Ferndale Family,

The past few weeks have been a challenge for us with the amount of days we have missed due to poor weather. In January, we thought we were having a mild winter and then February arrived and changed everything.

This time of year, Superintendents always get asked about the process and factors that go into our decision to close schools. First and foremost, the safety of our students and staff is our top concern, always. When it comes to winter storms, we wait as long as we can to close schools and only do so when there is no other viable option. We also try to be respectful of our parent community. It is a delicate balance to strike when we have to give a developing storm as long as possible before closing and still giving our community as much notice as possible so that they can make necessary arrangements for their students.

We have had several parents express to us that they felt that school could have been held during several of our snow days. I understand that point of view. However, it is not enough that the weather conditions are okay at 8:00 a.m. for us to open school. It also has to be safe for our staff to travel and so that they can be ready for the students at 8:00 a.m. Additionally, our bus drivers and custodians must arrive even earlier, and, if there is inclement weather, it makes it very difficult and potentially unsafe for them to travel as well.

We also have to take into consideration the decisions of the school districts around us. I participate in a conference call with other Oakland County Superintendents every time a potential weather event is forecast in which we try to come up with a group consensus and avoid logistical issues that arise if some districts close but not others. For example, if one district opens but the district some of our teachers live in is closed and they don’t have child care, then we may run into a situation where we do not have enough substitutes to cover our openings.

All this is to say, it is complicated and we have a large amount of factors that have to be considered. Our goal is to have school open every day. When bad weather threatens, we do our best to make the safest decision for our students and staff and to respect the logistical process our parents and staff have to go through to ensure their own students are taken care of during weather days while still considering the need for a stable school schedule.

Many concerned parents have also questioned the amount of snow days we have left for the current school year. As of today, Ferndale Public Schools has used seven “snow” days. Six of these days were due to weather, and one was due to not meeting the state requirement of 75% attendance on one day. The state affords each district six days of “forgiven time”. If a district goes past this, they may request a waiver for an additional three days. If the district is closed beyond these nine days, then we would be forced to add days to the end of the year.

While we strive to have school in session every day, there are instances when we must cancel school to ensure student and staff safety. Closing school is not a decision that I take lightly, and it is often a hard decision to make. I believe it is best to approach these decisions with an abundance of caution. If you have additional questions about the process, please share them with me and I will try to share the answers here with the community.

Stay safe and keep warm!

In Education,

Dania H. Bazzi, PhD
Superintendent
Ferndale Schools
MONTESSORI OPEN HOUSE RESCHEDULED

We are welcoming current K-2 students & families to learn about the Ferndale Schools Lower Elementary Montessori program. This event was postponed due to icy weather on February 12th and has been re-scheduled for February 26th.

Tuesday, February 26th
6:00 pm
Ferndale Upper Elementary
24220 Rosewood | Oak Park, MI 48237

Contact Montessori Teacher Amy Pommereau with questions, at Amy.Pommereau@FerndaleSchools.org

CASA OPEN HOUSE

You are invited to attend the Open House for Prospective Students and their Parents at CASA
TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2019
6:30 PM
CENTER FOR ADVANCED STUDIES AND THE ARTS (CASA)
23561 ROSEWOOD
OAK PARK, MI 48237

CASA is a unique extension service that allows students to take college-level Advanced Placement courses as well as a variety of rigorous academic electives and arts courses in a small, personalized setting. Come meet the wonderful CASA faculty and learn about how our courses can enhance your student’s high school experience while preparing them for college.

The evening will consist of a brief introduction of the CASA followed by the opportunity for parents and students to meet and talk to individual teachers. We look forward to seeing all of you there!

JUNIOR SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES SYMPOSIUM

Wayne State University is host to the 2019 Southeast Michigan Junior Science and Humanities Symposium (JSHS) to be held on March 8, 2019, in Detroit, MI.

JSHS is designed to challenge, engage, and publicly recognize students (Grades 9-12) conducting research in the sciences, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM). Individual students compete for scholarships and recognition by presenting the results of their original research efforts before a panel of judges and an audience of their peers. Opportunities for career exploration, research lab visits, peer discourse, and networking are planned. By participating in regional and national symposia, students may:
• Participate in a forum honoring individual achievement in STEM;
• Network with peers who have similar interests;
• Hear research presentations by other students;
• Develop skills to help prepare for undergraduate and graduate pursuits in STEM fields;
• Hear nationally renowned scientists speak on their work;
• Qualify for significant scholarships and other recognition; and
• Advance to the national symposium.

Students must be nominated by a teacher to attend.

LEARN MORE ABOUT JSHS

FREE STUDY SKILLS GROUPS AT OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

Struggling with assignments, homework and tests? Study Skills can help students:
• Learn new techniques for effective learning
• Develop independent, innovative study plans

Study Skills groups are FREE of charge and designed for Elementary, Middle, and High School students!

