



Community members celebrated the groundbreaking of our new Sheiko Elementary School thanks to the generous support of voters. The latest photos are posted on our website wbsd.org/bond.

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

The WBSD has a longstanding tradition of academic excellence and rigor, driven by our commitment to delivering exceptional educational experiences to our students.

Throughout the start of our bond projects, from celebrating the ribbon-cutting at the new Gretchko and Scotch playgrounds to completing the Magnet classroom, relocating 80 elementary staff for the shift to four K-5 buildings, initiating construction on the Transition Center at WBHS, and breaking ground for the new Sheiko Elementary, our core mission of teaching and learning has remained at the forefront every day.

During Late Start Wednesdays and Professional Development on November 5, we leveraged our time to analyze student data and pilot new curricular materials. Building on Cognia's commendation from our recent Accreditation Engagement Review – where we scored above average in every area – we are continuously refining our approach to data-driven instruction to drive further improvement. Our process includes:

1. Quarterly analysis of district and building level Learning Environment Observation Data
2. Fall, winter and spring analysis of NWEA MAP Growth and Proficiency Data

3. Annual review of Stakeholder Feedback, incorporating insights from students, families and staff

District leadership collaborates with building teams to leverage these data points, identifying priority objectives aligned with our Strategic Plan goals. One key goal area is Operations and Finance. I'm pleased to share that WBSD balanced our budget through an attrition model, increased fund equity and received a "clean and unqualified" audit.

This cannot be done working in silos. Our board, administration, staff, families, and students all contribute to our collective success. Please help me congratulate Julie Beaty, Nick Hersh and Kirsten Sonnevile-Douglass, who were elected to the Board of Education, and to thank all who were willing to serve our community in that role.

Together we bring our mission to life: to support each student's needs by providing the opportunities, experiences and educational tools for their journey.

Yours in Education,
Dania H. Bazzi, PhD
Superintendent

SAVE THE DATE

December 11 - WBHS Combined Winter Collage Concert
December 17 - WBMS Orchestra Concert with Rodney Page
January 6 - Back to School
January 19 - United We Walk event
January 28 - WBMS Parent Info Night
January 30 - District Kindergarten Info Night

February 5 - WB Preschool Academy Info Night
February 7 - WBEF Casino Night Fundraiser
February 12 - WBHS Pre Festival Band Concert
February 20 - WBHS Pre Festival Orchestra Concert
March 4 - WBHS Pre Festival Choir Concert
March 5 - 8th Grade Parent Night at WBHS

» LAKER News & Notes

Did you know our weekly updates are translated into 42 languages based on family preference, and we have over 60 languages spoken in our schools? We work diligently to ensure all families feel safe, welcome, and included in our school community. Adults wishing to learn English are encouraged to call 248-539-2390 or email Melissa.McDonald@wbsd.org for information. The next classes run January 6-April 30. Call today to register.



Congratulations to Elizabeth Zawalski, a fourth-grader at Scotch Elementary School! West Bloomfield Township Public Library selected her library card design titled "Read What You Want To."



Students age 16-22 across Michigan can enroll in Laker Opportunity Center for credit recovery and high school completion.



Check out WBSD Community Education for after-school programming and Parents Night Out events! More information at <https://wbsdce.ce.eleyo.com/>

SAVE THE DATE!

2 p.m., Sunday, January 19, West Bloomfield Middle School, is the 31st United We Walk event with the theme "Continuing the Dream: Building Bridges of Unity." This is three events in one: 2 p.m. program celebrating peace and unity, 3 p.m. walk, then community service and children's activities. In inclement weather the walk will be held inside the school. Scan the QR code for more information.



**BENEFITS THE
WEST BLOOMFIELD
EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION**



**FRIDAY
2.7.25
7-11 P.M.**

*Sponsorships
Available!*

**SILENT AUCTION, CASINO GAMES,
BINGO, APPETIZERS,
DANCING & LIVE MUSIC!**

GLEN OAKS GOLF CLUB IN FARMINGTON HILLS

**MORE INFO AT WWW.WBEP.ORG
TICKETS START AT \$50**



PREMIER CO-SPONSOR **AUCH**

A million reasons to support WBEP: West Bloomfield Educational Foundation (wbef.org) has raised over a million dollars to date to provide educational programming in our classrooms, and to help buy state-of-the-art technology. This fall, they presented 31 grants to teachers. February 7 is their primary fundraiser and sponsorships are available.

