



**WE THE PEOPLE TEAM WINS STATE CHAMPIONSHIP
A LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE CONTINUES**

East Kentwood High School's (EKHS) We the People team is a prime example of academic excellence in action within Kentwood Public Schools. This year's team won the state championship in January, repeating the accomplishment of last year's team, and becoming the first back-to-back state champions from East Kentwood since 1999-2000. They add to a long and valued tradition of excellence of We the People teams from East Kentwood for decades.

The team is comprised of 20 seniors from EKHS's American Political Thought class. Led by EKHS teacher Justin Robbins, the students take part in a rigorous academic competition focused on their knowledge of the United States Constitution, philosophy, history, politics, and current events.

The excellence of our WTP students and coaches demonstrates what's possible for our entire KPS school community.

The competition involves live hearings judged by political figures, legal professionals, and college professors. Team members, along with volunteer coaches, put in hundreds of combined hours outside of school to prepare for competition.

"We believe students achieve great things with high expectations and high levels of support," states Kentwood Public Schools Superintendent Kevin Polston. "We the People (WTP) is a rigorous examination of civics education measured against a common standard throughout the

Continued on page 2...

BALLOT PROPOSAL: SUPPORTS SAFETY, TECHNOLOGY AND FACILITIES

Kentwood Public Schools is asking our community to vote on the Sinking Fund Millage Proposal in this month's election.

Voters have previously approved Sinking Fund millages in 1996, 2005, and 2015 helping to make KPS schools stronger. The sinking fund approved in 2015 expires in 2025. It is currently levied at a rate of 1.5718 mills. If approved, the Sinking Fund Proposal on the ballot this month would come with an identical millage rate of 1.5718 mills.



Continued on page 2...

We The People Team Wins State Championship A Legacy of Excellence Continues *Continued from page 1*

country. The excellence of our WTP students and coaches demonstrates what's possible for our entire KPS school community."

When asked what the secret is, Polston noted, "We have engaged and supportive families, brilliant hard-working students, high impact staff as coaches, a commitment to excellence, a village of volunteers and mentors, and the resources necessary to achieve success. Excellence requires the effort and commitment of our entire Kentwood Community. Our WTP team truly paints a picture of what can be accomplished throughout our entire academic program."

Excellence in teaching and learning takes on many forms in KPS

Excellence in teaching and learning takes on many forms in KPS. Excellence can be seen in the consistent delivery of quality instruction by dedicated teachers, staff members, and coaches. Excellence is also evident in innovative ideas that involve real-world learning opportunities, like those available through the new culinary arts center at East Kentwood High School, or the Workforce Fridays initiative at Crossroads Alternative High School.

"Oftentimes, the first thing I hear about KPS is the celebration and recognition of our diverse global community. This is central to our identity, but it is not the whole of who we are," says Polston. "Our high performance continues to be recognized at state and national levels."

The students, staff, and teachers of Kentwood Public

We The People - **EKHS Team 37**

Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3
Divya Bhandari Peter Hnin Oummu Kabba	Robel Abebe Dawt Khun Cristian Schneider Bradley Vilcans	Tony Pham Paige Reynolds Kerim Suleman
Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6
Noah Avalos Nicolas Longstreet Dawt MenPar	Memphis Hartman Annie Nadolski Myonta Walker Bayan Zeqlam	Nate Moxey Amna Sabanovic Nishan Upreti



Volunteer Coaches:

Ahjah Bailey-O'Conner, Tyler Buck, Nhu Dang, Eric Dubois, Lucy Fornetti, Sophie Gemmen, Branden Graf, Katrina Hainline, Keaton Nguyen, Ken Ozanich, Justin Robbins, Connor Shaw, Ebise Tareegn, Mike Traywick, Avalon Wiczorek

Schools have received countless awards over the years, including National Blue Ribbon Schools, National Beating the Odds Schools, National History Teacher of the Year, Michigan Teacher of the Year, and many many more. In reflecting on these awards Polston noted, "We are also keenly aware these accomplishments would not be possible without the support of our entire Kentwood community."

The East Kentwood We the People Team looks to add to the recognition next month as they travel to Washington, D.C., to represent the state of Michigan and the Kentwood community in the national competition.



Ballot Proposal: Supports Safety, Technology and Facilities

Continued from page 1

If supported, the district plans to use these funds for security improvements, acquisition and upgrading of technology, and repair and renovation of buildings. Election day is February 27, 2024. Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. For more information on the Sinking Fund Proposal, including how to find polling locations, please scan the QR code to visit our website.



