



Stories from Around the World Build Community

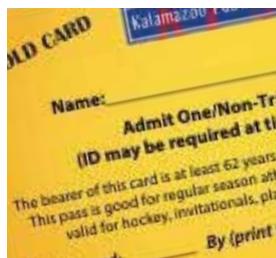
(SEE STORY AND MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 12-13)

Dr. Amira Mogaji Is the District's Newest Principal – and a Familiar Face.



pg. 6

KPS Introduces **Gold Card** for Senior Citizens.



pg. 10

NonProfit
Organization
US Postage
PAID
Kalamazoo, MI
Permit 709

**** ECRWSS ****
RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER

Kalamazoo Public Schools, 1220 Howard St., Kalamazoo, MI 49008



Here to help all fathers in Kalamazoo maintain active and engaged relationships with their children



Services Include

- Individual & Group Support/Coaching
- Father Centered-Family Friendly events
- Dad Café
- Men's Health Check-ins
- Basic Needs + Emergency Support
- Men's Wellness Retreats
- Connection to Community Resources
- Professional Development Workshops

Contact us for more information
(269) 261-0814
info@fatherhoodnetwork.org
www.thefatherhoodnetwork.org



Welcome to the 2025–2026 School Year!

A Message from the Superintendent

Dr. Darrin Slade



WE ARE excited to be starting a brand new school year. We are especially excited this fall, because over the past two years we have developed a new strategic plan to help guide the work that the district does.

On page 4 of this *Excelsior*, you will find a one-page explanation of the highlights of the Kalamazoo Public Schools Strategic Plan 2025-2030. Through months of meetings with staff, families, students and community members, we have developed an outline that highlights not just the goals that the district has set for itself, but strategies for achieving those goals, ways that we intend to mea-

sure our progress on those goals, and a plan for examining our strategies and successes — and for sharing that work with the community to ensure you are fully informed partners in this journey.

The one-page document contains the six pillars of the plan:

- Academic Excellence
- Family and Community Engagement and Collaboration
- Safe and Supportive Environment
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Operational Effectiveness and
- Quality Workforce

This document provides a succinct summary of the overall plan and will help you understand our general objectives. You can find the entire document on our website at <https://www.kalamazoopublicschools.com/strategic-plan>. I hope you will take the time to read this plan, because it

represents a tremendous amount of thought about the direction in which we want to grow. More than 70 strategic planning sessions were held, during which we received input from teachers, support staff, principals, parents, students, community members, and the school board.

While all of the pillars are important to our journey over the next five years, I want to emphasize that they are not equally important. There is one goal that rises above all the others, and that is the goal of achieving academic excellence. The top priority of the Kalamazoo Public Schools 2025-2030 Strategic Plan is — and must always be — to ensure that every student in the district reaches his or her fullest academic potential.

Everything else in service to that goal. Engaging with families and the community helps ensure our community is involved in providing opportu-

nities for success. Our schools must be safe and comfortable so students and staff can focus on their work without worry for their physical well-being. Fiscal responsibility is key, so we can provide students with the tools and resources they need to learn — and so the public continues their generous support of our work knowing that we are being responsible stewards of their resources. We desire to have the best staff so we can be as efficient and successful as possible in all of our operations — so families can be assured that we are focusing as much of our time and effort as possible on helping our students succeed.

My heartfelt thanks goes out to everyone who has contributed to the creation of this plan for the next five years — and my deepest gratitude to all who will help us bring this plan to fruition for the benefit of our children.

HELP PEOPLE STAY IN THEIR OWN HOMES.



COMMUNITY HOMEWORKS

Scan the QR code to learn more about our programs and find out how you can get involved!



CRITICAL REPAIR • EDUCATION • TOOL LIBRARY



STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030

Overview

Kalamazoo Public Schools Strategic Plan, adopted in 2025, outlines the district's priorities for the next five years and will guide the decisions, strategies and funding necessary to achieve those goals. This plan was created through a collaborative effort between the Board of Education, district leadership, staff, parents, students, and community members. This student-centered plan includes six goal areas that build a comprehensive process to meet the needs of our students and to ensure their success as independent thinkers and world citizens.

Improving student achievement in all areas and maintaining safe and orderly learning environments will continue to be the district's top priority.

Mission

At KPS it is our mission to nurture the dreams of all students and empower all students to contribute to a better world.

Vision

Every child. Every opportunity. Every time.

Strategic Plan Pillars

KPS has identified six critical areas the district will focus on over the next five years. Each of the pillars contains a goal statement, strategies that will be used to achieve the goal, and the measures of success.

