

The Comstock Communicator

COMSTOCK HIGH SCHOOL | COMPASS HIGH SCHOOL & ADULT EDUCATION | NORTHEAST MIDDLE SCHOOL | NORTH ELEMENTARY | STEM ACADEMY | GREEN MEADOW ELEMENTARY



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MORE NEWS

*Turn over to read
Center Point*

A newsletter about the
Comstock
Community Center



From the Superintendent

Dear Comstock Community,

As we enter the holiday season, I want to take time as the Superintendent to pause and give thanks for the many blessings we have here in Comstock Public Schools.

I am thankful for:

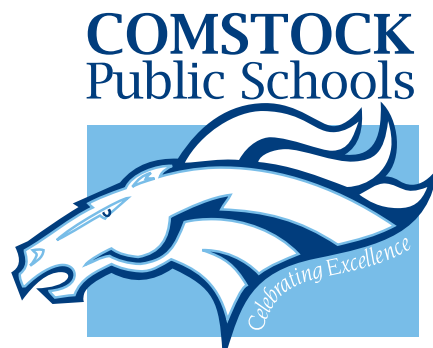
- Our dedicated and passionate teachers, curriculum and behavioral specialists, school psychologists, speech therapists, social workers, deans, coaches, and other certificated professional staff who truly make the difference day in and day out with our students. They have a heavy responsibility to care for and inspire students' minds. They accomplish this core task and more by investing many hours both in and outside of the classroom to make the learning experiences special, unique and memorable.
- Our organized and gracious administrative and executive assistants who keep us all on track and pointed in the right direction. I don't know how they do it but they answer phones, buzz open doors, take messages, greet parents and visitors, remind their principals of numerous issues, wipe noses, and smile at everyone all at the same time.
- Our supportive and faithful paraprofessionals who do all they're asked to do and more. Their contributions and selfless devotion keep teachers and students functioning at the highest levels of efficiency. Paraprofessionals step in and step up!
- Our hardworking and handy maintenance, facilities, and technology workers who keep all of the lights on, power flowing, and machinery running. They repair what is broken or worn out, plug leaks, and patch the holes all the while with a "can-do" attitude and a pleasant grin.
- Our protective and cautious bus drivers, our skilled and cheerful cooks, and our fastidious and meticulous custodians - they get the kids to

school safely, fill their stomachs with nutritious and delicious food, and clean up all of the messes and spots. Running a school would be impossible without them.

- Our outstanding and self-sacrificing principals, directors, and administrators who work long hours and have chosen the daunting job of school leadership. In Comstock, they lead the way, show the way, and go the way!
- Our wise and visionary School Board. I am grateful for their public service, collective synergy, and collaborative efforts to our community and school district. As elected officials, they must balance their personal views and opinions with the input and positions of the public they are charged to represent. It's a challenging task and we're fortunate to have them on our side.
- Finally, all of our parent and community volunteers who tutor students, chaperone field trips, help in classrooms and at athletic events, give special attention to students who need it, and help in many ways to keep the schools running smoothly.

I wish everyone in the Comstock community a happy and safe holiday season!

Dr. Jeff Thoenes
Superintendent



COMSTOCK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A SCHOOL DISTRICT DEDICATED TO KIDS

www.comstockps.org

Dr. Jeff Thoenes
Superintendent

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Brandy Brown, President
Jeff VanGoye, Vice-President
(Term ends 12/31/18)
Matthew Schreiner, Secretary
Pamela Dickinson, Treasurer
Shirley Amos, Trustee
Richard Hathaway, Trustee
(Term ends 12/31/18)
Karen Howes, Trustee
Ken Greenwood, Appointed Treasurer
Faye Goldner, Appointed Recording Secretary
New board members term begins 1/1/19:
Dori Scholly
Saralynn Brown

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Comstock Public Schools is to serve our community by supporting, inspiring, and challenging every person within the school district to reach his/her full potential through education.

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of Comstock Public Schools is to be an educational community where every person is empowered to reach his/her full potential.

QUESTIONS?

If you have questions concerning your schools, the answer is only a telephone call away:
269-250-8907

STORIES OR INFORMATION

The Comstock Communicator is published by Comstock Public Schools. Information may be sent to Dr. Jeff Thoenes at thoenesj@comstockps.org or by fax at 250-8908. It may also be e-mailed to Phyllis Rose at phyllisarose@aol.com.



BOND UPDATE

By Dr. Jeff Thoenes, Superintendent

As the new Superintendent, I'm thrilled the community united in support of our children and the district's long-term facilities needs through the bond passed in 2016. The Board of Education and Administration take this vote of confidence seriously and are working hard to maximize every public dollar.

To make these large construction projects a reality requires the dedication and expertise of a number of professional architects, construction managers, and building planners working in collaboration and cooperation with district and building administrators. We are fully focused on that effort.

As a reminder, in May, 2016, Comstock voters approved a \$40,130,000 bond. To maximize the number of dollars available for construction, these dollars will be spent in three series over the course of nine years. The money must be spent for improvements and preservation of the district's buildings and facilities. By issuing the bonds in

three series, the overall interest costs are less than if the bonds were issued all at once.

To help ensure the best construction results possible, the Board of Education completed an exhaustive bid and interview process which resulted in the employment of two key firms - GMB Architects and Miller Davis Construction.

GMB is a Michigan firm based in Grand Rapids with a local office in Holland. The company has over 50 years of experience and specializes in mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, interior design, landscape architecture, civil engineering, structural engineering, and a full range of K-12 pre-bond marketing services.

GMB has over 100 employees in nine architectural disciplines. The role of these professionals is twofold - to provide the district with a master plan for the projects as well as to design specific locations for rooms, offices, entrances, and utilities. The architects continually meet with the administration to find out what the schools need and then engage in proposing specific designs that balance those needs with the

monies available in the bond.

