



CELEBRATING DIVERSITY AND EQUITY AT KPS

Excitement and energy fueled the crowds during the Parade of Nations Day at Endeavor Elementary. Students packed the gymnasium, eager to cheer on their friends and classmates who participated in the parade. Parents, family members, teachers, and staff, gathered to celebrate this valued Kentwood Public Schools tradition. Flags waved, and smiles abounded as all anticipated this special event.

As the parade began, school leaders announced the names of countries to the crowd, one by one. Students strutted down the red carpet, proudly carrying the name of their native country and their flag, many dressed in the traditional clothing of their home culture, grins stretching from ear to ear. Greeted by thunderous applause, they basked in the spotlight, celebrating who they are and where they are from.

Celebrating diversity is a distinguishing factor of Kentwood Public Schools

The Parade of Nations is a longstanding tradition at Kentwood Public Schools and takes place in many buildings across the district at different points throughout the school year. In fact, two weeks after Endeavor's celebration, Townline Elementary held its first ever Parade of Nations with equal amounts of excitement and enthusiasm.

"Celebrating diversity is a distinguishing factor of Kentwood Public Schools," explains Superintendent Kevin Polston. "Consistently named the most diverse district in Michigan and in the top ten for diversity in the nation,

Kentwood Public Schools is a unique place for students to experience a quality education."

The Kentwood Public Schools team is aware of this unique status and works hard to ensure that all students feel at home. "We celebrate our identity and value each individual who walks through our doors to create a sense of belonging in each school. The students bring the richness of their cultures and heritage to Kentwood which enhances education — we all learn from each other's perspectives," affirms Superintendent Polston.

We elevate equity by providing the resources that each child needs to achieve success



The Parade of Nations is just one way that the district celebrates diversity. Building authentic and meaningful relationships with students is another. The team at KPS understands the title of most diverse school district in the state comes with the responsibility to make sure all students are successful.

Superintendent Polston clarifies, "Celebrating diversity is important, but we must also elevate equity. To truly achieve our vision of excellence and equity in education we must understand and respond...

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HAPPY LUNAR NEW YEAR!

Happy Kitty-Bunny New Year! Valleywood newcomers and other multilingual students celebrated Lunar New Year (January 22, 2023, this year) with red envelopes, watching a lion dance, and enjoying various foods including oranges, Vietnamese ginger candy, Northern Chinese style dumplings, and Taiwanese pineapple cakes. The celebration originated in China, welcomes spring, and is an important family holiday in many East Asian countries and beyond.

Our many Vietnamese and Vietnamese American students are celebrating Cat Year while in the Chinese Zodiac we are in Rabbit Year! This year's celebration was especially important for learning that people can celebrate the same root of a holiday/observance while knowing each culture, location, and home has their own important variations. We celebrate the whole and the individual when we learn how each person celebrates and honors aspects of their culture.

Valleywood's guidance secretary, Ms. Alicia Nicholson, is hosting Valleywood's 2nd annual Black History Creative Contest. The students' creative works (essays, narratives, artwork, or any creative expression) will be displayed for all students to vote for award-winners. Valleywood students who enter the contest vary from those who are celebrating an aspect of the Black or African American diaspora to personal accounts of living as a Black or African American student in the USA. We look forward to receiving many entries this year to uplift these stories during Black History Month and every month.



SOCCER BRINGS CHILDREN TOGETHER

Living in a world where diversity is not always honored, it is incredible to bear witness to the scholars in our Meadowlawn community who see past the difficulties of language barriers and cultural differences to get to the heart of why we all come here each day...for the fun, of course!

In all seriousness, language barriers and cultural differences fall to the wayside as soon as a simple soccer ball is introduced into the environment. Our Meadowlawn 4th and 5th graders are obsessed with that ball, a long stretch of flat land, and a gigantic net. Each day on the playground, you can see them gather, choose teams, and determine who goes first.

You can hear the excitement as a teammate takes

the ball down the field and see the joy on their faces as they high five, fist bump, backslap, or hug each other when a play goes their way.