	<h3>Academic Excellence</h3>
Goals	<p>Students who graduate from KPS will be college- and career-ready and able to compete globally with their peers.</p>
	<h3>Family and Community Engagement and Collaboration</h3>
Goals	<p>Partner with families and the community to build trust, commitment, resources, unity, and expanded learning opportunities.</p>
	<h3>Safe and Supportive Environment</h3>
Goals	<p>Students will be welcomed, respected, supported, and valued in a safe learning environment.</p>
	<h3>Fiscal Responsibility</h3>
Goals	<p>Maximize the use of resources equitably through careful planning and financial stewardship.</p>
	<h3>Operational Effectiveness</h3>
Goals	<p>Implement and maintain innovative and effective systems, structures, and technologies to support student success.</p>
	<h3>Quality Workforce</h3>
Goals	<p>Effectively recruit and retain a highly qualified, diverse workforce committed to serving all students.</p>

Progress Monitoring the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan will be monitored four times during the school year by the senior leadership team. Progress related to the Strategic Plan will be shared twice a year with the board and community, and two times a year with the Parent Advisory Committee and the Teacher Advisory Committee. Two general community meetings will be held each year to share progress on the Strategic Plan.

Use the QR code to visit our website and see the full 32-page Strategic Plan.



Kalamazoo Public Schools
 1220 Howard Street
 Kalamazoo, MI 49008
 (269) 337-0100
 Dr. Darrin Slade, Superintendent

BOARD OF EDUCATION

President

TiAnna Harrison

Vice President

Carol McGlenn

Secretary

Jennie Hill

Treasurer

Karla Murphy

Trustee

Takisha Johnson

Trustee

Juanita Yvonne Payton

Trustee

Patti Sholler-Barber

KPS SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Darrin Slade

Excelsior is mailed to every household in Kalamazoo.

For information about advertising, please call Encore Publications.

(269) 383-4433

NOTICE

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, and disability in any of its activities, hiring practices, programs or services.

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.
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
(269) 337-0177

District Directory at:
www.kalamazoopublicschools.com

Recipe

from the KPS Food Service, Chartwells

Josh Kerby,
executive chef



Kirsten Strong,
registered dietitian
nutritionist

Detroit Coney Dogs

THERE IS nothing better than a delicious Coney dog — especially if the Coney sauce is made right! This is a copycat recipe of the Coney dogs served at one of the most popular Coney dog restaurants in Detroit. With Detroit Lion's football starting this month, be sure to try out this recipe for game day. The sauce does need to simmer for about 4 hours, so plan accordingly. Scan the QR code for the recipe demo and a deeper dive into the history of the Coney dog.



SAUCE

½ cup beef suet OR vegetable shortening OR lard
2 ½ pounds ground beef
½ pound cow heart OR hot dogs, finely diced
12 saltines (smashed or ground)
¼ cup ketchup

2 cups chicken stock
1 ½ tablespoons chili powder
2 tablespoons paprika
¼ cup yellow mustard
1 tablespoon turmeric
1 tablespoon cumin
½ tablespoon garlic powder
½ tablespoon onion powder

½ tablespoon black pepper
½ tablespoon kosher salt
Pinch of clove

DOGS

14 hot dogs
14 hot dog buns
1 small bottle yellow mustard
1 small onion, finely diced
Pickles & Cheese (optional)

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large pot, add lard/shortening, ground beef, and cow heart/hotdogs. Brown ingredients over medium heat. Simmer and stir regularly; mash with a potato masher during the process to create a rough paste. Strain the meat and reserve.
2. Return the rendered fat to the pot, place over medium-high heat. Slowly, add saltine crumbs, stirring constantly to make a roux. It should form a loose paste able to flow from the spoon. Continue stirring until it turns a nice woody brown. Adjust heat to keep it from burning.
3. Add the meat mixture back to the pot along with chicken stock and simmer for 20 minutes at a slight boil. Add the remaining ingredients, and stir until mixed. Cover the pot and simmer for at least three hours on very low heat, stirring occasionally so it doesn't burn on the bottom.
4. Remove ⅓ of the mixture and puree it in a blender until smooth, then pour it back into the pot. Continue simmering, uncovered, for another hour, stirring occasionally.
5. In the meantime, cook your hot dogs however you like (boil/grill) and place on buns. (Buns can be heated by wrapping in a paper towel and steaming in a microwave for 30 seconds per bun — optional.)
6. For a true Coney experience, top your hot dogs with about ½ cup of the sauce, mustard, and diced white onions. Optional: shredded cheddar or pickles.

