

# INNERViews

PUBLISHED FOR THE STAFF OF GENESSEE INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
WITH ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND FRIENDS.

## Board and Superintendent Evaluation Reports Received

Each spring, the board conducts evaluations of itself and the superintendent. The results of the 2008-09 evaluations were presented at the April 28 meeting. The overall rating of the board was 3.8 (outstanding) on a 4.0 scale; the overall rating for the superintendent was 4.0 (outstanding). Additionally, Superintendent Thomas Svitkovich presented the results of his annual evaluation by local district superintendents, which was 6.9 (exemplary) on a 7.0 scale. The board acted to document the performance status of each evaluation and place them in the permanent files of the Genesee Intermediate School District.

## My Chance to Dance at MCIC

Dance instructors from CC Plus, Dance for Fun and Fitness visited the Marion D. Crouse Instructional Center on April 2-3, 2009. Two instructors provided workshops for students and an inservice for staff on adapting dance and exercise for children and adults with disabilities. Their



program, called My Chance to Dance, has won numerous awards including the 2002 Governor's Amateur Athletic Event award and is a tradition at the summer and winter Special Olympics games.

My Chance to Dance was created to avoid failure and build on success. The program relies on repetition, movements that are simple to follow, and hands-on activities -- all set to music the dancers enjoy! Even those with profound disabilities benefit from the stimulation and social interaction. The students at MCIC had a great time



rockin' and rollin' to the upbeat, modern music and dancing with their peers, staff, and the guest instructors. This event was part of the Visiting Artist Series at MCIC, organized by Carolyn Vierkorn, music therapist.

Pictured (photos in left and right columns) are MCIC students participating in the My Chance to Dance program.

## State of the Lakeville Community School District Presentation Received

The GISD Board of Education accepted an invitation to conduct its April 28 meeting in the Lakeville Community School District. At that meeting, Superintendent Vickie Luoma provided the board with a briefing on the status of the Lakeville Community School District and the programs it offers. The GISD Board of Education expressed its appreciation to the Lakeville Board of Education for hosting its meeting and joined them for the annual pancake supper, marking the end of the maple syrup season.



## Success and Excellence in the Midst Challenge

**Dear Staff,**

After recently attending a wonderful National Honor Society induction ceremony for nearly one-third of our Genesee Early College students, I was totally impressed with their excellence. They participated in a beautiful ceremony ending with each student presenting his/her National Honor Society pin to their parents allowing them to be the first to place the pin on the student's collar. I watched these exchanges and saw the pride expressed by both students and parents. The program was truly outstanding. This positive experience moved my mind away from the challenges of the day. We know that the future solutions for our state and nation will emerge from talented and thoughtful leaders like those honorees at our induction ceremony. These young people will certainly be the best of the best as they continue to succeed at the highest levels and help return us to future prosperity. In our present reality, though, our work continues to change, and we must be more agile in response to the new challenges we are facing.

This year, GISD shared services programs expanded once again in the areas of Business Services, Education and Learning, Human Resources, Special Education, Technology and Media Services, and Transportation Services. Our abilities to increase efficiencies, utilize standardized systems, and share services across district boundaries are driven by the high need to save resources. These programs are a reality because of our infrastructure and the stark economic conditions of our state. Rapidly increasing energy costs, declining enrollments, and decreasing resources from the state of Michigan have caused districts to look toward GISD for services that increase overall effectiveness and efficiency. The bottom line is that our shared services programs save resources and increase revenues available for student instruction in this very tough fiscal environment. Even though our resources are continuing to decrease, requirements for quality education are increasing at a dramatic rate. The demand for higher productivity, higher test scores, and increased number of students graduating with expanded skill sets is the true focus of our enterprise.

