

INNERViews

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



Elmer A. Knopf Learning Students Recognized

On January 5, 2010, the Carman-Ainsworth Community Schools Board of Education recognized Elmer A. Knopf Learning Center Project CHOICE students from Carman-Ainsworth Middle School (CAMS) for their contributions to school projects. The students worked with Mr. Alan Lichtenberg, CAMS Teacher, and his students to build a patio railing to help improve one of the courtyards at the middle school. The EKLC students have also been assisting with recycling, weeding flower beds, and outside trash pickup.

Genesee County Common School Calendar Adopted

Genesee County school districts have had a long history of supporting a common school calendar. The county superintendents, working through the Genesee County Negotiators, a committee of the Superintendents Association, have traditionally approved a common calendar to minimize interruptions of instruction in student programs. Meetings have also been held with Genesee County charter school administrators outlining the common calendar recommendation.

The common school calendar has benefitted students enrolled in shared programs between districts and increased efficiencies, which have led to savings and overall improvement of student programs. As an example, the implementation of a common school calendar has minimized lost instructional time at the GASC Technology Center and other program such as GenNET

ITV classes, special education Project CHOICE classes, and center-based special education.

Public Act 101 of 2007 requires that a common school calendar be officially adopted by an intermediate school district board of education for a period of five years. Therefore, the only change from the previously adopted common school calendar is the addition of the 2014-15 school year. Consistent with Public Act 101, and following the recommendation of the Genesee County Superintendents Association, the board adopted the proposed Genesee County common school calendar at its meeting on January 12.

Parent Advisory Committee Members Appointed

At its meeting on January 12, the GISD Board of Education appointed the following nominees to the GISD Special Education Parent Advisory Committee: Natalie Wright, representing Beecher Community School District; Kris LaNoue, representing Lakeville Community School District; and Margaret Ridley, representing Mt. Morris Consolidated Schools.

School Closure Information

As we experience the season of winter weather, please remember that GISD closing information is available on the web at www.geneseeisd.org. If GISD is closed, then all programs, events, and operations are cancelled, unless otherwise noted for specific instances.



GISD Budget and the Stimulus Package

Dear Staff,

Over the last month, members of Advisory Council and I have had an opportunity to meet with nearly every staff group. I am extremely grateful for your participation in these meetings and for your candid comments and questions. Your input related to GISD issues and our Teaching, Learning, and Service Plan will be an asset to our leadership team and the board of education as we move ahead to address the issues we will face during the next several months.

As we initiate our efforts to achieve the goals defined in the updated 2006-2011 Teaching, Learning, and Service Plan, it is important to remember that student achievement is the core of our efforts. Whether you transport students, work in one of our many offices, provide technical support, maintain our facilities, provide staff development, or work throughout our school community in programs ranging from special education to early childhood, our major goal is to improve the learning outcomes for students. GISD has grown dramatically in response to the great needs in our county for increased support and efficiency, particularly during these difficult economic times. This need is driven by the demand that our students reach the highest standards. New law is forcing dramatic change by requiring that teacher evaluations be directly connected to student performance and compensation. I can say with great pride that after our meetings, I am convinced, despite the many challenges we face, that we are indeed providing superior service to our constituents. Thank you for your commitment to quality education here in Genesee County.

As you recall, I've written and spoken about our budget challenges on many occasions. GISD's budget and corresponding services are structured in a direct relationship to our Teaching, Learning, and Service Plan. Our budgets in Special Education, Career Technical Education, and General Education are being negatively affected by decreases in property values and property tax collections. The result is that we are facing some difficulty in maintaining overall budget stability, due to these decreases in property tax revenues and our shrinking countywide student population. Therefore, we must continue to implement cost-saving measures in every building and department. We will be working with the Genesee County Superintendents Association Cost-Effectiveness Committees to develop other possibilities for savings and efficiencies.

