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IMPORTANT DATES

Board of Education Meetings

Thursday, Oct. 14 & 28, 2021

7 p.m.

Administration Bldg.

1220 Howard St.

Visit kalamazoopublicschools.net/boardmeetings for more information

Nov. 2

PreK-12 No School

Nov. 19 and 22

Grades 9-12 Half Day

Nov. 23-24

PreK-12 No School

Nov. 24

No County Programs

Nov. 25-26

Thanksgiving Break

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Career Launch Kalamazoo to Expand Apprenticeships, Early Career Exploration for KPS

Kalamazoo Public Schools has been awarded a grant from the Partnership to Advance Youth Apprenticeship (PAYA) to expand apprenticeships for high-school aged youth in the Kalamazoo area through a new effort called Career Launch Kalamazoo.

The \$25,000 grant will support Career Launch Kalamazoo strategy development and implementation through fall 2022 to develop and boost apprenticeships in three high-demand career areas: information technology, healthcare, and manufacturing.

“Apprenticeships allow our young people a view into their futures,” said KPS Superintendent Dr. Rita Raichoudhuri. “It helps them learn valuable job embedded skills in their industry of choice.”

In addition to funding, the grant also includes more than \$1 million of in-kind support for technical assistance, strate-

(continued on page 9)



Students Help Test Drive New Middle School Summer Science Program

Summer Readiness students at Hillside Middle School not only got to test drive drones this summer — they got to test drive a new middle school science program that developers hope will inspire interest in STEM classes and careers.

Approximately 40 eighth-grade students worked with robots and drones for a week as part of the pilot of the Kalamazoo Summer Math and Science Institute. In addition to hands-on operation of the drones, they learned how to program them and compiled data analysis of their activities.

The project is a collaboration between Kalamazoo Public Schools, The Kalamazoo Promise, and the Michigan Colleges Alliance. MCA originally developed the concept in another partnership that was designed for high school students.



Saphira England, an Albion College volunteer, LaTravion Younger, Javeon Lewis, and Ja’Shawn Fuller work with a drone during the Summer Readiness program.

“They realized they needed to get students interested earlier,” said Matthew Johnson, the interim KPS director of curriculum, instruction and professional development.

The hope is that the program will get students interested in STEM classes and career opportunities and pique their interest in local issues, such as water quality.

The partnership also ensures that students are exposed to MCA colleges, which are part of The Kalamazoo Promise. College volunteers will help staff the classes.

Participating students will have the chance to earn high school science credit for successful completion of the full four-to six-week summer program starting next year. Any eighth grade student can apply for the program, but there will be limited space.

Jason Radditz, an instructor at Albion College and director of the college’s Whitehouse Nature Center, was in Kalamazoo in August to help run the pilot program. The work with the drones and a planned water quality lesson were inspired by a STEM Geekend program he ran for Marshall Public Schools.

The idea is to not just teach students about science, technology, engineering, and math, but to “expose them to a growth mindset and establish some real-world problem-solving skills and solutions. We also want them to develop determination, grit and those key 21st century skills. We want to get them to think about scientific careers as something I can do and not something that I can’t do.”

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KPS Team Working Hard to Overcome COVID Challenges, Give Students Opportunities

We are now more than a month into the 2021-22 school year, and I am overwhelmed with gratitude.

And, in particular, I am grateful for the amazing staff we have at Kalamazoo Public Schools. It is through their hard work, enthusiasm, and diligence that we have been able to return to face-to-face learning for our students.

Last year was challenging as we scrambled to find ways to deliver online learning to our students and to keep them engaged. This year we are back in school buildings, where students can be in class with their teachers and friends and to feel that deep connection that comes from face-to-face interactions in the classroom.

But, there are still challenges. Like the rest of the country, we struggle with staffing. Facilities and our custodial team are working hard to keep our buildings sanitized for students while

COVID-19 continues to spread through our communities. Teachers are working to provide students the social-emotional and academic support they need to be successful as they come out of a year of online learning and isolation.

