



# WILDCAT CONNECTION

ISSUE 11 • WINTER EDITION • NOVEMBER, 2023



## RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

MPEF Grant Recipients Bring Innovative Ideas to Life in the Classroom

The Mattawan Public Education Foundation began the school year strong with two events highlighting some of the wonderful work being conducted in the district: the awarding of Brainstrong grants, and a Donor Appreciation Open House at the Mattawan Middle School Media Center. Since our inception, The Foundation has awarded over \$300,000 in Brainstrong grants to teachers and staff in the school district. On October 13 we added to that number, awarding \$23,000 and over 40 grants across all five buildings. That money goes directly into classrooms, helping provide teachers with the ability to enhance the learning environment of our students in creative ways. Brainstrong award day is one of The Foundation's favorite days of the year, as we get to see the impact made as teachers realize they've been awarded a grant they can use to improve the quality of their students' education.

On October 24, The Foundation held a Donor Appreciation Open House to showcase the transformation of the Middle School Media Center. Over the course of the past year, The Foundation engaged in a capital campaign to raise funds to give the media center much needed updates. Through the generosity of donors across the community, we were able to raise over \$100,000, providing the media center with new bookshelves, furnishings, and A/V equipment to create an accessible space for students and media center specialists to interact. The media center is truly the "Heart of the Middle School," and The Foundation thanks everyone who contributed to achieving this goal.

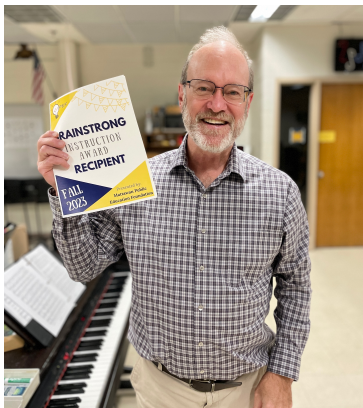
The Mattawan Public Education Foundation is just getting started this year! Mark your calendars for these upcoming events:

**Cheers to Education Fundraising Event**  
Friday, March 1, 2024

**Charity Golf Classic**  
Thursday, June 20, 2024

**Wildcat Road + Trail 5K**  
Saturday, August, 2024

Head to our website for more information, to donate or become involved: [www.mpef.org](http://www.mpef.org).



## IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 District News
- 3 Community Feature
- 4 School News



## 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 ZERO MILL SCHOOL BOND PAVES WAY FOR INNOVATION IN EDUCATION

Dear Mattawan Community,

We hope this message finds you well. Over the past year, we have been diligently working on the Zero-Mill Increase School Bond 2024 Initiative, a project that holds great promise for the future of education in our community. We believe in transparency and collaboration, and we want to keep you updated on the progress we've made.

Throughout the past months, we have engaged in internal focus meetings with our dedicated employees and students, fostering a collaborative environment where ideas and concerns were openly discussed. Additionally, we hosted Community Forums that brought together various stakeholders, providing a platform for valuable input from parents, community members, and local leaders. These forums were instrumental in shaping the vision for the School Bond 2024 Initiative.

At the Board of Education level, we have carefully deliberated on the feedback received and considered the diverse perspectives shared by our community. We are immensely grateful for the thoughtful feedback we have received, as well as the productive conversations that have taken place in these meetings. Your engagement and commitment to the future of our schools have been truly inspiring.

In our pursuit of comprehensive community input, we utilized phone and digital surveys to gather multiple data points. The wealth of information collected has been instrumental in shaping the priorities and goals of the School Bond 2024 Initiative. Your responses have been crucial in helping us understand the needs and aspirations of our community.

### OUR VISION

Mattawan Consolidated School will be the leading collaborative learning community in which every individual will be valued, engaged, and empowered in an ever-changing, global society.

As we move forward, we want to remind you of the upcoming opportunities to engage with us. More community forums are on the horizon, providing you with additional chances to learn about the specific needs that will be addressed in the bond.

We are excited about the future and the positive impact the School Bond 2024 Initiative will have on our schools, students, and community as a whole. Your support is crucial, and we look forward to shaping a brighter future for education in Mattawan together!