As we work through these serious budget issues, the day-to-day activities of GISD must continue. The direction established by the Teaching, Learning, and Service Plan must be followed and we must continue to implement the first phase of the Elmer A. Knopf Learning Center building renovation project. We were fortunate to have received a \$1.4 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant to be used to offset our direct costs of \$2.0 million for this project. Our requests for bids received a great deal of attention and the GISD Board of Education accepted the low qualified bid in all construction areas, based on the recommendation of the administration, Wolgast Corporation, and THA Architects Engineers. The project will start within the next few weeks and be ready for students this fall. We know that there will be some unavoidable disruptions at this school. However, using the systems we developed at other buildings over the past decade, we know that we can minimize the inconvenience. Certainly, the end result of this project is definitely worth a few bumps in the road during the construction phase.

In the middle of all of these challenges, we still must deal with the day-to-day requirements of our budget development process. As a result, our Genesee County Superintendents Association committees are reviewing our 2010-11 budget proposals. The next step is to gain approval from the Genesee County Superintendents Association, followed by our Budget Hearing, which is scheduled for March 10. Then, the next step is to gain approval from local district boards of education. After this step, the GISD Board of Education will act to approve our budget in June before the July 1 deadline. This entire process requires a great deal of work from many GISD staff members, and this year it is particularly challenging due to our economy. You can be assured we will do our best to maintain our budget within the established parameters required by law and board policy.

Please know that I am most appreciative of your involvement in this complicated and time-consuming process. Should you have a specific question about the budget process or its impact on GISD programs and services, please do not hesitate to contact your supervisor directly or call my office. As always, we will keep you informed as to changes and new developments which have a direct impact on GISD programs and services.

Sincerely

Public Schools/Charter Schools Comparison Report Received

At its meeting on January 12, the GISD Board of Education received a report entitled, *A Comparison of Administrative Costs and MEAP Scores among Michigan Public Schools and Charter Schools*. The report also included specific data for Genesee County. This report is produced annually by Dr. David Treder, GISD's research, evaluation, and assessment coordinator. In developing the detail, Dr. Treder utilized information from Michigan Department of Education sources, including Bulletin 1014 databases and MEAP "downloadable data files."

Overall, the report showed that the "cost of administration per pupil of Michigan's charter schools is nearly twice that of Michigan's public school districts. Further, the cost of administration as a percent of expenditures of Michigan's charter schools is twice that of Michigan's public schools." "Michigan's public schools outperformed charter schools on the MEAP math tests (grades 4 and 8) and MEAP English Language Arts tests (grades 4 and 8), over the last 4 years, by 10 to 21 percentage points. Michigan public school students outperformed charter school students on the MEAP math tests (grades 3 through 8) and the MEAP English Language Arts (grades 3 through 8) for both Fall 2007 and Fall 2008 by 8 to 20 percentage points." Genesee County's public school districts outperform Genesee County's charter schools across all subjects and grade levels, as well.

As a point of information, GISD shares the report with governmental bodies, agencies, and schools across the state. Dr. Treder was at the January 12 meeting to present the report and answer questions.

Race To The Top Presentation Received

The State of Michigan is submitting a grant to receive national Race To The Top (RTTT) funding. If the state is successful, significant funding for school improvement initiatives will be received by participating local school districts. In order to be eligible for the grant application, school districts must complete a checklist and attain the signatures of the board president, superintendent, and union leadership. At the January 12 meeting, Superintendent Thomas Svitkovich reported that he and Board President Lawrence Ford signed the application form and was pleased to announce that GISD's union

leadership signed the application form as well. Assistant Superintendent Mary Behm was present at the January 12 meeting to answer questions about the RTTT grant application, possible outcomes, and GISD's status. In order to ensure that GISD has the authorization of the Board of Education and is able to withdraw its application, if appropriate once all the details of the grant are known, it was recommended and approved that the board approve a resolution developed by Thrun Law Firm, P. C. At the January 12 meeting, the board adopted the Race To The Top resolution and accepted the presentation.

Health, Safety, and Nutrition Services Contract with Linden Community Schools Approved

At its October 13, 2009 meeting, the Board of Education, approved a contract with Linden Community Schools to enter into a shared services contract to provide before and/or afterschool programming for students in second through fifth grades in the Linden Community Schools during the 2009-10 school year. After further discussions with Linden Community Schools Superintendent Ed Koledo, it was agreed that GISD would enter into another shared services contract to provide before and/or afterschool programming for students and their families in Pre-kindergarten through twelfth grades in the Linden Community Schools during the 2009-10 school year. A youth development professional will be employed by GISD to provide these services, and Linden Community Schools will be billed for the services provided to deliver these programs. At its meeting on January 12, the board approved the agreement and authorized the superintendent/designee to hire appropriate personnel to deliver the services.



