

# The Appleseed

## A Word From the Superintendent...

Dear Community,

A person only has to open the newspaper or turn on a newscast to read or hear about public education and the teaching profession. Many reports cover the desire for higher standards for the MEAP and ACT tests and the termination of teachers whose students do not perform well on these high stakes tests. Other voices call for the privatization of support and instructional services or the transition of Michigan to a "Right to Teach" state. In all of this, much about what is working well and how we can improve is lost.

For any organization, private or public, continuous improvement is critical for survival. In September, our Board of Education adopted S.O.A.R.I (Strategic Objectives to Achieve Results) to keep Hudsonville Public Schools focused on improvement. While this plan will help focus our objectives, we recognize that it is the efforts of all our teachers and students that have the most profound impact on our student's ability to achieve their potential.

The research is overwhelming regarding the importance of teacher effectiveness. For example, in a 1997 study of over 60,000 third through fifth grade students, researchers found "that the most important factor affecting student learning is the teacher" (Wright, Horn, Sanders 1997 p.63). While this finding should not come as a complete surprise, what might be surprising is how significant the effect is. Over a three year period, Haycock (1998) showed that with a highly effective teacher the difference can be an 83 percentile point gain (Marano, 2003).

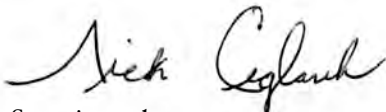
Recognizing that teachers have a profound impact on the quality of learning is an important and under-appreciated point in the state and national conversation around school reform. We are blessed to have incredible teachers in front of our students. Everyday they do their job and do it well. It is unfortunate that politicians have recently used a few pejorative examples, either as individual teachers or school systems in totality, to describe the teaching profession as a whole. Instead, might we suggest taking a shining example internationally (Finland) and applying the tenets locally?

Since 2000, students in Finland have scored at the top (if not the top) on Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). After an in-depth analysis of the Finnish educational system, three key themes emerged: 1) recruit the best, 2) prepare teacher candidates well, 3) engagement in curriculum, assessment and leadership. "Teachers' strong competence and preparedness are the prerequisites for the professional autonomy that makes teaching a valued career" (Sahlberg, 2011). Two other very interesting findings noted that instead of test-based accountability, the Finnish system relies on the expertise and professional accountability of teachers who are knowledgeable and committed. And almost all teachers are members of the Trade Union of Education.

Thus, as we continue on this path of improvement, we should be wary of those individuals who believe there is a silver bullet. Let's take a lesson from our Finnish counterparts who have proven results. Let's take a moment and reflect, support, and raise up our teachers. They make all the difference in the world!

"A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops." - Henry Adams

Sincerely,



Superintendent

## PATRIOT DAY OBSERVANCE!

Forest Grove Elementary School celebrated Patriot Day with a special flag raising ceremony and a 300 voice reciting of the pledge of allegiance. What a privilege it was to honor our flag, our fellow citizens and our country along with all of the values and principles that makes us uniquely American! The students were also reminded of how blessed we are to be American citizens, how important it is to remember those who have served or are currently serving to protect our country, and how we can honor our families and our nation, even as kids, on a daily basis!



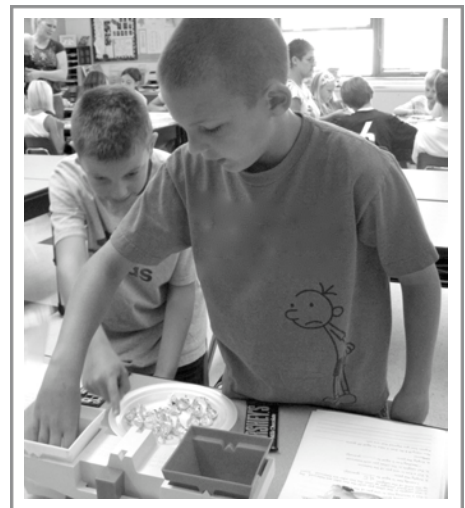
## IPAD EXCITEMENT AT PARK ELEMENTARY!

