

Kalamazoo Public Schools

# EXCELSIOR

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August 2025 • Volume 28, Issue 7

## Water, Water Lessons Everywhere

(STORY AND PHOTOS ON PAGES 8-9)

KPS honors  
2024-25  
Retirees.

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Meet **Neil Jansen**, Chenery Auditorium's new manager.

pg. 6



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# The Dog Days of Summer Are Perfect for Planning a Great School Year

## A Message from the Superintendent

Dr. Darrin Slade



IT IS ALREADY August, the dog days of summer. It's sad to think that summer vacation is almost over. You were excited for the start of summer vacation only a few weeks ago and now, we're looking at the start of the new school year on Aug. 25.

So what have you done with your summer? Have you had a chance to visit with family and friends? Have you gotten away? Have you laid in the sun, enjoying the warmth of our too short Michigan summers? Have you splashed in a pool, dipped your toes in the lake, or visited a splashpad to cool off?

Did you enjoy that extra scoop of ice cream in your waffle cone? Did you work in the garden, read that book, go for a hike, ride your bike, scream on the roller coasters at Michigan's Adventure, or

go to a Kalamazoo Growler's baseball game? How many pick-up basketball games did you play, how many goals did you score in soccer games with friends?

There's still time. You can do some or all of those things, but you need to make a plan to make sure you make the most of your summer. Otherwise, the days slip past with nothing to remember them by. Maybe instead of spending more time on social media than you could be outside in the garden. Maybe instead of lounging in front of the TV, you could catch an outdoor concert. Without a plan, you run the risk of missing some summer activities.

Sure, part of what makes summer so fun are those days that you can enjoy without an agenda or a to-do list, but without a few goals and few must-do activities you can get to the end of the summer and wonder where all the days went.

The same thing can happen with a school year.

If you don't make a plan for what

you want to accomplish for the coming year, the year might fly by without you achieving any of your goals. It may feel a little too soon (with all that summer daylight still greeting you every day), but now is the perfect time to sit back and think about all the things you can accomplish next school year — with some careful planning.

A few simple suggestions for making the most of the 2025-26 school year:

- Plan to be in school all day, every day. It may sound obvious, but practicing good attendance is the simplest way to set yourself up for success. Being in school, ready to learn every day gives you the best opportunity to capitalize on all of the great things happening in your school. Your teachers have lessons ready for you, your classmates enjoy the day more when you are there, and you can learn about new clubs, activities and sports — all of which will enrich your school experience.
- Plan to challenge yourself. The

more you stretch yourself, the higher you aim— the better your chances are of attaining new heights. Don't limit yourself by being too scared to try a harder class, or a new sport, a challenging piece of music, or auditioning for the lead in the school play. You can do more and be more than you know.

- Plan on being a community builder in your classroom and not a distraction. Yes, one of your goals can be to make the learning environment healthier, happier, and more positive. We all have the ability to do that, whether it is through a kind word to a classmate or a helping hand to the teacher. You have the ability to ensure that each classroom is a place of learning and free of unnecessary distractions — so everyone can learn more.

Those are some of the goals that I hope you'll consider setting this year. It can be the best year ever — if you choose to make it the best year. Aim high and make the 2025-26 school year one to remember.

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# CIS Champs Honored for Dramatically Improving the Lives of KPS Students

*From Communities in Schools of Kalamazoo*

**C**OMMUNITIES in Schools of Kalamazoo hosted its 18th annual Champs Celebration, at the Arcadia Ballroom at the Radisson Plaza Hotel earlier this year honoring individuals and community partners, who share in the CIS vision of an engaged community where every child fulfills his or her promise and who put forth time, energy, talent, and resources to make this vision a reality.

CIS Board President Linnaea Thomas served as the emcee. Presenters were: Ian Kennedy, executive vice president, chief legal and sustainability officer for Kalsec, Inc.; Kalamazoo Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Darrin Slade; CIS of Kalamazoo Executive Director James Devers; and KPS students Jaylan Vincent, Devin Harris, and Austin Bus.

**The 2025 Champs sponsors were:**

Kalsec Inc., Fifth Third Bank, JP Morgan Chase, Lake Michigan Credit Union, Landscape Forms, Maestro,

PNC Bank, R.W. LaPine Inc., Humphrey Products, Miller Davis Company, Welsh & Associates, Western Michigan University's Office of Diversity and Inclusion, College of Education and Human Development and Student Affairs office; Zoetis, Bronson Healthcare, Comerica Bank, FEMA Corporation, First Financial Bank, Greenleaf Trust, The Kalamazoo Promise, LKF Marketing, Mike and Sharon Seelye Family Foundation, Warner Norcross + Judd, LLP, Consumers Credit Union, and Mercantile Bank.

