

# STURGIS SCHOOL NEWS

Winter Sports Schedule  
Letter to Parents  
*Seussical* the Musical  
Sturgis SUCCESS  
2012/13 Calendar

Winter 2012



## SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

Dr. Thomas M. Langdon  
SPS Superintendent

As I consider the state of education right now it reminds me of Dickens' famous line from *A Tale of Two Cities* - "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." It is the best of times for many reasons, including what great students, staff, and parents we have at Sturgis Public Schools. It is the worst of times because of the skyrocketing cost of doing business and the budget cuts we continually face. This is truly a fantastic, yet unsettling, time to be in public education.



*Continued on Page 2*

## Superintendent's Corner *(continued from front page)*

Besides the fact that it is the best and worst of times, it is also the most challenging of times. But I don't mean challenging in a bad way; I mean it in a good way. We have been challenged by the State of Michigan to take on one of the most arduous high school curriculums in the entire country while improving test scores at every other level as well. Although this might cause some people dismay, at Sturgis Public Schools we see this challenge as an opportunity to do even more.

One way we are working to address these challenges is to seek new and innovative ways to deliver education to our students. This will involve more collaboration with all of our staff (see *Letter to SPS Parents* on page three that was sent to our District parents and guardians) and more use of technology.

We must remember that technology itself is just a tool - students will not succeed without strong and capable teachers, administrators, and ancillary staff members. Technology DOES allow us to quickly measure and assess where students are in their education and how to best get them where they need to go. With this constant assessment, we can design curriculum that will help not only students, but also staff and parents to ensure success for each child. This will not only help struggling students "get up to speed," but will also help advanced students realize their full potential.

This, of course, is very exciting - but it's also something new. In the coming months we are going to involve the entire school community as we look deeper into providing the best education for all of our students. If you would like to know more, please call the Central Office or any of our building principals. All of our administrators would be happy to explain the benefits of the Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) model - found in the adjacent *Letter to SPS Parents* article - or the technology initiatives that we are discussing for next year. As always, we welcome your questions and comments.

If at any time you are wondering what is going at Sturgis Schools, please check out our website at [www.sturgisps.org](http://www.sturgisps.org) for all of our event happenings. You will also find general information about Sturgis Public Schools that will keep you better attuned as to important information. District/building calendars, sports schedules, study/learning help, technology advice, teacher website links, and much more can be found at [www.sturgisps.org](http://www.sturgisps.org).

Thank you for checking our website and, as always, thanks for being part of our school family!



Sturgis High School art student, **Morgan Jones** paints one of the letters that adorn the preschool playground at Sturgis Central Commons.

## 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*
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*\*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 Monday of each month. On the third Monday 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](http://www.sturgisps.org) under the Board of Education menu listing.*

**Cover: Dante Avila and Bryce Russell** are introduced to the crowd at a recent Sturgis High School varsity basketball game.\*

\* Photo compliments of Lesli Stewart Photography

# News

## Letter to SPS Parents

As the New Year begins we would like to take this time to share some of the important things happening at Sturgis Public Schools. As you know, the state has gone through many changes this past year – some good, some bad. All of them have presented unique opportunities for public schools in Michigan.

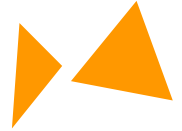
You may have read in the newspaper or heard on the radio information related to the new MEAP “cut scores.” Previously, many districts were accustomed to seeing scores in the 80-90 percentage range; now, depending on the content area, those scores will be anywhere in the 20-60 percentage range. This is simply a formula change that occurred at the state level. If you have any further questions regarding this issue, please contact any Sturgis Public Schools administrator.

Related to increased accountability by the state and other entities is a need for greater professional development for our instructional staff. This year, the school calendar includes two professional development days at the end of each trimester. The first set was December 2 & 5; the next days will be March 16 & 19. These days - when students are not in school - are opportunities for teachers and other staff to analyze data and to receive training relative to the needs represented by this data. It should be noted that none of these days result in a loss of instructional time for students.

One last item concerns Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) at SPS. Put simply, it is important for teachers and other professional staff to meet regularly to process data and to discuss best practices with each other to ensure student success. For too long the teaching community has been expected to implement change and work in a coherent manner with very little opportunity to plan and collaborate. The High School has been working with a delayed start for students every Thursday for the last several years. This opportunity affords teachers much needed PLC time that makes a difference in the lives of our high school students. As we move forward with many positive changes next year, we need to ensure that all of our staff are ready to meet the challenges involved.

