



A Message from the SUPERINTENDENT

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AT A GLANCE

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School Improvement Process Fosters Connectedness Across District

IB Diploma Program Moves Closer to Authorization

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Coffee and Conversation with the Superintendent

IMPORTANT DATES

Board of Education Committee of the Whole Meeting
Tuesday, December 3, 2013
6:30-9:30 p.m.
Board of Education Offices

Superintendent Community Coffee
Tuesday, December 10, 2013
9:30-11:00 a.m.
Einstein Bros Bagels
15077 Sheldon Road
(Five Mile & Sheldon Roads)

Board of Education Meeting
Tuesday, December 10, 2013
7:30 p.m.
Northville High School Forum

Winter Recess (No School)
Begins End of Day
Friday, December 20, 2013

Classes Resume
Monday, January 6, 2014

DEAR NORTHVILLE SCHOOL FAMILIES, STAFF AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

As we head into the Thanksgiving weekend, I can't help but reflect on all that we at Northville Public Schools have to be grateful for, including our innovative and compassionate teachers and staff who open the world of possibilities for our students; our incredible school families and community members who value the education of our young people in both their words and their actions; and, most importantly, our more than 7,000 students who

come to school every day ready to learn and be an active part of our learning community. Their voice is an integral part of the learning process, and to our ongoing growth and success as a community.

As we head into the holiday season and prepare for the upcoming new year, 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 schools.

WORK CONTINUES TOWARD DISTRICT VISION FOR MODERN LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The Northville Board of Education and district leaders came together earlier this month for a second visioning workshop led by Dr. Shawn K. Smith of Modern Teacher. The focus was on identifying the qualities of the district's vision for flexible, learner-centered school communities that advance learning and leadership within every learner and foster the skills and dispositions necessary for success in the 21st century global marketplace. The next step will be a strategic planning session with Dr. Smith in early December to continue work on the visioning process, and to begin developing a comprehensive three to five year project plan aligned with the vision.

Our goal in this visioning process is to create 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. The process includes identifying leading indicators that are supported by both qualitative and quantitative data. Our emphasis is on creating a vision that invigorates the culture of the district, deepens our work, and goes beyond simply having words on a page.

With this in mind, as the school district's vision is refined, we will be building in opportunities for broader stakeholder input from students (especially), parents, teachers, staff, community members and the business community. Look for information in the coming weeks via LISTSERV and on the district website about how you can offer input on the district's vision. As the visioning process continues, the Board of Education will also finalize district goals for the 2013-14 school year.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS FOSTERS CONNECTEDNESS ACROSS DISTRICT

Helpful in building our vision for a modern learning environment is the work and sharing we do across the district throughout the year — and in particular over the next few weeks — as part of our annual continuous school improvement process. Once each year, all of the district's school improvement teams come together with our District School Improvement Team over two-days in November and December to present their school improvement plans, share successes, grapple with challenges and exchange ideas. This first of these two meetings took place last Tuesday, November 19, 2013, with the second day scheduled for Tuesday, December 3, 2013.





Once again this year, as I take part in these daylong gatherings, I am struck by how this powerful process of bringing all our school improvement teams together serves as a catalyst for improvement efforts across the district. As early childhood, elementary, middle school, high school and special education center program teams share their successes and

challenges, we continue to learn with and from one another in very significant ways. The opportunity to see the progression from early childhood through graduation is powerful, as are the common themes that emerge across programs. The connectedness we share as a district continues to grow through the school improvement process.

IB DIPLOMA PROGRAM MOVES CLOSER TO AUTHORIZATION

A verification team from the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IB DP) visited Northville High School and the Northville community recently to follow up on the district's IB DP Application for Authorization. Reports from the visit, which was very comprehensive, have been positive in terms of the authenticity of input and the thoughtful and ongoing work of all those at Northville High School, and across the school district and the community, who have been involved in this important initiative.



As part of the verification process, the IB DP team met with administrators at Northville High School and the district leadership team, along with the district's IB DP and Middle Years Program coordinators and representatives from the IB Advisory Council, the Board of Education and the Northville Educational Foundation. The team also met with teachers, media specialists, students and parents. These various conversations showed our readiness and energies for the IB DP, as our students and parents continue to learn more about the opportunities that will be created for students through the Diploma Program and our stakeholders continue to support this learning and messaging. From these conversations and explorations, the IB DP verification team will report its findings to IB regarding whether Northville High School is ready to be authorized as an IB DP School.