## THIS YEAR'S AWARD RECIPIENTS

**First Day Shoe Fund was honored with a Champ award, presented by CIS Board Member Kwame G. Gyimah.**

First Day Shoe Fund is a Kalamazoo-based non-profit dedicated to providing new athletic shoes at no cost to students in elementary schools across the county. Founded in 2004, First Day Shoe Fund has grown significantly from distributing 160 pairs of shoes in the first year to distributing more than 11,000 pairs of shoes across 47 schools this past fall. The organization partners with CIS site coordinators in CIS-supported schools to help facilitate shoe distributions, ensuring students have access to new shoes.



**First Day Shoe Fund, CIS Champ**

**Jenee McDaniel was honored with the CIS of Kalamazoo Staff Recognition, presented by CIS Senior Director of Site Services, Dr. Tamiko Garrett.**

Jenee McDaniel's CIS career began as an intern at Loy Norrix High School. She transitioned into a full-time coordinator after earning a degree in social work from Western Michigan University. She discovered a passion for after-school programming and served as the CIS coordinator at Linden Grove Middle School. She later launched the program at Washington Writers' Academy. McDaniel is known for her creative and effective approach to after-school initiatives, focusing on college and career readiness while fostering meaningful relationships with students. Now as an associate director of after-school programs, she brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the task of maintaining high standards across multiple sites.



**Jenee McDaniel was honored with the CIS of Kalamazoo Staff Recognition, presented by CIS Senior Director of Site Services, Dr. Tamiko Garrett.**

**Richard Phillips was honored with the Gulnar Husain Volunteer Award, presented by CIS Board Member Susie Einspahr.**

Richard Phillips has been a dedicated volunteer with CIS for more than 20 years. His journey as a CIS volunteer began as a tutor at Northglade Montessori Magnet School, where he worked with first-grade students and later supported upper elementary students and school-wide programs. Phillips' commitment to making a difference has extended to Edison Academy, where he is known for his kindness, generosity, and dedication to community improvement. His genuine care for the students he works with has made him an irreplaceable community figure who always strives to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those around him.



**Richard Phillips CIS Champ**

**The Kalamazoo Promise was honored with the Diether Haenicke Promise of Excellence Award, presented by the President of the CIS of Kalamazoo Board, Linnaea Thomas.**

Launched in 2005, The Kalamazoo Promise is celebrating its 20th anniversary. The Promise has presented more than \$230 million in scholarships to over 8,700 students. Beyond providing financial support, The Kalamazoo Promise has expanded its supports to include pathway coaches, business collaborations, workforce development through internship programs, reconnection efforts, and community engagement — ensuring students receive comprehensive support throughout their educational journey.



**Von Washington Jr., The Kalamazoo Promise, CIS Champ**

**C**ONGRATULATIONS to the 2024-25 retirees. At a retirement dinner in May, the district celebrated the accomplishments of these employees for their dedicated service to Kalamazoo Public Schools and the district's students. The district is grateful for their work to ensure the care and success of the children of Kalamazoo.

A photograph showing four women standing behind a podium. The woman on the far left is speaking into a microphone. The woman next to her is gesturing with her hands raised. The woman on the far right is wearing a black dress with white stripes and is looking towards the center. The podium has a circular seal on it.



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

**Director of School Improvement,  
Title I and Assessments**  
Kalamazoo Public Schools  
1220 Howard St.  
Kalamazoo, MI 49008  
(269) 337-0180

All other inquiries should be directed to:

**Director of  
Human Resources**  
Kalamazoo Public Schools  
1220 Howard St.  
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District Directory at :  
[www.kalamazoopublicschools.com](http://www.kalamazoopublicschools.com)

Recipe

from the KPS Food Service, Chartwells

Josh Kerby,  
executive chef

Kirsten Strong,  
registered dietitian  
nutritionist

Medi Kale Pasta Salad

THIS KALE SALAD is the perfect farewell to summer! As the season winds down, we’re all looking for ways to hold onto the bright, fresh flavors of the growing season. Look no further than this satisfying kale salad that’s both hearty and surprisingly light. It’s so good, you’ll want to keep coming back for more.

The magic is in the zingy combination of white balsamic vinegar and fresh basil. But, this isn’t just about delicious taste; it’s also a powerhouse of nutrition. Kale, a true superfood, is packed with essential vitamins. Dark leafy greens are consistently recommended for boosting well-being and preventing health issues. So go ahead, snack on this guilt-free salad and nourish your body while savoring the last tastes of summer!



FOR KALE PASTA SALAD

- 2 cups campanelle pasta (or any short pasta shape)
- 2 cups kale, stems removed and roughly chopped
- 1/2 cup feta cheese, crumbled
- 1/4 cup parmesan cheese, freshly grated
- 1/4 cup sundried tomatoes, cut into slivers if not already sliced.

