



May 21, 2015

A Review of the  
Great Things  
Happening in  
Our Schools.

# Building Beat

## Upcoming ...

### Friday, May 22:

No School for students/staff  
at Hill Elementary ONLY

### Monday, May 25:

Memorial Day; No School

### Tuesday, May 26:

DHS Choir Spring Concert,  
6:30 p.m. Auditorium

### Wednesday, May 27:

Final Delayed Start Day at  
DHS/DAE students

Thomson Elementary PTO  
Walkathon Fundraiser

DMS Choir Concert, 7 p.m.  
DHS Auditorium

### Thursday, May 28:

Cap and Gown Distribution  
During school lunches

Hahn Vocal Music Concert,  
7 p.m. DHS Auditorium

### Friday, May 29:

Gates Elementary Spirit  
Day

Last Day for seniors

Farewell to 8th Grade  
Party, 7:30-10 p.m. Davison  
Middle School

### Monday, June 1:

Gates Anti-Bully Blue Out  
Day

Board of Education  
Meeting, 7 p.m. DHS AMR

## Central 4th graders write song to encourage test takers

When Central Elementary fourth graders **Baylie Brown, Grace Beamer and Natalie Vance** learned that some third graders were feeling a bit anxious about taking the new M-STEP state assessment, they thought a song would help to keep them up-beat.

So, Baylie, along with some help from her teacher, **Mrs. Kelly Fritz**, began to lay down some lyrics on paper. Grace and Natalie joined in on the effort and it wasn't long before the group had come up with a motivational melody set to Carly Rae Jepsen's pop hit "Call Me Maybe."

The song begins with an encouraging message:  
*"You know the m-step is near  
And we hope you don't fear  
The test is not a big deal  
Yes we believe in you"*

"We made it up for the third graders so they would do great on the M-STEP," Baylie said.

Grace said in the days leading up to the test, rumors led some third graders to believe that if they did poorly on the test, their teacher would get fired.

"We wanted them to know that was not going to happen," Grace said.

In addition, some students were worried about taking the test online. In the past, students took the state assessment - the Michigan Educational Assessment Plan (MEAP) - with pencil and paper.

In addition to performing the song in front of several staff members, a video of the trio singing the song was sent to all third and fourth graders. The song has netted the girls some unexpected attention.

"There was a third grader who came up to me and said I did a really good job," Natalie said.

Grace said another student gave her a "two thumbs up" for her performance while



Natalie, Grace and Baylie sing "Beat the M-STEP."

Where futures begin

A Fully Accredited District

Baylie said a classmate was excited because they shared the same bus.

Mrs. Fritz is very proud of the girls for wanting to inspire their classmates and coming up with the song. Once the fourth graders were finished with the M-STEP, she involved the whole class by including them in a music video with the girls' song. Students were encouraged to dress as music stars for the filming.

"I thought it would be a fun way to celebrate being done with the M-STEP," she said.

Here are the complete lyrics for the song. To see the girls perform their song, please click on this link: <http://www.davisonschools.org/videos.cfm?vID=16404>

*You know the m-step is near  
And we hope you don't fear  
The test is not a big deal  
Yes we believe in you"*

*We have some strategies too  
That we hope will help you  
So that you don't feel blue  
Yes we believe in you*

*Just please do your best  
And check all your answers  
Please there is no talking  
YOU ARE GONNA ROCK THE M-STEP!!!!*

## CHORUS

*hey it's the m-step, and don't be lazy  
Just do your best and  
You won't go crazy  
We are the 4th grade, kids at Central*

*We know you're gonna, beat the m-step  
So take your time with the test  
We know that you'll do your best  
Then you can go home and rest*

*And it's out of your way  
And then the very next day  
Your dear teacher will say  
That she's so proud of you  
You can go out and play*

*Use your super powers  
It will take some hours  
If you finish last  
You will still have a blast*

## CHORUS

*We know you're gonna, beat the m-step  
When you take the m-step test it is not so bad, It is not so so bad When you take the m-step test it is not so bad And you should know that*

## Sophomore Katie Pulaski invited to compete at Michigan Youth Arts Festival



Katie

Congratulations to Davison High School sophomore **Katie Pulaski**, who was invited to participate in the Michigan Youth Arts Festival Concerto competition. Instrumental Music Director **Jim Schuster** said Katie was one of 200 students invited to compete out of 15,000 potential events.

