



# A Message from the SUPERINTENDENT

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## AT A GLANCE

Board of Education Reaffirms 2014-19 District Goals

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## IMPORTANT DATES

### Upcoming Board of Education Meetings

Tuesday, December 8, 2015  
7:00 p.m.

Thornton Creek Elementary School

Tuesday, January 12, 2016  
7:00 p.m.

Hillside Middle School (Forum)

Tuesday, January 26, 2016  
7:00 p.m.

Winchester Elementary School

### Superintendent Community Coffee

Monday, November 30, 2015  
6:30-8:00 p.m.

Board of Education Office  
501 West Main Street, Northville

### Winter Break Begins

Friday, December 18, 2015  
(End of the Day)

### Classes Resume

Monday, January 4, 2016

## DEAR NORTHVILLE SCHOOL FAMILIES, STAFF AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

It is hard to believe we are already in the second quarter of the school year and that Thanksgiving and the holiday season will soon be upon us. We have much to be grateful for at Northville Public Schools including our innovative and compassionate teachers and staff who open a *World of Possibilities* for all our students; our incredible school families and community members who value the education of our young people in both their word and actions; and, most importantly, our more than 7,200 students

who come to school each day ready to learn and share of themselves. Their voices are an integral part of the learning process, and of our ongoing growth and success as a community. As we head into the holiday season, and prepare for 2016, I would like to take this opportunity to share updates in a number of areas and fill you in on some of the great things happening in our classrooms and out in the community. Enjoy the holiday season!

## NORTHVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION REAFFIRMS 2014-19 DISTRICT GOALS

The Northville Board of Education in October reaffirmed the 2014-19 District Goals, along with the Key Focus Areas for the 2015-16 school year that support our vision that *"All students will graduate from Northville Public Schools with the skills and dispositions necessary to maximize their potential as contributing members of a global society."* The district goal-setting process was revised in 2013-14 to more accurately reflect this vision through longer-term goals with annual check points along the way, in addition to reinforcing greater alignment and accountability between district level goals and individual school improvement goals.

### 2014-2019 District Goals include:

**I. Foster Learner Profiles that Lead to Globally Competitive Graduates** through personalization of learning; attainment of core competencies; and the alignment of globally ready characteristics with standards and assessments.

**II. A Culture of Learning and Leadership in Every School** that empowers learners, develops leaders, and fosters intellectual curiosity.

**III. Re-Imagined Curriculum and Instruction** that is relevant, responsive, and personalized; aligned instructionally from pre-



kindergarten through graduation; customized to encourage student ownership over time, place, path and pace; and learning environments that reflect the technology tools of today.

**IV. Effective Communication** to and from all Northville Public Schools stakeholders that is timely and relevant and creates opportunities for active involvement.

**V. Organizational Effectiveness** that strengthens strategic planning and provides leadership at all levels of the school system, with performance management indicators including quality school system indicators, fiscal responsibility and facility maintenance.

Click on [2014-19 District Goals](#) for a more detailed description, along with the Key Focus Areas for the 2015-16 school year.

## SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS OFFERS OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER

Our school district's overall direction in maintaining and expanding learning opportunities identified through our vision and district goals is underscored by our School Improvement Process. December 3, 2015, will mark our 19th year using the annual District School Improvement Team (DSIT) opportunity for our school improvement teams to gather, share successes and challenges, and learn from and with other school improvement teams. We continue to increase the focus on meaningful data and to delve deeper into student academic achievement and how buildings are making progress toward achieving the qualities we seek for our students as outlined in the Northville Public Schools Graduate Profile. This review and feedback process has strengthened both within and outside of the DSIT process for school improvement plans and DSIT presentations. Additionally, teams focus on using common data points and aligning school improvement planning

with appropriate Response to Intervention (RtI)/Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) implementation. This year, nearly 60 teachers, staff, administrators, students and parents from across our schools will gather after school as representatives from each school improvement team share specific data around literacy, math and school climate/culture in an interactive format. The "audience" will hear each presentation, have the opportunity to ask clarifying questions and will provide feedback to the presenting teams. At the end of the gathering, participants will return to their home schools to share what they have heard from each school along with the connections made between their work and the district's work. This DSIT process is both challenging and compelling, and truly highlights our journey to advance our Tradition of Excellence and open a World of Possibilities for all learners!