Miller Davis is a Kalamazoo firm with its office located conveniently downtown. The company was founded in 1909 and provides general contracting, construction management, and construction consulting services. These professionals work hand in hand with the architects and the school administration and oversee the actual construction projects. After the district finalizes the architectural designs and cost projections, Miller Davis hires the specialized construction companies that actually do the work - masons, electricians, plumbers, roofers, tilers, and a host of other companies.

Since our buildings are all older, federal regulations regarding lead and asbestos require abatement companies to remove the dangerous materials safely and properly. These costs are factored into the overall budget. Essentially, our counterparts at Miller Davis act as our advocates during construction and ensure that these varying companies work together collaboratively and complete their contractual obligations according to detailed specifications and required timelines.

I am pleased to announce that Phase I is now nearly complete. This phase included front office and secure entry renovations at all buildings, remodeled bathrooms across the district, and high school locker room rebuilds.

Both Phases II and III are currently in design discussions. While all buildings will experience improvements, the main focus of Phase II is on NEMS. It is fair to say that the school is being "gutted" and completely rebuilt from within. We are extremely excited by early designs and concepts.

As with Phase II, Phase III also touches all buildings but emphasis will be on redesigning the interior of the high school. It is important to note that through this bond, both NEMS and CHS will be completely air conditioned when the rebuilds are finished. For more details, see the district's website. Also, we'll be providing regular bond updates in each issue of the Communicator.

If you have any questions about our bond projects, feel free to contact me at your convenience. Call me at 269-250-8907 or by email at thoenesj@comstockps.org

Board Briefs

REGULAR MEETING

September 10, 2018

- Approved the following personnel
 - Jessica Rabine, STEM Academy first grade teacher
 - George Gleason, NEMS seventh/eighth grade English teacher
 - Sarah DeLange, districtwide speech pathologist
- Set the last day for seniors as May 24, 2019.
- Approved the bid of \$46,122.36 from JBM Automation for a new public address system at the high school.
- Appointed board treasurer, Pam Dickinson, as the Board's voting delegate to the MASB Delegate Assembly on November 1, 2018. Vice-president Jeff VanGoey was appointed as the alternate delegate.
- Established board liaisons for the buildings as follows:
 - Trustee Amos, Compass High School/Administration/Business Office
 - President Brown, Comstock High School
 - Vice President VanGoey, Green Meadow Elementary
 - Treasurer Dickinson, STEM Academy
 - Trustee Hathaway, Transportation

- Secretary Schreiner, Northeast Middle School
- Trustee Howes, North Elementary

- Directed Superintendent Thoenes to obtain quotes for electric signs at the STEM Academy and North Elementary.

REGULAR MEETING

September 24, 2018

- Approved hiring Carrie Bellen as technology teacher at North Elementary.
- Approved purchasing a subcompact tractor from Farm Depot in the amount of \$24,048.
- Moved into closed session to discuss negotiations with the Comstock Paraprofessionals Association.

REGULAR MEETING

October 8, 2018

- Approved retirement of Tracy Daniel, high school physical education teacher.
- Ratified the agreement with the Comstock Paraprofessionals Association for the 2018-19 school year which includes a 2 percent base increase on salary.
- Approved holding a regular Board meeting on the fourth Monday of the month with work sessions held only when necessary.

Community Auditorium Events Open to the Public

December:

7, 14 & 16--"The Story" by Vessel for the Arts: 7 p.m.- Go to hpami.org for tickets.

10- Comstock STEM/ Northeast Middle/ High School Choir Concert: 7 p.m., Free.

11-West Michigan Homeschool Fine Arts Concert: 7 p.m. (includes band, orchestra, choir) \$3 at the door.

12-Blood Drive-Colt Center: 7 a.m.-2 p.m.

12-Comstock NEMS/High School Holiday Band Concert: 7 p.m. Free.

19-Kazoo School Winter Program: 6 p.m.

January:

10- Kalamazoo Christian Middle School Play: 7 p.m. Free.

16-North Elementary Music Program: 7 p.m. Free.

CHS Ski & Snowboard Club 2018-2019

How the Ski & Snowboard Club works...

First, members buy a Bittersweet Membership Card for \$17. They show this card at Bittersweet every time they go. The discount card provides a large reduction off lift tickets and equipment rentals, if needed. So the membership card helps a lot with cost!

For students who want to ride the Ski Club bus, there is a one time fee (amount to be determined) for transportation. This pays for seven trips on Thursdays after school beginning in January. The bus leaves the high school at 2:45 p.m., goes to NEMS and picks up the middle school club members and then heads out to Bittersweet. The bus departs Bittersweet at 7:45 p.m. and returns to the high school for parent pick up at 8:20 p.m. The first Ski Club trip is scheduled for Thursday, January 10.

COSTS FOR SEASON:

- *Membership card = \$17 (pay one time) (Bittersweet waiver & money due on 12/7)
- *Lift ticket = 7 trips x \$17 = \$119 (Pay \$17 at window each time you go; no pre-pay)
- *Equipment rental (skis/snb 7 trips x \$17 = \$119) (Pay \$17 at window each time you go; no pre-pay)
- *Bus = TBD (Pays for 7 trips) (Due on 12/7)

TOTALS FOR SEASON:

- \$238 for season (if renting skis & riding bus) (\$119+\$119=\$238) plus bus fee TBD
- \$238 for season (if renting snowboard & riding bus) (same as above)
- \$119 for season (if already have equipment & riding bus) (\$119) plus bus fee TBD
- \$136 for season (if have equipment & driving on own) (\$119+\$17=\$136)

What to get in to Coach Daniel at Comstock High School:

Please place the following in an envelope with your name on it:

- 1) Bittersweet Waiver with \$17 (check to "BITTERSWEET SKI RESORT")
*Bittersweet waivers must be picked up at the High School office.
- 2) Bus Money TBD

OPEN TO ANYONE

The Comstock Ski & Snowboard Club is open to anyone, ages 7 years to adults. You don't have to go to Comstock or live in Comstock. Anyone can buy the \$17 membership card and get the discounts.

