

WINTER 2022

Communicator

CALEDONIA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER



SEASON OF LEARNING

Academic data shows points of pride

Dutton Elementary honored as Blue Ribbon school

High school journalism class highlights

Student's memory honored with playhouse



A letter from the Superintendent

Dear Caledonia Schools Community,

As we begin the second semester, I am reminded of the many reasons we have to be thankful during these unprecedented and challenging times. Not only do I have the privilege of serving as your superintendent, I also am working alongside some of the hardest working colleagues who care greatly for our students. Our staff has done a phenomenal job focusing on what needs to be done for our students and it brings me joy to see students growing both socially and academically.

During a time when the state academic test scores declined by an average of more than 12%, Caledonia Community Schools continued to show a positive increase in test scores in 75% of our buildings because of the hard work and dedication of our students and staff. We believe in-person learning is best for students and we are committed to providing a safe, rigorous and fun in-person learning environment where students thrive on the road to college or wherever life takes them after high school.

We have been very fortunate to keep all our buildings open for face-to-face instruction during the first half of this school year. Moving forward, I encourage everyone to heed the guidance of our health professionals so we can continue to keep everyone safe and keep our schools open. Thank you for your patience and support as we navigate education during these changing times.

Respectfully,

Dr. Dedrick Martin
Superintendent
Caledonia Community Schools



Meet the Board of Education

The Caledonia Community Schools Board of Education meets monthly at 6 p.m. on the third Monday. Check out our website for the most up-to-date information and location of our regular board meetings.

Marcy White, President
Jason Saidoo, Vice President
Julie Asper, Secretary

Tim Morris, Treasurer
Kyle Clement, Trustee

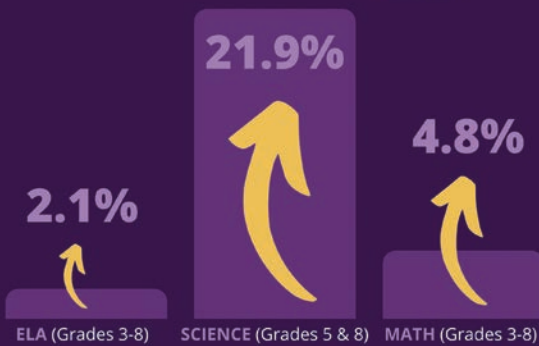
Katie Isic, Trustee
Brittany Barber Garcia, Trustee

In the previous edition of the Cal Communicator, multiple photos in the issue were taken by our high school journalism students. We are so proud of the work of these students and look forward to showing more of their photos in the future!

New Academic Data Shows Points of Pride

Just a few of the many wonderful achievements in our buildings this year!

M-STEP Scores (2019-2020)



16% + of seniors took one or more AP courses and received a 4.0 or higher

Class of 2021

81%

Class of 2021

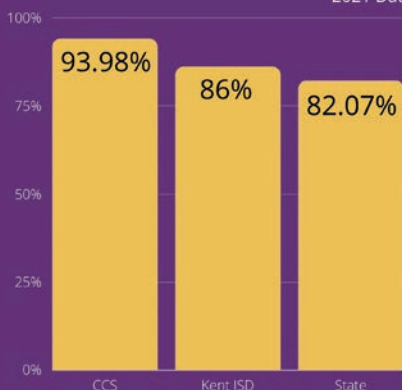
GRADUATES PURSUING FURTHER EDUCATION

96.3%

GRADUATION RATE
14 points higher than the state average

Class of 2021

4 Year Graduation Trend 2021 Data



6 out of 8 of our schools were able to sustain or improve with regards to the overall percentage of students who met or exceeded state standards when the state average regressed by nearly 12%



6/8 Buildings

Elementary Schools Excel in Multi-Tiered Systems Of Support

The implementation of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a priority of the Michigan Department of Education. In alignment with this priority, the Department of Education and Michigan's MTSS Technical Assistance Center have developed a process for identifying and recognizing ISDs, districts and schools that are demonstrating strong outcomes and/or making progress related to meeting the needs of every learner through a multi-tiered framework.

MTSS is a framework of providing high quality, research-based instruction for academics and behavior in a general education setting for core subjects and interventions. The interventions are matched to student needs, based on data, and are monitored routinely to determine progress.

A major component of MTSS is collaboration. Teams of educators with a variety of expertise work together to engage in shared problem solving. Parents are informed and involved throughout the process.

Our MTSS work has taken place over several years, and the work is being recognized at the State level. In fact, we recently learned that all of the district elementary schools will receive GOLD, SILVER, and/or BRONZE for the MTSS processes they have been established at the school level for implementing an MTSS framework in reading and/or behavior. We are proud of Caledonia Elementary, Dutton Elementary, Emmons Lake Elementary, Kettle Lake Elementary and Paris Ridge Elementary for their accomplishments.

