

Board Briefs



Early Learning programs growing by leaps and bounds

Gone are the days when kindergarten was a half day and included nap time.

These days, our youngest students are writing sentences and learning to read.

"As you know, kindergarten standards and academic standards have increased," Thomson Elementary Principal **Natalie Miller** told Board of Education members Monday night as part of an Early Learning presentation to celebrate "April is The Month of the Young Child." "This is our third year since kindergarten went from a half day to a full day and we have seen the need for more opportunities for social and emotional growth as academics have increased."

Miller added that along with the increased academic standards placed on students, so are the demands on families.

"Right, wrong or indifferent, in today's society, families are really busy," she said. "There are also financial constraints."

Taking all of these factors into consideration, Davison staff began taking steps a few years ago to expand the early childhood programming in hopes of boosting academics for our youngest learners. And it's working.

The Great Start Readiness Program is one such example. Since the district began overseeing the 4-year-old program in September 2009, it has grown from 32 students to 160. Now housed in its own wing at Central Elementary, nine sections of GSRP are taught by certified teachers using state-approved curriculum.

The half-day preschool program is free for those who meet certain eligibility guidelines, according to Early Learning Coordinator **Susan Vamos**, who added that registration for the program begins in February for the following school year.

"Ninety percent of families can be notified by

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Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week

May 2-6 has been designated as Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week in Davison.

Davison Community Schools is fortunate to have highly dedicated staff members who work diligently to put Kids First.

Board gratefully accepts contributions

The following contributions have been offered to the district:

- Davison Alternative Education received several chess sets donated from the **Gethicker's, the Davison High School Wood Shop** and an **anonymous donor** to help support the school's newly formed chess club.

- The Davison High School Boys' Lacrosse program received a donation of equipment valued at \$800 from former coach **Julian Dortman**.

Board Briefs is a monthly newsletter published after Board of Education meetings. For additional information, please contact the Communications Department at 591-0852.



Davison Community Schools

Where Kids Come First and Futures Begin

Connections ♦ Curriculum ♦ Opportunities

Presentations

Senior Exit Project prepares students for life outside classroom

In eighth grade, Davison students begin working on their career goals by developing an Educational Development Plan, or EDP for short.

During the rest of their school career, students will continue to hone their plans, focusing on the questions:

- **Who am I?** What are my skills, talents, abilities and interests?
- **Where am I going?** What are my goals now and for life after high school?
- **How will I get there?** What is my plan to achieve these goals?



Left to right, Davison High School seniors **Dustin Wood**, **Emma Schmieder**, **Kailee Tubbs** and **Kalei Geeck-Kirby** share details about their Senior Exit Projects with board members while Teacher Ms. **Kristen Slattery** looks on.

Work on the student's EDP culminates with the Senior Exit Project. Seniors are required to research a career, complete practicum hours through job shadowing, volunteer work or extracurricular classes, create a resume and cover letter, participate in a mock interview with community leaders and present a showcase project that takes place outside the classroom.

Students are also required to make two presentations and write a final paper about their experience and to reflect on their growth as part of their Senior Exit Project.

"It's a career-focused extension of the classroom," Davison High School English Teacher **Kristen Slattery** explained. "There is a strong connection to what students are doing in school with their EDPs, but our requirements go above and beyond at Davison like we do with so many other things."

Slattery said students have also gone above and beyond with their projects.

"We have had students start their own businesses, write and direct plays, and restore old cars," she said. "We've had kids do a lot of really beneficial things for the community and provide hands-on skills that sitting in an English classroom or any classroom for that matter cannot provide."

Senior **Kalei Geeck-Kirby** is studying nursing. She helped plan a "Parties for Patients" event at Genesee Hematology and Oncology to provide a stress reliever for cancer patients at the clinic.

Geeck-Kirby, along with classmates **Emma Schmieder**, **Kailee Tubbs** and **Dustin Wood**, spoke briefly at Monday's Board of Education meeting about their Senior Exit Projects this year. Dustin, who is interested in a career in business, recently organized a Senior Citizen Prom while Emma and Kailee plan to pursue careers in education. Emma plans to teach basic sign language to two classes at Hahn Intermediate while Kailee will teach an introduction to Spanish lesson to high school and middle school students in May.