FREE ADMISSION FOR RESIDENTS 65+

Laker Senior Gold Cards are available for West Bloomfield School District residents age 65 and above so they may attend plays, athletic games and musical performances free of charge. Cards are available at district schools and the ACS Office at 5810 Commerce Road.



FIRST Tech Challenge Grades 6-8

Congratulations to the WBMS Robotics Team #14649 for bringing home the Motivate Award! The team practiced gracious professionalism and worked hard after school to build, code, and develop a strong team and robot.



WBHS tennis won the OAA Blue League Championship!



WBHS Varsity Boys Soccer team won the district championship!

School of Choice: Pending school board approval, the district will once again be participating in School of Choice (SOC) for residents of Oakland County. Watch for the window to open in January. For more information visit wbsd.org or call 248-865-6453.



Save the date!

Friday, May 9, 2025

7:00 am

Temple Israel

5725 Walnut Lake Road

West Bloomfield



Think about your nominees!

Nominations OPEN starting Friday, January 3, 2025, and must be received by Friday, February 14, 2025, at 11:59 P.M.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Stacy Brickman, President
Nelson Hersh, Vice President
Julie Beaty, Secretary
Carol Finkelstein, Treasurer
Ashleigh Davis, Trustee
Deborah Evans, Trustee
Wm. Art Holdsworth, Trustee

WBSD Board Meetings are held in the iCenter at West Bloomfield High School at 7 p.m. Board Study Sessions are held at 6:30 p.m., in the ACS building, 5810 Commerce Road.

December 16 - Board Meeting
January 13 - Board Study Session
January 27 - Board Meeting
February 10 - Board Study Session
February 24 - Board Meeting
March 10 - Board Study Session
March 17 - Board Meeting

West Bloomfield School District
Superintendent Dania H. Bazzi, PhD
248-865-6485

Call for a Tour
West Bloomfield High School
248-865-6720

Oakland Early College
248-522-3540

Laker Opportunity Center
248-522-3542

West Bloomfield Transition Center
248-539-0532

West Bloomfield Middle School
248-865-4480

Doherty Elementary School
248-865-6020

Gretchko Elementary School
248-865-6570

Scotch Elementary School
248-865-3280

Sheiko Elementary School
(at Abbott site temporarily)
248-865-6370

Adult Ed. English Language Learner
248-539-2390

WB Preschool Academy
248-865-6457

WBSD Communications
Rebecca Fannon and Andrea Frank
248-865-6454



BOARD OF EDUCATION Progress Report

As President of our Board of Education, I open each meeting with a reminder that all of our board members are here to lead, not manage—in Laker terms: we steer, not row. Our role is to set the direction through our strategic plan and our budgeting process. We entrust our professional staff to carry out the mission, and they do not disappoint. Here is a synopsis of progress we can all celebrate in each of our Strategic Goal Areas.

Stacy Brickman

President, Board of Education

K-5 TRANSITIONS

WBSD has transitioned extremely well from a K-2/3-5 elementary school model to four K-5 elementary schools. Principals and the Learning Services department knew that supporting students, staff, and families with a transition to a new building and principal would be key. Over the last year, intentional transition activities have been planned and executed in order to help everyone feel at home. All four buildings are on a roll right now!

LEVEL UP ELEMENTARY MATH

Thanks to the transition to K-5 elementary buildings, students demonstrating advanced mastery of grade level math content now have the opportunity to “level up” one full grade level in math!

Voters overwhelmingly approved renewal of our Operating Millage this year which provides 17% of our annual budget.



West
Bloomfield
ELEMENTARIES



BAND/ORCHESTRA/CHOIR FOR 5TH GRADE

Every 5th grade elementary student now has a choice of band, orchestra or choir. This selection serves as their music special and provides an avenue for student choice and voice. It also ensures students have a foundation for a clear pathway to the performing arts in middle and high school.

STEAM STANDARDS IN K-5

Our STEAM Curriculum is now guiding a criterion-based Schools-of-Choice admission process at all grade levels, with the addition of our K-5 STEAM program at all four elementary buildings. Prior to the 24-25 school year, K-2 students were admitted via an open lottery system, while middle and high school students were required to meet assessment and grade criteria to gain entrance into our district.

PHONICS & READING TRAINING

88 of our preschool through fifth grade teachers and administrators are engaged in LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) training on phonics and the science of reading, to continue providing our students with the best possible English Language Arts education.