What don't you see? Scholars choosing to play with kids who only look like them, or people making fun of each other for different accents, clothing, or opinions. Oh, you'll see disagreements over who won, or a play gone wrong, but the teams are in it together, no matter what. It is fun to watch scholars pass the ball, yell out plays, and laugh with each other. If you watch long enough you might even find yourself holding your breath as they tumble to the ground, belly flop while diving after the ball, and just generally run into one another, because it is clear to all who are watching that they are building memories together that transcend continents, cultures, and barriers. They simply play together.

Take it from two Meadowlawn soccer experts, Manzi and Ansh, who say, "Soccer makes you feel alive, and you get to play with different kids and become good friends."

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY WITH ART

Challenger Elementary art students celebrated Black History Month through digital art design with the help of their art teacher, Chelsea Watts. Students in grades first through fifth worked collaboratively to contribute to the large displays on the walls of the Challenger hallways. Students learned about Black Americans, past and present who have made an impact on our country. Some of the influential people depicted are Martin Luther King Jr., Maya Angelou, Jean Michel-Basquait, Ruby Bridges, Whitney Houston, Louis Armstrong, Katherine Johnson, Simone Biles, and Barack Obama.



Celebrating Diversity and Equity at KPS

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to the needs of each child.”

The idea of elevating equity is a shared concern of many KPS community members, as noted in surveys, focus groups, and town hall meetings that have taken place during this year’s district strategic planning process. Elevating equity is no small task. Yet, the belief in equity guides the team at Kentwood Public Schools as they work to serve and educate the students of Kentwood.

“We elevate equity by providing the resources that each child needs to achieve success. That’s our commitment at Kentwood Public Schools,” explains Polston. “By doing this, we can accomplish our ambitious goal of excellence and equity in education and prepare students for our global society.”



NEURODIVERSE SUPERSTARS!

At Southwood Elementary, we love to celebrate the diversity of our population. While there is great representation of different races and cultures at Southwood, we also want to acknowledge our neurodiverse superstars. The ASD program at Southwood demonstrates their passion for inclusion.

Autism refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech, and nonverbal communication. Because autism is

a wide spectrum, each person with autism has a distinct set of strengths and challenges. There is a wide variety of ways in which people with autism learn, think, and problem-solve.



The staff have been doing exceptional work of exposing students to a variety of activities and learning opportunities. Field trips to places like the Children’s Museum and For the Kidz Gymnastics Center, provide sensory-friendly activities

to help everyone learn and grow. ASD is also involved in exciting preparations for Autism Awareness in April that will include the entire student body through mini lessons, a door decorating contest, and a t-shirt fundraiser. Stay tuned through our Facebook page for more updates.

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY AT EKFC

A theme at EKFC this year has been helping our Falcons become more future focused. Over Ms. Rizkalla's 30-year career as an ELA teacher she has had the opportunity to work with many students who are now making an impact on our community. Ms. Rizkalla (also an EK alum) has taken the opportunity to celebrate our diverse EK alumni who continue to make their mark on the world by sharing the stories of her diverse former students. Recent authors have been featured in her "My former EK students rockin'..." bell ringers. Recently highlighted individuals include:

- Charity Christine (Charity Bruce, class of 2014) - Charity is the small business owner of Charity Christine Salons who specializes in multicultural beauty and hair services. She also wrote a memoir titled, "I Choose Me, the Decision that Changed My Life," to share her story of overcoming odds and negative relationships to get where she is today.
- Sydney Nelson (class of 2013) - Sydney is the author of "Into the Marvelous Light: A 30-Day Guide on Healing from the Inside Out." Sydney's devotional invites readers to reflect on one's life and journey to uncover things which limit our ability to love and live life to the fullest.
- Azizi Jasper (class of 2002) - Azizi Hasani Jasper is the author of "Cointelprose," which is a collection of poetry that examines deep social and political issues through poetry and wordplay.

Ms. Joi Thompson has collected a series of books that she is promoting to her students each month centered around an observed celebration of the diversity that contributes to American culture from various authors who share the diverse experiences of our scholars. Featured Titles in observance of Black History Month are "Stamped" by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi, "Tristan Strong" by Kwame Mbalia, "Kindred" by Octavia E. Butler, "One Crazy Summer" by Rita Williams-Garcia, and "Making Our Way Home," by Blair Imani. Here are the themes for the second half of the year.

