



# WILDCAT CONNECTION

ISSUE 6 • YEAR-END EDITION • JUNE, 2022



## 2022 MPEF SENIOR SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

### Student Scholarship Recipients Named at Annual Awards Ceremony

On May 25th, the community gathered at Western Michigan University Miller Auditorium to honor 285 graduating members of the class of 2022. We have much to celebrate as we extend CONGRATULATIONS to our 2022 MPEF Scholarship Recipients! On May 11, 2022, MPEF awarded 19 scholarships totaling \$28,500 during the Senior Awards Ceremony. These ambitious, accomplished students are truly inspiring, and it is our pleasure to celebrate and support them in their future endeavors. Please join us in congratulating the Graduating Class of 2022 and our MPEF Scholarship Recipients!

**CONGRATULATIONS 2022 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS!**

<b>Taylor E. Grainger Scholarship</b> <i>Loryn Davidson, Rachel Zaidan, Yasmin Pirbhai and Claire Johnson</i>	<b>Jackson Peebles Memorial Scholarship</b> <i>Dakota Ortiz</i>
<b>Charles River Scholarship</b> <i>Mitchell Clinard</i>	<b>Lydia and Norman Moyle Memorial Scholarship</b> <i>Nathan Gillesby and Luke Kerrins</i>
<b>Foreign Language Scholarship</b> <i>Julia Weaver</i>	<b>Nancy Kauppi Saunders Memorial Scholarship</b> <i>Natalie Tinklenberg</i>
<b>Caleb J. Kerwin Scholarship</b> <i>Ella Williams</i>	<b>EXPLORE * DREAM * DISCOVER SCHOLARSHIP</b> by Kalamazoo Safari Company & Wildcat Photography <i>Brenna Hagenbarth</i>
<b>David Hinkel Memorial Scholarship</b> <i>Kelsey Lawson</i>	<b>Renee Dubs Scholarship, James Arnold Scholarship, Jon- Miguel Porn Memorial Scholarship</b> <i>Adelaide Douglass</i>
<b>MPEF Founders Scholarship</b> <i>Nolan Okoniewski</i>	
<b>MPEF Art Scholarship</b> <i>Jenna Stout</i>	
<b>Western Diversified Plastics, LLC &amp; Mol-Son, Inc., LLC Scholarship</b> <i>Amy Harman</i>	

Thank you, also, to our Mattawan Community for partnering with us in our Scholarship Program and helping MPEF continue to grow in generosity year after year. Our work could not be possible without the help and support of our generous donors, so thank you!

If you wish to help continue the work of Mattawan Public Education Foundation, text GIVE to 407-707-MPEF (6733) or visit our website [www.mpef.org](http://www.mpef.org). Follow us on Instagram @mpeforg

## IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 District News
- 3 School News

## OUR MISSION

Every child has a right to be connected.  
Every child has a right to intellect.

## OUR VISION

A Collaborative Learning Community in which every individual is valued, engaged and connected.





## THE MATTAWAN SUCCESS STORY A Reflective and Prospective Update

### Families and Community:

What a year it's been! On May 26, 2022, we graduated over 280 seniors at Miller Auditorium. It was a wonderful evening; graduation is the culminating experience for students, parents, staff, and the Board of Education. Thank you, parents and families, for allowing us the humbling opportunity to partner with you.

This year also marked the completion of the District's first Dynamic, Strategic Plan since around 2007. The Board of Education embarked on this critical process a mere two months ago. Through the solicitation of feedback from students, staff, administration, parents, and community members, data was gathered and used to craft a roadmap for the future of Mattawan Consolidated School. We want to remind everybody that this is a framework. We will be developing specific action items to achieve each of these goals and targets in the coming months. This plan is aggressive and will require a massive amount of work. It will also require teamwork: our community, families, and district all working harmoniously together to achieve success! When we think about our core values - partnerships, respect, inclusion, development, and excellence - I can't help but feel an immense amount of pride in the work we've done, the work we are doing, and the work yet to be done. You can view the Dynamic, Strategic Plan Overview at [www.mattawanschools.org](http://www.mattawanschools.org).

