



Newsletter

GOSHEN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

MARCH 2017

A bright future

by Diane Woodworth, GCS Superintendent



As I write this letter, the local “perma clouds” have been with us for a month or so. Fortunately spring will be here soon and that

inevitably means more sunshine and warmer, brighter days.

That’s how I am feeling about the future of Goshen Schools. Like any school district, we have our challenges. But I firmly believe the future of our schools is bright with the promise of ever-greater success in providing an outstanding education for our children and preparing them for the world that awaits them.

As evidence, I submit some of the very exciting programs we are featuring in this issue of our newsletter: the robotics program at Goshen Middle School; our collaborative efforts with other Elkhart County schools in alternative education; the growth of our popular IB program; and the excitement that continues to build with our Strategic Planning initiative.

Speaking of strategic planning, we are at a critical juncture in the process and I invite you to participate. The 2025 Plan will only be as good as the input we receive from you. Your insights and experiences are so valuable. Please share them with our Strategic Planning team.

I think I see the sun peeking through the clouds. 2017 is here and it’s going to be another great year at GCS! I sincerely hope it will be a happy and blessed New Year for each and every one of you as well.

Diane



Growth is the watchword for IB program

Increased participation in IB at GHS and program expansion into Goshen Elementary and GMS bode well for future.

Benjamin Franklin said, “Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, and success have no meaning.” Those words ring as true today as they did in colonial times – especially in the context of contemporary education.

Growth is definitely the key word in describing the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. Introduced in 2008 at Goshen High School, student involvement in the program has increased every year. The number of GHS students taking the IB exams grew by over 28 percent in 2016, with 92 percent of the students who attempted the full IB diploma earning it. Matthew Nichols, an IB coordinator at GHS, says these numbers speak to the reputation of the program. “The cool thing about being involved with IB is seeing the growing number of students challenging themselves to realize their full potential.”

Nichols and fellow coordinator, Theresa Collins, are quick to point out that the numbers are not the most important measure of success. Collins says, “Our students are choosing to raise the bar for themselves – in their writing, their thinking

and their speaking. Each year, more students have seen their older peers flourish thanks to the unique courses and supportive learning environment.” Collins adds, “Our best advocates are the students who have graduated and are leveraging their IB experience for success in college.”

Another source of excitement for IB students is the opportunity for real-world problem solving. Based on the core attributes of the program, Creativity/Activity/Service (CAS), this past year Goshen IB students initiated contact with IB students in Flint, Michigan, to explore ways to assist with the water crisis there. Prior to a visit to Flint, they learned that the millions of water bottles being sent to that city were actually creating a new problem – how to collect and dispose of the empty bottles. As part of the solution, Goshen students launched a school-wide effort to decorate and donate barrels for the recycling effort. Not only were the Goshen students able to fulfill the CAS core values, but they also developed a relationship with the Flint students, and will host them for a visit at the end of the month.

cont. on page 2 | IB program

Happily-ever-aftering in Camelot

GHS reprises popular musical 45 years after first performance.



In 1972, a Goshen High School senior had been "badgering" the drama department to put on a musical. In time, the department relented and agreed to produce the school's first full-fledged musical. That show was "Camelot" and that GHS student was Marcia Yost, who was then chosen to be student director of the performance.

Yost is now GHS's music department chair and it is fitting that 45 years later, the department is reprising "Camelot". And who is directing this performance? Yost, of course. Performances are scheduled for March 10-12 and 16-19. Times and tickets are available through: musictickets@goshenschools.org or the GHS Choir office at 533-8651 (Ex. 2518).

Suffice it to say, Yost is pleased with the decision and ecstatic about the opportunity to encore her performance as director. 'Camelot' is truly a classic," Yost says. "It's a great musical with lots of comedy and timeless messages. Like using 'might' to produce 'right' — and how we interact with people and with each other. It's just a great fit for the community and our students."

Yost is quick to point out that this year's performance will be vastly different than the one in 1972. "So much has changed since then and we have capabilities we couldn't have imagined back then. We're really pulling out all the stops in terms of our sets and designs. We have over 100 students involved in the cast, crew and pit orchestra. And I am absolutely delighted with the depth of talent we have for this performance."

Forty-five years is a long time between performances. But some things are definitely worth the wait.

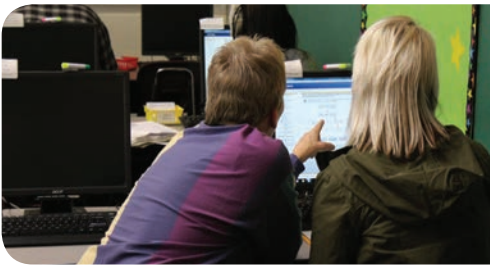
IB program

(continued from page 1)

In the September 2016 issue of GCS 360, we reported on the implementation of IB at the primary school level. Ruth Metcalfe, IB coordinator at West Goshen Elementary, says the program is off to a great start. Tailored specifically for elementary school students, the first-year focus has two primary components. "We are working hard to help students develop actions based on the IB 'learner profile,'" Metcalfe says. "This, in turn, helps them become better thinkers and more knowledgeable about the world around them. The second component focuses on inquiry-based learning skills, using the student's natural curiosity to ask questions, research answers and show independence in pursuing inquiries."