(Makes approximately 14 servings)

Harding's REWARDS

EARN POINTS
Earn 1 point for every \$1 spend on groceries.

GET REWARDS
Redeem points for FREE Product, dollars off your next purchase, or donate back to your community!

PLUS
Save with digital coupons and more!

SIGN UP TODAY!
Download our App or Scan the QR Code!

Download on the App Store | GET IT ON Google Play

the Y
YMCA

NOW ENROLLING

FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Strong Foundations, Bright Futures

Register for preschool with the YMCA today! The Northside Early Learning Center has spots available for 2025/26 school season—another year of active learning, building healthy habits, making friends, and so much more!

Questions? contact our Child Care Office via email at childcare@kzooyymca.org. To register, scan the QR Code or visit kzooyymca.org. Financial Assistance is available.

Dr. Amira Mogaji: District's Newest Principal Is a Familiar Face to KPS

DR. AMIRA MOGAJI has been named the principal of Washington Writers' Academy. She replaces Lanisha Hannah, who has been named assistant principal of Kalamazoo Central High School. Most recently Mogaji was an assistant superintendent for curriculum, instruction and assessment for Battle Creek Public Schools.

A native of Philadelphia, Mogaji earned her bachelor's degree in elementary education from Chestnut Hill College, a master of science degree in educational leadership from Saint Joseph's University, and a doctorate in Educational Leadership from Capella University. She also has her Montessori certification from the American Montessori Society and her superintendent certification from Immaculata University in Pennsylvania.

KPS families may be most familiar with Mogaji for the eight years she served as the principal of Northglade Montessori Magnet School from 2011 to 2019. Mogaji said she is excited to return to KPS — a district that her own children attend.

"I am an urban educator through and through. I can't imagine being anywhere else," Mogaji said. "I opt to work alongside other people who have chosen to work in urban education, in this space. I appreciate what everybody does here."

She said she sees tremendous strength and potential in Washington's focus on literacy.

"I think literacy is everything," she said. "Literacy is what changes lives. Without it, you have a struggle. A literacy focus is always wonderful. Through reading, writing, speaking, and listening — and ele-



Dr. Amira Mogaji, Principal, Washington Writers' Academy.

vating those skills — you can do anything."

Why did you become an educator?

My mother was a teacher. She's retired now. In terms of my own personal mission in life, in Montessori we call it our cosmic task. My mother, my father, we believe in education for all. That's what drew me. Everybody deserves a high quality education.

Does your Montessori background play any role in your work as an educator today?

Children learn in different ways. Montessori provides a constructivist model, where students can learn through working with materials, moving

from concrete to abstract, and by having choices. All children should acquire the Montessori learner outcomes which include: academic preparation, independence, confidence, social responsibility, and being global citizens. That's what all education should look like.

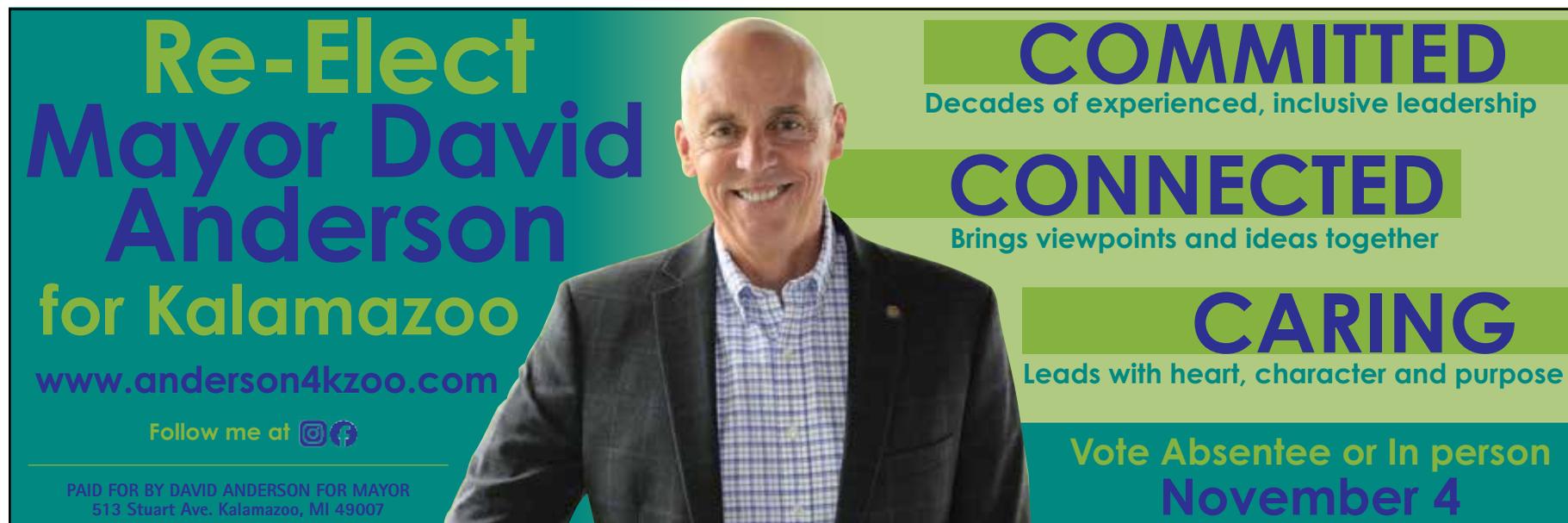
What do you like about being an administrator?