FUN AND LEARNING IN THE FORECAST FOR GLENWOOD STUDENTS

Glenwood students are enjoying a unique learning experience in partnership with WOOD-TV's Storm Team 8 Chief Meteorologist Ellen Bacca to understand various aspects of the weather. Each classroom receives experimental kits allowing students to make snow and clouds with their teachers while working virtually with WOOD-TV 8.

The virtual program features weather cartoons like Tom the Tornado and Siad the Snow Cloud. Through engaging activities, students learn more about the weather patterns of snow, wind, tornadoes, and lightning, giving them a greater knowledge base as they experience weather in real time.

Ellen keeps everyone interested and active through the learning with dance moves, such as the "tornado dance" and much more.



INNOVATIVE, REAL-WORLD LEARNING FOR CROSSROADS STUDENTS

Crossroads students and staff began our new Workforce Friday semester on January 19, 2024. All students at Crossroads enroll in one of our diverse potential career education programs each semester. In addition to our students receiving a high school diploma upon graduation, we strive to have each student also graduate with an industry relevant certification. This semester we have the following offerings:

- Grand Rapids Community College M-TEC Center: Automotive; General Construction; Welding
- Goodwill Industries: CNA; Career Exposure
- Mosley's School of Cosmetology: Nail Tech
- West Michigan Center for Arts and Technology: Mural Class; Ceramics; Digital Illustration; Documentary Videography
- Wayland Carpentry and Millwright Center: Commercial Construction
- Technology: Esports, drones, 3D printing, etc

In addition, Crossroads would like to thank the Michigan Arts and Culture Council (MACC) for awarding us a \$7,150 grant within the Arts in Education Residency program for 2024. This grant will be used for 24 Crossroads students to attend West Michigan Center for Arts and Technology (WMCAT) to learn about the visual and media arts during Workforce Friday.

ROTARY STUDENTS OF THE MONTH NAMED AT EKHS

East Kentwood High School has named its latest Rotary Students of the Month. For December, seniors Tarun Kumar and Clarissa Hernandez received this honor. In January, the Rotary Students of the Month included seniors Zion Guyton and Samara Mickens. The students participate in a wide variety of events and activities, including cheer, being members of school groups like S.A.L.S.A. (Spanish and Latin Student Association), working on their own art, and taking part in jobs outside of the school day. The students also have a variety of high goals for the future, including going to college, and pursuing careers in the culinary arts, in health-related fields, and in the arts. We congratulate these students for their efforts and for being great examples of excellence in learning at East Kentwood High School!



COLLABORATION LEADS TO INNOVATIVE LEARNING AT DISCOVERY

At Discovery Elementary, teachers are participating in a new co-planning and co-teaching model, Co-Teaching for Multilingual Learners, aimed at increasing inclusivity and differentiated learning for students. This collaborative effort is led by 2nd grade teacher Claudia Staggs and multilingual teacher Stephanie Darrow. The innovative pilot program is designed to break down the traditional barriers of learning, ensuring that each child is supported and valued on their academic journey.

Ms. Staggs implements interactive and engaging lessons that capture children's interest in math. Her approach focuses on harnessing the natural curiosity of children, turning each math lesson into an adventure. Ms. Darrow brings her expertise in English language development, incorporating linguistic scaffolds and adapting instruction to fit each student's learning style and pace. Together, their combined strengths create a dynamic and fluid learning environment where concepts are not just taught but experienced and internalized by each student.



The success of this collaborative model lies in its ability to seamlessly integrate content and language instruction. Staggs and Darrow work collaboratively to plan lessons that are both challenging and accessible, ensuring that every child is working with grade level content regardless of their proficiency level in math or English. The use of diverse teaching aids, hands-on activities, and individualized attention helps bridge gaps in understanding, fostering a love of mathematics among students. This pilot program demonstrates the effectiveness of collaborative teaching in providing an inclusive and comprehensive educational experience.

There are four co-teaching pilot teams at the elementary level in addition to Discovery — a 3rd Grade classroom at Challenger, a 1st Grade classroom at Endeavor, and two 2nd Grade classrooms at Townline — as well as additional teacher teams at the middle and high school levels. Teachers participating in the Co-Teaching for Multilingual Learners pilot participated in training over the summer as well as additional professional development and classroom learning labs during this school year to support their collaborative efforts.

LEARNING ABOUT HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES AT HAMILTON

Hamilton Early Childhood has partnered with the YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids to facilitate Grow It, Try It, Like It! Fun with Fruits and Vegetables program for our preschool age students. Through this program, students engage in hands-on activities that promote healthy food choices and regular movement and exercise. During the first visit, Clare Doss, from YMCA, read a story about using our five senses to discover new foods. Students used visuals to sort foods into categories using the food pyramid. The students' favorite part was making their own fresh fruit salad with strawberries, mangos, blueberries, and cantaloupe.

