



Gibraltar School District

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

Pretty soon we will be ringing in the New Year! In GSD, 2019 is filled with exciting learning opportunities and I would like to announce that Gibraltar has once again been selected to host the FIRST Robotics competition on March 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. STEM integration is a big reason that GSD is transforming education in the Downriver area. With our 1-1 technology for every student, STEM courses for students in K-12 and the increase in teaching our students 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Skills, GSD is creating graduates that are ready for a competitive and technological workforce. This year Gibraltar also has two teachers that have been honored nationally and by the State of Michigan for strong skills and talents in teaching Science and STEM integration. This is yet another reason that GSD is leading the way in innovative education!

Please take some time to enjoy family and friends this Holiday season and we will see you in 2019!

Amy Conway  
Superintendent

### Spark's Corner



Research shows that being happy and positive primes the brain to be more successful and productive. Promoting positivity will enhance our student's academic ability and develop them into happy and positive thinkers and leaders. Each month we will highlight a building or staff member that is spreading "The Orange" (Happiness) through Gibraltar!

#### Monday Morning Surprise at Parsons

On Monday, December 10th the parents at Parsons received a surprise when they dropped their children off at school. The families were greeted by elves, the Grinch and other fun Christmas characters. When the parents arrived to the parking lot, the Christmas characters greeted them with a big morning smile and a candy cane. Behind the costumes and outfits, were the teachers at Parsons. Their goal was to spread happiness and holiday cheer as the students began their new week of school. "It was amazing! Our families loved it," said Principal Kelley Villa. This is not the first surprise that the staff at Parsons has given their families.



### **Congratulations Mrs. Villa, Region 1, Principal Award Winner!**



Congratulations to Parsons Principal, Kelley Villa who received 2018 MEMSPA (Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association) Region Honors Award! Mrs. Villa has had an educational career spanning 30 years and we are so proud to have her as our Principal at Parsons Elementary! Mrs. Villa and her team have created a positive, invigorating and fun environment for students to learn. Please follow the below link to see a video about Mrs. Villa and Parsons. Congratulations, Mrs. Villa!

[https://gibdistnet.finalsite.com/cf\\_media/index.cfm?obj=406](https://gibdistnet.finalsite.com/cf_media/index.cfm?obj=406)

### **Congratulations, Mr. Richardson!**

After 33 years serving children and families throughout the area, Mr. Richardson is retiring as the Assistant Principal of Shumate Middle School. Words can't describe how much Mr. Richardson has meant to our students and the positive culture of Shumate and Carlson. Congratulations and best wishes, Mr. Richardson!



### **Chapman Welcomes Roary and the Detroit Lions**



On December 7th, the PBIS team welcomed Roary and the Detroit Lions into Chapman Elementary for our monthly assembly! This month, the theme was respect. Roary and his team taught our students how to be "Proud Like a Lion." This program was a wonderful character education assembly about anti-bullying and respecting each other through sports. The Lions demonstrated what good sportsmanship looks like in real life social situations. Roary dabbed and flossed his way into the heart of our students and also taught them how to be a L.E.A.D.E.R. Leaders are Listeners, Educated, Ambitious, Disciplined, Encouraging, and Responsible.



### **Carlson High School Update**



Congratulations to our very own Malissa Mates for winning \$200.00 from Meemic Insurance!

A big shout out goes to the Carlson Staff for raising over \$1000.00 to help families in our community have a WONDERFUL Christmas!

You may hear some of your students talking about the Khan Academy Challenge. We partnered with Khan Academy during our MPT to focus on SAT Prep. Your students earn points for every video and quiz that they take using the Khan Academy Platform. Your students are then entered into a drawing for a \$25.00 gift card per grade level, each week.

Be on the lookout for pictures from the Carlson Gym this week. The first student/staff ping pong tournament has been taking place this week!

### **Lily's Snowpile at Hunter Elementary**



Joy to The World is not just a song at Hunter Elementary School. The students, families and staff who attend Hunter took time this December to spread JOY and Kindness to children in the hospital. A second grade student named Lily Laskowski was born with a cleft lip and palate. Lily and



her family started Lily's Snowpile. Lily's family works really hard to collect new toys for children, newborn to 18 years old, to support Children's Hospital of Michigan Foundation.

The giving spread rapidly through Hunter School. A Young Fives student named Zaiden Kessler, who also spent a Christmas in the hospital, was touched by this toy drive as was his entire family. As a family they started collecting and buying gifts for Lily's Snowpile. Gifts from Zaiden's family started pouring in. His family knew how important this



Snowpile was and how much joy it would spread to children spending time in the hospital through the Holiday Season. Lily's Snowpile was a whole school initiative! The Hunter Community was beyond generous. Toys from every classroom covered the Hunter Media Center. All the toys were delivered to the Children's Hospital of Michigan Foundation by Lily's family.

### Shumate Robotics



Shumate Robotics Team 12303, The Hacker Hawks, won the Dearborn State Qualifying FTC Robotics Event on December 1, and thus qualified for the State Tournament at Kellogg Arena in Battle Creek on December 15. The day before the big meet, all 6th hour Shumate teachers took their classes out to the hallways to wish the Hacker Hawks good luck with a clap-out, as the team and their robot cruised through Shumate before heading to Battle Creek. The competition was really tough at the State Tournament, but the Hacker Hawks rose to the occasion, finishing within the top half of teams in the finals. We are so proud of our Hacker Hawks, as well as the other four SMS robotics teams, all of which had a tremendous season.

