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## IMPORTANT DATES

Given the evolving nature of the COVID-19 outbreak, all dates and times are tentative. Check the KPS website at [www.kalamazoopublicschools.com](http://www.kalamazoopublicschools.com) and Facebook page @KalamazooPublicSchools for the latest calendar information and other district updates.

## Board of Education Meetings

Thursday, May 14 & 28, 2020  
7 p.m.

Administration Building  
1220 Howard St.

Board Advance Meeting  
Tuesday, May 12, 2020  
6:15 p.m.  
1627 W. Main St.

For more information, call  
(269) 337-1572

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## Remember to Vote On or Before May 5, in Person or by Absentee Ballot

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## New Science Program Places Students in Role of Scientists

By Matthew Johnson, KPS K-12 Mathematics and Science Coordinator

Working like real-life scientists and engineers, Kalamazoo Public Schools students explored scientific phenomena such as how dolphins communicate and what makes glue sticky in the district's new science program, Amplify Science.

KPS adopted Amplify Science for use beginning with the 2019-2020 school year.

Through Amplify, students investigate phenomena by reading information books, completing hands-on activities, and participating in collaborative discussions to develop and refine models that help them



King-Westwood Elementary School students Debash Marquardt, Otis Alexander, and Cameron Alexander conduct a hands-on Amplify Science experiment.

arrive at solutions or explanations of real-world problems.

The program shifts the focus away from simply memorizing science concepts to providing opportunities for students to develop their own knowledge and solutions through a highly interactive process, teachers said.

"The resources definitely add to the excitement of their exploration," said Edison Environmental Science Academy third-grade teacher Kathryn Rozich. "By adding a variety of visual components, engaging paired literature, and hands-on

(continued on page 5)

## KPS Recruiting from Within to Find, Develop Strong Teachers

By Sheila Dorsey-Smith, KPS Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources

I have been an educator for more than 30 years and I still feel as strongly about this profession as I did when I began in 1989. Teaching has always been known as an honorable profession and we need the honor and respect to come back to the profession.

Sheila Dorsey-Smith, the KPS assistant superintendent of human resources, talks to students at the Future Teachers of Color conference at WMU earlier this year.



In recent years, around the country and in our own state, we have seen the teaching profession devalued and politicized, and we have seen our schools dangerously underfunded. The impact of these actions has affected teacher education programs, school districts, classrooms, and more importantly, the children that we serve. The children of Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS)

(continued on page 3)

## Kalamazoo Public Schools is Hiring.

Find information at <http://www.kalamazoopublicschools.com/Departments/HumanResources/EmploymentOpportunities>

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# Rising to the Ongoing Challenges

We are living through an unprecedented time. The Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic that has swept across the world has infected at least 1.8 million people, and caused more than 100,000 deaths worldwide — including almost 1,400 deaths in Michigan — at the time this was written in mid-April.

My first and most sincere hope is that you and your families have been fortunate enough to remain safe and healthy during this crisis.

Part of the statewide effort to protect you and your families has been the stay-at-home order issued by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. As of this writing, that order is in effect until May 1. Prior to that order for the general population, on March 12, Gov. Whitmer ordered the closure of Michigan's K-12 schools in an attempt to slow the spread of the Novel Coronavirus COVID-19. By April 2, the governor extended that order and

suspended face-to-face classes for the remainder of the school year.

For Kalamazoo Public Schools those orders have not simply meant shutting our doors and going home. On the contrary, what I have seen — and what I hope you know — is that our dedicated staff and many community volunteers have seen this stay-at-home order as a challenge to continue to provide services and aid to our students and families.

Immediately, KPS was aware that the school closures were necessary to help protect the health of students, families, and staff in the district, but the district was also aware that many students rely on the district's breakfast and lunch program for food each day. More than



Gary Start, Interim Superintendent

one-third of KPS children live in households below the federal poverty line, and approximately 70 percent of students are eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch.

The governor's original order came on a Thursday night — and by the following Monday, KPS Food Services operated by Chartwells had mobilized a version of our summer feeding program to provide grab-and-go lunches for our children at 20 schools and four community sites. Food is distributed Monday, Wednesday and Friday, with the three food packs containing food for seven days of meals.

On April 10, KPS distributed 31,728 meals — bringing the total number of meals served to almost 242,000 over four weeks.

At the same time, KPS's Teaching and Learning Services launched The Learning Hub, an online resource that provides students with materials to allow them to continue their learn-

ing. For families, without access to computers TLS staff printed packets of these materials for distribution at the food sites.

Since then, TLS has also coordinated the distribution of more than 1,200 Chromebooks to students without access to computers, some coming through a generous donation from Schupan and Sons and the rest coming from KPS's supplies of devices that were scheduled to be replaced soon.