I am thankful for the incredible team of building and district administrators who work with me to oversee and guide the district. This year's team faced an extra challenge, as many were new to the district or tackling new roles within the school system.

We have two new assistant superintendents:

Dr. Amy Vondra, who was with Chicago Public Schools, is our new assistant superintendent for Instruction and Student Services;



Dr. Rita Raichoudhuri,
Superintendent,
Kalamazoo Public
Schools

Jim English, formerly of Calvin University, is assistant superintendent of Operations.

Other new team members include:

Wessam Abdelaziz, who was at Western Michigan University, is coordinator of English as a Second Language (ESL) and World Languages;

Jeremy Andrick, a former Colorado principal and WMU doctoral student, is the new principal at Lincoln International Studies School;

Dr. Micole Dyson, formerly principal of Woods Lake Elementary: A Magnet Center for the Arts, is director of Elementary Education;

Ian Haight, who worked for Van Buren Intermediate School District and was technology director for Paw Paw Public Schools, is the director of Technology Systems and Services;

Kimberly Kirshman, a former assistant principal at Loy Norrix High School; is district

administrator for K-12 Virtual Learning;

Alexandra Miller, a former teacher and member of the Technology Assistance Group at Woods Lake Elementary, has been named coordinator of Instructional Technology;

Heather Misner, a long-time KPS employee who served as a climate and culture coach last year, has been named principal at Spring Valley Center for Exploration;

Linda Mitchell, principal of Woods Lake Elementary: A Center for the Arts, is the former principal of Lincoln International Studies School;

Andrew Muysenberg, assistant principal of Loy Norrix High School, previously taught math at Hillside Middle School;

Caycee Sledge, executive director of Instructional and Informational Technology, was the coordinator of Instructional Technology.

As I said, I am grateful.

Grateful for the long hours that principals and teachers put into preparing lessons and new opportunities for our students to learn. Grateful for the bus drivers who have learned new safety protocols and who work hard to take extra shifts as we try to cover routes with a shortage of drivers. Grateful for all of the staff who have worked to prepare instruments, ready books on our library shelves, participated in training, gotten vaccinated and stay masked up to keep kids safe, implemented new systems to aid families, and so much more.

We are so excited to have the chance to welcome students back into our buildings and to give them the opportunity to learn with their friends. The challenges are great but so are the opportunities. Our KPS team — your KPS team — is excited and grateful for the opportunity to work with our students and families to make this the best possible school year.

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Wessam Abdelaziz: ESL Coordinator Understands Immigrant Experience

Wessam Abdelaziz says his own experiences have many elements of the traditional immigrant story.

“When I came to the United States in 2008 to attend the University of Connecticut, it was a new language, a new culture. I had no family, no support,” he said. “I had to navigate that process on my own. So I understand and relate to the barriers, challenges, and struggles of immigrant families.”

Abdelaziz is the new coordinator of English as a Second Language and World Languages for Kalamazoo Public Schools.

A native of Alexandria, he taught ESL in Egypt for two years before coming to the United States in 2008 on a Fulbright Scholarship to study applied linguistics at the University of Connecticut. Two years later, he began a doctoral program at Western Michigan University, where he is currently a doctoral candidate completing his dissertation.

He lives in Kalamazoo with his wife Nancy, a computer engineer, and their two sons. The family enjoys the outdoors, and Abdelaziz, who played a year of professional soccer in Belgium, plays soccer and coaches for the TKO travel league.

Since coming to Kalamazoo 11 years ago, he has taught classes in everything from culture and translation to reading and conversation. In addition, he has been active with the Islamic Center in Kalamazoo, community programs that teach ESL, and mentoring ESL tutors.

Working effectively with families who need ESL services will mean creating a support network with community collaborators, such as Bethany Christian Services, the Kalamazoo Literacy Council, and the Kalamazoo Refugee Resource Collaborative, he said. Services might include providing educational tools to build language skills when school is not in session, helping with transporta-



Wessam Abdelaziz, ESL and world languages

tion to jobs, and creating social opportunities.