FOR THE DRESSING

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2-3 tablespoon fresh basil, finely chopped (or basil paste)
- 2-3 tablespoon white balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon Italian or Greek seasoning
- Salt and pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the pasta according to package instructions until al dente.
2. Drain the pasta and immediately rinse it under cold water. This stops the cooking process and prevents the pasta from sticking together.
3. While the pasta cooks, prep the other ingredients. For extra tender kale, massage it with a drizzle of olive oil for 1-2 minutes to break down the fibers.
4. In a small bowl or jar, whisk together olive oil, basil, white balsamic vinegar, minced garlic, the Italian or Greek seasoning, and a pinch of salt and pepper. Adjust to taste.
5. In a large bowl, combine the cooled pasta, kale, feta cheese, Parmesan cheese, and sundried tomatoes.
6. Pour the dressing over the salad and toss until everything is evenly coated. For the best flavor, let the salad sit for 30 minutes before serving to allow the kale to soften and the flavors to meld.
7. Give the salad a final toss before serving and enjoy.

Adult Education 2025 Graduates

|                     |                      |                     |                    |                     |
|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Abdulazim, Ola      | Crussemeyer, Brianna | Geib, Christopher   | Lamb, Jonathon     | Seals, Jozlin       |
| Banks, Arionna      | Doubley, Marquel     | Gladney, Trenton    | Leos, Daniel       | Showerman, Natasha  |
| Baptista, Shadrake  | Dixon, Sierra        | Heady, Rakyiah      | Meersma, Erik      | Smith, JerArmani    |
| Batts, Jared        | Edwards, Jerone      | Hedin, Naomi “Nick” | Munyaneza, Olivier | Sullivan, Leslie    |
| Brewer, Joseph      | Evans, Seth          | Howard, Jacorveon   | Niles, Sasha       | Taylor, Jacob Duane |
| Brown, James        | Everling, Abby       | Hrab, Holly         | Reed, Jr., Audie   | Tukes, Quonesha     |
| Callighan, Kelli    | Fadder, Hailey       | Huff, Kailee        | Rey, Darcelle      | Worden, Chelsea     |
| Carter, Jamani      | Galinis, Konner      | Hux, Alysen         | Robinson, Timothy  | Woods Jr., Robert   |
| Cockerham, Chandler |                      | Knobloch, Joshua    |                    | Young, Kayla        |



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# Chenery Welcomes New Auditorium Manager

NEIL JANSEN has joined Kalamazoo Public Schools as the manager of the district's historic Chenery Auditorium.

Jansen, 29, brings to the job a wealth of experience at entertainment venues throughout the region, including most recently serving as the entertainment manager at Gun Lake Casino and Resort, where he helped launch their new WawYe Oasis indoor entertainment center.

Prior to that, he was a production manager for the Kalamazoo State Theater, an audiovisual technician for the Comstock Community Auditorium, and was an audio engineer for Easy On Hold, which produces music and voice messages for phone systems. Through all that, he also worked as a private music teacher and performing musician.

He said he's excited to be in a position to build upon Chenery's role as one of the area's premiere performing spaces and to further the community connections that allow the auditorium to thrive. Jansen replaces Doug Blickle, who retired this summer.

"I am looking forward to connecting with all of these groups and growing our partnerships," Jansen



Neil Jansen is the new manager of Chenery Auditorium. He will also oversee other auditoriums in the district.

said. "I'd like to have more of their events at Chenery so we can grow alongside each other. I really respect all that they have done as supporters of Chenery in

the past, and I want to ensure this building is here another 100 years to support these organizations."

Jansen grew up in Marysville near Port Huron. As a young musician in Marysville, he played guitar, was active in choir, and was the drum major of his high school marching band. After high school, he enrolled in Western Michigan University. While there, he was a member of its award-winning vocal jazz ensemble Gold Company, GC II, and the Collegiate Singers and WMU Chorale.

He graduated from WMU in 2018 with a bachelor's in music education and multimedia arts technology. Although he originally planned to become a full-time music educator, he found his interests turning toward production and stage managing. Through the multimedia arts technology program he moved into audio engineering.

Jansen said his experiences with the State Theater and Gun Lake have provided him with a broad range of experiences which will serve him well at Chenery. At the State, he worked on everything from front-of-house duties to running sound, scheduling staff, and

*(continued on page 7)*



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**Session 1**

July 8 -11, July 15-18, July 22-25 and July 29  
8:30 - 11:45 a.m. or 12:30 - 3:45 p.m.

Anna Whitten Hall on the Arcadia Commons Campus

**Session 2**

Aug 5 - 8, Aug 12 - 15, Aug 19-23  
8:30 - 11:45 a.m. or 12:30 - 3:45 p.m.

