



# WILDCAT CONNECTION

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## BRAINSTRONG FUNDING FUELS SUCCESS

An Update from the Mattawan Public Education Foundation

The arrival of a new school year means Brainstrong time for the Mattawan Public Education Foundation! Each year staff is encouraged to apply for Brainstrong funding that the Foundation awards to enrich and enhance the students' learning experience. In October, members of the Foundation Board were privileged to visit our school buildings and award Brainstrong grants to well deserving teachers. We had a record breaking year and were proud to give out 52 grants totaling \$41,143. Some examples of Brainstrong Grants this year include:

- A sensory light table for the Early Elementary
- Funding for a Lego FIRST Robotics club at the Later Elementary
- A 3D printer, headphones, and other electronics upgrades for the Middle School
- Materials for an ecolab and a forensics crime lab study at the High School
- Refreshing of books district-wide

The cumulative total for Brainstrong Grant funds reinvested in the district now totals over **\$400,000**; an astounding amount that is only possible thanks to the generous donors that support our Mattawan schools. Along with Brainstrong, The Foundation is granting an additional \$41,500 in financial support to the district for the 2024-25 school year. This amount encompasses a wide range of activities, from staff development, to endowed grants for student connectedness and school safety, to ongoing support for programs across the district such as: Science Olympiad, Beekeeping Club, The Salmon Project, MATH Counts, the Level UP Program, PALS Leadership conference, the high school testing center, and more. The Foundation is grateful to be able to put your donations to use across the district in so many diverse ways.

**Charles River STEM Grant Update:** The Foundation is pleased to report that the generous grant made by Charles River Labs is being implemented across all five buildings. Some items that have been purchased include compound light microscopes, robotics kits, virtual reality sets, and a multitude of lab and STEM related supplies for classrooms. Mattawan Schools and The Foundation are so fortunate to have Charles River Labs in the community as a partner in creating educational opportunities for students.

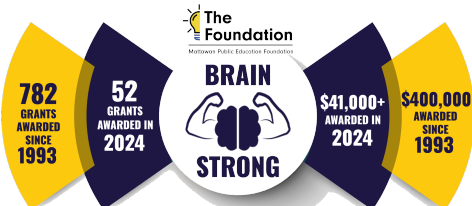
## IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 District News
- 3 School News

## THANK YOU MPEF!!



*Shani Walton, Middle School Teacher  
Brainstrong Funding Recipient*



Follow The Foundation on social media (#mpeforg on Instagram or search for "Mattawan Public Education Foundation" on Facebook) and visit our website at [www.mpef.org](http://www.mpef.org) to volunteer or donate today.

## OUR MISSION

Partnering with our community and families, we provide the highest quality education for all students in a caring, safe, and inclusive learning environment.



Randy Fleenor, Superintendent

## BUILDING OUR FUTURE: A BOND PROJECT UPDATE

### Families & Community:

I trust this communication finds you and yours well and that you are enjoying a productive start to the school year. As you know, voters approved two significant bond proposals totaling approximately \$110 Million, covering a variety of much-needed projects. I communicated in August with an update on the summer planning. Since then, we continue to make great progress. Below is a summary of the work to date:

### ACADEMICS + STUDENT + STAFF

#### PRIORITY 1: IMPLEMENTED

##### Bond-Associated Technology + Auditorium

##### **Upgraded Network Infrastructure (\$940K)**

- 74 Core and Edge Cisco Switches
- 314 Cisco Wireless Access Points
- Redundant Cisco Wireless Controllers

##### **Early Elementary & Staff iPads (\$383K)**

- 1,186 iPads replaced

##### **Staff & Student iMacs (\$130K)**

- 114 iMacs distributed

##### **Staff & Student MacBooks (\$579K)**

- 546 MacBooks deployed

#### PRIORITY 1: UNDERWAY

- High School Single-Mode Fiber Backbone (Holiday Break)
- Auditorium Enhancements:
  - Audio Visual System & Microphone Upgrade (\$110K)
  - Stage Lighting (\$107K)
  - Band Shell (\$170K)
  - Curtains (\$64K)
- Chromebook Upgrades (\$900K)
  - LES (Holiday/Spring Break)
  - MS & HS (Summer 2025)
- Middle School Large Space Presentation Systems (\$69K)
  - Both Gyms & Cafeteria