WBSD maintained a balanced budget and will add to fund equity this year with a clean and unmodified finding on our financial audit.

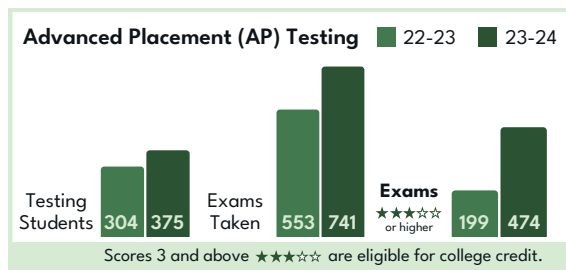
ACADEMICS

CURRICULUM REVIEW CYCLE

WBSD has established a thorough curriculum review cycle that aligns with state standards; analyzes WB student achievement data; focuses on research-driven best practices in instructional design; and includes parent, student, and staff input. Currently, secondary math teachers are piloting an innovative curricular resource called Reveal Math. Meanwhile, forty elementary teachers are piloting two different curricular resources in English Language Arts: ARC Core and EL Education. Both resources are knowledge-building curriculum that aim to deepen student knowledge of the world around them while also teaching essential language comprehension skills.

AP CLASSES GROWTH

With a targeted focus on encouraging students to lean into their academic goals, WBSD increased Advanced Placement participation and performance, with a 28% increase in scores 3 or higher!



CULTURE

FAMILY SUPPORT

The Global Equity Team proudly hosted its first “Caregiver University” event aimed at empowering families across the district with strategies to support their children’s learning. The inaugural session was “Raising Joyful Readers” where participants explored ways to make reading a joyful, daily habit that enhances literacy skills and builds lifelong learners.

MENTORSHIP

Mentorship programs at elementary and middle schools were designed to support academic, social, and emotional growth of students. These programs provide positive role models, and encourage self-confidence, resilience, and a sense of belonging. At the middle school level, mentorship supports navigating academic challenges, building peer connections, and developing leadership skills.



PLAYGROUNDS AT GRETCHKO & SCOTCH ✦

New playgrounds are open at Gretchko and Scotch, featuring five unique areas: high adventure on Apple Island, lower and upper elementary zones, a music garden, and a dedicated sensory playground. These playgrounds were generously funded by the community through the 2023 bond, providing all students with inclusive and enriching play experiences.

TRANSITION CENTER CONSTRUCTION ✦

Construction of our new, trend setting Adult Transition Center will be completed this month. Designed for our 18-26 year old students who receive special education services, this new facility at WBHS will provide a supportive and innovative learning environment where students will develop the skills they need for success beyond school. Watch for photos and a more in-depth look in the winter edition of The Laker.

SHEIKO ELEMENTARY & MORE TO COME ✦

Sheiko Elementary redesign process is complete and construction will begin early 2025. This school will open in August of 2026, offering students beautiful spaces designed for modern learning, preparing students for their future. Design is also underway for the new Career Technical Education space at WBHS.

SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS & AUDITS ✦✦

Every classroom in WBSD now has interior door safety locks with prominent displays that can be operated without a key. Teachers and students are now able to lockdown their classrooms without entering the hallway. These improvements were recommended through our ongoing safety audits and funded through a safety grant and the voter-approved sinking fund.



✦ Bond Funds

✦ Sinking Fund

✦ Grants or Other Funds

A COMMITMENT TO FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS

With the retirement of several legends in our Fine and Performing Arts Department last summer, we thought you might enjoy meeting a few of the arrivals joining our talented team.

Vocal Music at WBHS/WBMS

Daniel Dade comes to us from Grand Ledge High School, where he was a choral music educator conducting concerts across three ensembles per year. He also served as ensemble percussion director at Walled Lake Northern High School, and has been an educator and participant in several A Capella groups for middle school, high school and college. He performed with the Michigan State University Acafellas, Spartones and Men's Glee Club. Under his direction ensembles have earned Division 1 rating at Choral Festival and a perfect score at State Solo & Ensemble. Daniel will also be serving as district fine arts coordinator, creating a cohesive and unified Fine Arts Department and supporting curriculum and staff development K-12. Daniel earned a Bachelor of Music from MSU and his technical skills include live sound engineering, music composition, music technology and music theory.