Anna Whitten Hall on the Arcadia Commons Campus

## Neil Jansen *(continued from page 6)*

managing national tours for artists such as Weird Al Yankovic and guitarists Joe Satriani and Steve Vai.

The State Theater, like Chenery, is a historic building. Chenery celebrated its 100th anniversary this spring. The State opened in 1927. They have very different designs: Chenery was built as a classic auditorium for live performances, while the State began its life as a movie palace before being converted to a space for live performances.

"Anytime you have a building that age, you want to focus on two things: Keeping things updated and respecting their historic elements and the aesthetics of the space," Jansen said. "We want to try to invest in technology that is helpful to patrons — but not do anything that is distracting from other elements of the space. It's about prioritizing what needs to be done."

He looks forward to caring for this community resource and ensuring students, families and other members of the community can enjoy it for years to come.

Chenery has amazing acoustics, which has helped fuel its reputation as an outstanding space for live music, he said. "And, it's a very elegant room. It's had a lot of love from the community and our partners."

### FAST FACTS

**Name:** Neil Jansen

**Age:** 29

**Title:** Auditorium manager

**Hometown:** Marysville

**Musical interests:** Singing, guitar, piano

**Music teacher mentality:**

Even though he decided not to pursue teaching full-time, he still maintains an educator's perspective as a private music teacher. "I like the one-on-one interaction and I enjoy seeing the progression the students make every single week."

**Fandom:** *Star Wars*. But he's a cinephile in general and loves watching movies from the Criterion Collection.

**Speaking of collections:** He has more than 2,000 records. His vinyl collection was seeded with the album's from his father's collection. Although it's heavy on jazz, his favorite band is Pink Floyd.



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# El Sol Students Learn about Waterways through Watershed Council Project

**E**L SOL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL fourth and fifth graders had the opportunity to learn about the health of Kalamazoo waterways this year through an interactive project with the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council.

Teachers Eric Thomas and Carolina Sanclemente conceived of the project after attending professional development through the University of Michigan's Latin American and Caribbean Studies Center in San Juan, Puerto Rico, at the University of Puerto Rico. The conference focused on creating experiential student learning experiences that are transformational for the community and the students.

Thomas and Sanclemente partnered with Dr. Douglas McLaughlin at the Kalamazoo River Watershed Association to implement a project for students.

Students learned about the Kalamazoo River's history and role in the community and how it became polluted by the paper industry. They also

learned about work being done to revitalize the local waterways through the efforts of governmental units and advocacy groups such as the KRWA.

"Our main fifth grade ESL goal is writing," Thomas said, "so students had to use this information to write a letter to Dr. Natalie Wilson (the principal) to persuade her to give us permission for the project — to go to a part of the river and clean it up."

Only fifth graders made the trip to the nearby Axtell Creek Park for the hands-on portion of the project which included testing the water, picking up trash, and creating a watershed art piece. But, all fourth- and fifth-grade Multilingual Learner students learned about the river through Thomas' co-teaching with English Language Arts teachers. That included newcomer students who completed parts of the project in Spanish and English.

"The KRWA was an awesome partner because not only did they facilitate the hands-on part of the project, they also taught the students about water quality and how a watershed works and what it is. They told students how what happens in local waterways affects our whole water supply."



Dr. Douglas McLaughlin, Watershed Council executive director, hands a bucket of water from Axtell Creek Park to El Sol Elementary fifth graders last spring.

**ON THE COVER:** El Sol Elementary fifth graders, from left, Cameron Dunigan, Marshall Barrientos, and Guadalupe Avila check the health of the water at Axtell Creek Park as part of a Kalamazoo River Watershed Council activity organized by teachers Eric Thomas and Carolina Sanclemente.





**Dr. Douglas McLaughlin, Watershed Council executive director, hands a water monitor to an El Sol student.**

**McLaughlin and El Sol Elementary School students check a water sample from Axtell Creek for qualities such as temperature and oxygenation.**

# Kalamazoo Public Schools Annual Notifications

UNDER federal law, parents have the right to request information on the professional qualifications of their children’s classroom teachers and the qualifications of any paraprofessionals who provide services to their children. Parents may request and receive information about: (a) whether the teacher is state-certified, (b) whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or another provisional status, and (c) the baccalaureate major of the teacher and any other graduate degree or certification. Parents may request information on the level of achievement of their child in each of the state academic assessments.