**Mattawan Community.**

### PRIORITY 2: FUTURE

- 8 Additional Access-Controlled Doors (\$40K)
- Classroom Projector Replacement (\$547K)
- Teacher Audio/Visual Desk Upgrades (\$630K)
- MS/HS Security Camera Refresh (\$388K)
- HVAC and Fire Alarm updates at middle and high school

##### Bond-Associated Transportation + Bus + New Facility

- First bus replacement purchase (\$160K)
- Full bus replacement schedule being developed
- Design phase underway for new combined transportation and maintenance complex; tentative construction August 2025

### ATHLETIC + STUDENT + COMMUNITY

##### Design work continues on stadium turf and competition track:

- Tentative construction is March 2025, with anticipated completion for the 2025-26 football season.
- Construction will displace Fall 2024 and Summer 2025 events; athletics is working on alternate locations.
- Site assessments are in the final stages for the immediate stadium area.
- The turf will be striped to accommodate multiple sports.

##### Traffic Management

- A third party conducted a traffic study; the design team received and is reviewing the results.
- Designs are underway, including flow and additional event and staff parking, as well as the separation of buses, carpool, and student traffic at the middle and high schools.

##### General planning and placement discussion (tentative) underway for:

- New tennis court complex
- Work to be done on the softball and baseball fields and soccer field;
- Youth field placement;
- Placement of field house and aquatic center
- Storm-water management location options.

# Y 5's EARLY childhood



## POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT, POWERFUL RESULTS: PBIS In Our School

Our school pledge states that students will be “Kind, Responsible, Respectful, and Safe.” The staff, students, and Dr. Williams have been working on developing these traits with our Young 5s students through social contracts and character lessons. We even have some Wildcat Mascots named Responsible, Respectful, and Safe and Kind Bulldog (formerly known as Bully Bulldog). Students are learning to be such great friends. We will continue to foster these traits throughout the school year using our social contracts and many other fun activities.

## A Parade of Cuteness and SPOOKY Fun HALLOWEEN COSTUMES IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER



Students had a chance to show off their fun and spooky sides while celebrating Halloween. Students had so much fun dressing up and parading around the gym decorated with inflatables donated by the Ninth Street Walmart. Families had the opportunity to come and enjoy seeing all the students in their creative costumes. The students felt like celebrities waving at all of the families that showed up to celebrate the spooky season and support our students. Classroom parties were an exciting hit that focused on learning and Halloween celebration. Grown-ups were in the spirit as our staff dressed up too! It was a great day to be a kid at Mattawan Early Childhood Education Center.



MATTAWAN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER  
Growing FUTURE Wildcats



## SAFEGUARDING OUR FUTURE

### FIRE TRUCKS ROLL INTO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTER

For National Fire Prevention Week, the Mattawan Fire Department visited the ECEC, and provided a presentation on fire safety for all of our students. Our little Wildcats learned the essentials about fire safety and prevention, and some students even had the chance to dress up as real firefighters. At the end of the visit, the students received a goodie bag full of information about fire safety. We ended up with many Junior Firefighters. Thank you to our local community firefighters for taking the time to visit and educate our youngest learners about fire safety. Their visit helped to instill important safety habits in our children and build a positive relationship to help young children to not be afraid in emergency situations.



## WILDCAT WALK-A-THON

### Strides Towards Enhancing Early Childhood Innovation

Mattawan Young 5's students participated in the Walk-A-Thon this fall. Through the impressive efforts of the Mattawan Early Elementary Parent Association, and the incredible giving from the community, the ECEC raised over \$4,000! The funds will be used to develop the Positive Behaviors Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program, promote staff initiatives, sponsor field trips, fund special projects, and more. We are overwhelmed with their dedication to our students and express our gratitude to the MEEPA for so much hard work to bring forth a well-organized and highly successful fundraiser.

