November 9, 2015

**Chestnut Hill**

2015 National Blue Ribbon School Award Ceremony

For those who are interested in tuning in to see the Recognition Ceremony when Principal Tracy Renfro and Teachers Margaret Doan and Amanda VanHoey accept the 2015 National Blue Ribbon Award on behalf of the students, staff and families of Chestnut Hill Elementary School, the presentations to schools will be live streamed Tuesday, November 10, from 1:00-4:00 pm. Here is the link: [http://liveeventaccess.com/blueribbon/](http://liveeventaccess.com/blueribbon/)

*Congratulations Chestnut Hill. We are proud of you!*

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**Bond Project Updates**

If you live in the neighborhoods of our closed elementary buildings: Cook, Mills and Parkdale, you have probably been seeing trucks, equipment, workers and hard hats around these buildings. We recently asked for bids and had the work completed for the asbestos abatement in preparation for demolition of these three buildings. It is now time for the demolition to begin. Mills demolition began last week; Parkdale will begin in mid-to-late November and Cook in December.

We will be posting photos very soon on our website including video of the projects being done by the bond funds from a drone operated by our Project Management firm, Barton Malow. It will be exciting to see the work done from an aerial vantage point.

The demolition of the Central School classrooms has been bid separately because, as you may be aware, the cafeteria, gym and auditorium are remaining and will be integrated into the new part of the STEM elementary building and the demolition will be more complicated. Asbestos abatement work has been done with demolition to begin after the first of the year.

The Central auditorium will be closed following this holiday season’s performances. We anticipate the STEM elementary school and district auditorium ready for student learning, growing and performing in Fall 2017.

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**CHONGQING CHINA TEACHER EXCHANGE FOLLOW-UP**

Thanks to a generous grant from the Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation, in September and October MPS participated in an exciting exchange with Chongqing, China teachers.

In September we had eight teacher guests from China spend two weeks with us learning about our educational system and in October, we had six MPS teachers—Rebecca Faust, Lynn Tolfa, Jamie Reid, Sarah Cooper, Josh Criner and Kelly Murphy—spend two weeks in China learning about their educational system.

Thank you Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation for making this amazing opportunity possible.

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**Congratulations to the Dow High Charger football athletes and coaches** for their very impressive District Title victory Friday night against Fenton. Best wishes in the Division 2 football regional final playoff game against Walled Lake Western on Saturday, November 14 at noon at Walled Lake Western (Walled Lake Western is northwest of Detroit).

The winner of this game will advance to state semifinals the following weekend.

*Go Dow High Charger Football. We are proud of you!*

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**MPS Shining Star Nominations are now being accepted** for MPS staff members who you feel make MPS a better place for students. Please take a moment to nominate an MPS staff member today. [http://midps.org/shiningstarform](http://midps.org/shiningstarform)

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**Have questions or comments?**

Click on the **MPS Connect!** icon on our website ([www.midlandps.org](http://www.midlandps.org)) or call our office at 923-5026. Let’s Connect!
MDE Release of M-STEP Results

Last week, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) released aggregate results for its students on the 2014-15 state-wide assessment, known as M-STEP.

As was anticipated, the scores were lower than they were on Michigan’s previous test (MEAP). However, MPS is pleased to note that our scores maintained the same score percentage above the State average (the only comparison we have at this time) and we would expect to maintain our status as a high-performing school district, once district results are available.

The MDE hit the reset button on student assessment testing in 2014, announcing the replacement of the 44-year-old Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) test with the more comprehensive Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP). The M-STEP measures State standards in accordance with what students are actually learning. The M-STEP is not bubble sheets and multiple choice questions; the tests are now more interactive and engaging. Our students must demonstrate critical thinking, problem solving and deeper knowledge through written responses. The spring 2015 assessment was the first time students took a high-stakes assessment such as M-STEP online.

Results will be released in a staggered sequence. Public statewide aggregates were recently released. MPS is receiving results from the MDE website for the District’s use. The public release of individual student performance and district and school performance will be available by the end of 2015.

The 2014-15 M-STEP Results will be used as a benchmark with the expectation that MPS students will improve each year. The high standards and rigorous assessments will prepare students for the careers of the 21st Century.

