

Kalamazoo Public Schools

EXCELSIOR

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November 2025 • Volume 28, Issue 10



Planning for Senior Year and Beyond

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Students
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Living Abroad
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Inspire
Multilingual
Teacher **Julie
Zabik**



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Taking Time to Celebrate Success Is an Important Part of the Journey

A Message from the Superintendent

Dr. Darrin Slade



AS EDUCATORS, we often are called upon to be forward looking, to always be planning for and pondering the next test, the next year, the next goal. We are constantly looking ahead at the needs of students and how to ensure their future success.

But sometimes, it is important to pause and celebrate the successes in front of us. And, in the past few months, we have had some important successes within Kalamazoo Public Schools.

Several weeks ago, KPS shared great news for our Advanced Placement program. Advanced Placement classes are advanced courses that high school students can take across subject areas, ranging from chemistry to African American history to literature. Students who complete an AP course and pass their subject test with at least a score of 3 (out of 5) can earn college credit for the class.

This opportunity provides students with

an added level of academic rigor and helps prepare them for the work they will face in their post-secondary experiences.

In the 2024-25 school year, KPS saw the highest AP participation rates in the history of the district, as well as the highest AP scores to date. Last year, 1,423 AP courses were taken by 859 students. Of those students, 721 took 1,228 AP tests. Seventy-six percent of the students earned a score of 3 or higher on their tests.

Dr. Lindsay Noakes, the KPS coordinator of assessments, research and evaluation, notes that our AP participation rates are well above pre-pandemic numbers. Even more impressive is the passing rates, which have grown by 50 percent since 2018-19. The district is also pleased with the increasing numbers of African American and Hispanic students who are availing themselves of this educational opportunity.

That is a tremendous testament to the work our students and their teachers put into the past year. It is also a testament to the work of parents, tutors, and counselors and other staff to ensure our students are aware of the opportunities within KPS and that they are prepared to tackle these challenging

classes. As I have said before, and will continue to say, improving academic achievement is our No. 1 goal as a district, and this data points to the tremendous work our staff does to ensure we are gaining on that goal.

And in October, I shared more positive academic gains with our Board of Education. On the 2024-25 end-of-year state testing in English Language Arts (M-STEP-ELA), the district saw improvement in student performance at every tested grade level in our elementary and middle schools. Elementary school students demonstrated growth in grades 3 to 5, with KPS third and fourth graders bucking the state trend of declining test scores in ELA.

Our most improved elementary schools were: Arcadia, Edison, El Sol, Indian Prairie, Lincoln, Northeastern, Northglade, Prairie Ridge, Spring Valley, Winchell, and Woods Lake.

Major ELA improvements also were seen in our middle schools, with growth recorded at every grade level when compared to ELA growth across the state. Students in sixth and eighth grade reached the highest proficiency levels in more than a decade, with Milwood Magnet School being our most improved middle school program in ELA.

We saw mixed results with our high school ELA performance, with Loy Norrix and Phoenix high schools making gains, while our other two high schools saw a slight decrease in student performance.

As KPS strives to continue to raise expectations and performance at all schools for all students, we ask that parents and guardians support us and our students on this journey. Reading to your children at a young age and remaining involved and interested in their school work as they get older are wonderful ways to encourage their reading skills.

And, if you feel your child is struggling, please reach out to your teachers, principals and other staff. KPS has resources to help your child — from Saturday school to after-school tutoring to summer school. Our goal is to match you with the help your child needs to thrive.

There are good things happening in KPS thanks to the hard work of students, teachers, principals, other staff, senior leadership and the community. There is more work to do, but in this season of thanksgiving I want to pause to express my gratitude to everyone working to lift our children and help them reach their potential.

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Elementary Students Enjoy Sunny, Fun Runs

Elementary schools enjoyed beautiful autumn weather during the annual “fun runs” held at many buildings. Students collect donations from family and friends to help sponsor the runs. The funds are used to support special activities such as field trips, incentives, and materials for events such as spirit and theme weeks, said El Sol Elementary School Principal Dr. Natalie Wilson.

Teacher **Bethany Conley** gives a high five **Martin Cameron** as he crosses the Northglade Montessori Magnet School fun run finish line. He's followed by **Trinity Warren**, left, and **Maude MacCreedy**.