“We want to be flexible and accommodating for these kids and their families,” he said.

These connections, he hopes, will help families be more open to utilizing ESL services. Some families feel there is a stigma attached to ESL, and they sometimes refuse the service, saying their children already speak English.

“Yes, a child may speak English, but we need to build four language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening,” Abdelaziz said. “If a child does not read or write as well as their peers, they may struggle when they are older.”

Changing the perception of ESL, will require elevating the value of language and promoting it as a college-readiness and professional skill issue and not relegating it to a remedial status. One way he hopes to do this is by creating a ‘seal of biliteracy,’ which students can earn as they develop dual language skills that can be used to provide translation and interpretation services in the community.

But in addition to ESL, Ab-

delaziz is also in charge of world languages for the district. Even in this world of Google Translate and the Internet, studying other languages is valuable not just as a skill but to broaden understanding and build connections.

He recalled a friend who stayed with him for a year in Egypt. The American friend got good at the language, and eventually, he took to hanging out in the local coffee shops. The friend was not a diplomat or State Department

employee. He sold insurance.

“I said, ‘Jake, what are you doing?’ He said, ‘I have all of these families in my community and I don’t know how to communicate with them.’ He built a very successful business because of his language skills and because he understood the community.

“Language is not about drawing differences or a device to identify ‘others.’ It is about discovering what is out there in the world. Understanding language can help ease some of the barriers. It’s about how we can learn to respect and honor people and their cultures.”

..... Kalamazoo Public Schools

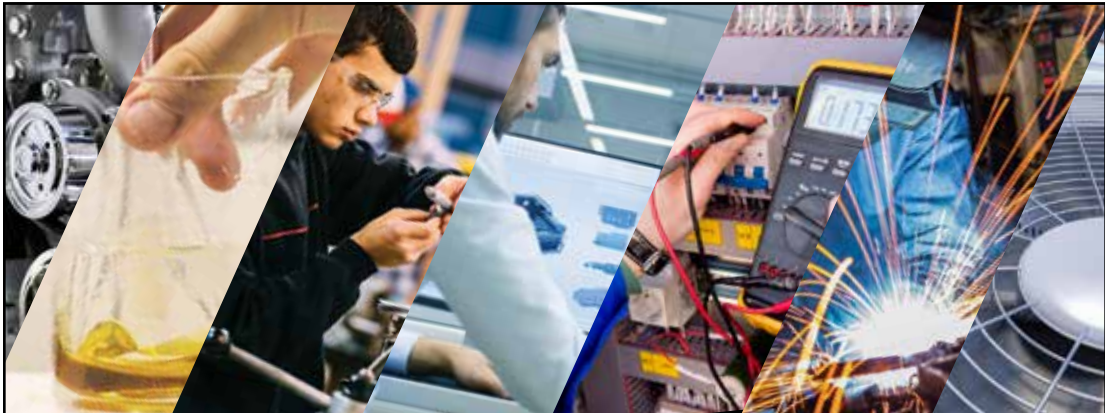
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Micole Dyson: Looking Forward to the Next Opportunities for Students

Young Micole Dyson thought she wanted to be a lawyer until she spent three years traveling the world after high school.

As a member of her family's contemporary gospel group, Jackson Family — not to be confused with the legendary Jackson 5, she jokes — she spent three years touring the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea. It was an eye-opening time.

"Papua New Guinea is a third world country. When you witness that level of poverty, you realize we have too much," she said. "It changed what I

cared about."

Dr. Micole Dyson was recently named the KPS director of Elementary Education. She replaces Judy D'Arcangelis, who retired in 2020.

After the tour ended, she followed her older brother to Andrews University in Berrien Springs. She planned to major in music, but the experience of substitute teaching changed her mind. She remembers hearing the bell at the end of her first day and thinking, "This is what I want to do."

