



A Message from the SUPERINTENDENT

February 8, 2014

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AT A GLANCE

Barbara Lott to be named Interim Assistant Superintendent for Instruction

Winchester Principal Pat Messing Retiring in June

Silver Springs Named *The Leader in Me* Lighthouse School

Michigan Principals Week: February 9-15, 2014

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NEF Awards Innovative Grants — A Night for Northville to Support the Arts Coming March 1st

Thank You to Our Kids Against Hunger Donors and Sponsors

Points of Pride from Across the District

Coffee and Conversation with the Superintendent

IMPORTANT DATES

February Board of Education Meetings

Tuesday, February 11, 2014
7:30 p.m.
Hillside Middle School

Tuesday, February 25, 2014
7:30 p.m.
Ridge Wood Elementary School

Mid-Winter Recess (No School)
Monday, February 17, 2014

Superintendent Community Coffee

Monday, February 24, 2014
6:30-8 p.m.
Board of Education Office
501 West Main Street, Northville

A Night for Northville

Saturday, March 1, 2014
8 p.m.-Midnight
Northville Square
133 West Main Street, Northville

DEAR NORTHVILLE SCHOOL FAMILIES, STAFF AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

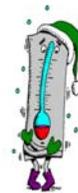
It is hard to believe that we are already two weeks into the second semester of the school year. Throughout our schools, I see evidence of deep and thoughtful learning in our classrooms, on our fields of play, in the arts, and in our community that is the result of the collective work of our students together with their teachers, coaches and parents. I also see evidence of our teachers and school improvement teams focused on examining data, developing and implementing strategies and action plans, and assessing progress as we strive to meet the needs of every learner.

I'd like to express my sincere appreciation to our entire school community for your patience and understanding this winter as we traverse the unprecedented snow and subzero temperatures and wind chills brought on by the polar vortex. We give careful thought to a variety of factors to ensure the safety of our students while maintaining a focus on learning. I don't recall in my nearly 30 years with Northville Public Schools that the district has ever been closed six days in one school year — much less in one month — due to inclement weather.

We recognize the widely varying views among parents and community members regarding the threshold for "cold days" versus "snow days" called as a result of snow and road conditions, as well as the variance in calling "cold days" among area school districts. The threshold we have followed in Northville, like most of Wayne County and some Oakland County school districts, is the National Weather Service Wind Chill Chart threshold for the risk of frostbite to exposed skin after 30 minutes, which falls in the -18 degree to -22 degree wind chill range overall, depending on the actual temperature and wind speed. This reference is available on the district website at www.northvilleschools.org.

The other issue at play in making these decisions is

weighing the value of providing notice to families the night before, versus making the decision in the early morning hours. Weather forecasts aren't always completely accurate eight to 10 hours out — or even by the early morning call at 4:30 a.m. — making borderline decisions tricky. As was the case this week, the timing of the snowfall during the morning commute made it difficult to treat roads and driveways in advance, impacting bus schedules and parent drop-off as school started.



With so many inclement weather days so close together and so early in the winter, we also know that many in our school community are also concerned about the impact on instructional time for our students and are also wondering if it will be necessary for the district to add days to the school year to make up instructional time. Northville Public Schools has always had at least 180 days of school scheduled for each year, and our total number of instructional minutes exceeds the state requirements. With the six days of "forgiveness" currently allowed by the state, and instructional minutes in excess of state requirements, we do not anticipate the need to add days to our school calendar at this point time — however, we will continue to monitor this concern for the balance of the winter.

I also want to take this opportunity, on behalf of the seven volunteer members of the Northville Board of Education, to thank all of those who took the time during **School Board Recognition Month** in January to show their appreciation and support, including state and local leaders along with PTAs from across the district, as well as individual parents, students, staff and community members. The dedicated members of the Northville Board of Education are: **Scott Craig, Cyndy Jankowski, Ann Kalass, Jim Mazurek, Adam Phelps, Ken Roth and Matt Wilk.**

BARBARA LOTT TO SERVE AS INTERIM ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR INSTRUCTION

Pending Board action at its February 11, 2014 meeting, **Barbara R. Lott**, an educator and school administrator with more than 20 years of experience, will join Northville Public Schools as **Interim Assistant Superintendent for Instructional**

Services. The open position is the result of current Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services Robert Behnke being named Superintendent for Adrian Public Schools in Adrian, Michigan and leaving our district effective February 21, 2014. We



congratulate Mr. Behnke as he takes on this new role in Adrian, and extend our appreciation for his leadership over the past two-and-a-half years on behalf of the Northville school community, especially in our work to integrate the International Baccalaureate, Common Core Standards and educational technology across our classrooms and schools. We wish Bob every success in his new role with Adrian schools.