### OPEN HOUSE SHOWCASES NORTHVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

The Northville High School second annual Community Open House on Sunday, October 25, 2015, was a wonderful opportunity for future students, families and community members to see all that Northville High School, and Northville Public Schools, has to offer. We had more than 175 families sign in to tour the school – including a few student visitors from Paris and several community members who welcomed the chance to learn more about Northville High School. More than 30 of the high school's student leaders were on hand to take visitors on guided tours of the building. Academic chairs and representatives from athletic teams, student clubs, and

music and arts programs, as well as current students and administrators, were available to share information about the school's and district's programs, and answer any questions.

A special thank you to the student tour guides for representing their school and the district so well. Thank you also goes out to the teachers, staff and administrators at Northville High School, and across the district, who worked so hard to make this event such an incredible success. For more information about Northville High School, call 248-344-3800 or visit the high school's website at [nhs.northvilleschools.org/](http://nhs.northvilleschools.org/).

### COMMUNITY CURRICULUM SERIES OFFERS INSIGHT INTO ACADEMIC OPPORTUNITIES

The Northville Public Schools Office of Instruction is offering a **Community Curriculum Series** aimed at helping students and parents navigate the wide range of academic opportunities available at Northville High School and the district's two middle schools to ensure our students are college- and career-ready in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The first program in the series, *International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program Information Night*, took place on November 18, 2015. The remaining topics in the series include:

- *At and Beyond Northville High School: Academic Enrichment, Research and Competition Information Night* – Monday, December 7, 2015
- *IB Diploma Program and Advanced Placement Overview Night* – Monday, January 25, 2016

- *IB Middle Years Program Information Night* – Tuesday, February 9, 2016
- *Curriculum & Activities Night at Northville High School* (for incoming freshman in fall 2016) – Tuesday, March 15, 2016
- *Student Research Forum* – Wednesday, April 27, 2016
- *IB Middle Years Program Personal Project Information Session* – Tuesday, May 10, 2016

All of the sessions will take place at Northville High School beginning at 6 p.m. For more information, contact the Office of Instruction at 248-344-3520. Please join us for these informative opportunities to learn more about what NPS has to offer!

### NORTHVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION OPPOSES "K-3 READING" AND ELECTRIC CHOICE PROGRAM LEGISLATION

The Northville Board of Education recently approved two resolutions opposing legislation currently under consideration in Lansing that would negatively impact Northville Public Schools and school district's across Michigan.

This first is House Bill 4822, also referred to as the "K-3 Reading Bill," which is designed to increase evaluation, intervention and possible retention of third grade students who do not meet the required proficiency level in reading. While no one argues against the importance of developing strong literacy skills in every student, the approach being taken in HB 4822 is not in the best interest of students, including those enrolled in Northville Public Schools. Specifically, our district and Board of Education take issue with:

- Mandatory retention of students, which is not supported by research.
- The reliance on state testing, which is still under development, and which is historically notorious for failing to provide scores and meaningful feedback in a timely manner.
- The complexity and detail contained in the 16-page bill is overly prescriptive, creating layers of programming and bureaucracy that will divert time, attention and resources away from supporting students.
- The potential for the legislation to significantly increase special education and/or 504 referrals and evaluations, which will increase cost and direct resources away from direct services.
- Failure of the legislation to address the core issues that would more effectively address the impact of poverty and opportunities for greater success in school.

The second set of legislation are Senate Bill 436 and House Bill 4298, which would significantly impact the state's Electric Choice Program by placing onerous requirements on Alternate Electric Suppliers, ultimately resulting in the practical elimination of the retail electric choice market in Michigan, thus increasing energy costs for consumers across the state, including Northville Public Schools. The district currently participates in the state's Electric Choice Program by purchasing electricity through the Michigan Schools



Energy Cooperative, which has saved the district \$1.7 million since the inception of the Electric Choice Program. (Note: Under the current program, utility customers in Michigan can purchase no more than 10 percent of their utility load from Alternate Electric Suppliers).