This year, we added several key staff to assist our students: one additional social worker at the middle school and two mental health clinicians to support wellness in our students and families. A third Dean of Teaching and Learning position will be added to the high school this fall. The high school currently has two Dean of Teaching and Learning positions. This added position will allow the building to better and more efficiently support our students, families and staff.

We have also added an additional full-time Student Resource Officer (through the VanBuren Sheriff's Department) who will be housed at the EES and LES building full time. This Deputy joins our current full-time Deputy at the middle and high school. As part of our on-going safety and security review, we recently contracted with a third-party safety specialist to review all our facilities, protocols, and equipment, and make recommendations for improvements.

## Empowering the future WITH MATTAWAN PRIDE...

With the retirement of Mr. Owen and Mr. Berlin (EES and LES principals), we have hired Ms. Melissa Martin as the new principal of the EES. She comes to Wildcat Country from Lakeview. The interview process for Mr. Berlin's replacement is underway!

This fall will mark the opening of our new preschool program, which will be housed in the Early Childhood Education Center. This will be a half-day program available to families and will join the 3 and 4 year-olds' program, or Tri-County HeadStart and the Great Start Readiness Programs.

There are a number of exciting and necessary projects we are working on this summer. Most notable: the high school office, middle school office, middle school media center, and roughly 29 middle school classrooms will receive much-needed new carpet. In addition, our Mattawan Public Education Foundation (MPEF) will be adding new paint, bookcases, and other pieces of furniture to our middle school Media Center in the months to come! Our football stadium will be receiving new, LED lighting, super bright and cost-efficient. These new fixtures should be operational for our first home football game this fall, giving new meaning to 'Friday Night Lights.'

The Board of Education recently approved the purchase of new math texts and supplemental materials for grades 6 – 12. This purchase is the result of a year-long review/pilot process and will provide a seamless transition from the elementary math experience through the AP math courses at our high school. These materials should arrive this summer, ready for students this fall.

This past year our Transportation Department has been working to deploy a new rout building application, complete with a mobile app for parents to securely track their child's bus location and arrival time. We believe this will be a great convenience for our parents. Stay tuned!

The district has taken a laser-focus approach to enhancing our professional development around school culture, relationship building, and equipping staff to better support students. This fall our teachers and administrators will embark on a game-changing opportunity by attending Capturing Kid's Hearts training. Our goal is to have the entire district trained within the next two years.

We wish you a wonderful and safe summer, With Mattawan Pride,

  
Randy



# Y 5's EARLY CHILDHOOD

## FIRST FANTASTIC FIELD DAY

Little Wildcats Enjoy Fields of Fun



Tuesday, May 24th was a beautiful Pure Michigan sunny day! Young 5 students and families enjoyed 12 different station activities at the high school track. Students rotated through stations such as soccer, parachutes, water balloon toss, and football toss. After the festivities were complete, parents joined their students for an outdoor picnic. It was a perfect way to celebrate the end-of-the school year. We are grateful to Amy Fisher, Early Childhood Education Center Integrated Arts teacher for organizing this event. Thank you to our parent volunteers, we could not have done it without them.



### Reading Buddies Rule 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE WILDCATS BOOST YOUNG READERS' SKILLS

On May 27, five 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes visited the Early Childhood Education Center with their favorite books in hand! Fourth grade students were paired up with Young 5 students and served as positive role models, sharing their love for reading with our youngest wildcat learners. For 30 minutes, students were engaged in reading favorite and fun books, looking for letters they know, and sharing stories about the illustrations. We appreciate our 4<sup>th</sup> grade buddies who certainly got Young 5 students excited about reading.



## CENTRAL OFFICE BIG WHEELS HAVE FUN WITH BIG WHEELS

"Growing old is mandatory, but growing up is optional." – Walt Disney. With the help of Mattawan's little Wildcats, Superintendent Fleenor and Assistant Superintendent Larner (AKA Nighthawk & Dragon) are trying to stay kids forever. Thanks to the generosity of the Mattawan Public Education Foundation, our educators were able to provide a fun activity to help young students, and a couple of grown-ups, get the wiggles out and cross the last school day finish line with big wheel fun. What a great way to end the school year in beautiful Pure Michigan!



