

STURGIS SCHOOL NEWS

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School Updates

Spring 2011



District News



Congress school students **Cristoval Nieves** and **Juliette Schroeder** play a counting game with money.

Challenges in our Financial Future

It comes as no surprise to anyone tuned-in that change is upon us. From the gut-wrenching budget cuts in Michigan to the radical changes in working conditions and employee rights in Midwest states, the landscape of education has changed... and it will continue to change well into the future. Your schooling experience was dramatically different from what future generations are going to experience.

At the federal level, our Secretary of Education, **Arne Duncan**, wants a radical change in the way schools are led and the way students are taught. He feels students need higher hurdles, and teachers and administrators need to evaluate if students have met these tougher standards. We've tried much of his agenda but felt other parts could be detrimental to our students, teachers, or communities.



Robert Olsen
Superintendent

On the State level, **Governor Rick Snyder**'s deep budget cuts proposed for public schools will drive changes in a more coercive fashion. His cuts will force school districts to close buildings, reduce staff benefits, increase class sizes, privatize or consolidate services, and offer more online classes. However, what Snyder wants may be tempered as the House and Senate debate their own version of the budget.

I've described education in political terms, because, sadly, the reality of what we are going through is most certainly as much political as it is pure education reform.

Michigan schools are forced to think creatively to provide quality education despite 10 years of shrinking budgets. At the same time, the expectations for school reform and increased student achievement are at an all-time high while the negative attacks on public education are unprecedented. Michigan has become a master of onetime fixes that offer little relief and no assurance of long-term funding stability.

For 10 years, Sturgis Public Schools took steps to prepare for a soft economy. Our employees all contributed to these efforts so the District wouldn't fly off the impending funding cliff. We never thought we'd face that cliff so soon, or that the chasm would be so deep. We are now facing more revenue cuts along with increases in the big two mandated expenditures - retirement contributions and insurance costs. These issues will take every bit of our savings account and more over the next three years, unless we make significant changes.

Effectively, we are facing what amounts to over \$715 in per pupil revenue cuts from our budget. This is the result of losing \$170 per pupil in federal money, \$300 per pupil in State money,

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Sturgis Public Schools, in partnership with parents and community, is to ensure each student has the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary for a successful transition to the next educational stage ultimately leading to a productive and satisfying life.

Board of Education*

- LeeAnn McConnell.....*President*
- Geoffrey D. Smith.....*Vice President*
- Tom Robertson.....*Secretary*
- Ann Bird.....*Treasurer*
- Ray Sterling.....*Trustee*
- Frank J. Kalasky.....*Trustee*
- Kerri Millett.....*Trustee*

**The public is welcome to attend the monthly Study Sessions and Regular Meetings of the Board of Education. The Board meets at 5:30 for the Study Session at the Sturgis Central Commons Board Room on the second Tuesday of each month. On the third Tuesday of the month the Regular Meeting is held at 5:30 p.m. in different schools in the District. Please see the schedule of the meetings posted on the Sturgis web page at www.sturgisps.org. under the Board of Education menu listing.*

Cover: Sturgis Public School children take advantage of the Sturgis Central Commons computer lab. The lab is open Monday - Thursday from 6-9 p.m. on days that school is in session. Any parent or student of Sturgis Public Schools can use the free lab.

see "Financial Challenges" on page 3

District News

Financial Challenges (cont.)

and a \$245 per pupil decrease due to having to fund a bigger share of pensions and increased insurance premiums. In addition, health insurance premiums are expected to rise 15% to 17%.

Governor Granholm already raided the School Aid Fund (SAF) to shore-up funding for Community Colleges. Governor Snyder plans to expand that raid and lump all of higher education into the School Aid Fund even though higher education has different funding sources not available to K-12 education. Coupled with cuts in the Michigan Business Tax and Personal Property Tax, these hits to K-12 funding are unconscionable.

I know things are tough all over and think that much of what the Governor is recommending is long overdue and at some point necessary. I just wish that I saw more shared sacrifice coming from all sectors of the economy. Admittedly, I'm an unabashed advocate for public education, but I truly don't know a single board member, teacher, administrator, or superintendent not committed to giving students the very best they can offer.

"What can we do?" It is imperative that we/you let legislators know the importance of rejecting Governor Snyder's proposed shift of community colleges and universities into the SAF. Sturgis Public Schools has already made sacrifices and will continue to do so, but Lansing is going too far with this proposal. Contact your state representative, **Matt Lori**, and State Senator, **Bruce Caswell**, and share these talking points with them:

- The governor has talked about "shared sacrifices" but proposed a budget with nearly \$2 billion in tax reductions for business paid for, in part, by huge cuts in education. Support for businesses can't be at the expense of kids.
- Sturgis Public School employees have been sharing in the cost of their health care premiums and reduced pensions and increased payments for retirees since 2003.
- We've absorbed cuts in various aspects of our school funding over the past several years.
- We've moved from being one of the highest-funded K-12 systems in the country to being below average.
- Education revenues in Michigan no longer keep pace with the rising costs that schools face.
- We can't absorb more cuts without layoffs, larger class sizes, program cuts, and other options that are detrimental to student learning.
- The total in shifts, transfers, and disinvestment adds up to over a billion-dollar hit to schools.
- Schools can't prepare our students to compete in the global economy with the funding of a third world budget.
- Keep the promise to the voters and children of Michigan.