If a student attending a school that receives any Title I, Part A funds is assigned to, or taught, for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified, the school must provide timely notice to the student’s parents. Any inquiries should be directed to:

Human Resources  
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Title VI protects people from discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. Kalamazoo

Public Schools operates in a non-discriminatory manner including, but not limited to, admissions, academic programs, student treatment and services, counseling and guidance, discipline, classroom assignment, grading, vocational education, recreation, physical education, and athletics. Any complaints or concerns regarding Title VI should be reported to:

Geoff Howe, Director of School Improvement, Title I and Assessments  
Kalamazoo Public Schools  
1220 Howard St.  
Kalamazoo, MI 49008  
(269) 337-0180

\* \* \*

Section 504 is a part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. It applies to all persons with disabilities regardless of age. It is an anti-discrimination, civil rights statute that requires the needs of students with disabilities to be met as adequately as the needs of the non-disabled are met. Section 504 is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education. Students are not to be excluded solely by reason of their disability or be subject to discrimination. All students with an Individual Educational

Plan are protected under Section 504. Section 504’s definition of disability is a broad definition that also protects students who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or has a record of such impairment or is regarded as having such an impairment. Major life activities include physical, mental, self-care, learning, reading, communicating, and thinking. Any complaints or concerns regarding Section 504 should be reported to:

Barry Smith, Coordinator of Student Services  
SmithBJ@kalamazoopublicschools.net  
Kalamazoo Public Schools  
1220 Howard St.  
Kalamazoo, MI 49008  
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\* \* \*

Title II provides grants to school districts to increase student achievement through teacher and administrator training. Kalamazoo Public Schools provides high quality training to assist teachers and administrators in many different areas to improve achievement for all students. Any complaints or concerns regarding Title II should be reported to:

Geoff Howe, Director of School Improvement, Title I and Assessments  
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## FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children’s education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are “eligible students.”

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student’s education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. The school must honor your request to review your child’s education records within forty-five (45) days of receiving the request. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will arrange for access and notify the par-

(continued on page 11)

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Kalamazoo Public Schools Annual Notifications (continued from page 10)

ent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

• Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records that they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record that they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise him or her of his or her right to a formal hearing regarding the request for amendment. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

• Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student to release any information from a student’s education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions:

- School officials with legitimate educational interest; contractors, consultants, or volunteers to whom the district has outsourced institutional services or functions. For example, the district shares data with ed-

ucational institutions that have a vested interest in helping district students such as:

- Communities In Schools;
- The Kalamazoo Promise;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies;
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law; and
- Information the district has designated as “directory information.”

DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requires that the Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS), with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to

the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child’s education records. However, KPS may disclose appropriate designated “directory information” without written consent, unless you have advised the district to the contrary in accordance with district procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow KPS to include this type of information from your child’s education records in certain school publications. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following: a playbill, showing your student’s role in a drama production; the annual yearbook; honor roll or other recognition lists; graduation programs; or sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members.

Directory information, which includes student’s name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized school activities and sports, weight and height of athletic team members, dates of attendance and previous school(s) attended, is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to organizations without a parent’s prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish

(continued on page 12)



HYDRANT FLUSHING  
STARTS SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21st

We flush hydrants in the spring and fall to force naturally occurring mineral deposits out of the water system. Flushing is also an opportunity to make sure components in the system are working properly.

- **Flushing does not affect the safety of the water system.**
- Tap water may temporarily appear cloudy right after flushing as minerals are stirred up, but this isn’t harmful. Run your water in a bathtub or utility sink until it runs clear again.
- If you have scheduled construction during hydrant flushing or have questions related to the program, please call 311 or (269) 337-8000.
- Most flushing will take place at night between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. If necessary, daytime flushing will occur between 7 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.
- Avoid doing laundry immediately after flushing as some fabrics could become discolored.

View a larger interactive map at  
[kalamazoo.org/HydrantFlushing](http://kalamazoo.org/HydrantFlushing)

# Kalamazoo Public Schools Annual Notifications *(continued from page 11)*

yearbooks. The district may disclose personally identifiable information from education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student to other school officials, including teachers, within the educational agency or institution whom the district has determined to have legitimate educational interests, such as Communities In Schools and The Kalamazoo Promise. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom the district has outsourced institutional services or functions. In addition, two federal laws require us to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories — names, addresses and telephone listings — unless parents have advised KPS that they do not want their student’s information disclosed without their prior written consent.

If you do not want KPS to disclose information from your child’s education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the district by writing to:

Department of Informational Technology  
1220 Howard St.  
Kalamazoo, MI 49008  
(269) 337-0146  
or by faxing to (269) 337-0195 on or before  
February 25.

## NONDISCRIMINATION, TITLE IX, SECTION 504, TITLE VI, AND TITLE II CONTACT INFORMATION

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, or disability in any of its activities, hiring practices, programs, or services. In addition, Kalamazoo Public Schools will not tolerate any retaliation against individuals who submit complaints and/or who participate in investigations relating to such complaints.