MATTAWAN CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL  
www.mattawanschools.org

# ENROLL WITH US.

# M

2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR

**OPENS MARCH 1, 2022**  
PRE-K THROUGH 12TH GRADE

**Do not register before March 1 or you will have to re-register**

### SCREENING DATE

- Young 5's screening date is April 20th from 1:00 - 6:00
- Kindergarten screening will take place during the week of June 6
- Screening date information for Y5 and K will come in an email after you enroll
- Preschool students do not need to attend the screener

### STUDENT PROGRAM OPTIONS DEPEND ON THE CHILD'S BIRTHDAY

- 8-31-2018 and 9-1-2019 will register for 3 Year Old Preschool
- 12-2-2017 and 9-1-2018 will register for 4 Year Old Preschool
- 6-1-2017 and 12-1-2017 will register for Young 5's
- 5-31-17 and older will register for Kindergarten
- **Full day (8:30 to 3:35) for Y5 and Kindergarten with lunch and transportation provided by the district.**

### 3'S & 4'S PRESCHOOL WILL BE

- Half Day (3 hours) without lunch or transportation provided by the district
- 30 week program
- AM session from 8:30-11:30; PM session from 12:30-3:30
- Must be potty trained
- Top three choices will be chosen when registering on PowerSchool

### 3 YEAR-OLD OPTIONS

- 1 Day Program: Tuition is \$16.50 per week, \$495 for the year
- Friday's from 12:30-3:30
- 2 Day Program: Tuition is \$33 per week, \$990 for the year
- Thursday and Friday from 8:30 - 11:30
- Monday and Tuesday from 8:30 - 11:30
- Monday and Tuesday from 12:30 - 3:30

### 4 YEAR-OLD OPTIONS

- 3 Day Program: Tuition is \$49.50 per week, \$1,485 per year
- Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday from 8:30 - 11:30
- Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 8:30 - 11:30
- Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 12:30 - 3:30
- 4 Day Program: \$66 per week, \$1,980 per year
- Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 12:30-3:30



# EARLY ELEMENTARY

## MEET THE PRINCIPAL

Introducing Ms. Melissa Martin



We are pleased to announce Ms. Melissa Martin as the next principal of Mattawan Early Elementary School. Mr. Jim Owen who announced his retirement after a long and distinguished career in education has officially passed the baton. Ms. Martin was the top selection out of a pool of very qualified candidates. She brings 16 years of experience, the last six as a principal for the Lakeview School District. Ms. Martin will hit the ground running here on July 1, 2022. We thank Mr. Owen for his sound leadership and extend best wishes on his new adventures.

We are very excited to welcome her to the Wildcat team and confidently lead this building into a bright future!



## MATTAWAN EARLY ELEMENTARY PARENT ASSOCIATION BOOK BUDDIES EVENT RECONNECTING AND READING A GOOD BOOK



MEEPA (Mattawan Early Elementary Parent Association) sponsored this spring's event. The goal was to provide an opportunity for parents and grandparents to reconnect with the school community after the extended pandemic issues.

MEEPA collected over 800 books, with one given to each student on the day of the event, along with a bag with a drink, kettle corn, and a book mark. Each grade level had a 35-minute time for their students to read with "Buddies" outside. National Honor Society students from the high school volunteered to be "Buddies", and a number of additional EES staff and MEEPA members also joined to read with students.

The weather was sunny and the number of participating "Buddies" was amazing. One Dad told me we should consider doing this each Friday! It was simply awesome to see our schoolyard filled with families, students and staff again. A special thanks goes to the MEEPA Board who worked to make this happen.

## BARN DANCE BOOGIE

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Family Folk Fun



Second Grade students were excited to invite their families to school for the annual Barn Dance! The second grade students learned about cultures and form in Mrs. Fletcher's class through music and dancing from other countries during their Spring folk dance unit. To celebrate the end of the unit, students invited family members to school to teach and dance with. It was really incredible to see so many family members with their students, smiling and dancing together. Of course, it's always fun to see the look of surprise on the dad's faces when it comes time to switch partners and they turn around to face another dad to dance with! Kudos to the dads, moms and family members of all ages for being great sports and showing off their amazing dancing skills!