With the inclusion of GMS and all 9th and 10th grade students in the IB Middle Years Program, GCS is now positioned to offer the full spectrum of IB curriculum. Nichols and Collins believe this is a very important development for the district and will serve to make the entire IB initiative all the more beneficial.

Merit Learning Center
Providing a cross-county alternative education



For some students, a traditional academic setting does not fit their learning styles or their life styles. Some are trying to balance school and employment, others have family responsibilities or behavioral issues, and some have simply fallen behind in earning the credits they need for graduation. As educators, Goshen Community Schools and four other school districts in Elkhart County believe they have a moral and professional obligation to address the needs of these at-risk students. That's why the Merit Learning Center (MLC) was established in 1999.

MLC is an accredited alternative school for students in grades 10 through 12. Its mission is to ensure that every student achieves a high school diploma — or at least has the skills and resources to continue their education and find gainful employment in the future. Under the leadership of Principal Kristen Watt and a

GHS adds college prep coach to staff



High school students are finding that researching and applying to colleges is becoming more and more complicated. To address this growing need, GHS has hired Marlette Gomez as its first college prep coach.

Gomez is a graduate of Goshen College where she earned a degree in sociology and later earned her masters from Indiana University South Bend. Prior to joining GHS, she worked at Oaklawn Center and was a Hospice care provider. Gomez is bilingual and is available to all GHS students seeking help in selecting the colleges to which they may want to apply, as well as providing assistance with applications and the general college admissions process.

Defining success

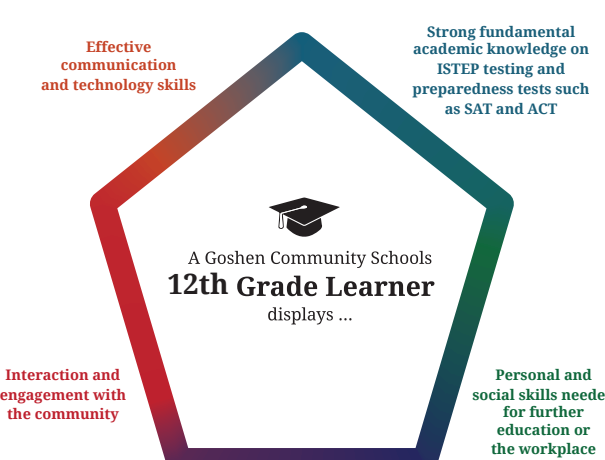
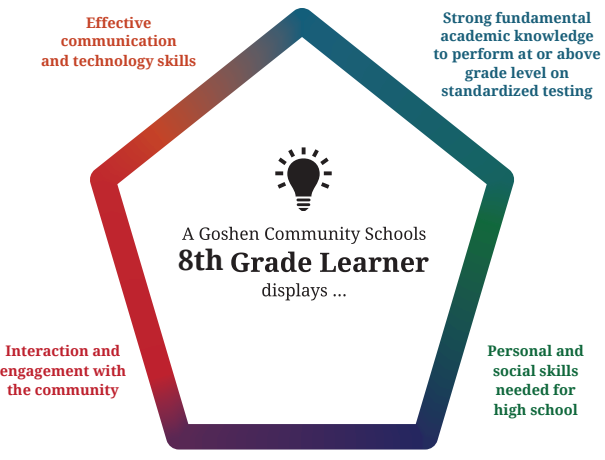
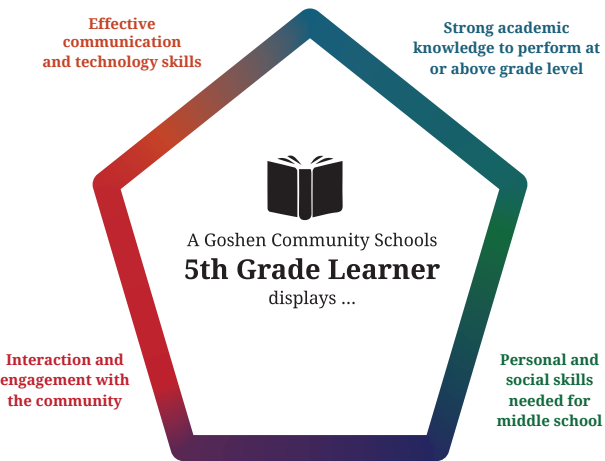
Academic committee publishes desired outcomes for Strategic Plan.

Every plan needs a vision for what can and will be accomplished in the future. As one of the various special committees working on the ten-year Strategic Plan for Goshen Community Schools, the academic task force has presented its summary of desired outcomes for the initiative.