Northglade students **Burriss Yaeger**, **Soren Alt**, and **Bryson Rolan** run with teacher **Josh Brown**.



Homi Cruz, in green, and **Farid Martinez Nonato** get drinks at the El Sol water station. Homi's arm is full of the bands he earned for each lap around the playground.



Amber Trieu, Arcadia



Markelle Casey, Arcadia



Emma De La Rosa Moreira (left) and **Olivia Ramirez** share a lap at El Sol Elementary School.

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ARTISTS' CORNER

In art class at **Winchell Elementary School**, fourth graders dove into the study of still lifes. Students examined bouquets of foliage to create a contour line composition, then used semi-moist tempera paints to fill the space with color. Students were challenged to finalize their art by signing their names and coming up with unique titles for their pieces.



DeShawn O'Large



Gibson Krol



Razia Whitley



Fatima Turkey, Jayceon Franco, Ava Johnson, and Jude Watkins work on their projects in Mandy Clearwater's class.

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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

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District Directory at:
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Recipe

from the KPS Food Service, Chartwells

Josh Kerby,
executive chef



Kirsten Strong,
registered dietitian
nutritionist

Thanksgiving Fruit Parfaits



WANT TO make a fancy looking and delicious dessert that is easier than pie? Whip up this dessert for your Thanksgiving dinner and your guests will think you are a culinary genius.

Servings: 8

INGREDIENTS

- 16 ounces heavy cream, whipped to soft peaks
- 1 cup pumpkin puree (use puree, not pumpkin pie filling)
- 1 tablespoon pumpkin pie spice
- 3.5 ounces of ginger-flavored cookies (Tate's is a good brand available at D&W)

- 2 cups fresh blueberries
- 1 cup pistachios, shelled
- Zest of one lemon, grated
- 8 small clear cups (about 12 ounces each)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Use a blender to grind the cookies into crumbs. Remove and set aside.

2. Use the same blender to finely chop the pistachios.
3. Fold together the pumpkin puree, pumpkin pie spice, and whipped cream. Set aside.

4. Layer each glass with about 3 ounces of whipped cream mixture, 1/8 cup blueberries, 2 tablespoons of cookie crumbs, and 1 tablespoon of pistachios. Repeat layering one more time.
5. Top each parfait with lemon zest.



6. Freeze for 30 to 60 minutes or chill in the refrigerator until ready to eat.
7. If you have food glitter, sprinkle on top for a festive flair.

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From Caregiver to Coach: Understanding How to Parent a Senior

THAT PARENTS and students clash during senior year should not surprise anyone.

It is a time of high excitement but it is also a time filled with anxiety and expectations that may differ widely between parent and child.

So everyone needs to just take a breath and try to understand what may be fueling tensions.

“It’s hard not to be emotional. That’s your kid. But, I’d say be patient,” said Stephanie Perry, dean of students at Loy Norrix High School. “Be patient with yourself and with your child. Just ask more questions.”

Stephanie Simpson, the guidance counselor at Phoenix High School said, “Being in the thick of senior year is hard because emotions are high. Everyone wants to have their say.”

Perry said parents have to own some of the conflict. “It is a transition for a parent, who is used to being a caregiver, who is used to going ‘I’m going to fix, fix, fix.’ Sometimes your kid is frustrated with something, and you want to fix it — and you don’t need to. You should ask, instead, ‘How can I support you right now? Do you need me to listen? Do you need me to think of some possibilities of how I can help you in this moment?’”

Sometimes that means letting students struggle on their road to independence, Simpson added. “As a parent, you know that sometimes your child may have to bump their head, but at least you’re there to put a Band Aid on it or make sure they get their helmet on to a certain extent next time.”