The staff in Food Services, TLS and many other departments, such as transportation and technology, have been working tirelessly to provide as many supports as possible to our students. Those efforts continue as we work to find ways to provide training to teachers and socio-emotional supports to students and to find new ways to communicate and connect as we help our students continue to learn during this stay-at-home order.

As you think about what our staff members have managed to do for the students of the dis-

trict, please be aware that many of these efforts receive funding through the Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency Regional Enhancement Millage, which is up for renewal on the May 5 ballot. This millage is key part of our district's budget. It provides about \$364 per student, or \$4.6 million, to the KPS general fund budget. It helps fund operations such as instruction, transportation, custodial services, and technology services. You can find more information about the ballot issue on Page 4.

No one could have known the problems we and other educational institutions would have been tasked with solving over the past few months. KPS employees have come together for the good of our children under these incredibly stressful circumstances. I want to thank our staff for rising to the challenges presented by this crisis. I am proud of all you have accomplished — and for what I am sure will be creative and resourceful solutions to issues as they continue to arise over the next few months.

## We Miss You Kalamazoo!

Hello Kalamazoo,  
At the library, our service motto is **KPL Creates Community**.  
For nearly 150 years, the library has served Kalamazoo by providing a space where everyone who visits feels safe, supported and welcome to enjoy everything we have to offer. Today, our community is facing unprecedented challenges. Currently, KPL is not able to provide everyone in our community with an equal level of service. While we offer a robust collection of digital materials and online services at [kpl.gov](http://kpl.gov), we know not everyone in our community has access to these resources. For this reason, KPL is working hard to identify new ways to provide better access for all through partnerships and future outreach efforts.

We miss you Kalamazoo. Please know that our staff is thinking of you and will continue to work to serve you in any way we can. Stay safe.

**Ryan Wieber** | Director, Kalamazoo Public Library

Kalamazoo Public Library  
[kpl.gov](http://kpl.gov)

# KPS Recruiting from Within to Find, Develop Strong Teachers *(continued from page 1)*

are the most important aspect of the work we do. To properly serve the students in our charge, we need the strongest teachers we can recruit. In addition to needing strong teachers, we need teachers who reflect the faces of the families in KPS.

## Teacher Shortage

In the good old days, Michigan was known as an exporter of teachers. As a state, more teachers were trained here than local districts could hire. School districts came from all over the country to recruit newly graduated teachers from our colleges and universities. There were vacancies in growing districts throughout the country; and many of our young Michigan graduates were offered contracts on the spot to work in other states. In recent years, the teacher shortage has become more acute. The number of students in teacher preparation programs has decreased over the years and our teacher pipelines are drying up. According to the 2018 U.S. Department of Labor Title II Report on National Teacher Preparation Data, it was noted that in the 2013–2014 school year there were 11,287 students enrolled in teacher preparation programs in Michigan, and in the 2016–17 school year, there were only 6,859 students enrolled in teacher preparation programs. That is a 60.7 percent decrease in teacher education programs in Michigan in just three years.

While those numbers are difficult to accept, the numbers of minority teachers entering the profession are even lower. Of Michigan students enrolled in teacher preparation programs in the 2016–2017 school year, only 7 percent were African American, 3 percent were Latinx and 2 percent were Asian. As an illustration closer to home, our primary pipeline, Western Michigan University (WMU) has just 5.27 percent African American teacher candidates enrolled in the teacher education program. KPS has been



**William Wright is a KPS graduate and helped start Future Teachers of Color.**



**Sarah Giramia, left, and Hailey Timmerman talk at the Future Teachers of Color conference at WMU. The two are KPS graduates and helped start FTC.**

committed to hiring teachers that are more reflective of our diverse student population. We are proud to have a staff that has 13.1 percent African American teachers. Although that still falls short by more than half of the percentage of African American students in the district, it is more than double the percentage of African American students in the whole state of Michigan, which is 5.9 percent.

In addition to fewer teachers going into the profession, several teaching areas are hard-to-fill because of competition from the private sector. Some of the hard-to-fill areas are: math, science, special education, world language, bilingual education, reading, and career and technical education. To mitigate some of these shortages, KPS partnered with WMU to create specialized cohort programs for current KPS teachers to receive endorsements in shortage areas. We started with an English as a

Second Language (ESL) cohort and the following year we added a reading cohort. Finally, to increase foreign language offerings in our high schools, we partnered with WMU and the Confucius Institute to provide Chinese language classes at both of our high schools.

## KPS Pipeline Initiatives

We realized that we couldn't wait for someone or something to make an impact on the composition of our teaching staff. I frequently say to our team, "The cavalry isn't coming to save us!" So in KPS, we put some practices in place to help recruit and retain strong teachers and especially employees who have shown promise in KPS.