“It’s quite an honor,” Schuster said.

Katie plays the clarinet.

## Choral student selected for Michigan Honors Choir

Davison High School senior **Bailey Linton** was selected to participate in the Michigan Youth Arts Festival’s All-State Choir earlier this month in Kalamazoo.



Bailey

Participation in the Michigan School Vocal Music Association’s Honors Choir program has a three-tier structure: Regional, State and All-State. Auditions for Regionals takes place in October. It includes a vocal sampling and a sight reading test. Qualified students perform in the Regional choir closest to their location. Auditions for the state level are held during Regionals, at which approximately 300 students are selected to perform in the State Honors Choir in January during the Michigan Music Conference in Grand Rapids. The All-State Honors Choir consists of the top 100 students from the State level, and they perform at the Michigan Youth Arts Festival in May. Great job!

## Schuster named MSBOA Teacher of the Year

Davison High School Instrumental Music Director **James Schuster** has been selected as the District III Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association’s Teacher of the Year. Schuster was presented with the award by MSBOA District III President Scott Pries and Vice President Benji Jones in the middle of the Wind Ensemble’s performance at last Saturday’s Musicathon.



Jim Schuster

“I am humbled and honored that my peers would nominate and vote for me to be the District III MSBOA Teacher of the Year,” Schuster said. “This award would not be possible without the continued support of the administration, parents and most importantly our students.

Schuster was nominated by two teachers from District III.

“I am very excited that our program is recognized as one of quality for both band and orchestra by the MSBOA membership,” Schuster said.

## DHS named Bronze medal school in U.S News Best Schools in Country report

For the second consecutive year, Davison High School has been named as one of the best high schools in Michigan and the country by U.S. News and World Report. The school earned the designation of a national bronze medal school in the report, which ranked more than 22,000 public, charter and magnet schools in 49 states, comparing them in the areas of student/teacher ratios, college readiness and math and reading proficiency scores.

In Michigan, 849 schools were evaluated. In total, U.S. News nationally ranked 6,517 highest-scoring schools as gold, silver or bronze in the 2015 rankings.

## **Learning the Lingo: What does it mean to be “Data Driven”**

*The world of education changes almost as fast as technology— there’s always something new to learn and educators are constantly fine tuning their craft in order to make sure their students are best equipped for success. Sometimes, it seems like educators even speak a different language using acronyms and terms like DIBELs, DRA, formative and summative assessments, PLCs, STAR, QAR, SRG, Title I, District Accreditation, universal screener, ACC, PD and data dialogue just to name a few. But what do they all mean? In this edition of the Building Beat, we will begin to define what these terms mean. Today’s Learning the Lingo lesson deals with the term “data driven.”*

According to Assistant Superintendent **Kevin Brown**, “data driven” means that decisions are made based on data.

“It is extremely important for schools to look at data,” Brown said. “It is easy to make assumptions and predictions based on what you believe to be true or what you think may be happening but often the data does not support those assumptions. Schools have limited resources. It’s important to make good decisions in order to wisely use our limited resources. That’s where data comes in. Analyzing data in order to make decisions helps us maximize our resources.”

“If you don’t look at data, everything is just a guess,” said District Assessment Coordinator **Eric Chorley**. “Imagine you are driving to Florida from Michigan. You don’t just want to look up in 20 hours or so to see if you made it. You want to check a map or GPS device (i.e. the objective data) along the way to make sure you are on the right path. Sometimes there is construction that you need to be able to maneuver around instead of just standing still. The same can be thought of in education. Students come to school with a wide variety of experiences and readiness levels. To determine if we are meeting the needs of our students effectively on their education path, we need to examine data objectively at consistent intervals to determine if our programs are working or need adjustments ... We don’t want to wait until the end of the school year and then evaluate a program to see if it was successful. We want to do data checks along the way and make any adjustments or detours to maximize the efficiency of our programs.”

In Davison, there are many ways data is used to measure the effectiveness of programs.

“We look at student achievement data from national, state and local assessments,” Brown said.. “We use surveys, such as our parent satisfaction survey, to gather perception data. We use behavioral data. We use facilities data.”

