



Huron Intermediate School District

LEARN... LEAD... SERVE...



HISD Newsletter

October 2019



A Message from Superintendent, Joseph Murphy

It is our pleasure to present to you the first Huron Intermediate School Board Newsletter of the 2019-2020 school year. We have been producing these newsletters four times a year to keep you better informed of the programs and services offered at the HISD. I am proud of our programs and services that we offer at the HISD and the great staff we have administering them. We will continue to improve communication with our local school districts. We have visited each of our seven local school administrative teams early this school year to receive feedback. In early November, we will be sending a survey to all staff in Huron County to get additional feedback. Please take the time to complete this survey. Your opinion is important to us. Lastly, I am considering moving to a podcast to replace this newsletter moving forward. You should see the first of these in December. I look forward to a great 2019-2020 school year. Please let me know if you have feedback, questions, or suggestions for future topics.

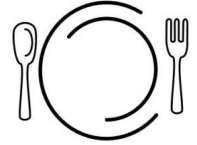


Early Childhood Programs Voted #1

The Huron Learning Center Early Childhood programs won the Reader's Choice #1 Preschool for the Huron Daily Tribune! There will be an awards ceremony on October 22nd at the Franklin Inn. Recipients will receive awards to acknowledge their achievement!



County School Board Dinner & Meeting



Bad Axe Public Schools will be hosting a County School Board Dinner/Meeting on Tuesday, November 19, to be held in Bad Axe High School Gymnasium. Dinner is at 6 p.m. with a brief meeting to be followed by a presentation. The topic for this meeting is "Board Roles and Responsibilities." Guest Presenter will be Rod Green, MASB Consultant.

This meeting is open to all Huron County School Board Members and Superintendents.

R.S.V.P. to Donna Gliniecki at don-nag@huronisd.org or 269-3461.



"Child Find" is a continuous process of screening and evaluation designed to identify and refer as early as possible all children with disabilities. This includes students Kindergarten through age 26 and families of young children age 0-3 who are in need of Early Intervention or Preschool Special Education services of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

If you know of a child who is in need of an evaluation for special services, please contact Carol Brown at Huron ISD at (989)269-9274 or at cbrown@huronisd.org. You can also complete an online referral by visiting www.huronisd.org.



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Virtual Reality Lab engages Tech Center Learning

The Huron Area Technical Center (HATC) wants to engage and excite students about education.

This year, the Tech Center will be unveiling a new classroom called The L.A.B.

The L.A.B. will host a variety of virtual reality machines and simulators. The virtual environment allows students to be virtually transported all over the world to various locations and job-sites while sitting in a classroom at the Tech Center in Bad Axe.

“Our job is to get students prepared for college or to be career-ready when they graduate high school. We feel it’s our job to stay current and get kids excited about education,” said HATC Principal Lane Walker.

One way the HATC plans to engage students is through the new virtual reality lab. Virtual Reality simulators are interactive ways to engage students and make the learning process fun. The classroom has a John Deere 3510 Backhoe simulator, a Lincoln Electric VRTEK Welder, and an ALEX Patient Simulator.

“We wanted to continue to make the Tech Center a cutting-edge learning facility. We know that this will give our students a huge advantage as they prepare for their future. Virtual Reality not only engages students at a high-level, it gets



HATC student, Jack Fischer, trains on new John Deere Backhoe Simulator.

them excited about learning while teaching them real-world skills,” said Walker.

The John Deere Simulator is 100% matched to a John Deere 3510 Backhoe. The simulator is used for training and is a cost-effective and efficient way to train operators in a risk-free environment. Students sit and operate the machine, which moves and shakes like a real backhoe while working through different jobs using highly detailed lessons.

The simulator will teach each student proper operator techniques and machine controls. After completing each lesson, operators receive immediate feedback on their performance.

Bad Axe senior Jack Fischer is enrolled in the Construction/Building Technology Program at the Tech Center. He was one of the first students to start training on the new simulator.

“The simulator makes it so much easier to operate the machine and there isn’t a ton of pressure where you’re always worried about doing something wrong or breaking something,” Fischer said. “I look forward to using it more, it makes learning fun!”



ALEX is a patient communication simulator that uses AI technology to help students in the Health Science field.