We looked within our ranks of current staff and students to begin the rewarding process of growing our own teachers. We began this by partnering with WMU and The Kalamazoo Promise to start the WMU Future Edu-

cators Program (FEP) in 2015. The goal was to recruit KPS high school graduates from under-represented, socio-economically disadvantaged, and educationally at-risk families to attend WMU and study the field of education to prepare them to teach for KPS. As this program started, we discovered we were lacking a high school pipeline for FEP.

To develop that pipeline, last school year we had the opportunity to enhance the teacher cadet program at Loy Norrix High School. We developed a program with Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency (KRESA) and WMU to encourage, guide, and mentor KPS high school students into the teaching profession. As a result, we more than doubled the number of students from KPS in FEP. In addition, the teacher in the program was charged with starting a Young Educators Society (Y.E.S.) club. Y.E.S. clubs are student leadership organizations that attract minorities to the profession by allowing students to learn about teaching as a career. We started the club this year and are looking to expand Y.E.S. clubs to all secondary schools next school year.

At the college level, we have partnered with Future Teachers of Color (FTC), a student organization at WMU as a way to support aspiring teachers of color. The FTC student organization was developed by FEP scholars to support and increase under-represented populations in the teaching profession. KPS supports this group by exposing the participants to current practitioners through presentations, meals, and informal conversations in twice-monthly meetings. Our overarching goal is to better prepare the FTC students for the realities of the teaching profession. While we understand that not all of the students we mentor in this student organization will work for KPS, we understand the responsibility of preparing teachers of color to work in the field of education.

## KPS Hiring Practices

Presently, we anticipate approximately 26 open teaching positions in KPS for the 2020–2021 school year. Some of those new teachers will be FEP scholars and current interns in our district. To fill the upcoming positions, we are seeking strong teachers and teachers that reflect the diversity of our student population. In order to find those teachers, we will need your assistance.

This is the hiring season for teachers and administrators. Never before have we had to recruit in such restrictive circumstances. The Coronavirus has wreaked havoc on typical hiring practices. Usually, we post positions on the KPS website, Handshake (a network of colleges and universities throughout the country), on job boards, and on various social media platforms. We visit student teacher seminar classes and speak directly to student interns. We invite and support student interns from universities throughout the state. We also work with online universities and allow those students to intern in our schools. In addition, we typically attend job fairs at Michigan universities, as well as at universities in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. Five years ago, we started hosting jobs fairs as a way to recruit interested candidates. We usually have three job fairs in the spring. Due to the Coronavirus, all recruiting fairs have been cancelled.

This year, we are using technology to post positions and hold interviews. However, we know that the very best teachers often are recruited by employers in our district and people in the Kalamazoo community. This article is a call to action and a very special ask of our community to assist with the recruitment of teachers that can successfully work with our students and families. If you know of such a teacher, please have them apply on the KPS website at [kalamazoopublicschools.com](http://kalamazoopublicschools.com) or call (269) 337-0100 for additional information.

# Regional Enhancement Millage Renewal – Frequently Asked Questions

On Tuesday, May 5, 2020, voters in each of the nine school districts in the Kalamazoo RESA service area will be asked to vote on whether to renew a three-year, 1.5-mill property tax millage, which supports the operations of the public school districts and charter schools in the KRESA service area.

**Is this a new millage or a millage increase?**

Neither. It's a renewal. The original three-year, 1.5-mill property tax millage that voters first approved in May 2005 and then most recently renewed in 2017. This is a request whether to renew the millage for another three years. If approved, taxpayers would continue paying the same millage rate they have been paying since 2005.

**How do school districts currently use the money?**

Each local school board decides district budget needs and priorities. Millage funds are used to support instructional services, support services and other

district priorities.

**How much do the schools get from this millage?**

As the fiscal agent, Kalamazoo RESA distributes the tax revenues to school districts and charter schools on a per-student basis. Each school district and charter school receive the same per-student amount, which is approximately \$364/student.

**Why are charter schools included in the millage renewal proposal when they have not been included in the past?**

Changes to the applicable state law since the millage was originally approved added charter schools as beneficiaries of the millage effective May of 2018. All beneficiaries must be listed on the ballot.

**How much would this renewal request cost the taxpayer?**

Since the enhancement millage is a renewal, it would not cause any increase in tax rates. Homeowners would pay based on the taxable value of

their home, which is typically about half of the market value. A homeowner with a home with a taxable value of \$75,000 (approximate market value of \$150,000) pays \$112.50/year, which is \$9.38/month.

