



SPARTA AREA SCHOOLS

June/July 2021

BELL RINGER

Home of the Michigan Blue Ribbon Exemplary School

www.spartaschools.org

Moving Forward with Positive Intentions

In many ways, the start of the 2021-22 school year has proven to be even more challenging than last year. While we were well prepared for the start of the year, the last minute public health order requiring masks for staff and students in grades PK-6 in Kent County caught many off guard and has caused much anger and confusion in our community and region. Our staff and students have continued to do an outstanding job and have shown their resilience. We also have been able to experience many more 'normal' activities over the first couple of months of this school year when compared to last school year. My focus in this article will be on the positive things that have happened as we continue to navigate this pandemic and offer a quality education and extra-curricular opportunities for our students.

First off, at the time of this writing, we have been able to keep our

doors open, our students in school learning, and have been able to minimize disruptions. Yes, we have had positive COVID cases among our staff and students. Yes, positive cases are required to isolate and miss school, and students required to quarantine (household contacts and those linked to an outbreak) are missing days as well. But this number is far less than a year ago when all close contacts were required to quarantine. We also are far better prepared to provide remote instruction and support for any students that must miss school. Learning continues to move forward, with nearly all students receiving face-to-face instruction, and our staff continues to do an outstanding job!!

Second, the "extra" opportunities we have been able to provide for our students this fall is far beyond what we were able to do a year ago. Our kids are going

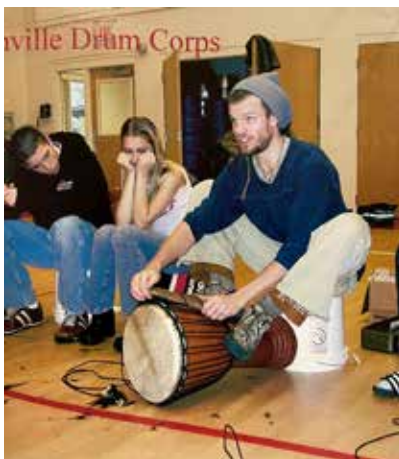
on field trips, mostly outdoors as the weather has been nice, and they are finding opportunities for experiential learning. We were able to celebrate homecoming as a school and community, with the largest crowds we have ever had in our new stadium, while also providing a homecoming dance for our high school students. All our athletic programs have moved forward and have been virtually unaffected by the pandemic. We continue to plan for concerts, plays, and many of the other "normal" activities we are accustomed to, and are hopeful that we will be able to provide them with minimal mitigation efforts. It has been great to see our students "in action" again doing the things that they love to do!!

Finally, I have to applaud our students. While there will always be some challenges when you bring nearly 2500 students to school each day, our students

have handled anything that has been thrown at them, made any necessary adjustments, and made the best of the situation. Many times I think about how much our society can learn by just watching our kids. They are happy to be in school, to be able to resume many of their "normal" activities, and have adjusted to any necessary mitigation measures to be able to do so safely. We should be proud of our kids, their efforts, and their resilience. Our kids really do not surprise me, but we can learn from them, listen to them, and must realize that they are our future. Our future leaders are in our schools, and they are watching us. Let's remember to make them as proud of us as we are of them. Thank you for supporting our children!!

With Spartan Pride,

Pete Bush, Superintendent



1991... 30 years ago... Almost a Third of a Century of Providing the Extras for Education for the Sparta Education Foundation



In 1991, a group of forward-thinking community members and school staff looked to the future, saw certain needs, and created the Sparta Education Foundation (SEF) to help with those needs for Sparta Area Schools. Currently, the SEF Board of Trustees consists of 15 volunteers, with a variety of talents and time commitments, meeting monthly, and awarding grants three times per year.

Today, as the Foundation looks back, we have realized it would take much more than a full page to list the many citizens, businesses and staff who have shared time, talent and financial gifts to enrich the experiences of Sparta students. And over those years, as the Foundation worked to supply "the extras" for education, another long list took shape – grants. Grants were awarded for an ice cream

machine and child-sized carpet sweepers... photography equipment and field trips... speakers (in-person) and speakers (for distance learning)... robots and reading aids... a tuba, trash can drums and giant balls to drum on... to name just a few. The amazing catalog of creative ideas, both large and small, sparks learning and creates joy.

And now, what? As the past is reviewed, a switch

is also being made to focus on the years ahead. These past months have taught that no one can begin to imagine what will be needed to enhance learning for the students in the days ahead. Still, the board is determined to seek out partners for progress who are willing to share in the challenge and excitement of "providing the extras for education." To see how you can get involved, follow our Face-

book page (Sparta Education Foundation MI) or visit the SEF website (<https://www.spartaschools.org/parents-students/spartaeducation-foundation/>).

We hope you enjoyed our 30th anniversary ice cream socials at the ECC, Ridgeview and Appleview elementary schools' open houses on August 19.

Welcome to the next exciting decades of the Sparta Education Foundation!



BELL RINGER



Third Graders Thunder "Bake!"

Students in Mrs. Singleton's and Mrs. Hurley's classes took advantage of the recent stormy days to bake "Thundercake." Based on the beloved book by Michigan author Patricia Polacco, Thundercake, and her grandmother's special recipe, students sifted, poured, stirred, and even added the secret ingredient of tomatoes to create delicious Thundercake. As the book goes, baking this cake is a sure way to beat a rainy day and any fears of thunderstorms!

2021 PUBLIC NOTICE-ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Sparta Area Schools District hereby provides notice to parents, guardians and the general public of the 2002 Asbestos Management Plan for the District. In accordance with EPA40 CFR Part 763 – Asbestos containing materials in buildings, please note: Inspections, periodic re-inspections and surveillance and related activities are ongoing within the school district buildings

according to EPA 40 CFR Part 763, 1, 2, 3, and OSHA 29 CFR Parts 1910 and 1926. Building management plans are available for review.

