



SPARTA AREA SCHOOLS

November 2024

BELL RINGER

Home of the Michigan Blue Ribbon Exemplary School

www.spartaschools.org

Celebrating an Outstanding Start to the School Year

Dear Spartans,

I'm excited to share how proud I am of the exceptional start we've had to this school year. As I look back at the last few weeks, it's clear that we've set the tone for an incredible journey ahead, marked by meaningful traditions, outstanding achievements, and the boundless spirit that defines our Spartan community.

A Homecoming to Remember

This year's homecoming celebration was an event like no other, where we truly honored what it means to be a Spartan. It was more than just a football game or a parade; it was a tribute to our school's traditions, a time to come together as a community, and a moment to celebrate the legacy we all share. We welcomed back former Spartans, alumni from many different graduating classes, and current students to stand together and celebrate our school spirit. Homecoming is one of our oldest and most beloved traditions, a time when current students and graduates alike return to the place that helped shape them. This year, we saw a fantastic turnout, with alumni coming from near and far to participate. The parade through town was a testament to the heart of this community, with floats, homecoming court members, and our outstanding marching band leading the way. Seeing our alumni proudly wearing their Spartan colors, some with their own children now attending our schools, reminded us all that once you're a Spartan, you're always a Spartan. It's a lifelong identity that binds us together, regardless of where life may take us.

This year's homecoming game itself was also a thrilling event,

filled with the energy and excitement that makes our school community so special. Though the game was competitive, it was the coming together of students, alumni, and families that made it such a memorable night. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the festivities, from our student council to parent volunteers, and to the many alumni who made the journey back to be a part of this special event. You truly helped us celebrate our tradition in style.

Success on the Courts: Boys Varsity Tennis Wins First River Cities Alliance Championship

Not only are we celebrating our past and traditions, but we are also celebrating new milestones that show just how bright our future is. I am thrilled to announce that our boys' Varsity Tennis team has claimed our first conference championship as part of the new River Cities Alliance! This is a historic achievement for our athletic department and a testament to the hard work and dedication of our student-athletes, their coaches, and the families who support them.

This year marks our school's first season in the newly formed River Cities Alliance, and what a debut it has been! Our boys' tennis team displayed exceptional skill, grit, and teamwork throughout the season, culminating in this championship. The players' ability to rise to the challenge, even against tough competition, shows not only their talent but also the Spartan resilience we've come to expect from all of our athletic teams. These athletes exemplify the Spartan ethos of perseverance, respect, and determination, and we are incredibly proud of them for bringing

home this title.

I would also like to extend a special congratulations to Coach Wagner and Coach Cnossen, whose leadership and guidance have been instrumental in this victory. We know that championships don't just happen; they are the result of countless hours of practice, dedication, and a shared commitment to excellence. We are all incredibly proud of the boys' Varsity Tennis team and look forward to what is sure to be a bright future for this program.

This championship also signals the beginning of what we hope will be many more victories as part of the River Cities Alliance. We are proud to be part of this new conference and look forward to the opportunities it presents for all of our student-athletes to compete at a high level. With this kind of start, the future is looking very bright indeed.

A Vibrant Start for the Arts:

The Marching Band Shines While our athletic teams have had an amazing start, we also cannot forget to celebrate the success of our arts programs, which have had a similarly fantastic beginning to the school year. Our marching band has kicked off their season in incredible style, wowing audiences with performances that have not only energized the stands at our football games but have also garnered accolades at competitions.

Under the expert direction of Mr. Sam Beeson, the marching band has once again proven that they are among the most talented and hard-working students in our district. The level of artistry and discipline shown by our band members is nothing short of spectacular, and their performances have already

set a high bar for the rest of the season. Every member, from the drum majors to the color guard, plays a critical role in delivering performances that move and inspire those who watch. Our arts programs, like our athletics, are a vital part of the Spartan experience. They provide our students with opportunities to express themselves, build confidence, and develop lifelong skills. We are proud of the incredible work our marching band has done so far and are excited to see where their talent and hard work will take them in the coming weeks.

A Promising Year Ahead

As we reflect on this incredible start to the school year, I want to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude to our entire school community. From the students and staff to parents and alumni, every one of you has played a part in

making this such a successful beginning. It is your passion, dedication, and pride in being Spartans that make our district such a special place to learn, grow, and thrive.