When I went back for my master's degree, not in a million years would I have imagined I would become a principal. As a teacher, everyone would send their children to me when they were struggling and I thought maybe I needed to work in a teacher education program to help new teachers before they go into the classroom.

I had a conversation with an advisor and he said, 'You need to be a principal. The principal is the first line of defense. You can support teachers on the ground. You can support children on the ground. Be the front line worker and support them in the moment.'

How do you hope to build community at Washington?

I am looking forward to a year of collaborating and working with the staff. I want to have a working partnership with families and the community. I think communication is key. I am always available to staff and parents as we get to know each other or to talk about whatever they want to talk about. When school starts, I'll be in classrooms, in the cafeteria and on the playground. The phrase I like to use is 'intentionally visible and available.' *(continued on page 7)*



Re-Elect Mayor David Anderson for Kalamazoo
www.anderson4kzoo.com
Follow me at  

COMMITTED
Decades of experienced, inclusive leadership

CONNECTED
Brings viewpoints and ideas together

CARING
Leads with heart, character and purpose

Vote Absentee or In person November 4

PAID FOR BY DAVID ANDERSON FOR MAYOR
513 Stuart Ave. Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Dr. Amira Mogaji (cont. from pg. 6)

FAST FACTS

Family: She is married and has six children.

Favorite thing to do when not at work: Anything with my family. We love the zoo. We love the beach. We do puzzle nights. I'm a staunch roadtripper. I just got back from the East Coast. I've driven to San Antonio and to California.

Book everyone should read: "Just Mercy" by Brian Stevenson. He is a lawyer and a lot of his work was around trying to get reduced sentences for people who were sentenced as juveniles. There is a quote in that book: 'We are all better than the worst thing we have ever done.'

Favorite movie: *Remember the Titans* with Denzel Washington.

Last performance you've seen: *Hamilton*. I love musicals.

Favorite junk food: I am not supposed to eat it: Pizza. It's the world's perfect food.

Secret talent: I can sing. My kids get free, nonrefundable concerts on our road trips.

KPS Introduces Gold Card for Senior Citizens

SENIORS — not the district's high school seniors but the community's other seniors — will receive a new perk this year. Senior citizens who live in the district and are 62-years-old or older can get a KPS Gold Card, which will provide free entry to all regular season athletic events at KPS facilities.

The cards are available at the KPS Administration Building, 1220 Howard St. Residents must bring an ID, such as a driver's license, or other proof of age and residency in the KPS boundary area to obtain their card.

The cards:

- Provide free admission for regular season athletic events — excluding hockey, invitationals, and other special sporting activities.
- Are non-transferable.
- Do not expire.

In addition, nonresident senior citizens 62 and older will now qualify for a discount on admission

at the gate to regular season games.

The effort to offer free admission and discounts to senior citizens began with former KPS trustee Barb Miller and Vona Swanson, a Kalamazoo resident, who saw similar discounts being offered in other districts.

"We are thankful to Superintendent Dr. (Darrin) Slade for his willingness

to listen to our idea and see

that the senior pass program will happen," Miller said. "It really is a win-win for everyone. Grandparents get to see their grandkids perform and see the wonderful spaces that their tax dollars helped make happen, and hopefully, really feel a part of this great community."

Swanson added, "I'm excited to see seniors more involved in cheering on the students, and I believe that both seniors' and students' lives will be enriched by this new effort."



Ignite your
CURIOSITY!

LIMITED-TIME hands-on exhibit
NEW fall education programs
EXCITING events



LEARN MORE! airzoo.org

AIR ZOO
Aerospace & Science Experience



KALAMAZOO
& LOAVES
& FISHES

Need Help with Groceries?

