

# COMMUNITY Connection

See what's new at Flint Community Schools | Summer 2017

## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

The 2016-2017 school year marked incredible progress for the students of Flint Community Schools. From returning the district to a community school model to expanding early childhood education options, and increasing access to nutrition and healthy lifestyle programs, the district continues to focus on data-driven methods driving success for every student walking our halls.

Partnerships have been essential to the progress we have made as a district. Through the continued support of community organizations and leaders, Flint Community Schools' students will receive the tools they need to lead successful lives and become productive members of society.

As a district, we worked vigorously to achieve our objectives for the 2016-2017 school year, including developing a focus on

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*Bilal Tawwab, FCS Superintendent*

increased student achievement, ensuring effective governance and communication between the board of education and superintendent, establishing trust and confidence in the leadership transition, developing a shared vision to support a positive district culture, and increasing student

enrollment and retention. That said, we couldn't have done it without the unwavering support of the community and for that, I am grateful.

In this newsletter, you will have the opportunity to read more about a few of the programs and faces behind these efforts. Here is a preview:

- Meet several community school directors helping connect our students and families with the community;
- Learn about Flint Community Schools' focus on early childhood education;
- A new partnership with the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan that expands nutritional options for students on the weekend and over the summer;
- Read more about Jamie Foster, who has returned to Flint Community Schools as athletic director;

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**FLINT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**  
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# MEET YOUR COMMUNITY SCHOOL DIRECTORS

The Community Education Initiative is a Flint Community Schools districtwide strategy to establish public schools as neighborhood hubs, helping to create stronger families, healthier neighborhoods, higher-performing schools and higher rates of student academic achievement and success. Learn about several of your community school directors below.



**Name:** Chris Collins  
**Title:** Community School Director,  
Durant-Tuuri-Mott

Chris has a passion for helping people, specifically in the area of education, and believes having a support network is essential in the development of the Flint community.

Chris is excited about the continued possibilities that exist with the help of community partners, neighborhood volunteers and the school community. He believes with all hands on deck, there is a unique opportunity to be an impetus for change in Flint.

**Fun Fact:** Chris loves to hunt and fish. Although he has only been hunting for two years, he can't get enough of it!



**Name:** Kerry Downs  
**Title:** Community School Director,  
Brownell-Holmes STEM Academies

As an 18-year veteran teacher of Flint Community Schools, Kerry is passionate about student success. During the pilot year of the Community Education Initiative, Kerry witnessed

firsthand the positive impact community partners had, not only in the day-to-day business at Brownell-Holmes, but also the connections that were made with students, their families and the neighborhood.

Kerry is excited to continue the momentum in the partnerships forged through the program and working with stakeholders to make sure certain goals are reached in re-establishing Community Education in Flint.

**Fun Fact:** Kerry is an alumna of the University of Michigan-Flint and loves seeing the growth of the University and the Flint community.



**Name:** Jesse McGraw  
**Title:** Community School Director,  
Potter Elementary

Jesse chose to be a community school director so he could continue working with students and the community, but on a different level. He wanted to introduce new activities and

bring a new, healthier way of life for students at Potter.

Jesse enjoys connecting students and families with high-energy programs through the Community Education Initiative. Given the program's success so far, he expects to see a continuation of the school and community coming together as one, and making sure everyone feels welcome.

**Fun Fact:** Jesse has been mistaken for Tiger Woods.



**Name:** Rawlan Lillard  
**Title:** Community School Director,  
Neithercut Elementary

As long as he can remember, Rawlan has had a heart for his community. He has worked with children and young adults throughout his

professional career and he wanted to give back some of what he received as a product of Flint Schools and as a Flint native.

Rawlan works with the principal and staff at Neithercut to develop, implement and maintain academic, healthy and physically active programming designed to help children and families become more academically prepared and health conscience. Together, they have established a process to assist with attendance and have a fully operational sports program for students.

**Fun Fact:** Rawlan Lillard Sr., former principal at Gundry Elementary School, is Rawlan's dad.



**Name:** Marlando Wade  
**Title:** Community School Director,  
Brownell STEM Academy

Marlando's years of service and commitment to education compelled him to want to do more and continue to give back to the Flint community.

Marlando is a product of Flint Schools and believes his contribution helps area youth appreciate the ground work of a community destined to repair, rebuild and restore education in Flint.

His passion is driven by the continued partnerships being developed in the community. He is excited to be a part of this transformation, which will result in empowering children and families.

