



A SEASON OF GIVING

Kentwood Public Schools is fortunate to consistently receive strong support from the greater Kentwood community. Community members vote at the ballot box to approve important funding measures, volunteers show up to read to students, to mentor them, or to organize a school dance or carnival. Fans fill the stands at Falcon Stadium to cheer for our athletic teams. Valued community partners also show support to our students and families through the spirit of giving.

Gordon Food Service (GFS), a valued partner with the Kentwood Public Schools Child Nutrition Services Department, is one of the many local entities that helps support our students. This fall, Gordon Food Service, in partnership with Samaritan's Feet International, delivered 250 pairs of shoes to Discovery Elementary. GFS was offering their support by giving a clothing item—shoes—which is always needed in schools. GFS trusted the staff at Discovery Elementary to devise a plan to make sure those shoes were put to good use.

Valued community partners also show support to our students and families through the spirit of giving.

Discovery staff did just that. They first approached their physical education teacher to stock up her shoe rack in the gym. Students can go to the rack to borrow a pair of shoes

during their gym time if they forget to wear tennis shoes. This ensures that all students are able to participate in gym class regardless if they have a pair of their own gym shoes or not.

The bulk of the shoes, though, were organized in Discovery's clothing and resource closet, sorted by size, and made available to students and families who have limited resources. Any staff member who notices a student or family of students who need new shoes, now has a place to go within their building to provide for these students.

Discovery's Kent School Services Network Community Coordinator, Michelle Beals, oversees this program. She states that sometimes staff discover a student's need by engaging in conversations with parents. Other times, a staff member becomes aware of a need while they are interacting with students. Staff members contact Beals, who is able help the students select the perfect size, color, and style shoe from the large inventory available at the school.



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A Season of Giving

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Beals says family members and students who receive the shoes are always greatly appreciative. She also points out how important support like this is for student success.

"If (students') basic needs are met, then they're able to concentrate on their schooling," Beals explains. "We know that if their bellies are full, if they're warm, if they're sleeping, if they're feeling safe, then they're able to concentrate on their schoolwork, on their academics. They are going to grow academically. Their brains are going to grow that much faster and more quickly. They're going to be able to just soar."

Discovery Principal Blair Feldkamp greatly appreciates the efforts of Gordon Food Service, and the numerous other community partners, who support, not only his school, but all of Kentwood Public Schools. He also appreciates the dedicated staff members who make the most of the community support to serve our students.

"It's very powerful when you let people lead with their heart, lead with the energy that comes with leading with your heart and getting kids accounted for," Feldkamp says. "You can't go 15 minutes in this building without seeing one of our kids somehow, some way, in some capacity, just being accounted for, supported, by one of the adults that works here. It's really cool."

During this season of giving, this issue of Kentwood School News is dedicated to those who support our students and our schools throughout the year. The issue is also dedicated to our students and staff who work hard through a variety of efforts to give back to our community. The strong partnership between our district and our community is greatly valued and appreciated!



CROSSROADS HOSTS 13TH ANNUAL THANKSGIVING LUNCHEON

Crossroads celebrated the spirit of gratitude on Tuesday, November 26th, with its 13th Annual Thanksgiving Luncheon. Organized by student leaders, the event brought together peers, teachers, board members, community partners, and administration staff for a warm and festive gathering.

This cherished tradition began 13 years ago when a student petitioned the principal to host a Thanksgiving feast at school, recognizing that many classmates were unable to enjoy the traditional meal at home. Today, the luncheon remains a meaningful way to give thanks for the support of our community and to celebrate the ways we contribute back to it.

We are proud to continue this legacy of unity, gratitude, and giving. Thank you to everyone who helped make this year's luncheon a success!

MEIJER SUPPORTS THE BROOKWOOD AUTISM PROGRAM

The Gaines Township Meijer store is making a special effort to support the Kentwood Public Schools community through a generous donation to the autism program at Brookwood Elementary.

This fall, Meijer donated \$10,000 to Brookwood Elementary's autism program. The funds can be used for a variety of things, including field trips for students to places like Meijer, to help focus on things such as shopping and interacting with members of the community.