For more information, email Coach Daniel at daniel@comstockps.org or go to www.skiBittersweet.com and click on the "classes and snow sports clubs" link. Then, scroll down to the ski club information for students or adults.

The Bittersweet Ski Club application and waiver can also be

found on this site, so you would not have to pick it up from the high school office. Just print them at your leisure.

These forms must be filled out. They cannot be turned in at Bittersweet. They must be given to Ski Club chaperone, Coach Daniel at CHS to be turned in.

Here's to some fun and great shredding on the slopes this winter... MICHIGAN IS ONE OF THE GREATEST WINTER WONDERLANDS SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? GET OUT AND PLAY. If you don't know how to ski or snowboard, don't worry. We teach you and you receive two free lessons with your membership cards (\$100 value)!

Hazardous Weather Communications



With hazardous weather conditions just around the corner, Comstock Public Schools is encouraging all parents to talk with their children about the possibility of school closing due to bad weather. In the event that school must be closed early on any given day, please have a plan developed with your children so they arrive home safely.

Every effort is made to make a decision to close school by 5 a.m. and to notify the news media immediately. However, the district has no control over how quickly the information is disseminated by the media.

Below is a list of the multiple ways you can be notified of early closings, or school closings:

You may sign-up to follow Tweets at <https://twitter.com/ComstockPS> regarding school closings or go to our website at www.comstockps.org.

Make sure your Infinite Campus portal is current with correct contact information in order to receive ShoutPoint notification.

For the latest school closings, turn your radio or television to the following stations:

CALL LETTERS

- 98.5 FM, 96.5 FM (WNWN, WFAT)
- 100.9 FM (WQXC)
- 903 AM, 1400 AM (WBCK, WRCC)
- 106.5 FM, 590 AM, 1470 AM (WQLR, WKZO, WQSN)
- 107.7 FM, 103.3 FM (WRKR, WKFR)
- TV 3 WWMT-TV
- TV 8 WOOD-TV
- TV 4 WOTV

Comstock Public Schools Foundation Needs You

The Comstock Public Schools Foundation currently has openings on the board for positions as officers and trustees. No prior experience is needed. Taking part in this Foundation is a rewarding experience as you are part of managing and distributing student scholarships and teacher grants.

We welcome community members to attend our monthly meetings. If you can't attend a meeting, we would be glad to hear from you. Send questions or concerns to Foundation@comstockps.org or leave a message with the Superintendent's Office at 269-388-9384 and a board member will get in touch with you.

Our next meetings are:

December 5, 2018	April 10, 2019
January 9, 2019	May 8, 2019
February 6, 2019	June 5, 2019
March 6, 2019	September 11, 2019
	October 23, 2019 (annual meeting)



Meetings are held at 5:30 p.m. at the Comstock Public Schools Administration Building, 3010 Gull Road. Come to the doors at the back of the building.

Please consider joining us and helping enrich the educational environment of Comstock Public Schools!

The Comstock Public Schools Foundation is organized exclusively for the benefit of the educational, literary, and scientific activities of the Comstock Public Schools, including scholarships and grants to students and teachers.

Comstock Public Schools FOUNDATION

Office of the Superintendent, 3010 Gull Road, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49048

Honor a Loved One's Legacy with a Memorial Donation.

*Thank you for your gift to the Comstock Public Schools Foundation.
Your generosity will strengthen the educational opportunities in our community.*

I/We would like to support Comstock Public Schools Foundation students with an unrestricted gift of:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,500 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$750 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$3,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ (other) |

Your gift supports:
Student and Teacher Scholarships
Educational Equipment
Program Enrichment

I/We would like this gift to be made in the Honor/Memory of: _____

Please notify _____

Address _____ City/State _____ Zip _____

I/We would like to designate this gift to: (name and fund) _____

My gift is enclosed. (Please make checks payable to the Comstock Public Schools Foundation)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone () _____ Date ____/____/____

I/We would like to know more about the Comstock Public Schools Foundation.

If you have any questions, please call the Superintendent's Office at (269) 388-9384

Compass High School

GED Class Registration Set for January



Looking to get your GED or complete your high school diploma requirements? Comstock Adult Education will help!

Registration for winter semester morning, afternoon, and evening classes will be January 23 and 24 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Comstock Compass High School, 3010 Gull Road.

Please call 269-250-8930 for more information.



SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS NEEDED

Become a School Bus Driver! METS, the transportation employer for Comstock Public Schools, is currently hiring school bus drivers for part-time assignments starting at \$14.75 per hour.

No experience is necessary and training will be provided to qualified candidates. Apply today by sending your resume to:
recruiting@contractbusdrivers.com.

**For more information, please call
(269) 250-8690,
or toll free at (888) 996-8586**

Comstock High School

High School Students Join in College Month Activities

October was College Month in Michigan and Comstock's seniors participated in a number of activities from submitting college applications to visiting colleges.

Applications: With help from the College and Career Academy (CCA), seniors submitted 176 applications during the month. Of these applications, 112 were sent to 21 different Michigan institutions, while the remaining 64 were sent to 47 out-of-state institutions.

Financial Aid: During two separate Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Completion Nights, 40 seniors submitted their FAFSA forms, accumulating over \$87,000 in Pell grants alone. Furthermore, the CCA hosted its fourth annual Scholarship Night in partnership with the Kalamazoo Community Foundation. Thirty-one seniors and their family members learned about the many academic awards available from the Foundation which grants over \$1 million to students in Kalamazoo County annually.