As Interim Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services from late February through June (if necessary), Ms. Lott will be a familiar face around the district, as she facilitated workshops on data driven dialog with our Administrative Council — comprised of school principals and program directors — last year in her role as academic outreach specialist for the Michigan State University Office of K-12 Outreach. More recently, Barb has supported school improvement initiatives and Title I programming at Meads Mill Middle School throughout this school year.

Barb also brings a wealth of knowledge and experience as a school district administrator, having served as Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Personnel, and Director of Special Education and Special



Barbara Lott

District. We are fortunate to have someone of Barb's caliber and expertise to continue to move our educational programs forward during this interim period.

The timeline and process for posting, interviewing and hiring a permanent Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services is available on the district website at www.northvilleschools.org/node/198.

The individual selected for this key position will play a critical role in helping to shape the vision for Northville Public Schools and in leading our core work in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. I am confident that our exceptional community, the strength of our district and the outstanding reputation of our programs will attract a field of very qualified candidates. Updates regarding the search will be provided as information becomes available including dates and times for the opportunity for staff and parent input in the process.

WINCHESTER PRINCIPAL PAT MESSING RETIRING IN JUNE

Many of you also may have heard that Winchester Elementary School Principal Pat Messing will retire at the end of the school year. Pat has served the Winchester school community, as well as the Northville Public Schools community, for 11 years. During her tenure with Northville Public Schools, Pat's leadership has been instrumental in deepening our focus on school improvement processes and outcomes, and in strengthening our work in early intervention and instructional support at Winchester and across the district. Pat's leadership, together with that of the Winchester staff, students and parents, is clearly evident in the commitment Winchester has to growing learners and leaders.

We appreciate Pat's leadership and look forward to recognizing her for her service to the children, staff and community of Winchester Elementary School and Northville Public Schools, as the end of the year approaches. We also appreciate the ample notice of retirement that Pat has provided, as it allows for a thorough search and selection process and a thoughtful transition in leadership. We consider the process of selecting a building leader to be critically important, and value the input of staff, parents and students in this process. The timeline and process for posting, interviewing and hiring a new principal for Winchester Elementary School is available on the district website at www.northvilleschools.org/node/198.

SILVER SPRINGS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NAMED *THE LEADER IN ME* LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL

I am thrilled to share that Silver Springs Elementary School has earned "Lighthouse School" status as part of the transformational *The Leader in Me* model for schools based on Stephen Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*® and designed to teach leadership to students. Of the nearly 1,600 *The Leader in Me* schools worldwide, Silver Springs is the 62nd to achieve Lighthouse status and only the fourth in Michigan — including our own Moraine Elementary School, named a Lighthouse School this past May.

The Leader in Me is an innovative, school-wide model that emphasizes a culture of student empowerment that helps unleash each child's full potential. Applying *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*®, teachers and students internalize timeless leadership principles that nurture the skills students need for success in the 21st century.

We congratulate the entire Silver Springs community on achieving this distinction as a Lighthouse School in their *The Leader in Me* journey. This is powerful work that brings students, teachers, parents and families together with a collective focus on learning in a way that lets loose the leadership capacity and potential within each learner.

With two of Michigan's four Lighthouse Schools right here in Northville Public Schools, and both Ridge Wood and Winchester elementary schools in their first full year of implementation of *The Leader in Me* process, the opportunity to build on a culture of leadership and learning across all of our schools has never been greater. Both Amerman and Thornton Creek elementary schools have launched the study process, and are participating in book studies, Leadership Day visits to Lighthouse Schools, and in *The Leader in Me*



symposia. *The Leader in Me* work at the elementary level aligns with the *Learner Profile* development that is part of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program for our sixth through 10th graders.