In addition, the district is keeping an eye legislatively on any potential impact of the recently passed road funding legislation on school funding, as well as legislation moving through Lansing to allow individuals to carry concealed weapons on school property. For more information about these important pieces of legislation and/or to contact your legislators go to [www.legislature.mi.gov](http://www.legislature.mi.gov).

### WINTER HAS ARRIVED!

With the record snow and cold of the last two winters fresh in our minds, I want to take this opportunity to remind our school families, students, staff and community members of our protocols for calling inclement weather days. First and foremost, the safety and wellbeing of our students, staff and families is paramount in any decision to close schools. When a "snow day" or "inclement weather day" is called, it is done as early as possible (before 5:30 a.m. and often earlier, including the night before in some cases). The decision is made after much deliberation among district officials who monitor road and building conditions throughout the night in consultation with other area school superintendents, and with expert advice from a national meteorologist who can help predict a storm's path as much as 48 hours before it reaches our area. The weather conditions and issues taken into consideration in closing schools due to weather include:

- The amount of snowfall and its impact on road (including side roads and dirt roads) and parking lot conditions and the ability to safely transport students to school.
- The timing of a storm and the ability of local road crews and district personnel to clear roads and parking lots in time for the safe transport of students to school.
- Ice or freezing rain and its impact on road and parking lot conditions – as well as the potential for downed trees and powerlines – and the ability to safely transport students to school.
- Dangerous temperatures or wind chills that carry a high risk for frostbite in a short period of time. To close school based on cold alone (rather than in



conjunction with concerns about road conditions, bus issues or other safety concerns), the actual temperature combined with wind chill considerations are greater (colder) than -19 to -22 degrees below zero. This figure is based on the range of temperature/wind chill that carries a higher risk of frostbite at the 30-minute threshold for exposed skin. For a detailed wind chill chart go to: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/winter/windchill-images/windchillchart3.pdf>.

- Building problems such as a loss of heat, power or water service.

The quickest and easiest way to learn about school closings is via the district's LISTSERV e-mail service. School closing also are announced on the district's parent notification system (Edulink), which uses the main contact information within MI-STAR to call parents with snow day notifications, student attendance issues, building updates and other important information. Details regarding the [Edulink](#) call out system and the options available for parents can be found on the district website.

School closing announcements also are available on the district website home page at [www.northvilleschools.org](http://www.northvilleschools.org) and the following television and radio stations – WJBK-TV (FOX 2), WDIV-TV (Local 4), WXYZ-TV (Channel 7), WWJ-TV (CBS Detroit), WKBD-TV (CW 50), WWJ Newsradio 950 and News/Talk WJR-AM 760.



Although it seldom occurs, it also may be necessary to close school early due to weather. In the event of early closure, every effort is made to release elementary students no earlier than 3:15 p.m. (normal dismissal is 3:45 p.m.). This may mean that high school and middle school students are released earlier than their normal dismissal time in order to keep the buses running on time for elementary students. Again, notification regarding an early school closure is made as soon as possible by LISTSERV, Edulink, the district website and local TV and radio stations. I hope you will find this information helpful as we prepare to traverse another Michigan winter and all that it may bring.

NORTHVILLE EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION – GIVE STUDENTS AN EDGE

The Northville Educational Foundation *Annual Campaign* kicked off last week with the goal of raising \$100,000 (or \$40 per student) by January 31, 2016, to support Northville Public Schools and *Give Students An Edge*. During the 2014-15 school year, the Foundation awarded the district nearly \$215,000 to support facility improvements at Cooke School, the International Baccalaureate Program, *The Leader in Me*, Innovative Teacher Grants, and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics) programming, among other initiatives. Our heartfelt thanks goes out

to each and every donor for bringing these important learning initiatives to our students! For information about the Northville Educational Foundation and how you can support the *Annual Campaign To Give Students An Edge*, visit [www.NorthvilleEdFoundation.org](http://www.NorthvilleEdFoundation.org).