Pick-up and Home Delivery Available
Both Fresh and Non-Perishable Items
No Income Verification or IDs Required

Call: 269-343-3663
Email: info@kzoolf.org
Visit: www.kzoolf.org





The Kalamazoo Promise
wishes you a successful school year!

A vision for **community transformation** and a national
model for **changing the human condition**

Class of 2026, Need help planning your next steps after high school?
Email Coaches@kalamazoopromise.com for postsecondary planning support!

Learn more: www.kalamazoopromise.com



Welcome Back KPS Students!

As you stuff your backpack with all the things you need for another successful school year, don't forget the ONE CARD that unlocks your access to thousands of books, movies, TV shows, music titles, and SO MUCH MORE!
Your **OneCard**.

OneCard gives ALL KPS students full access to everything Kalamazoo Public Library has to offer:

- print, digital & audio books of all genres
- streaming movies & TV shows via Hoopla & Kanopy
- streaming music via Freegal & Hoopla
- online craft tutorials via Creativebug
- online language learning via Mango Languages
- access to internet, computers, KPL's Teen Studio, Idea Lab & more!

Psst...KPS teachers and staff get a **OneCard** too!



Learn more at kpl.gov/onecard



Kalamazoo
Public Library
kpl.gov

Aaron Sauter: Middle School Challenges Appeal to New Milwood Magnet Principal

ALTHOUGH the middle school years can be challenging — just ask any parent of tweens — for Aaron Sauter, the new principal of Milwood Magnet School, middle school students are his favorite group to work with and present a great opportunity for growth — and to practice patience.

“I feel that at this age students are just starting to discover ‘the real world’ and are building independence,” he said. “With middle schoolers there is never a dull moment. It keeps things interesting one minute to the next.”

Sauter, 42, is originally from Blissfield in the southeast corner of Michigan. He came to Kalamazoo to attend Western Michigan University, where he earned a bachelor of science degree in education. He also holds a master’s degree in education from Walden University, and a master’s in educational leadership from American College of Education.

After elementary, middle school and high school teaching stints in Virginia and Kentucky, he returned to Kalamazoo as a teacher at Linden Grove Middle School. There, then-principal Craig McCane encouraged him to move into administration, and he became the culture and climate coach at Linden. He moved to Milwood in 2023 as an assistant principal under principal Mitch Hawkins, who retired this summer.

What made you want to become an educator?

My mom is a retired educator and I had some really inspiring high school teachers who showed me that being a teacher was more than academics but rather caring for the whole child.

What do you enjoy about being an administrator?

As the assistant principal, I enjoyed working alongside teachers and students to set new standards and processes for how the school can operate. We saw a lot of growth in a short time because of the dedication of the staff and their willingness to try new strategies for the students.

What is the secret to helping students succeed in middle school?

Patience, a sense of humor, patience, empathy, patience, consistency and then a dash of patience.

What do you think are the strengths of Milwood Magnet?

Milwood is full of strengths. The staff is top tier and I would argue is one of the best assembled and dedicated groups of teachers in the field. The teachers are relentless in their pursuit to help the



Aaron Sauter has been named the principal at Milwood Magnet School.

students in their classroom, both academically and socially emotionally.

The students at Milwood are as strong as they come, they continue to rise to the new level of expectations and challenges they are presented with, they are resilient, and they show up daily — despite having some difficult circumstances — to improve themselves.

How do you work to create community in your school?

I was lucky to come into a building with a great principal in Mr. Mitch Hawkins, who had helped cultivate a collaborative community. I tried to bring a fresh perspective to push new ideas and help continue the work he had already started. I can’t say it

FAST FACTS

Are you married? Do you have kids? Yes, my wife is an amazing fifth grade teacher and we have one daughter.

What are your favorite things to do when you’re not at work? When not at work, or at any of my daughter’s sports activities, I enjoy all forms of exercising and riding motorcycles.

What’s a book that everyone should read? “Toughness” by Jay Bilas

Last concert you went to? Trial and Turnstile

Favorite junk food? Donuts

Do you have any pets? I have two great pitbulls, Mia and Dash.

Secret skill? I make the world’s best breakfast. When I eventually retire, I would love to be a short order cook at a diner.

enough that the teachers and staff are the reason Milwood is growing in such a positive way. The teachers support each other, they collaborate, and they hold each other accountable. My work is to create the space where this can happen organically and support them with what they need to be successful.

BRANDY STIVER has been named the assistant principal of Milwood Magnet School. Stiver earned a bachelor’s degree in K-12 physical education from Grand Valley State University and a master’s degree in Educational Leadership from American College of Education. She also earned a K-12 physical education and elementary education certification from the State of Michigan.