The stimulus package will give education some relief. However, service agencies across the country will not benefit from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). Resources we might receive, after all of the budget deficits within the state have been filled, will be nonexistent-to-minimal. As of this date, we are not certain whether our Section 81 funds (our General Education Fund foundation) will be cut. If these cuts are

made, we are not certain that the stimulus dollars received by the state can replace these cuts. Our local tax base is declining, and more frightening is the fact that grants from state and local sources are in jeopardy because philanthropic organizational investments are being challenged by the declining stock market and lagging economy. All in all, it appears that we are facing some even more dire economic challenges.

As we struggle with these budget uncertainties, it is also obvious that we are facing a new challenge related to the health and wellbeing of our population. The current threat of swine influenza A (H1N1) is the topic of every media outlet. Everyone is asking questions. Our best advice is to follow directions from the Genesee County Health Department and the Centers for Disease Control. Following universal precautions like keeping your hands clean, being certain not to touch your face, nose, mouth, or eyes, and guarding your health by exercising, eating properly, and getting plenty of sleep, are great preventatives during any flu season. Using our communication network, we will keep you posted as to any circumstances which may impact our workplace. However, I am certain we will continue to maintain a high level of safety for the health of our students and staff.

Focusing on the positive, the excellence of our programs, and the outstanding work of our staff will get us through this difficult financial time. Yes, we will have to make some adjustments. However, we will not be over-reactionary, and we will attempt to base our decisions on all of the facts before taking any action to adjust programs and services related to declining revenue sources from the state and local tax collections or grants. You can be assured that we will do our best to maintain our organization by expanding services, increasing our efficiencies, and doing our best to cut energy costs. Implementing programs such as the four-day work week during the summer months will save infrastructure and energy costs. Transitioning to a paperless operation will save staff and production costs focusing on a greener environment here at GISD. These initiatives and many other opportunities to save resources will win the day. Our collective work, no matter what role each of us has on the GISD team, adds to the bottom line. Whether you work in an office, on a bus, by supporting activities in various buildings, teaching in a classroom, or by working with our constituent districts, you add to the quality of education in our county. On behalf of the GISD Board of Education, I am most appreciative of your efforts to remain adaptable while we continue to respond to the conditions of our economy and changing educational landscape.

Sincerely,

## THA Architect Engineers Recognized for GISD Transition Center Design

Prior to the 2009 National School Boards Association (NSBA) Conference in San Diego on April 4-6, a request for unique designs for school facilities went out to school and related specialty building designers for conference displays. A local architectural firm, THA Architect Engineers, submitted a display showing the unique challenge of turning a retail building into a facility specializing in providing transition education services to adult special education students. That facility is the GISD Transition Center. NSBA judges reviewed all of the submittals and checked for compliance with contest guidelines. The selected finalists, including THA Architect Engineers' submission, were displayed at the conference to recognize the districts' architects.

The display demonstrated how the design and the finished building fit the transition program and curriculum. Given that the Transition Center prepares 18- to 26-year old students with special needs for independent living, the world of work, and community life; the setting for the building could not be more ideal. Its close proximity to retail, employers, and transportation provided the "fit" GISD students needed. The functionality of the building has proven to be ideal since the program is still growing into the building and grounds. Jeff Bennett from THA Architect Engineers attended the April 28 GISD Board of Education meeting with the display that was presented at the conference. At that meeting, the board recognized and congratulated THA Architect Engineers for being selected to participate at the 2009 NSBA Conference.



GISD Board of Education members and administrators are pictured with Jeff Bennett (second from right), representing THA Architects Engineers, along with the display that was featured at the NSBA Conference in San Diego.

## Expanded Shared Business Services Contract with Kearsley Community Schools Approved

Since the 2006-07 school year, the GISD Board of Education has approved shared business services contracts with 13 school districts, including Kearsley Community Schools. Currently, GISD has a contract with Kearsley to provide budget development, amendments, and presentations to the board of education; property taxes; audit preparation; grant oversight; federal and state reports (review and submission); and state aid borrowing. Kearsley Superintendent Jeff Morgan worked with Business Services to expand GISD's shared business-related services for Kearsley to include payroll services, online attendance, and payroll-related audit preparation. A contract was submitted to Kearsley, and Mr. Morgan has returned the signed contract.

