

The Comstock Communicator

COMSTOCK HIGH SCHOOL | COMPASS HIGH SCHOOL & ADULT EDUCATION | COMSTOCK MIDDLE SCHOOL | COMSTOCK ELEMENTARY | STEM ACADEMY | CELA



**HAPPY
HOLIDAYS**

ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

From the
Superintendent
page 2

Board
Briefs
page 3

Faye Goldner
Retires After
34 Years
at CPS
page 4

Superintendent's
Office Hires
New Executive
Assistant
page 5

School
News
pages 5-10

2020-21
CPS
School
Calendar
page 9

Comstock
Library
News
pages 11-12

MORE NEWS

*Turn over to read
Center Point*

A newsletter about the
Comstock
Community Center



From the Superintendent

Dear Comstock Community,

The well-worn phrase of “going home for the holidays” is a fitting statement for me and my family as it is for many. Going home is the place where we gather with family and friends, and share not only gifts, but the present of our presence with each other. In fact, my wife likes to kid me about how I’ve worn out this phrase when I have forgotten to buy her a gift.

However, this year will be unlike others as we consider how to share our time with our loved ones since safety must be considered first and foremost.

For my family, going home has always meant dealing with holiday travel—catching a flight from Detroit to Tucson, a non-stop flight when available. As we approach our destination and peer out the windows, bright sunlight reveals mountains and craggy desert hills dotted with saguaros.

Upon arrival, we walk off the plane with heavy coats, caps, and gloves and are greeted by family dressed in t-shirts and shorts. We get in the car and off we go. A whirlwind of visits, family gatherings, restaurants, and drives through our favorite desert landscapes, or the University of Arizona campus to get our Wildcat gear await us. If we’re extra lucky, we can catch a basketball game at the UA’s McKale Center. Did I mention the fabulous Mexican cuisine?

When it’s time to leave, our suitcases are fatter than when we arrived. We say our good-byes and share a year’s worth of hugs and kisses, with promises

to return soon.

Our trip back home to Michigan has often meant delays at airports, sleeping in cots at the terminal, and getting in long lines. But we often look back to even those trying times with humor. *Dad, do you remember the time at Chicago’s Midway Airport during that blizzard when the terminal crew brought out the cots way past midnight and then they woke us up at 4 a.m.?*

This year, we won’t be traveling, but that has happened before. With jingle bells in hand, we’ll make the calls and sing our greetings, get on FaceTime, pass the phone around, and say hello to all. We’ll share photos and group messages. We might even try Zoom this year.

The most important part of this season is to celebrate life in its fullest with your loved ones and sometimes that takes a dose of creativity.

I’m glad ‘going home’ this year means enjoying our Comstock community with my family, including our son who lives nearby in Grand Rapids. And I’m sure the other members of our family, our cats, Cosmo (named for Comstock’s mascot) and Dante, will appreciate it.

May your season be filled with joy and love and peace. Be well and stay safe!

Happy Holidays!
Dr. Jeff Thoenes
Superintendent

Superintendent’s Update

As our Colt Nation nears the holiday season, I want to thank you for your continued collaboration with our district’s COVID-19 safety and response plan. Our community’s adherence to and support for this plan are key to keeping our buildings open for face-to-face instruction and learning. Our Board of Education and Leadership Team understand that living with and adjusting to the coronavirus pandemic is neither pleasant nor easy. However, it is clear that the pandemic is not going away anytime soon and that its disruption to the normal operations of our district is becoming the new normal.

Of course, schools are not the only part of our society experiencing the negative influence of the virus. With the holiday season quickly approaching, my mind naturally recalls family gatherings, bountiful meals, and social gatherings. How will the pandemic alter our cherished traditions? Currently, the State of Michigan and the federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC) do not have any travel restrictions for the Kalamazoo area.

Continued on next page



COMSTOCK PUBLIC SCHOOLS
A SCHOOL DISTRICT DEDICATED TO KIDS
www.comstockps.org

Dr. Jeff Thoenes
Superintendent

BOARD OF EDUCATION

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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.



@comstockPS

Bus Drivers Help Technology Staff

The district's bus drivers have stepped up to help the technology staff with new Chromebooks. They unboxed, labeled, and enrolled 366 devices into the Google administration console.

"Their help has been crucial to our district's functioning," said Mark Peeters, CPS Technology director.

Students Achieve Success in Virtual Academy

Students are experiencing success through the personalized and self-paced learning approach of the Virtual Academy.

Students Randy Powell and Samantha Harmon have successfully completed the required classes to

earn their diplomas, reports Pam Dudley, Virtual Academy director.

Randy will be looking for a factory position while Samantha wants to enter the medical field to become a nurse.

Superintendent's Update

Continued from previous page

However, I ask that each family evaluate the wisdom and safety of either hosting or traveling to large traditional family gatherings, and consider pandemic-safe alternatives instead. Lamentably, large family celebrations of people who perhaps traveled miles from diverse areas to come together are ripe to become superspreader events.

Please take all necessary precautions regardless of where or how you celebrate the holidays. Ultimately, I ask all of the members of our school community to evaluate your exposure risk and consider the need to quarantine before returning to school.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me either via email, phone call, or personal visit. I can be reached at thoenesj@comstockps.org or 269-250-8906. If you happen to see me at a future school event or in the community, please take the time to say "hi" and allow me to introduce myself - I look forward to our conversation!