Donations Accepted

Generous donations to Early Childhood Programs and Services, the Elmer A. Knopf Learning Center, the Marion D. Crouse Instructional Center, and the Transition Center were received by the board. Donations included coats, personal care supplies, media supplies, and donations of cash from numerous donors, including the Knights of Columbus Council #4285, the Knights of Columbus –Swartz Creek Council #6694, and THA Architects Engineers.

Elmer A. Knopf Learning Center Construction and Renovation Project and Bids Approved

At the October 13 GISD Board of Education meeting, representatives of THA Architects Engineers and Wolgast Corporation presented plans and timelines for a four-phased construction and renovation project for GISD's Elmer A. Knopf Learning Center. The first phase consisted of constructing a 17,060 square foot addition, housing eight classrooms and facilities, along with renovation of existing space to create a music room and daily living skills classroom. Additionally, GISD applied to the state of Michigan and was awarded \$1.4 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds for phase I of the project.

GISD's plans call for the remaining three phases for renovation of the existing building space to be bid out separately, budget permitting. A review of the design process, scope of the project, timelines, finance, and the ARRA funding process were all discussed during the presentation at the October 13 meeting. Indirect costs including architectural, engineering and construction project management, tap-in, and contingency funds are estimated at \$560,360. Including the changes in recommended bids for construction, the total direct cost will be \$2,095,357. With these changes, the project cost for Phase 1 is estimated at \$2,655,717. After using ARRA funds, the remaining \$1,255,717 will come from the Special Education Building and Site Fund over a two-year period.

At the January 12, 2010 Board of Education meeting, the recommendation to accept bids for the Elmer A. Knopf Learning Center renovation project was tabled. Working with GISD's construction manager, Tim Johnson from Wolgast Corporation, more in-depth information was gathered to assure the board that GISD was making the best recommendation possible in keeping with board policy and in the best interests of its students and the district. Following the January 12 meeting, GISD reviewed the post-bid interview process for successful bidders with Mr. Johnson. Mr. Johnson and his team checked references with area construction administrators, including their own, to be certain that bidders have the capacity to complete the work to specification.

Representatives from THA Architects Engineers, Wolgast Corporation, and administration were present at the January 26 GISD Board of Education meeting to answer any questions. At that meeting, the GISD Board of Education approved Phase I of the GISD Elmer A. Knopf

Learning Center construction and renovation project and accepted Wolgast Corporation's recommended bids in the amount of \$2,095,357. The project is scheduled to begin on or around February 1, 2010, pending the proper state of Michigan plan review approvals.

"Ready, Set, Grow!" Passport Initiative Support Approved



The Genesee County Superintendents Association continues to endorse this program that identifies children as they are born in local hospitals. This concept helps educators develop a closer relationship with the area's newest parents, as well as increase the health and learning levels of incoming preschool and kindergarten students. Local district superintendents support the program at \$.75 per student for operation costs in partnership with the health and business communities. GISD Superintendent Dr. Thomas Svitkovich currently serves on the Passport Board of Directors, providing leadership and coordination for "Ready, Set, Grow!" Passport activities. At its January 26 meeting, the GISD Board of Education approved financial support of \$3,000 to the "Ready, Set, Grow!" Passport Initiative. This amount is in addition to the in-kind support the district is currently giving to the program.

Help an Adult Learn to Read



The Genesee County Literacy Coalition is offering free tutor training to those who want to help adults improve their reading abilities. Tutors are also needed to assist adults who speak English as a second language. Tutors must have a high school diploma or GED, be willing to provide two or more free hours of tutoring per week, and attend free training sessions before they can begin tutoring.

To register for free tutor training, contact Debbie at (810) 239-9425.

Sing in the New Year!