Stiver has worked at KPS for 26 years. She has served as an elementary teacher, physical education instructor, Saturday School principal, and an assistant athletic director. Most recently, she was a climate and culture coach for the district.



Confident
S.O.L.E.

OPEN HOUSE

 SEPT 13, 2025

4000 Portage St
Kalamazoo, MI
49001

 1PM – 3PM



Registration is required.
Scan to register online.

Sierra Prather: Woods Lake Principal Is a KPS Grad Determined to Help Students

SIERRA PRATHER, the new principal at Woods Lake Elementary: A Magnet Center for the Arts, is a Kalamazoo native who was inspired to go into education when she was a student at Loy Norrix High School and became determined to help students in her hometown find academic success.

Prather attended Lakewood, Northeastern, Washington, and Edison elementary schools. She moved away for middle school but graduated from Loy Norrix High School before attending Western Michigan University, where she earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a master's degree in Instructional Leadership.

"While at Loy Norrix High School, I participated in the Education for Employment program," she said. "This program allowed me to spend time at the day-care on campus of my high school during my junior year and in a kindergarten classroom at Winchell Elementary for my senior year.

"I was able to work with students, create and teach lessons, and just be creative. I was able to learn from amazing teachers by just observing their craft in action. A 'strong flame' grew inside of me, and I changed my career path from lawyer to teacher at that moment."



Sierra Prather is the new principal at Woods Lake Elementary.

After graduating from Western, she moved into the classroom. She taught at Woods Lake for 15 years — five years as a kindergarten teacher and nine years as a fifth grade teacher. In 2022, she made the move into administration as the assistant principal at Parkwood-Upjohn Elementary School.

She returned to Woods Lake as an assistant principal in 2023. In addition, she has served as the elementary summer school principal for three years.

"I knew that I wanted to be a part of shaping future generations in my own hometown, so I stayed home," Prather said. "I am delighted to continue to grow in my leadership role as the principal at Woods Lake Elementary."

What do you like about being in administration — specifically being a building principal?

I am rewarded with the opportunity to make a significant, positive impact on students, staff, families, and the school community as a whole. I am able to witness student growth, build strong relationships with all stakeholders, help to shape the school culture, and continue to inspire our future generation.

What are the strengths of Woods Lake? What about KPS as a whole?

Woods Lake Elementary is a very diverse school and provides students with opportunities to excel academically, emotionally, socially, and artistically. Woods Lake is the only elementary school in the district that provides all students the opportunity to

(continued on page 11)



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

Sierra Prather *(continued from page 10)*

participate in dance class once a week.

Our district is very resourceful! We are able to support students, staff, families, and our entire community. The district has established positive relationships with community partners to support our students.

What is the power of adding the arts to a school curriculum?

Adding the arts to a school curriculum has a wide range of benefits for students. It impacts their cognitive, social, emotional, and academic development. It encourages students to think creatively and provides a platform for self-expression. It helps with critical thinking, concentration, and visual-spatial skills. It boosts confidence and self-esteem. It also provides students the opportunity to be exposed to diverse cultures and perspectives, which fosters cultural understanding and empathy.

FAST FACTS

Can you tell us about your family? I am blessed to have a wonderful, supportive family. I have soon-to-be 15-year-old fraternal twin sons!

What's your favorite thing to do when you're not at work? When I am not working, I really enjoy spending time with my family and friends. I love to shop, watch movies, and attend concerts.

What's the last concert you went to? The last concert I attended was Kirk Franklin featuring Fred Hammond, Marvin Sapp, Yolanda Adams, and the Clark Sisters.

Favorite junk food? My favorite junk food is BBQ potato chips and Twizzlers.

MIRANDA ROOY has been named the assistant principal of Woods Lake Elementary: A Magnet Center for the Arts.

Rooy earned a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education/Fine Arts Composite from Hope College and a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Grand Canyon University.

Rooy was an early elementary classroom teacher for Beaver Island Community Schools for 10 years, and she has been a classroom teacher for KPS for seven years, including teaching art and music in five elementary schools, kindergarten at Washington Writers' Academy, and kindergarten and fifth grade at Woods Lake Elementary.



KNIGHTS HEALTH CENTER



Serving Kalamazoo County residents between 5 to 21 years old

HEALTH CARE

- Sports physicals
- Illnesses & injuries
- Well child exams
- Immunizations
- STI testing
- And more

MENTAL HEALTH

- Counseling
- ADHD
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Stress
- And more

Make an Appointment:

When: M-F 7-3:30

Where: Loy Norrix High School, 606 E. Kilgore Rd, Kalamazoo MI

269-391-2843

HealthyKnights@kalcounty.gov

Cost: Fees for services will be billed directly to your insurance provider, this includes both private and Medicaid. There are not any co-pays, and you will not be sent a bill for what insurance doesn't cover. For families without insurance, services are free



Catch it before it's gone!