Board Briefs

REGULAR MEETING (VIRTUAL)

August 24, 2020

- Approved hiring Madelyn Buhrman, First Grade Teacher
- Approved the following retirements:
 - Laurie Anderson, STEM Academy Second Grade Teacher
 - Faye Goldner, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, Board of Education
- Approved the following resignations:
 - Justina Goodyke, Kindergarten Teacher
 - Molly Miller, CMS Resource Room Teacher
 - Kim Simonds, CMS Special Education Teacher
- Ratified the 2020-21 calendar, Schedule B and Professional Development with the Comstock Education Association.
- Approved repealing the current NEOLA policies, bylaws, and administrative guidelines and adopting the Thrun policy manual, with the exception of the current bullying policy.
- Approved a daily least rate of \$100 for the district's Fully Automated Timing System (FAT) so that Stampede Timing may lease the equipment.

REGULAR MEETING (VIRTUAL)

September 14, 2020

- Provided time for input on the proposed modification of the anti-bullying policy #5207. No one commented on the policy.
- Superintendent Thoenes reported that the transportation department received a perfect score on the Michigan State Police bus inspection.
- Attorneys from the Thrun Law Firm presented a \$500 donation to the CPS Foundation as a retirement gift to Faye Goldner and thanked her for her years of service.

- Parents and teachers spoke about their concerns for students not having in-person instruction.
- Approved the administration's recommendation to 1) return to learn in buildings for pre-kindergarten – fifth grades; 2) approve in-person instruction for the EFE auto tech class; 3) allow in-person learning for the CHS functional program; 4) continue STEM Academy aftercare program; 5) allow in-person SAT testing on October 14.
- Approved repealing policy #5517.01 Anti-Bullying, and adopting Anti-Bullying policy #5207.
- Moved into closed session for discussing negotiations with the CEA, conducting the superintendent's quarterly evaluation and discussing attorney-client privileged communications.

REGULAR MEETING (VIRTUAL)

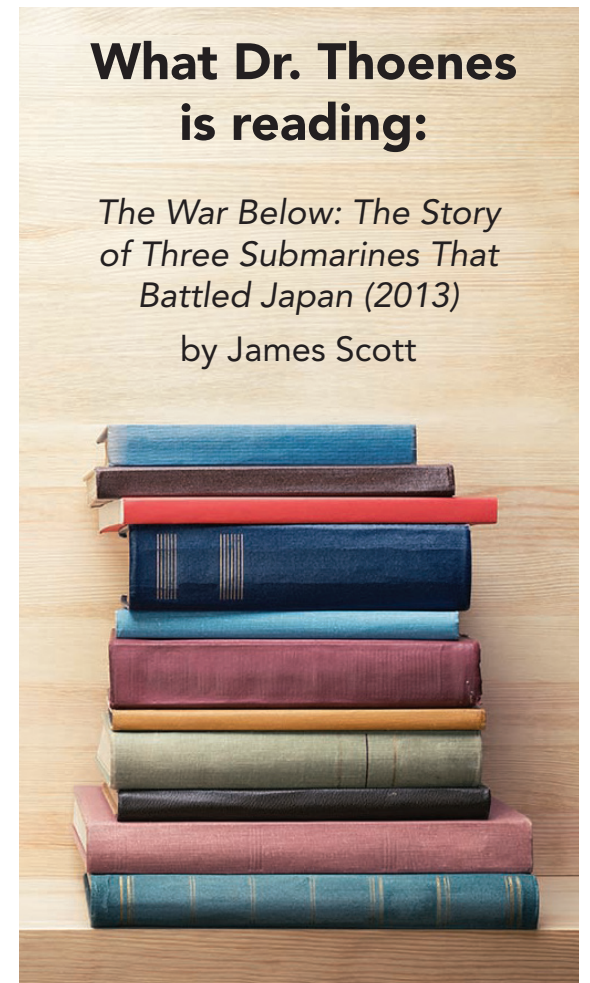
September 28, 2020

- Dr. James Rutherford, director of the Kalamazoo County Health Department and Epidemiologist, Mary Franks, provided current information and data relating to Kalamazoo County and the COVID-19 virus.
- Recognized Sue Duncan, auditorium manager, for bringing the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra to the auditorium for their annual Halloween Concert.
- Several people shared their concerns for the safety of students and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Moved into closed session to discuss negotiations with the Comstock Education Association.
- Approved ratifying the Letter of Agreement for the 2020-21 school year with the Comstock Education Association.

What Dr. Thoenes is reading:

The War Below: The Story of Three Submarines That Battled Japan (2013)

by James Scott



Faye Goldner Retires After 34 Years

Faye Goldner, executive assistant to the superintendent, is retiring, having served six different superintendents over the course of 34 years.

“I can honestly say I never dreaded coming to work,” she said, something she attributes to Bob Hamet, the superintendent who hired her and who started her out on the right track of what was important.

“For him, it was family, the relationships that you built here,” she said. “He was so loved by everybody. He was just a good role model. He led by example.”

Comstock has definitely been a great place to work.

“Not coming from an educational background, I’ve learned an awful lot and I admire the administrators, teachers and support staff who work here,” she said.

The COVID pandemic is a good example of all the hard work staff and administrators have done.

“They’ve worked hard on all the changes,” she said. “If people only knew the amount of time the staff have put into making the preparedness plans, return-to-learn plans, only to revise the plans when the laws changed - which seemed like almost daily - to make sure the kids are safe, that they’ve covered all the bases and followed all the laws. I’m just in awe.”

The superintendents she’s worked with have been very supportive, even with each one having a different leadership style.

“There would be a learning curve for both of us, but once we got in sync I feel we worked good as a team,” she said. “I was always thankful that they valued my input and insight, and listened to my perspective. They knew I would speak honestly and I wasn’t afraid to share a difference of opinion.”