Gaines Township Meijer Store Director Randall Bradley was inspired by the work that is taking place in the autism classrooms at Brookwood. He felt it was the perfect place to make this year's donation from his store.

"When we work with schools it brings about a connection and allows us to reach people within the community that we serve," Bradley said. He added that students will be able to come to his store and participate in shopping, buying food items, and then taking them back to school to prepare meals as they focus on life skills. "I just love that," Bradley added in explaining his store's decision to choose the Brookwood autism program to be its recipient of the store's annual donation for this year.



EK NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY LEADS THE WAY WITH A COMMITMENT TO SERVICE

The President of East Kentwood High School's National Honor Society (NHS), Mackenzie Kasiorek, shares how things are going with the East Kentwood NHS so far this year:

"East Kentwood's National Honor Society has undergone some big changes this year. We are striving to align our organization to the high exclusive standards held by the National society and be more involved, not only in our Kentwood community, but as our own NHS as well. Our student-led executive board is working hard to find ways to give our members plenty of opportunities to get involved in our schools, and beyond. Our focus this year shifted to finding places in the community that truly need help.



Recently we held our first all-member service activity where we decorated 700 bags for Kids' Food Basket, and with fun, colorful and encouraging messages for kids. Our focus is on how these activities directly impact members of our community, which we hope in turn will encourage our NHS members to get more involved.

Our National Honor Society works closely with the elementary schools in the district, doing what we can to guide and inspire the Future Falcons by engaging in athletics, games, cultural activities and assisting in any way that we are needed. By spending time with our younger, Fellow Falcons, we are bringing the whole Kentwood community together and lifting everyone up; an integral part of the EK National Honor Society's mission. We continue to find new and creative ways to become more intertwined with the surrounding community. By doing so, we are not only helping others, but we are becoming kind, compassionate, open-minded leaders, and members of society."

**CITY OF KENTWOOD
PARKS & RECREATION**

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

*Tree Lighting Ceremony
& Holiday Light Parade*

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 6-8 PM
IN FRONT OF THE LIBRARY AT 4950 BRETON SE

KENTWOOD.US/TREELIGHTING



**WINTER
PROGRAM
REGISTRATION
NOW OPEN!**

PROGRAMS FOR KIDS OF ALL AGES!

- Art
- Basketball
- STEM
- Dance
- Soccer
- Chess
- Cooking
- Tennis
- And More!
- Music
- Fencing
- Martial Arts
- Wiffle Ball
- Yoga
- Volleyball



REGISTER ONLINE AT [KENTWOOD.US/PARKS](https://kentwood.us/parks)

DO GOOD

In the words of every millennial's favorite teacher, "Believe in yourselves. Dream. Try. Do good." For many of us, it's the last part of Mr. Feeney's advice that resonates the most. When Topanga questions, "Don't you mean do well?" Mr. Feeney replies, "No, I mean do good." That's exactly what the students at Brookwood ARCH are focused on—doing good.

This year, our Youth Advisory Board has embraced the idea that true leadership is often about serving others. These students go above and beyond, dedicating their time to making sure that ARCH is a place where everyone feels welcome. Whether it's leading Town Hall meetings to gather feedback or coming up with new, inclusive ways to play games, these young leaders are committed to doing good for their fellow students.

In an effort to expand their impact, the Brookwood ARCH students are also building meaningful connections with senior citizens in our Kentwood community. Through this initiative, they spend time with older adults, listen to their life stories, and will eventually share those stories to honor their experiences. Additionally, ARCH students are partnering with Kentwood Parks and Recreation for a food drive benefiting the Little Free Pantries located throughout the city.

This summer, Brookwood ARCH students took their commitment to doing good globally. After learning about the importance of clean water, they took action by raising \$125 to help children around the world gain access to safe drinking water through World Vision. With just \$50, one child can have access to clean water for an entire year. Although the fundraiser has concluded, the opportunity to contribute to this important cause remains open.

At Brookwood ARCH, we are dedicated to fostering a "Do Good" mentality in every student. We want them to leave knowing they have the power to make a difference and to continue carrying Mr. Feeney's timeless words with them: Dream big, serve others, and do good.

What's
in Your
Water?