**Fun Fact:** Marlando can imitate Scooby Doo.



**FLINT  
COMMUNITY  
SCHOOLS**

COMMUNITY EDUCATION IN ACTION

## CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES OF THE CLASS OF 2017

**W**e often forget that education isn't a sprint, it's a marathon. On Tuesday, June 6, proud family members and friends gathered to witness our seniors complete their marathon and celebrate an exciting rite of passage – high school graduation. We honored 131 graduates from Southwestern Classical Academy, 74 from Northwestern High School and 32 from Accelerated Learning Academy (ALA), as well as the families and community partners that worked tirelessly to help them achieve their goals.

The Class of 2017 will reach far corners of our nation, from Creshiala Thomas, who will attend Alabama A&M University, to Alexis Lewis, Ka'Naria Davis and Kiyona Prater, who will attend Texas Southern University, and many more. A number of graduates will stay local, where they will build the region's talent network right here at home. Over 100 graduates will attend University of Michigan-Flint, Kettering University, Baker College and Mott Community College combined, while several students will serve our country in the Armed Forces.

Many students faced adversity during their years in school, but some more than others. Jatori Boxley, of the Accelerated Learning Academy (ALA) was involved in gang activity in the 7th grade, but with the help of ALA administrators and through his own drive and determination, graduated and has plans to enroll in Lansing Community College next



fall to study physical therapy. Flint Northwestern Valedictorian Kabrianna Keyes-McDonald experienced unique challenges, routinely moving with her grandmother and great-grandmother, using afterschool programs such as cheerleading and volleyball to stay active and upbeat, eventually earning her valedictorian status. Keyes-McDonald has received a full scholarship for her first year at Lane College where she plans to study sociology or criminal justice.

Flint Community Schools is exceptionally proud of its 2017

graduates, and we wish them great success wherever their paths may lead.

ACCELERATED LEARNING ACADEMY

*Valedictorian:* **Kiera White**

*Salutatorian:* **Breanna Fuller**

NORTHWESTERN HIGH SCHOOL

*Valedictorian:* **Kabrianna**

**Keyes-McDonald**

*Salutatorian:* **Dimitree Duncan**

SOUTHWESTERN CLASSICAL ACADEMY

*Valedictorian:* **Tamara F. Bingham**

*Salutatorian:* **Zakeya A. Jones**

# ENROLLMENT

As the 2017-2018 school year approaches, area families are encouraged to begin the enrollment process early. Enrolling early reinforces to children the importance of a high-quality education and gets them excited about learning at Flint Community Schools.



For families with young children, there are a number of tremendous early childhood education options. The benefits of

early childhood education are far-reaching and extremely important to the foundation of lifelong learning.

At any grade level, a good place to start is at the Flint Community Schools enrollment office, located at 923 East Kearsley Street. The office is open all summer, and staff members are happy to assist with questions or

concerns regarding paperwork and documentation.

Keiona Murphy, director of centralized enrollment, and the enrollment office staff, are a veteran team of enrollment specialists, skilled in helping families throughout the process.

"I always tell kids that I work for them," says Ms. Murphy. "My job is to make sure we get them what they need. I received a world-class education in my time as a student at Flint Community Schools, and I love supporting families in the community and setting students up for success in life."

Ms. Murphy is a Flint Central High School graduate and has worked in the district for 18 years. She stresses the importance of early enrollment in helping the district prepare to meet the needs of each student that will walk the hallways in the fall.

Ms. Murphy notes the process can be overwhelming. Families face a range of issues, from uncertainty over whether

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**Keiona Murphy**, FCS Director of Centralized Enrollment

they have the necessary documents to having a unique living situation. "Make enrollment decisions early," she says. "Even if you have to make changes later, it's best to get the process started now."

For more information and to begin the enrollment process, call the centralized enrollment office at 810.767.6158 or visit [flintschools.org](http://flintschools.org).

## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE *Continued from page 1*

- A breakdown of the enrollment process and how to get started;
- A highlight on our 2017 Flint Community Schools graduates;
- Information on the YouthQuest partnership and summer programs; and
- A profile on Heather Nassar, a teacher at Doyle/Ryder Elementary.

The next chapter of Flint Community Schools has just begun, and I thank you for being a partner on this journey. Through sustained community involvement and support, we will continue to raise the bar on what's possible for the students of Flint Community Schools.

Thank you,

**Bilal K. Tawwab**,  
Flint Community Schools Superintendent

## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

**F**lint Community Schools, along with community and state partners, are committed to building a strong bridge from early childhood education to our K-12 schools. The district continues to encourage area families to explore available early childhood education options, from our Montessori pilot program to Cummings Great Expectations, and our Great Start Readiness Program to the early childhood education center under construction at Durant-Tuuri-Mott.

Even before the water crisis took place, we identified the need for early childhood options to position children for success from a young age. As research demonstrates, those who begin learning before age five have higher earnings, are more likely to hold a job, commit fewer crimes and are more likely to graduate from high school. Now, more than ever, it is

imperative we continue the progress we have made in the area of early childhood education.