I am excited for all that lies ahead. Whether it's on the field, in the classroom, on stage, or in the community, I know that we will continue to build on this momentum and achieve even greater things together. This is a year for new traditions, new victories, and new heights of excellence. Let's continue to support one another, celebrate our successes, and make this school year one to remember.

Thank you for all that you do.
Together, we are Sparta!

Joel



MDOT

Our class participated in the MDOT National Work Zone Awareness sign competition in May of 2024! Third grader Brynleigh Jones' artwork was selected as a winner with her creative design using a sloth to tell drivers to slow down. Thank you Bryn for sharing your artwork talents with us and helping drivers to know the importance of slowing down within work zones!



Firetruck Visit For ECC

The Sparta Fire Department came to the Early Childhood Center to show our preschool students the ins and outs of a fire truck! Students were taught what to do in case of a fire and were able to check out all the tools and equipment that firefighters use.



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Applevue Visits Grand Rapids Public Museum

Applevue Elementary entered the past while visiting Grand Rapids Public Museum in September. Fifth graders have been welcomed to the museum for many years. It is wonderful to see our

students enjoy learning about both the past and the present at GRPM. The "Old Grand Rapids Streets" exhibit is always a hit with live docents teaching everything from old-fashioned apothecary uses to

running a lathe and printing using a hand press! Stepping back into history allows students to appreciate the innovation and resourcefulness of past generations. What a great field trip!



The Heartfelt World of Patricia Polacco's Stories

This month, our 4th-grade class took part in an exciting author study focused on Patricia Polacco. Born in Lansing, Michigan, Polacco is known for writing stories that leave a lasting impression. Her books resonate deeply because they are filled with real emotions, often drawn from her own life experiences. Whether she's writing about family traditions, childhood struggles, or overcoming challenges, her stories make readers feel connected and understood.

In *Thank You, Mr. Falker*, one of Polacco's most famous stories, a young girl

with dyslexia learns to read with the support of a caring teacher. This story is about more than just learning—it's about overcoming self-doubt and the importance of having someone who believes in you.

Family love is another key theme in Polacco's books, such as *The Keeping Quilt* and *The Blessing Cup*. These stories show the power of family traditions and how love is passed down through generations. They give readers a sense of comfort and belonging, reminding us of the warmth we find in our own families.

Many of Polacco's stories also teach im-

portant lessons about empathy. In *Chicken Sunday*, children from different backgrounds come together through friendship and kindness. The story shows how communities can bridge differences by understanding and supporting one another.

Patricia Polacco's stories have a special way of touching our hearts. Through her simple yet powerful storytelling, she invites readers to reflect on their own lives, relationships, and struggles. If you're looking for books that will make you think and feel deeply, her stories are a must-read!



Fifth Grader Venture Art Prize in Grand Rapids

Fifth graders ventured into ART PRIZE 2024, experiencing wonderful exhibits and interactive artworks throughout Grand Rapids. Artists shared their talents by sketching, interacting, and performing their way into our students' beautiful fall day experience. Students reported that they enjoyed the variety of venues, including the Amway, The GRAM, and the



streets of downtown Grand Rapids. The art installations were thought-provoking, whimsical, and some-

times a bit outrageous. The field trip was funded through Sparta Spirit Walk and PTC funds.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT FUNDRAISER
SLICES FOR SEF
 Pizza Buffet
 (includes salad & soft drink - drink of your choice)
 Adults - \$12, Youth - \$8
 (for orders from the menu, specials not included)
 20% of your total bill (dine-in or take-out) will be generously donated to the SPARTA EDUCATION FOUNDATION to help provide classroom grants. Mention the SEF when ordering.
TUESDAY NOVEMBER 12
ANGELA'S ITALIAN RESTAURANT
 240 E Division St Sparta
 4:30-7:30 PM 616-887-1913
 Sparta Education Foundation Givecloud Co
 Facebook: Sparta Education Foundation MI

Dig Deeper This Holiday Season to Help the Sparta Education Foundation Meet Its \$100,000 Matching Grant Goal - Double your dollars when you donate to SEF



A very generous local family has offered to match donations given to SEF, dollar for dollar, up to \$100,000. We are SO CLOSE to meeting our goal. But, we only have until June 2025. Please help us increase the impact of grants in our school district's classrooms and build the SEF endowment to ensure decades of ongoing support for Sparta Area Schools. Any amount is much appreciated. Watch your mail this November for our annual campaign donation opportunity or email us at sef@spartaschools.org to be added to our mailing list. Thanks so much!