Digging into data for more than 5,600 students can seem pretty time intensive. Davison is fortunate to have an assessment coordinator to help dissect and assist staff members in reading that data.

“We are very fortunate to have an assessment coordinator, Eric Chorley, who does a great job of collecting and disaggregating data for our administrators, coordinators and teachers,” Brown said. “Our teachers and principals regularly analyze data during their professional learning community (PLC) meeting time. We have District and building data days where we focus on student achievement data and our District and building school improvement teams use data to measure the effectiveness of programs.”

**“Data analysis is a struggle across education. It takes time to really dig into the information and to have the discussions necessary to determine what the causes are and what possible solutions can help.”**

**Eric Chorley**  
Assessment Coordinator

“Data analysis is a struggle across education,” Chorley said. “It takes time to really dig into the information and to have the discussions necessary to determine what the causes are and what possible solutions can help.”

Chorley’s role is to collect, combine and disaggregate the data to help staff and/or administrators make decisions and stay informed about students and programs. This includes setting up data collection devices using surveys, MS Access or our online data warehouse, Illuminate, to gather the data. Examples of this data are DRA (Development Reading Assessment), DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills), Star Math/Reading, statewide assessments, local common assessments, etc.

Next, the collected data is usually combined with various demographics (teacher, grade level, building, gender, economic status, special education status, enrollment date, attendance, behavior, etc.) for Chorley to create an aggregated data report.

“Many times one piece of assessment data is combined with another to give a complete picture (i.e. multiple data points) of a student or program,” Chorley explained. “For example, we will combine DRA, DIBELS and MEAP\* Reading (until it was discontinued) scores into one report. This data can also be combined with similar historical data to get a picture of what has been happening over time.”

Once aggregated data is created, it is time for Chorley to create reports for staff and administrators that tailor to their needs.

“For example, one of the reports we examine throughout the year is examining an entire grade level’s historical DRA benchmark percent by comparing those who take Free-Reduced Lunch and those who don’t,” Chorley said. “We check to see if the gap is closing between the two groups. If it isn’t, we try to drill down further to see if we can determine a reason and then create a strategy to attack the problem. This is at the heart of the School Improvement process. By taking the time in this step, most any report using any demographics, over any period of time can be created.”

Chorley said the district is getting much better at digging into data to make sound decisions.

“Gates Elementary has adopted a process called Data Dialogue that is proving to be very successful in helping staff determine causes to issues,” he said. “Other buildings are beginning to adopt this process as well.”

The next step in being “data driven” is disseminating the information to parents.

“Star Math and Reading data reports are sent home three times a year or shared at Parent Teacher conferences,” Chorley said. “Many teachers include DRA scores on the report cards or at conferences. ACT and MEAP\* scores are sent home to parents via a parent report created by those vendors. How clear or useful this information is to parents is unknown as some is very simple while other information can be very complex. What is known is that we live in an information society where people expect to have information available at their fingertips. It would behoove us to make sure our parents can read and understand any data that is sent home so that they can work with the teacher to maximize their child’s learning and growth.

*\*The MEAP is being replaced by M-STEP and ACT is being replaced by the SAT. 2015-2016 is the first year we will have data from either of these assessments.*

Hill Elementary students participated in the school's third intersession this week. The theme was "Fun in the Dirt." On Wednesday, the students visited the Robert Williams Nature & Historical Learning Center in Davison Township. The day included a nature hike, dissecting owl pellets, planting a sunflower garden and roasting hot dogs and making s'mores around a camp fire.





Siple Elementary Staff celebrated “Red Nose Day” on its inaugural day Thursday, May 21. The campaign is dedicated to raising money for children and young people living in poverty by simply having fun and making people laugh. People across the country, including staff at Siple Elementary, are coming together to have fun and raise funds and awareness. The day’s events will culminate in a three-hour entertainment TV special on NBC featuring the country’s favorite comedians, musicians and Hollywood stars.

Congratulations to all of our students who served as Blueberry Ambassadors at Gates Elementary, Hill Elementary and Hahn Intermediate. Hill Elementary was the winner of the \$1,000 prize in this year’s program, organized by Flint businessman Phil Shaltz. All of the students enjoyed a pizza luncheon at the Flint Farmer’s Market on Tuesday, May 19, prior to the ceremony where this year’s award winners were announced.