With Gratitude,

  
Randy Fleenor  
Superintendent

**MCS**   
**today.tomorrow.**  
AND FUTURE FOCUSED

## Mattawan Education Association Hot Dog Fundraiser Sizzles with Success

Our Deepest Thanks to Community and Local Businesses

The Mattawan Education Association would like to thank the Mattawan Community for your support this year at the Annual Homecoming Hot Dog Sale. We raised \$4,700 which will be used to award deserving seniors with scholarships to further their education as well send deserving students from all 5 of our buildings to summer camps. This was only possible with the help of so many people and community businesses who donated supplies and monetary donations. Special thanks to Biggyby-Mattawan; Chartwell's, Main Street Pub; Mattawan Chiropractic Clinic; PC; Ralph Moyle Inc.; Pizza Hut @ McGillen's Crossing; QDoba West Main; Red's Rootbeer Stand; Schultz's Fruit Ridge Farms; Shell – Flemming Brothers Oil; Subway – City Center; Target – West Main, and United Bay Community Credit Union.



## MATTAWAN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADVENTURES AWAIT

Community Rallies to Fund Field Trips, Investing in Early Learning



Not all classrooms have walls. Thanks to our generous community, end-of-the year field trips will open a world of learning for our youngest Wildcats. Stepping out of the classroom and into the world of real-world experiences, field trips offer a wealth of benefits for young students. These immersive learning opportunities provide hands-on exploration, ignite curiosity, and expand knowledge for learners. Field trips also spark a sense of wonder and excitement, igniting a love of learning that extends far beyond the classroom. We extend a heartfelt thanks for helping us raise money at the annual Walk-A-Thon to support our field trip endeavors. The event was a great success! Mrs. Bailey's class was the winning class bringing in the most pledges for our school. They earned a Bubbles and Chalk Party to celebrate their win!

## Safeguarding Our Future

EARLY CHILDHOOD FIRE PREVENTION EDUCATION



When our students practice the letter F, they also practice Fire Safety Week. Our local Mattawan Fire Department visits our campus with their equipment to teach all our youngest students about fire safety. In the tender years of early childhood, laying a foundation of fire safety knowledge is crucial for safeguarding young lives. By introducing fire safety concepts in a playful and engaging manner, children can learn to identify fire hazards, understand the dangers of fire, and know how to react appropriately in case of a fire. They learned strategies like planning a family meeting place in the event that there is a fire, to not be afraid of a firefighter if they were in the house, and understanding the "Stop, Drop, and Roll" technique. Some of our eager students even got to try on the equipment! A special thank you to our local fire department for joining our students to instill fire safety concepts early on, empowering children to become active participants in their own safety and the safety of those around them.

## Capturing Kids Hearts

INSPIRING KINDNESS, COMPASSION, AND CONNECTION IN EVERY CHILD



The Early Childhood Center is in year two of implementing Capturing Kids' Hearts. Our staff and students are fully embracing this program. Each classroom creates a social contract of rules for how we agree to treat each other. Our campus feels like a second home where everyone's needs are met! Our teachers take ownership for making it work, because it challenges us to be the best we can be for our students. GO WILDCATS!



# EARLY ELEMENTARY

## FALL INTO FUN

Early Elementary Students and Families  
Celebrate Student Life in Mattawan



The chill is in the air but our classrooms are full of warmth as we celebrate the fall season with games, STEAM activities, and the annual parade. Kindergarten celebrated the end of October with pumpkin themed games and lots of yummy snacks. Parents came to help run the centers. Our annual costume parade saw snow flurries this year. Students did two laps around the playground, Mrs. Martin handed out glow stick lightsabers! Parents and family members came to watch our Wildcats parade around in costume. The fall celebration was a special time for Early Elementary students, families, and teachers to come together and celebrate accomplishments and the fun fall season.

## Science Sprouts from the Ground Up MR. DELILLE'S CLASSROOM GARDEN FOSTERS EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING



In the heart of a bustling school, there exists a remarkable science teacher whose passion for education goes beyond textbooks and lectures. Meet Mr. DeLille, an educator who has embarked on a journey to make science come alive for his students through the captivating world of food crops. With hands-on experiences and a year-long commitment, Mr. DeLille has transformed his classroom into a fertile ground of discovery, where students not only learn about science but actively participate and witness their work bear fruit—literally.

