The Laker

West Bloomfield SCHOOL DISTRICT

June 2025 | Issue 13 | Volume 56



Community members toured the new Transition Center space, where our students ages 18-26 who receive special education services practice life and job skills.

WE EXPECT THE BEST . . . AND OUR STUDENTS AND STAFF ARE DELIVERING

This has been an exciting year in the West Bloomfield School District, focused on academic rigor, strategic financial investments in our learning spaces, and relationships. Our primary goals are to keep students and staff safe, and to create an environment where each student is supported to grow into their own unique Portrait of a Graduate. In this season of graduations and promotion ceremonies, it is exciting to see and measure the growth and progress of individual learners and our district as a whole.

As I shared in the last Laker, we have implemented a curriculum review cycle that ensures every content area is studied regularly, and data is used to determine what tools will best meet our students' needs as we advance toward stretch goals in each content area. We are not satisfied with the status quo. We expect the best for and from our students and staff, and they are delivering.

If you watch our monthly board meetings, each month spotlights a different school building. Staff, leaders and students share their learning data, their goals, their strategies to meet those goals, and what makes their school special.

For example, the middle school shared its data and how this year it embarked on a process tied to testing that not only increased students' test-taking skills, but drilled down into data to see what structures and support needed to be put in place to help students meet their goals. Students learned about the importance of attendance. They had the opportunity to participate in before and after school tutoring sessions. Students also helped staff design activities to motivate their best efforts. We are eagerly awaiting the scores and already looking at how we can incorporate ideas from students and staff about the school day to keep that focus on academic rigor.

We are also proud to share that we will bring forward another budget this June that maintains a strong fund balance. James Stottlemyer and WBSD have been recognized by the Michigan School Business Officials (MSBO) with a Meridian Award, special recognition acknowledging successful practices in all areas of school management and education.

We know the last year has been difficult as we worked to rightsize our district for current enrollment, and transition into a sustainable model that supports students' learning. Our spring survey data from families, staff and students will be explored more deeply this summer, but preliminary analysis is very positive. We are headed toward a bright future. Thank you for supporting our efforts.

Proud to be WB,
Dania H. Bazzi, PhD
Superintendent

SAVE THE DATE

June 6 – Last day of school
June 16 - Budget hearing, 6:30 p.m. WBHS
June 16 - Board meeting, 7 p.m. WBHS
July 21 - Board Study Session
August 12-14 – WBMS Orientation by grade
August 28 – Family Fun Night

Free admission for Residents 65+

Laker Senior Gold Cards are available for West Bloomfield School District residents aged 65 and above to attend plays, athletic games and musical performances free of charge. Cards are available in the high school athletic office open 7:30 a.m.-3 p.m. or by scanning the QR code.



Several WBSD Students Named Finalists for Michigan Design Prize Challenge Competition

Several West Bloomfield students have been named finalists for the Michigan Design Prize Challenge, an annual competition celebrating and developing exceptional Michigan industrial design talent.

Kindergarten through 12th-grade students across the state are invited to participate. Finalists are invited to a one-on-one mentoring session with a professional designer to advance their idea. Being a finalist is a significant honor that reflects their creativity, innovation and dedication to excellence in design.

The Vision of the Michigan Design Council is to establish Michigan as the destination for individuals in industrial design and related professions, to help Michigan-based businesses prosper and encourage businesses to locate to Michigan by virtue of its robust industrial design talent base.

This year WBSD had the honor of hosting the first Design Prize launch for the state. The challenge this year was to select a sport and design a single piece of sports equipment that offers solutions to inclusive challenges facing Michigan youth. Finalists had the privilege of visiting Sundberg Ferar to launch our Design Prize unit in class.

West Bloomfield finalists:

- The Hand 3000 – Logan Roper
- Flexy Leg – Zelda Kimmel
- Saddle Steer Helper – Julia Antonova, Kenzie Boyle, Eleonora Duvnjak, Scarlet Wood (Scarlet was also a winner when she was in second grade)
- Tide Tech – Mia Gidcumb
- Vision Master – Alyssa Menkowitz, Aurora Malushi, Sandra "Gabby" Beaumont, Jocelynne Abdul

A few weeks ago, they took their prototypes and ideas and worked with an industrial designer to improve their design. On June 10, these amazing designers and finalists will find out if they are a gold, silver or bronze medal winner during a celebration at the College for Creative Studies in Detroit.

David Byron, president of Michigan Design Prize, is an outstanding industrial designer and the main representative for this wonderful K-12 grade program. At our board meeting he shared, "We knew from our very first meeting that West Bloomfield would be the perfect place to help this council expand their efforts and to help create programs where students thrive!"