Further, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), students, employees, and candidates for admission to any educational program and/or employment and all other persons are protected against all forms of sex discrimination and sexual harassment, including based on gender identity or stereotypical notions of gender identity.

The following person is designated as the Title IX coordinator with respect to any Title IX complaint of discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation involving staff members or third parties:

Steve Leland  
Director of Human Resources  
lelandsp@kalamazoopublicschools.net  
Kalamazoo Public Schools  
1220 Howard St.  
Kalamazoo MI 49008  
(269) 337-0177

The following person is designated as the Title IX coordinator with respect to any complaint from students regarding discrimination, harassment, retaliation and/or bullying from another student(s):

Reuquiyah Saunders, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services  
Kalamazoo Public Schools  
1220 Howard St.  
Kalamazoo, MI 49008  
(269) 337-0161

In addition, building-level administrators are responsible for monitoring adherence to the district’s nondiscrimination policy and for incorporating the district’s policy statement in all printed promotional materials and newsletters. Students should report concerns or complaints about discrimination, harassment, bullying, or cyberbullying by another student or students first to a teacher, and then if not satisfied, to the principal or assistant principal. Any concerns or complaints of discrimination, harassment, bullying, or cyberbullying not satisfied at the building level may be reported to an administrator in the Student Services Department. Concerns and/or complaints should be in writing, with the date, details of the concerns, and signature of the person making the complaint.

Any complaints and concerns of discrimination, harassment, bullying, or cyberbullying that involve adults and/or staff members should be reported to the building principal. If the inquiry is not satisfied at this level, or if the building principal is the subject of the complaint, then the concern may be directed to the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources. All concerns should be in writing, with the date, details of the concern, and signature of the person making the complaint.

Complaints of any violation of the district’s nondiscrimination policy will be promptly investigated and appropriate actions taken based on the results of the investigation. Individuals who report violations of the district’s nondiscrimination policy will be granted confidentiality to the extent reasonably practicable. Any questions or assistance required regarding the district’s nondiscrimination policy, bullying policy, or Title IX protections should be addressed to the office of Student Services (269) 337-0161 for students and Human Resources (269) 337-0182 for staff.

The district has modified its guidelines and a grievance procedure for complaints filed under Title IX, which prohibits discrimination based on sex in any district educational program, service, or activity. The district’s new Title IX Statement and Grievance Procedures are being updated on the KPS website at: [www.kalamazoopublicschools.com/ExploreKPS/AnnualNotifications.aspx](http://www.kalamazoopublicschools.com/ExploreKPS/AnnualNotifications.aspx) and will be included in the district’s student code of conduct.



**BRUSH  
THE BLOCK**  
**Sept. 2-7, 2025**

PRESENTED BY:  


LEARN MORE AT:  
**BrushtheBlock.com**

HOSTED BY:  


Mural by Patrick Hershberger

# Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

PPRA affords parents of elementary and secondary students certain rights regarding the conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include, but are not limited to, the right to:

- Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (“protected information survey”) if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED):
  1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent;
  2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family;
  3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
  4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
  5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships,
  6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
  7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student’s parent; or
  8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility,
- Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of:
  1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
  2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or

- screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others. (This does not apply to the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for, or to, students or educational institutions.)
- Inspect, upon request and before administration or use:
    1. Protected information surveys of students and surveys created by a third party;
    2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
    3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

Kalamazoo Public School’s (KPS) policy is to follow the requirements of the PPRA, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrange-

ments to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. KPS will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. KPS will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. KPS will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this direct notification requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for marketing, sales, or other distribution,
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.



THE CLINICAL PRACTICE OF WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
HOMER STRYKER M.D. SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

### Schedule your child’s sports physical!

- \$40.00 due at time of service.
- No insurance will be billed.
- Physical form should be completed and signed by parent prior to appointment.

Please call 269.337.4600 for an appointment

wmed.edu/wmedhealth · Find us on Facebook @WMedHealth

## ARTISTS' CORNER

In the spring, Milwood Magnet School art teacher **Ashley Rhodes** and her students explored the work of contemporary portrait artist Jordan Casteel, focusing on how artists use color, line, and detail to express personality and connection through art. Each student created a portrait of a family member using a handmade scratch art surface — first layering oil pastels, then covering them with soapy acrylic paint. They practiced contour line drawing and etching techniques to create portraits of a family member who holds a special place in their lives.

Sahni Smith, who was a sixth-grade student last school year, created a portrait of her cousin, who takes her on outings every Saturday. “We always have fun together,” she said. Since her cousin also cuts hair, Sahni included scissors and other personal touches in the portrait to reflect his personality and their close bond. Through this project, students not only developed artistic skills, but also deepened their appreciation for the people who support and inspire them every day.