Our district goals reflect a system-wide commitment to growing leadership, and I am delighted to share the news that the *Northville Educational Foundation* (NEF) has allocated \$5,000 per elementary school to advance their work on *The Leader in Me* implementation process! The tremendous support of NEF, together with Northville Public Schools and the incredible collaborative work being done at the building level by PTAs and Dad's Clubs, along with parents, staff and community members is making this work possible. To have two of the four Lighthouse Schools in Michigan is an incredible achievement — to have the potential for several more of our schools to achieve this distinction is remarkable.



MICHIGAN SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S WEEK: FEBRUARY 9-15, 2014

I also want to let you know that the Northville Board of Education will honor school-level leaders from across the district at its Tuesday, February 11, 2014 meeting for all these individuals do to ensure Northville students have a safe, challenging and inspiring place to learn and grow. This special recognition comes during **Michigan School Principals' Week, February 9-15, 2014**. We are fortunate to have such an outstanding team of

educational leaders in our school buildings who work in partnership with the community, district leaders, classroom teachers, students and parents to create a successful learning community across the school district. These are good people who care deeply about their students, teachers, staff and community. I hope you will join me in thanking these energetic and inspiring leaders for all that they do to ensure success for all students.

2013-14 DISTRICT GOALS — VISIONING PROCESS CONTINUES

The Northville Board of Education in December approved the school district's goals for the 2013-14 school year. Generally a process that takes place in the fall, the Board and district leaders have held off on finalizing the goals for this school year as we engage in a collaborative process across the district's stakeholder groups to begin work toward an overarching, compelling vision for Northville Public Schools that supports our mission, drives school improvement efforts, and includes specific action items that support progress toward our vision.

Topping the district's goals for this year, our journey toward redefining the district's vision for a modern learning environment continues as we work with Dr. Shawn K. Smith of Modern Teacher in the coming weeks to begin developing a comprehensive three to five year project plan aligned with our vision. In addition, we are currently in the process of gathering broader stakeholder input into this vision from students, parents, teachers, staff and community members, with an emphasis on creating a vision that invigorates the culture of the district and deepens our work. (See the item at the end of this newsletter about an upcoming opportunity for school families and residents to offer feedback on the district's vision that will be part of my Monday, February 24, 2014 Superintendent Community Coffee.)

On the right is a synopsis of our 2013-14 District Goals. To view the complete District Goals document with key strategies, as well as the Goal Metrics/Target Dashboard — which includes each goal, the metric by which it will be measured, and the 2013-14 target — visit the district website at <http://www.northvilleschools.org/node/578>.

2013-2014 District Goals

- I. Redefine Northville Public Schools' vision for flexible, learner-centered school communities that advance learning and leadership within every learner while fostering the skills necessary for success.
- II. Develop a 3 to 5 Year Project Plan aligned to Northville Public Schools' vision, inclusive of consideration for Setting the Context for Change; Strategic Planning; Implementation; and Advancing as a Learning Organization.
- III. Use data to drive instruction and program development to advance learning for all students. Key strategy areas include: School Improvement; School Culture of Learning and Leadership; Curriculum Design; Instructional Delivery; and Teacher and Administrator Evaluation.
- IV. Develop a General Fund operating budget that supports a balanced cost structure for 2013-14 and 2014-15 or better, while maintaining a General Fund balance that meets the district's target of 11 percent of current operating expenditures.
- V. Upgrade and improve district buildings, infrastructure and facilities.
- VI. Enhance communication and customer service throughout all district levels.

NEW FEATURES GIVE PARENTS MORE CHOICE IN RECEIVING EDULINK NOTIFICATIONS

I am pleased to share with you some new features that have been added to the school district's Edulink parent notification system. Edulink currently uses the main contact information (generally a home phone number) within its MISTAR system to call families for snow day notifications, student attendance calls, building updates, and other important messages. (MISTAR is the district's web application that provides parents with direct access to student data via the Internet.)