She earned her bachelor's degree in elementary education with minors in music and science. She returned to her native California, taught in a private school, became a principal and earned a master of arts degree in administration and leadership at La Sierra University. She also holds a specialist of arts degree in educational leadership from Eastern Michigan University and a doctorate in K-12 educational leadership from Western Michigan University.

During her tenure with KPS, she has served as principal



Dr. Micole Dyson, director of elementary education

of Woods Lake Elementary: A Magnet Center for the Arts and Washington Writers' Academy. Last year, she was one of two elementary lead administrators, mentoring other principals.

She is hopeful for the new school year and the opportunities that exist as students and staff return to schools for in-person instruction after being virtual during the past year.

"I was excited by what I saw in the Summer Readiness program," Dyson said. "The students were excited about learning, sharing what they learned, and showing what they learned during our virtual time. I want to

focus on continuing that learning. Rather than it being the 'new normal', I like to think of it as the 'new next'.

"The new normal implies we're going back to the way things used to be, but the new next means there's so much for us going forward. I am excited about what's next."

Dyson and her husband Ple-do Dyson, who is a security officer at Kalamazoo Central High School, share a blended family with seven children, with the youngest starting high school this fall. In her off time, she said, her

life is focused on "faith and family" and, in the summer, soaking up sun at the beach if possible.

This year will mark her 24th year in K-12 education, 14 of which she spent as a principal. Moving into central administration will be a change for the avowed "people person."

"I think the thing I will miss the most about being a principal will be the constant interaction with lots of people, students, staff, and parents, but I can still go to schools and be around students. I'm confident I will still get my hugs."



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

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Kalamazoo, MI 49008
(269) 337-0161

All other inquiries should be directed to:

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Andrew Muysenberg: New LN Assistant Principal There to Support Students

As the new assistant principal at Loy Norrix High School, Andrew Muysenberg wants students to know that he understands what it means to struggle academically.

Growing up in DeWitt outside of Lansing, he struggled with academics. When he had problems with reading as a first grader, his parents held him back for a year.

"I had great teachers that supported me and encouraged me to focus on my studies and become a leader amongst my peers," Muysenberg said. "I share this story with students to show them everyone struggles with something. But with a great support system and hard work, you can overcome anything."

As a student at DeWitt High School he found his niche playing football, basketball, and running track. He was the freshman football coach at DeWitt while he was earning his bachelor's degree in elementary education at Olivet College. He also has a master's degree in educational leadership from West-



Andrew Muysenberg is the new assistant principal at Loy Norrix High School.

ern Michigan University.

Muysenberg has worked for Kalamazoo Public Schools for nine years, most recently as a math teacher at Hillside Middle School. Before that, he was a strategic math teacher for the Alternative Learning Program.

As students return to in-person learning, he said he hopes the school takes advantage of the social-emotional learning and technology that were at the heart of last year's online lessons.

"Lastly, we need to make sure that we set clear expectations for students," he said.

"Teachers and staff need to show empathy towards students while supporting them as we all transition back to in-person learning."

When not in the classroom, he and his wife Laura and their young daughter love to explore downtown Kalamazoo and camp in Ludington in the summer. He is excited to become a part of the Loy Norrix family.

"The thing I enjoyed the most about high school was the different people I met and the friendships I made," he said. "High school is so much more enjoyable when students feel like they are a part of the community. I want to encourage students to step outside of their comfort zones and try a new sport, club, or activity while at Loy Norrix."



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First Day of School



Four-grader Alice Efting and her dad, William Efting, wait for the first bell at Woodward School for Technology and Research on the first day of school.



Tara Harris, fourth grade, and her mom, Lindsey Kirchner, walk to school on the first day of the school year at Woodward.



Mom Rashidah Abdullah and third-grader Amir Abdullah are ready for the first day of school at Woodward.



Superintendent Dr. Rita Raichoudhuri poses for a first day photo with King-Westwood Elementary first graders Ayleen Jasso and Sophia VanStrein.



Students enter Milwood Elementary on the first day of school.