POINTS OF PRIDE FROM ACROSS THE DISTRICT

Every day in our classrooms, through the arts, on our fields of play and through extracurricular activities, our students and teachers from across Northville Public Schools give us much to celebrate. Here are just a few highlights.

- Thirty-two Northville High School seniors have been recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation as academically outstanding based on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholar Qualifying Test taken their junior year. Twenty of these students are National Merit Scholar Semi-Finalists, ranking them among the top 1 percent of their peers nationwide academically and giving them the opportunity to continue in the competition for 8,000 National Merit Scholarships worth more than \$35 million that will be offered in the spring. These Semi-Finalists include: Jonathan Bi, Yannis Bi, Karl Finkbeiner, Neha Gandra, Robert Hong, Neha Kishore, Prakash Kumar, Samantha Lu, Peter Martin, Ashwath Muruganand, Karthik Pittala, Katherine Robertson, Sidharth Sawhney, Parth Shah, Ryan Shanahan, Rhea Singh, Jean Tyan, James Xue, Connie You and Himanshu Zambare. In addition, 12 members of the Northville High School Class of 2016 earned National Merit Scholar Commended honors, ranking them among the top 5 percent of their peers academically nationwide. Commended students include: Alexis Aulepp, Haley Clifton, Ramya Erasala, Aashima Gulati, Divya Gumudavelly, Reeshma Kumar, Karen Li, Daniel Liu, Erica Meister, Saurab Nooguri, Grace Yang, and Vickie Zhang.
- Congratulations to Northville High School science teacher Tom Silak on being named one of six 2015 ASM International Detroit Chapter Teacher Scholars. The letter announcing the award had the following to say about Mr. Silak: "Your time, dedication and interest in bringing the field of Materials Science to your students is an effort that we acknowledge and appreciate...You are a key contributor to our outreach activities that promote materials science and engineering to students." High praise for an outstanding teacher!



- I'm also pleased to share that Northville High School was recently honored with **Special Olympics Michigan's Outstanding School Award for 2015**. The award acknowledges those "groups and individuals who stand out for their support and friendship, and have made tremendous contributions to their programs and athletes." Special thanks goes to our Northville High School National Honor Society students, our football and basketball programs, and Northville High School special education teacher John Campbell for the key role they have all played throughout these many years in enabling our students, staff and community to be part of the Special Olympics Michigan experience as both volunteers and athletes.
- This past Thursday, Northville High School and the PBIS School Improvement Committee welcomed **THE BULLYCIDE PROJECT**. Graciously funded by the Northville High School PTSA, THE BULLYCIDE PROJECT is a powerful 40-minute theatrical production that chronicles the true stories of students who have taken their lives due to bullying (bullycide). THE BULLYCIDE PROJECT is based on the book *Bullycide in America*, compiled by Brenda High and written by mothers who have lost a son or daughter due to bullying. All Northville High School students had the opportunity to see THE BULLYCIDE PROJECT and support staff was available for any students who had difficulty with the content or wanted to process what they saw and experienced. Immediately following the performance there was a "Talkback" session facilitated by the director of THE BULLYCIDE PROJECT, where students had a chance to process the performance in a question-and-answer format and learn appropriate words and actions to stand up for themselves and others in bullying situations. This experience supports the high school's PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support) school improvement goal that *all Northville High School students will feel safe/respected at school and treat others and self with respect*.
- Our Northville High School athletic teams recently wrapped up an incredible fall season, with our **Boys Cross Country Team taking Runner-Up honors at the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) Division 1 Championship**, the highest finish for the team in school history. In addition, our



Girls Cross Country Team finished fourth in the state, the Boys Tennis Team finished sixth in the state (including State Champion Connor Johnston); the Girls Golf Team finished 13<sup>th</sup> in the state; and the Girls Swim and Dive Team finished eighth in the state. Adding to the excitement this year was our Varsity



Football Team, which went an amazing 10-1 including going undefeated in the regular season for the first time in more than 50 years. On behalf of all Mustang fans, a sincere thank you to all of these outstanding athletes and their coaches for an amazing season of competition! Go Mustangs!