Based on feedback from parents, we have expanded the Edulink notification options available. This includes choosing which phone number parents wish to have notifications directed to, as well as the choice to receive notifications via text message or e-mail. Parents who wish to change their Edulink contact information to another phone number (such as a work or cell phone number), or who prefer to receive text message or e-mail notifications can visit the Edulink Parent Portal at <http://www.intouchk12.com/ParentPortal/Login.aspx?> and select their

preferred contact method. For those who want to continue to receive Edulink calls at the main number currently being used, no action is necessary.

When selecting the preferred method for Edulink notifications, it is important for school families to consider the option that will best ensure they receive information from the district in a timely fashion without being disruptive, keeping in mind that some snow day notifications from the Edulink system may come as early as 4:30 a.m.

In addition, those families who DO NOT wish to receive snow day notifications via Edulink can e-mail ParentPortal@northvilleschools.org and inform the district of this request. Please include your name, your student's name(s) and building(s). Please note, Edulink will continue to make calls and send notifications in the case of emergencies and other standard district communications if this option is selected.



NEF AWARDS INNOVATIVE GRANTS — A NIGHT FOR NORTHVILLE TO SUPPORT THE ARTS COMING MARCH 1ST



Along with allocating \$5,000 per elementary school to advance work toward *The Leader In Me* process, and ongoing support for the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (Grades 6-10) and Diploma Program (Grades 11-12), the Northville Educational Foundation recently awarded 11 grants totaling \$13,611 to teachers from across Northville Public Schools as part of its **fifth annual Innovative Grants competition**.

Each year, these grants support unique school and classroom programs and initiatives that enhance the education of all Northville Public Schools students and support innovative approaches to teaching. Among the grants awarded this year, is a \$3,000 mega-grant that went to a team of teachers at Amerman Elementary School for a Green Energy Solutions project. These Innovative Grants support and stretch learning in a variety of ways — increasing access to curriculum content through technology; offering hands-on, visual representation; and providing engaging projects.

Our congratulations and sincere appreciation is extended to each of this year's grant recipients for bringing these exciting learning opportunities to our students. Our heartfelt gratitude also goes out to the Northville Educational Foundation and its many generous donors who support initiatives such as the Innovative Grant competition for the benefit of our students, teachers and school communities.

In some more exciting news from the Northville Educational Foundation, I encourage all of you to mark your calendars for the **A Night for Northville Celebrates the Arts event, on Saturday, March 1, 2014, 8 p.m.-midnight at Northville Square, 133 West Main Street**. Vocal, instrumental and visual arts in all 10 Northville schools will benefit from the proceeds of this year's

event, presented by the foundation.

Hosts Susan and Chuck Gaidica will welcome the Northville community to a wonderful evening of music, dancing and hearty hors d'oeuvres. The Gaidicas are Northville residents and longtime supporters of many facets of the arts in the Northville community. Chuck Gaidica is also Director of Meteorology at Local 4 (WDIV-TV).

In addition, visual, vocal and instrumental art teachers from across the district's schools have a compiled a list of needs. These items will be detailed on each school's "Giving Tree", which will be on display at the event. Attendees are encouraged to make tax-deductible donations to fund this myriad of needs.



Tickets for the A Night for Northville are \$100 (with \$70 tax deductible). You can purchase tickets online at www.NorthvilleEdFoundation.org or in person (cash or check only) at the Board of Education Office, 501 West Main Street, Room 307, Northville. Hope to see you there!

For more information about the Northville Educational Foundation and the A Night for Northville event, visit the foundation's website at www.NorthvilleEdFoundation.org.

Vibrant colors ... a joyful noise ... and a celebration of creative expression will be 2014's A Night for Northville

THANK YOU TO OUR KIDS AGAINST HUNGER DONORS AND SPONSORS

At Northville Public Schools, we believe strongly that the **Kids Against Hunger** and **Gleaners Food Bank Kids Helping Kids** experiences are an integral part of what makes our schools and our community strong. These food packaging events bring together elementary school students from Northville and inner-city Detroit to work side-by-side to learn more about world hunger, and most importantly, do something about it. Just as we value exemplary academics, athletics, the arts and extracurricular activities — the opportunity to stand shoulder to shoulder with students from inner-city communities in service to others empowers our students, strengthens relationships, and builds awareness of our global society.