Carlos Clay snaps a quick picture of daughter, Audrey Clay, second grade, on the first day of school at Woodward.



Kids Hope volunteer Patti Huiskamp escorts Daleyza Simbron and her father, Omar Simbron, to the right line at El Sol Elementary on the first day of school.



El Sol elementary staffer Israel Catarino guides a student to the right class line at El Sol Elementary School.

First Day of School



El Sol Elementary teacher April Guevara helps a student put on a mask before the start of the first day of school.



Dad Josh Danks snaps a quick photo of daughter, Lily Danks, and wife, Andrea Noud, before they drop her off for the first day of school at El Sol Elementary School.



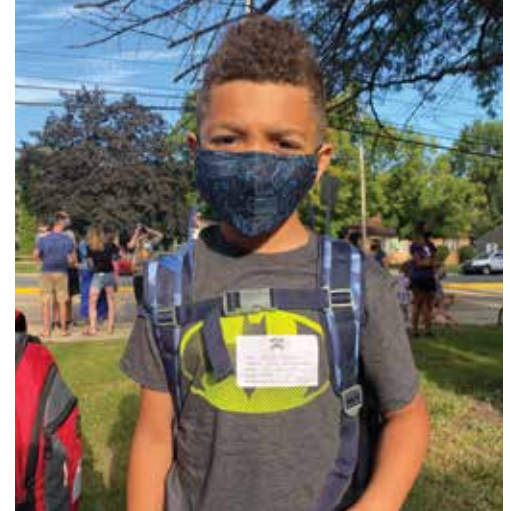
Loy Norrix students play strategy games on the first day.



Danasia Virgil felt a little nervous and needs a hug from her mom, Cheri Virgil, on the first day of school at Woodward.



Loy Norrix High School students test their paper airplane skills in a physics experiment.



Lincoln Sledge waits for the start of the new school year at King-Westwood Elementary School.



Indian Prairie Elementary School Charlene Cromwell reads to her third graders on the first day of school.



Jabari Allen is ready for the first day of school at Woodward School for Technology and Research.



Loy Norrix students try their hand at the wood tower game on the first day of school.

Teachers Prep for School



Maple Street Magnet School's new athletic director, Thomas Unangst, shares the school's new slogan with the staff during their first staff meeting of the school year.



Kindergarten teacher Taylor Roberts prepares pencil boxes for her students at Parkwood-Upjohn Elementary School.



Fifth-grade teachers Sierra Prather and Shannon Chandler work on a bulletin board at Woods Lake Elementary School.



Jennifer Buchholz helps fellow third-grade teacher Amy Richmond with a computer issue as they prep their classrooms for the opening of school.

Chef Samuel • KPS FOOD SERVICE CHEF

Hummus

Ingredients

- 1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas drained
- 1 large fresh lemon
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup well-stirred tahini
- 1 head of roasted garlic
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for serving
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cumin
- Salt and white pepper to taste
- 2 to 3 tablespoons water

Directions

In the bowl of a food processor, combine the tahini and lemon juice and process for 1 minute, scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl then process for 30 seconds more.

Add the olive oil, roasted garlic, cumin, a $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of salt and a pinch of white pepper to the whipped tahini and lemon juice. Process for 30 seconds, scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl, then process another 30 seconds or until well blended.

Add half of the chickpeas to the food processor and process for 1 minute. Scrape sides and bottom of the bowl, then add remaining chickpeas and pro-



Chef Samuel Dunn

cess until thick, this should take 1 to 2 minutes.

Most likely the hummus will be thick or still have tiny pieces of chickpea. To fix this, turn on the food processor and slowly add 2 to 3 tablespoons of water through the feed tube until you reach the desired consistency.

Taste for salt and pepper, adjust as needed. Serve hummus with a drizzle of olive oil and dash of paprika. Store homemade hummus in an airtight container and refrigerate for up to one week. It can be served with the homemade pita bread featured in the June *Excelsior*.