The Elmer A. Knopf Learning Center ended 2009 with two spectacular music performances on December 17, 2009. The gym was filled with family, friends, and lots of fun. Students proudly collected cash and 338 pounds of nonperishable items for the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, with many large donations being made on the day of the holiday performance. EKLC staff and students are looking forward to celebrating 2010 with the annual spring music programs! This year promises two spectacular events, filled with song, dance, and lots of smiles, on April 22, 2010. EKLC's spring charity will be the support of local agencies that advocate for animals, such as the Humane Society of Genesee County.

Leaves of Absence Approved

Leaves of absence were considered and approved for: Andrea Bartholow, Business Services; Carl Cox, Transportation Services; Michelle Grifka, Elmer A. Knopf Learning Center; Gale Luketich, Transition Center; and Jaimi Scrivener, Elmer A. Knopf Learning Center.

Resignation Accepted

A resignation for the purpose of retirement was accepted from Linda Barber, Marion D. Crouse Instructional Center.

February Birthdays

1	Kathy St. James	Transportation Services
2	Diane Burt	Business Services
2	Deborah Lannom	MCIC
2	Laura Rainey	Mott Middle College
3	Amy Lowell	Transportation Services
3	Windel Robinson	Transportation Services
3	Adrian Wright	Transportation Services
4	Robert Snyder	EKLC
4	Genevieve Weber	EKLC
5	Kathleen Bell	ECPS
5	April Miller	HSNS
6	Rebecca George	SESC-N
6	Scott Long	MCIC
6	Rebecca Thomas	EKLC
7	Dorothy Cooper	Technology & Media Services
8	Agnes Bedell	HSNS
8	Beverly Knox-Pipes	Tech. & Media Services
9	Cara Gorman	ECPS
9	Jennifer Sanders	EKLC

9	Jennifer Smith	Transportation Services
10	Darcy Coon	EKLC
10	Jamie Hacker	Transportation Services
10	Pamela Koehler	Transportation Services
11	Toni Chippi	Transportation Services
11	Bernestine Holmes	MCIC
12	Jill Haug	EKLC
12	Celeste Mora	Mott Middle College
12	Roberta Richards	Project CHOICE
12	Theresa Woods	Transportation Services
13	Duane Diehl	Transportation Services
15	Linda Barber	MCIC
15	Ronald Bergstrom	Transportation Services
15	Robert Phelps	Transportation Services
16	Lynn Momany	MCIC
17	Elizabeth Lester	Transportation Services
17	Jeanne Quinlan	EKLC
18	Robert Dippold	MCIC
18	Marcia McGee	ECPS
18	Kristen Tanner	EKLC
18	Denise Welsh	SESC-N
19	Mariah Gordon	MCIC
19	Cheryl Klinert	EKLC
19	Bonnie O'Neal	Transportation Services
19	Deborah Ray	EKLC
20	Deborah Holtslander	SESC-N
21	Susan Cyrul	Project CHOICE
21	James Donovan	Mott Middle College
21	Pearlena James	Transportation Services
21	Theresa West	Transportation Services
23	Michelle Asbury	ECPS
23	Wendy Jones	SESC-N
24	Laronda England	Transportation Services
24	Rebecca Powell	Transportation Services
26	Carly Adams	ECPS
26	Joseph Firmingham	Tech. & Media Services
26	Andrea Lamay	Project CHOICE
27	Sonia Brumley	Project CHOICE
27	Linda DeCamp	Business Services
27	Pamela Prior	Project CHOICE
28	Sarah Adams	Project CHOICE
28	Bradley Kirchner	Tech. & Media Services
28	Debra Newbold	MCIC
29	Melissa Graves	Project CHOICE

March Birthdays

1	Thomas Norton	Transportation Services
1	Melissa Sears	ECPS
2	Andrea Gerth	Transportation Services
2	Ramanda Moody	Transportation Services
2	Hayley Moore	Transportation Services
4	Rebecca Klobucar	HSNS
4	Judy Linderman	Transportation Services
4	Kim Madorski	Tech. & Media Services
5	Sheila Maclin	Transportation Services
5	Patricia Morris	EKLC



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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.**

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. 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.

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