EK STUDENT COUNCIL LEADS STUFF THE BUS CAMPAIGN

During this season of giving the students of Kentwood Public Schools are in the spirit! East Kentwood High School Student Council is leading the way with its annual Stuff the Bus campaign. The EK Student Council leads this annual food drive for families in need of support during this time of year, collecting food items at both the Freshman Campus and at the High School. In addition, several elementary schools and middle schools also join in this effort to give back to our community. This year, the Stuff the Bus campaign collected 5,900 pounds of donated food. These food items are going to Streams of Hope—a valued community partner who will distribute them to families in need.

The EK Student Council wants to highlight some top donations from our schools. From the High School and Freshman Campus, Val Thomasma's 1st hour class donated 140 items and Brittany Brassler's 1st hour class donated 118 items. Bowen had the most donations from our participating elementary schools, donating 998 items. Valleywood had the most donations for middle schools, with 260 items collected. In addition, lots of community members donated items at Family Fare as our EK Student Council members were there to receive them. In total, the Stuff the Bus campaign collected 3,892 items of food!

KPS sends out a HUGE thank you to the EK Student Council, plus all staff members and students at schools across the district who supported the effort and to our families and community members who donated to this cause. The partnership between Kentwood Public Schools and our community is strong and unique. We are so appreciative to be able to come together for this important annual effort.



SIXTH GRADERS HONOR VETERANS WITH PATRIOTIC PROJECT AND CIRCLE SHARING

Sixth graders at Pinewood Middle School recently completed a heartfelt project to honor our nation's veterans. In addition to learning about the history of Veterans Day, students also participated in a Veterans Day Hero Project.

Students were encouraged to research and learn about a specific veteran, past or present. They then shared their findings with their classmates in a circle format, fostering a sense of community and empathy. By listening to their peers' stories, students gained a deeper understanding of the sacrifices and contributions of veterans. The completed projects and presentations were displayed in the school hallway, showcasing the students' talent, dedication, and newfound knowledge.

To further enrich their learning experience, students watched videos and read articles about veterans' experiences. These resources provided valuable insights into the challenges and triumphs faced by those who have served our country.

We are extremely proud of our students' efforts and their commitment to honoring our veterans. By participating in this project, students gained a deeper appreciation for the sacrifices made by those who serve our country. Thank you to Mr. Hoffman, Mrs. Davis, and our 6th grade team for organizing this amazing experience.



KENTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS EDUCATION FOUNDATION

December 2024

SAVE THE DATE: 10th Annual Red & Black Gala — Rooted in Excellence, Growing Impact: From Kentwood Classrooms to Global Change-Makers

Mark your calendar for the 10th Annual Red & Black Gala, hosted by the Kentwood Public Schools Education Foundation. Join us on **Thursday, February 27, 2024, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at StoneWater Country Club (7177 Kalamazoo Ave SE Suite A, Caledonia, MI).**

This special evening will celebrate the Foundation's mission to enrich Kentwood Public Schools through grants, scholarships, and community partnerships. The event will also honor the incredible achievements of Kentwood alumni who have grown their roots in our classrooms and expanded their impact across the globe.

Why Attend?

- Celebrate Kentwood's legacy of excellence and its role in shaping future leaders.
- Support innovative educational programs and opportunities for students and educators.
- Enjoy an evening of connection, inspiration, and community pride.

Whether you're a Kentwood alum, a parent, an educator, or a community supporter, your presence helps plant the seeds of success for the next generation.

How You Can Participate

- **Purchase Tickets or Tables:** Join us for a night of celebration and giving back.
- **Become a Sponsor:** Showcase your support for public education and gain recognition within the Kentwood community.

Tickets and sponsorship opportunities are available now! [Visit www.kpsef.org/red--black-gala.html](http://www.kpsef.org/red--black-gala.html) to learn more and secure your spot.

Interested in serving on the Kentwood Public Schools Education Foundation Board? We're seeking new members passionate about education and community growth! Learn more and get started at www.kpsef.org/contact-us.html.

Together, let's celebrate our Kentwood roots and grow a legacy of excellence!





A Destination District

TOWN HALL MEETINGS PROVIDE VALUABLE INFORMATION

The third round of town hall meetings is wrapping up for Kentwood Public Schools as the district continues to gather input from families, community members, and staff regarding the elementary redistricting process that will accompany the opening of the new Hamilton Elementary and Early Childhood Center in August 2025.