# EARLY ELEMENTARY

## TOMORROW'S TEACHERS TODAY:

### WMU Pre-Intern Program Nurturing Future Educators



WMU pre-interns have partnered with Mattawan Early Elementary to grow the candidate pool for outstanding educators. These pre interns are conducting observations in early elementary classrooms and will teach two lessons throughout the semester. This week they did a read aloud with our students. Next visit they will lead a math station using our math curricular resource, Bridges. Pre interns are building classroom communities while supporting literacy and mathematics teaching practices to help prepare them for their own classroom. We are fortunate to have this relationship and the ability to give back and help shape these educators.

## SAFETY FIRST: FIRE PREVENTION MONTH

### Mattawan Firefighters Educate Young Learners



October is Fire Prevention Month! The goal of Fire Prevention Month is to raise fire safety. This year's theme was "Smoke alarms: Make them work for you!" Local fire departments, schools, and community organizations play a key role in bringing Fire Prevention Week to life in their communities each year and spreading basic but critical fire safety messages. Mattawan Fire Department visited our school to teach students important fire safety tips. The students were excited to see the fire truck up close and meet the brave firefighters who protect our community. The firefighters shared valuable information about fire prevention, and educated kids about the risk of home fires and ways to minimize them. They demonstrated their gear and equipment, which helps alleviate any fears a child may have, helping them feel safe and secure in emergency situations. They also took the time to answer student questions and build positive relationships with our young learners.

Our local firefighters are true heroes who protect our community. We are grateful for their dedication to public safety and their willingness to visit our school to educate our youngest learners about fire prevention. Their visit helped to instill important safety habits.

## MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT, A BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS

### Highly Trained Experts Boost Student Achievement and Significant Growth



Educators at Mattawan Early Elementary are excited to share some wonderful news about the significant growth our students have experienced over the past three years! Thanks to our dedicated teachers and support staff, we have implemented a multi-tiered system of support that has truly made a difference.

Through targeted small group learning led by highly trained experts in both literacy and math, we are able to provide individualized attention to every student. By utilizing student data, we form intentional small groups that ensure all learners receive the support they need.

We are thrilled to report that this approach has resulted in a remarkable improvement each year in both reading and math. Our most recent IRIP data shows that we have successfully decreased the number of students needing intervention to just 9%. This is an incredible achievement!

The power of early intervention is evident in the progress our students are making, and we are proud of their hard work and determination. Thank you for your continued support as we strive to provide the best educational experience for our children.



## A Spooktacular Later Elementary Parent Organization Event TRUNK-OR-TREAT BRINGS THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER



Our school's Trunk-or-Treat event, organized by our dedicated parent organization (MLEAP), was an outstanding success and a true highlight of the season! This year, we were thrilled to see participation reach new heights with over 140 decorated trunks spread across the three grade levels! The creativity displayed in the decorations was simply spectacular, with each trunk showcasing unique themes ranging from spooky to whimsical, including a football tailgate, the classic game of Candy Land, Alice in Wonderland, and even a live chicken! The enthusiasm and spirit shown by parents, guardians, students, and staff made the event even more memorable.

The costumes were another standout aspect of the night, with both kids and adults dressing up and joining in the fun. From superheroes to classic Halloween characters, the variety of costumes added to the festive atmosphere and created an experience filled with laughter, excitement, and community connection. We had dinosaurs, superheroes, sports figures, clowns, policewomen, animals, Ghostbusters, astronauts, book characters, and princesses! It was heartwarming to witness students moving from trunk to trunk, enjoying treats and games while surrounded by friends and family. The Trunk-or-Treat event truly embodied the school's sense of community, bringing everyone together for a day of joy and celebration.