She’s worked closely with many different administrative teams, finding them to be great to work with and enjoying getting to know them on a personal level.

“We have had many laughs with so many, many jokesters in the group and we’ve had some tears,” she said. “They are very supportive of each other, and want what is best for the students. Administrators spend countless hours away from their families trying to make sure their students have a positive educational experience.”

During her tenure, she has worked with over 45 different board of education members, finding them to be dedicated, caring individuals.

“School boards have one of the hardest positions

to hold, and they make very important decisions for a school district,” she said. “Sometimes their decisions weren’t always popular, but they made them with the students’, and the District’s, best interests in mind.”

Having worked in the district since 1986, she’s seen a lot of changes, particularly in the area of technology.

For example, Dr. Hamet didn’t use a computer but instead dictated everything. That meant she had to transcribe the document and give it back to him for additional revisions, something that might happen two or three times with one document.

“Now they do their own communications for the most part,” she said. “Periodically, they’ll want it printed out on letterhead. That has drastically changed as far as me doing correspondence for them.”

Today, there’s not much paperwork coming in which has to be placed into a file.

“People keep their files on their own computers,” she said. “Technology has changed my position a lot.”

Years ago one of her jobs was to print out and collate all the information for the board members in preparation for the board meeting. Sometimes those packets would be one to two inches thick.

“Now, we use BoardBook and it’s all done electronically,” she said. “It’s time saving in many ways and it’s saving many, many trees.”

But dealing with all the new technology has also been stressful.

“Technology is not my forte so I would get frustrated,” she said. “This seems like it should be so simple to do. We have a really patient technology department here and I give them a call and say, ‘I can’t figure this out.’ They get that and come and help me out.”

The fun things she recalls about her time in the district include Corporate Olympics and Staff Shenanigans.

“I remember what the camaraderie was like when the staff from the different buildings got together to do Corporate Olympics,” she said.

Staff Shenanigans was a talent show, directed by Duwayne Hunt.

“That was so much fun,” she said. “We have many, many talented staff members. It brought the staff together. The community enjoyed it. I worked backstage getting the acts lined up.”

She still laughs remembering a skit done by Larry Dopp, Bob Hamet, Howard Ewles, and Tom



Retiring executive assistant, Faye Goldner, was recently honored at a staff luncheon prior to her retirement. Along with cards and some cash, she received a Yeti cooler which she plans to put to good use on the back of a golf cart.

Conor. They all had on long wigs and wore tutus and performed like a chorus line. Tom Conor also portrayed Diana Ross backed up by Sandy Standish, Linda Staviski, and Linda Kwasny as the Supremes.

In retirement, Ms. Goldner will miss the people the most.

“I thoroughly enjoy the socialization, the contact with people,” she said. “You get to know so many of your co-workers when you see them on a regular basis and when you’ve worked in the district for so long.”

She’s also enjoyed helping the staff members with whatever issues come up.

“If I can’t help them, I certainly know whom they can call to get their questions answered,” she said. “Maybe I was an ambassador for the staff. I felt a sense of pride to help people to get the answers they need.”

For her life after retirement, she doesn’t have a lot of plans yet.

“I don’t have any plans right now,” she said. “Until I get myself acclimated to not coming into work, I will have to take it one day at a time. Not going to work will be a huge void for me. One minute I’m fine with it and the next, not so much. This has been my life for so many years. What comes after?”

In December, she and her children, their spouses, and grandchildren will be heading to the Florida Keys for a retirement celebration.

In the long term, she hopes to get involved in volunteering at her grandchildren’s schools in Schoolcraft and Battle Creek. She has two sons, a stepdaughter, five granddaughters and three grandsons.

New Executive Assistant Hired for Superintendent's Office

Ashley Lavanway has been hired as the new executive assistant in the superintendent's office, replacing Faye Goldner who is retiring.

A native of Lawrence, Michigan, Mrs. Lavanway graduated from Lawrence Jr./Sr. High School and then received an associate degree in accounting from Baker College in Muskegon.

She began her career working for the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District in their accounts receivable department. Then, she and her husband, Dennis, moved to California where they both worked for the same startup company. After that, she worked for Herff-Jones in their yearbook division.

Returning to Michigan about six years ago, she worked briefly in the office of the elementary school in Lawrence and from there she went to Mattawan Consolidated Schools as the executive assistant to the superintendent where she's worked for the last 4-1/2 years.

In her role as executive assistant to the superintendent, she's enjoyed interacting with the community.

"No day is exactly the same," she said. "You start to learn who people are in the community. The school is kind of the hub in the community and to be in that hub and to be able to interact with different groups within that community and parents, students, it's fun for me."

Her time in Mattawan working with superintendent, Dr. Robin Buchler, also helped her to grow in her profession.

"She always told me, 'I know you can do more,'" she said. "She kept pushing me to learn and to do better and to push myself to continuously grow. Every time I get the opportunity, I jump on it. I like to continue to grow."

She also attributes her success to Ms. Buchler.

"She was a fighter," said Mrs. Lavanway. "She went out and always gave 110 percent. She listened to everybody. She pushed everybody to do their best."

With Comstock being a smaller school, she's looking forward to being a more integral part of the team.

"My organizational skills, and my experience in Mattawan have prepared me to move on and excel here at Comstock," she said.

Also, at Mattawan, she worked with the technology department on updating the website and with the superintendent on the district's rebranding efforts.

Outside of work, she and her husband enjoy kayaking, going to different places for each adventure.

"Next summer, we want to kayak the Pictured Rocks," she said. "They do kayak tours. That would be our next big adventure."