The attendance zones will change for each of the district's elementary schools as KPS reconfigures the zones creating a new attendance area for the opening of the district's 11th elementary school for the 2025-26 school year.

The first round of surveys and town hall meetings focused on gathering input from families, students, community members, and staff regarding what stakeholders felt

was most important when it came to changing elementary boundaries and opening a new school. Three points rose to the top during this round of engagement: 1) establishing and maintaining neighborhood schools; 2) maintaining the diversity that exists in schools; and 3) accounting for equitable school population sizes and planning for future growth in the community.

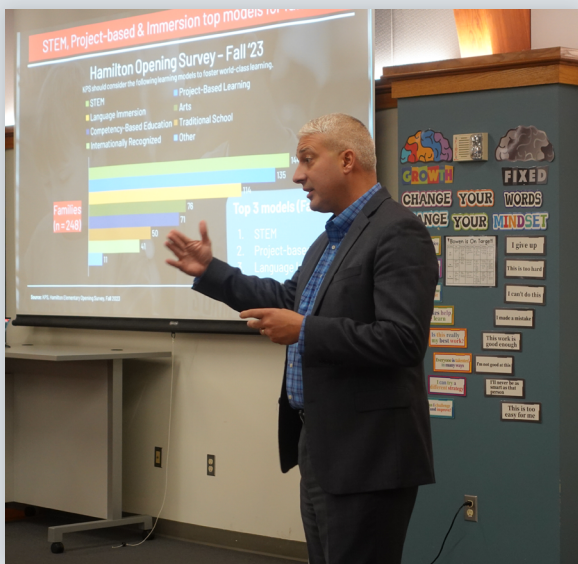
The second round of survey and town hall meetings called for input from families and staff on the proposed new attendance zones that the district developed based on the initial input of families and staff. That input led to revisions to the proposed new attendance zones for schools.

This third round of survey and town hall meetings was designed to get input on the changes made to the initial new map of zones and to hear input on other topics related to changing elementary boundaries. Meetings were held at each elementary school, as well as one at the Refugee Education Center, with a virtual meeting still to come. The meetings have been well attended and informative for district leaders.

"This is a once in a generation change," says KPS Executive Director of Strategy and Innovation Sunil Joy. "Whether it's this decision or any decision in the district, we want to make sure that our families and our staff are not only well informed, but that they have a hand in our decision making and that their voices are heard."

Joy estimates, when looking at the survey responses and town hall meetings in all three rounds of community engagement that began more than a year ago, that more than a thousand voices gave input and feedback on the important process of redistricting.

"I just want to give my appreciation to all of our school leaders and families for being a part of this process," Joy said. "The turnout has been really, really good and the questions have been insightful. The engagement levels have been great. I'm just very thankful because we can't do this by ourselves. We need the voices of those around us, whether it be our staff, families, or students to make sure that we are successful."



SEASON OF GIVING: EMPOWERING OUR STUDENTS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

As part of our theme, "Season of Giving," Glenwood students are actively engaged in initiatives that not only highlight their efforts in leadership development but also emphasize the importance of giving back to their community. This year, we've focused on cultivating the whole child, with the mission statement: "I am empowered to influence my community."

In October, the Glenwood ARCH program concentrated on Youth Development, a crucial aspect that equips students with the skills necessary to take action in their environment. This initiative ensures that students feel safe to explore their leadership potential while understanding the importance of contributing positively to their surroundings.

Throughout the month, students participated in a six-week series of leadership lessons facilitated by the Family Outreach Center. These lessons provided them with the tools to understand their capacity to lead and influence change. Additionally, students began conducting Youth Advisory Board meetings, allowing them to take the reins in planning and executing some ARCH program activities.

A highlight of their learning came when students took part in a community beautification project. Equipped with gloves and trash bags, they ventured out to clean their playground and areas surrounding the school. This hands-on experience not only fostered a sense of ownership and responsibility but also underscored the joy of giving back to their school community. Through the simple act of picking up trash and leaves and disposing of them properly, students grasped the essence of leadership: it's not solely about position or titles, but about who you are and the impact you can have on your community.