We are so impressed with this competition for our students and look forward to finding out in the fall what next year's Michigan Design Prize Challenge will be!

WBSD also wants to acknowledge the incredible support and guidance from our teachers, administrators, families, community and design council, who have mentored and inspired these students throughout their journey.

WBSD staff who serve as educational ambassadors for Michigan Design Prize are Kristi Law, Carrie Roth, Juliann O'Brien – who with the support of Amy Quinn, Johanna Mracna and the administrative team – have expanded this from one classroom to one school, and now one district.



TRANSITION CENTER PREPARES STUDENTS WITH LIFE SKILLS

Thank you to our school families, community members, elected officials, and Chamber of Commerce friends for supporting our Ribbon Cutting as we unveiled the new WB Transition Center. The mission of the WB Transition Center is to support developmentally diverse adults 18-26 by fostering independent living skills and preparing them for competitive employment, empowering them to lead fulfilling and self-sufficient lives.

WBHS senior photographer Ari Saperstein captured these moments showcasing the space's:

- Simulated Apartment
- Instructional Kitchen
- Dreamcrafts Workroom
- Transition Sensory Room
- Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES) Lab





The PAES Lab is designed to help students develop skills in multiple areas, including:

- Soft skills like adaptability and time management
- Entry-level skills in various work areas
- Problem-solving skills

Students are assessed based on their performance, including how many jobs they complete independently, the level of support needed, and their interest in the jobs. The system utilizes a mastery-based learning approach, evaluating students on their understanding, ability to apply skills, and interest in each task.

Call 248-865-6470 if you own a business and would like to discuss job opportunities for our students.

2025 BOARD OF EDUCATION

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

June 2 - Board Study Session
June 16 - Budget Hearing
June 16 - Board Meeting
July 21 - Board Study Session
August 11 - Board Workshop
August 12-14 – WBMS Orientation by grade
August 25 - Board Meeting
August 28 – Family Fun Night
September 15 - Board Study Session
September 29 - Board Meeting

West Bloomfield School District
Dania H. Bazzi, PhD
Superintendent
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
248-865-6454

Have You Heard?

NEWS FROM AROUND THE DISTRICT

DECA AT NATIONALS

WBHS DECA club took eighth place in the nation out of 45,000 competitors!



NEXT LEVEL ATHLETICS

Help us congratulate these WBHS student athletes who signed letters of intent to play college athletics:

Kinan Abdulrazzak, Oakland University soccer
Jaiden Allos, Mercyhurst University football
Dwayne Broome Jr., Davenport University football
Joshua Bryant, Adrian College football
Kamren Flowers, University of Toledo football
Steven Fountain, MSU baseball
Breanna Gamble-Jones, Madonna University basketball
Breasia Gamble-Jones, Madonna University basketball
Jay Gardenhire, University of Colorado football
Julia Hempelmann, Madonna University volleyball
Mattisyn Hill, Wingate University soccer
Keith Hopkin, Wilberforce University baseball
Kevin Hopkin, Wilberforce University baseball
Beau Jackson, University of Pittsburgh football
Brendin Jones, Saint Clair County Community College basketball
Cecilia Kowalski, University of Bridgeport volleyball
Cameron LaFlamme, Kalamazoo College baseball
Ava Lord, University of Olivet basketball
Ashton McCoy, University of Olivet football
Slade Moore, U of M baseball
Sean Owens, Adrian College football
Jalen Payne, Wilberforce University baseball
Corey Pittman, Lawrence Technological University football and basketball
Brady Scheidt, New York University baseball
Chase Smith, Kenyon College diving
Natalie Weissman, Carleton College swimming
Connor Zaborny, Cleary University baseball

NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY

Seventy-one WB Middle School students were inducted into NJHS.

LEARNING BY DESIGN 2025 Outstanding Project

EARLY CHILDHOOD/ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | **UNBUILT - PROJECT IN PROGRESS** | ENTIRE BUILDING

West Bloomfield School District, New Sheiko Elementary
West Bloomfield, MI





TMP Architecture
1191 West Square Lake Rd.
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302
tmp-architecture.com
John Castellana, FAIA, REFP, Project Designer
248/338-4561

DESIGN TEAM
Amy Rydleski, AIA, NCARB, Project Architect
Jennifer Maino, NCIDQ, Interior Designer
Keri Seeney, NCIDQ, Interior Designer

OWNER/CLIENT
West Bloomfield School District
West Bloomfield, MI
Dr. Dania Bazzi, Superintendent