35TH ANNUAL CHEMISTRY DAY

OCTOBER 16, 2021, VIDEO PREMIERE AT 12 P.M.

Local chemists put on a digital reenactment of the Wizard of Oz with a chemistry twist! Follow Dorothy and her faithful dog, Trout, from Kalamazoo to Oz and back as local chemists from manufacturing and educational intuitions explore rainbows, bubbles, smoke, tornadoes and more before dissolving the Wicked Witch of the West. The 35th annual Chemistry Day is co-sponsored by the Kalamazoo Section of the American Chemical Society and the Kalamazoo Valley Museum.

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INSURANCE FOR EDUCATORS

Career Launch Kalamazoo to Expand Apprenticeships, Early Career Exploration for KPS *(continued from page 1)*

gic planning, coaching sessions with experts, learning trips, access to learning partners, problems of practice and cycles of inquiry work to enhance programming.

PAYA also will provide Career Launch Kalamazoo with technical assistance from PAYA's national partners, cross-site learning opportunities, and opportunities to participate in national research, communications, and access to the PAYA Network, a group of organizations working to expand and improve apprenticeships for high schoolers.

KPS will partner with Kalamazoo Valley Community College, the City of Kalamazoo, The Kalamazoo Promise, Bronson Healthcare Group, Flowserve, and MANN+HUMMEL to create Career Launch Kalamazoo.

Raichoudhuri saw the power of apprenticeships and career and technical education when she led college and career work for Chicago Public Schools. She is encouraged to see the Kalamazoo community is interested in growing similar opportunities



Career Launch will help build on career exploration activities such as MICareerQuest Southwest.

for students.

"The ultimate goal is that all of our graduating seniors will be graduating with a post-secondary plan, which could include a four-year university, two-year college, a vocational training program, a certificate program, the military, a job," she said. "Whatever it may be, we are putting in place systems that will help all of our students graduate from high school ready for college, career, and life."

Apprenticeships are a vital part of all of those preparatory experiences, Raichoudhuri said.

"They can help students

build their professional networks, connect with mentors in the field, build confidence in their abilities as a contributing member of an organization, give them a sense of belonging in the world of work, hone their 21st century skills, and get them ready for the world of work," she said. "It is an invaluable experience that has the power to disrupt cycles of poverty."

The highly competitive grant drew more than 200 applications, and KPS received one of only six grants awarded this year. KPS is one of 17 grantees from across the country that

has been funded over the years. Career Launch will create a network of educators, employers and community resources that provides middle schoolers with early exposure to career awareness and exploration and gives high school students opportunities to participate in apprenticeship programs with local employers.

"The Kalamazoo Promise is extremely excited to partner with Kalamazoo Public Schools on helping students find alternative paths to success," said Von Washington II, executive director for community relations of The Kalamazoo Prom-

ise. "This grant will allow us the opportunity to plan and strategically implement several pathways for students to follow as they use The Kalamazoo Promise scholarship."

Katie Dickens, director of IT Business & Clinical Information Systems for Bronson Healthcare Group said, "This collaboration will help to create interest and engagement in careers in technology fields and provide avenues for students to grow into jobs that provide a living wage. As the area's largest employer, we think it is important to focus time and attention on the future generation of employees."

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Congratulations to the 2021 KPS Retirees

It is with great gratitude that we thank the following retirees for their years of service to Kalamazoo Public Schools. The district thanks these retirees for all that they did to serve, educate, and protect this community's greatest asset — its children.