Regardless of what happens with Sturgis Public School funding, I want to assure you that every SPS employee will do what they can to deliver a quality education to our students, your children, and our future.



Raymond Dresser, Jr. and JoEllen Oster present Sturgis Public School teacher Mel De Young with the 2010 John Oster Award.

Oster Memorial Winner

Mel De Young was recently selected as the 2010 recipient of the John Oster Award at a Sturgis Rotary Club luncheon.

The fund provides an endowment to be given each year to a teacher in recognition of the teacher's outstanding contribution to the Sturgis community and to the education and training of students in the Sturgis School District. The vision of the award was to also provide all teachers with the incentive to strive to improve their professional training and to reward them for extraordinary contributions made to improve the level of education.

De Young graduated from South Christian High School in Grand Rapids and received his Bachelor of Science degree at Western Michigan University. He has also received a Certificate of Educational Technology from Michigan State.

After earning his BS degree, De Young worked at Burr Oak Schools for a year. In 1996 he was hired by Sturgis Public Schools as a first grade teacher at Congress. This year he left Congress to take a newly-opened classroom at Jerolene School.

De Young is also the league secretary of the Tuesday night men's golf leagues at Island Hills, a former recreational soccer coach, and a former member of the Eastside Kiwanis group.

De Young is married to Christy, a first grade teacher at Wall School. He has two sons who attend Sturgis Middle School - Dylan, an 8th grader, and Michael, a 6th grader. In his leisure time, Mel likes to golf, read, cook, garden, and work on his house.

JoEllen Oster, established the memorial fund in 1981 in honor of her late husband John, who strongly believed that there should be some type of recognition and reward for an outstanding Sturgis teacher. The award is administered through the Sturgis Area Community Foundation. The 2010 Oster award marked the 30th year for the honor.

Elementary Schools

Eastwood School

Celebrating B,B,B,B,B & B

Over 600 students and family members recently enjoyed Eastwood's annual Book Fair, Brownie, Basketball, Beach Balls, Bingo, and Bake Walk (B,B,B,B,B & B) family fun night. All ages enjoyed the variety of activities. The Bake Walk supported the Student Council. The Eastwood Advisory Council (EAC) ran the Book Fair.

Congress School

Celebrating 100 Days of School

Congress School kindergarten and first grade students recently celebrated the 100th day of school. In kindergarten, the students made 100 day hats, colored a 100 number grid, and wrote stories about spending 100 dollars. First grade students had a 100 piece puzzle contest, read over 100 books, played the *Penny, Nickel, Dime Exchange* game, and also wrote stories on how to spend \$100.



The Eastwood B,B,B,B,B & B Party: Eastwood students **Taylor Hopkins** and **Sarah Clark** and a young friend enjoy the "Bake Walk." **Avery Wheeler** tastes the "Brownies."

Wall School

Wall School recently celebrated *Read Across America* on March 2, which is also Dr. Seuss' birthday. Parents came into the building to read one-on-one or with small groups of children. The ultimate goal was that every student in the building would be read to during that time. Read Across America had an amazing turnout and was a wonderful success!



Pictures clockwise from top left: **Kyla Nichols** play the Penny, Nickel, Dime Exchange game; **Matt Wynes** practices graphing skills; **Alissa Jacobs** and **Adam Donmyer** count money.



Wall students (L-R) **Myah Grant**, **Emily Herman**, **Luke Herman**, and **Sean DePuydt** listen to a book read by Luke and Emily's mom at the Wall School Read Across America celebration.

Jr./Sr. High News

Sturgis Middle School

Celebrating Pi Day

Happy Pi day! Sturgis Middle School students and staff celebrated Pi day on Monday, March 14 (3.14). They donned neon green pi shirts, decorated the school with over 700 digits of pi (pi is irrational, so it never ends and it never repeats), and - of course - ate pie. If you have a chance to visit the Middle School before spring break, you will be able to see all the pi numbers lining the entrance hallway.

Middle School County Quiz Bowl Champs

Congratulations to the Middle School Quiz Bowl team for taking first place in the recent county competition. Front (L-R) **Matt Kirk, Nathaniel Sisson, Ben Sisson, and Kylee Duncan.** Back (L-R) **Cleanna Crabill, Khushi Vakharia, Avery Peterson, and David Polzin.**



SHS College Bowl

Sturgis SUCCESS, our local College Access Network, sponsored their first College Bowl. Nearly 30 students and their parents attended to file their FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) forms. The FAFSA is the first step to earning college grants, scholarships, and work-study offers.