Our elementary teams have been hard at work creating a schoolwide reading plan and Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports to ensure success for all students.

The graphic features a dark purple background. At the top, the text 'MTSS PBIS' is written in large, bold letters, with 'MTSS' in purple and 'PBIS' in yellow. To the right is a small icon of a graduation cap. Below this, three horizontal bars represent award levels: a gold bar with the number '1' and a gold medal labeled 'Gold'; a silver bar with the number '2' and a silver medal labeled 'Silver'; and a bronze bar with the number '3' and a bronze medal labeled 'Bronze'. At the bottom, white text reads: 'Caledonia Community Elementary Schools were recently awarded the GOLD, SILVER & BRONZE awards of achievements by the Michigan Department of Education.' Below this, the word 'Congratulations' is written in a glowing yellow cursive font.

Bond and School Improvements Update

This year has proven to be a significantly challenging construction environment. Supply chain and manufacturing delays have frequently changed the way we need to think about and operate our construction plans. The clearest examples of this have been the structural redesigns necessary at the Cal Community Center and the new Dutton Elementary to avoid 400% increases in steel prices or, on a much smaller scale at Duncan Lake Middle School, where we are still (as of Jan. 21) waiting for a delivery of fire safe aluminum framing and fire safe glass for the new main office entryway, a shipment that was originally due in July.

We continue to work closely with our owner's representatives PlanteMoran-CRESA, technology advisors Communications by Design and our architectural firms of Tower-Pinkster (school construction) and Stantec - C2AE (Cal Community Center) to keep the bond projects on time and within budgets. Our construction firms, Christman Company (schools) and Rockford Construction Co. (Cal Community Center), have been an integral part in helping us keep our schedules and costs in line.

The new media center at Duncan Lake Middle School is complete! Middle school students have been enjoying the space for reading, research and studying.



Summer Bond Work

This year will be the second of four summer construction projects that stemmed from the 2020 bond. We will begin construction on the new Dutton Elementary and the Cal Community Center this summer.

Some of the other highlights we are looking toward this summer include:

- Roofing replacement at Emmons Lake Elementary and the High School (north)
- Roofing sectional replacement at Caledonia Elementary, Kettle Lake Elementary and Duncan Lake Middle School
- Replacement of all remaining school monument signs
- Several landscaping projects throughout the district
- Several security related projects throughout the district.

Work at Duncan Lake Middle School will also continue with door, door frame and fire glass upgrades surrounding the new central classroom areas as well as continued improvements to the new main entrance on Kraft Avenue.

Bond information, updates and pictures can be found on our website. If you have any questions about anything bond related, our team can be reached directly at 2020Bond@CalSchools.org.



Photos by Nate Versluis

Caledonia Celebrates Honorary Captain at 2021 Homecoming Game

Gene Raab, an alumnus from the class of 1948, was our honorary captain for the 2021 Homecoming football game. Gene Raab was a three-year varsity football player and captain at Caledonia High School, who also served our country for 31 years in the United States Air Force before retiring with the rank of Colonel.

During Gene's time in Caledonia, the team won three straight Barkenell league championships, closing the 1947 football campaign with an enviable record of 19 wins compared to only two defeats for a three-year span. At the end of his senior season, Gene and five other Caledonia graduates were selected to be part of an eleven-man all-star team.

Sadly, right before this article went to print, the district was informed that Gene had passed away, but we felt it was important to share his story one final time. If you had ever met Gene, you knew how much he loved Caledonia and was humbled by the honor of being selected as the honorary captain for the homecoming game. In talking with him, he was quick to point out that the success of his team could not have happened without the community support and contagious spirit in the stadium as they played.

According to Gene, "The energy in the stands was just as great as the energy on the field." Caledonia has a long-standing tradition of being a community that is invested in supporting all athletes and students, and one that is known to pack stadiums. As a district, we realize the importance of sharing stories honoring our past, while we continue to celebrate memories yet to come. We are so thankful Gene was able to share this special night with our community.

We were so fortunate to be able to reconnect with an amazing Fighting Scot and relive some glory days with him this fall. Gene's memory will live on in this community forever.

Dutton Elementary honored as National Blue Ribbon school

As a district, we would like to recognize Dutton Elementary for earning the prestigious National Blue Ribbon honor as an Exemplary High Performing School in 2021 based on outstanding overall performance in the areas of Reading/ELA and Math performance. This award marks the first time that a Caledonia school received a National Blue Ribbon honor since as far back as 1996.

Caledonia Community Schools is so proud of all our faculty and staff who work hard to make an excellent learning

environment for our students. Dutton Elementary is a great example of a school that prepares students to make a positive difference in the community by empowering all students to achieve their best and **Cultivate Agile Learners**.