At its meeting on April 28, the GISD Board of Education approved the expanded shared business services contract with Kearsley Community Schools.

## Expanded Education and Learning Services Contract with St. Clair County Regional Educational Service Agency Approved

Since the 2007-08 school year, the GISD Board of Education has approved education and learning services contracts to form partnerships to provide education and learning consultant services with the Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District, the Lapeer County Intermediate School District, and the St. Clair Regional Education Service Agency (RESA). Currently, GISD has a contract with the St. Clair RESA to provide content area consultant services in social studies. St. Clair RESA Superintendent Dan DeGrow worked with Education and Learning to expand the shared education and learning services and, specifically, add mathematics support. A contract was submitted to the St. Clair RESA, and Mr. DeGrow has returned the signed contract.

At its meeting on April 28, the GISD Board of Education approved the expanded education and learning services contract for the St. Clair RESA through the 2008-09 fiscal year.

## Staff Lay Off Approved

On April 9, 2009, Gloria Bourdon, director, Health, Safety, and Nutrition Services, received correspondence from Mott Children's Health Center regarding nonrenewal of the Interagency Agreement with the Genesee Intermediate School District for the 2009-2010 school year. Current national economic changes have caused a significant decline in their revenue which is expected to continue. The partnership will end effective July 1, 2009. The Interagency Agreement supports the school-based oral health program.

The Personnel Committee met prior to the April 28 meeting to review a recommendation to lay off two Dental/Health Education Facilitators: June Downey and Connie Smith. Both are represented by the Genesee Intermediate Educational Support Personnel Association. At its meeting on April 28, the GISD Board of Education approved the lay offs.

## One-Year Administrative Contract Extensions Approved

Each year at the regular meeting in April, the board of education considers the one-year extension of administrative contracts, as recommended by the superintendent. Consideration for contract extensions is a result of budget review, recommendations from supervising administrators, and input from constituent district superintendents if the position is funded through a local school district consortium. At its April 28 meeting, the GISD Board of Education reviewed the recommendations and approved one-year contract extensions for various administrative staff within the district.

## Reclassification of Administrative Position Approved

Several years ago, the GISD administrative structure was reorganized. As a result of that process, nearly one-third of GISD's administrative staff has been reduced over the last ten years. Jobs have changed, along with reporting responsibilities, and some new titles have been created. Most recently, GISD has engaged in a shared services model providing increased services to constituent districts, charter schools, and districts throughout the state most

notably, the Business Services department, providing shared business programs to 13 districts and GISD. At the current time, there are proposals submitted to two other districts for services. The total general fund budget expenditures for districts GISD serves via shared services contracts is \$267,080,475.00, and the total number of full- and part-time employees is 3,576, in addition to the total GISD budget of \$138,624,608.00 and 1,368 GISD employees.

As a part of the ongoing evaluation of administrative staff, GISD is working with the consultant who helped redesign GISD's administrative structure ten years ago to determine its current effectiveness and efficiency. At this point, the report from the consultant has not been completed. However, as a part of a preliminary draft, which has been shared with Deputy Superintendent Michael Moorman, Mr. Jeff Rahmberg recommended that the board consider changing Mrs. Cynthia McCain's title from executive director of Business Services to assistant superintendent for Business Services. The title change is consistent with the majority of comparable ISDs throughout the state, as most of the larger ISDs have an assistant/associate/deputy superintendent in charge of the business department. The GISD Board of Education approved the reclassification of the position.

## Shared Technical Services Contract with Westwood Heights Schools Approved

Since the 2006-07 school year, the GISD Board of Education has approved technical services agreements to form partnerships to provide technical support with 12 school districts. The services being defined are customized based on the request of the local districts. Recently, Westwood Heights Schools Superintendent Deborah Hunter-Harvill worked with Technology and Media Services to finalize customized shared technical services provided to Westwood Heights. A contract was submitted to Westwood Heights Schools, and Dr. Harvill has returned the signed contract.