Early childhood education is essential in helping position young learners for success in K-12.

A large focus in early childhood education is on developing executive functioning skills, commonly thought of as life skills, at an early age. These skills help students

to plan, make decisions, concentrate and multi-task – abilities that are critical to learning the basics throughout their educational career. Parents play a significant role in developing these skills as well, and we continue to explore avenues where parents can increase their involvement in their children’s education from a young age.

In an earlier edition of this newsletter, you may have read about mindfulness programming taking place throughout the district. Mindfulness practices – including breathing, focusing on the present moment and practicing yoga – can help students improve these executive functions and are available to our early learners as well.

*For more information on enrolling your young learner in early childhood education programs, call the centralized enrollment office at 810.767.6158.*



## Heather Nassar, Instructor of Reading Intervention at Doyle/Ryder Elementary

**W**hat makes a great teacher is more than just ensuring that students do their homework and show up to class – it’s going the extra mile to shape a student’s mind and help them grow.



Heather Nassar, instructor of reading intervention, does all that and more for students at Doyle/Ryder Elementary.

An 18-year veteran in Flint Community Schools, Nassar has taught students ranging from kindergarten to sixth grade. Currently, she teaches reading intervention focused on providing concentrated attention and improving literacy for students who need extra attention.

Nassar did not always want to be a teacher. In fact, she began her education at the University of Michigan-Flint in hopes of becoming a nurse. Through a connection with a co-op at a local elementary school, she began volunteering her time in a kindergarten classroom, which was where she found her calling.

“Ms. Nassar is the kind of educator who ensures that all children feel comfortable and successful in school. She builds relationships with virtually every student, even those who she has not had in her classes,” said Doyle/Ryder principal, Robert Bueche.

Nassar is involved in many programs in her community. She works with the Big Brothers Big Sisters Program, serving as the main point of contact for the lunch buddy program at Doyle/Ryder. In addition, she is an internal coach for Reading Corps, an initiative by the Hope Foundation that tutors students at Doyle/Ryder.

## Flint Community Schools Partners with Michigan Department of Education and Food Bank of Eastern Michigan for Expanded Backpack Program

Flint Community Schools recently announced the districtwide expansion of the Backpack program to provide all free and reduced lunch students with a backpack every Friday containing breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks for both Saturday and Sunday. The program also expanded to provide meals throughout the summer to area residents.

The program grant, funded by the Michigan Department of Education and implemented by the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, also provides enough food in each backpack to account for younger siblings in the home who are not of school age.

"The impact of this program is tangible both at home and in the classrooms, where we're seeing increased attendance and participation as a direct result," said Flint Community Schools Superintendent Bilal Tawwab. "We are thrilled to announce the partnership will continue throughout the summer – a time when students are highly vulnerable. Flint Community Schools is immensely grateful to both the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan and the Michigan Department of Education for making this outstanding program possible and available for our students and our community."

The Backpack program has grown from only 816 to nearly 5,000 students in the city of Flint. The Food Bank of Eastern Michigan implemented the program in 2004 with the purpose of reducing child hunger, educating students on proper nutrition and promoting healthy lifestyles.

The program is made possible by faculty and staff within the school, as well as parent volunteers who work together to stuff the hundreds of backpacks available to students each week.

## Jamie Foster Returns to Flint Community Schools as Athletic Director

Flint Community Schools recently announced Jamie Foster has returned as athletic director for the district. Foster has identified youth athletics as an area of focus and aims to involve coaches at every level to participate in elementary programs and encourage continued participation. He also seeks to inspire student athletes to be role models on and off the field and to maintain grade point averages that position them for later success.

"I believe our best days are ahead of us, and that begins with our youngest athletes."

*Jamie Foster, FCS Athletic Director*

Foster will be donating a portion of his salary to the Flint Community Schools Athletic Fund to pay for equipment and facilities upgrades, as well as to cover a portion of the salary for part-time assistant athletic director, George Finch.

Foster has played an integral role in leading the merger of Southwestern Classical Academy and Northwestern High School's athletics programs. The new, unified program, Flint Community Schools Athletics, features teal and black as official team colors. Students from both schools played a significant role in the development of the new program by nominating and voting to select Jaguars as the new Flint Community Schools mascot.

"I am proud to have been involved in the Flint Community Schools athletics program dating back to our heyday with Flintstones, including Mateen Cleaves, Antonio Laber Smith and Matt Tranan," said Foster. "I believe our best days are ahead of us, and that begins with our youngest athletes."



