JUNE 2022

JAY NEWS

Superintendent's Message

Greetings SPS Family. Famous writer/author Charles Dickens in his, *"A Tale of Two Cities,"* wrote, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair."

Some may feel like this quote describes the school year we are wrapping up. We had some "diamond" moments - and - some may feel as though we've had some "stone" moments. As we draw to a close, let's focus on these wonderful accomplishments for our district and its children.

BEYOND COVID- Some may have wondered for a period of time, "Are we EVER going to get through this? Are we ever going to return to some semblance of normalcy?" As we are all well aware, life and our lives will never be the same - though - it feels AMAZING that we have made it through the perils of this dreadful virus. And, we did it together! Like any family we had our struggles, though in the end - when things really counted - we pulled together for the common good of all SPS kids and families. We are better and stronger for what we have endured…

GRADUATION- After all, this is what it's all about, right? We strive to raise them up the best we can to graduate with an education in order to make this world a better place. CONGRATULATIONS to our twenty-eight (28) Odyssey graduates and their families as well as the one-hundred seven (107) Shepherd High School graduates and their families! As you leave this educational institution, our hope is you are as well-prepared as possible to make a positive impact in and on society. Go forth and succeed!!

STRATEGIC PLAN- Any organization striving to daily improve finds their "stride" best when they develop a plan-of-action. Thanks to the help of the Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) and their strategic planning experts, a five-year course of improvement for the district has been crafted. As has been reported previously, over the next five years, these activities will be taking place in order to manifest this plan with in the best way possible:

- Each March Board meeting of 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026 the Board will approve new objectives
- The Board will be receiving quarterly updates of progress throughout each year
- A Strategic Planning *Steering Committee* will be formed to develop new objectives each year
- As much as possible, budget considerations will be filtered by the Strategic Plan
- A mechanism that will tell the ongoing story of the plan over time will be created

THANK YOU to Everyone who has helped with this process. Our Steering Committee will be made up of folks who have been helping along the way; more to come on this item.

And, lastly, THANK YOU to the entire Shepherd Public Schools community for the warmth and endearing spirit you have shown me as your new superintendent this school year. Have a WONDERFUL summer and I hope to see you all at our August BlueJay Bash, Thursday, August 18, 2022!!

Thank you for your attention to this edition of the Jay News. In all we do, let's remain ***BlueJay Strong!!***

Respectfully,

Terry J. Starr, Superintendent

Winn Elementary

This past month, our focus with "Second Step" was problem friendship skills. We found out ways to invite friends to play and strategies to play fairly. We also learned about how to make amends when we do make a mistake with friends. We learned that we need to take responsibility and admit what we did even if it is tricky! We had a great group of kids get nominated for being role models in the area of friendship. Congratulations "Star Students"

Winn Star Students

Field Day Fun!

What a great day full of friends, fun, and food! We want to say thank you to our Winn Parents Club for coordinating this full day event. Special thank you to; Katie Eisenberger, Alana Fields, and Melissa VanAlstine for helping chair this event for our students. We had a little rain but we still had loads of fun!

Tall Ships Take Sail!

Thanks to Mrs. Verhaar all third, fourth, and fifth grade students got to go to Suttons Bay for a day on a Tall Ship! This is like having school on the water. The kids had an amazing time! Thanks to Mrs. Verhaar for writing the grant for all of our students. Thank you to the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe for funding this wonderful opportunity for our students!!

Shepherd Elementary

Shepherd Elementary would like to recognize two 5th grade students in Mrs. Mikek's class who have demonstrated exceptionally high academic performance, maturity, and excellence. Congratulations to Natalia Jorgensen & John Welniak!

These two students have been nominated for the National Youth Leadership Forum: Pathways to STEM. This nomination honors students who exhibit superb leadership, exceptional maturity, and scholastic merit. Students are invited to stay on campus at either Loyola University in Chicago, Illinois & Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio where the program is to be held.