Students across the district are using technology in new ways to further their learning. There is no limit to the amount of new knowledge that students can acquire through the use of iPads, blogs and online classrooms. At Park Elementary School, students in Mrs. Gitler's class work on setting up their new iPads. These students are learning how to use a Google Doc to track their reading and writing progress. Excited chatter fills the room as students begin to discuss their reading and writing goals.



## BAUER THIRD GRADERS CELEBRATE MILTON HERSHEY'S BIRTHDAY!

On September 13, the 3rd graders at Bauer Elementary celebrated Milton Hershey's birthday with tasty math activities. We turned perimeter into "per-YUM-eter" by building chocolate fences around various shapes. To learn that area is the number of squares that a shape covers, students used a full sized Hershey's chocolate bar. They traced the chocolate bar onto graph paper and measured their bar in square inches and square centimeters. At another station, they used balance scales to weigh their candy bar and other chocolate yummys. It was a great experience for learning math concepts and getting to enjoy a treat at the end!



## HHS EAGLE RENAISSANCE

Eagle Renaissance is a program at HHS that encourages and rewards student achievement. Eagle Renaissance has a Crew of kids that helps to keep HHS great! Those Crew students will be working this year to help promote school spirit and Eagle Pride (The Spirit Squad), assist our families in need (Helping Hands Food Pantry), and recognize lots of different students and teachers for their great accomplishments in and out of HHS. Keep your eyes and ears open for all of the work Eagle Renaissance will be completing this year!



Eagle Renaissance is once again sponsoring the Helping Hands Food Pantry in partnership with Carpenter's House Outreach Ministries. HHS families/students that qualify for free and reduced lunch are eligible to access our food pantry. If you are interested in accessing the pantry, please contact Mrs. Jesky ([mjesky@hpseagles.net](mailto:mjesky@hpseagles.net)) to get more information. Pantry order forms will be in the Main Office and at Carpenter's House.

We are always looking for donations for our food pantry. If there are any parents/community members/students who would like to donate items, please feel free to drop them off in the High School Media Center during school hours. Our only request is that you donate something you would like to eat yourself! We also have an account for anyone who would like to simply donate cash. Our advisors shop for specific items we may need during the year with any donation that is made. 100% of donations go directly and only to this food pantry. If you have questions, please contact Mrs. Jesky.

## GEORGETOWN RECYCLES



The 5th grade students at Georgetown recycle paper products each Friday. They bring the paper out to our Paper Gator in the parking lot. This was placed at the school by our parent club many years ago. It is also available for residents to drop off their paper to recycle.

Last year the 3rd grade students studied a unit on recycling. This raised an interest in them adding plastic to the recycling process at Georgetown. A year later, as 4th grade students they continue to help with recycling at Georgetown.

They come around each Friday and gather our empty plastic recyclables. The plastic is brought to the Hudsonville High School's plastic recycling bin.

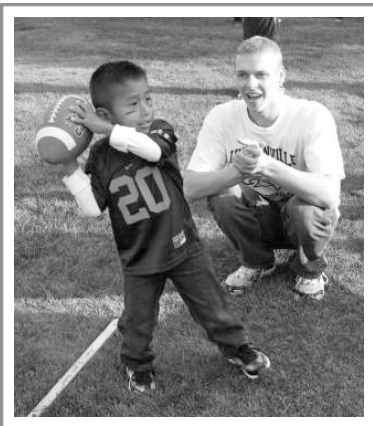
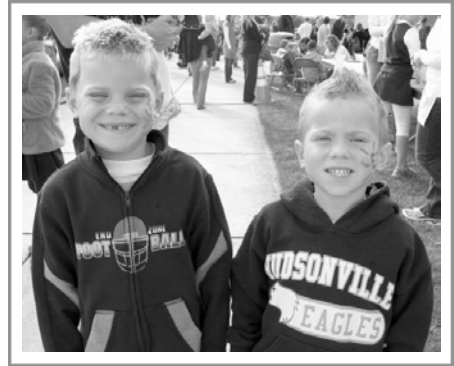
The students take pride in being able to help protect our environment in this way.