Through robotics, our 36 SMS robotics students learned practical, 21st century skills, which will help them become better problem solvers, collaborators, and critical thinkers. **#GettingScienceDone**

### Fill the Bus



Shumate's NJHS has been quite busy this holiday season. We collected cans here at Shumate to help Gibraltar Transportation "Fill the Bus." We collected over 26 boxes of canned goods and non-perishable food items. The advisory that collected the most cans was Mrs. Miller's advisory with 372 points. NJHS is providing the winning class with a pizza lunch. Thank you to all who contributed!!

### Tis the Season

Shumate's NJHS also raised over \$1,200.00 to help out Shumate Families in need this Christmas season. Eight students will receive a Meijer gift card and three gifts each from NJHS. NJHS sponsors, Mrs. Gresham and Ms. Wright, guided students to organize a Giving Tree here at Shumate. We "adopted" four Shumate students and hung ornaments on the tree with what they need and want this Christmas. Shumate staff generously chose a tag or two or three from the tree and shopped for these students. NJHS and Mrs. Browning wrapped all of the gifts and staff delivered the gifts to these student's homes to open on Christmas morning. Our Shumate Staff is amazing!! They went above and beyond to help these students out. We are so proud to work at Shumate Middle School!



### Lakeshore Virtual School

Lakeshore is thrilled to spotlight Jacob Hartsuff this month. Jacob is new to Lakeshore this year and has been thriving since his arrival. He already completed five classes and is on track to complete three more by the end of this semester. This puts him two classes ahead of the expected pace! Additionally, he is great at communicating with his mentor and seeks help from his teachers when needed. We are very proud of Jacob's success!



## Cooperative for Special Education Services Update

Happy Holidays to all of our students and their family's this season! We wish you all the best for a safe and relaxing break. We hope that your time is filled with peaceful moments and lasting memories. Remember that holidays and holiday breaks are intended to be a relaxing time and a "reset" so that you and your student may go back to work/school rested and refreshed. Please keep that in mind as you do your holiday schedule.

From WebMD, here are some tips to help relax and enjoy our time off:

- Take a 5-minute break and focus on your breathing. Sit up straight, eyes closed, with a hand on your belly. Slowly inhale through your nose, feeling the breath start in your abdomen and work its way to the top of your head. Reverse the process as you exhale through your mouth.
- A good belly laugh doesn't just lighten the load mentally. It lowers cortisol, your body's stress hormone, and boosts brain chemicals called endorphins, which help your mood. Lighten up by tuning in to your favorite sitcom or video, reading the comics, or chatting with someone who makes you smile.
- Research shows that listening to soothing music can lower blood pressure, heart rate, and anxiety. Create a playlist of songs or nature sounds (the ocean, a bubbling brook, birds chirping), and allow your mind to focus on the different melodies, instruments, or singers in the piece. You also can blow off steam by rocking out to more upbeat tunes -- or singing at the top of your lungs!
- You don't have to run in order to get a runner's high. All forms of exercise, including yoga and walking, can ease depression and anxiety by helping the brain release feel-good chemicals and by giving your body a chance to practice dealing with stress. You can go for a quick walk around the block, take the stairs up and down a few flights, or do some stretching exercises like head rolls and shoulder shrugs.

May this holiday season be full of surprises and cheers, simply because you deserve the best.

Sean Waymaster, Director of Special Education  
*Flat Rock, Gibraltar, Grosse Ile, and Huron Schools*

## Food Service Update

**January:** We will be featuring soup and sandwich combos on all menus. Potato Soup with a Ham & Swiss sandwich on ciabatta bread, Chicken Noodle Soup with a Triple Cheese Panini, and a classic Grilled Cheese & Tomato Soup.

**Gibraltar Feast:** We served 625+ plated meals for the Annual Christmas Feast. That's 120lbs of turkey, 180lbs of chicken, 650 dinner rolls, 60lbs of green beans, 25 lbs of butternut squash, 40lbs of zucchini and 650 lava cakes.

Wishing all families, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

## Downriver STEM @ Weiss



Wildcat students at Downriver STEM @ Weiss are hard at work learning and utilizing different mathematical strategies to solve problems. They are being asked to justify their answers and explain their thinking to ensure they understand the concepts at a deeper level. We are moving beyond instructing with math shortcuts and moving towards instruction that focuses on the "why" behind the learning we are doing. The Wildcat students are doing a tremendous job learning math with these strategies and are still learning the most efficient strategies as well. Great job, Wildcats!

## Transportation Department Update



We are excited to announce that we have hired two new bus drivers and one bus aide. Our two bus drivers will be taking beginning school bus training in January. We have a bus aide that is transferring over to becoming a bus driver. She has passed her road test and will be taking beginning school bus training in February. Congratulations to Sherry



Shockley, Katie Vlodyka, Donald Zeliska and Bob Wilson. Congratulations Karen Ball on your retirement. You have been a dedicated and appreciated employee of GSD for 16 years.