- January - Environment and Climate Change
- February - Black History Month (works by Black authors)
- March - Women's History Month
- April - Middle Eastern Heritage Month
- May - Asian American / Pacific Islander Heritage Month
- June - LGBTQ Pride Month

In February, we dedicated an entire Falcon P.R.I.D.E. lesson to celebrating the diversity in our classrooms. Students had an opportunity to learn a little about the various countries of origin of our student body. As they read about each country, they colored flags and made displays in each of their classrooms to celebrate the global diversity that is represented in the hallways of EK.

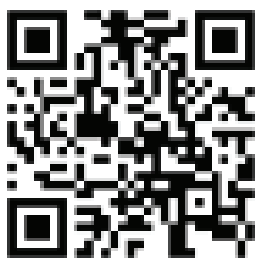


WORLD INFLUENCERS CELEBRATED

Crestwood's Collaboration Center was recently transformed into a gallery, displaying student research, artwork, and handiwork celebrating the lives of some of the world's most influential leaders, activists, and heroes. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famed "I Have a Dream" speech looped through the speakers and screens, students, teachers, staff, and visitors wandered through a display of sixty-one entries. Participants learned about these influential people and cast their vote for which piece resonated most. Malala Yousafzai, Cesar Chavez, Greta Thunberg, and Harvey Milk were among the leaders highlighted in this student-made museum. Thank you, Karen Gibson, for heading up our Hall of Heroes gallery!

MOST DIVERSITY IN MICHIGAN

Endeavor celebrates being the most diverse elementary school in the state of Michigan, according to Niche.com, an organization that gives in-depth profiles on every school and college in America. We are a school family that embraces and celebrates EVERY student, parent, and staff member that makes our community unique. We work at creating and maintaining an enduring and transformative sense of BELONGING for everyone, as we value each person!



On January 20, Endeavor held our annual Parade of Nations! The Parade of Nations is the quintessential representation of diversity, belonging, and uniting. Over 600 students, parents, and special guests were in attendance, and everyone was deeply moved. You can enjoy the excitement of our Parade of Nations by clicking on this QR code to see a video of the event, created by our friends and partners at AVES Films.



TOWNLINER HOLDS FIRST PARADE OF NATIONS

Townline Elementary came together in early February to hold the school's first ever Parade of Nations. Students from dozens of countries gathered to march in the parade, wearing clothing and carrying flags to honor their heritage.

The event was so exciting! As each country's name was announced and students began to walk down the red carpet in the parade, students in the crowd greeted them with enthusiastic cheers of support and appreciation. Many Townline family members were on hand as well, smiling and snapping pictures, as students paraded into the packed gymnasium.

In addition to the Parade of Nations, students, and staff at Townline enjoyed a "Taste of Nations" prior to the parade festivities, sampling foods from around the world.

Townline is happy to join in this valued Kentwood Public Schools tradition and looks forward to many Parades of Nations in the years to come.





Registering is easy!
Scan the QR Code to
create a ParentVue
Account or login to an
existing account!



Online Registration and Open Enrollment

March 1 - May 12, 2023

All Kentwood Public School residents and current school of choice students who plan to return to KPS for the 2023-2024 school year from Young 5's and Kindergarten through 12th grade must register each year.

Take these 4 easy steps today!

- Use the QR Code or go to <https://www.kentwoodps.org/registration/olr/>.
- Current families may login to an existing ParentVue Account and new families must create an account.
- Follow the directions to complete each section and upload important documents. Everyone must show proof of residency.
- Click Submit.

Thank you for choosing Kentwood Public Schools

EXCELLENCE & EQUITY IN EDUCATION

2023 FALCON CHARITY CLASSIC

Are you ready for spring and summer? The KPS Education Foundation's annual Falcon Charity Classic is scheduled for June 5 at Stonewater Country Club. This year's event will be bigger and better than ever!