As we continue through the season of giving, we encourage all students to seek out opportunities to volunteer and uplift those in need. Every effort, no matter how small, contributes to the larger goal of making Glenwood a better place for everyone. Together, we can inspire a generation of leaders who understand the power of giving and the impact of their actions on the world around them. Let's continue to empower our students to influence their community positively!

COMMUNITY DONATIONS SUPPORT STUDENTS AT EK

In late October, Huntington generously donated 100 backpacks to EKHS to support our newcomer ML students! We were able to fill each backpack with school supplies provided by the Heart of West Michigan United Way and WZZM 13's Stuff the Bus campaign that we received at the beginning of the school year. This has helped to ensure that we can provide new students with the essential items they need to start their time as Falcons off strong!

In early November, LMCU provided tasty treats for our EKHS staff. The items were delivered to staff by a snack cart that made stops at offices, classrooms, and staff lounges. They also "gift" us with their time every month by serving as active members of the Community School Leadership Team (CSLT) that we share with Pinewood and Freshman Campus.

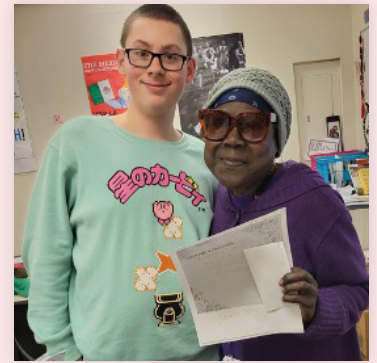


EKHS ARCH ~ HEARTFELT GRATITUDE

During the past month, our Season of Giving initiative focused on expressing heartfelt gratitude to the staff at East Kentwood High School, reinforcing our student vision statement: "I am empowered to influence my community." By actively engaging in this expression of gratitude, EK ARCH students not only acknowledged the support they received from educators and staff but also learned the importance of reciprocity in kindness.

ARCH students took the initiative to write personalized letters to teachers and staff members as they wished, sharing their appreciation for the guidance and encouragement they had received. In these letters, students articulated what they had learned from their teachers and how those lessons played a role in their personal growth.

This project not only fostered a culture of appreciation within the ARCH program and EKHS, but also encouraged students to recognize and reflect on the hard work and dedication of the staff who created a safe and enjoyable learning environment. By empowering students to take charge of their gratitude, we cultivated a sense of community and belonging that underscored the importance of kindness, support, and mutual respect.



NEW TEAM FOCUSES ON COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AT EXPLORER

At Explorer, we are excited to introduce our new Community School Leadership Team (CSLT), which meets monthly to bring together local neighbors, businesses, school staff, and other community members. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss school goals, review important data, and address the factors that impact our students. Our aim is to find ways to get involved and make a positive difference in our students' lives.

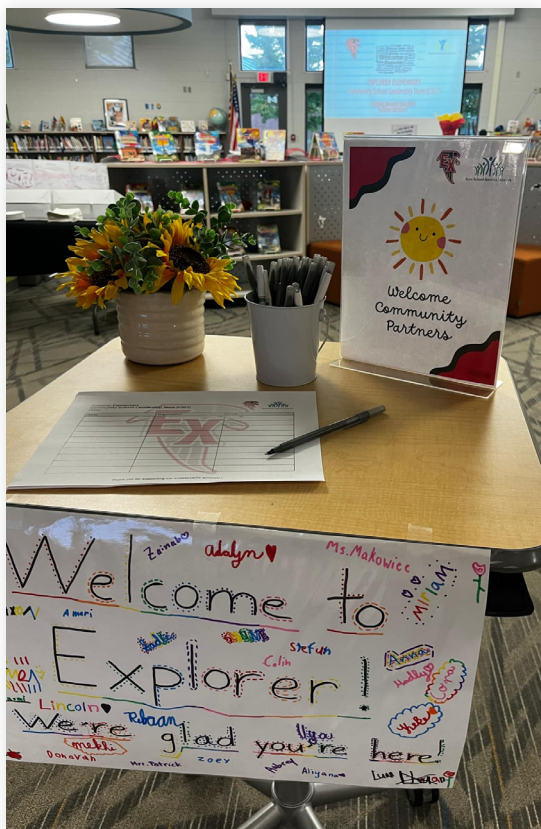
As part of this broader community initiative, we are partnering with local organizations to offer support that extends beyond academics. Together, we are addressing our students' social, emotional, and health needs by utilizing the strengths and resources of each partner. Ultimately, our goal is to improve student outcomes and strengthen the community both inside and outside the school.