10th graders at Hillside and Meads Mill middle schools and Northville High School. All secondary teachers and administrators have completed one-day training and more than 60 have participated in three-day training to prepare them to teach courses using IB practices and principles. Another 30 staff members have participated in various symposiums on IB principles and assessments, and have, in turn, shared their learning with their colleagues during professional development sessions. A number of consultants from across the country also have visited the school district to lead professional development sessions with staff and teachers. Additionally, the district's current sixth through 10th grade course offerings, student scheduling and curriculum reflect the Middle Years Program philosophy.

In the meantime, Northville High School will be hosting IB DP "Conversations" in December both during the school day (at seminar) and in the evening for students and parents to meet each other, as well as our Diploma Program teachers and staff. Also, beginning in December, applications will be available for this year's sophomores to apply to participate in the Diploma Program beginning in the 2014-15 school year.

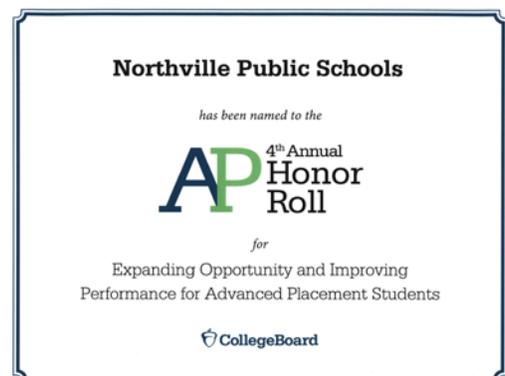
I also want to take this opportunity to thank the Northville Educational Foundation, our high school and middle school PTAs and Mothers' Club of Northville, for their generous support in the visual transformation taking place to integrate internationalism into the curriculum and culture at the three schools. We anticipate an IB verification visit will take place for our Middle Years Program in late winter or early spring of 2014. For more information about IB visit the district website at:

<http://www.northvilleschools.org/node/1165>

In addition, the district submitted its Application for Authorization on October 1, 2013 to offer the IB Middle Years Program to all sixth through

NORTHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS NAMED TO COLLEGE BOARD'S 4TH ANNUAL AP DISTRICT HONOR ROLL

In more exciting news, I am pleased to share that Northville Public Schools has been named to the 4th Annual College Board's AP District Honor Roll. A total of 477 school districts in the United States and Canada earned a place on this year's list. This marks the second consecutive year Northville has been placed on the AP District Honor Roll, which recognizes efforts on the part of school districts to open AP (Advanced Placement) classroom doors to a significantly broader pool of students, while maintaining or improving the percentage of students earning passing scores of 3 or higher on AP exams. Because improvement in AP results typically takes sustained effort, the AP District Honor Roll is based on the examination of three years of AP data, from 2011 to 2013, for all students who took AP exams in May of those years.



It is a significant achievement to be recognized as one of the outstanding school districts on the AP Honor Roll. We are proud of the success our students have experienced in the rigorous AP course work and we are gratified by the passion with which Northville



High School educators and counselors have embraced the curriculum and worked to reach out to more students with this opportunity to experience college-level learning. We are mindful that it is the strong partnership of our teachers and counselors working together with students and families that enables our students to achieve as such high levels. More than 90 percent of colleges and universities across the U.S. offer college credit, advanced placement, or both for a score of 3 or above on AP exams — which can

potentially save students and families thousands of dollars in college tuition.

The Northville Board of Education will honor Northville High School's AP educators and counselors at its Tuesday, December 10, 2013, Board of Education Meeting, which will take place at 7:30 p.m. at Northville High School.

ANN KALASS APPOINTED TO ONE-YEAR TERM ON BOARD OF EDUCATION

Please join me in welcoming Ann Kalass as the newest member of the Northville Board of Education. Ann was appointed by the Board from among seven Northville school district residents who submitted applications to fill a one-year term left open by Joe Hige, who has opted not to serve the extension of his current four-year term that is the result of a change in Michigan election laws. Ann will assume her new duties at the January 14, 2014 Board of Education meeting.



A resident of the Northville school district for 10 years, Ann is Chief Executive Officer of Starfish Family Services, a private, nonprofit agency serving vulnerable children and families across metropolitan Detroit. Prior to joining Starfish, she worked for 13 years in a variety of marketing and sales executive positions at Ford Motor Company. Ann and her husband, Scott, have two daughters, Natalie, who is a freshman, and Katie, who is a junior at Northville High School.

In addition, plans are underway to honor Joe Hige for his four years of dedicated service to Northville's school children at the December 10, 2013 Board of Education Meeting at Northville High School.