It's the "Classroom Garden." Mr. DeLille's journey began with the simple idea of creating a classroom garden. The goal was to provide his students with a living laboratory that would allow them to explore various scientific concepts while growing food crops. This interactive and practical approach not only makes science more engaging but also connects students with the environment and the food they eat. As a bonus, it instills a sense of responsibility and nurtures teamwork among the students.

## MATTAWAN EARLY ELEMENTARY INSPIRING A NEW GENERATION OF EDUCATORS

### A Powerful Partnership with WMU



In the ever-evolving world of education, it is crucial to provide aspiring teachers with the right guidance, support, and opportunities to help them flourish in their careers. Mattawan Early Elementary School (EES), a distinguished educational institution, has taken significant steps to support the growth of new teachers. Over the past few months, 45 Western Michigan University (WMU) students have been fortunate to participate in three unique opportunities to observe, interact, and engage in various aspects of classroom teaching at Mattawan EES. These experiences have not only bolstered the confidence of these pre-interns but also enriched the learning environment at Mattawan EES.

In addition to observation, pre-interns at Mattawan EES are encouraged to take an active role in the classroom. They are given opportunities to run small group sessions for math and conduct Read Aloud sessions. These hands-on teaching experiences not only build confidence but also help future teachers develop practical teaching skills. Mattawan EES acknowledges the importance of allowing pre-interns to actively engage with students as it is a step towards bridging the gap between theory and practice.



## 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE STEPS UP TO PROMOTE SCHOOL SAFETY

### Elementary Team of "Safties" Embark on Experiential Learning



Our fifth grade Safety Patrol teams gathered during their lunch/recess for their monthly meeting to learn about the bus radio system. Student Advisor, Amy Smith-Owens, coordinated with the MCS Transportation Department, who was kind enough to bring a bus over to board and provide experiential learning. Safties learned how the radio, intercom, and GPS work, as well as were given the opportunity to practice communicating on the system. Our Safety Patrol members are already well-equipped to provide help every day at elementary entry and dismissal, and now will be ready for emergency situations, too! Special thanks to this group of amazing leaders!

# LATER

## ELEMENTARY

3 - 5

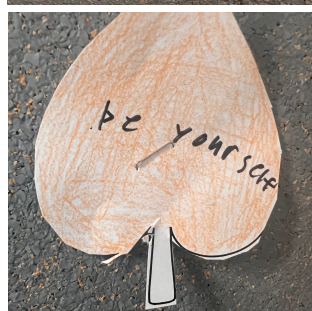
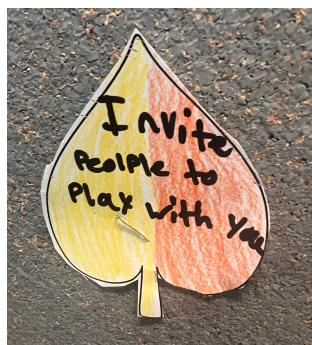


### PARENTS PROVIDE A BOO-TIFUL BASH

Mattawan Later Elementary Parents  
Provide a Sweet Trunk-or-Treat Halloween

All of our students had the opportunity to participate in Trunk-or-Treat, a wonderful event coordinated by MLEAP. There were more than 150 very creative trunks with special treats for students! Amazing volunteers who helped direct cars, hand out bags to students, took photos, and helped organize to make this fun event safe and successful.

School celebrations provide opportunities for students to connect with their peers, teachers, and community members in a more relaxed and informal setting. These events foster a sense of belonging, camaraderie, and school spirit, promoting social and emotional development in young learners. Thank you to our staff and volunteers who helped make it a hauntingly Sweet celebration for students!



### Mattawan Later Elementary Students Create "Kindness Tree" that Blossoms with Compassion

#### A PROJECT THAT LEAVES GOOD VIBES

Mattawan Later Elementary students have great advice for simple ways to show kindness every day! On full display is their "Kindness Tree" project, demonstrating the ways to spread kindness. This unique tree has blossomed with acts of kindness that can make a world of difference in someone's day. Promoting kindness in elementary school is not just about teaching children to be polite and respectful; it's about cultivating empathy, compassion, and a genuine desire to make a positive impact on the world around them. Engaging them in thought provoking activities that encourage perspective-taking and understanding of others' emotions are a meaningful way to inspire kindness.