**COVID-19 Election Information**

On March 27, 2020, Governor Whitmer signed executive order 2020-27, which substantially changes the rules and procedures for the May 5, 2020 election, so that these elections may be conducted by absentee voter ballot to the greatest extent possible in an effort to limit in-person contact.

**Is the Enhancement Millage still being voted on the May 5 election?**

Yes, registered voters in each of the nine school districts in the Kalamazoo RESA service area will be asked to vote on whether to renew a three-year, 1.5-mill property tax millage, which supports the operations of the public school districts and

charter schools in the KRESA service area.

**How will the vote be conducted for this election due to COVID-19 and executive order 2020-27?**

The election must be conducted to the greatest extent possible by absentee voter ballots. All currently registered voters will receive an absentee voter ballot application to request an absentee voter ballot. Voters who submit an absentee voter ballot application will receive an absentee voter ballot that can be returned by mail in a postage-prepaid envelope. Newly registered voters will automatically receive an absentee voter ballot.

**Will I be able to vote in person?**

The election must be conducted to the greatest extent possible by absentee voter ballots. However, each jurisdiction must maintain at least one (1) location on Election Day where any voter can appear in-person to receive and submit a ballot, including an individual with a disability that inhibits the individual from voting an absentee voter ballot remotely. It is our understanding that each of the townships and cities in Kalamazoo County will have a polling place, and that the county clerk's offices in Barry, Calhoun, Kalamazoo, and St. Joseph Counties will be open for voting on Election Day.

**When is the last day to register to vote?**

The last day to register to vote by mail for this election was Monday, April 20, 2020, using the form available at [www.michigan.gov/documents/MI-VoterRegistration\\_97046\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/MI-VoterRegistration_97046_7.pdf). An individual can register to vote online by visiting [www.michigan.gov/voterregistration](http://www.michigan.gov/voterregistration). Anyone who registered online after April 21 must email or mail residency verification (often a driver's license, but other items can be used) to their county clerk prior to Election Day in

order to receive a ballot. Voters may register in person through Election Day, May 5, 2020, during any hours in which the local election clerk's office is open.

**What is the language on the ballot?**

KALAMAZOO REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY REGIONAL ENHANCEMENT MILLAGE RENEWAL PROPOSAL

This proposal will allow the intermediate school district to continue to levy regional enhancement millage that expired with the 2019 levy. Pursuant to state law, the revenue raised by the millage will be collected by the intermediate school district and distributed to local public school districts based on pupil membership count.

Shall the limitation on the amount of taxes which may be assessed against all property in Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency, Michigan, be increased by 1.5 mills (\$1.50 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation) for a period of 3 years, 2020, 2021 and 2022, to provide operating funds to enhance other state and local funding for local school district operating purposes; the estimate of the revenue the intermediate school district will collect if the millage is approved and levied in 2020 is approximately \$12,543,252, which funds will be disbursed as required by statute to the following school districts: Augusta Academy, Climax-Scotts Community Schools, Comstock Public Schools, Evergreen Academy, Forest Academy, Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools, Gull Lake Community Schools, Kalamazoo Covenant Academy, Kalamazoo Public Schools, Lakeside Charter School - Kalamazoo, Oakland Academy, Paramount Charter Academy, Parchment School District, Portage Public Schools, Schoolcraft Community Schools, Vicksburg Community Schools and Youth Advancement Academy?



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## NOTICE

Kalamazoo Public Schools welcomes all students and staff of any religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy, gender identification, height, weight, familial status, marital status, sexual orientation, and disability.

The District will not tolerate or condone any act of bias or discrimination toward any person on the basis of religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy, gender identification, height, weight, familial status, marital status, sexual orientation, and disability in any of its activities, hiring practices, programs or services.

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

### Director of Student Services

Kalamazoo Public Schools  
1220 Howard Street  
Kalamazoo, MI 49008  
(269) 337-0161

All other inquiries should be directed to:

### Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources

Kalamazoo Public Schools  
1220 Howard Street  
Kalamazoo, MI 49008  
(269) 337-0177

District Directory at :

[www.kalamazoopublicschools.com](http://www.kalamazoopublicschools.com)

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Gary Start

## New Science Program Places Students in Role of Scientists *(continued from page 1)*

activities, it allows the students to talk, read, and write all while problem solving independently with a team.”

Milwood Elementary School fourth-grade teacher Mathew Al-

ger said, “Amplify Science is engaging and has a lot of student interaction. This interaction allows the students to be more involved in the process of figuring out the ‘why’ of the lesson and instead of

just being told the answer.”

Erika Zavasky, a first-grade teacher at Edison, has noticed how the students develop a sense of ownership in their learning.