One of the main goals of Sturgis SUCCESS is to help all of our graduates attend and complete college with as little personal debt as possible. Thank to volunteers **Holly Keyser, Kelly Bibb, Randy Pahls, Nick Harker, Mike Thomasma, and Brenda Tozer** for all of the help and knowledge they provided that made the afternoon so worthwhile.

Although the Michigan deadline for FAFSA has passed, the Federal deadline is not until the end of June. The sooner you file the better. Many schools award financial packages in the coming weeks.

If you have questions about the FAFSA form, or scholarship opportunities, contact **Tracy Harker** at 651-1515 or check our website at www.sturgissuccess.org.



Middle School students design pi digits that will be used to decorate the Middle School. **Dakota Smith, Kari Lemmerhart, Ky Deloach, Lorena Granados, and Samantha Mitchell.**

Sturgis High School

Annual High School Progressive Party

There will be *Minute to Win It* games, inflatable human foosball, ping pong, black light volleyball, inflatable twister, cards, and **David Rowe**, the hypnotist!

Yes - it's the annual SHS Progressive Party, to be held on Saturday, March 19 from 7-11:45 p.m. at Sturgis Middle School. This alternative activity is for ALL Sturgis high school students. Tickets will be on sale the week of March 14 at all lunch times. The first 50 tickets sold will get priority seating at the hypnotist show. The cost is \$6 and includes snacks and all of the fun!

Contact the Sturgis Youth and Family Office at syaf@yahoo.com or 659-3664 if you are able to help chaperone the event. The SHS Progressive Party is sponsored by Sturgis High School Student Senate, Sturgis Foundation YAC, Sturgis Council of the Arts, and the Paul and Jean Casault Family Fund!

Women's Fitness and Life Sports Classes

The Women's Fitness class and the Life Sports class took advantage of several local facilities and "experts" to keep in shape this trimester, proving that Winter should be no hurdle to fitness.

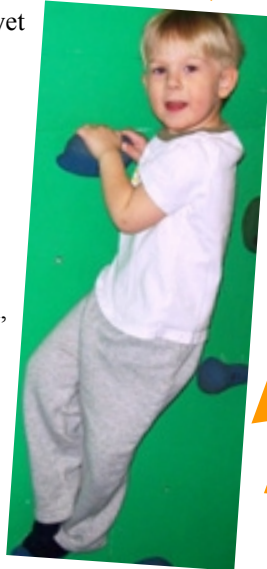
They went sledding and cross country skiing at Meyer Broadway Park in Three Rivers, line-danced with **Liz Sutton**, learned self-defense from the Sturgis Police Department, practiced Yoga with **Indra** at Fit Zone, went scuba diving with **Greg Stone** and **Rob Jenks**, learned about skin care and makeup from **Kathy Lindeman**, and got all their "female" questions answered by **Carol Sharp, NP.**

Thanks to the Doyle Center, Curves, Fit Zone, Sturgis Community Pool, Creative Gymnastics Center, and AMF Sturgis Lanes for allowing us to use their facilities at little to no cost.

Other Happenings

Preschool Registration

Children who turn four but are not yet five years old by December 1 may be eligible for the free Head Start or Great Start Readiness Preschool programs in Sturgis. Please stop in to get an application packet at the Adult & Community Education Office in the Sturgis Central Commons building. Please use the entrance that faces the District Library on W. West Street. For more information, please call 659-1542.



Picture: **Chandler Wall** enjoys climbing the wall at Creative Gymnastics on a recent Great Start Readiness preschool field trip.



The Women's Fitness class and the Life Sports class enjoyed getting fit at several local facilities. Clockwise from top: (L-R) **Lauren Kellogg, Sami Setterblad, Ellie Guijosa, and Amanda Sutton** enjoy the trampoline at Creative Gymnastics Center. **Karra Lafler** works on one of the exercise machines at Fit Zone. **Jarred Finnerman** tries scuba diving at the Sturgis Community Pool.

Sports Physicals

The tentative date for sports physicals is Saturday May 7th. Mark your calendars and watch for future updates.



The Girls Gymnastics Team holds their South Central League first place trophy. Front (L-R): **Cassidy Penner, Jenifer Blouin, Cierra Conklin, Sheyenne Melchi, and Emily Nosler**. Middle (L-R): Coaches, **Bailee Denison and Stacey Keim; Julie Boyden and Jessica Farmer**. Back (L-R): **Elizabeth Crites, Catherine Milford, Alea Penner, Molly Marshall, Mary Boyd, Dannette Schroeder, and Megan Kirsch**.