# LATER ELEMENTARY

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5

## CUP STACKING CRAZE SWEEPS THE SCHOOL

### PE Students Stack Up Success



Mr. Lutz's later elementary students stacked up some fun in his physical education class. In partnership with Speedstacks, Inc., Mr. Lutz seized an opportunity for our elementary students to have a blast in an engaging activity that helped develop essential motor skills, including hand-eye coordination and bilateral coordination. As they raced against the clock, they also learned about teamwork, sportsmanship, and the importance of perseverance. They practiced the importance of focus and precision. Speed Stacking is an amazing sport of fitness, agility, concentration and quickness. Teachers and kids across the country have experienced the benefits and have become a part of the "movement." Mr. Lutz's students refined their skills via relay races and other exercise games. This lesson was fun for kids and an exercise in building skills and confidence as they worked to conquer the cup challenge. Mattawan teachers are innovative and simply the coolest, continually seeking out ingenious ways to provide creative learning experiences. Bravo Mr. Lutz, for making this towering achievement possible for kids. Let's keep stacking up the learning, we're seeking funds for items to offer more speed stacking experiences in PE class, contact Mr. Lutz at Mattawan Later Elementary.

## A 'CLASS ACT', MLE FUTURE LEADERS Mattawan Later Elementary Celebrates Student Character

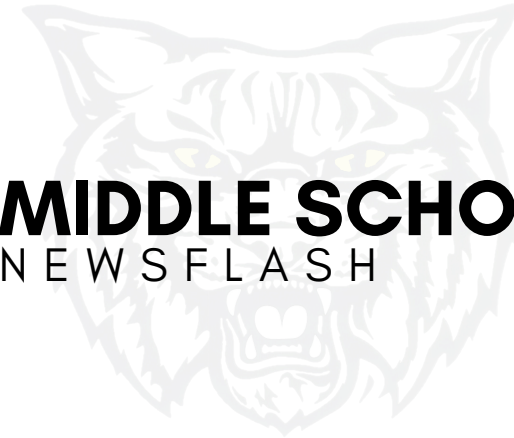


Our school's Caught Doing Good ticket system and weekly prize program has been a resounding success, fostering an environment that encourages positive behavior and acknowledges the good deeds of our students. Each week, teachers and staff distribute tickets to students who exhibit empathy, kindness, respect, and responsibility (whatever the monthly focus trait is), creating an atmosphere where positive actions are recognized and rewarded. This initiative has not only motivated students to demonstrate exemplary behavior but has also contributed to a sense of community and shared purpose within our school. The excitement and anticipation surrounding the weekly prize drawings have added a layer of fun, reinforcing the importance of making good choices in a meaningful way.



In addition to the Caught Doing Good program, we have introduced monthly assemblies focused on teaching and celebrating Leadworthy character traits. These assemblies provide an opportunity for students to learn about traits such as empathy, self-directedness, integrity, perseverance, and courage in an engaging and interactive format. Highlighting these character traits help embed them into the school culture, promoting personal growth and leadership. To honor students who embody the monthly trait, we present Student of the Month certificates, recognizing their efforts and inspiring their peers. These assemblies have become a cornerstone of our character education efforts, celebrating the achievements of our students and reinforcing the values we strive to uphold throughout the Wildcat school community.

# MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWSFLASH



## Keep Your Child On Track in Middle and High School: Pay Attention to Attendance

Showing up for school has a huge impact on a student's academic success. Even as children grow older and more independent, families play a key role in making sure students get to school every day and understand why attendance is so important for success in school and on the job.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Students should miss no more than 9 days of school each year to stay engaged, successful and on track to graduation.
- Frequent absences can be a sign that a student is losing interest in school, struggling with school work, dealing with a bully or facing some other difficulty.
- By 6th grade, absenteeism is one of three signs that a student may drop out of high school.
- By 9th grade, attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than 8th grade test scores.
- Missing 10%, or 2 days a month, over the course of the school year, can affect a student's academic success.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

#### Make school attendance a priority

- Talk about the importance of showing up to school every day.
- Help your children maintain daily routines, such as finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep.
- Try not to schedule dental and non-urgent related medical appointments during the school day.
- Keep your student healthy. If you are concerned about a contagious illness, call your school or health care provider.
- If your children must stay home because they are sick, make sure they have asked teachers for resources and materials to make up for the missed learning time in the classroom.