KEY STATS
Grades Served: PreK–5
Capacity of Students/Occupants: 688
Size of Site: 16 acres
Gross Area of Bldg./Space: 125,457 gsf
Space per Student: 182 sq. ft.
Cost per Student: $73,289
Square Foot Cost: $402
Project Cost: $50,423,900
Occupation Date: 8/17/2026

PHOTOGRAPHY: ©2024 TMP ARCHITECTURE



SHEIKO WINS NATIONAL AWARD

The new Sheiko Elementary School won a Learning by Design: 2025 Outstanding Project award! Reviewers noted the Michigan theme utilized throughout the design meets the modern learning needs of students. They loved how the port side shares information on shipping and the Great Lakes, the dune side speaks to Michigan's sand formations and beaches and the second floor explores the Upper Peninsula. Also noted were the cottage theme for the early elementary program, and the outside learning spaces. Watch the website for updates as progress is moving quickly. We are on target to open fall of 2026.



FIRE CLUB

West Bloomfield Fire Department partnered with WBHS to create a Fire Club at Station #5. Students learned about fire gear, hose loads, fire behavior, EMS, safe ladder usage, ropes, knots, webbing harness, extrication and ice rescue with teacher sponsor Nic Hamilton.



THANK YOU, WB LIBRARY AND SCHULER BOOKS

West Bloomfield Township Public Library brings magical authors to WBSD students. This year they sponsored the visit of Jarrett Lerner, an award-winning author-illustrator and creator of some of our favorite books (Nat the Cat, Hunger Heroes, Geezer the Robot). The library also supplied all of our Pine Tree program books and runs an amazing summer reading program. Schuler Books helped set up an online store to purchase Jarrett's books and is another great place to pick up books and suggestions to keep reading.

West Bloomfield ELEMENTARIES

MICHIGAN GREEN SCHOOLS

WBSD

GREEN WITH ENVY

All our elementary schools earned MI Green School status this year!



WBHS STUDENTS EXPLORE MEDICAL CAREERS

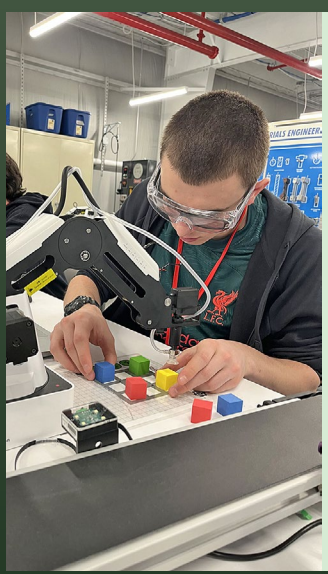
WBSD's Medical Mentorship students thank the Henry Ford Hospital West Bloomfield medical professionals they shadowed. There were 10 field trip opportunities, in addition to HIPAA and bloodborne pathogen training.

A WBSD 1991 alum, Regional Chief Medical Officer Manu Malhotra, addressed the students and thanked them for the energy they bring to the hospital. Dr. Wilfred Allen described how important the program is in providing students an opportunity to explore various medical fields and professions, and shared WB has one of the best programs he's ever seen. Thank you, Liza Zanotti-Eurich, for connecting our students to these real-world experiences!

WBHS ALUMS IN THE NFL

The good news keeps coming for WBHS alumni now in the NFL:
Tyrone Broden – Seattle Seahawks
Lance Dixon - Philadelphia Eagles
Donovan Edwards – New York Jets
Maxwell Hairston - Buffalo Bills
Makari Paige – New York Giants





LIFTING UP STUDENTS

WBHS teachers Kelli Mattson and Buddy Muylaert took students to LIFT in Detroit. Students toured a manufacturing plant, programmed robots and learned about welding. LIFT accelerates the development and adoption of advanced materials, manufacturing processes, and educational tools for industry and the Department of Defense by connecting industry, academia and government.

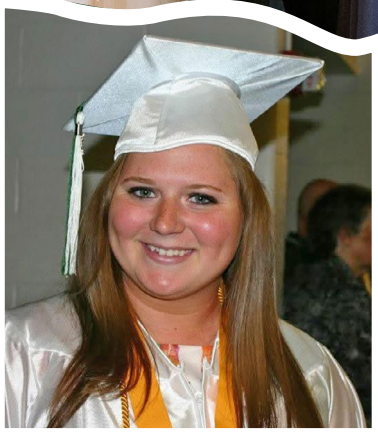


PERFORMING ARTS HONORS

Twenty-one West Bloomfield Middle School students earned top division (Superior) ratings at the MSBOA District 4 Solo and Ensemble Festival. Last spring, Jesse Sacks nominated Linda Trotter as a candidate for the Michigan School Band and Orchestra District 4 Orchestra Teacher of the Year. Colleagues from 25 districts in the Metro Detroit area voted on several nominees, and Linda was selected as the District 4 Orchestra Teacher of the Year! Linda was then one of 16 candidates for the MSBOA State Teacher of the Year. We are thrilled to share that Linda was selected as the State Teacher of the Year!