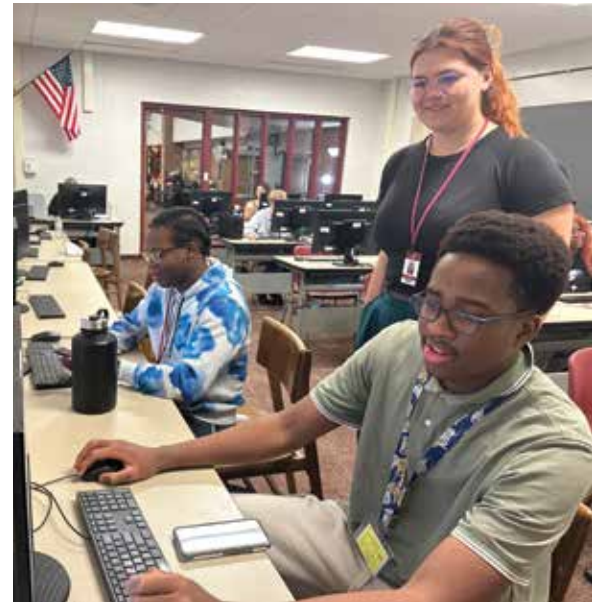
It’s a transition that is totally age-appropriate



CIS Site Coordinator Ta’Nay Robinson helps Kalamazoo Central senior Rose Seya set up her Common Application account to apply for college.

and normal, not just in the parent-child relationship but in school too. The whole college application process is one that deans and counselors try to place on the shoulders of seniors themselves.

So, as the world comes to expect students to be more mature and independent, it’s only natural that students will begin flexing those social-emotional muscles which can cause conflict with parents, said Judi Mentzer, dean of students at Kalamazoo Central High School.



Kalamazoo Central Communities In Schools site coordinator Emily Ayers helps seniors Oluwatomiwa Olagbemi, right, and Jordan Kwei, set up accounts for the Common Application for colleges and the FAFSA.

“They’re trying to exert their independence. They’re leaving soon,” she said. Like Perry, Mentzer said parents should focus on their changing role as an advisor.

“I think parents are aware of the changes and are savoring every moment, and students just feel ‘you’re invading their space.’ They think ‘just let me live my life,’” Mentzer said with a laugh.

“It’s hard for parents, because parents see the
(continued on page 7)



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Raising Seniors *(continued from page 6)*

big picture and students often don't see it until the very end and suddenly feel "I'm not ready to go."

Those fears about the future may be very real, but the students may not even recognize them for what they are. No matter what their plans are for the future — when high school ends, so ends over a decade of being a K-12 student and certain goals and expectations.

"They're losing their safe place, their routines," Simpson said. "Even if they've balked at doing homework, it's become their norm. They've been doing it for years of their life. I tell parents that they're scared. Either they are going to succeed and do well — or they're going to self-sabotage at the end, because they're afraid of what's going on outside in the real world."

Simpson and Perry encourage parents to step back and embrace their new roles as helpmates to their children, supporting them as they face all of these scary decisions and transitions.

"Just be there and offer support, hold their hand and let them know, 'It's okay. We can do this together.' If you're walking on campus and they say, 'I don't need you to come with me.' You can say, 'OK. I'll just

sit outside. I'm here if you need me,'" Simpson said.

Perry said she likes to compare this new parental role to that of a coach. "Sometimes parents take it personally, when things happen — or don't happen. You want to say, 'Well, why aren't you doing that? Just do it.' But, you have to remember they are not

you. That's where it becomes your job to ask questions, to listen, to try to help and understand.

"You need to be coaching them through the process. The hard part is that's your heart living outside of you. It's your kid."



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Senior Year: Going the Distance with Planning and Motivation

IT'S NOT TOO LATE. That's the message for high school seniors.

If you haven't applied to college yet, if you haven't started the search for scholarships, if you didn't get the SAT scores you wanted — even if you don't think you've gotten all of the credits you need to graduate in June — there is still time to tackle all of those issues.

But seniors need to take responsibility and do the hard work to ensure their final year of high school is a success.

"I think the great thing about seniors — or the upside and the downside — is that they need to be self-sufficient and they need to self-advocate, because they are young adults," said Stephanie Perry, dean of students at Loy Norrix High School. "They are that much closer to being out in the real world and having to do things by themselves and be more independent."

The fall is always a busy time for high school counseling departments. By this time, counselors have held meetings with seniors to begin audits of their transcripts and to help students set up the accounts they need to complete the Common Application, which is the general college application form used by most schools, and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid or FAFSA. Counseling departments will have provided students with some kind of checklist to help them keep track of important dates and assignments.