They also enjoy working on home renovation projects. Her husband is a project manager/engineer at FBN, a builder of replacement parts, in Plainwell.

She also enjoys cooking, baking, and making ice cream. The ice cream making has turned into a



little side business that was just taking off before the pandemic hit.

That venture began a couple of years ago when she made ice cream for her husband's work. The owner of the company liked it so much that he asked if she had ever sold it.

"I had never thought of that," she said. "I just did it for fun. That kind of started that and it started to take off until COVID hit."

She went to craft fairs and then advertised it online to her work colleagues in Mattawan and the word began to get out.

Her favorite flavor is what her husband named "Peanut Butter Squared," peanut butter ice cream with peanut butter swirls.

"I have a base recipe that I use and play around with what I think sounds good," she said. "Some people have given me some suggestions and I have taken that on and created something."

One flavor that didn't work was a blueberry wine ice cream.

"It did not turn out the way that I thought it would," she said. "That's all part of the trial and error."

Mrs. Lavanway, whose first day in Comstock was in early November, can be reached at lavanway@comstockps.org or at 269-250-8907.

Comstock High School

Senior Honored for Excellence in STEAM

Senior Shelby Alexander has been named a 2020 Student Art & Science Award Recipient by Western Michigan University in conjunction with the Michigan Aviation Hall of Fame.

The annual Science Innovation Hall of Fame Awards recognize students, educators, organizations, and individuals who have shown support of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM).

Shelby's fascination with science goes back to first grade when she saw another class learning about the planets, tornadoes, and volcanoes, while her class didn't, something she felt was unfair.

"I was so infuriated by this unfairness that I went to a science summer camp to learn just those things," she said. "The shade of green I wore my entire first grade experience nudged me into the STEAM direction."

Last summer, she designed video games and produced a story-game project named "Mystere," which gave her the opportunity to lead people in science and technology but also in art and creative computing.

She uses her website, GitHub, to share her passion for STEAM. She posts weekly poems written in programming languages along with her latest

programming projects, competitions, and robotics team information.

Her list of extracurricular activities includes not only science and technology clubs and events but also participation in Theatre Kalamazoo New PlayFest and the First Congregational Church Choir.

"I have always been the only theatre kid, the only artsy type in school, and I am very grateful that I get to bring the 'A' to STEM schools," she said.

Shelby attends Comstock High School as well as the Kalamazoo Math and Science Center.

Comstock High School

NHS Inducts Seven New Members

The high school's National Honor Society recently inducted seven new members from the junior class.

The new members are Jada Cook, Alex Patov, Taylor Stratton, Matthew Searles, Madigan Webster, Amelia Hall, and Kyla Owens.

The induction ceremony was held outside due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"The seniors did an outstanding job creating a safe and socially distant induction," said NHS advisor, Colleen Grueter. "It was wonderful to celebrate with students, family members, and friends. We cannot wait to get started working within our community."



New members of the National Honor Society are (left to right) Jada Cook, Alex Patov, Taylor Stratton, Matthew Searles, Madigan Webster, Amelia Hall, and Kyla Owens.

Band of Blue Schedules Winter Concert

Due to the pandemic, the Band of Blue's winter concert will be presented virtually on Wednesday, December 16, at 7 p.m., and will feature many high school, middle school, and STEM students.

Students have been preparing individual acts similar to a talent show submission. There will be instrumental solos, original songs, song covers,

and Color Guard performances. Students were asked to tap into their favorite musical activities and get creative. "The results have been impressive," said Mr. Jason Fritz, band director.

To join us, keep your eye on social media for the link or you can email Mr. Fritz at fritzj@comstockps.org.

Pep Band and Flag Corps Back in Action

Practicing social distancing and wearing masks, members of the Colt Pep Band and Flag Corps performed for the home game against the Decatur Raiders.

"This performance was voluntary," said Jason Fritz, band director. "I was thrilled with how well the students performed. Even though we had to leave a bit early due to an impending rain storm, the

experience was enjoyable for everyone involved."

The students were socially distanced and when not playing, they dutifully wore their masks. That was also true of the Flag Corps.

"The occasion was a prime example of students actively participating in district programming while adhering strictly to our COVID-19 safety protocols," said Mr. Fritz.

Football Team Makes Playoffs

Congratulations to the Comstock Colt Varsity football team for making the playoffs this year, the first time since 2007. The team clinched the playoff spot after a 34-20 victory over the Decatur Raiders.

The team ended the pandemic-shortened regular season with three wins and three losses. The team is coached by Jason Hayes.

Students Beautify School through Gardening

Students in the CHS Functional Program have been doing a ton of gardening this fall. They weeded, prepared flower beds, and planted flow-

ers. Thanks to these students, the community and the high school staff and students will be enjoying beautiful flowers now and in the spring.

Teachers Receive Star Awards

Nominated by their students, several high school teachers have received Star Teacher Awards.

Congratulations to:

Math teacher - Ryan Warner

Auto technology teacher - Matt Basse

Choir and Music teacher - Beth Stachura

Kevin Hamilton, intervention specialist, has created a bulletin board near the library so students and staff can see all the Star Award winners.

High School Creates Welcome Back Video

Students returning to face-to-face instruction in early November were greeted with a welcome back video created by Kevin Hamilton, intervention specialist, and Jimmie Cotter, post-secondary dean.

The video focused on health and safety expectations for students. Teachers shared the video during first period to help students clearly understand how to "return to learn."

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

Compass High School

Compass Students of the Month

Compass High School has named several students as Students of the Month for September and October.

September honorees were Kaylan Ruiz, Jayden Fields, Daniel Menzie Jr., Atrévion Nathan, and Zoey Lesman.