Donate visit us online: sparta-education-foundation.givecloud.co/

Please follow and share us on Facebook:



THANK YOU! Together, we're "Providing Extras for Education" ~ Inspiring Learning, Empowering Success.



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Our **High Quality Program** is free to pregnant women and families with children ages 0-4.

Early Childhood Programs

Pregnancy - 3 Years Old

Home Visiting

Our Home Visiting program focuses on preparing your family for the school years ahead. Each family is paired with a Home Visitor who will provide individualized support specific to you. Families and Home Visitors work together to set and achieve goals, promote development and access community resources. Socializations and family engagement events are offered to all families and provide opportunities to build relationships and explore the classroom environment.



Pregnant Women:

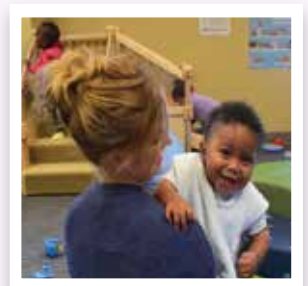
- Weekly visits alternating between the Agency Nurse and Home Visitor
- Education and information from our "Partners for a Healthy Baby" curriculum
- Prenatal health and postpartum recovery information
- Mental health and postpartum depression resources
- Support building healthy relationships with family and baby

Birth - 3 years old:

- Weekly visits with Home Visitors
- Develop parent as child's first and best teacher
- Support in using the home environment to enhance child's school readiness outcomes
- Monthly in-home snack experience
- Regular developmental and social-emotional assessments

Infant/Toddler Rooms

Providing a safe, nurturing environment is the top priority for our Infant/Toddler classrooms. Each child has a primary caregiver who partners with the family to best understand the child's cues and ensure their needs are met. Learning takes place during every part of the day in these classes through individualized daily routines.



3 - 4 Years Old

Preschool

We understand that children learn through experience and strive to nurture the whole child in our preschool programming. In addition to math, reading, science, social studies, and art skills, our students develop skills in cooperation, problem solving, and personal responsibility.



Supporting you as your child's first, best teacher!

Contact us for more information: hs4kc.org



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(L to R: Sawyer Burns, Gavin Moul, Berkley Decker)

Exciting Adventures

In Developmental Kindergarten, students had a wonderful start to the year learning about their classroom communities and discovering the larger community they are a part of outside of the classrooms! While students interacted with community helpers around Sparta, they gained an understanding of various roles that help contribute to the functioning of a society, learned how different professions work together to create a healthy environment, and recognized the efforts of those who serve and support them. As a result, they took more ownership over their classroom responsibilities, learned how to ask questions, practiced being active listeners, expanded their vocabulary, and were building background knowledge! Thank you to Brett Hurley at HurQleys Handyman Service, Ben Schut with Herrington's Waste Service Inc, Zach Smith at Sparta Animal Clinic, Katie Merryman at The Barkery Pet Grooming, Sparta Fire Department, and various staff members at Sparta Area Schools for engaging students in meaningful ways!

Congratulations To Our September Students of the Month!

Each month, our staff at Sparta Middle School nominates students whom they have in class to be honored as our Students of the Month. Criteria for being a Student of the Month are students who conduct themselves as model citizens who set a positive example by living out our Spartan Values - Safe, Positive, Accomplished, Respectful, Trustworthy, Accepting.

SMS FALL DANCE

Thursday
November 21st
(6pm-8pm)

- **Mark your calendars! Our SMS Student Government will be communicating more details in the near future!**
- **ALL GRADES ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND!**
- **There will also be opportunities for SMS parents to chaperone and help with decorations, snacks and beverages for our kids.**





FREE CLASSES

GED, HIGH SCHOOL
DIPLOMA OR ESL
IN SPARTA

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