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Virtual Reality Lab

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The VRTEK Transport Welding Simulator is an ideal tool for basic and intermediate welding training. It engages and helps recruit future welders while also providing a skills evaluation and training tool. The machine provides realistic puddle and actual welding sounds that help learners respond and adjust welding techniques. It also simulates sparks, slag, grinding and weld cooling. The machine provides a tutorial that explains and demonstrates various welds. Students must also learn to adjust the machine using Welding Procedure Specifications such as selecting gas type, gas flow, amperage/voltage, and wire feed speed in the system. This machine will help reduce training costs, increase welding certification knowledge, and offer a much safer training opportunity than traditional welding. Students put on an Oculus System that transports them in a virtual welding environment. The HATC is one of the first schools in the country to have the new Oculus System.

ALEX is a Patient Communication Simulator that uses AI technology to help students in the Health Science field develop patient care skills, critical and decision-making skills, and conduct patient assessments. ALEX also helps develop foundational nursing skills and engages students to meet high-level goals. The machine comes with IrisCam, which is an HD camera built in the eyes of the simulator, which provides digital video for live streaming and recorded review. It also uses Google Cloud Speech API to integrate speech recognition to support automated medical interviewing.

“Our goal is to provide the best learning environment possible and offer students engaging, interactive ways to get excited about their education. We want the HATC to be leaders in student engagement. I feel our new Virtual Reality Lab will take the Tech Center up to a whole new level,” said Walker.

Visit our website often to find out about trainings, upcoming events, local data, and so much more!

www.huronisd.org



REMC Die Cuts



REMC Die Cuts are now housed in the Huron Learning Center Student Workroom. Students are completing orders for classrooms throughout the county and enjoying the work experience! If you would like to place an order or need a job completed, please contact Jeff Guza at 989-269-3453.

Huron ISD Hires Additional Literacy Consultant

The HISD has recently hired an additional Literacy Consultant. Laurie Preston will be working with Grade 3 teachers across the county this school year. Her work will focus on the K-3 Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy. She will also host a Professional Learning Community (PLC)



LAURIE PRESTON

that will foster professional learning. Her work will mirror that being done in Grades K-2 by Marilyn Peplinski. Laurie will coach and consult with Grade 4 and 5 teachers in subsequent years.

Laurie was an elementary teacher for 27 years, with most of that time in grades 3 and 4. She and her husband Andy live in Port Austin and have three young adult children.



HISD Welcomes New Itinerant Staff

Kristy Powell joined the HISD as a Special Education Teacher Consultant currently serving North Huron School District and Ubly Community Schools. She is a graduate of Central Michigan University and Saginaw Valley State University. Kristy has experience teaching in programs for students with emotional impairments and autism spectrum disorder. Kristy and her family are natives of the Thumb Area and have recently relocated back to the area.



KRISTY POWELL

Jessica Gentner is a School Social Worker with HISD currently providing services at Bad Axe Schools. Jessica is a graduate of Ubly Community Schools and Saginaw Valley State University. She earned her Master's Degree from Michigan State University. Jessica's previous experience was with the Human Development Commission working with senior citizens and she also has experience working in mental health and foster care. Jessica loves spending time with her children, reading, baking, and repurposing furniture.



JESSICA GENTNER

Sarah Green is a Special Education Teacher Consultant currently serving EPBP Laker Schools, Owendale-Gagetown Area Schools, Cross Lutheran, and St. John Berne. She is a graduate of Kingston High School, Michigan State University, and Saginaw Valley State University. Prior to



SARAH GREEN

joining the team at HISD, Sara was both a special education teacher and general education teacher with Kingston Community Schools. She resides in Kingston with her husband and children. In her spare time, Sara enjoys spending time with friends and family, reading, and running.

Liz Pommerenke is School Social Worker and has joined the HISD Behavior Team. She currently provides services at Ubly Community Schools and the Huron Learning Center. Liz obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from Oakland University and graduated with her Master's from Wayne State University. Liz has experience working in a residential treatment facility, home care, and hospice. She enjoys spending time with her children, the outdoors, reading, and traveling.



LIZ POMMERENKE





HISD Welcomes New Itinerant Staff (continued)

Occupational Therapist Meg Bulla earned her Master of Science in Occupational Therapy from Saginaw Valley State University and worked in a variety of rehab settings before coming to work at the HISD. Meg serves students in several local districts and the Huron Learning Center. Meg loves our agricultural community and has shown horses in Michigan and surrounding states. Congratulations to Meg and her husband, Aaron who have recently welcomed a baby boy.