Sahni Smith

## Launch From Your Library with the Air Zoo

### Children

**Wednesday, August 6 | 10:30 am | Central**  
Explore the farthest reaches of space with the Air Zoo!  
Learn about astronauts, the space station, and more!

## JAPANESE-STYLE HERBARIUMS



### Teen

**Tuesday, August 5 | 3 pm | Powell**  
Learn about Japanese-style herbariums and make your own!

**Learn more at [kpl.gov](http://kpl.gov)**



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

# Phoenix High School 2025 Graduates

Abdalla, Heba Albager  
Dauod Abmed  
Ackerman, Tyrus Darnell  
Ahmadi, Gull Bahar  
Al Diab, Yasmine  
Alhasan, Joudi Bashar  
Altayara, Mohammad  
Tameem Wahid  
Alvarado Gutierrez, Nereyda  
Alvarado-Gutierrez, Miriam  
Anderson, D'Zire Nevaeh Lynne  
Aviles, Giovanni Ilias  
Betts, Ziarra Jazoni  
Beville, Natavia Faith  
Blackmon, Briasha Armonie  
Bloodworth, Kiana Ariyah  
Branson, Shubar Ali  
Broughton, Ty' Prei' Oannia  
Nicole Shanell  
Brown, Michelle Janay  
Burney, Michael Devon  
Cannon, Alexander Ensign  
Carter, Jer'Marion Sin'Cera  
Carter, Karmela Ayanna  
Casey Jr., Tory Deshon  
Chandler-Williams, Xavion  
Taye

Clay, Darnell Dupaul  
Cole, Gauge Joseph  
Coleman, Ariel Jhanay  
Cuba, Na'dayia Ophia  
Degrote, Aidan Jaxion  
Deloney, Jeffrey Allen  
Drown, Zachary Preston  
Edmonson, Dennis Dwayne  
Evans, Moriah Juliet  
Faria, Firia Esperanca  
Ford, Amonie S  
Fuller, Christian James  
Fuller-Smith, Kaliyah Zian  
Gallardo, Anthony Abdias  
Garcez, Cecilia Faith  
Ghozlan, Abdulrahman Hlal  
Gibson, Keyniya Kelise  
Gordon, Saniyah Michelle  
Guerrero, Jazmin Guadalupe  
Gul, Samiullah  
Hall, Ariyanna Denise  
Hamilton, Randy George  
Hanof, Omar Khaled  
Haskell, Ashley Annetta  
Herrera, Sage  
Hinton, Kyriana Cecilia  
Hughes, Destiny Denise



Principal Ajamian Gardner congratulates  
Tory Deshon Casey Jr.

Isham, Natalie Kaylynn  
Jackson, Shunta Leon  
Jamar, Khadafi Duval  
Johnson, Aaliyah Tasha Marie  
Johnson, Corey Pommeroy  
Johnson, Kenyouri  
Demetrius

Kheyari, Huzaifa Abdul Alim  
Knox, Quanna Janai Seville  
Lal, Sohumi Ryan  
Langford, Antrell Antonio  
Langston, Antwuan Jamar  
Lewis, Javeon Armani  
Lewis, Marquis Skyler

Lewis, Nehemiah Ti'yon  
Mabon, Akyra Rashae'  
Cimone  
Marshall, Jaidyn O'Shea  
Martell, GracieMae Melody  
Mata Juarez, Amy  
McCone, Da'nyiah Moire  
McCorkle, Ka'Miya  
Rozalynae  
McCrary, Arionna Maria  
Mejia Garcia, Gerson Joel  
Merino, Jayla Shaylin  
Monroy, Adriana Jaquelyn  
Moore, Sirlen Andre  
Mumararungu, Tety  
Muvunyi, Charles  
Noori, Humaira Shah  
Orta, Osdy Esau  
Patterson, J'Toryin Andreis  
Peake-Wright, Natasia Niara  
Faith  
Pitts, Michael D'Juan  
Reyes Armijo, Jesus Alberto  
Rosenthal, Kendrick Devante  
Rukundo, Kevin  
Salarzai, Nadiya  
Selemani, Anastazia

Sherrod, Lashaun Leigh  
Simmons, Kennedy Michelle  
Smith, Jahkai Anthony  
Tapia, Cheri  
Tesfazghi, Abraham  
Thompson, Kimora Ly  
Tipton, Semaj Ysiad  
Trejo, Jose Antonio  
Underwood, Blake Russell  
Vankrimpen, Braylon  
Thomas  
VanNiman, Nicholas  
Vaughan-Hughes, Jona  
Walker, Latonya Renae  
West, Annashawnda Talissa  
Whitfield, Kaliyah Michelle  
Whitfield, Trevahya Unique  
Whitmore-Holmes,  
Nikiyonna Amunika  
Casandra  
Wiggins, Dillan Huston  
Wilborn, Delacia Monae  
Woodson, Ah'marrie  
Word, James Allen  
Wulu, Jahmari Raishon  
Zada, Zobaida Mosa

