



SPARTA AREA SCHOOLS

February 2024

BELL RINGER

Home of the Michigan Blue Ribbon Exemplary School

www.spartaschools.org

Sparta Area Schools is a Place to Shine!

Hello Spartans!

The Sparta Area Schools family continues to shine brightly, showcasing excellence in academics, athletics, performing arts, and STEM programs. These accomplishments are a testament to the dedication of our students, educators, parents, and community partners.

Our performing arts programs have reached new heights of excellence, with outstanding performances that have garnered praise and recognition. Our talented students have demonstrated their skills and passion through captivating musicals, concerts, and artistic showcases, enriching our community and inspiring

audiences.

In athletics, we are proud to celebrate our athletes who have showcased exceptional talent, determination, and sportsmanship. Their hard work and dedication have brought pride to our school and community, setting a high standard of achievement for future athletes to aspire to. Furthermore, our Academic All-State Scholar Athletes exemplify the perfect balance between academic excellence and athletic prowess. These students are shining examples of dedication, discipline, and commitment to both their studies and their respective sports.

Our STEM classrooms continue to foster innovation, critical thinking, and

problem-solving skills among our students. Through hands-on learning experiences and cutting-edge technologies, our students are prepared to tackle real-world challenges and make meaningful contributions to society.

At Sparta Area Schools, we are committed to providing a nurturing learning environment with small class sizes, ensuring personalized attention and support for every student. Our state-of-the-art facilities offer modern and conducive spaces for learning, creating an atmosphere that encourages exploration and growth.

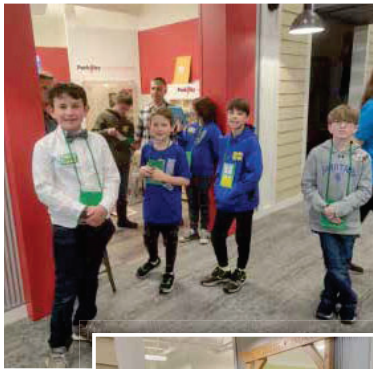
None of these achievements would be possible without the unwavering support and strong partnership of our

community. Your continued involvement, encouragement, and collaboration are vital to the success of our students and the overall excellence of our school district. As we celebrate these successes together, let us remain dedicated to our mission of fostering a culture of excellence, inclusivity, and lifelong learning. Together, we will continue to make Sparta Area Schools a beacon of educational excellence and a source of pride for our community.

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to the success of our students.

All my best,

Joel



Learning opportunities at JA Biztown

Fifth grade students enjoyed a wonderful trip learning economics and business skills at JA Biztown! Classroom lessons preceded a culminating activity where students ran their own town, complete with companies, banks, restaurants, and government! What an amazing experience!



Beautiful Blessings

By Ashley Shelner

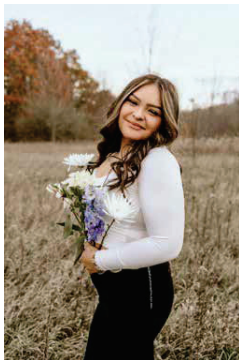
During a trip to Israel this summer, I was inspired to incorporate a new routine in my classroom. In Israel, during Shabbat, fathers take the time to bless each of their children speaking words of affirmation and love. When I heard this I knew right away this was something I wanted for the students in my classroom. I wanted them to know just how special they are to me. I take turns throughout the week speaking public affirmations (blessings) to each student once a week. On Fridays students pick a name and bless that person. I have seen my classroom grow in love and respect for each other during this time. It has been an amazing experience in our classroom. Each student is blessed at least twice a week knowing just how important they are in our classroom family. I encourage you all to do the same for the loved ones in your life. Tell them out loud just how much they mean to you. It will change your life, and you will see beautiful blessings all around you!