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#### Help your teen stay engaged

- Find out if your children feel engaged by their classes, and feel safe from bullies and other threats.
- Make sure your teens are not missing class because of challenges with behavioral issues or school discipline policies. If any of these are problems, contact the school and work with them to find a solution.
- Monitor your teen's academic progress and seek help from teachers or tutors when necessary. Make sure teachers know how to contact you.
- Stay on top of your child's social contacts. Peer pressure can lead to skipping school, while students without many friends can feel isolated.
- Encourage your child to join meaningful after-school activities, including sports and clubs.
- Support your students if you notice signs of anxiety, and if needed, seek advice from your school or health provider

#### Communicate with the school

- Know the school's attendance policy – incentives and penalties.
- Check on your child's attendance to be sure absences are not adding up.
- Seek help from school staff, other parents, or community agencies if you need support.



## MIDDLE SCHOOL MELODIES OF AUTUMN A DELIGHTFUL FALL CHOIR PERFORMANCE



In October, the middle school choir program presented their fall concerts! We had two separate concerts, 6th grade and then 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade combined. The 6th graders sang a few different pieces including two traditional folk songs and paired them with Hallelujah by Leonard Cohen and Yellow Submarine by the Beatles!

The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders featured songs centered around a theme of hope and self-expression! The 7th graders presented Fight Song by Rachel Platen and another piece in the classical choral style. The 8th graders sang a pop-inspired choral piece titled Give Us Hope and another piece in the classical choral style. Both the 7th and 8th graders combined to present a traditional folk song called We Shall Be Known by MaMuse and Roar by Katy Perry!

Overall, it was a successful night of making music and joy all around! We were joined on stage by the incredibly talented 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade teacher, Brandon Bear, who played piano for us!

## THE CAT'S MEOW MR. WRIGHT'S LINKS PEER TO PEER



The Cat's Meow Coffee Cart is an ongoing class project that is run by the students in Mr. Wright's LINKS peer to peer class. Together with their LINKS partners, students make and sell coffee and tea to staff throughout the middle school. Students learn about and practice job skills such as interpersonal communications, customer service, and maintaining a budget/handling money, as well as food preparation, safety and cleaning. The Cat's Meow Coffee Cart is operated 4-5 days per week, and the students look forward to the independence in moving around the building. They also look forward to the interaction with customers. Profits from the Coffee Cart go back into the LINKS class to pay for more coffee supplies, as well as groceries for weekly cooking lessons. This successful program has been in operation for more than 7 years, and we hope to keep it around for many more years to come!

# 9 - 12 HIGH SCHOOL HEADLINES

## MATTAWAN DRAMA DEPARTMENT'S "THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG" A Spectacular, Hilarious Performance



Mattawan High School Drama Department's performance of "The Play That Goes Wrong" was absolutely hilarious! Our talented students had the audience roaring with laughter. We're impressed with their perfect comedic timing! We are also proud of their hard work and dedication. Very special thanks to our supportive parents and community members who came out to enjoy the show. Your attendance helps us continue to offer exceptional performing arts programs. Thank you to the cast and crew for bringing laughter and joy to our community.

## Student Leaders Serve on Michigan Department of Education Advisory Council CONGRATULATIONS CAROLINE GRUBER AND KERRIGAN METHENY



We're incredibly proud to announce that two of our students have been selected to serve on the Michigan Department of Education Student Advisory Council. These young leaders represent Mattawan school district and provide perspective, and valuable input on MDE initiatives. They are two of only 50 students chosen to represent their school districts in the state of Michigan. Congratulations Caroline and Kerrigan. You are making a difference and providing an important voice for Mattawan students in shaping the future of education in our state. GO WILDCATS!



## FOOD AND FITNESS STUDENTS MASTER THE CLASSROOM Mrs. Cooper's Class Cooks Up Life Skills Learning

Mrs. Cooper's Food and Fitness class recently transformed into a culinary classroom! Students learned valuable kitchen skills as they prepared a delicious sweet heat chicken recipe. From mastering the rice cooker to practicing proper food safety and sanitation, our students gained hands-on experience in the culinary arts. They worked together and learned the importance of following recipes and measuring ingredients. They not only learned about the nutrition aspects of this meal, but they also had the satisfaction of enjoying the delicious dish together. Special thanks to Mrs. Cooper for shopping for all the ingredients and teaching our youth important practical life skills that will benefit them, and future dinner guests, for years to come.