We are Mattawan proud that our children are developing the emotional intelligence and empathy necessary to navigate the world with understanding, shaping them into responsible and caring citizens. Regularly acknowledging and celebrating these acts of kindness reinforces the message that kindness is valued and appreciated. We are committed to building a positive school culture that is joyful and supportive learning environment for all students.



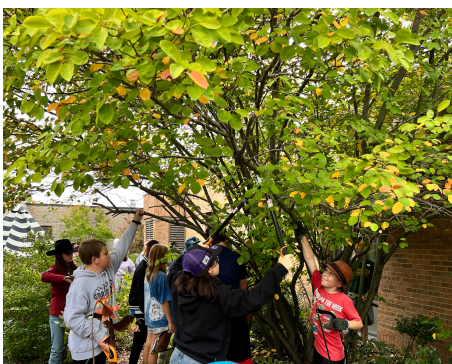
# MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWSFLASH

## LOCAL VETERANS RECEIVE A HERO'S WELCOME MATTAWAN MIDDLE SCHOOL VETERANS DAY HONORS



Mattawan Middle School gathered to host a Veterans Day celebration. The morning began with a talented student whose rendition of the national anthem was a moving tribute to our country. A procession of veterans marched through the school halls, with footsteps of pride and honor. Students lined the corridors, holding signs and cheering as the local heroes marched by. The Veteran's Day brunch was perfect for fellowship and time together. A student-designed video was presented, featuring students and staff who spoke of their own family's veterans. Student speakers shared remarks about the noble calling that requires sacrifice, dedication, and courage. Our veterans were asked to stand so that their child, grandchild, great-grandchild, or the student who invited them could give them a Mattawan medal to commemorate their valiant service. This experience made way for memorable learning for Mattawan Middle School kids. Meeting a veteran can be a humbling and inspiring experience, reminding us of the sacrifices made by those who have served our country. Planning and preparing the middle school celebration of veterans provided a greater understanding about the cost of freedom and the importance of honoring those who have served. The warm smiles and nods from our local heroes was of great reward. The guests of honor were visibly touched by the students' appreciation, the handshakes, joyful tears, and hugs.

## YOUNG SCIENTISTS EMBARK ON NATURE CENTER ADVENTURE



The MMSCC has many plans for this school year for our club meetings and our visits to the Portman Preserve. We are planning on taking three trips (October 25, January 24 and May 13.) We are going to continue to work on eradicating the invasive species plant Autumn Olive. We will be hiking, conducting water quality tests, studying wildlife habitats, comparing plant species in the three different seasons (fall, winter and spring) and clearing brush on the lesser traveled trails. At our club meetings we will have a guest speaker from the Kalamazoo Nature Center, clean up trash on our school property and learn more about native plants and animals. This year we will be partnering with the Mattawan Middle School Bee Club to prune, pull weeds, clean up trash and spruce up the middle school courtyard and the landscaping in front of the school. Last year Donna Perry joined us for our April trip to study and identify birds. We are planning on having her join us again for our May field trip.

## 2023-2024 YEARBOOK UNDERWAY YEARBOOK CLUB IN PLANNING AND PRODUCTION



Mattawan Middle School students have been working hard on the 2023-24 yearbook! Yearbook Club staff members are involved in all stages of the yearbook planning and production from photography to design. Students advertise the yearbook, take and edit pictures, and choose the theme, design, cover, and layout.

Yearbook staff member Grace George (8) says, "I love being a part of Yearbook Club because being able to put your own touch on the yearbook makes it even more special. This year's yearbook is going to be awesome. We are excited about the theme and we think it is something that middle schoolers will be able to connect to."

Yearbook Club gives students another opportunity to get involved in an activity outside of school that isn't sports related. As Cameron Overley (7) puts it, "I am just excited to be a part of something new. This is something I haven't done before and I am looking forward to having a new experience this year."

This is also a great chance for students to see how it feels to prepare for a job opportunity. Yearbook staff members fill out applications to join, and students are responsible for equipment, time management, and fulfilling commitments. Shout out to our Student Yearbook Staff, this group is voted "Most Likely to Succeed!"

## THANK YOU MATTAWAN PUBLIC EDUCATION FOUNDATION!

Renovations are complete! The Middle School Media Center furniture was delivered and installed this summer. There are comfy reading areas, new tables and chairs and different areas for smaller work groups. Students and staff are appreciating the flexibility and collaborative nature of the new furniture.