## 2ND ANNUAL FUN FEST A HUGE SUCCESS!

The Hudsonville Education Foundation (HEF) estimates that almost \$4,000.00 was raised on September 23rd. Each year the Family Fun Fest grows and all the proceeds directly support teaching and learning through mini grants. Thank you to the many volunteers and for all of you who came to support the HEF.



## HHS CHOIRS ARE HEADED TO DISNEY!

This upcoming Mid-Winter Break, our high school choirs will be performing at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida. Our choirs will also have a unique opportunity to record part of a soundtrack of a Disney film. The choirs are looking forward to this once-in-a-lifetime trip and are working hard at raising the necessary funds to travel. This past Saturday,



students had a great time hosting a "Disney" breakfast at Applebees in Grandville. Our next event is a "Pay-It-Forward-A-Thon" where students will be gathering sponsors to go out in our community and "Pay it Forward" to the elderly, military families, and anyone who just needs a helping hand. If you know of anyone who could benefit from this event, please email Deb Andre at [dandre@hpseagles.net](mailto:dandre@hpseagles.net) or visit our Facebook page at [HHS Choir-Disney or Bust!](#)



## FREE FOUR YEAR OLD PRESCHOOL?



Do you have a 4 year old or a child that will turn 4 years old by December 1, 2011? Do you know someone who does?

Did you know that Hudsonville Public Schools offers a state-funded preschool, FREE, to children who will turn 4 years old by December 1, 2011?

Children who qualify (exhibit two factors from the State's eligibility criteria list) will receive a high-quality preschool experience four days a week for three hours per day.

Some examples of qualifying criteria include; low family income (less than \$66,000 for family of four), single parent, low birth weight, diagnosed disability or developmentally immature.

Spots are still available for this program. **Please call the Early Childhood Office at 616-797-0842** or find registrations and more information regarding the Great Start Readiness Program online at [www.hudsonvillepublicschools.org](http://www.hudsonvillepublicschools.org) under the Early Childhood Programs tab.

## PLAY TO LEARN PROGRAM

Did you know that the Early Childhood Department offers several monthly interactive parent/child play groups? A variety of classes are offered for children birth - 5 years of age.

These groups are designed to enhance your child's social, emotional, and cognitive skills. For information on the upcoming events, call Dar Van Kampen, Parent Educator, at 669-9362 x 16622.

You can also find us on the website at [www.hudsonvillepublicschools.org](http://www.hudsonvillepublicschools.org), look under the Early Childhood Programs tab to find Play to Learn.

## A 3RD GRADE DOUBLE TAKE!

The students in Mrs. Mulder's classroom at Forest Grove Elementary School have been hard at work getting to know the inner workings of their new iPads already this school year. This class is a part of a technology pilot group that is being led by technology department personnel and classroom teachers from across the district. These individuals are on the cutting edge of implementing new technology tools and strategies into our

instruction practices with the objective being to enhance learning, improve academic achievement, and to help bring our Hudsonville students in-line with 21st century workplace skills and abilities.





## SOUTH ELEMENTARY CELEBRATES THE CONSTITUTION

September 17, 1787 is known as the birth of our United States Constitution. To recognize and celebrate this very important day in our American History, Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia proposed a law for ***Schools that receive federal funding to be required to hold educational programs on the Constitution on Constitution Day, September 17th.*** The law was passed and enacted in May 2005. South Elementary honored this day with Ms. Fischer's and Mr. Nederveld's 5th graders presenting small skits throughout each classroom. These skits told age appropriate stories about the beginning of our country and how our

Founding Fathers established the United States Constitution. All of the children learned a great deal about our Constitution.



## ALWARD FOURTH GRADERS ARE BUSY!

Alward fourth graders travelled to Lansing last week. Each class spent an hour touring the Capitol Building, learning about its history and architecture, and answering questions about our state government. They were most excited to lie on the glass floor and look up toward the inside of the dome. In the Michigan Historical Museum, they saw exhibits and artifacts from the days of the Paleo-Indians through the 1960s. Both buildings are open for families and are free; what a great family day trip this would be!