DATES
High School: Saturday, March 2, 2019
Middle School: Saturday, March 9, 2019
Elementary: Saturday, March 16, 2019

TIME
9:30 am–2:30 pm
(Includes a lunch break – attendees should bring their own lunch)

LOCATION
208 Pawley Hall, Oakland University
Rochester, MI 48309

INFO AND REGISTRATION
SEHS Counseling Center (248) 370-2633

FERNDALE COMMUNITY BAND CONCERT

The Ferndale Community Concert Band (FCCB) is a diverse, multigenerational musical ensemble of experienced volunteer musicians from all over metro Detroit, including Ferndale High School student musicians. The mission of the FCCB is to provide quality, challenging musical and mentoring experiences for members and student musicians, as well as educating and entertaining the citizens of Ferndale and surrounding communities. Join us for their latest FREE concert, a festival celebration featuring performances by the Ferndale Community Concert Band, Rochester Community Concert Band, and Clarkston Community Band.
FEBRUARY 24TH, 2019, AT 3:00PM
Ferndale High School Auditorium
881 Pinecrest, Ferndale MI 48220
NO ENTRY FEE!
Hello Ferndale Family,

As we shared earlier this year, we are in the midst of creating a new Strategic Plan for Ferndale Public Schools. We have formed a committee of 20 stakeholders, and we want to make sure that we hear feedback from our entire Ferndale Family. Please know that you are encouraged to share your feedback with anyone on the committee so that they can pass it along for consideration. If, for any reason, you are unable to share your feedback with a committee member, please feel free to email the committee.

This email is monitored by our Strategic Planning Coordinator and all information sent to this email address is shared with the committee and taken into consideration.

We appreciate all of your efforts and are working to ensure that Ferndale Public Schools continues to provide all students with an exceptional education that prepares them for college, careers, and success in a diverse society.

FERNDALE SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Jodi Berger, Parent
- Crystal Brock, Parent
- Jim Campbell, Parent
- Amy Ceglarek, Staff Member/Teacher
- Tammy Crossley, Staff Member/Para
- David Crumrine, Parent
- Sarah Elturk, Parent
- Marie Gearing, Staff Member/Secretary
- Lindsay Gonska, Staff Member/Teacher
- Camille Guinn-Gunter, Staff Member/Teacher
- Jean Harrison, Staff Member/Para
- Amy Hawtin, Staff Member/Psychologist
- Tom Maes, Staff Member/Administrator
- Joe Scandalis, Student @ UHS
- Nick Schultz, Parent
- Skylar Speedwell, Student @ FHS
- Mackenzie Stuart, Staff Member/Teacher
- Sean Whitton, Staff Member/Teacher
- Lisa Williams, Staff Member/Administrator
- Melissa Wilson, Parent
FOCUS ON THE ROAD DISTRACTED DRIVING

By now, most of us are well aware of the dangers involved in distracted driving (in particular texting) aimed at helping to minimize this growing epidemic. Here are a few eye-opening statistics to encourage you to make the choice to focus on the road:

Cell phone use is highest among individuals between the ages of 16 and 24.

Nearly 330,000 injuries occur each year from accidents caused by texting and driving.

Injured in crashes that involve a distracted driver.

Approximately nine people are killed and more than 1,000 are injured in crashes that involve a distracted driver.

The National Safety Council reports that cell phone use while driving is the number two reason accidents occur.

In the U.S. are caused by texting and driving.

Sending or reading a text message typically takes your eyes off the road for approximately 5 seconds, long enough to cover a distance of 200 feet. If you’re traveling at 55 miles per hour, that’s 187 feet. How many feet per second is that?

Your vehicle travels roughly 95 feet, in the U.S. are caused by texting and driving.

Because text messaging requires visual, manual, and cognitive attention from the driver, it is by far one of the most dangerous of all types of distractions.

Each year, 2.24 million people are injured in crashes involving distracted drivers.

Nearly one out of four accidental deaths in the U.S. are caused by texting and driving.

In 2010, 3,092 people were killed in crashes involving drivers using handheld devices.

Nearly 3,000 people were killed in crashes involving drivers who were distracted by a cell phone.

High Schools. We are tasking high school students to create Public Service Announcements that encourage their peers to avoid the dangers of distracted driving, and yet, according to the latest report from the National Highway Traffic Safety Agency (NHTSA) this knowledge has done little, if anything, to affect behavioral changes and, in turn, the number of incidents and fatalities.

The simple fact is far too many young drivers are still texting and driving. To compound the problem, since 2000, the number of Americans between the ages of 12-17 who report using a cell phone or texting while driving has doubled.

What’s the solution to this problem? Taking a stand to do nothing is not the way to go. We need to continue to make people aware of the risks of distracted driving.
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18TH THRU FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22ND
Mid-Winter Break

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25TH
7:00 PM
Board of Education - Regular Meeting
FHS, The Nest

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24TH
3:00 PM
Ferndale Community Concert Band
FHS Auditorium
This event is free. Donations are accepted.

THURSDAY, MARCH 28TH
State of the District Scavenger Hunt!
Ferndale High School