Clearly, it is time to expand PLCs to every building and every grade level. With this in mind, **Sturgis Public Schools will be extending the Thursday delayed start to every building in the district beginning April 9. All bus routes will run one hour later on Thursdays.** You may choose to have your child stay home until the new start time or s/he may arrive at school at the standard start time. In order to provide adequate supervision, please contact your child’s school if you plan to self-transport your child at the standard start time. You will receive a follow-up letter from your building principal asking for information regarding your plans for your child on the delayed start Thursdays.

Thank you for your time in reading this letter. We are confident that this will make our schools even more successful and help your child achieve even more.



▲▲  
*Sturgis High School students (L-R) Brennan McConnell, Olivia Mizner, and Viridiana Rodriguez display their Diplomat Torch Award certificates that they received at the Business Professionals of America (BPA) Regional Competition recently held at Lake Michigan College. Sturgis High School had 85 students participate, 11 first place finishes, and 55 students qualify for the State competition in March.*

## Sturgis Endowment Grants

Two Sturgis teachers have found unique ways to expand and enliven their teaching through grant money received from the Sturgis Public Schools Endowment Fund.

**Gretchen Cropsey**, a second grade teacher at Congress Elementary, received \$999 to apply towards an Apple TV in her classroom. She uses the TV to create engaging ways for students to independently practice reading and math skills. It allows for more small group and differentiated instruction, and is also used as an interactive whiteboard. Cropsey presents digital lessons on the TV and is now able to show photos, videos, music, etc. as part of her instruction. The Apple TV, in conjunction with the Apple iPad, aids independent reading and math centers by allowing students to become familiar with educational apps, such as sight word flashcards, e-readers, spelling games, math facts, etc.

**Stephen Erts** and **Sally Baldwin** from the high school art department received \$330 for transportation to the South Shore Train Station so their students can visit the Chicago Art Institute. The students will have the opportunity to see world-renowned art pieces that they have been studying and emulating in class. They will use interactive worksheets as they view the art works and write a reflective essay after the trip.



# Elementary Schools

## Congress Schools

### Military Kids Receive HUG dolls

Congress School staff knew the holidays would be tough for students with a parent in the military. To thank those parents who sacrifice everything to serve our country, Congress school presented three children of military members gone overseas a HUGGEE MISS YOU™ doll, otherwise known as a HUG doll. These dolls were made with the corresponding uniform of the military branch in which their parent serves. The face of the doll featured a picture of their loved one. Congress hoped the dolls provided a little bit of comfort to its students of military families and showed their thanks to the heroes in our community.



(L-R) **Emma McClimans, Elaina Bogucki, and Nathaniel Bogucki** pose with their HUG dolls that feature a picture of their father on them.

## Eastwood Elementary

### Lego Open Has 50+ Entries

The recent 17th annual Eastwood Lego Open competition featured more than 50 entries. There are two main categories - free-style and kits. Within each main category there are 11 subcategories featuring things like creativity, outer space, fantasy, etc. The contest is open to all Eastwood students.



Top: **Nathan Perry** stands by his Ferris Wheel creation.  
Bottom: **Jacob Haller** peruses the Lego creations.



Great Start  
Preschool  
students,  
**Maythim Alugail**  
and **Elias Cardiel  
Nieves**.



Sturgis High school sophomore **Chance Stewart** takes a turn interviewing local WBET radio host **Mike Stiles** at a recent basketball game.

# Jr./Sr. High News

## Sturgis Middle School

Students at Sturgis Middle School love to go to the school library—but not just for the books. Thanks to **Mrs. Hout** and **Mrs. Idriss**, there are always interesting things to do there, like trivia contests, reading challenges, and new book displays.

The most exciting activity, however, has been writing letters to our service men and women. Hout, who has a son in the Navy, discovered that many service people receive very few, if any, letters in the mail. She challenged middle school students to write 200 letters, one for every sailor on her “adopted” ship, the USS Ingraham. The students exceeded their goal and sent more than 200 letters to the sailors just in time for the holidays. Hout places photos and replies from the sailors on the library bulletin board for all the students to see.