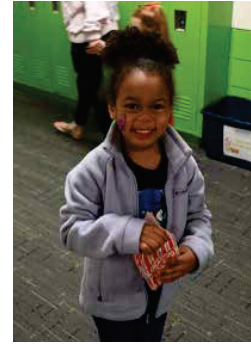
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CAREER ACADEMY STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Aracely Vazquez-Lucio is an exceptional self-directed learner. She has been a role model for the Career Academy for the past three years, always meeting her weekly progress goals and showing her peers how to be a star student. She has encouraged fellow Spartan athletes and celebrated Spartan success as a cheerleader for four years. She has successfully taken part in the medical assistant program at KCTC for the past two years and is planning on attending Grand Valley State University in their pre-physical therapy program. Aracely has been a driven student, and her sense of humor complements her drive. Her teachers in the Career Academy will miss her when she graduates this May.



Best of luck to you, Aracely!



Ridgeview Kindergarten Round Up

On Tuesday, March 12, Ridgeview hosted a community event called Ridgeview Round Up for future kindergarten students and families. The night began with a presentation about Ridgeview, kindergarten readiness skills, the differences between developmental kindergarten and kindergarten, and how to enroll in school. The kindergarten

staff was in attendance to meet and greet the families and to answer any questions. When the presentation was done, families were able to visit tables for resources, community programs, and even purchase Spartan gear from our Athletic Boosters. The families then could tour the school. They stopped in the library for a book to take home, they visited

the DK and kindergarten classrooms, and enjoyed popcorn and popsicles on the playground. We even had a bus available that gave a tour around to our beautiful schools. It was a very successful and fun night. We appreciate the community's support and we look forward to welcoming the 2024-2025 kindergarten class into Ridgeview in this fall.



Cool choices for PBIS

Students at Applevue who make positive choices can earn some fun things. For making positive choices, students get tickets. Weekly drawings are held and kids whose tickets are pulled, can pick from some small trinkets, ping pong time with a few friends, basketball, and knifty knitter time. Recently, students who worked on making a hat with the knifty knitter, a round peg loom, finished the hat they were working on. The hat will be donated to Mel Trotter for homeless folks who need warm clothing. More hats are coming! Hobbies like knitting and crocheting are repetitive tasks that research has shown are good for the brain and act as a calming strategy. It also teaches perseverance, sticking to something, until it is finished. The students not only learned a skill but also learned the value of contributing to something and giving back to the community.

(PBIS: Positive Behavior Interventions Supports)

The West Michigan National College Fair

The West Michigan National College Fair is taking place on Tuesday, April 23rd. Representatives from over 100 colleges/universities will be at this college fair at the DeVos Place in Grand Rapids, MI.

- It is a free event for students and their parents/guardians to attend.
- It is a great opportunity to learn about many different colleges/universities all at one event location.
- Attendees can speak with college admissions representatives to see which programs are offered, learn about scholarship opportunities, clubs on campus and more!

EVENT: West Michigan National College Fair
DATE: Tuesday, April 23rd
TIME: 6-8 p.m.
LOCATION: DeVos Place - 303 Monroe Ave.
 NW Grand Rapids, MI 49503

**Sparta Early Childhood Center
Preschool Open House**

2024-2025

Come tour the ECC to learn about our options for 3-year-old preschool, 4-year-old preschool and childcare!

**April 25th
4:15pm-6:00pm**

LOCATION
480 S. State St. Sparta, MI 49345



Learn



Play



Explore



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Sparta Education Foundation's 21st Annual Strikes for Students



This year's Sparta Education Foundation's 21st Annual Strikes for Students (formerly RetroBow) scored a 300! The family-friendly event took place on Saturday, March 9. Thanks to the generosity of our community we were able to raise \$3200!

Thirty-two teams bowled across two sessions. Teams consisted of families, friends, students, staff, and teachers. Their registration fee covered two hours of bowling, free pop and popcorn, and tickets to a grand prize drawing. Bowlers could also purchase additional tickets for general door prizes. All of the funds raised will be used by the Sparta Education Foundation (SEF) to provide grants to

Sparta Area School teachers for the "Extras for Education" such as field trips to the zoo and theater, 3-D printers, and drones.