Counselor Dare Coffee and Dean Meghan Folkerson surprised the recipients with a home

visit to present them with their recognition certificates.

For October, Jayden and Kaylan once again received Student of the Month honors along with Mary Bradford.

Ms. Dare and Ms. Folkerson have created a Student-of-the Month bulletin board in the school's main hallway to honor these students.

Comstock Middle

Students Learn Vocabulary with 'Hangman' and SAT WOW

Students in Christine Hopson's math class at the middle school are learning new vocabulary words with the help of the Scholastic Aptitude Test Word of the Week (SATWOW) and the traditional word game "Hangman." Every Monday morning, when students arrive in class, Ms.

Hopson engages the students in a game of "Hangman." Students take turns guessing letters until they can name the word, and then she gives them the definition.

This helps students prepare for the vocabulary portion of the Scholastic Aptitude Test.

Comstock Elementary

Elementary Has New Shields for Students

Student-size clear-plastic desk shields are now in place at Comstock Elementary School, reports Susan Caswell, principal.

"These devices will be used to help create a

protective barrier between students and thus help mitigate the spread of the coronavirus," she said.

The kindergarten classes have already been using dividers that use opaque plastic shields.

Community Auditorium Events December 2020/January 2021

While these events are not open to the public, we are sharing the information so you can see the taped performances at a later date.

December:

December 9 - STEM/MS/HS Band will tape a performance and share at a later date.

December 12-13 - Nutcracker Ballet - Excel Dance. Limited viewing, not open to the public.

December 15 - West Michigan Home School Fine Arts (WMHFA) will tape a performance and share at a later date.

January:

January 7, 2021 - KCMS Winter Play: Matinee at 12:45-2:15 .pm. Performance at 7 p.m. Limited seating will be available, not open to the general public.

January 30, 2021 - Kalamazoo County Fire Chiefs-Winter Seminar.

Comstock Elementary

Operation Warm Distributes Warm Attire to CES Students

Elementary students in need recently received winter coats thanks to Operation Warm, a non-profit organization whose goal is to provide students with winter coats.

Whitney Wilkins, parent liaison for CES, connected the school with Operation Warm with the result that 450 brand new coats were given to students.

In 2019, Operation Warm distributed about 410,000 coats to 1200 communities through the help of more than 800 partners.

With the pandemic's effect on the economy, students will need the warm coats more than ever, according to the group's founder and CEO, Dick Sanford.

If you would like to help through giving a donation and/or volunteering, go to operationwarm.org. A donation as small as \$20 can provide a coat to a needy child.

CES Teacher Wins Meemic Mini Grant

Sherria VanSparrentak, kindergarten teacher at the elementary school, received a grant from the Meemic Foundation for school materials to start the year.

Her *PopIn2Win* grant application was selected to receive funding for back-to-school supplies. With her winning grant, she received a \$75 credit to use with Office Depot online.

PopIn2Win is an award given monthly by the Meemic Foundation. Meemic is an insurance company for educators. Their Foundation has been providing grants for educators in schools and colleges since 1992.



CES Receives \$15,000 for Arts Education



Comstock Elementary School has been awarded \$15,000 to fund its Leading Education through the Arts & Discovery (LEAD) Project. This is the second year the school has been awarded the grant.

The Michigan Council for Arts & Cultural Affairs made the award based on grant proposals they had received earlier in the year. Shawn McMeekan and Wendy Shreve, the school's Aesthetic Education Coordinators, worked with the director of EFA's Aesthetic Education program, Kevin Dodd, to submit the school's grant proposal.

The LEAD Project makes it possible for each of the school's classroom teachers to team with professional teaching artists from the community for four units of instruction in the arts whether it's theater, visual arts, or dance.

Each unit will provide students with six lessons that will prepare them to view and appreciate a quality work of art being presented in the community. Fortunately, all of this year's works of art will be available virtually.

Students will engage with the art form and will be asked to make the same kinds of decisions the professional artists would have made when creating their own work of art. These experiences will build each student's capacity for appreciating the arts and the impact they can have on our community.

The students have already completed their first unit which prepared them to see the KIA's



Kindergartners Aubree Johnson and Nathan Wirtjes from Miss Buscher's class, participate in a virtual arts lesson.

guest exhibit, "Cultural Encounters: Art of Asian Diasporas in Latin America & the Caribbean, 1945-Present."

The remaining three units will prepare students to see the stage shows "Adventures in Storytelling" and "Storytelling: Orpheus & Eurydice", performances by "SOLE Defined" and "Inlet Dance Theatre," and the KIA's exhibit "Framing Moments: Photography from the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts."

This project is supported in part by an award from the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs.

Box Tops Go High Tech

Collecting Box Tops for Education is still happening at CES. However, it has gone high tech and is now an app. Go to the app store and download the Box Tops 4 Education app.

Follow the directions to find CES and take a photo of your receipt. It works just like you were cutting out those little pink coupons which are still on some boxes so you can send those in, too.

However, you only have 48 hours to send in the photo of your receipt. Keep looking for Box Tops for Education products.

The library really appreciates your assistance in purchasing books.

Check the date on your Box Tops and if you find some that have not expired and would like to send them in, the school's address is Comstock Elementary School, 1423 N 28th St., Kalamazoo MI 49048.

Comstock Elementary

Church Makes and Donates Sneeze Guards

Members of the Kalamazoo Community Church made and donated sneeze guards for the tables in the Young 5's and kindergarten classrooms at Comstock Elementary School. The sneeze guards allow students to be socially distant and safe when sitting at their tables.