## Little Learners Take a Walk on the Wild Side

KINDERGARTENERS ENJOY CLASS TRIP TO THE ZOO

Early Elementary kindergarten students enjoyed a gorgeous day at Binder Park Zoo. This outdoor learning experience was filled with acres of exploration of an array of animals and plants. This fun excursion allowed students to observe animals and feel a connection with wildlife and their habitats. Thank you to our chaperones for your part in making this exciting field trip possible.



## Life Skills Lessons for LES Students **RESOLUTION PRACTICES MAKE PEACE**



Pictured above is a community circle taking place in a 5th grade classroom. In 2019, the LES implemented a student centered approach to resolving conflicts between students. This practice is commonly referred to as Restorative Justice. Restorative Justice practices in schools are about repairing harm done to relationships over the need for assigning blame and dispensing punishment. Restorative Justice asks questions like: Who was harmed? What are their needs? Whose obligation is it to repair the harm?

Through Restorative Justice practices, students learn to take ownership over their own actions and feelings. Restorative Justice practices, including the use of “I” statements, promote self-management and self-awareness. At the heart of these practices are strong relationships and communities. Specific practices, such as Circles, teach empathetic listening and respectful sharing. They also teach students the impact and consequences of their decisions. Restorative Conversations focus on reflection and “making things right.”

After conflict or harm, Restorative Practices provide a way of thinking about, talking about and responding to issues and problems by including all participants to consider what happened and how to make things better. Some restorative justice tools that are used at Mattawan Later Elementary include community circles, peer mediation, and restorative circles.

# LATER ELEMENTARY

3 - 5



### OUTDOOR LEARNING **MPEF Grant Proves that Some Classrooms Don't Have Walls**

As schools around our country sought a safe way to bring students back to classrooms last year, a solution emerged: Outdoor Classrooms. Our third grade teachers looked beyond their classroom walls to find ways to teach and learn in safe, natural settings. "If restaurants were able to find space by converting parking spaces and sidewalks into dining space, there's no reason schools can't do the same." – Craig Strang, associate director of learning and teaching, Lawrence Hall of Science.

Research has shown that outdoor learning can have huge benefits on children's mental health and academic performance. Children are often calmer and better able to focus when learning in nature, and teachers have reported better behavior and social interactions with fewer disciplinary issues. Through a very generous MPEF grant to build an outdoor classroom, learning outdoors is now a permanent option for all third graders!



## **Musically Making the Most of It**

### SEEING THE SILVER LINING THROUGH COVID ADAPTATIONS

COVID presented a number of challenges in the school setting that educators and students had to endure, it also provided the catalyst for “out of the box” thinking. Out of necessity, educators had to develop different ways of doing things and break the mold of traditional practices; however, not all these changes were bad, many of them turned out to be beneficial! Miss Mroczek teaches 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade general music at the Later Elementary and here's what she has to say about the COVID experience in music class. “COVID was definitely not fun for anybody! However, I am very thankful for the many good things and ideas that came out of it,” said Mroczek. “It made me rethink and revamp literally everything and forced me to come up with different ways of doing things that I never would have thought of before!” Mroczek switched the 4<sup>th</sup> grade recorder unit from winter to fall which meant that the kids were able to go outside, spread out, and enjoy nature and fresh air while practicing recorder. That was also helpful for her ears! She will definitely be doing that again next year.

A more notable change was the cancellation of grade level music programs. Miss Mroczek also had many positive things to say about that change. With the cancellation of music programs, Tara Fletcher (EES music teacher) and Miss Mroczek realized that they could cover a TON more content. Without grade level concerts, they could devote solid months of teaching age-appropriate curriculum and skill development rather than concert preparation. For the past 2 years Mroczek has been able to devote 2 months of school to “piano karate” which has been fantastic! Students have progressed because they are able to take the concepts they learn collectively as a class September through March, apply them independently on piano in April and May.