Dutton Elementary has been recognized in the past for its staff's tireless work in supporting every student. Dutton was awarded the title "Reward School 2018-2019" for earning all A's or Significantly Above Average (for similar demographic schools) in all categories rated by the state of Michigan. The Michigan Department of Education nominated Dutton Elementary for the National Blue Ribbon Award and recognized the school for creating an environment that encourages feedback among staff, parent involvement and support from the Caledonia Community Schools administration.

Dutton Elementary Principal Shawn Veitch and staff regularly partner with a local church and several businesses. Staff members volunteer with students at a weekly summer reading program in a neighborhood mobile home community and connect students with Kids' Hope mentors and hand-to-hand weekly food distribution.

Our Dutton Elementary school teachers and staff go above and beyond to ensure our students have the support they need to succeed in school, and we'd like to congratulate everyone involved in making Dutton Elementary a great place to learn.

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes outstanding public and non-public schools, celebrating school excellence, turnaround stories and closing student achievement gaps. The U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona recognized 325 schools as National Blue Ribbon Schools for 2021.





Caledonia Education Foundation Awards Grants

In November, the Caledonia Education Foundation (CEF) awarded \$49,000 to 10 grant recipients. CEF works all year long to raise funds to invest in its grant program. Teacher gifts, brick pavers, email campaigns, employee payroll contributions and events like CALPALOOZA all contribute to support Caledonia students and teachers. Many of these programs and projects have no other means of funding.

CEF announced the grants by visiting the recipients in their classrooms with a “prize patrol” and big check presentation so the students could join in celebrating! The CEF has always been a huge supporter of Caledonia Community Schools and we are excited to see what our staff does with these grants. Thank you for supporting our schools.



Congratulations to the following award winners:

- **Teresa Yonker of Caledonia High School**
Grant: Coalition of Community Rooted in Reading
- **Liz Alexander of Kraft Meadows Intermediate School**
Grant: KMIS Library Renovation
- **Andrew Crawley of Caledonia High School**
Grant: Digital Media Equipment Upgrade
- **Cara Flegel of Caledonia High School**
Grant: HDMI Microscopes
- **Kara Stevens of Caledonia High School**
Grant: Choir Uniforms
- **Kaylie Schertzing of Caledonia High School**
Grant: Choice Reading Book Order
- **Jeff Jenkins of Caledonia High School**
Grant: Lighting Console Upgrade for Fine Arts Center
- **Dionna Damaskos of Duncan Lake Middle School**
2 Grants: DLMS Coffee Cart and Kitchen Supplies
- **Jill Arehart of CAL Enrich ED**
Grant: VEX IQ Launch

High School Journalism Class Produces Award-Winning Work

Did you know that in 2018 our Caledonia High School journalism class launched an online news program called *The Cal Connection*? Not only is *The Cal Connection* a student-run news site that contains exciting and engaging articles, but it is also being recognized for its award-winning publications.



Photos by CHS Journalism Class

The journalism class is made up of sophomores, juniors and seniors who, under two student editors-in-chief, determine what to cover, take their own photos and write their own stories, publish accepted work and maintain the website. Other high school classes may also highlight exceptional work from their non-journalism students in the Student Showcase under the Community tab. Unless otherwise stated, all published work belongs to the student who wrote it and represents their beliefs solely, not as a representation of the journalism class or Caledonia High School.

Just this winter, the journalism class won the National Yearbook Program of Excellence from Jostens for the second time in three years. In 2019, the Michigan Interscholastic Press Association awarded our 2019 CHS yearbook the “Gold” award, meaning it was one of the top 20 yearbooks in the state. In 2020 yearbook students received the “Silver” award as well.

This year, the digital news class started highlighting a featured journalism article of the week in its weekly video updates, and it increased page views from 50 to 400 per day. You can access a link to their site from the CHS News Center on our website or visit <https://calconnectionnews.com/>.

From CHS’s Broadcast Journalism Class to the Orange Bowl

Caledonia graduates are making their mark as accomplished professionals here in Michigan and nationally. We recently learned that 2016 Caledonia High School alumnus Amer Bektas had the opportunity to call the Orange Bowl playoff football game for the University of Michigan student radio program on New Year’s Eve. That broadcast broke a record for all-time listenership at the University of Michigan with over 80,000 listeners tuning in. Before attending the University of Michigan, Amer credits his time as a student at Caledonia with helping lay his foundation for success.