The Alward fourth graders also participated in their egg drop! Each student created a vehicle that would protect their egg and Mrs. Moore threw the vehicles off the roof. The egg drop helps the students understand the process of the scientific method and how to solve difficult problems.

*Principal Moore, tosses the egg vehicles from the roof (left) while student's watch and wait to see if their egg "pilot" survives the fall (right).*







## NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER FERPA FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

(1) The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the School principal [or appropriate school official] a written request that identifies the records(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

(2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write the School principal [or appropriate school official], clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

(3) The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has contracted as its agent to provide a service instead of using its own employees or officials (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or

therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. The school district will make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or student of the records request.

(4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the *School District* to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-5920

The following information is designated as "directory information":

1. Student name
2. Student address
3. Student telephone number
4. Student date and place of birth
5. Photograph
6. Electronic mail address
7. Student participation in officially recognized activities and sports
8. Student degrees, honors, and awards received
9. Student major field of study
10. Student dates of attendance
11. Grade level
12. Name of last previous school attended by student
13. Weight and height of members of athletic teams

Each year the district will give notice of its intention to release directory information in the building newsletter. Types of directory information to be released will be designated and parents/guardians and eligible students will be advised of their rights to refuse to permit the release of information designated. Parents and eligible students must inform the district in writing as to what directory information they do not want released without prior consent, within fifteen (15) days of publication in the building newsletter.

## BUILDING STAMINA FOR READING

Bauer students need to build “stamina” for reading. Stamina for reading refers to teaching children to read on their own for periods of time each day. Students are actively engaged in reading when they have “stamina” to read independently.



Children become better readers, reach benchmarks, and develop a love for reading when they are given time during the day to read. Our Bauer students are working hard at increasing their stamina time!

## District Calendar

**Wednesday, October 12, 2011 & Wednesday, November 9, 2011**

Late Start for Middle School & High School Students: 9:50 a.m.

**Friday, October 21, 2011**

No school for students

**Wed. - Sunday, November 23 - 27, 2011**

No school - Thanksgiving Break

(High School Staff reports on the 23rd)

## MR. RAGAN’S CHEMISTRY CLASSES BUST THE OCEAN’S 11 MYTH!

Mr. Ragan’s chemistry classes used their knowledge of density and their iPads to answer the question, “Was it really possible for 11 people to steal \$150 million dollars the way it was portrayed in the movie Ocean’s 11?” If you are not familiar with the movie, George Clooney (Danny Ocean) and his 10 accomplices devise a plan to rob the “Big Three” casinos in Las Vegas of \$150 million dollars. The plan results in 11 men carrying out duffle bags full of money, supposedly totaling \$150 million, but is this actually possible?



After watching a quick snippet of the movie to gather details, the students were off on the assignment. The students used their iPads to search the Internet for information such as the largest bill denomination currently used by the US mint, the dimensions of a U.S. bill, and its mass. Students then used this information to perform some calculations that would allow them to answer the question and then each group prepared a keynote presentation to report their findings to the class. “It was interesting to find out if this was even possible” said group member Rachel Fohlbrook. Another group member, Kiersten Gahan mentioned, “It was easy transitioning between the many apps that were available on the iPad. Moving between the calculator, the Internet, and Keynote was super easy while everything was being saved.” Christian Drenth mentioned, “iPads are awesome and make things much easier.” Not to spoil the movie but the calculations don’t lie. “I got this project from an article in a recent science journal and this became a great project introducing students to the importance of measurement, unit converting, and several types of calculations that are used in science classes,” says Mr. Ragan. Great job everyone!

## HUDSONVILLE COMMUNITY EDUCATION ACTIVITIES



Flyers already have or will be coming home with your kids for some exciting offerings through Hudsonville Community Education. To see an updated list of all current classes/clinics, please visit our website at [www.hudsonvillepublicschools.org](http://www.hudsonvillepublicschools.org) and click on the Community Ed. link.