Other Happenings



The Girls Competitive Cheer Team: Front (L-R): **Kristin Richardson, Sami Wallace, Kayla Richardson, and Shelby Flowers.** Back (L-R): **Natasha Ash, Alex Richards, Brianne Graham, Erika Richardson, Taylor Harris, and Jessica Paciorkowski.**

Vocal Solo & Ensemble

Bryce Airgood, Kaitlin Buchan, Helen Datkovic, Sarai DeJesus, Steven Griffith, Anna Lytle, Lydia Peterson, Abbie Scheske, and Rachel Smith performed at the District Vocal Solo and Ensemble last month. The Madrigal Ensemble also performed and received a Division I rating.

Congratulation to **Sarai DeJesus, Rachel Smith,** and the **SHS Madrigal Ensemble** for qualifying for the State Solo and Ensemble at Aquinas College on March 19th.



Sturgis High School performed "Sound of Music" with a cast and crew of more than 50. The Von Trapp family is pictured above: Front (L-R) **Meg Scheske, Tess Scheske, and Trevor Jacobs.** Back Row (L to R) **Luke Eichorn, Sydney Wenzel, Jason Eichorn, Lauren Raiford, Abbie Scheske, and Rachel Smith**

Winter Sports Highlights

Sturgis Competitive Cheer

- Won first Division Championship since 2003.

Boys Wrestling

- **DJ Mathews** and **Austin Ward** went to the State Championship at the Palace of Auburn Hills and both finished 1-2.

Boys Swimming

- **Nathan Stemen, Thomas Tetzloff, Carson Crabill, Christian Griffioen, Tyler Crone and Bobby Flowers** qualified for the State Meet at the Holland Aquatic Center on March 11 and 12.

Girls Gymnastics

- Won the League Championship (their first year in the South Central League).
- Placed first in team GPA with a 3.599 team average.
- Placed second at Regionals, which qualified them for the State Meet on March 11th at Kenowa Hills.
- **Mary Boyd** (all around), **Molly Marshall** (all around), **Sheyenne Melchi** (all around), **Megan Kirsch** (vault, floor), **Dannette Schroeder** (vault), **Cierra Conklin** (bars), and **Alea Penner** (floor) qualified to compete in the Individual State Championships on March 12.

Boys Basketball

- Won District Championship and will start Regional play in Three Rivers on March 14.



Left: **Hunter Wells** (a.k.a. Trojan Man) watches over the team during a basketball game. Right (L-R) **Jarred Finnerman, Conner Render, Kelsey Caposey** pose on Senior Night while **Riley Wentzel** looks on above.

Kindergarten Orientation

Sturgis Public Schools will hold a **parent only** Kindergarten Parent Orientation Meeting for all children coming to kindergarten in the fall on Thursday, April 14 at 7 p.m. in the Wall School Gym. **Incoming students must turn five-years-old on, or before, December 1, 2011.** Kindergarten registration packets will be distributed at this meeting.

Registration will take place on Wednesday, April 20th or Thursday, April 21st in the Wall School gym from 1:00 to 7:00 p.m. **This is for parents only.** If your child needs a hearing or vision test, these will take place in the Library at Wall School **only on April 21st, Thursday**, during the registration time.

Parents will need to bring the kindergarten registration packet along with the following information about their child:

- ✓ State-Certified Birth Certificate
- ✓ Immunization Record
- ✓ Vision and Hearing Record
- ✓ One Proof of Residency that lists parent name and address (such as a utility bill or rental/mortgage receipt).

For more information about kindergarten orientation or registration, please call Congress School at 659-1565, Wall School at 659-1570, or Wenzel School at 659-1575.

Tell Us What You Think

Sturgis School News welcomes letters, comments, and critiques. All correspondence should be sent to Editor, Sturgis School News, 107 W. West Street, Sturgis, MI 49091. We can be reached by phone at 659-1542 or by e-mail through our web site at www.sturgisps.org.



Clockwise from lower left: **Caleb and Jennifer Hendricks, Kobe Mullins, Elizabeth Nelson, Kenneth Munoz and his mother.**

2010-11 School Calendar

March	
17-18	Parent-Teacher Evening Conferences (Grades K-5)
April	
4-8	Spring Break
22	Good Friday
May	
6	Mid-Term
30	No School - Memorial Day
June	
9	Last Day of School for Students

Free Medicaid Seminar

A free seminar about Medicaid Eligibility and Estate Planning will be conducted by local attorney **Bob Brothers**. It will be held on Tuesday, March 29 at 7 p.m. in the Sturgis Central Commons Board Room. Please call 659-1540 to register as seating is limited.



Karl Schaefer, Jarred Finnerman, and Dante Avila enjoy sledding as part of the Life Sports and Fitness Class.



Conceive It...Believe It...Achieve It...At Sturgis Public Schools