College Exposure: Representatives from 16 different postsecondary institutions visited the high school during October for their annual visits. These



Comstock students visited Grand Valley State University during College Month.

are in-school opportunities, open to all grade levels, where students can learn more about an individual college from admissions representatives. These are also the very people who review and make decisions about the applications of CHS seniors.

The CCA also took 20 underclassmen to an evening College Fair at KVCC's Texas Township campus. Representatives from over 90 different postsecondary institutions were available to answer questions concerning anything about the post-high school transition. Students are always encouraged

to attend this annual event.

Finally, the CCA took 41 students to an all-expenses-paid campus visit to Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan. Students learned about the admission process, listened to a student panel, took a campus tour, and ate in the all-you-can-eat dining hall.

Whether it's a two-year college, a four-year university or a trades certificate program, it's all college.

Information is at your fingertips!

Infinite Campus has two new apps to help you and your student stay up to date with grades and missing assignments. If you have the current Infinite Campus app, you can delete it from your device.

Go to the App Store and search for "Campus Portal." There are two apps: one for students and one for parents. Make sure you select the correct one. When you launch the new app, it will ask you to pick your state and school district.

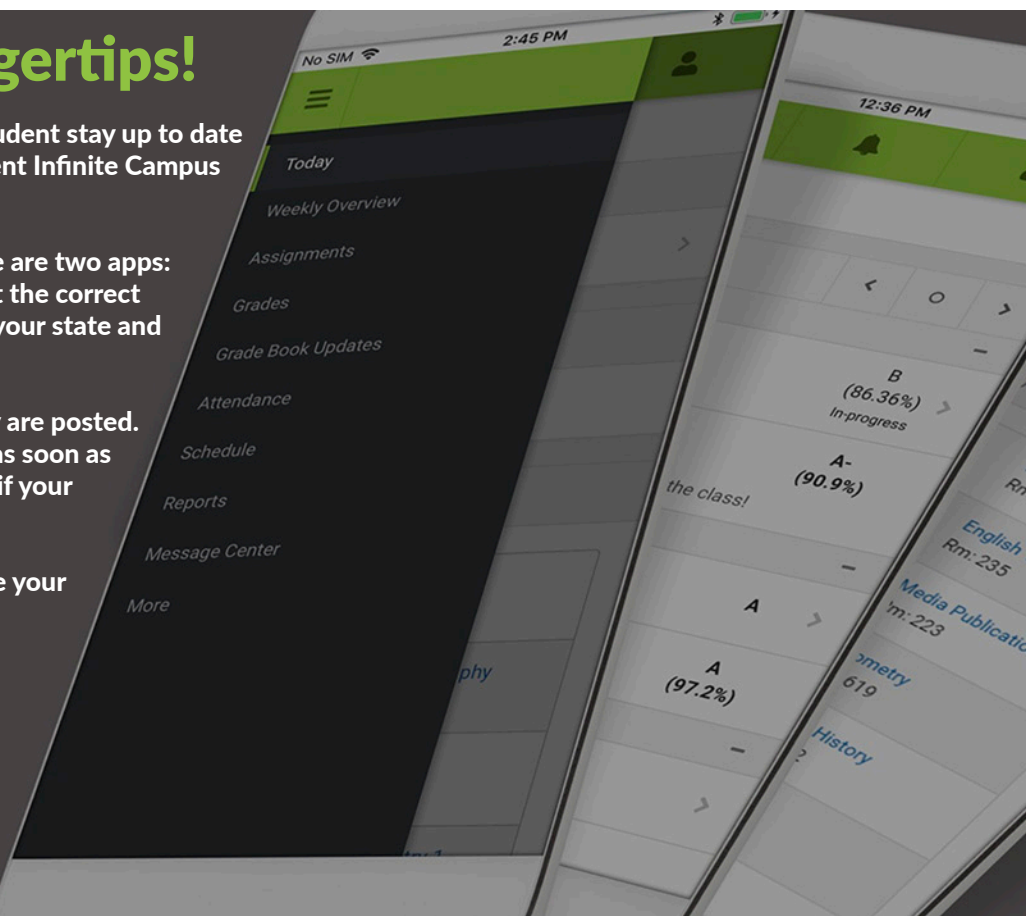
Once you're signed in, you will see announcements as they are posted. If you enable push notifications, you can see assignments as soon as they are graded, and any that are missed. You can also see if your student was marked absent or tardy.

It's easy to schedule and contact teachers quickly, or to see your student's EDP.

If you don't have a portal account, we're happy to get you connected – just email Angelina Sabatino: sabatinoa@comstockps.org



Infinite
Campus



Comstock High School

Student Attends Art Portfolio Day at KIA

High school junior and art student, Luis Torres, recently attended the Art Portfolio Day at the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts to present his art to representatives from art schools and colleges and universities.

Luis, who is passionate about art, especially comic and manga drawings, wants to continue his study

of art after high school. While at the event, besides showing his work to the college representatives, he talked with them about their programs and also received some art supplies.

"We are extremely proud of Luis for taking advantage of this opportunity and following his passion," said Chelsie Taylor, College and Career dean.



Luis Torres, a junior at CHS, recently attended the Art Portfolio Day at the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts.

Welcome, New Staff Members



Lindsay Clark

The legal profession's loss is Comstock's gain. That's because the district's new special education teacher consultant, Lindsay Clark, originally intended to be a lawyer, majoring in political science and social studies.

However, she decided to become an educator.

"I loved the idea of being a positive part of kids' childhood," she said. "I loved coaching and wanted to help kids make great memories."

A graduate of Hartford High School in Hartford, Michigan, she earned a bachelor's degree from Western Michigan University and a master's from Calvin College.