EXTREME SPORTS

BEYOND HUMAN LIMITS

Now-Oct 1

airzoo.org

Developed by



in partnership with



AIR ZOO
Aerospace & Science Experience

KPS Helps Celebrate New International Collection at Kalamazoo Public Library

EARLIER this year, more than a dozen multilingual learners from Milwood Magnet School helped the Kalamazoo Public Library celebrate the unveiling of its new International Language Collection.

The collection is located on the second floor of the library's Central Branch. It draws together international literature that was spread throughout the library. The collection was organized by KPL librarian Natalie Isham. KPL also maintains an international

section in its children's room.

Milwood Magnet School library assistant Tania Fleitas worked with the KPL staff to help them expand the collection to include books that she provides for Milwood students.

Milwood has nearly 150 speakers of languages other than English, including Spanish, Arabic, Swahili, Pashto, Farsi, French, Kinyawarda, Armenian, Latvian, Tajik, Estonian, Tigrinya, Russian, Dari, Ko-

rean and Guyarati.

Fleitas praised KPL for looking at the needs of the community and making the commitment to expanding its international collection to help improve new English language learners' literacy skills and also help them maintain connections with their cultures and the larger community.

"Imagine a person from El Salvador goes to the
(continued on page 13)



Milwood Magnet School library assistant Tania Fleitas, center, looks at books in the international collection. Fleitas helped with book recommendations for the collection.



Gesnanne Joseph looks at French language books in the Kalamazoo Public Library's expanded international collection.



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

International Language Collection at KPL *(continued from page 12)*

library and finds a book written by Claudia Hernandez, a masterful storyteller from El Salvador," she said. "This person checks the book out from the library and reads stories that take place in the region this person knows. Now, this reader acquires another perspective about their place in the world. This person can feel represented and proud of the shared

origin with the author.

"Then, because the book is in the public library, they are able to recommend that book to someone else to check out, and therefore it turns into a shared experience. A reader may connect with books that describe the geography, history, sounds, smells of their heritage and reinterpret the complexity of the

ON THE COVER: Milwood Magnet School students Daniella Johari and Moussa Zuvena look at a book from the new international collection at the Kalamazoo Public Library.

place where one moved from. The emotional value of finding that book that makes you feel less isolated is unquantifiable. The public library grants access so that many people can have that experience."



From left, Nour Alfjr, Tania Fleitas, Gesnanne Joseph, and Hasibullah Ahmazay talk about the selections in the International Language Collection at KPL.



While at KPL, students signed up for their library cards.

Improving Lives Through Public Health

- New/Expecting Parent Support & Services
- Immunizations
- Family Planning
- Well Water Testing
- WIC Nutrition Support
- Household Hazardous Waste Services
- Older Adult & Caregiver Resources
- STI Testing & Treatment
- School-Based Health Clinics
- Veterans Services & more!



 **269-373-5200**

 **311 E. Alcott St.**

Learn more about the services provided by the Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department



KALAMAZOO
COUNTY GOVERNMENT
Health & Community Services Department

Time to Grow with Kalamazoo County Pre-K!

- Plant the seeds of success with high-quality prekindergarten.
- The 2025 application is open! Programs may be free/low-cost for your family.

Visit dreambigstartsmall.org or call 269-250-9333.



FALL SEMESTER STARTS SEPT. 3

www.kvcc.edu/register

Kalamazoo**VALLEY**TM
community college

ADVISORY TO ALL PARENTS

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Kalamazoo Public Schools has adopted an Integrated Pest Management program. Inherent with this are the District's efforts to reduce the use of chemical pesticide(s) as much as possible. While it may occasionally be necessary to apply a pesticide, they will only be used as a last resort.

You have the right to be informed prior to any pesticide application made to the school buildings and grounds. In certain emergencies, pesticides may be applied without prior notice, but you can be

provided notice following any such application. To receive notification, please complete the following information and submit to your child's school.

Should you have any questions or concerns about pest management within your child's school, please feel free to contact Karen Jackson, Executive Supervisor/Facilities Management, at (269) 337-0400. Thank you for helping us with this matter.

To receive notification, please fill out the following form and return it to your child's school.