Hout received the following message from one of the sailors on board the ship:

*My name is Brandon, I am a United States sailor on-board the USS Ingraham. We are on deployment right now, and were overseas, away from our families for Christmas. It is very hard being away, and it's hard to know that we couldn't be with our families. There is not much we can do out here to feel at home. We work every-day, even on Christmas. We did a little decorating and had a special dinner to try and make it feel more like Christmas, but it wasn't the same without our families. The morning before Christmas when I was eating lunch I saw a couple people hanging papers on the bulkhead. (wall) And I noticed they were all reading them as they hung them up, and they were all very quiet. When I went to see what it was, there were hundreds of letters!!!! Letters thanking us for what we do, and wishing us a Merry Christmas.... As I read through them I felt so good inside! We all did. After Christmas was over the letters you sent*



Recipients of the Sturgis Middle School letters aboard the USS Ingraham .



Sturgis Middle School students display Navy gear received from their pen pals on the U.S.S. Ingram. Bottom Row (L-R): **Aline Lopez, Sarah Miller, Dalton Smith, Gabby Gooden, and Reece Ream.** Middle Row (L-R): **Brandon Swineheart, Cameron Harper, Mayte Delgado, Taylor Bennett, and Rachel Fry.** Top Row (L-R): **Tim Bloom, Roberto Garcia, Dana Dunkel, David Vincent, Jonah Strang, and Mrs. Hout.**

*us were the most comforting thing we had. Many of us read through all the letters and were holding back tears. It was a feeling of comfort, and it helped us feel better about what we are out here doing. The letters you wrote us helped us out more than I can explain. I want to personally thank you for the time you put into writing them. It probably seems like no big deal to you, but to us it makes a world of difference. I noticed a lot of questions on your letters too. If you would like answers, feel free to email me back. Your teacher Ms. Hout has my email address. I am more than happy to answer any question you might have. I would also like to say a big thank you! You are all very special, and have very kind hearts. We keep you in our prayers everyday. I look forward to hearing back from you!*



Peer Assistance Students at Sturgis High School donated, shopped for, and wrapped gifts for a needy (and very appreciative) Sturgis family. (L-R) **Brianna Lindsey, Megan Hill, Hannah Myers, Cassidy Penner, Dago Munoz Garcia, Eli Wickline, Caroline Kirsch, and Ashley Lane.** Not pictured: **Jason Eichorn, Kelsey Keyser, Joey Lioy, and Bryce Russell.**

## Sturgis SUCCESS

### Local College Access Network Now Available

Sturgis SUCCESS, our local college access network, is now open for walk-in help with college applications, FAFSA forms, scholarship information, and anything to do with going to college. The office is located in Sturgis High School and is open from Monday-Thursday from 2:00 – 6:00 p.m.

**Tracy Harker**, Sturgis SUCCESS Coordinator, and **Joseph Robele**, College Advisor, are available to work with students and parents. For more information about Sturgis SUCCESS, check out our new website at [www.sturgissuccess.org](http://www.sturgissuccess.org) or give us a call at 659-1500, ext. 1669.



**Alyssa Blowers and Alex Richards** paint a new Senior Success sign.

### Upcoming Sturgis SUCCESS Events:

- **Q & A Table at Parent Teacher Conferences** - Sturgis High School - January 25 & 26.
- **Table and Information Sessions at Parenting Fair** - Eastwood School - Feb. 4.
- **Financial Aid Night** - Sturgis High School - February 8 from 6:30 – 8:00.
- **Parent-To-Parent Meeting** - Wall School - Feb. 9 at 6 p.m. A presentation will also be given to parents of k-2<sup>nd</sup> graders on steps to take now to help prepare their students for their future careers.
- **College Bowl Sunday** – Sturgis High School - February 12 from 2-4 p.m. Students can reserve a computer in the high school library and have expert help in filling out the FAFSA form, a form required to get college scholarship or grant money.
- **College Acceptance and Financial Aid Q & A Night** - Sturgis High School - 7 p.m. on April 11.



The Sturgis gymnastics team holds the second place plaque that they won at the Sturgis Invitational (Row 1): **Sheyenne Melchi and Alea Penner** (Row 2): **Cierra Conklin, Dannette Schroeder, and Megan Kirsch** (Row 3): **Emily Nosler, Aly Seidler, Alexis Janes, and Cassidy Penner** (Row 4): **Amber Johnson, Maisilyn Brock, and Tara Smith.**

## Autism/Asperger Support

St. Joseph County Community Mental Health has a support group for families of individuals with autism/Asperger syndrome. The group meets on the fourth Monday of every month at 6:30 p.m. at the CMH facility located at 677 E. Main in Centerville. For more information, contact **Lynelle Thrasher** at 467-1000.