She taught for five years in the Crawford-AuSable district in Grayling and then two years in the Bloomingdale Public Schools in Bloomingdale.

An influential teacher in her life was Robert Teske who taught government and economics at Hartford. In fact, Mr. Teske not only taught Lindsay and her younger sister but also their father.

"He taught us that teaching wasn't just about the content, but about the role you play in children's beliefs and values," she said.

Mrs. Lindsay is a newlywed, having married her husband, Eric, this summer. He is a social worker. She is now the "bonus mom" to two children, Oliver, 4, and Emerson Jean, 2.

She enjoys traveling, including trips to Guatemala each summer to conduct

professional development seminars for teachers.



Jason Fritz

Jason Fritz, Comstock's new band teacher, still remembers what he received for Christmas his senior year of high school. It was his very own band instrument, a euphonium (also called a baritone) so he no longer had to use a school instrument.

"My family all threw in together to buy me my own instrument," he said. "It was literally the only present I got that Christmas. It affected me greatly, and it was then that I decided I wanted to teach music."

During his days at Bangor High School, he was always the student assigned to help others, a task which he enjoyed, he said. As a result, several influential people told him he would be a good teacher.

"I wanted to do something with my life that would have a real impact on the real world," he said. "Being a teacher seemed like the best use of my time and talents."

After receiving his bachelor's degree in music education from Grand Valley State University, he was band director in Standish-Sterling near Bay City and then moved to Concord for six years where he built a band program.

After that, he taught at the International Community School of Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. Returning to the States, he entered graduate school at WMU where he worked with the Bronco Band and taught beginning conducting for music majors.

He then worked in the Behavioral Education Center in Bangor, subbed at Comstock for six months in the 2014-15 school year, returned to Concord, and then came back to Comstock this year as band director upon the retirement of Mark Nelson.

The most influential teacher in his life was the supervisor of his master's work at Western, Dr. David Montgomery, who was associate director of bands at WMU and also director of the Bronco Band.

"He has this incredible knack for being kind and caring while at the same time pushing each of his students to achieve at the highest levels," said Mr. Fritz. "His approach with students and his methods for organizing a successful band program have truly helped me to be a stronger teacher."

Regarding his family, Mr. Fritz says he won the "cosmic lottery." His parents have been married for 43 years. He still spends time with his brothers and nieces and nephews helping out on the family farm in Bangor where he grew up.

His wife, Dani, a 2001 graduate of CHS, is a writer, having had her first novel published last spring. She is also a volunteer with the marching band.

"She is an integral part of the teaching staff for the high school marching band," he said.

Mr. Fritz enjoys cooking, gardening, fishing and riding his motorcycle.

"When I have the time, I also occasionally make cheese," he said. "Mozzarella and feta are my two best so far, and for my next batch, I am going to start aging some brie."

Comstock High School

VFW Donates \$2200 to High School Band

Comstock High School band director, Jason Fritz, often tells his students, "Support the community and the community will support you."

A perfect example of that was shown this fall when Comstock VFW Post 6252, the VFW Auxiliary, and the Dads of Foreign Service Vets donated \$2,200 to the band program.

The donation came following an email from Paul Dungey of the VFW Post who wrote to Mr. Fritz, saying, "For many years the Comstock Band has supported us in the parade we sponsor every Memorial Day. The dedication of your Band and these kids has helped the parade be a great success year after year."

Because of that dedication, the VFW donated money to the band to be used as deemed appropriate.

The checks were presented to Mr. Fritz and the band during halftime at the final home football

game of the season. In addition to the \$1000 from the VFW which the band was aware of, the Auxiliary surprised them with another \$1000 donation. There was also a \$200 check from the Dads of Foreign Service Vets.

During their halftime performance, the Band of Blue honored the VFW by recognizing VFW members who attended the game and by playing "America the Beautiful" to thank veterans for their service.

Mr. Fritz was thrilled with the donation but also notes that it is important on many levels, not just the financial one.

"For me as a teacher, I think the biggest impact is because it shows our students that they are important, that the things that they do matter in the bigger world," he said. "We gladly perform our civic duties as a band with no expectation of thanks or praise. It is our honor to be there."

The donation also speaks to the kindness that's in the world despite all the bad things reported in the news, he said.

"There are people in our community who feel compelled on their own to contribute to our cause unsolicited," he said. "Our students must have had a tremendous impact on them. And our local VFW must consist of incredibly kind and thoughtful people, but we already knew that."

Mr. Fritz plans to use the money for instruction and equipment for a drumming program involving musicians from the community as well as the band. One idea he has in mind is a hand drumming class which could be taught by a friend of his who has studied drumming in Ghana.

"I'm hoping to collaborate with the EFA Dance program for a combined performance of drummers and dancers in the spring," he said.

STEM Academy

Students Connect Through Global Read Aloud

STEM Academy middle school English students joined over 1.5 million kids around the world this fall in the Global Read Aloud program.

The program which began in 2010 had a simple goal from the beginning - having students read one book as a way of making connections. Since the program's inception, over four million students have participated.

This fall sixth and seventh graders in Danielle Tennant's English classes at the STEM Academy read "Amal Unbound" by Aisha Saeed while eighth graders read "Refugee" by Alan Gratz.

"Amal Unbound" is about a Pakistani girl forced into indentured servitude while "Refugee" tells the story of refugees from three different eras: Nazi Germany, 1990s Cuba and contemporary Syria.

Comstock's STEM Academy students partnered with different schools to discuss the books. For example, they have recorded video discussions through FlipGrid to share with partner classrooms in Canada.

They also participated in video chats with schools in Wisconsin and Canada.

In addition, they have commented on other students' blogs and have written postcards about the book which were mailed to schools in North

America, South America, Europe, and Oceania.