The main objectives of the CSLT are to learn more about our students and the community school strategy, to collaborate and share resources, and to improve student achievement and well-being through data-driven decisions and active engagement.

In the short time we've been working together, we've already seen some positive results. For example, CSLT members have collaborated to provide new winter coats for students and are gathering donations for our school's wish list. Additionally, we've been able to raise awareness about the work of our Multilingual Learners (ML) department and how they support our ML students.

We are currently looking for local neighbors, businesses, and non-profits to join our CSLT! Meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month at 9:30 a.m. We encourage you to come and bring a friend!

Let's continue working together to create a stronger, more supportive school community.



THE GIFT OF TIME!

A student support team is a group of professionals who work together to ensure students have the resources, guidance, and assistance they need to succeed academically, emotionally, and socially—and it all takes time. Our support staff at Bowen continually invests their time and energy to ensure our students are supported through every challenge they face, from academics to mental health support. Here are just three members of our support team who help make Bowen strong.

Kamaria Dawkins - Social Emotional Learning Coach

Kamaria makes a difference at Bowen every time she:

- Fosters the development of the crucial social and emotional skills needed for students to effectively manage their emotions, build positive relationships, and make responsible decisions including:
 - Self-awareness
 - Self-regulation
 - Social awareness
 - Responsible decision making
- Supports students, collaborates with educators, and engages families
- Leads our Student Support Team

Devin Cook - Social Worker

Everyday our students are reminded they're safe at Bowen when Devin:

- Provides support to students, families, and staff members to address various emotional, social, and behavioral challenges
- Provides individual counseling, immediate support during times of crisis, and helps to restore positive relationships and a sense of stability
- Intentionally creates an office her students have called a “safe space” at Bowen Elementary.

Stacey Carson - KSSN School Community Coordinator

There are few people in our building as acquainted with the names and needs of our community as Stacey. She compassionately manages:

- Resource coordination, organization, and dispensing
- Advocating for students and families
- Supporting family engagement and connection
- Building and maintaining critical community partnerships including:
 - Kids Food Basket
 - Hand2Hand
 - Kids Hope mentors

We're thankful for the contribution of time and care given by every Support Staff Team member in our building.





KENTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Calendar 2024-25

- Aug 19 *First Day of School
- Aug 30 No School
- Sep 2 No School
- Sept 25..... ½ Day K-12 / PD for Staff

- Oct 10..... ½ Day K-12 / Conferences
- Oct 11 No School

- Nov 1..... No School / PD for Staff
- Nov 27 - 29 .. No School / Thanksgiving Break

- Dec 20 ½ Day K-12 / KEA Records Day (non-report)
- Dec 23 - Jan 3 ... Winter Break

- Jan 20 No School for Students & Staff / MLK Day

- Feb 17 & 18 No School for Students & Staff / Mid-Winter Break

- Mar 5..... ½ Day K-12 / PD for Staff
- Apr 3..... ½ Day K-12 / KEA Records Day (non-report)
- Apr 4 - Apr 11.... No School for Students & Staff/ Spring Break

- May 23 ½ Day K-12 / KEA Records Day (non-report)
- May 26 No School / Memorial Day
- May 30..... Last Day of School - Half Day for Students & Staff

| School | Start | Dismissal | Half Day Dismissal |
|-------------|---------|-----------|--------------------|
| Elementary | 9:00 AM | 3:59 PM | 12:15 PM |
| Middle | 8:20 AM | 3:04 PM | 11:35 AM |
| EKFC & EKHS | 7:35 AM | 2:19 PM | 10:50 AM |
| Crossroads | 7:34 AM | 2:10 PM | 10:40 AM |

| AUGUST | | | | | | | JANUARY | | | | | | |
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| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
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| DECEMBER | | | | | | | MAY | | | | | | |
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No School For Students
 Half Day