Sturgis High School will present **Seussical** at Sturges-Young Auditorium, Feb. 3rd-5th. Performance times are 7:30pm Friday Feb. 3rd and Saturday Feb. 4th, with an afternoon performance on Sunday Feb. 5th beginning at 2pm. *Seussical* is a musical based on many books written by Dr. Seuss. Tickets are \$5 for students/seniors and \$8 for adults. They are available from the auditorium by calling 651-8541 or the high school main office at 659-1515.

# Happenings

## Great Start News

### Free Playgroups

Free Great Start Playgroups for all children 0-5 and their families meet every Monday from 10:00 am - 11:30 am at Holy Angels in Sturgis.

### Enrollment for Free Preschool

Preschool enrollment has begun! Go to <http://www.sjcisd.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=greatStart.home> for an application in English or espanol. For questions, call **Jackie Baker** at 269-467-5496.

### Discovery Days Offer Free Screenings

Discovery Days for children aged 0-5 will be held March 13 at Holy Angels from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm. This event includes pre-school round-up and vision, hearing, speech, and developmental screenings for your young child. Many exhibits and vendors will be ready to help your child succeed in school.

### Grandparent and Kinship Care Support

Parents Again provides resources for grandparents and kinship care providers. The group meets 6-8 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month at the United Methodist Church located at 305 East Main Street in Centreville. On-site child care and a free light meal are offered. Meetings include guest speakers and open discussion/sharing times. For more information contact **Irene Gunnink** at 269-506-8195.

### Nurturing Fathers Program

Community Fatherhood is offering an eight-week session of the Nurturing Fathers Program. For more information call 269-282-1340 or 269-317-7337.

### Help Improve Early Childhood System

The Great Start Parent Coalition is looking for parents to share their voice and stories to improve the early childhood system in St. Joseph County. Meetings are the first Monday of the month at Centreville United Methodist Church at 6:00 pm and the third Monday of the month at 11 am at the McDonald's in Sturgis. Child care and a meal is provided. Call **Anita Lopez Schlabach** for more information at 269-467-5404 or e-mail her at [aschlabach@sjcisd.org](mailto:aschlabach@sjcisd.org)

For more information about any of the Intermediate School District's programs, contact **Amy Brauer** at 269-467-5309 or send her an e-mail to [sjcgreatstart@gmail.com](mailto:sjcgreatstart@gmail.com).



Great Start Preschool student **Maria Valeffuerte Medina**.

## Winter 2012 Home Schedule

### BOYS VARSITY BASKETBALL

01/27/12 (F)	Loy Norrix	Home	7:15PM
02/10/12 (F)	Gull Lake	Home	7:15PM
02/14/12 (TU)	BC Central	Home	7:15PM
03/12/12 (M)	Regionals	Home	TBA
03/14/12 (W)	Regionals	Home	TBA

### BOYS FRESHMAN & JUNIOR VARSITY BASKETBALL

02/02/12 (TH)	Marshall	Home	4:15/5:45PM
02/14/12 (TU)	BC Central	Home	4:15/5:45PM
02/16/12 (TH)	Harper Creek	Home	4:15/5:45PM

### GIRLS VARSITY BASKETBALL

01/27/12 (F)	Loy Norrix	Home	5:45PM
01/31/12 (TU)	Lakeview	Home	7:15PM
02/10/12 (F)	Gull Lake	Home	5:45PM
02/21/12 (TU)	Kzoo Central	Home	7:00PM

### GIRLS FRESHMAN & JUNIOR VARSITY BASKETBALL

01/26/12 (TH)	Loy Norrix	Home	4:15/5:45PM
01/31/12 (TU)	Lakeview	Home	4:15/5:45PM
02/09/12 (TH)	Gull Lake	Home	4:15/5:45PM
02/21/12 (TU)	Kzoo Central	Home	4:15/5:45PM
02/23/12 (TH)	Coldwater	Home	4:15/5:45PM

### BOYS VARSITY WRESTLING

01/11/12 (W)	Tri Meet	Home	5:30PM
01/25/12 (W)	Coldwater	Home	7:00PM

### BOYS VARSITY SWIMMING

02/02/12 (TH)	Marshall	Home	6:00PM
02/09/12 (TH)	Loy Norrix	Home	6:00PM
03/10/12 (SA)	State Finals		