This year, the LES brought back the 5<sup>th</sup> grade music program “COVID style.” Due to the uncertainty of restrictions, the 5<sup>th</sup> graders put on a virtual music program with the help of Matt Boven's high school film crew. While not completely ideal, Miss Mroczek pointed out the unexpected benefits of the

situation. Matt Boven's students, Brian Weaver, Liam Comrie and Jackson Hunter, did an amazing job filming the concert with multiple camera angles and developed a video for the community to watch. What a great keepsake that students and families can enjoy for years to come!

These past 2 years have certainly been filled with numerous challenges that most of us would like to forget, but with those challenges also came opportunities for adaptation, beneficial change, and growth. Thank you to all the staff at MCS who embraced obstacles, thought “outside the box,” and put forth extra effort to continue to make Mattawan Consolidated Schools an academic, socially/emotionally safe and successful place for all students!

# MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWSFLASH

## 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Band Hit All the Right Notes at State Festival WAY TO GO WILDCATS!



7th and 8th Grade Band Members Pursue Great Performances and Achieve Great Results at the MSBOA District XI Solo and Ensemble Festival.

Band is a class that is held every day in each grade level. Students work in small groups and large ensembles to achieve their personal best and give to the quality and experiences of the entire group. One of the most exciting experiences our 7th and 8th grade students pursued this year was participation in MSBOA District XI Solo and Ensemble Festival.

Just over 60 of our 7th and 8th grade students prepared and performed solos, duets, trios, quartets, and quintets and performed them for their families and for a panel of instrumental music judges. The students received written comments and shared in a small clinic with their judge sharing inspiring goals for the future. All of our students earned first or second division ratings and also received a red or blue keepsake medal for each event.

We are so very proud of all of our students and we believe they have grown a great deal in all areas of their musicianship and personal confidence throughout this past year! Congratulations on all of your success from Ms. Jonker and Mr. Boswell!

## MIDDLE SCHOOL BOOK BUDDIES HAVE A STORY TO TELL

### Authors, Illustrators, and Mentors



One of the most important things an author needs to consider while writing is his or her audience. Research shows that when students write for authentic audiences beyond their classrooms, they often find greater purpose in their learning and are more motivated to do their absolute best. In an effort to bring this research into the classroom, Anne Heinicke and Amanda Rounds, 8th grade Language Arts teachers, collaborated with Bridgit Smith and Amanda Petticoffer, 4th grade teachers, to create an authentic and exciting new writing project for students. In the fall, after reviewing reading strategies called signposts and studying mentor picture books, 8th grade students interviewed a 4<sup>th</sup> grade “book buddy” to write a personalized story for. Thanks to a Brainstrong Grant through MPEF, Amanda and Anne were able to purchase blank books for the 8th grade students to fill with creative stories and illustrations tailored specifically for the 4th grade student. Later in the school year, 4th grade students also learned about signposts in preparation for the big book buddy meet-up day.

On April 25th, the 8th grade walked over to the Later Elementary to share their books with their 4th grade buddies. The meet-up started with reviewing the signpost concepts that both grade levels worked with this year and playing get-to-know-you games. Then, the pairs spread out within the classrooms and hallway to enjoy the books with Oreo snacks donated by fourth grade families. The day concluded with more games and many of the 8th grade students gifting the books they created to their 4th grade buddies. It was heartwarming to see how excited the 4th grade students were to read the books written just for them and how proud the 8th grade students were to share their work with a captivated audience. Overall, it was a fun opportunity for students to celebrate literacy, develop leadership skills, and foster connections within our district. Since the book buddy collaboration was such a positive experience for students this year, the 4th and 8th grade teachers are excited to further develop the concept next year to build more connections between buildings and create more opportunities for students to share their learning with authentic audiences.