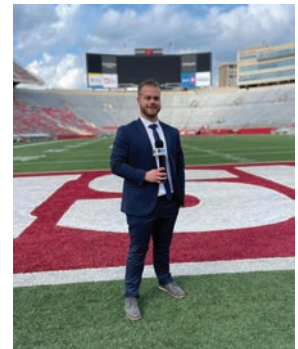


Photo from Amer Bektas

“I always knew I wanted to do something in sports, so I took journalism and business classes at CHS,” Amer said. “The classes were great because they planted a seed for my passion in sports media and business. Both classes created an environment that resembles what it is like in the industry. Every day, my teachers would push me to be better than I was the prior day.”

His advice for current students is, “go out and try new things and don’t be afraid of failure. If you are not willing to get out of your comfort zone, then you will always stay stagnant. You are going to fail plenty of times and hear a lot of no’s and that is OK. It is how you react to these tough situations that will help prepare you for success in the future. Each time you fail, make sure you get up and dust yourself off, then evaluate what you did well and what didn’t go as planned.”

Anyone interested in listening to future broadcasts can tune into the WCBN Sports YouTube Page or follow him on Twitter @AmerBektas. We can’t wait to see where Amer’s life journey takes him after he graduates from the University of Michigan this spring.

Dialogue With the Doc Creates Opportunities for Community Engagement



Last semester, Dr. Martin went out into our community and school buildings to hold six separate community dialogues, as well as four different sessions for staff. In December, we held a special Dialogue with the Doc and Deputy session focused solely on school safety considering the recent safety incidents in our state. Dr. Martin was joined by a Kent County Sheriff Deputy. This was a chance to allow families an opportunity to hear and ask questions about safety protocols in place for Caledonia Community Schools.

We'd like to thank everyone who was able to come out to one of our Dialogue with Doc sessions. It was a great time for our community and staff to ask specific questions and have an open dialogue about happenings in our community. We had some great discussions, and we hope more community members can join us for our spring sessions.

If you missed any of our Dialogue with Doc sessions but are still interested in learning about what was presented, you can find links to the slideshow presentation and a recording of one of the sessions on our website. There, you will also find a list of frequently asked questions gathered from the sessions.

Student's Memory Honored With Playhouse at Duncan Lake Early Childhood Center

This fall, Duncan Lake Early Childhood Center dedicated a new playhouse on the playground in memory of a former student, Alice Beverage, who passed away unexpectedly in 2019. In collaboration with Alice's family, the student's former teacher Tammy Geene wrote a grant to establish this special memorial in honor of Alice. Alice absolutely loved school and loved playing, so a playhouse was the perfect fit. A special ribbon cutting ceremony was held in November where Alice's brother, Doug Jr., cut the ribbon for his "sissy's playhouse." We are excited for all the students, present and future, who will be able to enjoy this playhouse.



Kraft Meadows Intermediate Honors Vets



On Veteran's Day in November, Mr. Geerdes from Kraft Meadows Intermediate School taught mini lessons to numerous fifth grade classrooms about Veteran's Day, the Armed Forces and the history and meaning of Taps, which is our nation's official song of remembrance for those who have died for their country. Mr. Geerdes played Taps, and a moment of silence was held to honor the people of the Armed Forces. It was a great way to teach students about honoring our veterans.



Enrollment Now Open

✓ *Preschool* ✓ *Young Fives* ✓ *Kindergarten* ✓ *All school-age students*



School Age Students (Young 5's - 12th)

Feb. 1 - Online Enrollment begins

For school age enrollment questions, please contact Ginnie VanPolen at 616.891.8185

Preschool Students

Jan. 12 - fall 2022: Fall for Current/Past DLECC Families

Feb. 1 - fall 2022: Fall for New Families

For preschool enrollment questions, please contact Jennifer Brown at 616.891.6220. Join us at our Open House on January 31, from 6-7pm.

Enrolling now helps us better plan for a successful 2022-23 school year!



www.calschools.org



facebook.com/CALSCHOOLS

We're Hiring!

Positions now available:

- Part-time custodian - \$13.94/hour
- Lead or full-time custodian - \$15.86/hour
 - All levels of custodians are paid a \$500 bonus upon successful completion of 60 days of employment.
- Snow plow - \$17.65/hour (truck & equipment provided)
- Bus drivers
 - \$500 sign-on bonus
 - Paid CDL training - \$14.62/hour
 - Driver pay starts at \$17.28/hour
 - Single subscriber insurance or Cash in Lieu of Benefits
 - Earn 10 sick days, 12 vacation days, 8 holidays, 1.5 personal days*

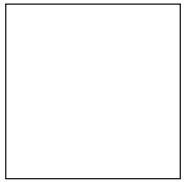
* Per CTA contract guidelines



Apply online at www.calschools.org/employment



Paid for by Caledonia Community Schools
9753 Duncan Lake Ave. SE
Caledonia, MI 49316



Learning Never Stops!

Hope you have a happy and safe winter season!

Keep up with us at:



www.calschools.org



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