MEG BULLA

Rakel Osentoski, Speech Language Pathologist joins HISD with a Master's Degree from Western Michigan University. Rakel completed an internship at Harbor Beach last spring. Rakel enjoys being back in her home community and close to family, as she was an Ubly graduate. This year, she provides therapy for students at Caseville, St. John's Lutheran at Berne, Cross Lutheran, and part of Laker Elementary.



RAKEL OSENTOSKI



EMILY PROCTOR

Speech Language Pathologist Emily Proctor rejoins the HISD. Emily earned her Masters degree in Speech-Language Pathology at Central Michigan University. Emily is passionate about services for preschool children and we are so pleased to have Emily providing services in a variety of preschool settings. Emily and her new husband, Wesley, were married on October 18. Congratulations Emily and Wesley!



Michigan Department of Education and ISD Special Education Determinations

Special Education performance and compliance has been assessed for each ISD in Michigan. Part of this work is related to the MDE determination of needs intervention related to Michigan's Special Education State Performance Plan. The state sets criteria for special education compliance, such as timely IEPs, and on performance indicators such as graduation rate and M-STEP proficiency for 4th and 8th grades. The state and each ISD is rated based on MDE's selected indicators for students who have disabilities. This data is also broken down by district to be shared with

each local administration team to see the status of the school based on the MDE selected indicators.

Each ISD in the state of Michigan must ensure that free appropriate public education is offered to each student with disabilities in their jurisdiction. The relationship of ISD and local district grows closer as we respond to this mandate together. This team approach and responsiveness to local data has assisted in working together to make improvements that are of consequence to students with disabilities.



Resources Available to Meet Needs of English Learners

Huron County is largely an English speaking county but some area schools have had an increase in the number of students enrolled who are English Learners (EL). The approach to meeting the needs of EL students varies from district to district and the needs of students may differ greatly based on their age and past experiences.

There are three main areas of focus for schools with English Learners: teaching English, teaching the academic content, and partnering with families. Each district is required to have a Title I plan that outlines how the school will meet the needs of any English Learner students who enroll in the school. If the child's home language is anything other than English, the school's Assessment Coordinator will enroll the student in the WIDA screener. This tool will identify the English proficiency of the student and determine if the state assessment (M-STEP/PSAT/SAT) is appropriate for that child.

Teaching English while trying to teach academics can be a challenge. Software such as Rosetta Stone is widely accepted as a helpful tool. Immersion learning is also commonly used as students rapidly learn English in a supportive environment where English is used but with intent (no contractions, slower rate of speech, shorter sentences, no jargon or idioms).

Some schools use peers from advanced language classes to help bridge to the English environment, while others use paraprofessionals, world-language teachers, and technology. While they are not perfect,

thanks to electronic translators, students, teachers and parents can all communicate despite language barriers.

Many of the apps for communicating with families offer free built-in translation services. Whenever the school can help the family also learn English, we know that we increase the chance for success for the student. The Great Start Collaborative of Huron County has already created many resources in Spanish for area families with the help of several High School World Language teachers.

Staff sometimes worry that their student growth data will be negatively impacted by having an English Learner in their classroom. This should not be factor for two reasons. First of all, the rate of growth for many English Learners is astounding, so beginning of year to end of year growth may be larger than that of others. Secondly, teachers can always ask that the student growth data be excluded for a particular student with circumstances that warrant it.

It can be challenging to determine if a child has a learning barrier when there is also a language barrier. For this reason, the HISD is acquiring testing materials in Spanish. If a child is suspected of having a disability, the same rules and timelines apply for that evaluation process.

Look for additional resources for meeting the needs of English Learners on the new HISD English Learner webpage, <http://www.huronisd.org/?DivisionID=7949>.



Early Childhood Visits Nature Center



The Early Childhood Team hosted a family event at the Huron County Nature Center in Port Austin on Friday, October 4th. With help from Scott Whipple and volunteers, the day was a huge success. Families came from throughout the county to enjoy hands on activities, a guided nature walk, games and outdoor family time.