"Counselors have gone into classes. They call it an introduction to their senior year and share important information," Perry said. "We talk about the Common App and walk through the process of setting up their accounts with them. They don't have to fill out everything — just the main information. The important thing is linking their Common App with their Xello (the career exploration program) account. They can add more detailed information later, with things like letters of recommendations, transcript requests, counselor recommendations, and so on."

Students who want to apply for early admission

generally need to have applications submitted by Nov. 1, but there are still several months left to apply for regular admission. And for students contemplating community college, those schools often take applications until right before classes begin.

If a student hasn't decided which colleges they want to apply to, Kalamazoo Central High School Dean Judi Mentzer encourages them to talk to the college representatives who are visiting high schools — and to visit some college campuses.

"There's nothing like getting on campus," Mentzer said. "You can watch all the videos, talk to the reps, but you don't really know what a school is like until you get on campus. It's just a feeling. You walk on some campuses and think, 'Oh, it's too big' and feel overwhelmed. Or you can think, 'I'm ready.'"

She said that if students are unable to visit campuses with their families, they should look for other opportunities, such as school-sponsored trips, or visits coordinated by programs such as Western Michigan University's Gear Up.

Students also want to take some time to begin working on the essays for their college applications. Oftentimes, the English teachers build that writing assignment into their curriculum for seniors, but it's always good to have a rough draft sketched out in advance.

"English teachers can help with grammar, phrasing and storytelling, but you can also show it to your counselors," Mentzer said. "A counselor might have a perspective your teacher might not have on



Phoenix High School students Jevaeh Jones, left, and Kiera Virgil request information about Southwest Michigan College during a campus tour.



Loy Norrix Post Secondary Fair provides juniors and seniors with an opportunity to talk to colleges, trade unions, military representatives and others to prepare for life after high school.



Loy Norrix junior Dennise Hernandez speaks with Maxwell VanZant, admissions adviser at Oakland University.



Loy Norrix senior Alexander Lopez speaks with Jeff Taylor, a representative for the Michigan Regional Council of Carpenters at the Loy Norrix Post Secondary Fair.

ON THE COVER:
U.S. Air Force Technical Sergeant Shyla Smith explains the appeal of the military to Loy Norrix students, from left, Kellen Johnson, Anthony Boy, Itamar Santos and Lukas Buytendorp at the Loy Norrix Post Secondary Fair.

what kind of information to include.”

She recalls a student at another school district who was heavily involved in the Kalamazoo Civic Theatre. Mentzer noted that the senior hadn’t included that in her essay. The student said, “I just do that because I love it.” Mentzer said that’s exactly why it should have been included in the essay. “This is where you need to brag about yourself.”

Perry said the essay is your chance to tell your story, and it may be the opportunity to tell the story behind some less than stellar grades. Maybe a student struggled with homelessness or a mental health issue and that affected their grades — they can share how they came back from those challenges.

“I believe in sharing your journey and being honest,” Perry said. “I think admissions people are human and they have understanding. I think it’s important for them to know if a kid is a fighter and an overcomer.”

Stephanie Simpson, the counselor at Phoenix High School, said her students are also deep in the senior process of figuring out what they want to do after high school. They usually follow one of three

tracks: applying for colleges, considering careers in the military or the trades, and looking at entering the world of work.

During the comprehensive review of a student’s high school career, sometimes it becomes apparent that a student is in danger of not graduating. The advice is the same in that situation as it is for a student who may be behind in applying for college: It’s not too late.

Meeting with a counselor to get an audit of the credits a student has earned is key to knowing if any graduation requirements are missing, Simpson said. If a student finds they need additional coursework outside of the regular school schedule, all KPS high schools offer Courseware, an online credit recovery program.

“We want the students to have some ownership. You need to get to know your counselor and to know what classes you need,” Simpson said. She said she has students who are short of credits, but she never says it’s too late. In those cases, she challenges them to “prove me wrong.”

With focus and consistent effort, students can recover and walk across the stage with their class-

mates, she said.

Perry encourages students to always keep working toward their goals, whether it’s graduating or trying to boost their grade point. It might be difficult, but it’s not impossible.