They are now receiving postcards in return and are excited to hear what different students from around the world think about the books they have read.



Ava Schreiner watches Flipgrid with a partner school in Canada.

STEM Academy

Students Attend Annie's Big Nature Lesson



Mrs. Swinehart's and Ms. Sandefur's class hike the trails at the Kalamazoo Nature Center.

Third and fourth grade STEM Academy students recently visited the Kalamazoo Nature Center for a week to participate in Annie's Big Nature Lesson program. This is an environmental education program that engages students in authentic scientific investigations supporting earth, physical, and life sciences.

Each day students interacted with onsite experts who supported the teacher's lesson for the day. Students also experienced a quiet observation/writing time each day to reflect on nature.

STEM Academy

Night of Flight Introduces Students to Aviation

The annual Night of Flight, organized by third grade teacher, Ann Swinehart, once again introduced STEM students and their families to the world of aviation.

During the event held at the Battle Creek/Kalamazoo International Airport, students experienced simulators, learned about the science of flight, became familiar with the aviation alphabet, and created paper airplanes.

Students also sat in the cockpit of a Boeing 737 FedEx plane. WMU aviation students conducted informational tours about the different parts of the plane. Students even saw the “black box” and

learned about its purpose.

They also visited the Cirrus SR20 aircraft which is used by WMU students studying to become professional pilots.

Following these events, students went into the maintenance hangar to participate in a paper airplane contest. Students were organized by grade levels in a challenge to see whose paper airplanes could go the farthest. Adults even participated.

Winners received a 3D printed trophy created by STEM Academy art teacher, Jeannine Roys. They also received a book about airplanes provided by the STEM Academy Parent Teacher Group (PTG).



Naomi Collier uses the aviation alphabet to decode a message.

Night of Flight Celebrates Seventh Anniversary

For seven years, the STEM Academy’s Night of Flight has introduced students and their families to aviation. The event was the dream of STEM Academy teacher, Ann Swinehart, who spent a lot of time as a child at the Battle Creek International Airport where her father worked for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

She loved watching the planes take off and land and wanted to bring that excitement to her students.

So, in 2012 she created Night of Flight which is co-chaired by Tom Thinner, WMU recruitment and outreach manager.

“It’s one of my favorite nights of the school year,” said Mrs. Swinehart. “I love the smiles and laughter that Night of Flight provides my children and their families. In addition, there’s the exposure that Tom and his students provide them at such a young age.”



Participants prepare to throw their paper airplanes to see whose can go the farthest.

Green Meadow Elementary

Painting Event Raises Funds for Art Program

Painting trees helped Green Meadow raise nearly \$600 for the school’s art program. About 20 people, including Superintendent Jeff Thoenes, gathered at North 11 for a night of painting.

Led by Green Meadow art teacher, Julia Knieling, participants painted pictures of fall trees. The budding artists could choose the color of their trees but Ms. Knieling helped with tints and hues. All the trees looked different, but they all looked like trees.

Everyone was happy to take home their own work of art.



The artists display their happy little trees.

Green Meadow Elementary

Green Meadow Students Study Apples, Pumpkins

Using their five senses, Green Meadow kindergartners and Young 5's explored apples and pumpkins this fall for the sake of science.

For the apples, the colors were graphed and predictions were made as to which apple tasted best. Apples were peeled and chopped up to make applesauce which made the room smell delicious. Everyone enjoyed tasting the results. Students also wrote about apples.

When the pumpkins were opened up, students enjoyed feeling the slimy fibers with slippery seeds and were amazed by how many seeds there were. Then, they used a hundreds chart to count the seeds. One of the pumpkins had over 500 seeds inside.

The pumpkins were also put through a float test with students predicting whether or not the pumpkins would float. They were wide-eyed to discover that pumpkins do float.



Miss Kimmer's class watches to see if the pumpkin floats.

Green Meadow students and staff are thankful to the parents who donated the apples and pumpkins for this great hands-on learning opportunity.

Students Enjoy the Arts

Classroom instruction and field trips introduced Green Meadow students to the arts this fall.

The whole school attended the DanceWorks Chicago performance at Cheney Auditorium. Students were amazed at the talent, strength, and creativity shown by the dancers.

Students experienced another type of art when Ms. Whalen from KRESA's Education for the Arts program came to Green Meadow and taught the students about art. Then, students traveled to the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts (KIA) to participate in the community art exhibit, *do it*. This exhibit began in Paris in 1993

and has been shown in at least 50 locations around the world. According to the KIA website, "Each *do it* exhibition is uniquely site-specific because it engages the local community in a dialogue that responds to and adds a new set of instructions, while it remains global in the scope of its ever-expanding repertoire."



Kindergartners pondered the meaning of candy with a KIA docent.

Students looked at various art installations and added a wish to the tree in one area. They were asked to hum in some areas. Many kindergartners puzzled over the candy in another area.

Green Meadow Celebrates the 50th Day of School



Clockwise from above: Fourth graders celebrate the 50th day of school by dressing in 50s fashions. Stephen Wincek, Kennedy Walters, Ameerah Rimpson, Indigo Ballard-Bradley Emmy Kimmer. Amy Stacy poses with second graders.

North Elementary

North Raises Money for Blood Cancer Cures



Kindergartner, Drake Walls, donates to Pasta for Pennies.

North Elementary students recently raised \$1,475 in Olive Garden's Pasta for Pennies program which supports the efforts of The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) to find cures and provide treatment for those suffering from these blood cancers.

In this three-week effort, students brought in their spare change for LLS. Then Olive Garden provided a pasta party for the classroom which raised the most funds. This year, Mrs. Lyster's and Mrs. Storteboom's classrooms won the party.

Besides being a fundraiser, Pasta for Pennies also educates students about blood cancers.