At its meeting on April 28, the GISD Board of Education approved the contract for GISD to provide technical services for Westwood Heights Schools through the 2009-10 fiscal year, and authorized the superintendent to employ necessary staff and fully define the working relationship with the district as outlined in the agreement.



## Donations Accepted

Generous donations to the Elmer A. Knopf Learning Center and the Marion D. Crouse Instructional Center were received by the board. The donations included numerous cash contributions given by staff, family, and friends, as well as hygiene products, nutritional supplies, and specialized equipment for student use.

## Chery Wagonlander Honored

Chery Wagonlander, Mott Middle College principal, was recently selected to receive the Michigan North Central Association State Council's special Leadership Recognition as part of the AdvancED Awards Recognition Series for 2008-09. Chery's exemplary work at Mott Middle College High School was lauded by the Council and was the basis for their decision to commend her leadership. Congratulations to Chery for this special honor!



## Reading Recovery® News

Since 1996, Reading Recovery in Genesee County has been supported by the Genesee Intermediate School District, which has been the training site for over 110 Reading Recovery and Literacy Lessons teachers. Congratulations to Nancy Casteel and Krista Somers, Linden Community School District teachers, for completing the year-long training. They will be joining the other Reading Recovery teachers who are serving struggling readers and writers in first grade.

## Reading Recovery® Thanks Transition Center Students

The Reading Recovery staff would like to acknowledge Jan Jennings and the students at the Transition Center for their hard work. The Transition Center students produced approximately 600 writing books that were used by Reading Recovery® students to write and read original stories on a daily basis. A big thank you goes to the students at the Transition Center for providing such a useful and productive service.

## Letter Carriers' Annual Food Drive

The National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) will be conducting a food drive on Saturday, May 9, 2009. This event will be taking place nationwide. The NALC is asking you to place nonperishable food items in a bag by your mailbox on that day. The food items will be stored in the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan. Please help "stamp out" hunger by supporting your letter carriers in their effort.

## EKLC Penny Harvest a Success!

Each fall and spring, EKLC students participate in a music performance. In conjunction with the music event, students have encouraged community giving by sponsoring charity-minded activities the week prior to and the week of the performance. Students and staff have planted trees, collected non-perishable food items, personal care items, and sent care packages to soldiers overseas.

At this year's spring event, students sponsored a penny harvest to benefit the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan. To make the event fun, a friendly competition was held to see which classroom could collect the most donations. Room 25, a MoCI classroom, won the competition by collecting over \$106.00. The ASD classroom with the most donations was Room 904 at Carman-Ainsworth Middle School, with \$73.00. Thanks to the families, students, and staff, EKLC was able to raise \$634.78 overall. Way to go!



Pictured are EKLC students with pennies they collected to benefit the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan.

## Congratulations Graduates

Victoria Dykes, daughter of Sherry Dykes, ECPS, will graduate in June from Mott Middle College with a 3.8 GPA. Additionally, she has earned an Associate of Science degree and an Associate of Art degree from Mott Community College, where she achieved a 4.0 GPA. She has been accepted at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. Congratulations and great job, Victoria!



Lauren Miller, daughter of Cindy Miller, ECPS, graduated from Grand Valley State University in April. Lauren will be attending medical school at Michigan State University starting in June. Congratulations and best wishes, Lauren!

## Recent Nuptials



Wedding bells rang for Sheila Cummings, ECPS Project CHOICE-Clio Schools, on April 9, 2009. The wedding took place in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. The groom, Donald Welch, is retired from General Motors and is currently a firefighter for Grand Blanc Township. The happy couple enjoyed their honeymoon in Gatlinburg before returning to their home in Grand Blanc. Congratulations and best wishes!

## Employee Hired

At its meeting on April 28, the GISD Board of Education approved the hiring of Rachel A. Sharpe as Teacher of Students with Cognitive Impairments at the Elmer A. Knopf Learning Center.