“A grade point situation (versus a lack of credits) is a little tougher, because that’s mathematics,” Perry said. “Can it be higher than what you have? Yes, absolutely, but it’s going to take coming to school every day, being on time, doing your work, studying, going to after-school tutoring if you need it. It’s going to involve hard work.”

No matter what issues a student is facing, it’s important that students remember that they and other school staff are there to help.

“I think the majority of people will suffer in silence rather than ask for help,” Perry said. “That’s where relationship-building comes into play. Most of the time my counselors have great relationships with kids. If I get data in front of the counselors that a student is failing English, they are on it. They get the kid to meet, they talk to the parents and ask how we can help you. We get some sort of plan in place to check with them to make sure they’re getting the support they need.”

Kalamazoo Innovative Learning Program and KPS Virtual substitute counselor Rebecca Learner encourages students to be proactive and work closely with counselors to resolve issues.

“KPS students have four years to develop a relationship with their counselor, so hopefully by senior year being behind won’t be a problem. However, situations beyond one’s control can happen and as a counselor I reassure the students that there is ALWAYS a solution,” Learner said.

In addition to Courseware, there’s summer school, Test Out, co-op work credit. Students can also return for a fifth year or shift to a program such as KILP or Phoenix. Students can also plan to attend community college to help boost their grades before enrolling in a four-year university.

“It’s often to the student’s advantage to ‘hit the wall’ while they are in high school — and to figure out how to climb over it. Colleges and employers are looking for individuals that can think creatively,

(continued on page 10)

Senior Year *(continued from page 9)*

critically, and problem solve,” Learner said.

Simpson said that Phoenix, with its smaller class size, allows for strong relationships between students and teachers. Plus, Phoenix teachers are likely to have students for multiple classes, which provides added opportunity to get to know students.

Even if a student is on track to graduate with all the required credits, if they’re ahead of the game in terms of completing college applications, they have the FAFSA filled out on the day it opens, they know what their dream school is, there is still one more hurdle for them to overcome: Senioritis.

“Senioritis is a real and probably a universal condition that surfaces from stress, emotional and mental fatigue, and a desire to start adulting,” Learner said. “It can show itself as lack of motivation, apathy, procrastination and burnout. Fear of the unknown also plays a part, and I’ve seen students self-sabotaging.”

To combat senioritis, Simpson said she tries to hold casual monthly visits with seniors to check in with them and talk in a relaxed setting. It might be as simple as enjoying a cup of tea and talking about applications or inviting students to have a cup of hot

chocolate and check-in about how they’re doing on the Courseware classes.

“Take your senior year seriously,” Mentzer said. “Colleges ask for that final transcript. Sometimes colleges will place a student on hold and are waiting for that final transcript before making an admission decision. They are expecting students to finish strong.”

Senior year is a marathon, not a sprint, Perry said.

“My kid just started cross country in middle school. Watching kids at the meets, sometimes they go all 100 percent energy at first, then they get to the end and they don’t have anything left,” she said. “We are helping kids to remember this year is

a marathon and you have to pace yourself and you have to stay motivated.

“There is a quote out there that says, ‘Motivation is like taking a bath.’ We tell people to take one every day. You have to motivate yourself every single day.”

And remember to enjoy this time, Mentzer said. It’s your senior year. Do all of the fun things, like sit in the student section at the football and basketball games. Go to the pep rallies, Attend the senior breakfast, go to prom, make plans to attend Grad Bash.

“Enjoy your senior year but take it seriously too,” Mentzer said. “It’s a fine balance between having fun and keeping in mind where you’re headed.”



On Thursday, Nov. 20 at 6 p.m., students from Maple Street Magnet’s Musical Theater Class will present a showcase of scenes and songs they have been working on in class. Admission is free and the show will be in the Maple Street cafeteria.