"Students become aware of the disease and with this experience they learn more about cancers and how children and adults develop and overcome cancer," said teacher Laura Thompson. "It gives them the feeling of being helpful in stopping blood cancers in the world."

For Ms. Thompson, this fundraiser has a personal aspect since she is now in remission after having Hodgkin's Lymphoma a year ago.

"As a survivor, I am willing to answer questions and can show children how cancer can be a big part of lives," she said. "They learn the effects of cancer and the kinds of treatments. I am happy I got to be part of this amazing program."

Ms. Thompson thanks everyone for their support of Pasta for Pennies.

"This was a great opportunity for North Elementary to shine," she said.

Olive Garden has sponsored Pasta for Pennies for more than 20 years. Since 1994, participants in the program have raised more than \$315 million for LLS.

Anyone who would like more information, please contact Ms. Thompson at thompsonl@comstockps.org.

Father/Daughter Winter Dance

Girls of any age with their Fathers!
A grand night of Dancing, Games and Food!

Saturday, February 2, 2019

at Comstock High School

Dancing and games from 6-8:30 p.m.

Pizza and refreshments served from 6-7 p.m.

\$20/couple and \$5/extra daughter

Professional photographs available at an extra charge beginning at 5:30 p.m.

More information – Call Tinessa Patterson at 779-1734

Advance registration highly recommended to help us get an accurate count for food.

Father / Daughter Dance Registration Form

Return by mail to:

Comstock High School
Attn: Tinessa Patterson
2107 N. 26th St.
Kalamazoo, MI 49048

Father _____

Daughter _____

Phone _____ Daughter's Current Grade _____

School _____

Please make checks payable to: Comstock High School
Pre-registered names will be at the registration table.
No tickets will be sent!

***In the case of inclement weather, cancellations will be on TV

Athletic Department News

Hall of Fame Induction Banquet

The 2019 Hall of Fame induction banquet will be held on Saturday, April 27, at the WMU Fetzer Center. Doors will open at 5 p.m. with dinner starting at 6 p.m. and the induction to follow at 7 p.m. Tickets to this great event can be purchased from the Comstock Athletic Office for \$25. Come support these great Comstock alumni and coaches and visit with family and friends. The deadline to purchase tickets is April 22.

Father-Daughter Dance

The Father-Daughter dance will be on Saturday, February 2, from 6-8:30 p.m. at Comstock High School. Pictures can be taken at 5:30 p.m. and food will be served from 6-7 p.m. Please return the registration form by January 31 to help us get an accurate count for food. The competitive cheer team will be hosting this event this year. Please call Tinessa Lewis at 269- 779-1734 for more information.

Mother-Son Bowling Event

The mother son bowling event will be held on Saturday, February 9, from 2-5 p.m. Check-in begins at 1:30 p.m. at Eastland Bowl. It includes three hours of bowling, shoe rental, pizza and cookies. Please call

Shirley Doorlag at 250-8712 with any questions.

Boys Soccer Conference Champions

Congratulations to the Boys Soccer team (bottom photo) for another great season. The team won the conference for the third year in a row. Evan Veenhuis had another awesome year scoring 44 goals. He finishes his senior year with 131 career goals and set four Comstock records.

Third Team All-State Soccer

Congratulations to Evan Veenhuis (photo below, right) for making Third Team All State. Evan is a three-time conference champion and two-time BCS Conference MVP. He also is a district champion. He finishes his career with 131 goals at Comstock which is a career Comstock record.

Girls Golf State Qualifiers

Congratulations to Abby House and Emily Dodd (photo below, left) for their great play in golf to make it to the state meet. They did a wonderful job representing Comstock. Congratulations on a great season.



Mother/Son Bowling Event

Boys of any age with their Mothers!
A grand night of Bowling, Pizza and Fun!

Saturday, February 9, 2019

2 to 5 p.m.

Check-in begins at 1:30 p.m.

Eastland Bowl

\$23/couple and \$7/extra son

Includes 3 hours of bowling, shoe rental, pizza and cookies.

More information – Call Shirley at 250-8712

Registration/Money due by Wednesday, February 6.

We have to CAP at 148 people.

Mother/Son Bowling Registration Form

Return by mail to:
Comstock High School
Attn: Justin Ansel
2107 N. 26th St.
Kalamazoo, MI 49048

Mother's name _____

Son's/Sons' name(s) & grade(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ School _____

Bumpers needed: Yes or No (circle one)

If you wish to bowl with another family, check in together day of event.

Please make checks payable to: Comstock Athletics
Pre-registered names will be at the registration table.
No tickets will be sent!

***In the case of inclement weather, cancellations will be on TV

Comstock Public Schools 2018-2019 School Calendar

December 4	High School Conferences	4:00-8:00 p.m.	Full Day Students K-12
Dec. 24–Jan. 4, 2019	WINTER RECESS		No Students / No Teachers
January 22	Half Day Students K-12 (High School Exams)		Half Day Students & Teachers K-12
January 23	Half Day Students K-12 (High School Exams)		Half Day Students & Teachers K-12
January 24	Half Day Students K-12 (High School Exams)		Half Day Students & Teachers K-12
January 25	Professional Development A.M. K-12 END OF 1ST SEMESTER		
	Records Day P.M.	8:00am-3:00pm	No Students K-12
February 22	MID-WINTER BREAK		No Students / No Teachers

COMSTOCK HIGH SCHOOL WINTER SPORTS SCHEDULES

Boys Freshman Basketball

Thu, Dec 6	@ Buchanan HS	6:00PM
Thu, Dec 13	Brandywine High School	6:00PM
Tue, Dec 18	@ Allegan Public Schools	4:15PM
Wed, Dec 19	Berrien Springs HS	6:00PM
Tue, Jan 8	Kalamazoo Christian HS	4:30PM
Thu, Jan 10	@ Parchment High School	TBA
Fri, Jan 18	@ Bridgman Public Schools	4:15PM
Fri, Jan 25	@ Gull Lake High School	4:15PM
Tue, Jan 29	Hastings High School	4:30PM
Thu, Jan 31	Buchanan HS	6:00PM