Also, released recently were the ACT College readiness test results for the graduating class of 2015 and the class of 2016 (retesting still ongoing). The class of 2015 ACT composite score is a 23.4 and the class of 2016 is 23.0. At this time the State composite average is 19.9.

As I hope you can see, MPS students are excelling on these important assessments when compared to other students in our State and the new high standards of the M-STEP assessment. The new State standards will push MPS and our State to reach for higher results.

Dow High’s Caleb Broodo of Troop 763 completed his Eagle Scout project with DHS Athletics. Caleb’s project was to build the display case and sign for the H. H. Dow High Hall of Fame. Caleb did a can drive and had donations to cover the cost of the materials for the display case. He then spent several hours building and staining the finished product. Caleb also built the signage above the display case. Dow High is extremely grateful for the time and effort Caleb put into building the display case and sign.

“Poetry Off the Page,” an Arts Integration Workshop, was held last week. The focus was using poetry to teach Language Arts and Social Studies. 28 MPS teachers participated and had a great experience. It was exciting to see the way the teachers responded to the presenter as well as the students in the three demonstration lessons.

The Midland High Drama Department will present To Kill a Mockingbird November 12-14 at 7:00 pm at Central Auditorium.

Tickets are for sale at Journeys and Village Green and will be on sale during lunch hours this week at MHS.
On Friday, October 30, 5th grade students, parents, community members and elementary Spanish teachers gathered together at Jefferson Middle School to participate in the 2015 MPS 5th Grade Fiesta Hispana. Over 200 5th graders and their parents from elementary schools all over Midland were able to enjoy an evening of interaction and exploration of Hispanic cultures. Twenty-two Midland area residents representing twelve Hispanic countries volunteered an evening to share authentic artifacts from their respective countries and to explain a little of their culture to the more than 200 students in attendance that night. Students had the opportunity to speak Spanish with native speakers and learn about many different cultures. They also had the opportunity to sample food from many countries, make a craft, explore Hispanic dance through Zumba, and experience Spanish music through singing and instruments. Attendees also enjoyed a preview performed by the cast of the MCFTA’s Peanut Gallery “Quixote”. The evening ended with entertainment provided by community members and Midland Public Schools’ students and staff. Many volunteers contributed to the success of the evening including parents, high school students and community members. Thank you to the MPS elementary Spanish staff for organizing this great event!

Under the direction of the Midland High School Beautification Committee, approximately 20 members of the National Honor Society and Kiva Club transplanted numerous perennials from Parkdale to MHS last week. Everything from tall grasses, burning bushes, and hydrangea, to lavender and lilies were “rescued” from Parkdale to improve the grounds and entryways at Midland High. After Parkdale is razed later this month, a little bit of it will live on at MHS.

“pearls” of wisdom ...

“Excellence is the gradual result of always striving to do better.” — Pat Riley

“To be successful you must accept all challenges that come your way. You can’t just accept the ones you like.” — Mike Gafka

A great collaboration: On October 30 the Dow High Chamber Singers and the Midland High Meistersingers combined to sing the National Anthem for the October 30 DHS/MHS playoff game.

Week of Non-Violence/Friendship

As part of their Week of Non-Violence/Friendship activities last week, on Friday (Nov. 6), it was hat and crazy/mismatched sock day because Chestnut Hill students show kindness from “head to toe.”

Great Job Chestnut Hill and our MPS schools for embracing this very important week and message!

Several of Mrs. Sarah Hechlík’s HH Dow High 3rd hour Writing Workshop students submitted their personal memoir pieces to “Teen Ink,” a national teen literary magazine. The following students were published on the Teen Ink site: Bailey Altman, Jessee Beckord, Justin Cook, Lauren Daniels, Kinsey Davis, Rachel Schaar, Julia Lumbert, Katie Meidt, Faith Mrdutt, Mackenzie Magill, Mike Robb, Desiree Vandenber, Christa Weckesser, Liz Wegner

On October 30, the DHS and MHS orchestras came together for a “masterclass” with Violinist Hal Grossman, guest of the Grove Music Festival.

Jacob Gomez from MHS and Sunny Kim from DHS are pictured here with Violinist Grossman. Jacob and Sunny were two of the four students that played for the masterclass.

PLEASE NOTE … (check with your school for exact release time)

Elementary students have two half days in November—12th & 25th.
Middle & High School students have one half day in November—25th.