NORTHVILLE EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION THANKS FOR GIVING CAMPAIGN UNDERWAY

The third annual Northville Educational Foundation (NEF) *Thanks for Giving Campaign* is underway. This year's goal is to raise \$100,000 by January 31, 2014, for the foundation's General and Endowment Fund, which each year supports immediate district needs, student financial assistance, staff professional development, innovative grants for teachers, the International Baccalaureate program, and general district operational needs. The fund has also supported many other academic, artistic and athletic needs in recent years — from textbooks to technology and from athletic assistance grants to new band uniforms. It also has allowed the NEF to create, manage and support capital improvement efforts such as TURF CLUB and the Cooke School playground and library (currently under development). At its November 21, 2013 Board meeting, NEF also approved \$30,000 toward *The Leader in Me* initiative at the elementary level; \$5,000 per elementary school to support the implementation process.

For more information about the Northville Educational Foundation or its *Thanks for Giving Campaign*, visit the foundation's website at 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 endeavors, our students and teachers from across Northville Public Schools give us much to celebrate. Here are just a few highlights.



- I am honored to report that Northville Public Schools is the recipient of the "Safety is No Accident" award from SET SEG School Insurance Specialists. The award recognizes our district's outstanding efforts in reducing claims and increasing loss control measures that help ensure the safety and wellbeing of our staff, students and visitors. Congratulations to our entire staff on a job well done!
- The Ridge Wood Elementary School Dad's Club recently presented the school with a check for \$9,185 to help with the implementation of the school's *The Leader in Me* initiative. The Dad's Club has raised more than \$12,000 for the school since its inception last spring through events such as a golf outing. What a great example of a school community coming together to support student growth and learning.



- Students and staff at our two middle schools celebrate their Spirit Weeks at the end of October with **Civic Concern Drives that netted more than 5,000 food and household items for those in need in our community.** Students and staff at Hillside Middle School also collected some \$500 in cash that was donated to Civic Concern and students and staff at Meads Mill Middle School raised more than \$200 for the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute. Spirit Week activities included a competition among grades to see which could donate the most items to Civic Concern, along with dress up days, and the annual Hillside and Meads Mill football game. Kudos to all of our middle school students and staff for supporting those in need in our community in such meaningful, and fun, ways.
- Our Northville High School athletic teams recently wrapped up an incredible fall season with our **Girls Cross Country Team winning the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) Division 1 State Championship** for the first time in school history in addition to earning Division, Conference and Regional championships. And, to top it off, **Coach Nancy Smith** has been honored as the **2013 Michigan Cross Country Coach of the Year.**



But that's not all! This fall:

- The **Volleyball Team** made it to the State Semi-Finals and is both District and Conference Champions.
- The **Mustang Varsity Football Team** finished the season 8-2 and won its first Conference Championship in 49 years.
- The **Boys Cross Country Team** finished fifth in the Division 1 State Championships, also earning Division, Conference and Regional championships.
- The **Girls Swimming and Diving Team** finished the season 8-0, won its Division and placed 13th in the Division 1 State Championships, with freshman Laura Westphal, swimming to an individual State Championship in the 500 freestyle.
- The **Boys Tennis Team** finished 15th in the Division 1 State Championships, with sophomore Connor Johnston finishing as "runner up" in #1 Singles in the State Finals.
- The **Boys Soccer Team** finished the season 13-5-2 and was recognized as an All-State All-Academic Team.
- The **Girls Golf Team** finished the season 7-1

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!

- **Amerman Elementary School fifth grade teacher Dave Babich has received a grant of \$968.47 from the Meemic Foundation.** The money will be used to purchase Geomate Jr. Geocaching GPS devices to teach geocaching skills, as well as reinforce historical, geographical, mathematical and scientific concepts with students throughout the school year using the great outdoors. Geocaching is an activity in which hand-held GPS devices are used to locate hidden items in the outdoors. Students will first learn geocaching skills by using the GPS devices in the school's courtyard and eventually nearby city and state parks. In addition, students will use the GPS devices, along with computer programs such as Google Earth, to begin creating digital identification guidebooks for the city park's bird, insect and plant populations. The GPS devices will also be used to discuss navigational tools used throughout history, as well as real-world geometry applications for the use of coordinate planes.

COFFEE AND CONVERSATION WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT

I would like to personally invite Northville school parents, guardians and community members for coffee and informal conversation at my next **Superintendent Community Coffee on Tuesday, December 10, 2013, from 9:30-11 a.m., at Einstein Bros Bagels, 15077 Sheldon Road (at Five Mile and Sheldon Roads) in Plymouth.**

These regular 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. I also am always eager to hear from school families and residents about those issues and concerns that are most important to them. The coffees have an informal format. 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 hope you have a safe and joyful Thanksgiving weekend filled with fun, laughter, 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 K. Gallagher

Mary K. Gallagher
Superintendent