- Kudos to the district's newly formed **Technology Integration Specialists team** and the more than 50 teachers and administrators who honed their technology skills recently at the **Tech & Taco Tuesday** event. Comprised on 17 teachers from across the district, along with representatives from the Office of Instruction and Educational Technology, the Technology Integration Specialist team hosted the event at Northville High School with the goal of sharing with teachers and staff various innovative technologies to enhance student learning. Those attending were able to choose what area or topics they would like to learn more about including Google Classroom, Google Apps and Extensions, Illuminate, Camtasia by TechSmith, Google Docs and Forms, and Formative Assessment Tools. The tacos were added as an incentive, due to the timing of the event which took place from 3:30-8 p.m. Thank you to our Technology Integration Specialists and all those teachers and staff who attended on their own time and walked away with fresh and innovative ideas for their classrooms. A similar event is being planned for the spring!

- I am excited to share that six of our students from Northville High School and Hillside Middle School recently competed in the **World Robot Olympiad International Championship** in Doha, Qatar. These students include **Hillside Middle School** students **Jason Brown**, **Kevin Tracz** (unable to attend) and **Adam Bis** from the Pi-Rho-Technics Team, which placed 8<sup>th</sup> in the Junior Regular category; **Brian Ding** and **Justin Chang** also from **Hillside** (along with Eric Liu from Canton), from the RoboExplorers Team, which took 21<sup>st</sup> place in the Junior Open category; and **Christopher Geng** and **James Kevin Xue** from **Northville High School** (along with Charles Liu from Canton) from the Robofest Team, which finished 8<sup>th</sup> in the University Regular category. World Robot Olympiad (WRO) is a world-wide robotics competition for students in elementary, middle, and high school and college. WRO started in Singapore in 2004, and has continued to grow rapidly as countries across the world have begun placing stronger emphasis on the importance of STEM education. The winners of the 2015 USA National Finals, which took place at Lawrence Technological University in September, were invited to represent the USA in the WRO International Finals. They competed against the winners from more than 55 countries across the globe in six categories for the chance at a gold, silver, or bronze medal. Way to go!!

- Also, hot off the presses, I am very proud to announce that **Hillside Middle School** science teacher **Colleen Polydoros** has been selected as the **Michigan Science Teachers Association (MSTA) 2016 Middle School Science Teacher of the Year**. Colleen was chosen for using and modeling best practices, inspiring students, demonstrating innovative teaching strategies, being an excellent role model for students and other teachers, demonstrating leadership, and exhibiting a passion for science and for teaching. Colleen will be honored at an Awards Ceremony in March during a special dinner at the 2016 MSTA Conference. She also will be recognized by Northville Board of Education at an upcoming meeting.
- And last, but not least, congratulations to our team in **Transportation and Durham School Services** on winning the **Mayor's Choice Award** in this past Friday's **Holiday Lighted Parade** through downtown Northville. The **NORTHPOLE** school bus trimmed in holiday lights, along with a host of enthusiastic elves from Durham School Services really put us all in a festive mood!



COFFEE AND CONVERSATION WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT

I would like to formally invite Northville school parents, guardians, and community members to my next **Superintendent Community Coffee** on **Monday, November 30, 2015, 6:30-8:00 p.m.**, at the **Northville Public Schools Board of Education Office, 501 W. Main Street, Northville.** **Deanna Barash, Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services**, will also participate. Anticipated topics include 2014-19 District Goals (2015-16 Areas of Focus), with an emphasis on our work in curriculum, instruction and assessment. These informal coffees offer school families and community members the opportunity to ask questions, offer input and learn more about the school district in a small group setting. Those attending are welcome to come and go at any time during the specified timeframe.

Whether you stay home, travel just down the road, or across the country, I wish you a safe and joyful Thanksgiving weekend filled with fun, laughter and shared traditions and time spent with close family and good friends. As always, I thank you for your continued support of Northville Public Schools.

Sincerely,  
*Mary Kay Gallagher*  
Mary K. Gallagher  
Superintendent