Doss is enjoying her time with the students at Hamilton, "I had a lovely time teaching my first day of classes at Hamilton ECC," she shared. "The staff were very welcoming and supportive. The students were very engaging and eager to learn new things as well as have fun and be silly when talking about new foods! A favorite moment was when one student announced that the hungry caterpillar had eaten 15 foods at a certain point in the story, so we counted, and the caterpillar had, in fact, consumed 15 foods!"

We can't think of a better way to get our kiddos to start forming healthy habits!



LEARNING THROUGH THE ARTS: A RICH TRADITION AT KENTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Learning occurs in many places and in many ways. In Kentwood Public Schools, we are committed to making sure we offer a wide variety of opportunities for students to learn. This includes the arts. Visual arts, theatre, vocal performance, instrumental — these are some of the many areas where KPS excels in providing students with rich opportunities for learning.

Our district is fortunate to have a dedicated team of educators who are committed to our students' success and enjoyment through the arts. In December, many of our student performance groups were able to display their talents, skills, and hard work at the annual Collage Concerts that took place at the East Kentwood Fine Arts Auditorium. It was an amazing day of performances enjoyed by many who attended.

One group joining their performing arts peers at the concerts was East Kentwood's ABC (Anything but Classical) Orchestra. To learn more about this group and the preparation they put into the event, please scan the QR Code to enjoy a video, put together by our partners at AVES Films, highlighting the ABC Orchestra.



TEACHMICHIGAN INITIATIVE IS GOING STRONG

Kentwood Public Schools collaborates with TeachMichigan, offering teachers a unique opportunity to grow in their profession. TeachMichigan is a five-year initiative aimed at retaining and developing high-impact educators. The initiative offers participants a chance to learn and grow with other teachers from districts across the state.

The three cohort groups from KPS participating in the TeachMichigan initiative are new teachers, established teachers seeking National Board Certification, and those teachers interested in taking on leadership roles in their careers. During the past few months, participants have met as a whole group, receiving coaching from TeachMichigan leaders, and supported by KPS instructional coaches as they do work in their individual focus areas.



Kentwood Public Schools Director of New Staff Development and Curriculum, Debbie Schuitema, asserts investing in high-impact teachers benefits students. "The teachers in this program are taking part in such reflective and innovative work," says Schuitema, "that it can only result in an increase for students in areas like a sense of belonging, understanding of really challenging concepts, and learning how to work with others."

Next month a second group of educators from KPS will begin to benefit from the TeachMichigan initiative.

PINEWOOD EXCELLENCE IN INSTRUCTION AND LEARNING - SOCRATIC SEMINAR

Each year, our Pinewood teaching staff is focused on providing the best learning experience for students by continuously looking for ways to improve our instructional practices and curriculum delivery. This year our staff have used many different instructional strategies to help students learn. One of the many highlights this year include a dynamic pair of 8th grade ELA teachers, Mr. Garland and Mr. Wrobbel, who worked together to create a unit based on an instructional strategy called a Socratic Seminar.

A Socratic Seminar is an instructional strategy that provides a platform for students to explore complex ideas, deepening their understanding of the material, and enhancing their communication skills. The Socratic Seminar begins with students reading a text, which serves as the foundation of the discussion. Students then formulate questions designed to provoke thoughtful responses. Next, students take turns participating in discussions, expressing their thoughts, responding to peers, and building upon each other's ideas. The culminating activity is a formal discussion where the classroom is divided into two circles. The students sitting in the inner circle discuss the questions, while the students in the outer circle are the recorders who take notes about what is being discussed. After a period of time, the students switch roles so that all students have a chance to take part in the discussion.



Pinewood 8th grade students participating in a Socratic Seminar at the end of the first semester chose to use the Pinewood Mission Statement as the basis of their discussion. Students brought up relevant topics to discuss such as the favorite parts of their day, safety in school, the use of instructional time, and improvements that can be made at our school. Then, students were able to participate in a deep-dive discussion of various aspects of the text. Mr. Garland enthused, "It was great for the teachers to take a step back and hear the students lead the discussion, ask each other questions, encourage each other, and share their honest thinking within the classroom setting." Mr. Wrobbel added, "Pinewood teachers take great pride in students' abilities and skills; this was just another example of how our students display excellence on a daily basis."

THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF A CO-TEACHING JOURNEY

In their co-teaching journey, Hailey Gordon and Kendall Coulter have embraced authenticity, discovering the elements that unite and distinguish them not only as teachers but also as individuals. Establishing common ground on a personal level was deemed essential for them to become effective educators. Through this process, they have cultivated an open and positive environment, becoming the backdrop for their collaborative efforts in designing lessons, setting goals, and implementing effective instructional strategies.