We all are so appreciative of all of the work of the wonderful MPEF! The transformation of the Media Center has elevated our heart of the Middle School. Thank you again to our community and MPEF!



# 9 - 12 HIGH SCHOOL HEADLINES

## High School Marching Band Takes 2023 "Duality" to Disney

MHS STUDENT POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SHINES BRIGHT, EARNING RECOGNITION OF FELLOW TRAVELERS



Our Mattawan Marching Band presented its 2023 show Duality at home football games, area competitions and culminated their season by performing at Disney World in Orlando, Florida. "I am so proud. I'm always proud of the band, but today feels different. Over the last few days, we've taken a huge part of the HS band to Florida" said Bill Boswell. "The performance was fantastic, to be sure, but I think there is even more to celebrate."

Throughout the trip, the students received compliment after compliment about how they behaved and treated people. The flight attendant on our departing flight (which departed 40 minutes early because the students were so efficient) came on the radio to compliment the band on their behavior as we taxied to the gate. At Hollywood Studios, a Disney cast member approached some chaperones to compliment the students on their politeness, contrasting their behavior with another band's students in the park. This theme repeated again and again, including at checkout when the front desk of the hotel, as well as the night security told our tour directors that we were one of the cleanest, quietest, and best behaved groups in memory. This is a reflection not only of the traveling students, but of the way the band as a whole, all of them, work to treat each other and the community around them well. Not every moment is perfect, of course; there were logistical hiccups and sometimes behavior corrections were needed, but when I look at the trip as a whole, I continue to be impressed by this group's willingness to consistently live up to or surpass expectations. I could not be more proud. This was an amazing opportunity for students to grow through meaningful moments. So many students came out of their shell with new connections, deepened older friendships and navigated challenging social dynamics, all while sticking to the "groups of 3 or more" rule. Mr. Boswell was pleased to report that, "as important as the musical growth is, I think my favorite part of the trip is seeing this interpersonal growth."

## HEART AND HUSTLE

### High School Men's Tennis Team Finishes Strong with Third Place in State Championships

Men's Tennis finished the year placing 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 26 in the state championship match. The pairings of Caleb Goodrich and Gavin McCain and Bradley Ko and Matt Engel made it to the 2<sup>nd</sup> round while Nolan Ackerman won two matches to reach the quarterfinals at one singles. Also reaching the quarterfinals was the number 2 doubles team of Connor Schultz and Alan Muresan. Jacob Hodgman at two singles willed himself to the semifinals before falling to the flight champion. Two flights collected 4 points apiece by making it all the way to finals which included Garrett Cheng at three singles and Dylan Hodgman at four singles. Last but certainly not least is the number 1 doubles team of Andrew Williams and Tanner Segraves who are the number 1 doubles flight champions. This is the first time a Mattawan doubles team has won a state title in school history. Congrats guys on another historic season!!!!



## MHS SPORTS REPORT

FALL SPORTS WRAPPED UP WITH SOME EXCITING HAPPENINGS!

- Ladies volleyball concluded their season by playing a well fought game against Byron Center in the MHSSA Regional Finals
- Women's Golf sent junior Charlotte Stenger to the state finals after qualifying with a 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish at regionals

**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF OUR STUDENT ATHLETES!  
WE SEE YOU AND THE HARD WORK AND DEDICATION TO YOUR**







# WILDCAT CONNECTION

## 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](#)



### **WILDPAKS** [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 El, Later El, 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

2023.2024

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

## 2023-2024 DISTRICT CALENDAR

### DECEMBER

12 ½ Day - Staff PD

25 Winter Break Begins

### JANUARY 2024

8 Classes Resume

17-18 Final exams - ½ days for **6-12 students only**

19 ½ Day

22 Staff PD - No School

### FEBRUARY 2024

6 ½ Day - Staff PD

19 No School Students & Staff

29 ½ Day - Staff PD

### MARCH 2024

7-8 ½ Day

11 No School - Staff PD

29 No School - Spring Break Begins

### APRIL 2024

8 Classes Resume

24 ½ Day - Staff PD

### MAY 2024

16 ½ Day - Staff PD

27 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 Staff Records



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