According to Alan Metcalfe, GCS assistant superintendent, the recommended outcomes address critical points of emphasis for all GCS students with specific landmark goals for elementary, middle and high school achievement. "It all starts with defining aspirational but achievable expectations for our students and their families," Metcalfe says. "These outcomes speak to issues of student engagement, collaboration with teachers, parental and community involvement, and expanded opportunities for success."

The overriding goals are reflected in and represented by the three learning levels shown on the right.

The text and illustrations depicted on the right are, of course, just summaries of a more detailed narrative. In-depth information is available at <http://www.goshenschools.org/2025-strategic-plan/>. Metcalfe also reminds everyone that the Strategic Planning process is not complete and the need for additional input is ongoing. Please email your questions or comments to superintendent@goshenschools.org.



Science, not science fiction

Robotics at Goshen Middle School inspire passion for innovation



Talk of robots may conjure up images of a galaxy far, far away, but students at Goshen Middle School are learning that robotics is about science, not science fiction. In the process, they are also learning important life skills.

The robotics program at GMS had simple origins; after his 6th grade son participated in a robotics program in Elkhart, GMS teacher Geoffrey Schuetz suggested the school start its own club. The students use a system produced in kit form by Lego® (yes, that Lego). The kits consist of programmable bricks, motors and assembly parts. The goal is to teach computational thinking and inspire creativity.

The club is actually a team competing in tournaments and in First Lego League. Students are challenged to "design their own solution to current scientific problems." The current theme is "Animal Allies," chosen to encourage teams to design a real-world project focused on the interactions between people and animals. The GMS robotics team is now working on a type of fog light to detect animals along roadways, a design for which they are actually considering filing a patent.

Schuetz sees many benefits to the robotics program. "I am constantly amazed at how passionate these kids are about it," he says. "It inspires them to look at things in new and different ways. It's great to watch them be so focused on the task at hand, learning to manage their frustrations and taking failure in stride. All great life lessons."

Contact Us



Administration Office	574.533.8631
Goshen High School	574.533.8651
Goshen Middle School	574.533.0391
Chamberlain Elementary	574.534.2691
Chandler Elementary	574.533.5085
Merit Learning Center	574.533.9743
Model Elementary	574.533.7677
Parkside Elementary	574.533.7765
Prairie View Elementary	574.534.4710
Waterford Elementary	574.533.6811
West Goshen Elementary	574.533.7855

Online



www.goshenschools.org



www.facebook.com/goshen.schools



www.twitter.com/goshenschool

Feedback

We welcome our readers' letters, comments and critique. Write to Editor, 360 Newsletter, Goshen Community School Corporation, 613 E. Purl St., Goshen IN 46526 or call 574.533.8631.

Board Members

Felipe MerinoPresident
Bradd WeddellVice President
Keith GoodmanSecretary
Jane DeVoeMember
Roger NafzigerMember
José OrtizMember
Jane TroupMember

Goshen Community School Corporation
Administration Center
613 East Purl Street
Goshen, IN 46526

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Goshen, IN
Permit No. 68



Chess for success

Who would guess that in this short attention span, digital world, a board game that has been around for over 1,500 years would be trending upward? But that is exactly what is happening in the Goshen School system. And the game, if you haven't guessed, is chess.

Joe Riegsecker, chess coordinator for GCS, tells us that about 220 students are actively involved in the club. "It's a game that has appeal to students and parents alike," Riegsecker notes. "Initially, most of the kids get involved out of curiosity, but once they get into the game, they quickly learn that each game is different. It taps into their competitive drive and is always challenging. Parents like knowing that there is research that suggests chess helps kids academically while improving their concentration skills and the value of thinking before acting."

Currently there is a chess club in all but one GCS school. In addition to internal club competition, students also compete in tournaments with other schools in the area.



2017 Events

March 3

End of 3rd Quarter
Grading Period

March 7-31

Kindergarten Registration
Administration Center,
8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

March 7th, 16th, 21st
8 a.m. - 7 p.m.

March 10-12

GHS Musical; Camelot
GHS / 10th & 11th at 7:30 p.m.,
12th at 2:30 p.m.

March 16-19

GHS Musical; Camelot
GHS / 16th, 17th, & 18th at 7:30 p.m.
and 19th at 2:30 p.m.

March 29

Snow Make-Up Day
If No Snow Days, No School

March 30-April 7

Spring Break - No School

April 14

Good Friday - No School

April 20

Coffee With Superintendent
Administration Center,
Board Room at noon

April 20 & 25

Kindergarten Blast Off
Chamberlain, Chandler, and Parkside—
April 20, 5:30 - 7 p.m.

Model, Prairie View, Waterford, and
West Goshen—April 25, 5:30 - 7 p.m.

College Kindergarten—
1700 S. Main Street
April 20, 5 - 6 p.m.

April 24

National Jr. Honor Society
Induction Ceremony
GMS / 7:30 p.m., GMS Auditorium

April 28-30

GMS Musical; The Lion King Jr.
GMS / April 28 & 29 at 7:30
and April 30 at 2:30 p.m.

April 30

National Honor Society
Induction Ceremony
GHS / 2 p.m. Auditorium