



Inside Track

A Model District Where Students Want To Be
Home of the Railroaders!



Students of the Month

The following students were chosen by staff members as Railroaders of the Month for March: 8th grader

Aidan Loos, 9th grader Kyle Winslow, 10th grader Josh Austin, 11th grader Hailey Kallas, and 12th grader Jake Will. Congratulations!



Pancake Dinner/Literacy Night

It was a wonderful educational evening and a great meal at Robert Kerr, on March 9th. The local fire fighters once again cooked a delicious meal for everyone. The dinner was in conjunction with the first annual Literacy Night, at Robert Kerr. Families had the opportunity to go room-to-room and participate in a wide range of literacy activities that promote reading. Families also had the opportunity to sign up for several youth organizations and activities that will take place throughout the community.



Senator Rick Jones and Representative Ben Frederick came to Durand Middle School to meet some of the students and staff. During the meeting, 7th grade students took Senator Jones and Representative Frederick on a tour. Students from Ms. Shankster's STEM class did a demonstration on how to use CAD software to 3D print and printed a sample of a project from her class. Students from our Youth Advisory Committee explained how all middle school classes have flexible seating and the importance of YAC. We also had two students talk about special education and our special education awareness day that all middle school students participated in. Nurse Kay and Mr. Bromley also talked about the Wellness Center and the importance of it at Durand Area Schools.

We also had several presentations throughout the last few weeks. We had the Michigan State Police come and talk to the 7th grade students about human trafficking. We also had the Michigan Attorney General's office come and present about ok2say. Ok2say is "program designed to empower Michigan students, parents, school personnel, community mental health service programs, and law enforcement to share and respond to student safety threats." (ok2say). For more information, please visit, <http://www.michigan.gov/ok2say/>



Spirit Cup at DHS

On Friday, March 3rd, the TV-12 Spirit Cup was at Durand High School. Students arrived at 5 a.m. to have their chance to show our Durand Pride and be seen on television. We had a great turnout of students of all ages. All Durand schools participated in the food/money donation process as we collected 1,600 pounds of canned goods and \$200 in cash. All the food donations were delivered directly to Bethany Baptist Church in Durand. The monetary donations will be given to The Shiawassee Hunger Network to use toward future food bank purchases. To see Durand High's Spirit Cup Challenge, check out the website at www.abc12.com and search Spirit Cup. The Durand High School Student Government would like to thank all that donated and showed up to support Durand Area Schools.

Band Festival

The Durand 7th grade, 8th grade, Concert, and Symphonic Bands performed at the MSBOA District 5 Band Festival on Saturday, March 11th. The festival was held at Perry High School. All four bands earned overall "Excellent" ratings, and three bands earned "Superior" ratings in the sight-reading room. The bands earned praise from the judges for their quality of musical selections, tone quality, range of expression, and technique. The band's Spring Concert is Tuesday, May 9th, at 6:30 p.m. in the high school gym. The band will also perform in the annual Railroad Days Parade. For more information on the Durand band program, visit our website at www.durandbands.org.



FFA State Convention

From March 8th through 10th, the State FFA Convention was held in East Lansing at Michigan State University. Durand was proudly represented by a number of students who earned awards. Haley Zducic earned 4th place and a Gold Award in the state for Creed Speaking. Madilynn Mills earned 4th place in Extemporaneous Public Speaking and a Gold Award. The Greenhand Conduct of Meetings Team earned 6th place honors in the state and received a Silver Award. Team members included Baylee Huff, Olivia Ayers, Jacob Feldhouse, Maddison McMillin, Abigail Schaub, Kelsie Caldwell and Cassady Plourde. The State FFA Degree is the highest degree a student can earn at the state level. Nash Hart, Madilynn Mills, Jake Will, Sierra Woolworth and Savannah Kozicki earned their state degree. Lucas Davenport, Grant Hart, Andrew Johnson and Melanie Weir also earned their Outstanding Junior Degree. Congratulations to all!

FFA Labor Auction

The FFA and Alumni held the Annual FFA Labor Auction on Tuesday, March 14th in the high school cafeteria. Over 40 FFA members participated in this event for another near record setting year. A special thanks to all the parents, business owners, and community members for their support in this year's fundraising activity.



March is Reading Month was kicked off at Bertha Neal Elementary with a visit from the "Zoomobile" through the Binder Park Zoo. All students, Preschool through 1st grade, had the opportunity to meet some live animals with extraordinary senses. They learned more about how their own human senses measured up when compared to various animals. Students were encouraged to continue reading more about animals and are all working to reach our school goal, of every student reading at least 20 books.

Superintendent News

Spring is officially upon us and as educators that means we are in full swing planning mode for next year's course offerings at the middle school and high school. Many of you are aware that in the last couple of years Durand Area Schools has strengthened its programming in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Designated STEM courses are offered for all grade levels culminating in three separate STEM courses at the high school as a part of Project Lead The Way taught by our new and incredible teacher, Brian Gavenga. This coming school year, the Board of Education has approved a unique offering for our middle school students.

Ms. Becky Shankster, a teacher specialist in the areas of math and science at the middle school will be spearheading a new offering for high achieving 5th and 6th grade students. This combined grade level

program will see students recommended to the class by virtue of advanced aptitude in math, science, and language arts, teacher recommendation, and overall proficiency. Middle school principal, Paula Dobson, along with school counselor Laura Frelich, and Ms. Shankster conceptualized the concept for the course after seeing the need for some advanced opportunities for motivated students and seeing the level of enjoyment generated by other STEM courses in the district and the high level of interest in First Robotics, also coached in part by Ms. Shankster.

The students in the class will be taught in STEM themed units and will also incorporate all core content areas. To accommodate two grade levels, math and language arts will be taught in a workshop model and mini lessons from grade level content will be incorporated as well. Collectively, the core content will be integrated within the themed units. Though these students will be primarily together for much of the day, they would still have the opportunity to join grade-level peers

for lunch, recess, and electives.

This new middle school program is the logical next-step for students after having had the opportunity to experience STEM coursework taught by two stellar elementary teachers, Kristy Dumond and Amanda Johnson. This is the natural progression for these high achieving students as they enter the middle school as 5th graders. Though soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem solving will be a part of the class, the preparation of students for success in our highly technical world will be our emphasis. In Durand, we are very fortunate to have dynamic and motivated teachers who are willing to take the lead and a leap of faith in creating new and relevant courses for our students. And even better, we have teachers doing it in all of our school buildings!

Sincerely,
Craig McCrumb
Superintendent, Durand Area Schools