NYLF Pathways to STEM is designed to give students unprecedented opportunities to discover their personal strengths and continue to acquire the leadership skills necessary for academic & career success. Students will join other youth leaders in intensive, engaging, hands-on workshops focused on five skills that are necessary for success; emotional awareness, communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and goal setting. Nominees will also have the opportunity to explore a future career in three STEM pathways; Medicine, Engineering, & Crime Scene Investigation. Way to be your BlueJay best, John & Natalia!

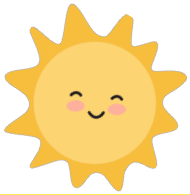
Bikes for Books Winners!

The Bikes for Books Program is a reading incentive program that has been in place for the last eight years between Alma Masonic Lodge #244 and the local schools. Students who achieve the reading goals at their school are entered into a drawing where they could win a bicycle and helmet or gift certificate.

This year's winners are Andrew Robinson (5th grade Mrs. Brock) and Emma Hudecz (4th Grade Mrs. Sanchez). Mr. Bob Johns, from the Alma Masonic Lodge came to the school and presented Andrew and Emma with a gift certificate for a new bike.

Thank You

Shepherd Elementary would like to give a huge thank you to Jim Thrush and Ted Bott. These two gentlemen volunteer their time and use of their vehicles, twice a month, in conjunction with the Shepherd United Methodist Church, to pick up over 125 food bags from the Community Compassion Network, in Mt. Pleasant, and deliver them to Shepherd Elementary. These food bags contain food for two breakfasts, lunches, and snacks for students who are in need on the weekends. The support that these two men give to our students is selfless service to our students and community.



Shepherd Middle School

8th Grade Academic & Recognition Awards

On June 2nd we had the 8th grade Academic & Recognition Awards program. Over half of the 8th grade students received recognition for their academic efforts and recognition for other efforts. The program was attended by the students and parents. We are very proud of our students and their outstanding accomplishments. We look forward to their success as they transition to high school next year.

Mock Rock

Ms. McCarthy did an outstanding job of coordinating a very entertaining Mock Rock program on June 3rd. There were 13 different acts and Ms. McCarthy, Ms. Sickles, Ms. Moeggenborg and Ms. Courtright capped it off with a rocking rendition of "Paradise City" by Guns N Roses. It was a great time for all and the students had a blast. Thank you Ms. McCarthy and students that participated!

Special Olympics

Congratulations to Jacob and his wins during the Special Olympics at Central Michigan University on June 3rd. Jacob did an outstanding job winning a gold medal in the softball throw, a silver in the run and a bronze in the standing long jump. Also, a special thank you to Blake and Drew that spent the day volunteering at the event. What a special day for our BlueJays!

Middle School Equestrian Team

This past weekend the Middle School Equestrian Team participated in an event at the Isabella County Fairgrounds. They competed against Clare, Montebella, Alma, Ithaca, Breckenrige. The girls did a fantastic job representing Shepherd Middle School. Each student completed 8 or more events. The team took an overall 2nd in the match. Way to go Shepherd Equestrian Team!

Shepherd High School

Odyssey Middle/High School
News from the Woods

Hello Everyone!

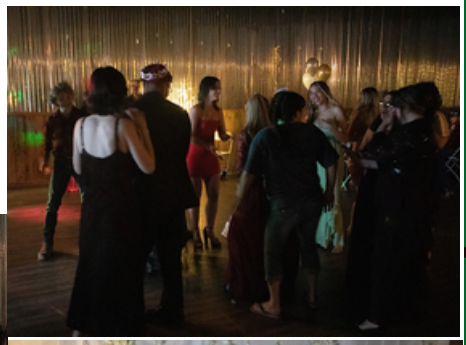
This is the time of year when we put a bow on all of the amazing things we have accomplished over the last school year. Odyssey students have had a variety of experiences since August. We have welcomed new students, new staff members and a new baby to the mix! Congratulations to everyone who joined us and found success in a new program. I hope to see everyone back next year so we can continue growing and achieving.

Speaking of achievements, have you heard about Odyssey's graduating class of 2022? This year marks the 32nd year of amazing accomplishments for the Odyssey family. The class of 2022 was the second largest graduating class Odyssey has ever seen. This feat is a testament to the hard work and dedication of not only the students, but also the staff who have provided an environment conducive to success and growth for these young adults.