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Key Events to Pay Attention to During Your Senior Year

- ✓ Meet with your counselor to discuss graduation requirements and create an audit of your classes, discuss graduation requirements, examine post high school options, and make a list of colleges and other opportunities.
- ✓ Create a calendar of college application and financial aid deadlines
- ✓ Work with your counselor to set up your Common App account through Xello.
- ✓ Make sure you start your paperwork for The Kalamazoo Promise.
- ✓ Plan campus visits.
- ✓ Register to retake the SAT if you feel that you need to.
- ✓ Attend college visits and college fairs planned at your school.
- ✓ Set up your FAFSA account and complete it as soon as possible. This will be important for another key activity: researching and applying for scholarships.
- ✓ Ask teachers for letters of recommendation.
- ✓ Create a brag sheet with your accomplishments such as AP courses, dual enrollment, sports, extracurricular activities, and awards.
- ✓ Prepare college applications. Submit them by Nov. 1 for early application deadlines, or by the end of December for regular admission.
- ✓ Order your cap and gown.
- ✓ Stay engaged — watch out for senioritis.
- ✓ Plan ahead for: Prom, College Signing Days, Graduation, Senior Trip and Grad Bash.
- ✓ Make sure you enjoy senior year. Attend things like sporting events, plays, dances, pep rallies, hang out with family and friends.

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Every year, Kalamazoo Public Schools first grade students take a trip to their closest library branch in the fall. There they listen to stories, enjoy hands-on activities, and check out books. The collaboration promotes reading and provides a fun introduction to a valuable community resource.



Amber Booth's first graders arrive at the Kalamazoo Public Library and are excited to explore.



Amber Booth's first graders enjoy a story with KPL lead children's librarian Laura Bultman.



Irany Nonato Alonso works on coloring in the Kalamazoo Public Library Children's Room.



Maize Whitley uses her reading skills to read library aide Michael Evans' name tag.



Penelope Golden, Jade Cotton, and teacher Katherine Lee enter the Children's Room followed by Jared Rayburn.



Louise DiTaranto and Maize Whitley enjoy a coloring sheet.



Miriam Markham Smith checks out a book with the help of substitute librarian Susan O'Connor.

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If you're struggling to pay your water bill, we can help.

The City of Kalamazoo is making critical investments in our water and wastewater systems. These investments are funded by all of us through the rates we pay. Rates in Kalamazoo remain low compared to other communities, but we understand that rising costs may create hardships for some households. Financial and other aid options are listed below.

Payment plans and due date extensions are available. Call 311 or (269) 337-8000 for help. The Community Action Agency of Southwest Michigan can help low-income households pay overdue bills. Call 211 or 1-877-422-2726 for more information.

Consumers Energy offers a free home analysis that can help customers save money by reducing energy and water consumption. Call 1-888-316-8014 for more information.



www.kalamazoocity.org/UtilityHelp

Si necesita ayuda para pagar su factura de agua o alcantarillado, hay ayuda disponible. Para obtener información en español, llame al 311 o al 269 337-8000.

Julie Zabik: Living Abroad Builds Foundation for Multilingual Teacher

FOR JULIE ZABIK, studying abroad turned into living abroad, which inspired a career as a teacher for multilingual learners.

Zabik grew up in Kalamazoo attending Winchell Elementary, Maple Street Middle School, and Loy Norrix High School.

"I loved my experiences at all the schools I went to," said Zabik, 28. "My most memorable experience was my final soccer season in 2016 when we made it to the conference tournament finals and won the district championship. It was a great team and a great group of girls on and off the field."

At Norrix, her two most influential teachers were Spanish teacher Christina Holmes and AP chemistry teacher Claudia Witt-Thomas, who inspired her to study chemistry at Kalamazoo College where she earned a Heyl Scholarship.

While at K, she played soccer and took advantage of the school's well-regarded study abroad program, spending six months in Spain. Those six months inspired a



Loy Norrix teacher Julie Zabik, spent four years living, studying, and teaching in Spain before returning to Kalamazoo. She earned her master's degree there.

deep-seeded love of experiencing and learning about different cultures.

"I instantly fell in love and decided to move there after graduating from college," Zabik said. "One year turned into four. I met some amazing friends, worked at amazing schools and completed my master's degree in bilingual and multicultural education (at the Instituto Franklin in Alcala de Henares). As an outsider I knew it was important to use common interests to get to know locals and make friends."

"I used my desire to become fluent in Spanish to get to know the teachers at my schools, and used my love of soccer to meet people from all around the world."

Her interest in different cultures and languages helped her form deep connections with her students in Spain and now informs her work as a multilingual teacher at Loy Norrix High School.