Orchestra at WBHS/WBMS

Kim Kang joins us from Tecumseh Public Schools, where she taught two high school and two middle school orchestras, as well as a high school guitar class for which she created the curriculum. Kim holds a Bachelor of Music from Eastern Michigan University and served on the Michigan Schools Band & Orchestra Association and American String Teachers Association.

Theater at WBMS

Sarah Emerson has taught for 10 years in three countries – the U.S., U.K., and Grand Cayman. She earned an MA (Hons) in Theatre Studies from the University of Glasgow, a Post Graduate Diploma



WBHS band students traveled to University of Michigan where they connected with former WB band students Kylie Harmala and Arthur Yang.

of Education - Specialist Degree from the University of Edinburgh, and multiple credentials and certificates. She comes to us from Farmington Public Schools, where she was the career development facilitator, a teacher, and director of the high school play and musical.

Visual Arts at WBHS

Jacqueline Smith holds both a Master of Teaching and a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Wayne State University. She has been both an art teacher for grades 3-8 and an Art Club advisor, utilizing the national standards for visual arts, as well as cross-curricular projects with an emphasis on incorporating math and writing into the art curriculum.

Visual Arts at Gretchko/Scotch

Megan Stutesman holds a Bachelor of Art Education K-12 from Oakland University and joins us from Oxford Community Schools, where she was the International Baccalaureate Elementary Art educator. Like Jacqueline, her instruction includes drawing, painting, ceramics, and technology integration.



CONGRATULATIONS TO COACH McALLISTER

West Bloomfield is proud to honor Coach Darrin McAllister, recognized at the 66th Annual Coach of the Year Awards by the Michigan High School Coaches Association for Girls Basketball.

Under his leadership, our team has achieved:

- 3 Conference Titles
- 3 District Championships
- 3 Regional Championships
- 3 Quarterfinal Appearances
- 2 State Semi-Final Appearances
- 1 State Runner-Up Finish
- 2 State Championships

WBHS ALUM SPOTLIGHT ON Ryan Destiny, Class of 2012

By Alycia Chase

Ryan Destiny is emerging as one of Hollywood's most exciting rising stars, making a name for herself across film, television and music.

Next, she will be seen starring as the lead in Amazon MGM's biopic "The Fire Inside," where she plays Claressa "T-Rex" Shields, one of the greatest female boxers of all time. Shields made history as the first American woman to win an Olympic gold medal in boxing and the first American boxer – male or female – to win back-to-back gold medals. The film marks Rachel Morrison's feature directorial debut, with a screenplay by Oscar-winning writer Barry Jenkins. "The Fire Inside" hits theaters December 25.

Destiny first gained widespread attention with her breakout role on Fox's "Star," in which she starred alongside Queen Latifah. Destiny's role showcased her impressive range, blending her acting, singing and dancing talents. In addition to "Star," Destiny has appeared in Freeform's "Grown-ish," and several other projects, some of which were filmed in Michigan.

As a musician, Destiny released her debut single, "The Same," in 2018, followed by a remix featuring rapper Tobi

Lou the next year. Her second single, "Do You," came out in 2020, and further solidified her as a dynamic musician.

HOW HAS WBHS HELPED RYAN ON HER CURRENT PATH?

Ryan Destiny graduated in 2012, but had already begun her music career. She signed with Universal Records during her senior year and successfully balanced both school and her career, thanks to the incredible support from her teachers and the counseling office. She gives special thanks to her choir teacher, Mrs. Hawk, and counselor, Mrs. Brody, who worked together to create a game plan that allowed Destiny to graduate while pursuing her career in the entertainment industry.

"WB played an essential role in shaping my ambitions and dreams," Destiny said. "My teachers and counselors were incredibly supportive, offering guidance and encouragement every step of the way. They were committed to ensuring my success, both academically and personally, always believing in me – whether the challenge was big or small. I don't think I could have achieved what I have without their encouragement and support."

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR OUR CURRENT STUDENTS?

"Stay focused on what's right in front of you and resist the urge to compare your journey to anyone else's. Trust your path, be patient with yourself and embrace the process, even the setbacks. Now is the time to explore who you are, to get lost and to overcome obstacles, knowing you'll find yourself again with each challenge. Try not to get discouraged – you're exactly where you need to be, and you're doing just fine."

We are proud of Ryan, another amazing alum! Do you know a WBHS alum who would be a great fit for a spotlight feature? Reach out to alycia.chase@wbsd.org to let her know.



BLANK FOR AD