Questions may be directed to the Operations Supervisor, Sparta Area Schools, 475 W Spartan Dr, Sparta, MI 49345. You may also contact the Operations Supervisor by calling 616-887-8213 during normal business hours.

2021 Annual notification of the asbestos survey

Our school district has conducted an extensive asbestos survey of all of our buildings. Based on the findings of this inspection, a comprehensive management plan was drafted. This plan details the response actions that the District will be taking regarding asbestos containing material found in our buildings. Even though the High School, Ridgeview, Administration and Transportation buildings do not contain asbestos materials, in compliance with the US Environmental Protection Agency Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERTA) of 1990, we have an Asbestos Management Plan on file at the transportation office at 429 S. Union Street, Sparta. The management Plan is available for inspection at our offices without cost or restriction during normal business hours. Our goal is to make our schools a safe place in which students can learn. Our procedures for dealing with this problem reflect that concern. Please let us know if we can answer any questions.

Operations Supervisor, Sparta Area Schools, 475 W Spartan Dr, Sparta, MI 49345.



Grand Rapids Public Museum Visit

Applevew's fifth grade was afforded a wonderful trip to Grand Rapids Public museum through a generous grant from Crystal Flash. Students were fascinated by the history of our place and people.

2021 Pest management plan

Sparta Area Schools has adopted an Integrated Pest Management program. Inherent with this are the District's efforts to reduce pesticide use as much as possible. While it may occasionally be necessary to apply a pesticide, these will only be used as a last resort. This program does not rely on routine pesticide applications to resolve problems. We use various techniques such as habitat alteration, sanitation, mechanical means, exclusion, etc. to prevent pests from becoming a problem.

You will receive advanced notice of the application of a pesticide, other than bait or gel formulations at your child's school.

This advance notice of the application will be given 48 hours before the application.

The law requires us to do this notification by using two methods. The first method required by the law is the posting at the primary entrances to your child's school. The entrances that will be posted are those entrances that have a sidewalk that leads directly to a parking lot. The second method we are going to use is the posting in a common area located by the main office of the school. Parents are also entitled to receive this notice by first-class United States mail postmarked at least 3 days before the

application. If you would like to be notified by mail please contact the Operations Supervisor at 616-887-8213. Please give the secretary your name, mailing address and what school your child attends.

In an emergency (for example, bees nest), pesticides may be applied without prior notice, but you will be provided notice following any such application.

You may review our IPM program or pesticide application records for your child's school by contacting the District's Operations Supervisor at 616-887-8213.



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New nurse at Sparta schools!

Sparta Area Schools is happy to welcome Elaine Spencer "Nurse Elaine" to our school nursing team. She will be working with Amy Roelse - "Nurse Amy" to care for our students and staff. The district is extremely excited about our new addition! Please help us welcome Nurse Elaine to our Sparta family!



A Day at Art Prize

In September, the fifth graders had the opportunity to travel to downtown Grand Rapids to see various pieces of art at Art Prize. They were able to observe firsthand that art can be made up of different mediums. There were art pieces that ranged from metal, to used dictionaries and water bottles, to different types of paint. They learned that art is truly in the eye of the beholder and had an appreciation for the time, workmanship, and dedication that each artist had to create his/her masterpiece. A few artists were even present to answer questions the public may have had. Hopefully this adventure will inspire our fifth graders to view art differently and maybe some of them will be future artists.



Reading with children is fundamental to their later literacy skills. Miss Jessica reads with children as they enter the classroom for the day.

Sparta Early Childhood Center

This fall we opened the doors of the new Sparta Early Childhood Center and have welcomed more than 120 three and four year olds. Everyday children engage in listening to stories, practice writing skills, play outside, practice self-help skills and engage in a curriculum that supports their level of learning.

Children were asked "What is your favorite thing to do at school?"

"I like to play in the kitchen." ~Sofia

"I like to draw." ~Milo

"I like to paint and sing and go down the slides." ~Jayden

"I like to play with babies and color." ~Lexi

"I like to play a,b,c's." ~Jaslen

"I like to play with the barn and the people." ~Clayton

"I like to build with magna tiles." ~Stella

The foundation of our preschool is based on children learning through play. Through play and interactions with their peers and teachers children learn how to solve problems, build language skills, learn about the world around them. Children's day also has structured time when concepts such as letter names and sounds, how to write letters, counting and many more academic skills are taught.

For questions or information: Call 887-0068 or email heather.lashuay@spartaschools.org.

Educationally, Heather Lashuay
Director of Sparta Early Childhood Center



Jackson and Lakelyn problem solve as they build with blocks.



Jaslen and Zayden talk about magnetic letters.



Wyatt and Cohle are exploring stamps in the writing center.



BELL RINGER

Great activities at Applevue Elementary

Fall Traditions

The fourth graders have enjoyed getting back to many of our fun traditions at Applevue Elementary this fall. We started the school year with a PBIS assembly to go over our expectations. We refer to all of the students as an All-Star. This helps them remember to be Safe, Team Player, Act Respectably, and Respect. The students were able to participate in a few games to show these characteristics. They played Hungry Hippos and Lightning.



Spirit Walk

All of the fourth graders participated together in our Spirit Walk sponsored by our PTC. It was a beautiful day and the students worked hard getting as many laps as they could. The fourth grade classes raised the most money for our school. Way to go students and families! Many students enjoyed pouring slime on their teacher's at our assembly afterwards.



Homecoming week

During Homecoming week, the students showed their school spirit by participating in our Dress Up Days. On Friday at our fourth grade assembly the cheerleaders got us excited for Homecoming by performing many of their cheers. We love showing our Spartan Pride. We are having a great start to the 2021-2022 school year!