This collaborative planning not only encourages the integration of diverse teaching styles but also establishes the importance of catering to the wide range of students in their shared learning space. The partnership between Hailey and Kendall, each equipped with different expertise and skills, has significantly enhanced the overall classroom environment. This collaboration enables them to create an inclusive atmosphere where every student can thrive academically and socially.



Co-teaching extends beyond fostering a supportive learning community; it is a catalyst for individualized instruction, addressing the diverse needs of the students. In doing so, it not only benefits the students but also creates a fulfilling and dynamic teaching experience for the educators. Their co-teaching journey stands as a testament to the transformative power of collaboration in education, showcasing the potential to maximize learning opportunities and create a truly inclusive educational environment.

LEARNING THROUGH CODING AT EXPLORER

Recently the students in Mrs. Hayes' 3rd grade classroom at Explorer put on a Sphero Coding Museum. To prepare for this museum, students first mapped out a maze complete with 360 degree turns, stops with flashing lights, and sound effects. After students completed the course, they were charged with coding their Sphero's to maneuver the maze. Students had to figure out how to measure the distance from one point to the next and input the measurements into their computer to upload to their Sphero. Students determined how to have their Sphero turn or spin and how many degrees the Sphero needed to turn to navigate their maze. Students translated these instructions into code for navigation as well as coding the flashing lights, messages, and sounds that the Sphero would make. Students worked hard inputting the information into the computer in preparation for the museum.

The day of the museum, the students gathered in Explorer's collaboration center to show off the hard work they had put into their coding. The students excitedly explained all about their maze and their coding to classmates and staff visiting the museum. They shared the successes as well as the struggles that they experienced coding the information, understanding decimals for their distances and degrees for their turns. They cheered each other on as their Sphero's moved from place to place with accompanying sounds and lights. Students' displays at the museum integrated many STEM skills they had learned in class related to math, science, technology, planning, and presentation.



REGISTRATION FOR 2024 - 2025 BEGINS MARCH 1ST

It is that time of year again—time to register for the upcoming school year. All students, both new and returning students, are required to register online for the 2024-2025 school year. The window for online registration begins on March 1st and runs through May 13th. To register, parents or guardians need to go to the district's website at www.kentwoodps.org and click on the enrollment tab to begin the process. The enrollment page may also be accessed by scanning the QR code.



In addition, the district is scheduling a special registration night for our Young 5s and Kindergarten students. This takes place on Thursday, March 7th at 7:00 p.m. at your child's home school. At this event, parents and guardians will be able to gather essential information about our Young 5s and Kindergarten programs, meet the amazing staff who will be working in partnership with you to guide your child's journey, and get information and support regarding the registration process.

It is important for all students to register as early as possible to help with a smooth process of assigning classrooms and scheduling transportation needs. Registration questions can be answered by office teams at your child's school as well as at the district office located at 5820 Eastern Avenue, phone number 616.455.4400.



IT'S TIME TO SIGN UP FOR BASEBALL & SOFTBALL!

- CO-ED T-BALL / 4 1/2-6
- GIRLS SOFTBALL / 7-15
- BOYS BASEBALL / 7-14



SCAN TO SIGN UP!



WWW.KENTWOODBASBALLSOFTBALL.COM



ENROLL NOW IN SPRING AND SUMMER PROGRAMS

LOTS OF GREAT PROGRAMS FOR KIDS OF ALL AGES!

- Art
- Basketball
- Biking
- Dance
- Soccer
- Martial Arts
- Cooking
- T-ball
- And More!



REGISTER ONLINE AT KENTWOOD.US/PARKS



KENTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
School Calendar 2024

- Feb 19 & 20 No School for Students & Staff / Mid-Winter Break
- Mar 6..... ½ Day K-12 / PD for Staff
- Mar 28..... ½ Day K-12 / KEA Records Day
- Mar 29 - Apr 5.... No School for Students & Staff/ Spring Break
- May 24 ½ Day K-12 / KEA Records Day
- May 27 No School / Memorial Day
- May 31..... Last Day of School - Half Day for Students & Staff

School	Start	Dismissal	Half Day Dismissal
Elementary	9:00 AM	3:59 PM	12:15 PM
Middle	8:20 AM	3:04 PM	11:35 AM
EKFC & EKHS	7:41 AM	2:31 PM	10:48 AM
Crossroads	7:30 AM	2:18 PM	10:46 AM

FEBRUARY							MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3						1	2
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
25	26	27	28	29			24	25	26	27	28	29	30

APRIL							MAY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6				1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30					26	27	28	29	30	31	

No School For Students
 Half Day

* Updated 8/03/23