## Resignations Accepted

Resignations for the purpose of retirement were accepted from: Cynthia S. Miller, Early Childhood Programs and Services; Jill A. Richardson, Marion D. Crouse Instructional Center; Carol A. Rumminger, Elmer A. Knopf Learning Center, Grand Blanc Brendel Elementary Project CHOICE; Regina L. Taylor, Transportation Services; Margaret L. Wallace, Transportation Services; and Denise B. Williams, Marion D. Crouse Instructional Center.

## Accelerated Return from Leave Approved

At its meeting on April 28, the GISD Board of Education considered and approved an accelerated return from leave of absence for Laurie Potter.

## Leaves of Absence Approved

Leaves of absence were considered and approved for: Lori K. Banaszak, Technology and Media Services; Michele M. Shaw, Transportation Services; and Regina Zofchak, Transportation Services.

## GISD Employees Honored

All GISD staff were honored during Employee Appreciation 2009. This year, 65 employees were also honored with longevity awards. Collectively, these individuals have over 1,085 years of service to GISD students and local school districts! Those who were recognized for 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, or 35 years of service are:

### 35 Years of Service:

Kay Hartl, MCIC.

### 30 Years of Service:

Susan Himes, EKLC; Sandra Mann, MCIC; Debra Hux, ECPS; Kathleen Bell, ECPS; Patricia Slater, Transition Center; Donna Burmeister, Davis Education Center; Diane Burt, Davis Education Center; Bradley Irwin, Davis Education Center, and John Shepard, SESC-N.

### 25 Years of Service:

Serina Ross, EKLC; Susan Fulton, EKLC Project CHOICE, Jill Richardson, MCIC; Rachel Johnson, MCIC; Michael Daugherty, MCIC; Lu Sinda Johnston, MCIC; William Bamberger, ECPS; Tracy Valentine, Davis Education Center; and Andrea Peters, SESC-N.

### 20 Years of Service:

Joanne Blimka, MCIC; Cathy Stewart, MCIC; Denise Williams, MCIC; Doreen Busch, MCIC; Dotty Freathy, ECPS; Charlotte Byrd, Transition Center; Marcia Pavkovich, SESC-N; Fran Birtsas, SESC-N; and Patrick McHugh, Mott Middle College.

### 15 Years of Service:

Carol Vassler, ECPS.

## 10 Years of Service:

Debra Gonzalez, EKLC; Evelyn Tereau, EKLC; Mary Skitz, EKLC; David Tennant, EKLC; Cheryl Klinert, EKLC; Barbara Abdella, EKLC Project CHOICE; Denise Evert, EKLC Project CHOICE; Barbara Wilson, MCIC; Scott Long, MCIC; Camille Timmons, MCIC; Julie Salim, MCIC; Beth Harvey, MCIC; Denise Trantham, MCIC; Pattie Chaney, MCIC; Deloris Eddins, MCIC; Carrie Springer, MCIC; Suzanne Rhodes, Davis Education Center; Joseph Firmingham, Davis Education Center; Tina Mullins, Davis Education Center; Barbara Stewart, Davis Education Center; Lora Gibson, Transportation; Cathy Bueche, Transportation; Karen Seeley, Transportation; Sheila Birdsall, Transportation; Linda Roberts, Transportation; Nannette Simpson, Transportation; Bonnie Lee, Transportation; Dale Spillers, Transportation; Delynn Stone-Demell, Transportation; Cheri Owens, Transportation; Deanna Yurk, Transportation; Rebecca Stuber, Transportation; June Rice, Transportation; Linda Justice, SESC-N; Susan Zajac, SESC-N; and Jamie Johnson, Mott Middle College.

Thanks to the districtwide Employee Appreciation committee members who volunteered their time to make each building/program event enjoyable for everyone!