### BOWLING

02/16/12 (TH)	@ AMF Sturgis	Home	3:30PM
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### GIRLS JV & VARSITY COMPETITIVE CHEER

01/28/12 (SA)	Sturgis Invitational	Home	10:00AM
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### GIRLS VARSITY GYMNASTICS

01/27/12 (F)	Tri Meet	Home	5:30PM
02/06/12 (M)	Tri Meet	Home	5:30PM

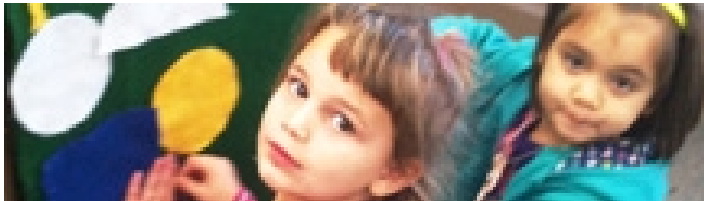


# Foul Weather Alerts

When the weather outside is frightful - foggy or snowy - be sure to check the school website at [www.sturgisps.org](http://www.sturgisps.org) or listen for school postponements, cancellations, early dismissals, or activity cancellations. All radio announcements will be made on WBET (99.3 FM), WLKM (95.9 FM), WKZO (590 AM), WNWN (98.5 FM), WTHO (105.5 FM), WKFR (103.3 FM), WVPE (88.1 FM), WZUU (92.5 FM), WFRN (104.7 FM), and WOWO (1190 AM). Television announcements will be made on WWMT (ch. 3), WOOD (ch.8), WSBT (ch. 22), and WNDU (ch. 16). You may also sign-up in your child's school office to receive an automated telephone call or follow the links on our district website to receive an email when school is cancelled or delayed. When possible, announcements will occur by 6:30 am.

# 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 659-1500 ext. 1700 or by e-mail through our web site at [www.sturgisps.org](http://www.sturgisps.org).



Great Start Preschool students **Vally Wiederman** and **Asia Crockett**.



107 W. West Street • Sturgis, MI 49091

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# Postal Patron

## 2011-12 School Calendar

### January

9 School Resumes  
25-26 Parent-Teacher Evening Conferences - Grades 6-12

### February

17-20 No School - Mid-Winter Break

### March

16-19 No School for Students  
22-23 Parent-Teacher Evening Conferences - Grades K-5

### April

2-6 No School for Students - Spring Break  
9 Districtwide PLC Begin - Delayed Starts for K-12

### May

28 No School - Memorial Day

### June

14 Last Day for Students

## 2012-13 School Calendar

### September

4 First Day of School for Students

### December

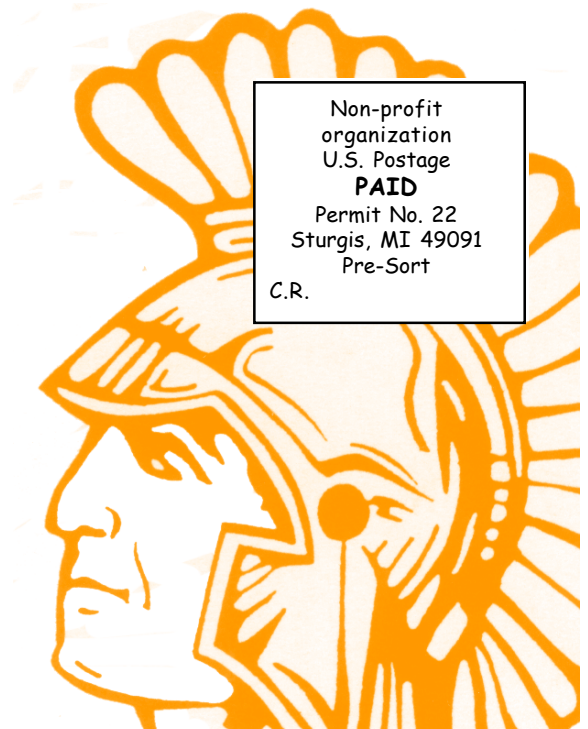
22 - Jan. 6 No School - Christmas Break

### February

15-18 No School - Mid-Winter Break

### April

1-5 No School for Students - Spring Break



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