Students and staff appreciate the church's support in helping to keep students safe from the coronavirus.

Right: Working on the sneeze guards for the elementary school are Michael Rooney, Dave Johnson, Kenny Hale, Jr., Kenneth Hale, Grant Cannon, and Dan Sherman.



2020-21 Comstock Public Schools Calendar

December 10, 2020	CHS Conferences	3:00-7:00	
December 17, 2020	Comstock Middle School Conferences	3:00-7:00	
December 21, 2020- January 1, 2021	Winter Recess		
January 19-21, 2021	Half Day Students K-12 (High School Exams)		Half Day Students/Teachers
January 22, 2021	PD AM/K-12-Records Day PM (End of 1st Sem.)		No Students
February 26, 2021	Mid-Winter Break		No Students/Teachers
March 4, 2021	CHS Conferences	3:00-7:00	
March 11, 2021	Comstock Middle School Conferences	3:00-7:00	
March 16, 2021	Comstock Elementary & STEM Conferences	4:00-8:00 (CES) & 3:00-7:00 (STEM)	
March 18, 2021	Comstock Elementary & STEM Conferences	4:00-8:00 (CES) & 3:00-7:00 (STEM)	
March 19, 2021	District Provided Professional Development Day (Counted as Inst. Day 6 hours)		No Students
March 26-April 2, 2021	Spring Break		No Students/No Teachers
May 6, 2021	CHS Conferences	3:00-7:00	
May 13, 2021	Comstock Middle School Conferences	3:00-7:00	
May 31, 2021	Memorial Day		No Students/No Staff
June 4,7,8, 2021	Half Day Students K-12 (High School Exams)		Half Day Students and Teachers K-12
June 8, 2021	Last Day for Students/Records Day PM		Half Day Students AM/Staff Records Day PM

Construction + COVID = Specials on a Cart

Specials - physical education, music, library, and art - look very different because of construction and COVID regulations. For example, instead of students going to a separate room for art, the art teacher, Mrs. Knieling, goes to each classroom. She takes the supplies she needs, but some supplies are kept in the individual classrooms to prevent the spread of germs.

Specials teachers have had to modify curriculum and become even more creative as far as projects and activities to fulfill curriculum given the regulations of COVID and social distancing.

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Another example is in music. Students are not al-

lowed to sing in the classroom which means they're using lots of instruments and humming.

For library class, books are on a cart for selection and books are returned to a bin that is sealed for a week of quarantine.

In PE, students have spent a lot of time outside doing activities, but when the weather turns cold, Mrs. Odell is working on social distancing rules for using the gymnasium.

Specials teachers are also posting lessons online for virtual students. This year has been challenging for the specials area teachers, but with collaboration, brainstorming, and working together - while being socially distant - they have been finding solutions and designing creative lessons to engage students in person and online.



Miss Kimmer and the Library cart are on the way to kindergarten.

Elementary School Celebrates with Ribbon Cutting

A ribbon cutting ceremony was held recently at the elementary school to open up the second floor for students. Because of COVID restrictions, the celebration was very small but the staff hopes to have a bigger celebration when all of the work is completed and restrictions have been lifted.

School board members and a few community members toured the area. Construction will continue in other areas of CES throughout the school year. Currently the cafeteria area, locker room



The ribbon cutting ceremony lasted only a minute.

area, concession area, art room, music room, and former Home Economics areas are under construction.

Students do not have access to those areas but everyone is very excited about the noises and progress being made daily.

Comstock Elementary Halloween Parade Goes Virtual

This year's Halloween parade went virtual when the in-person parade was cancelled due to COVID restrictions.

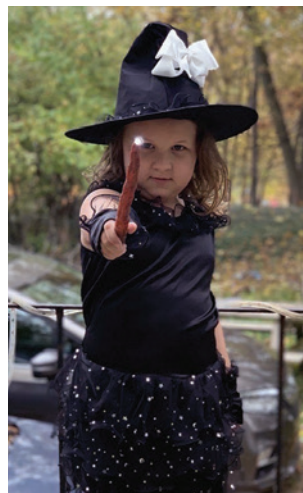
Parents were encouraged to send an electronic photo of their students in their Halloween costume. Mr. James Brown, Behavior Team staff member, collected all of the photos of students and staff and put them into a virtual Halloween parade shared online.

While it was a very different experience, it was still exciting fun to see everyone's faces, even in disguise. Hopefully next year the parade will once again will be in person.

Thanks to all who made the virtual parade possible.



Henlee and Harper Bax



Alisa Cantrell



Brekken Jackson



Kal-el Frazier

COMSTOCK HIGH SCHOOL WINTER SPORTS SCHEDULES

Boys Varsity Basketball

Tue, Dec 8	vs. Vicksburg High School	7:00PM
Fri, Dec 11	@ Niles High School	7:00PM
Tue, Dec 15	vs. Maple Valley High School	7:00PM
Fri, Dec 18	vs. Buchanan HS	7:00PM
Tue, Jan 5	@ Allegan Public Schools	7:00PM
Fri, Jan 8	@ Bangor Public Schools	6:00PM
Fri, Jan 15	vs. South Haven High School	7:00PM
Tue, Jan 19	@ Quincy High School	7:00PM
Fri, Jan 22	vs. Berrien Springs HS	7:00PM
Tue, Jan 26	vs. Bloomingdale High School	7:00PM
Fri, Jan 29	vs. Brandywine High School	7:00PM