Action Items

Board ratifies agreements with DPA, CFMT bargaining group

Board of Education members ratified contracts with both the **Davison Paraprofessional Association** (DPA) and **Custodial, Food Service, Maintenance and Transportation** (CFMT) bargaining groups at Monday night's meeting. Both agreements are for the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years

ACC Textbook/curriculum recommendations gets nod of approval

The district's **Advisory Curriculum Council** has completed countless hours of work to provide a recommendation for textbook and curriculum purchases for the upcoming school year. Board members approved the recommendation Monday night for \$199,042 in curriculum supplies for elementary math and high school English language arts, criminal law I, CI biological science and CI world history.

Nine DHS students to compete in DECA international competition

Board members approved a trip for nine marketing DECA Club students to attend the International DECA Conference April 22-27 in Nashville, Tennessee. The following 9 students qualified at the March 11-13 State DECA Conference to be part of the Michigan delegation to the International DECA Conference:

- **Cole Davis**, senior, Chapter Awards Program, President.
- **Nathan Mudge**, senior, Chapter Awards Program, Vice President.
- **Chase VanWormer**, senior, Chapter Awards Program, Vice President.
- **Ashley Adams**, senior, Public Relations Project.
- **Morgan Freeman**, senior, Public Relations Project.
- **Morgan Graham**, junior, Learn and Earn Project.
- **DJ Harrington**, junior, Gold Level School Based Enterprise.
- **Monet McCoy**, senior, Learn and Earn Project.
- **Jeremy Nealis**, senior, Gold Level School Based Enterprise Project.

Robotics Club heading to world competition

Board members approved a trip for the 17 members of the House of Cards Team #3534 FIRST Robotics team to attend the 2016 FIRST Robotics Championship Competition in St Louis, MO April 27 – May 1.

Board approves contract renewal with Chartwells

Board members voted to extend its contract with Chartwells School Dining for the management of the district's Food Services program for the 2016-17 school year. The Michigan Department of Education approved the extension.

"Four years ago we made a change in the hiring of a new director from Chartwell's," Director of Operations Phil Thom said, referring to Jennifer Mieslik. "Since that change in district management I really believe consistently over the past four years we have continued to raise the bar with our program and it's as good as I've ever seen."

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June who qualify by income. If (they don't qualify), we may be able to offer to some families who are over income a very reasonable tuition rate."

Vamos said preschoolers receive an hour of free choice time and at least 30 minutes of outdoor time as well.

New this year to Davison's GSRP preschool is a pilot program that is a full day and combines nine special and nine regular education students. Several other school districts within the county are expected to pilot a similar program next school year, Vamos said.

Davison offers more preschool options through the Cardinal's Nest. Preschool and child development programs for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds are available with half- and full-day options. These tuition-based programs offer curriculum that correlates with GSRP programming and uses the same assessments. More than 300 children are also enrolled in the Cardinal's Nest latchkey programs offered at the Cardinal's Nest, Hill Elementary, Gates Elementary and Hahn Intermediate School.

Other early childhood programs that are available include Successful Kids = Involved Parents, more commonly known as SKIP. The free program for students ages 0-5 and their parents encourages group play and parent education. Play groups are held at Central Elementary once a month and home visits are also available for parent educators to perform developmental screening to help identify students who may need speech or other services.

Head Start, a federally funded program, is also available to Davison families. This program is not offered through Davison Community Schools but is operated by the Genesee County Community Action Resource Department. There are two locations in Davison; one is housed in a unit next to Thomson Elementary and the other at St. John's.

Miller said the availability of preschool programming for Davison families is evident in the data that is collected during Kindergarten Roundup.

"The sheer percentage of students that have attended some type of preschool this year was almost 90 percent compared to 32 percent (in 2009)," she said. "A lot of that is due to the growth we have had in our GSRP program."

Miller added students who attended a quality preschool do perform at a higher level on kindergarten entrance assessments.

"In 2009 we started collecting data at Round Up—measuring letter and number identifications, how they write their name and a Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) screener.

"These students do typically perform academically better on our kindergarten entry assessment by five to 10 percentage points better."



A student on her first day of GSRP in September.



Leading the Pledge

Preschool students from the Cardinal's Nest and GSRP led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance at the April Board of Education meeting. Students were accompanied by Thomson Elementary Principal Natalie Miller, Early Learning Coordinator Susan Vamos and GSRP teachers Andrea Bell and Lindsey Tate.