# 2025-26

## SCHOOL YEAR BREAK SCHEDULE

Once the complete school year calendar has been approved,  
it will be posted at: [kalamazoopublicschools.com](http://kalamazoopublicschools.com).

|                     |                              |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL | Aug. 25, 2025                |
| WINTER BREAK        | Dec. 22, 2025 – Jan. 2, 2026 |
| SPRING BREAK        | March 30 – April 3, 2026     |
| LAST DAY OF SCHOOL  | June 5, 2026                 |

Kalamazoo Public Schools

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# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE



FREE EVENT

WEDNESDAYS AND SATURDAYS  
NOW - AUG. 30

## RAIN GARDEN TOURS | 20 - 25 min.

This family-friendly tour shows how rain gardens in urban settings and simple landscaping changes can have a significant positive impact on the environment.



EXHIBIT ENDS - AUG. 31 | FREE

## THE ART OF ADVERTISING



Highlighting nostalgic signs and advertisements from local businesses from the permanent collection of the Kalamazoo Valley Museum, "The Art of Advertising" offers up an eclectic mix of advertising paraphernalia from bygone eras.

EXHIBIT ENDS - AUG. 31 | FREE

## COLORFUL COLLECTIONS

This new exhibit features items from the permanent collection of the Kalamazoo Valley Museum displayed in a rainbow of hues. Delve into the color spectrum like never before as you enjoy some of the brightest and boldest examples from the KVM's collection.

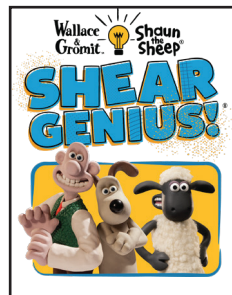


EXHIBIT ENDS - AUG. 31 | FREE

## WALLACE & GROMIT AND SHAUN THE SHEEP: SHEAR GENIUS!

Step into the environments of Wallace & Gromit and Shaun the Sheep to explore their contraptions, antics and escapades through dramatic play and interactive opportunities.

*Wallace & Gromit™ and Shaun the Sheep™: Shear Genius! was created by Minnesota Children's Museum and Aardman Animations™ Limited © 2025*



UPCOMING EVENT FREE

## OUTSIDE THE MUSEUM WALLS

Museum activities will be popping up all over Kalamazoo in August. Drop by the museum's table for an activity and to say hi!

- **Friday, Aug. 8** | Back-to-School Bash with the Family Health Center
- **Saturday, Aug. 9** | **Beyond the Backpack** | Bronson Park
- **Saturday, Aug. 23** | **10 a.m. - noon** | **STEAM Ahead Into the School Year** | Explore play in nature for pre-K and early elementary ages in playscape across from Bronson Park

## PLANETARIUM EXPERIENCE | AUGUST SHOWS | \$3 PER PERSON

Visit [kalamazoomuseum.org](http://kalamazoomuseum.org) for details.

### One World, One Sky: Big Bird's Adventure | 11 a.m. Sat.

30 min. | Pre-K - Grade 1

Join Big Bird, Elmo and their Chinese friend, Hu Hu Zhu, exploring the sky they share. Discover the Big Dipper and North Star, and take an imaginary trip to the moon.



### The Sky Above Us | 1 p.m. Sat. & 2 p.m. Sun. | 35 min. | Grades 4 & up

Learn about some of the "celestial wonders" that can be seen overhead in Michigan in this live, season-focused program.

### Magic Tree House: Space Mission | 1 p.m. Sun. | 30 min. | Grades 3 & up

Travel with siblings Jack and Annie in their Magic Tree House as they discover a note that asks them to answer questions about space.

### Pink Floyd's Wish You Were Here | 2:30 p.m. Sat. | 50 min. | Grade 5 & up

This music light show features the music of Pink Floyd's album "Wish You Were Here" synchronized with video light effects.

HOURS: Tuesday - Saturday | 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Sunday | Noon - 4 p.m.

## FREE GENERAL ADMISSION

### SPECIAL NOTICE: The museum opens at 1p.m. on Aug. 27

Note: Some areas of the museum may be closed due to exhibit changes, staffing needs, special programs or collections care. We thank you for your patience.

*The Kalamazoo Valley Museum is operated by Kalamazoo Valley Community College and is governed by its Board of Trustees.*



230 N. Rose St., Kalamazoo  
[kalamazoomuseum.org](http://kalamazoomuseum.org) | 269.373.7990