Girls Varsity Basketball

Tue, Dec 1	@Vicksburg High School	7:00PM
Fri, Dec 4	@Brandywine High School	7:00PM
Fri, Dec 11	@Niles High School	5:30PM
Tue, Dec 15	@Maple Valley High School	7:00PM
Thu, Dec 17	@Buchanan HS	7:00PM
Tue, Jan 5	vs. Allegan Public Schools	7:00PM

Tue, Jan 12	vs. Quincy High School	7:00PM
Thu, Jan 14	vs. South Haven High School	7:00PM
Tue, Jan 19	vs. Portage Northern High School	7:00PM
Thu, Jan 21	@Berrien Springs HS	7:00PM
Tue, Jan 26	@Bloomingdale High School	7:00PM
Thu, Jan 28	vs. Brandywine High School	7:00PM

Girls and Boys Varsity Bowling

Mon, Dec 7	@Coloma High School (St. Joe Kelly's Bowl)	4:00PM
Wed, Dec 9	@Martin Public Schools (Airport Lanes)	4:00PM
Mon, Dec 14	Parchment High School (Eastland Bowl)	4:00PM
Wed, Dec 16	@Galesburg-Augusta Middle School (Eastland Bowl)	4:00PM
Mon, Jan 4	Gobles MS/HS School (Eastland Bowl)	4:00PM
Wed, Jan 6	@Saugatuck High School (Alleys -Douglas)	4:00PM
Mon, Jan 11	South Haven High School (Eastland Bowl)	4:00PM
Wed, Jan 13	Coloma High School (Eastland Bowl)	4:00PM
Mon, Jan 18	Martin Public Schools (Eastland Bowl)	4:00PM

Wed, Jan 20	Parchment High School (Eastland Bowl)	4:00PM
Mon, Jan 25	Galesburg-Augusta HS (Eastland Bowl)	4:00PM
Wed, Jan 27	@Gobles MS/HS School (Revel & Roll)	4:00PM

Boys Varsity Wrestling

Wed, Dec 9	@Fennville Quad w/Bangor & Hartford	5:00PM
Fri, Dec 18	@Mattawan Quad w/LN & K Central	4:00PM
Wed, Dec 23	vs. Comstock Invitational	9:30AM
Sat, Jan 9	@BCS South Haven Quad w/EC and Ravenna	9:00AM
Wed, Jan 13	Comstock BCS Quad vs RV, Colon & Marcellus	5:00PM
Wed, Jan 20	Comstock BCS Quad vs BH, BS, Martin	5:00PM
Wed, Jan 27	@Lawrence BCS Quad vs Buchanan	5:00PM

Girls Varsity Competitive Cheer

Sat, Dec 12	@Addison Invitational	TBA
Wed, Jan 13	@BCS South Haven Jamboree	6:00PM
Wed, Jan 27	@BCS Buchanan Jamboree	6:00PM
Sat, Jan 30	@Harper Creek Invitational	TBA

Comstock Township Library Events

**THE LIBRARY IS CURRENTLY CLOSED
EXCEPT FOR CURBSIDE PICKUP DUE TO
THE GOVERNOR'S MOST RECENT
REGULATIONS.**

Current Library Hours:

Monday-Thursday 9:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Friday - 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Saturday - 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

- When you visit, freely browse the shelves to choose and check out materials or pick up items on hold, and then enjoy those items outside the library. When you visit please:
- Wear your face covering
- Limit your visit, including computer time, to 1 hour
- Practice social distancing

Comstock Library is FINE FREE! The library does not charge fines for overdue materials, with the exception of mobile hotspots and Playaway Launchpads. Also, all outstanding overdue fines have been cleared. If you have long overdue library items, you can bring them back without penalty.

Curbside service is available! Call us at 269-345-0136 to place an order or place holds through the online catalog. Call us after you receive notice that your holds have arrived. Ring the library's doorbell when you come to get your items or call us from the parking lot and we'll bring them out to you checked out and ready to go.

Did you know you can check out magazines, including the most current issues? Stop by the front desk for

available issues to check out and enjoy at home.

If you do not have a library card, and do not want to come into the library to get one, sign up for a temporary card that will allow you to access our digital materials. Visit <https://www.comstocklibrary.org> to fill out an application form.

Visit our website for information on services and virtual events. Sign up for our eNewsletter so you can stay current with all the latest library news and events.

Adult Events

Adult Pick-Up Crafts: Fabric Gift Bows. Whatever holiday you celebrate, make your gifts extra special with a handmade gift bow. This adult take-home craft kit includes instructions and all materials. There will also be an instructional video posted on YouTube. Go to [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and search for "Comstock Township Library". Registration is required for this free craft. Register on our website, [comstocklibrary.org](https://www.comstocklibrary.org), under "Events." You may also register by calling 345-0136. The number of participants is limited. Participants can pick-up their crafts the week of December 7.

Eat Healthy, Be Active, January. Stay tuned in January for a program presented by Bronson Methodist Hospital on how to be healthy and active all year long.

Reminiscence Writing with Wilma on Zoom, Tuesdays, January 5-February 16. Tired of being stuck at home with nothing to do? Please join the Comstock Township Library's "virtual" Reminiscence

CLOSINGS

Thursday, December 24, Christmas Eve
Friday, December 25, Christmas Day
Closing at 5 p.m. on Thursday, December 31,
for New Year's Eve
Friday, January 1, New Year's Day

Writing Class. You can write about your past or present; you can write essays, stories, fiction, or poems. It's just a fun, supportive class for people who love to write. Class leader Wilma Kahn has an MFA in Creative Writing and a Doctor of Arts in English. How does this class work? Wilma provides optional writing ideas or you can write anything you like. You do your writing at home, share it each week with classmates over Zoom, and "hand it in" by email or mail. Wilma will return your writing with helpful comments. Registration is required for this free program and begins December 21 on our website. Go to Programs and it will be under "Upcoming Events." You may also register by calling 345-0136. Please include your email address and a Zoom link will be emailed to you. The number of participants is limited.

