnet School: A Center for Math, Science and Technology, has helped her students find artistic expression in one of the hallmarks of the past year — face masks. “Basically, we talked about why people create art. We discussed how people create art about many things, including what is going on in the world around them.

Students then learned how to draw portraits. We focused on learning how to create realistic eyes, ears, hair, neck, and shoulders, and then the students got to create a mask design of their choice.”



Evelyn Ramirez-Hernandez, Grade 7



Ja'Various Bennett-Coleman, Grade 7



Jacob Cory, Grade 6



Maci Gast, Grade 7



Samiya Wright, Grade 7



Sariah Lawrence, Grade 7

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Lincoln and Woods Lake Students Chalk It Up!



Ian Snedden creates a chalk message at Woods Lake.



Lincoln International Studies School Chalk and Bubble Day.



Noah Coston and his daughter Chloe Coston decorate Woods Lake.



Gabriel Ray participates in the Lincoln International Studies School Chalk and Bubble Day.



Ciara Marshall hula hoops at Lincoln International Studies School Chalk and Bubble Day.



Teacher Kelly Hutchings and Cecelia Wassink made art together at Woods Lake.

KPS 2021 Summer Readiness

Programs/Level	Grade	Session 1 Dates	# Days	Session 2 Dates	# Days	Days/Week	Location	Instructional Time	Contact	Phone
Incoming Kindergarteners	K	June 28 – July 15 (No school July 5th)	11	July 19 – Aug 5	12	M–Th	Greenwood	8:30 – 2:30	Elizabeth Spaner	337-0560
Elementary	K–5	June 28 – July 15 (No school July 5th)	11	July 19 – Aug 5	12	M–Th	Milwood El, Northeastern, Parkwood–Upjohn, Woodward	8:30 – 2:30	Sherri Giggy	337-0190
ELL Newcomers Program	K–5	June 28 – July 15 (No school July 5th)	11	July 19 – Aug 5	12	M–Th	Milwood El, Northeastern	8:30 – 2:30	Brenda Sanchez	337-1579
Middle School	6–8	June 28 – July 15 (No school July 5th)	11	July 19 – Aug 5	12	M–Th	Hillside	7:30 – 11:30	Vicky Leatherman	337-0168
ELL Bridge Program	8	June 28 – July 15 (No school July 5th)	11	July 19 – Aug 5	12	M–Th	Hillside	7:30 – 12:30	Brenda Sanchez	337-1579
ELL Newcomer Program	6–12	June 28 – July 15 (No school July 5th)	11	July 19 – Aug 5	12	M–Th	Hillside, Loy Norrix	7:30 – 12:30	Brenda Sanchez	337-1579
High School Credit Retrieval – Session I ½ Credit	9–12	June 28 – July 15 (No school July 5th)	11			M–Th	Loy Norrix	7:30 – 12:30	Vicky Leatherman	337-0168
High School Credit Retrieval – Session II ½ Credit	9–12			July 20 – Aug 5	11	M–Th	Loy Norrix	7:30 – 12:30	Vicky Leatherman	337-0168

Elementary School

- Incoming Kindergarten
- Grades K–5
- In-Person
- Must meet at-risk qualifications – assessment data/teacher recommendation
- \$500 for non-KPS students
- Breakfast and lunch provided
- Transportation provided
- Registration forms will be given to parents of qualified students
- School placement will be based on student's home address
- Engaging and exciting activities to transition to Fall 2021
- No cost

Middle School

- Grades 6–8
- Offering instruction in reading, writing and math
- Program is for enrolled KPS students only at no cost
- Highly recommended for identified students
- Registration forms mailed to individual students and available online
- Breakfast, lunch, and transportation provided
- Career and community awareness integrated in lessons

ELL (English Language Learners) Bridge Program for 8th Graders

- Offering instruction in science, social studies, and reading
- Program is for current 8th grade KPS English language learners only at no cost
- Registration forms mailed to identified students

Spanish I for Credit

- Designed for students currently in grades 8–12

High School

Students may take a ½ or 1 credit course(s) during the Summer Readiness Program.

Cost:

KPS Students:*	\$50	½ Credit	*KPS students will be reimbursed for the course this summer only if they pass the course.
	\$85	1 Credit	
KPS scholarship students F/R*	\$35	½ Credit	
	\$50	1 Credit	

Non-KPS	\$100	½ Credit
	\$200	1 Credit

Students must have attended a KPS high school (Central, Loy Norrix, or Phoenix) during the 2020–2021 school year to qualify for the reduced in-district rate.

Course Offerings (for credit recovery only):

Contingent upon sufficient enrollment and staffing: English, Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, Biology, Chemistry, World History, U.S. History, Spanish I and GradPoint

- Designed for students currently in grades 8–12
- Academic credit for successful completion
- Breakfast, lunch, and transportation provided
- Registration forms available at High schools, Secondary Education Dept. at West Main, or at: www.kalamazoopublicschools.com



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