WBHS ALUMNI PROFILE
Brooke Buffmyer, Class of 2012



Buffmyer is one of those names people tend to know in West Bloomfield. And Brooke Buffmyer is carrying on a family tradition working in the district where she grew up. She attended Roosevelt Elementary and Abbott Middle School (her grandmother worked at Orchard Lake Middle School) and now is at West Bloomfield High School where her father also works.

After graduating from WBHS, Brooke went on to Central Michigan University for both her undergraduate degree and a master's in educational leadership. Aside from a semester in another local district, she's spent nine years teaching science at her alma mater – currently physical science and honors physics.

Always learning, Brooke is part of the Oakland Schools Aspiring Principals program, where participants interact with educational leaders on topics ranging from budgets to discipline philosophy, and have time and space to sit in decisions and talk to other people at different stages of their career. She has also participated in a leadership cohort for the past two years with Assistant Superintendent of School Administration and Innovation, Johanna Mracna.

What brought you back to WB?

"It always felt like home. I want to give back to something that gave me so much." Buffmyer shared. "It's a draw to have that connection to something I know and love, but be able to affect some positive change for our growing and changing community. And I get to see my dad every day – not many adults get to say that!"

One of the ways she is personally moving WBSD forward and growing as a leader is through Laker Connection – a program bridging that gap between elementary and high school students. Her partner, Megan Hrycaj, wrote a grant to do vertical alignment, connecting students and programs across the district after Scott Long, Assistant Superintendent for Learning Services, took a group on a visit to elementary schools as part of a professional development day.

Teachers and administrators had the opportunity to see the SEL (social emotional learning) RULER curriculum in classrooms and that spurred the idea. RULER is designed to help students recognize, express and regulate emotions with helpful strategies. The two thought about how they could bring something like RULER to the high school.

This year, there were four opportunities:

1. Five high school classes wrote pen pal letters to students at Gretchko and Sheiko
2. High schoolers recorded an SEL lesson (like naming emotions) for elementary students
3. The classes did a live Google meet
4. In May, high school students went on a field trip to meet them in person

They hope to expand it next year as they've seen how this ties directly to our district goal of – we're all Lakers. Feedback from both age groups and the teachers involved has been positive.

"We're building the kind of community you want to live in," Buffmyer stated.

What advice do you have for current students?

"Try as many things as possible and take the risks," she said. "We offer so much and it's such a diverse community in which to learn something new. Take it while it's safe."

Congrats!

2024-25 TEACHERS OF THE YEAR



West Bloomfield SCHOOL DISTRICT

WB Preschool Academy
Iris James

Elementary Schools
Doherty-Vanessa Kilano
Gretchko-Jackie Pace
Scotch-Taylor Carroll
Sheiko-Allison Pargoff

WB Middle School
Connie Fellman

WB High School
Megan Hrycaj

Adult/Alternative Education
Kimberly Liddell Love

Oakland Early College
David Snyder

WB Transition Center
Renee Samuels

SUPPORT PERSONS OF THE YEAR



WB Preschool Academy
Bethany Helka

Elementary Schools
Doherty-Karen Topor
Gretchko-Suzanne Pokley
Scotch-Vanity Koop
Sheiko-Suzy Lederman

WB Middle School
Angela Boyer

WB High School
Farqad Al-Fatlawy

Oakland Early College
Shirley Graham

WB Transition Center
Christine Preston

HELP US THANK OUR RETIREES!

Julie Abeska
32.5 years

Karen Brody
51 years

Greg Campbell
39 years

Deborah Elias
25 years

Connie Fellman
35 years

Tina Gagnon
6 years

Brenda Hanlon
16 years

Jeannette Hawley
23 years

Lisa Jennings
27 years

Denise Kelley
23.5 years

Kaarin Kleimola
11 years

Dilyse McAllister
22 years

Amy Rohweder
3 years

Michelle Rudelic
30 years

Kenneth Rys
23 years

Karen Sorgen
25 years

Stephen Toy
22 years

Kitrina (Kitty) Van-Meter
39 years

John Verloove
23 years

Michael Weingarden
26 years

Erin Wynn
25 years