Ask-a-Lawyer on Zoom, January 7, from 3-5 p.m. Join Robert Reilman to get your legal questions answered. This program is free and signups begin on December 21 on our website. Go to Programs and it will be under "Upcoming Events". You may also sign up by calling 345-0136. Space is limited. Please include your email address and we will send you an invitation to the Zoom meeting.

Trivia Contest for Adults, January 11-15. Show off your knowledge in an online trivia contest! Stay tuned to

LIBRARY continued on next page

Comstock Township Library Events

LIBRARY continued from previous page

our Facebook page and website on January 11 for a link to the questions. You can play alone or as part of a team, but please limit your teams to no more than four people. And let's keep it honest -- no help from outside resources like Google, please. The contest ends on January 15. If there is a tie, a tie-breaker question will be sent to those players on January 15 and the grand prize winner will be announced on our Facebook page. Good luck!

Adult Pick-up Craft: Fat Quarter Valentine Wreath.

Make a beautiful winter ornament inspired by nature for your tree or your door! This adult take-home craft kit includes instructions and all materials. There will be an instructional video posted on YouTube. Go to youtube.com and search for "Comstock Township Library" to find the instructions. Registration is required for this free craft and begins January 18 on our website. Go to Programs and it will be under "Upcoming Events." You may also register by calling 345-0136. The number of participants is limited. Participants can pick-up their crafts the week of January 25.

Youth Events

Storytime on Facebook LIVE: Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. - Join Ms. Liz and Ms. Sue every Thursday morning for a fun online storytime. You can watch our storytimes without a Facebook account. Just keep scrolling down the page until you see the LIVE video appear.

Monthly Youth Craft: Pick up a new take-home youth craft on the first of the month. Please make sure you're also checking out books to support the library.

Wooden Gingerbread Houses: Pick up a wooden gingerbread kit at the library and decorate your own

winter holiday home. Snap a picture of your finished home and send it to us on Facebook or email so we can show off your creation.

Free Holiday Book: A free, new book for the holidays will be given to all children and teens who currently have library cards. Show your family's library card and pick out your free gift in the youth department starting Monday, December 14, and ending Wednesday, December 23.

1,000 Books Before Kindergarten:

The concept is straightforward...

Read a book (any book) with your newborn, infant, toddler, or preschool-aged child. The goal is to read 1000 books before your little one starts kindergarten.

The rewards are lasting...

- Reading aloud surrounds children with rich language and builds vocabulary and listening skills.
- Reading exposes children to new experiences and helps children understand the world around them and empathize with others.
- Reading aloud models the importance of reading and shows children reading is fun!
- Reading with your child brings you closer together and creates memorable bonding moments.
- You are your child's first teacher. We want to encourage you to read, sing, talk, play, and write with your children every day. Starting early—before kindergarten—is key to children's success when they begin school. The Comstock Township Library is here to support you and your child as you begin your journey toward reading 1000 Books Before Kindergarten! Stop by the Youth desk to get your first sheet today.

NEW Storytime Kits: Recreate the magic of storytime with a take-home storytime kit. Some of our themes include: Dinosaurs, Transportation, Cats, Dogs, Construction, Colors and many more!

Monthly Teen DIY Project: Sixth-Twelfth graders, pick up your monthly take home on the first of the month. No registration is required, but we do ask that those picking up projects support the library by checking out materials. Don't have a Comstock library card? Most patrons qualify for a free card.

Teen Biblio Boxes: Ever wanted to check out fun book subscription boxes like Owlcrate? Now you can get your very own custom biblio box from the library - for free! Each box will include a themed book from the library, candy/snacks and other fun book-themed surprises and goodies. The only thing we need back from you is the library book and your cardboard box (if it's in good shape). Registration is required and a Comstock library card is needed to check out the box. This program is only open to sixth through twelfth graders.

Follow us on Facebook at
ComstockTownshipLibrary.

Follow us on Instagram at
comstocktownshiplibrary.

Visit our online calendar for more information regarding programs: comstocklibrary.evanced.info/signup

Dear Comstock Parents,

The Comstock Township Library is happy to inform you that you may use our curbside service with your student(s). Curbside pick-up of library material is available Monday - Friday from 10 a.m.- 6 p.m.

Books, audiobooks, movies, and all other library materials can be requested by contacting the library in the following ways:

- Call: **269-345-0136**
- Email: **info@comstocklibrary.org**
- Visit our website at **www.comstocklibrary.org** and log in to your account to place holds.
- Message us on our Facebook page: **facebook.com/ComstockTownshipLibrary.**

Our digital library is always open for patrons to borrow electronic books, audiobooks, music, and TV shows. Visit the digital materials page on our website for more information.

Additionally, we have appointment-only computer use, free fax service, and copying service.

If you need a Comstock Township Library card, please fill out the online form on our website to get a temporary card valid for 60 days. Please allow 24 hours for your application to be processed.

We hope to see you at the curb!

Liz Castleberry
Youth Librarian



We have Homebound Library Services! Please call the library for information.



Wi-Fi is available in the library. You may also ask about checking out one of our mobile hotspots.



We have fax, photocopy, and scanning services available.



Download free audiobooks, ebooks, music, and video from home through our digital services, Hoopla and Overdrive (Libby). Go to <https://www.comstocklibrary.org/ebooks.asp> for a complete list of all our available digital materials.