“During our first unit in first grade, students were introduced to a sea turtle named Spruce that lived in an aquarium,” Zavasky said. “I brought Spruce to life by telling my kids that the aquarium needed our help, and they had phoned me and needed them to be a part of this scientific work. They began to call themselves scientists and use academic vocabulary not

only within the science block, but it carried through in everyday language.”

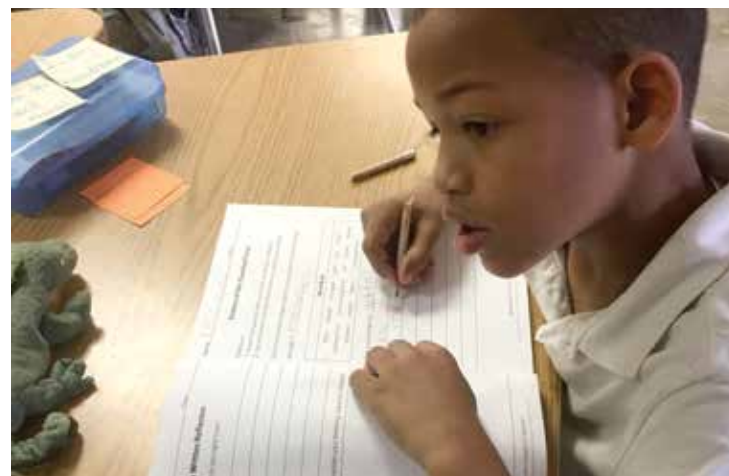
The Amplify Science program was selected to develop students’ confidence in their ability to think scientifically and to work collaboratively as a team to apply what they learned. Students also form an understanding of the career opportunities in science and engineering. The foundational knowledge and skills developed in the science class will prepare them for success in middle school, high school and beyond.



Woods Lake students Khayyir Freeze, Sean Trainer, Jordan McClinton, and Jazmin Elizabeth Pollman complete an assignment related to solar power.



A Woods Lake Elementary fourth-grade student puts the finishing touches on a solar-powered fan.



Edison Environmental Science Academy third grader KeyAnu Henderson works on Amplify Science, the new KPS science program.

# Launchpad to Learning



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# Annual Literacy Night Celebrations Held in March

Kalamazoo Public Schools elementary and middle school buildings celebrated all things reading during the annual Literacy Night celebrations held in March. Themes included everything from superheroes to careers to carnivals. Some schools chose to use the nights to unveil and celebrate their all-school reads, while others used the evening to showcase how literacy is represented across the curriculum.



Winchell Elementary School hosts an all-school science fair as part of Literacy Night.



Theora Thompson welcomes people to Northglade's production of "The Bremen Town Musicians" on Literacy Night.



Elayne Seaman checks out the Kalamazoo Nature Center exhibit on Literacy Night at Woodward.



Ezra Kuder saves some "Nerds" with a gummy rope at Northglade Montessori Magnet School's Literacy Night. Teacher Angela Smith encourages him.



Rashid Al-Gharib, Bonham Faworski, and Brandon Streeter talk to Kevin Harris, who works for the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi at the Linden Grove Literacy Night.



Sequeenah Taylor gets her face painted during Literacy Night at Woodward School for Technology and Research.



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# Honors Choirs 2019–2020

## MSVMA 6-7-8-9 STATE HONORS CHOIR

Participation in all honors choirs is by audition only. For the MSVMA 6-7-8-9 Honors Choir, students who gained entry into the choir rehearsed several Saturdays at schools throughout Michigan. Students performed Thursday, January 16, 2020 at DeVos Hall in Grand Rapids.

## Maple Street Magnet School for the Arts

Director: Julie Davis/Ashleigh Merrill  
Ruby Berg  
Alason Murphy  
Emmalee Murphy  
Taniyah Pritchett  
Ellen Terzino

## Hillside Middle School

Director: Theresa Williams-Johnson  
Michelle Ashford  
Zyen Buchanan  
Claire Call  
Caitlin Gillish  
Hope Escobedo  
Sofia Gross  
Davion Hubbard  
Una Kappenman  
Kayla Lyle  
Allyson Makneke  
Savannah Vincent  
Makiyah Williams

## Kalamazoo Central High School

Director: Theresa Williams-Johnson  
Zyen Buchanan  
Davion Hubbard

## MSVMA HIGH SCHOOL HONORS CHOIRS

Regional Honors Choir: Students in grades 10-12 audition to be accepted into the MSVMA Regional Honors Choir. They performed with the regional ensemble this fall.

MSVMA High School State Honors Choir students are selected from the pool of regional honors choir participants. They rehearsed during a weekend in

January and performed Saturday, January 18, 2020, at DeVos Hall.