**CO-STUDENT GOVERNMENT PRESIDENT  
 CREA DIPPEL**

Crea gave the commencement welcome address. She will be attending Michigan State University  
 Area of Study: Biology and Secondary Education



**SUMMA CUM LAUDE HONOREE  
 RACHEL ZAIDEN**

Rachel shared advice and levity to the graduates. She will be attending University of Michigan  
 Area of Study: International Relations and Legal Studies



Class of **2022**

**SUMMA CUM LAUDE HONOREE  
 ELLA WILLIAMS**

Ella provided advice and levity to the graduates. She will be attending Hope College  
 Area of Study: Special Education



**WILDCATS FOR LIFE!  
 Wishing You Success, and Nothing Less**



On May 25th, the community gathered at Western Michigan University Miller Auditorium to celebrate the graduation of 285 members of the class of 2022. Dr. Buchler, Superintendent Emerita, came back to present the class of 2022 after they received their diploma covers. Thank you to all of our staff, in every role, who contributed to educating and supporting these graduates, K-12. We are grateful to parents, their first teachers, for allowing us to partner with you. It takes a village! We are proud of the Class of 2022 and wish them the very best in their adventures!

**MHS SPORTS REPORT  
 SPRING SPORTS WRAPPED UP AND BROUGHT HOME THE HARDWARE**

**GO WILDCATS!**



- Our Girls Tennis Team had an amazing season, they earned their place to compete at State, where both our #1 Singles player, Liz Novak and our #2 Singles player Romika Shokohi, brought home First Place State finishes, and our Team placed third overall! Amazing showing by our Wildcats!
- Our Track Star Yasmin Pirbhai earned a berth at State in TWO Events....High Jump and Shot Put
- Both the Baseball and Softball teams took District Championships, and competed at Regionals!
- Men's Golf team made it to the State Finals!

Congratulations to all of our student athletes and coaches for an incredible Spring Season!

Mattawan Consolidated School  
56720 Murray Street  
Mattawan, MI 49071

**VOTE AUGUST 2, 2022**  
EVERY WILDCAT. EVERY DAY.

**OPERATING MILLAGE RENEWAL**

# WILDCAT CONNECTION

2022.2023

## AUGUST 2022

**29** First Half-Day of School for All Students

## SEPTEMBER

**2-5** Labor Day Observed - No School

**6** Classes Resume

**20** ½ Day - Staff PD

## OCTOBER

**5** Count Day

**13** ½ Day - Staff PD

**28** ½ Day - Staff Records

**31** No School - Staff PD

## NOVEMBER

**10-11** ½ Days - Parent/Teacher Conferences

**22** ½ Day PD

**23** Thanksgiving Recess begins

**28** Classes Resume

## DECEMBER

**26** Winter Break [Begins December 26]

## JANUARY 2023

**9** Classes Resume

**18-19** Final exams - ½ days for 6-12 students only

**20** ½ Staff Records

**23** Staff PD - No School

## FEBRUARY 2023

**8** Count Day

**16** ½ Staff PD

**17** ½ Staff/Students

## MARCH 2023

**10** ½ Staff Records

**13** Staff PD - No School

**23-24** ½ Days - Parent/Teacher Conferences

**31** Spring Break Begins

## APRIL 2023

**10** Classes Resume

## MAY 2023

**2** ½ Day Staff PD

**29** No School - Memorial Day

**31** Final exams - ½ days for 6-12 students only

## JUNE 2023

**1-2** Final exams - ½ days for 6-12 students only

**2** ½ Day Students - Last Day of School Staff Records



[www.mattawanschools.org](http://www.mattawanschools.org)

The Mattawan Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, age, disability, height, weight, marital status, or any other legally protected characteristic in its programs and activities, including employment opportunities. Please contact the Title IX Coordinator, 56720 Murray Street, Mattawan, MI 49071, 269-668-3361 with inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies.

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

2022.2023

Ted Roethlisberger, President

Maureen Ford, M.D., Vice President

Shari Magrath, Secretary

Mark Noffsinger, M.D., Treasurer

Marika Hawes-Ruhrup, Trustee

Vickie Mabin-Herzberg, Trustee

Bruce Miller, Trustee

Randall Fleenor, Superintendent

Jay Larner, Assistant Superintendent