Betty Allemang
Library Assistant
Milwood Elementary
23 years

Kristin Barnes
Teacher
Indian Prairie
25 years

Kimberly Berry
Teacher
Woods Lake
34 years

Tracie James
Teacher
Academically Talented
31 years

Judith Morin
Behavior Specialist
Northeastern
29 years

Orlando Bridges
Teacher
Milwood Elementary
25 years

Chad Jansheski
Teacher
Linden Grove
24 years

Gregory Orr
Teacher
Hillside
29 years

Jacqueline Bynum
Teacher
Lincoln
31 years

Yolanda Kirk
Home Support Specialist
Washington Writers'
20 years

Amy Pachay-Kish
Teacher
Woods Lake
32 years

Mark Cardwell
Teacher
Kalamazoo Area Math
and Science Center
11 years

Elizabeth Klepper
Secretary
Administration Building
13 years

James Ray
Campus Safety Officer
Kalamazoo Central
30 years

Mary Carter
Secretary
Kalamazoo Central
20 years

Teresa Knoechel
Teacher
Arcadia
15 years

Elizabeth Schmitt
Paraprofessional
Spring Valley
16 years

Phyllis Cook
Paraprofessional
Kalamazoo Central
11 years

Sveri Stromsta May
Teacher
Loy Norrix
33 years

Sandra Shaw
Teacher
Maple Street
25 years

Christopher Cosier
Teacher
Kalamazoo Central
22 years

Randy Mayfield
Custodian
Facilities
23 years

Gary Start
Deputy Superintendent
Administration
37 years

Mark Davis
Bus Driver
Transportation
25 years

Debra McKee
Teacher
Maple Street
34 years

Daniel Stout
Teacher
Kalamazoo Central
19 years

Cindy Green
Assistant Superintendent
Administration
25 years

Pamela McKenzie
Teacher
King-Westwood
37 years

Sally Wagenaar
Teacher
Loy Norrix
23 years

Beth Hoekstra
Teacher
Parkwood-Upjohn
21 years

Troy McNees
Carpenter Foreman
Facilities
28 years

Laura Warren-Gross
Librarian
Maple Street
14 years

Carmel Jackson-Edwards
Paraprofessional
Kalamazoo Central
20 years

Charles Mench
Paraprofessional
Transition Services
30 years

Franklin Williams
Campus Safety Officer
Loy Norrix
30 years

Jane Metzler
Paraprofessional
Parkwood-Upjohn
35 years

Theresa Williams-Johnson
Teacher
Kalamazoo Central/
Hillside
31 Years



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Artists' Corner

This month Artists' Corner features new works by one of Kalamazoo Public Schools' art teachers.

Harry Sykora, art teacher at Kalamazoo Central, has been throwing pottery since the seventh grade. He shared recent works that were fired in an anagama kiln.

"Pottery is not only a means of expressing your artistic thoughts, but it also provides a therapeutic and satisfying process and product. The textural feel of clay has very



Kalamazoo Central art teacher Harry Sykora sits in front of his pottery wheel with a piece ready for the kiln.



cleansing properties.

"This pottery is made with a wood-fired process known as anagama, which was first practiced by the Korean culture in the 6th century and later adopted by the Japanese. Anagama is a very labor-intensive method requiring strategic wood placement through ports in the kiln for approximately three days. This results in phenomenal colors and textures."



Pottery by Kalamazoo Central art teacher Harry Sykora that was fired in an anagama kiln.

Kalamazoo Public Schools Forming Committee to Review Facility Needs

Kalamazoo Public Schools will be forming a committee this fall to review the school district's facility and capital improvement needs.

As part of this process, KPS will be evaluating potential improvements to various schools, athletic facilities, fine arts facilities, possible computer and classroom technology upgrades, and other needs across the district.

Kalamazoo Public Schools has a long history of maintain-

ing and investing its facilities in order to provide an excellent education for all students. Three KPS schools built between 1921 and 1922 will be hitting the century mark this school year: Lincoln International Studies School, Woodward School for Technology and Research, and Parkwood-Upjohn Elementary School.

The group will be reviewing a list of facility needs, considering the results of a community survey, and providing

a recommendation to the full Board of Education on whether the district should pursue a bond issue to address any identified needs.

Community members who are interested in participating in the discussions or who have questions about the project, should contact Kelly Davis at daviskl@kalamazoopublicschools.net or (269) 337-0114. The group will be forming soon, interested parties should contact Davis as soon as possible.



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