The MSVMA All-State Honors Choir is made of 120 students from the State Honors Choir who audition to participate in this next level of performance. They traditionally perform at the Michigan Youth Arts Festival, which was canceled this year.

MSVMA All State Jazz Honors students auditioned for one of twenty total openings in the choir. They performed Friday, January 17, 2020, at the J. W. Marriott Ballroom.

## Kalamazoo Central High School

Director: Theresa Williams-Johnson  
Maicee Bishop  
Rachel Richman  
MarQuan Snell

## Loy Norrix High School

Director: Julie Pelligrino  
Alayna Boucher  
Katherine Gray  
Akkadian Jackson  
Zoe Shanahan  
David (Asher) Yuill

## HS STATE HONORS CHOIR

## Kalamazoo Central High School

Director: Theresa Williams-Johnson  
Maicee Bishop  
Rachel Richman  
MarQuan Snell

## Loy Norrix High School

Director: Julie Pelligrino  
Alayna Boucher  
Katherine Gray  
Zoe Shanahan

## HS ALL-STATE HONORS CHOIR

## Kalamazoo Central High School

Director: Theresa Williams-Johnson  
Rachel Richman

## Loy Norrix High School

Director: Julie Pelligrino  
Katherine Gray  
Zoe Shanahan

## HS ALL STATE JAZZ HONORS CHOIR

## Kalamazoo Central High School

Director: Theresa Williams-Johnson  
Abigail Baker  
Aija Hodges  
Sam Van Natter

## SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN VOCAL FESTIVAL HONORS CHOIR

The Southwestern Michigan Vocal Festival (SWMVF) is an annual event held at Western Michigan University, which brings together high school choirs from throughout the region to sing together in a choir of around 1,000 singers. An optional honors choir experience is available for festival participants. Whereas the festival philosophy calls for an inspiring large chorus experience, the honors choir program offers serious voice students a special opportunity for enrichment. Around 60 students are selected for this experience by audition in early February.

## Kalamazoo Central High School

Director: Theresa Williams-Johnson  
Maicee Bishop  
Madelyn Honeysett  
Abigail Doonan  
MarQuan Snell

## Loy Norrix High School

Director: Julie Pelligrino  
Emma Atkinson  
Celia Baublis  
Laya Houslander  
Akkadian Jackson  
Katie Kutzko  
Lina Moghrabi  
Ethan Semelbauer  
Zoe Shanahan  
Sophie Talo  
Jordan Torres  
Asher Yuill



Several KPS students participated in the Michigan High School State Honors Choir. They included, front row, from left, Maicee Bishop, Rachel Richman, and Alayna Boucher, and back row, from left, MarQuan Snell, Katherine Gray, and Zoe Shanahan.



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## Respond your way to the 2020 Census.

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## LNHS Class of 1980 40th Reunion Rescheduled

Due to COVID-19, the Loy Norrix High School Class of 1980 has cancelled their 40th reunion, previously scheduled for June 20. Instead, a 41st reunion will be held sometime in the summer of 2021. Details to follow as things develop. Questions can be directed to: [loynorrix1980@gmail.com](mailto:loynorrix1980@gmail.com).

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# Parents Can Help Picky Eaters Develop Their Palates with Patience and Practice

By Shaun Robinson,  
Executive Chef for Chartwells —  
Kalamazoo Public Schools

I was a picky eater — that should give hope to frustrated parents everywhere.

I grew up to become an executive chef for Chartwells, which provides Food Service for Kalamazoo Public Schools.

Having grown up as a picky eater, I keep that in the forefront of my mind when I deal with children. For some, their palates just have not matured yet, and that can come with age. Other children might be like one of my sons, who had an aversion to certain food textures. My daughter's research found that there are actual physical causes for that aversion.

My point is kids have different preferences. And, sometimes, with some effort, it is possible to find ways to work around their fears and aversions to certain foods.

Parents should maintain a positive attitude. People's palates develop at different ages. It could be that your child is simply a late bloomer in terms of palate and food choices. Maybe they'll never outgrow those issues, but for many it's just a matter of time. Their tastes may change, but sometimes they become more receptive to foods simply because of peer pressure or being willing to explore foods that they see their friends eat.

Remember, children may not be open to an entire meal of new tastes, but they may be willing to move slowly. So, let them sample — and let them determine the course they are going to take in their food exploration.

Being a chef, I naturally try to take control or set the agenda for a meal. I come up with a run of recipes and say, "We're going to make this and do that," rather than asking, "What are you interested in?" You can't do that



**Chef Shaun Robinson mixes up fruit smoothies for guests at the Washington Writers' Academy Literacy Night celebration last year.**

with kids. Ask them what they'd like to cook, what foods they like to eat, what are they interested in trying.