The Bad Axe Fairgrounds was host to middle school students from across the county on September 18th, at the first-annual Career Exploration Fair. A total of 635 students attended the event, along with 73 school and parent chaperones. The schools that participated included: Bad Axe, Caseville, Harbor Beach, Huron County Rural schools, Lakers, North Huron, Our Lady of Lake Huron (OLLH), Owen-Gage and Ubyly.

There were several objectives for the Career Fair. The first goal was to give visiting students an opportunity to participate in hands-on demonstrations and talk with local businesses about possible careers in Huron County. Second, all programs offered at the Huron Area Technical Center were represented with teachers and students from each program offering demonstrations of the skills taught in each of their programs. Last, as all schools are now required to include career curriculum for students at all grade levels, the Career Fair provided a high-quality experience for all middle school students.

All participating businesses and CTE programs were divided into 6 major career zones: Arts & Communication, Human Services, Business/Management/Marketing & Technology, Health Sciences, Natural Resources & Agriscience, and Engineering/

Manufacturing/Industrial Technology. There were two sessions offered for the day, with half of the students in the county coming in the morning and the other half in the afternoon. During each session, students would rotate through the six different career zones, spending 20 minutes in each. Within each zone, students were encouraged to explore independently and to interact with the hands-on activities and demonstrations provided by each business and CTE program. Between the morning and afternoon sessions, all students attended a picnic lunch and watched an electrical safety demonstration provided by Thumb Electric Cooperative.

There were 56 exhibitors present at the career fair, which included: 12 CTE programs, 4 Community Colleges and 40 different businesses. Additionally, there were many volunteers who came to help out and support this first-annual event.

Overall, the Career Fair received lots of positive feedback from schools and businesses alike. The Upper Thumb MiSTEM Network is looking forward to hosting the Career Exploration Fair as an annual event, in addition to continued collaboration with the local schools, businesses and community organizations.



Mike Cleland of Thumb Electric Cooperative provides an electrical safety demonstration.

Career Exploration Fair Highlights



Students from the Huron Area Technical Center Marketing Program provide a hands-on activity for students.

Scheurer Hospital staff give ambulance tours and talk to students about careers in Emergency Medical Services.



Casey Turner, from the Visual Communications Program at the Huron Area Technical Center, provides a green-screen demonstration for students.



Secondary MOCI Room Starts Car Detailing



The secondary MOCI program has begun a new business venture this year. Starting in the month of October, the class opened the first ever HISD Car Wash. The Car Wash is open for any employee of the HISD and costs \$20 for an inside and outside wash. The students created flyers and signup sheets that are located in the HLC Work Room. Two days a week, the students are responsible for vacuuming, washing, scrubbing, and drying vehicles for their customers. The students are learning many things during this business. They are responsible for their attire, work ethic, cleanliness, job completion, and money skills. Most of these students will be entering the workforce within a few years and the idea behind this was to give them hands on training of what a job is really like. As of this week, every workday has been sold out and there is a waiting list to get in.



Elementary MOCI Room to Partner with BAMS for Destination Imagination

Bad Axe Destination Imagination (BADI) has invited Mrs. Ashlee Mossner's afternoon class to start a team this year under their Creative Challenge Branch, a program modified for Special Learners. Students will travel to Bad Axe High School each week to practice and prepare. Students from the BADI Middle School team (7th -10th graders) will also be in attendance to mentor our students.

Destination Imagination is an educational program in which student teams solve open-ended challenges and present their solutions at a tournament. Teams are tested to think on their feet, work together, and devise original solutions that satisfy the requirements of the challenges, and develop innovative thinking strategies. Participants gain more than just basic knowledge and skills, they learn to unleash their imaginations and take unique approaches to problem solving.



This year, the challenge for the Creative Challenge Branch is "Demonstrate a story about something growing." Students will write a script, design and make a setting, props, and costumes, add special features, and perform their play.

Our team will present their solution on May 1, 2020, during Creative Challenge Day at Camp McGregor near Jackson, Michigan. This event averages over 10 special education teams each year. This year's theme is agriculture. In addition to team challenge presentations, students from the local FFA and Tech Center will be teaching us lessons in nature, planting, and animals. We participate in an awards ceremony and dance at the end of the program.

For more information about Destination Imagination in Michigan and to watch an introductory video go to <https://www.micreativity.org/>.