Boys JV Basketball

Fri, Dec 7	@ Buchanan HS	4:30PM
Thu, Dec 13	Brandywine High School	7:30PM
Tue, Dec 18	@ Allegan Public Schools	5:45PM
Wed, Dec 19	Berrien Springs HS	7:30PM
Tue, Jan 8	Kalamazoo Christian HS	6:00PM
Thu, Jan 10	@ Parchment High School	TBA
Tue, Jan 15	@ Gobles High School	5:30PM
Fri, Jan 18	@ Bridgman Public Schools	5:45PM
Tue, Jan 22	@ Lawrence Jr.-Sr. HS	5:30PM
Fri, Jan 25	@ Gull Lake High School	5:45PM
Tue, Jan 29	Hastings High School	6:00PM
Thu, Jan 31	Buchanan HS	7:30PM

Boys Varsity Basketball

Fri, Dec 7	@ Buchanan HS	7:30PM
Fri, Dec 14	Brandywine High School	7:30PM
Tue, Dec 18	@ Allegan Public Schools	7:15PM
Thu, Dec 20	Berrien Springs HS	7:30PM
Tue, Jan 8	Kalamazoo Christian HS	7:30PM
Fri, Jan 11	@ Parchment High School	7:00PM
Tue, Jan 15	@ Gobles High School	7:00PM
Fri, Jan 18	@ Bridgman Public Schools	7:15PM
Tue, Jan 22	@ Lawrence Jr.-Sr. HS	7:00PM
Fri, Jan 25	@ Gull Lake High School	7:15PM
Tue, Jan 29	Hastings High School	7:30PM

Girls JV Basketball

Tue, Dec 4	@ Vicksburg High School	5:45PM
Thu, Dec 6	@ Buchanan HS	7:30PM
Fri, Dec 14	Brandywine High School	4:30PM
Tue, Dec 18	Allegan Public Schools	5:00PM
Thu, Dec 20	Berrien Springs HS	4:30PM
Tue, Jan 8	@ Kalamazoo Christian HS	5:30PM
Thu, Jan 10	@ Parchment High School	TBA
Thu, Jan 10	Olivet	5:30PM
Tue, Jan 15	Plainwell Schools	5:00PM
Thu, Jan 17	@ Bridgman Public Schools	6:00PM
Thu, Jan 24	Gull Lake High School	5:30PM

Girls Varsity Basketball

Tue, Dec 4	@ Vicksburg High School	7:15PM
Fri, Dec 7	@ Buchanan HS	4:30PM
Fri, Dec 14	Brandywine High School	6:00PM
Tue, Dec 18	Allegan Public Schools	6:30PM
Thu, Dec 20	Berrien Springs HS	6:00PM
Sat, Dec 29	@ Kent City High School (at GVSU)	TBA
Tue, Jan 8	@ Kalamazoo Christian HS	7:00PM
Thu, Jan 10	Olivet	7:00PM
Fri, Jan 11	@ Parchment High School	5:30PM
Tue, Jan 15	Plainwell Schools	6:30PM
Thu, Jan 17	@ Bridgman Public Schools	7:30PM
Thu, Jan 24	Gull Lake High School	7:00PM

Boys/Girls Varsity Bowling

Mon, Jan 7	@ Hackett Catholic Central	4:00PM
Wed, Jan 9	Parchment HS	4:00PM
Mon, Jan 14	@ Schoolcraft HS	4:00PM
Wed, Jan 16	@ Constantine HS	4:00PM
Mon, Jan 21	Coloma High School	4:00PM
Wed, Jan 23	Bronson Junior/Senior HS	4:00PM
Mon, Jan 28	@ Galesburg-Augusta HS	4:00PM
Wed, Jan 30	@ Kalamazoo Christian HS	4:00PM

Boys Varsity Wrestling

Wed, Dec 5	@ Kalamazoo Central Quad	5:00PM
Fri, Dec 7	@ Olivet Invitational - B Team	5:00PM
Sat, Dec 8	@ Big Rapids Invitational	9:00AM
Wed, Dec 12	@ Gull Lake Quad	6:00PM
Fri, Dec 14	@ Holland JV Invitational	5:00PM
Sat, Dec 15	@ Gull Lake Invitational	9:30AM
Sat, Dec 29	Comstock Varsity Invitational	9:30AM
Wed, Jan 9	BCS Parchment Dual vs BS & Lawrence	6:00PM
Sat, Jan 12	@ Parchment Team Invitational	9:00AM
Tue, Jan 15	BCS River Valley Dual vs RV & NB	6:00PM
Sat, Jan 19	Comstock Varsity Team Tourney	9:30AM
Wed, Jan 23	BCS Brandywine Dual vs Brandy & Buch	6:00PM
Fri, Jan 25	Comstock Varsity Invitational	4:00PM
Wed, Jan 30	BCS Comstock Tri w/ Parch, Coloma	6:00PM
Sat, Feb 2	BCS Conference Meet - River Valley	9:00AM

Girls Varsity Competitive Cheer

Sat, Jan 12	@ Gull Lake Invitational	TBA
Wed, Jan 16	@ BCS Parchment Jamboree	6:00PM
Wed, Jan 23	@ BCS Bridgman Jamboree	6:00PM
Tue, Jan 29	@ BCS Berrien Springs Jamboree	6:00PM
Sat, Feb 9	@ BCS Conference Meet - Parchment	10:00AM

