

October 2011

Dear Parents/Guardians, Students and Friends of Bay City Public Schools,

I hope that your children have had a good start to this school year. One area that has been of concern to some parents and us as well has been bus delays due to road construction projects in the area. Our Transportation Department has made route and time adjustments in an effort to reduce or prevent these delays.

We also made adjustments at the start of the school year to reduce class sizes where possible and needed by adding teaching staff, adding classrooms, or other measures. Our goal is to continue to bring class sizes down as much as possible and we are seeing lower class sizes this year as compared to previous years. I believe that lowering class sizes particularly in lower elementary grade levels is very important to the development of younger students.

A few cool items to share, some of which you may know, others you may not:

All of our schools improved overall student achievement last year with Central achieving the State's Adequate Yearly Progress measure for the first time in 7 years and Handy for the first time in 5 years. There were nice gains in core areas such as reading and math and test scores improved overall. We should be proud of the work of our students, teachers, and school staff and we will continue to build on these successes into the future.

In September, the NAACP and our local Meijer Stores combined to donate \$1,000 to Washington, Lindsay, Kolb, and MacGregor to assist students and teachers with school supplies.

Several members of the Detroit Red Wings were on hand at Kolb last month to present students and staff with a Red Wing Jersey signed by all team members for display at the school. This is part of the Wings' "Community Relations Tour."

The United Way provided **1,236 Bay County** kids with new shoes, pants, shirts, socks and other clothing items for back to school with the help of hundreds of volunteers, businesses and individuals; this effort also generated over \$64,000 in local retail purchases helping the Bay economy.

Lastly I want to provide you some information on the upcoming November special education millage increase request by Bay Arenac Intermediate School District of 1.0 mills. The special education millage received by the ISD benefits special education students in ALL of the local school districts including Bay City Schools. Most special education services are above and beyond regular education services received by all students and most are mandated by federal and state laws. However, school districts do not receive nearly enough funding to cover these mandated services. In Bay City, \$8 million is spent annually for special education; \$4 million in funding is received. The shortfall is paid from dollars supposed to go to regular education students. With falling local property values, special education funding has also fallen. The ISD millage is an attempt to assist local schools to cover some of their special education costs not currently covered. There will be more information on this topic on our website and through the media.

If you have not had a chance to read our "Pledge to Parents" on the front page of our District website, I encourage you to do so. This is our commitment to work with you to provide your children with a rewarding and successful educational experience. Thank you for supporting your children and our teachers and staff in these efforts; it is appreciated, and is extremely important. If you have any questions or comments, I encourage you to contact me at 989-671-8165 or by email at newcombed@bcschools.net. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Douglas L. Newcombe
Superintendent

Please remember to check out these resources which may be of assistance to your children;
Opportunity Connection Website: offers a variety of learning opportunities for students, teachers, and businesses. You may visit their website at www.opportunityconnection.net.
Imagination Library: This is a FREE book a month program for ANY child (age birth to 5) living in Bay or Arenac Counties. Visit www.imaginationlibrary.com