

Board Briefs



Student M-STEP scores continue to improve in fourth year of test

Davison students continue to outperform their counterparts on the M-STEP, even scoring at or near the top 20 percent in the state on many of the annual assessment's subject areas.

M-STEP, which stands for Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress, is an online statewide test given in the spring. Students in grades three through eight are assessed annually by the state in math and English language arts. In addition, fifth, eighth and 11th graders are tested in social studies.

"As a board of education you've chosen to compare yourselves on a statewide basis," said Assistant Superintendent **Kevin Brown**, referring to the board's curriculum goal that the percentage of students achieving satisfactory performance on the state assessment will annually rank among the top 10% in the State of Michigan. "We didn't actually make the goal in any one assessment but are very close in most of the areas, in fact in five of the assessments our students outperformed in the 80th or above percentile. That's the top 20 percent statewide. I think that's pretty good when you are comparing yourself to every school in the state of Michigan."

"When we adopted this board goal, we knew it was quite a stretch goal and one that we can be proud of if we're knocking on the door and can be very proud of when we achieve it," said Superintendent **Eric Lieske**. "We wanted to take risks and step out of our comfort zone, especially when it means doing the right things for kids."

While overall test results are important, Davison school officials are just as interested in digging deeper when it comes to looking at individual student growth. In some areas, the district has seen student growth increase by at least two percentage points.

"That's good news," Brown said. "What's really good news is when you look at 6th and 8th grade math—those are areas where just a few years ago we were having some problems. We took some steps to

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Graduation dates set

The following contributions were accepted at last night's meeting:

- **Gary Guy** donated a high powered telescope for use in science departments throughout the district.
- **Lori Tallman** donated a giant cupcake cutout display to Gates Elementary to be used as a background for various events.
- **Wojo's Garden Splendors** donated flower barrels to Thomson Elementary for school beautification.
- **Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 126**, donated \$500 to the Cardinals Care Fund to assist students and families in need.
- **Angie Siple** donated assorted snacks for students at Siple Elementary.
- Pastor **Shelly Long** donated school supplies and backpacks to Siple Elementary for students in need.

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

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Presentations

Hill Paraprofessional Amanda Groat named “Kids First” Oct. recipient

Hill Elementary Media Center Paraprofessional **Amanda Groat** is the October recipient of the “Kids First” Award.

Each month, administrators nominate a DCS employee who best exemplifies what it means to be “Kids First.” Winners receive a \$100 Visa gift card thanks to Mark Owen, owner of MEEMIC insurance agencies in Davison and Flint Township, and a certificate. The winner is chosen at random.

Amanda was nominated by Hill Elementary Principal **Jennifer Torok**, who wrote:

“It is my pleasure to nominate Amanda Groat for a Kids First Award. Amanda is our media paraprofessional at Hill Elementary. Amanda wears many hats and is always willing to lend an extra hand. You can see her daily assisting with breakfast, greeting students as they enter our building, she also leads a summary writing intervention group on top of her media paraprofessional duties. She is kind and caring, makes an intentional effort to get to know our students, and has a wonderful way about her that challenges students to be their very best.

“Amanda is creative and makes learning fun, while maintaining high expectations. She is an asset to our staff!

“Amanda is a fine example of a Davison employee with a Kids First Attitude.”

Other great DCS staff members who were nominated this month include: **Amie Hicks**, Hahn Intermediate Teacher; **Shaun Kovatch**, Davison High School Teacher; **Ashley McCann-Markham**, Central Elementary Teacher; **Rhonda Miller**, Siple Elementary Secretary; **Sarah Smith-Clark**, Davison Middle School Teacher and **Betsy Wambaugh**, Davison High School Counselor.



Left to right, Hill Elementary Principal Jennifer Torok, Hill Elementary Paraprofessional Amanda Groat, Board of Education President Kathy Sudia and Superintendent Eric Lieske.



shore up those areas and are now really starting to see dividends.”

Some of those steps included hiring Siple Elementary Teacher **Julie Crockett** as the district’s math coach in 2016; training teachers in Math Recovery, a professional development course that focuses on early numeracy; hosting or participating in Math Classroom Learning Labs; and launching Number Talks, a 10-15 minute whole group mental math activity.

“We wanted to get away from factual regurgitation of 5 plus 5 is 10,” Brown explained. “In order for students to have a conceptual understanding, it’s hard to build a strong foundation on just memorization of facts.”

Brown added that more than 40 teachers have been trained in the Add+Vantage Math Recovery course.

“We don’t run a Math Recovery program but we’ve had a lot of teachers trained in math recovery because we believe that puts another tool in their tool box,” Brown said.

Almost 30 of those teachers have also completed Course 2 of the Add+Vantage Math Recovery program.

Thirteen K-4th grade teachers have hosted and another 65 have participated in math classroom learning labs.

“Basically a learning lab is where one teacher volunteers to host other teachers within the district,” Brown explained. “They have a pre-conference and talk about the lesson and what to look for and observe when that teacher is teaching. After the lesson

they then reconvene and have dialogue. This, according to our teachers, has been some of the best professional development they have ever had.”

While the district has seen significant double digit growth in sixth and eighth grade math scores, scores at the seventh grade level are still below what school officials would like to see.

“Seventh grade math is still a concern but we are addressing that issue,” Brown said. “You have to remember, though, that most of our efforts have

been concentrated at the elementary grades, following that model of early intervention, so it does take some time for those results to be passed on to the upper grades

In English language arts, Davison students scored in the 86th, 89th and 87th percentiles in sixth, seventh and eighth grades, respectively. Brown said the district is actually working to strengthen the focus in the area. One way is by expanding the role of building literacy specialists.

“Our literacy specialists have worked with our most intensive kids as interventionists,” Brown said. “They are highly trained professionals, most with master’s degrees in reading. They now have the flexibility to not only work as interventionists but also as coaches to work with teachers with implementation of balanced literacy, Reader’s Workshops and in the same capacity similar to our math coach.”

The district is also participating in the Reading Now Network, which is a philosophy of districts joining together as regions and developing and sharing best practices.

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Superintendent Eric Lieske

Leading the Pledge

Davison High School Student Council members, along with teacher sponsor Mrs. Linda Martin and Assistant Principal Mrs. Julie Malenich, led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance. Student Council is a government/service organization made up of elected class officers and representatives from each grade level. The Student Council is charged with a variety of responsibilities including school leadership initiatives, school dances, homecoming events and fundraisers.