We are currently enrolling for Summer School 2022! This program will be open to the first twenty students, preference will be given to 11th and 12th grade students who need to recover credits! Odyssey Summer School will operate July 5 until July 28 from 8AM until 12PM. This will be a mix of credit recovery courses and ONP projects. It will be a great experience for everyone involved, come join the fun!

At Odyssey we are happy to welcome new faces and help students who need extra support. If you find yourself in a situation where you or your student needs extra help, or just a change of pace, please reach out! Please give Mike or Dawn a call at (989)773-9473 to set up a time to discuss your student's educational options.

PROM 2022



CLASS OF 2022

Other Important Information:

At the general election on **August 2, 2022** taxpayers will be asked to renew the district's operating millage.

The proposal will authorize a millage rate of 20.6913. However, The district cannot levy more than 18 operating mills in any given year. Simply approving 18 mills does not allow the district to levy the 18 mills for more than one year. Due to a law called Headlee, the operating millage is often "rolled back" each year as the law is designed to limit the increase in the operating tax levy to the increase in the consumer price index.

Operating millage is not paid on home or farmland. Operating millage is levied on non-homestead property only.

You may be questioning why the district is levying any operating millage. Doesn't the state fund our schools? Not local property tax? The state assumes that each school district in the state of Michigan is levying 18 mills of local property tax on all non-homestead property. Therefore, the state decreases the amount of state funding based on the levy of 18 mills of local tax. For the 2021/2022 school year the state assumes that Shepherd Public Schools is collecting over $1,190,617 from local property tax. Without the approval of the millage request, Shepherd Public Schools would have to figure out a way to operate with $1,190,617 less.

We understand that you as a taxpayer are facing the same economic times as the school district. Costs continue to increase, putting more of a strain on the family and district budget. When considering your support for the millage proposal please keep a couple of things in mind. Operating millage is levied on property classified as non-homestead. Passage of the above propositions would not affect tax bills for primary residences (homesteads) or qualified agricultural properties. Properties that would be affected include commercial/industrial property, apartment buildings, rental homes, vacation property and vacant land. In addition, this is not a new tax but rather a renewal of millage previously approved by the voters. This renewal will have little effect on your current taxes.

For a business property with taxable value of $200,000 the tax would cost $3,600 ($200,000 / 1,000 x 18 mills), similar to what you are paying today.

It is extremely important that the district be allowed to levy this operating millage. Please vote on August 2, 2022.

MyMichigan Health

Annual Health and Safety Fair

Come join us for an afternoon filled with fun activities focusing on safety, health and wellness and BICYCLE RIDING. Parents and children will have the opportunity to build their own summer safety kits, tour emergency response vehicles and decorate their helmets and bicycles.

Be sure to bring your bike!

Safe storage of bikes will be provided.

The first 100 children will receive a FREE bike helmet.

Thursday, June 9 ▪ 4 - 7 p.m.

Gratiot County Fair For Youth Fairgrounds

701 S. Lincoln Avenue
Alma, Michigan 48801

Schedule of Fair Events:

4 - 5:30 p.m.	Vendor Booths & Activities
5:30 p.m.	Bike Decorating Contest
6 p.m.	Helmet Decorating Contest
6:30 p.m.	Bike Parade

When you first arrive, go to the MyMichigan Health booth to receive your checklist to build your very own summer safety kit. Once you've built your kit by visiting the listed vendor booths, return to the MyMichigan Health booth to put your name in a drawing to win a brand new bike!

For additional information, call Michelle Miller at **(989) 466-3378** or email **michelle.miller@mymichigan.org**.

MyMichigan Health
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN HEALTH

TAKE NOTE OF THE DATES BELOW...

August 16: Opening Day/Teacher Work Day
August 17: PD Day
August 18: PD Day and Bluejay Bash
August 22: First day of School
September 2: No School/Pre-Labor Day
September 5: No School/Labor Day