PESTICIDE NOTIFICATION REQUEST • 2025/2026 SCHOOL YEAR

Name of School: _____

Student's (Child's) Name: _____

Street Address: _____ City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Please Check One:

- I wish to be notified prior to a scheduled pesticide treatment **inside** of the building.
- I wish to be notified prior to a scheduled pesticide treatment on the **outside** grounds of the school.
- Both of the above.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

Please report any change of schools or address to Karen Jackson at (269) 337-0400.



COMMUNITY *Arts* AWARDS

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

2025

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS OCTOBER 6TH.

Do you know someone who is a leader in the arts, volunteers their time in the arts, or is a talented youth with a promising future in the arts? Or perhaps you know of a local business that consistently supports or advocates for our local arts scene? If so please nominate them for a 2025 Community Arts Award!

View all of the award categories and make your nomination on the CAA page on our website:

KalamazooArts.org

ac
arts council
of greater kalamazoo

Important AHERA Notice

All Kalamazoo Public Schools Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response (AHERA) Management Plans are available for review by parents/guardians and employees of Kalamazoo Public Schools. They may be reviewed by:

1. Contacting individual buildings, where each Plan is located in the administrative office and may be reviewed there during school hours, or
2. Contacting Karen Jackson, at the Office of Facilities Management, 600 W. Vine Street, (269) 337-0400.

The district has completed six-month periodic surveillance, as required under the AHERA guidelines, which reassessed all areas of known or assumed asbestos materials to determine if a change has taken place. The results of the inspections have been added to the current AHERA Management Plans.



METRO
KMETRO.COM • (269) 337 - 8222

TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS FOR STUDENTS

- Ride to & from School
- Extracurricular Activities
- KVCC/WMU/VoTech Programs
- 21 Bus Routes
- Metro Connect
- Travel Training

Visit us at Kmetro.com for information on transportation options to increase student access to educational opportunities throughout the community!

....LET'S GO METRO!

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE



EVENT SEPT. 19 - 21 | FREE

KALAMAZOO REFUGEE FILM FESTIVAL

This Kalamazoo Refugee Resource Collaborative partnership showcases the stories of people forced to flee, through film. Three films will be shown, one each day. Following each film, a panel discussion will be led by refugee and stateless individuals.

NEW EXHIBIT SEPT. 27, 2025 - JAN. 4, 2026 | FREE

DANCING WITH LIFE: MEXICAN MASKS



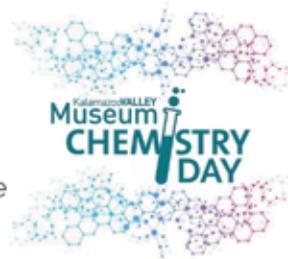
Explore the rich festival culture of Mexico through historic and contemporary masks from the collection of the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture.

Dancing with Life: Mexican Masks was curated by Dr. Pavel Shlossberg and organized by Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, Spokane, WA. Its tour is organized by International Arts & Artists, Washington, D.C.

EVENT SATURDAY, OCT. 18 | NOON - 4 P.M. | FREE

CHEMISTRY DAY: THE HIDDEN LIFE OF SPICES

Explore the chemistry of spices through fun experiments. Free seeds will be given away, so you can continue the joy of the science of spices in your own garden!



PLANETARIUM ANNOUNCEMENT

The planetarium is currently under renovation. Visit kalamazoomuseum.org for the latest information on upcoming showtimes.

EVENT FRIDAY, OCT. 31 | FREE

MUSEUM MAYHEM FOR PRE-K



Enjoy Halloween-themed hands-on craft activities and storytimes, plus the spooktacular Puking Pumpkins science demo that teaches about acids and bases!

EVENT TUESDAYS, SEPT. 23 - NOV. 18
6:30 - 7:30 P.M. | FREE

THE HONORABLE HARVEST LECTURE SERIES

Enjoy weekly talks this fall examining ways we can restore the tenets of reciprocity with the natural world as



a community and as individuals. In partnership with the museum, this drop-in lecture series is held at Kalamazoo Valley Community College's Marilyn J. Schlack Culinary and Allied Health Building, located at 418 E. Walnut St. in downtown Kalamazoo. View the list of topics at valleyhub.kvcc.edu/events.

NEW EXHIBIT OCT. 12, 2025 - JAN. 4, 2026 | FREE

"AM I AN AMERICAN OR AM I NOT?"



This traveling exhibition asks visitors to think about examples of unfair treatment from our country's past and present in order to protect the American promises of life, liberty and justice for all.

"Am I An American or Am I Not?" was developed by the Fred T. Korematsu Institute, Exhibit Envoy and AGH Arts Strategies.

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

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

FREE GENERAL ADMISSION

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 | 269.373.7990