Can you describe your teaching experiences in Spain?

My experience teaching in Spain was very different year to year. My first two years I worked in
(continued on page 15)

WALK-IN FLU VACCINE CLINIC

Mon - Thur

8-11:30 am & 1-4 pm

@ Kalamazoo County
Health & Community
Services Department

311 E Alcott
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

No appointment necessary, just bring
an insurance card and ID!



Julie Zabik *(continued from page 14)*

a school with a very diverse population including many immigrant students from Morocco. My last two years were at a charter school and another public school in a different part of Madrid. There was always a large emphasis on not just supporting students with their language skills but finding opportunities to share our culture and holidays. The students adored the language assistants, and it was always bittersweet having to move schools every 1-2 years. Building relationships with the students and witnessing their growth were always the best parts of the job.

What do you like about teaching ML students at Norrix? What are the challenges?


The best part of teaching in the ML department is definitely the students. They are so kind, unique and inspiring to me. Being a teacher in the ML department, you need to be very versatile. The ML population has proven to be very dynamic in terms of numbers and needs. One year, you may have a majority of sheltered newcomer classes and then the next you may be primarily co-teaching in general classrooms. Being able to adapt and be available to meet the specific needs of our population can definitely be challenging but is vital to providing the most support possible as a department.

What are you teaching? How do you support these students outside of general language skills?

I am teaching our ELD 3 Developing English class which is an intermediate English language class for our students. In addition, I am co-teaching an Algebra 1 class with a focus on supporting a large number of ML students taking that class. Going from a sheltered newcomer classroom to a mainstream class can be a bit intimidating for our students, so being able to be a familiar face in that class and support their unique needs is very rewarding.

What do people need to know about these students and this program?

Coming back to Loy Norrix and working with this specific group of students has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. I have learned and grown so much being around my students. Being a teacher isn't always the easiest job, but the resilience and courage of the students I teach inspire me to give my all to this job and this school.




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!

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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@kalamazoo.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



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE



NEW EXHIBIT NOW - JAN. 4, 2026 | FREE

DANCING WITH LIFE: MEXICAN MASKS



Explore the rich festival culture of Mexico through historic and contemporary masks. The exhibition centers around the work of the mask makers and dancers themselves through written and recorded interviews, including bilingual Spanish and English texts.

Dancing with Life: Mexican Masks was curated and organized by Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture and is toured by International Arts & Artists, Washington, D.C.

NEW EXHIBIT NOW - 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.

EVENT SATURDAY, NOV. 22 | 11 A.M. - 2 P.M. | FREE

PARADE DAY ACTIVITIES



Stop by the Kalamazoo Valley Museum after the downtown holiday parade for cool things to do! There will be hands-on activities, reindeer games and more!

SAVE THE DATE FRIDAY, DEC. 5 | 6 P.M. & 7:15 P.M. | FREE

KALAMAZOO MANDOLIN AND GUITAR ORCHESTRA ART HOP



Experience the magic of the season with a live performance by the Kalamazoo Mandolin and Guitar Orchestra at the December Art Hop, hosted by the Kalamazoo Valley Museum.

SAVE THE DATE DEC. 20, 23, 27, 28, 2025 & JAN. 3, 2026 | FREE

WINTER BREAK ACTIVITIES



The Kalamazoo Valley Museum will host a variety of exciting hands-on activities for all ages during winter break. Visit kalamazoomuseum.org for details.

EVENT TUESDAYS, NOW - 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.

PLANETARIUM EXPERIENCE | NOV. SHOWS | \$3 PER PERSON

Visit kalamazoomuseum.org for details.

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

Discover the "celestial wonders" that can be seen overhead in Michigan in this live, season-focused show.

We Are Guardians | 11 a.m. Sat. | 25 min. | Grades K & up

Satellites reveal how interconnected Earth's ecosystems are, helping us understand the impact of human activities on climate change and the delicate balance of our planet's environment.

Living in Balance: Anishinaabe Star Knowledge | 1 p.m. Sun. | 24 min. | Grades 5 & up

Living in Balance highlights Anishinaabe stories of constellations and moons in relation to contemporary insights about environmental changes.

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

SPECIAL NOTICE: The museum will be closed Nov. 27 - 28

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