All door prizes were provided by generous businesses and community members, and included items ranging from Squishmallows to car wash kits to original artwork to Whitecaps passes. There was truly something for everyone!

A HUGE thank you goes out to the folks at Sparta Lanes for hosting this amazing event. Not only did they provide the space and staff to allow families and teachers to bowl together, they also provided additional prizes for our bowlers.

SEF is grateful for ALL of our donors. We could not do this event without you and your generosity. For a complete list of donors and to see photos from the event, please go to our Facebook page: Sparta Education Foundation MI. And while you're there, like and follow us!

Thank you to our "Strikes" sponsors:

- Armock Mechanical
- Brieden Miller Orthodontics
- ChoiceOne Bank
- Palermo Pizza
- Sparta Athletics
- Sparta Chevy

Sparta Lanes/Garden Patch

Sparta Tire and Automotive

Thank you to our "Spares" sponsors:

- Armock Family
- Baldini Family
- Knowlton Masson Dentistry
- Sparta Animal Clinic

We would be remiss if we didn't also thank our two emcees for the day. Jeff Amlotte and Doug Davis gave of their time and talents to bring excitement to all of our participants. They made important announcements, played trivia, and created fun wherever they went!

SEF's Strikes for Students is the perfect example of the Sparta community coming together to support Sparta Area Schools. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer for future "friendraiser" events like this, please

go to our website <https://sparta-education-foundation.givecloud.co/volunteer-opportunities>, or send us an email at sef@spartaschools.org. We'd love to have you join us!

The Sparta Education Foundation exists to raise funds which are used to provide "Extras for Education" which are not covered by the regular school budget. We are currently running a Matching Funds campaign. Two community members who care deeply about public education have provided a \$100,000 gift to be used as a matching gifts fund. If you would like to be a part of our Matching Funds campaign, you can give a financial gift by following this QR code.

Thank you again to all participants. It is events like this that make Sparta a great place to be!

LeAnn Kitson
President, Sparta Education Foundation

Sparta Middle School Information for April 2024



Bob Alonzo, our SMS Choir Director, and our Choir travelled to Greenville to participate in their first Choir Festival! Our students performed very well and earned a 2 rating! Thank you to our SMS Choir students and to Mr. Alonzo for all your hard work!



PSAT for SMS 8th Graders is Tuesday, April 16th.

8th grade students and families will get more information as the testing date nears. Our 6th graders have activities with our friends from Camp Henry while our 7th graders are going on a field trip to John Ball Zoo on PSAT day as well.



End-of-Year Student Dance: Wednesday, May 29th

We are excited to be hosting our 4th and final student dance at Sparta Middle School on Wednesday, May 29th! All students are invited to attend who have met the positive citizenship requirements to participate.

Time: 6:00pm-8:00pm



2024 8th Grade Recognition Ceremony & Dance

Date: Wednesday, May 22nd

Time: 6:30pm (Doors Open at 6pm)

Location: TBD (Either Spartan Stadium or Sparta High School Fieldhouse)

Dance to Follow in SHS Cafeteria

8th graders will participate in a required rehearsal during school on the day of the ceremony.

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION COMING SOON!



Sparta Middle School Information for April 2024

The High School Choir made a fantastic debut in their first trip to the Michigan Choral Festival in years. At festival the High School Choir sang Benedictus and Time, they were then required to sight read a small segment of music they had not seen before.

The Sparta High School choir walked away with a Division I - Excellent Ranking! Well done to Sparta High School Choir and thank you to all who supported these students and the arts at Sparta Area Schools.





BELL RINGER

Sparta Middle School Business Showcase

The top 10 groups of 6th graders presented their Business Showcase project to a panel of judges on Thursday, April 11th. The judges were looking for groups who were well informed on their business, who were able to share relevant facts on the history of the business, who were able to explain why West Michigan is a good place for the business, and who were able to communicate the information in a professional manner.