## May Birthdays

1	David Hoover	Transportation
1	Ryan Johnson	EKLC
1	Tricia Young	Transportation
2	Becky Finkle	ECPS
2	Laura Hawks	Day Treatment
3	Evelyne Brown	MCIC
3	Dana Jones-Shaw	Education and Learning
3	Gary Lewis	Transportation
3	Dawn Lindstrom	EKLC
3	Vicky Piazza	EKLC
3	Margaret Prosch	HSNS
4	Donald Gauthier	EKLC
4	Kenneth Sirignano	MCIC
4	Cynthia Workman	Human Resources
5	Angela Gittings	Transportation
5	Jessica Prast	Transportation
5	Steven Taddei	Human Resources
6	David Close	TMS
6	Amy Wilson	ECPS
7	Kelly Averill	Transportation
7	Nicole Heavilin	ECPS
7	Barbara Olszewski	Project CHOICE
8	Marcia Clark	SESC
8	Carrie Springer	MCIC
8	Keri Stafford	ECPS
9	Micaela Meyer	EKLC
10	Barnett Carlisle	Transportation

10	Tamiaka Miller	Transportation
11	Suzanne Tucker	Project CHOICE
12	Sheila Ackerman	Transportation
12	Susan Zajac	SESC-N
13	Dawnette Jefferson	Transportation
13	Debra Marshall	SESC-N
13	Kerry Moore	MMC
14	Rebecca Stuber	Transportation
14	Melissa Wing	Education and Learning
16	Theresa Flange	MCIC
17	Cynthia Ruddy	ECPS
18	Canda Johnson	Transportation
18	Diane Keely	MCIC
18	Sherry Osmon	EKLC
18	Kristin Plunkett	Transportation
19	Tamara Kucharczyk	MCIC
20	Linda Ford	MCIC
20	Anna MacDonald	HSNS
20	Melissa Rossello	HSNS
21	Beverly Harrison	SESC-N
21	Jackie Hawley	Transportation
22	Linda Roberts	Transportation
23	Terese Knag	Business Services
23	Rachel Rosa	ECPS
25	James Coviak	MMC
25	Shirley Licquia	Transportation
25	Victoria Milne	MMC
26	Robert Frasier	MMC
26	Jamie Kendall	Business Services
26	Linda Taddei	SESC-N
27	Fanny Birtsas	SESC-N
27	Lori Eastwood	MCIC
27	Michael Garrett	Transportation
28	Gwinda Jefferson	ECPS
29	Mary Beardslee	EKLC
29	Aurora Clifford	Project CHOICE
30	Tammy Gill	SESC-N
30	Margaret Sadowski	ECPS
30	Ann Smela	ECPS
31	Joseph Coady	Transportation
31	Amber Pillen	Transportation
31	Brian Vanderkarr	Transportation

## June Birthdays

1	Timothy Slezsak	Transportation
2	Lori Lane	MCIC
2	Rachel Montague	Transportation
2	Gail Snider	MMC
4	Jessica Drouin	Transportation
4	Rebecca Kirby	MCIC
4	Amanda Lamielle	Day Treatment
4	Teresa Skellenger	MCIC
5	Deanna Kelley	Day Treatment
5	Cheryl Martin	Project CHOICE



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## GISD Jobs

The Human Resources and Operations department at Genesee Intermediate School District is accepting applications for numerous positions. **To view openings and complete an online application, visit the "employment" link at: [www.geneseeisd.org](http://www.geneseeisd.org).**

If you need additional information, please contact Cindy Workman at (810) 591-4404.

## InnerViews Submissions

InnerViews is published for the staff of Genesee Intermediate School District with additional distribution to community partners and friends.

Please submit articles and information to Eileen Jackson, Communications and Development, by mail, fax at (810) 591-7570 or email: [ejackson@geneseeisd.org](mailto:ejackson@geneseeisd.org). Be sure to include your name and contact information.

Articles will be reviewed for information that is appropriate for the publication, timeliness, as well as relevance to the InnerViews newsletter audience.

# INNERViews

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and Development Department**

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