## MHS SPORTS REPORT FALL SPORTS WRAPPED UP WITH SOME EXCITING HAPPENINGS!



- The Mattawan boys' tennis went to state tournament, ranked 9<sup>th</sup> and finished 6<sup>th</sup> place. The 3 doubles team of Kurtis Scheffler and Jeffrey Richardson won a match before falling in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round. Nolan Ackerman, our 1 singles player, lost in the semifinals to the eventual champion from Midland Dow. Dylan Hodgman competed in the finals at 2 singles but couldn't hold off Forest Hills Northern. Connor Schultz, at 3 singles, defeated the number 1 seed on his way to the finals. Unfortunately, Connor had to forfeit in the final match due to an injury.
- Charlotte Stenger won golf regionals shooting a 77 on a tough Bedford Valley Golf Course, earning her a spot in the state tournament. Charlotte played incredibly at the state tournament, ultimately finishing the day in 7<sup>th</sup> place.
- Owen Fisher came in 14th place at cross country regionals and qualified for the state race at Michigan International Speedway.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF OUR STUDENT ATHLETES! WELL DONE!**



# WILDCAT CONNECTION

## WILDCATS

### MCS Unified Family Resources



**SUPPLIES FOR SUCCESS** [www.supplies-for-success.org](http://www.supplies-for-success.org)

Supplies for Success assists students and families in need at the Mattawan Early and Later Elementary, Middle and High Schools with new and gently used clothing. Supplies for Success is a volunteer organization whose purpose is to provide appropriate school clothing. By caring for their basic needs, we encourage self-esteem and promote academic success. Our goal is to give these children the confidence they need to succeed and to relieve economic stress on their parents.



DONATE NOW



**WILDKPAKS** [www.wildpaks.org](http://www.wildpaks.org)

Wildpaks is dedicated to building a stronger Mattawan community, one student at a time. Wildpaks is a nonprofit organization which supports students who are at risk of going hungry over the weekends throughout the school year in the Mattawan Consolidated School District. We directly serve over 200 students (and counting) among the ECEC, Early EI, Later EI, Middle School and High School. Every Friday each participating student receives a food pack filled with healthy, kid-friendly meal and snack items that provide nutritional support on the weekends.



DONATE NOW



**MATTAWAN AREA PANTRY** [www.mattawanareapantry.org](http://www.mattawanareapantry.org)

Neighbors helping neighbors by providing food assistance to families in need who reside in the Mattawan school district. The Pantry is a non-profit organization that relies on volunteers and the generous donations of this community to serve a growing number of Mattawan area families experiencing food insecurity. Distributions are held the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month from 8:30 am to 11:15 am.

### BOARD OF EDUCATION

2024.2025

- Ted Roethlisberger, President
- Shari Magrath, Vice President
- Mark Noffsinger, M.D., Secretary
- Vickie Mabin-Herzberg, Treasurer
- Marika Hawes-Ruhrup, Trustee
- Rick George, Trustee
- Onur Arugaslan, Trustee

- Randall Fleenor, Superintendent
- Jay Larner, Assistant Superintendent

## 2024.2025 DISTRICT CALENDAR

### NOVEMBER

- 1 No School - Staff PD
- 14-15 ½ Day
- 25-29 Thanksgiving Recess

### DECEMBER

- 23 Winter Break Begins

### JANUARY 2025

- 6 No School - Staff PD
- 7 Classes Resume
- 15-16 Final exams - ½ days for 6-12 students only
- 17 ½ Day

### FEBRUARY 2025

- 14 ½ Day
- 17-18 No School Students & Staff

### MARCH 2025

- 7 ½ Day
- 13-14 ½ Day
- 17 No School - Staff PD
- 28 No School - Spring Break Begins

### APRIL 2025

- 7 Classes Resume
- 16 ½ Day - Staff PD

### MAY 2025

- 23 ½ Day - Staff PD
- 26 No School - Memorial Day

### JUNE 2024

- 3-4 Final exams - ½ days for 6-12 students only
- 5 ½ Day Students - Last Day of School