For the first time, for non-golfers, we are holding a cornhole tournament in the afternoon. Details are being finalized and will be available on our website, www.kpsef.org beginning in early March.

Golf will have two shotgun flights, the morning round tees at 8 a.m. and the afternoon round at 1 p.m. We will be limiting each round to 26 foursomes to allow for a great golfing experience. Register early to insure you get your desired slot in the outing.



KENTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Calendar 2022-23

Aug 22 *First Day of School

- Sep 2 No School
- Sep 5 No School
- Sep 21 Half Day for ALL Students / PD for Staff
- Sept 28..... Middle School Conferences- Evening (Full Day for Students)
- Sept 29..... Middle School Conferences- Half Day for 6-8 Students
- Sept 30..... Half Day for 6th-8th Student & Staff
- Oct 12 & 13.... High School Evening Conferences (Full Day School)
- Oct 14 Half Day for 9th-12th Students & Staff
- Oct 26 Elementary Evening Conferences
- Oct 27..... Half Day K-5 Students / Evening Conferences
- Oct 28 Half Day K-5 Students & Staff
- Oct 31 Half Day for ALL Students / PD for Staff
- Nov 23 Half Day for ALL Students and Staff
- Nov 24 & 25 ... No School - Thanksgiving Break
- Dec 16 Half Day for ALL Students/KEA records day
- Dec 19 - 30 Winter Break
- Jan 2 Winter Break
- Jan 16 No School - MLK Day / PD for Staff
- Feb 14 Half Day for ALL Students / PD for Staff
- Feb 20 & 21 Mid-Winter Break
- Mar 1..... Middle & High School Evening Conferences / Full Day of School
- Mar 2 Middle & High School Evening Conferences / Half Day 6-8 Students ONLY / Full Day High School
- Mar 3 Half Day 6-12 Student & Staff
- Mar 27 Elementary Evening Conferences / Full Day
- Mar 28 Half Day K-5 Students
- Mar 29..... Half Day K-5 Students & Staff
- Mar 30..... Half Day for ALL Students and Staff
- Mar 31 - Apr 7. Spring Break
- May 26 Half Day for ALL Students / PD for Staff
- May 29 No School - Memorial Day
- Jun 2..... Last Day of School - Half Day for Students & Staff

School	Start	Dismissal	Half Day Dismissal
Elementary	9:00 AM	3:55 PM	11:55 AM
Middle	8:15 AM	3:04 PM	11:20 AM
Freshman Campus	7:30 AM	2:31 PM	10:53 AM
High School	7:30 AM	2:31 PM	10:53 AM
Crossroads	7:37 AM	2:29 PM	10:45 AM

AUGUST							JANUARY						
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
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28	29	30	31				29	30	31				

SEPTEMBER							FEBRUARY						
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OCTOBER							MARCH						
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29	26	27	28	29	30	31	
30	31												

NOVEMBER							APRIL						
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
27	28	29	30				30						

DECEMBER							MAY/JUNE						
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	28	29	30	31	1	2	3

No School For Students
 Half Day *check left column to see what schools have ½ days

Kentwood Board of Education
KENTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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KENTWOOD, MI 49508

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The Red and Black Gala, normally held in late winter, will not occur this year. The focus of the gala is to recognize and award our Outstanding Alumni of Kentwood Schools (OAKS) to graduates of our great schools. As we move forward with our planning for the 2024 Gala, we are seeking nominations for recognition.

Prospective OAKS award winners must meet the following criteria to be considered for the honor:

- Be a graduate of East Kentwood.
- Possess a record of outstanding achievement in his/her chosen field.
- Adhere to the highest moral and ethical principles.
- Be recognized by his/her organization or profession to have made a significant contribution to the success of that organization or profession.
- Be an appropriate role model for others.
- Demonstrate civic responsibility and community involvement.
- May or may not be currently holding the position in which he or she achieved the major successes for which the honor is being presented.
- May be living or deceased.

We are looking for graduates from the 70's and 80's who meet the above criteria. To nominate a graduate, visit our website at www.kpsef.org and go to the AWARDS menu item to download the nomination form.