Here are some other simple tips that parents can use to help their children broaden their palates:

- Think about foods in terms of basic components. I always suggest starting with foods in their simplest form. Sometimes it takes time to break into foods, especially with vegetables. Let kids try the fresh foods first, like a vegetable, before you put it in a cooked dish. For example, let them try fresh broccoli before you make a broccoli cheese soup or some other, more complex dish. When they realize how different — or better — a food tastes when it's cooked and seasoned, it may be a good way to bring them around.

- I like the idea of having a family night, where you have the entire family explore another culture through the cuisine and then plan and make a meal together. You can have a bunch of recipes and talk about a region

and its history and what foods are there. Let the kids have a hand in making dinner — even if it's just one recipe. I think it's a really fun way to introduce kids to the kitchen. And, that one-on-one time is precious.

- If you are worried about how to introduce them to cooking, just keep things simple. Start slow and simple with something like a yogurt parfait, where they layer fruit, granola and yogurt. Then, let them help make a dinner salad or a fruit salad. Let them work on cold prep skills. Then move on to basic chopping skills and show them how to work a knife. Once you get into food prep, then you can move on to heating and cooking.

I scared my kids out of the kitchen. You can overwhelm them.

It is OK to slow down and let them go at their own pace. They want to do things themselves and to show you how good they can do things. Just let them succeed at some easy tasks first.

These last few stressful weeks have been a reminder of how food can be comforting for families. It's not just the foods that we eat, but the practice of making meals together that can help us cope with instability and unknown circumstances. When the world is spinning out of control, cooking together and sharing a family meal can provide a note of normalcy. I hope your family looks forward to sharing dinner every night possible.

Chef Shaun • KPS FOOD SERVICE CHEF

## Potato-Crust Quiche

Hi, Kalamazoo! I hope you are safe and spending some of this precious time with family making some delicious meals together! Take time to have a family cooking night. Share, learn and enjoy as a family. Try out this gluten-free quiche and add whatever flavors and whichever proteins you prefer. Best regards and bon appetit, Chef Shaun.



**Shaun Robinson is the district chef for Chartwells at KPS Food Service.**

### Ingredients

4 tablespoons butter, melted and divided in half.  
1 bag hash brown potatoes, thawed (1 lb. 4 oz, bag is ideal)  
Salt and pepper, to taste  
½ teaspoon nutmeg  
1 heaping tablespoon Dijon mustard  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
4 slices turkey bacon, chopped into ¼-inch pieces  
1 large onion, diced  
1 tablespoon fresh thyme, chopped  
½ cup fresh spinach, chopped  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
6 eggs  
½ cup half-and-half  
1 ½ cups shredded Gruyère

### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Brush a cast-iron skillet or pie pan with 2 tablespoons melted butter.
2. In a large bowl, combine potatoes, salt, pepper, nutmeg, and mustard. Press the mixture

into the skillet, making sure the bottom has no gaps and the height is level all the way around. Pour the remaining butter evenly over the top. Bake until golden, about 30 minutes. Let cool for at least 5 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, heat olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat, and cook bacon briefly, about 3 minutes. Add onion, thyme, garlic, salt, and pepper. Reduce heat to medium and cook until onion are softened and slightly caramelized, stirring frequently, for about 5 minutes.

4. In another large bowl, whisk eggs and half-and-half until smooth. Add the bacon mixture to the eggs and stir quickly to combine. Fold spinach into mixture.

5. Pour the filling into the cooled crust. Bake for 15 minutes. Sprinkle cheese evenly over the top. Continue baking until browned and bubbling, about 15 more minutes. Serve warm.

**Servings: 4**

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# Parents Can Help Develop a Positive Culture Around Sports

By **Jim Horn, Milwood Elementary School Physical Education Teacher**

As many sports have been forced to the sidelines, now is a great time to pause and reflect on our responsibility to help create a positive culture around sports. As a former student-athlete, current coach, and a parent of student-athletes, I feel like I view this subject from a variety of lenses which help bring a deep perspective on this issue. Creating a positive culture around sports can be a difficult thing to do because of all of the dynamics involved in sports,

but with the right perspective as a parent, a positive sports culture is achievable.

As a student-athlete I had a positive experience with sports, but it did not all come from my parents. My father worked a lot, and my mother was involved only a little. In addition to their support, however, I also had many positive experiences thanks to my many fantastic coaches. I also had older siblings who played sports and who helped me cultivate a positive culture around sports. From those experiences, I would say my parents, coaches, and siblings allowed me to experience sports in a way where I found success (not always winning) and continued to find enjoyment in playing sports. The emphasis was always on developing skill, teamwork, respect for authority, and having fun.