## YOUTHQUEST PROVIDES SUMMER FUN AND LEARNING FOR FLINT KIDS

With warmer weather comes summer break—and, for many young people, a lack of educational and physical activity. But Flint area students are once again discovering the fun of summer learning, thanks to YouthQuest, a free educational and enrichment program. Known for its afterschool programs serving students enrolled in grades K-12, primarily in Flint Community Schools (FCS), YouthQuest also provides six weeks of summer learning experiences to more than 1,500 children each year.

YouthQuest is made possible through a partnership between FCS and the Flint & Genesee Chamber of Commerce, and is funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

Since the 2017 summer program kicked off on June 19, participants have gained access to a range of activities designed to improve their academic performance and help them develop such core skills as leadership, teamwork, problem solving, critical thinking and decision making. Students also visit area museums and other cultural institutions, and participate in physical fitness and community service activities.



“To provide a strong education, you have to look at the whole student,” said Rhett Hunyady, Vice President of Education & Training, Flint & Genesee Chamber. “By empowering students in an engaging learning environment and getting them involved in their community, YouthQuest helps prepare local youth for success in school, at home and beyond.”

That emphasis on learning and community reflects the Mott Foundation’s longstanding commitment to helping area children and their families access quality educational experiences, says Jennifer Liversedge, program officer at Mott.

“We believe the future of Flint and Genesee County depends on the success of all our young people,” said Liversedge. “We also believe year-round academic, recreational and enrichment opportunities can provide our kids with the tools and experiences they need to succeed and thrive.”

*To learn more about YouthQuest and the 2017 summer program, visit [www.yquest.org](http://www.yquest.org) or contact the Chamber at 810.600.1422.*





# SCHOOL INFORMATION 2017-2018

## Secondary Schools:

### ACCELERATED LEARNING ACADEMY (7-12)

G-2138 W. Carpenter Road  
(Inside Northwestern High School)  
810.767.8500

### NORTHWESTERN HIGH SCHOOL (10-12)

G-2138 W. Carpenter Road  
810.760.1780

### SOUTHWESTERN CLASSICAL ACADEMY (7-12)

1420 W. Twelfth Street  
810.760.1400

## Elementary Schools:

### BROWNELL STEM ACADEMY (K-2)

6302 Oxley Drive  
810.760.1643

### DOYLE/RYDER ELEMENTARY

1040 N. Saginaw Street  
810.760.5266

### DURANT-TUURI-MOTT ELEMENTARY (K-7)

1518 University Avenue  
810.760.1594

### EISENHOWER ELEMENTARY

1235 Pershing Street  
810.760.1607

### FREEMAN ELEMENTARY

4001 Ogema Street  
810.760.1797

### HOLMES STEM ACADEMY (3-8)

6602 Oxley Drive  
810.760.1968

### NEITHERCUT ELEMENTARY

2010 Crestbrook Lane  
810.760.1359

### PIERCE ELEMENTARY

1101 W. Vernon Drive  
810.760.1386

### POTTER ELEMENTARY (K-8X)

2500 N. Averill Avenue  
810.760.1813

## Early Childhood:

### CUMMINGS GREAT EXPECTATIONS – AN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

G-2200 Walton Drive  
810.240.0874

### GREAT START READINESS- HOLMES

6602 Oxley Drive  
810.767.8018

# Flint Community Schools 2017-2018 Calendar

## DISTRICT CALENDAR

- September 5:** Students Report (1/2 Day)
- October 18:** Staff Professional Development (Students 1/2 Day)
- November 7:** Staff Professional Development
- November 23-24:** Thanksgiving Recess
- December 22:** Students 1/2 Day
- December 25-January 2:** Holiday Break
- January 15:** Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- January 26:** Records Day
- February 16:** Winter Break
- February 19:** Presidents Day
- March 7:** Staff Professional Development
- March 30:** Good Friday
- April 2-6:** Spring Break
- May 28:** Memorial Day
- June 11-13:** Secondary Students 1/2 Days
- June 13:** Students' Last Day (1/2 Day)

## BALANCED CALENDAR

- August 7:** Students Report (1/2 Day)
- September 1:** District Closed
- September 4:** Labor Day
- October 16-27:** Intersession
- November 7:** Staff Professional Development Day
- November 23-24:** Thanksgiving Recess
- December 18-22:** Intersession
- December 25-January 2:** Holiday Break
- January 15:** Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- January 26:** Records Day (1/2 Day)
- February 19-23:** Intersession
- March 7:** Staff Professional Development Day
- March 26-29:** Intersession
- March 30:** Good Friday
- April 2-6:** Spring Break
- May 28:** Memorial Day
- May 29-June 1:** Intersession
- June 21:** Students' Last Day (1/2 Day)