The opportunity for our students to participate in these powerful experiences is made possible each year through the generous support of business sponsors, together with grant funds, contributions from our families, and the fundraising efforts of our students. This year, I am delighted to report that Northville Public Schools and Bridgepointe recently received a **\$2,000 grant from Eagles for Children** to support a **Kids Against Hunger packaging event**, through the efforts of Jonathan Kidder, a member of the Northville Kiwanis and an Eagle participant. Through Eagles for Children, participating

golf clubs across the country pledge a dollar amount for every eagle scored on their course during a season, with 100 percent of the proceeds going to organizations and programs serving children in their communities.

Additionally, we are incredibly grateful for the continuing generosity of our business and community group partners who make this opportunity possible for elementary students across Northville and our partner schools:

- Patti Mullen & Associates, Remerica Hometown One (Gold Sponsor)**
- Northville Mothers' Club (Silver)**
- Clark Hill PLC (Silver)**
- Durham Transportation Services (Silver)**
- Tom Holzer Ford, Inc. (Bronze)**
- Stifel-Nicolaus & Company, Inc. (Bronze)**
- Wright & Hunter Technology Consultants (Bronze)**
- Dr. Leonard Rezmierski + Ms. Mary Kay Gallagher (Bronze)**

There are more sponsorship opportunities available to support this worthwhile program! If interested, please contact Ms. Whitney Breech at BreechWh@northvilleschools.org or call 248-344-3508. This year's packing events are scheduled in March through May.



POINTS OF PRIDE FROM ACROSS THE DISTRICT



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



- The **Northville High School music program** has been named by the Grammy Foundation as a **national semifinalist in the 2014 Grammy® Signature School competition**. Created in 1998, the prestigious program recognizes top U.S. public high schools that make outstanding commitments to music education during an academic year. Finalist will be announced in March, and will receive custom awards and music program grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$15,000. More than 20,000 public high schools were eligible to enter the competition. Of the 123 semifinalists, Northville High School is one of only seven in Michigan. Congratulations to our incredibly talented vocal and instrumental music students and teachers on this outstanding recognition!

- While we're on the topic of musical talent, our **Winchester Elementary School students** wowed the crowds on Saturday, January 25 and Friday, January 31, by singing the National Anthem before the Plymouth Whalers hockey games against the Sarnia Sting and the Kingston Frontenacs. In addition to these Kodak moments, Winchester will receive a portion of the ticket sales from the two games, which will be used to support the school's *The Leader in Me* initiative.

- The more than 300 seventh graders at **Hillside Middle School**, along with teachers, staff, parents and community members, were recently challenged to "be the change" they want to see in the world and their school, as they took part in **Challenge Day**. The powerful, high energy, daylong program guides young people and adults through a series of experiential learning processes aimed at increasing personal power and self-esteem, shifting dangerous peer pressure to positive peer support, and eliminating the acceptability of teasing, violence, and all forms of oppression. This marks the 10th year for Challenge Day at Hillside. What a great example of how when we open ourselves up to new experiences amazing things happen.



COFFEE AND CONVERSATION WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT

Finally, I would like to personally invite Northville school parents, guardians, and community members to my next **Superintendent Community Coffee** on **Monday, February 24, 2014, 6:30-8 p.m.** at the **Northville Public Schools Board of Education Office, 501 West Main Street, Northville.**

In addition to informal conversation about topics from across the district, I also will be seeking input from those in attendance in two key areas — a visioning activity to elicit feedback on our vision for Northville Public Schools and input as we begin the search for our new Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services.

Also be sure to mark your calendar for **future Superintendent Community Coffees** to take place on **Thursday, March 20, 2014, 1-2:30 p.m., at the Next Chapter Bookstore & Bistro, 141 East**

Main Street, in downtown Northville, and Tuesday May 20, 2014, 9:30-11 a.m. at Einstein Bros Bagels, 15077 Sheldon Road (at Five Mile and Sheldon roads) in Plymouth.

We have much to be proud of at Northville Public Schools as we continue to work toward providing the best possible educational programs for all students. Thank you to our students, teachers, staff, families and community members for all each of you do to help make this possible.

Sincerely,

Mary K. Gallagher

Mary K. Gallagher
Superintendent