Today, I am the physical education teacher at Milwood Elementary School and the head men's basketball coach for Kalamazoo Valley Community College.

Coaches are always learn-



**Jim Horn is the physical education teacher at Milwood Elementary School (and a Milwood alum) and the head men's basketball coach at Kalamazoo Valley Community College.**

ing and developing their coaching philosophy. When I started coaching, it was to stay involved with the competitive side of sports which does not always lead to a positive culture in sports. The pressure of winning can cause coaches to make decisions or to do things that may not be best for everyone involved, because

they think they are doing something to win. They may yell at a kid thinking they are motivating them, or they might argue with a referee to change a call. The competitive side of sports can be tricky because it can be perceived as something different than what it really is.

One of my first coaching experiences was with a coach whom I learned more from in two years than the rest of my 28-year coaching career.

But, sometimes he was not perceived by parents as the real coach he was. His passion for the game would sometimes cause him to do things that parents, administrators, fans, and others would view as out of control and over the top. Yet, during my time with him, he never lost the trust of his team or his coaching staff. We understood where he was coming from and the team thrived under his leadership, but from outside of the team he was viewed very differently.

Parents need to understand that coaches are learning and developing too, and they will

make mistakes along the way, but we must believe they have the student-athletes' best interests at heart. Support your kids' coaches.

Parents, I am with you. We want the best for our children and want them to have a positive experience playing sports. I have seen a lot of different stances from parents when it comes to creating a positive or negative culture in sports. There are parents who don't care, and you will probably see them at one or two games a year, if any. Some parents are at every practice, game, team gathering, and are heavily involved.

No matter what type of parent they are, in the end, they want the best for their children. I have heard the terms "helicopter parent" and "no-show parent." Coaches, administrators, and other parents start to form an opinion of them and how they are helping or hurting the culture of the team. I understand it because I have lived it from all sides, and like my former coach

*(continued on page 11)*

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Parents Can Help Develop a Positive Culture Around Sports (continued from page 10)

who was misunderstood, parents can be too. The biggest thing a parent has to remember is that in order to build a positive sports culture, it has to be about everyone involved and not just their child. That means they must consider the school, administration, coaches, parents, players, fans, etc. when expressing their feelings, or making a decision that could impact the culture of the team or the sport.

Parents, in order to perform your role in creating a positive culture around sports, there are three things I want you to remember: First, everyone is learning and plays a role. Players, coaches, administrators, and referees are all growing in their own areas, and then trying to put it all together when they play (let's cut them some

slack). Second, things are not always how they appear. Perception is not always reality, again, everyone is still developing and growing at different rates (let's help them grow). Finally, parents don't get a pass on behavior or attitude because it's their child and they love them more than anybody (which is true). Just remember the other people involved in your child's sports team. Love them too. They are sacrificing a lot to help them develop as a student-athlete.

Everyone's focus should be on making sure our children are having a positive experience by helping create a positive sports culture in which they can grow as students, as athletes and as people.

Remember: **TEAM**, Together Everyone Achieves More.

PEEP Enrolling for the 2020-2021 School Year

By Elizabeth Jackson-Spaner, KPS Coordinator of Early Childhood Education

In 1975, the State of Michigan developed a state-funded Michigan School Readiness Program (MSRP) to provide high quality preschool for four year olds. Governor Jennifer Granholm. Renamed the program the Great Start Readiness Program.

Kalamazoo Public Schools' Great Start Readiness Program is called PEEP (Pre-kindergarten Early Elementary Program). KPS has 17 PEEP classrooms in 11 elementary schools. PEEP follows the same school calendar as the rest of the district and is a part of the elementary school where it is housed.

KPS offers half-day and full-day PEEP classes. Transportation is provided to most families. PEEP teaching staff provide a structured day with meals, large group and small group learning, as well as time for children to play with and explore a variety of materials in the classroom. Play is the best way for young children to learn and understand their world.

Even though the school year has ended, the PEEP team is still accepting applications for next year. If you have a child who will be four years old by Sept. 1, you can complete an application online at [dreambigstartsmall.org](http://dreambigstartsmall.org). KPS PEEP is a part of the

Kalamazoo County Pre-K team to enroll all Kalamazoo County 4 year olds in a high quality, early Start program and KC Ready 4s education program.

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|                         |                  |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| Thursday, May 21, 2020  | 5:30—8:30 pm     |
| Tuesday, June 2, 2020   | 9:30 am—12:30 pm |
| Thursday, June 18, 2020 | 5:30—8:30 pm     |
| Tuesday, July 7, 2020   | 9:30 am—12:30 pm |
| Thursday, July 16, 2020 | 5:30—8:30 pm     |

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