
Midland
Public Schools
Inspiring Excellence
OUR
SCHOOLS
An update from Midland Public Schools

MPS IN THE NEWS

MPS CELEBRATES MIDLAND COUNTY NEIGHBORING WEEK THROUGH CONNECTION, COMMUNITY



Midland Public Schools (MPS) celebrated Midland County Neighboring Week, September 27–October 3, with activities across all grade levels focused on kindness, connection, and community.

Elementary activities included Woodcrest's "Chalk the Walk," handmade placemats for assisted living residents at Chestnut Hill, gifts for the crossing guards at Adams, and a food drive benefiting Shelterhouse at Siebert.

Other highlights included the Central Park PTO Color Run, collaborative artwork, and family gatherings, including a Chalk & Talk event at Carpenter Pre-Primary Center.



Northeast Middle School and Plymouth Elementary strengthened their partnership with student welcome tunnels and a community quilt, while Jefferson Middle School students participated in cultural club activities and peer mentorship events.

At the secondary level, Dow High School orchestra students performed for residents at Bickford of Midland, and Foods students partnered with special education students for "Pancakes with Peers." Midland High School volleyball players volunteered at The Arc of Midland's "Fall into Fun" event and food drive. Building Trades students from both high schools also opened their student-built home project to the community. The MPS Administration Center welcomed community partners to an open house featuring treats prepared by middle school Life Skills students.

Throughout the district, Neighboring Week highlighted how small acts of kindness and meaningful connections help build a stronger community.

MPS STUDENTS SEE SAT SUCCESS ON STATEWIDE STAGE

Recently released state assessment scores have revealed that MPS students are achieving high marks on the SAT! The district tied for #22 in the state for highest SAT scores with an average score of 1074. In addition, H.H. Dow High School ranked #32 among Michigan high schools with an average score of 1093.7. Students' SAT scores are one of many criteria that universities and colleges may use to make admissions decisions.

MPS HIGH SCHOOLS NAMED TO MICHIGAN'S BEST HIGH SCHOOLS LIST

H.H. Dow High School and Midland High School have been nationally recognized as top high schools in the latest U.S. News & World Report Best High Schools rankings. Both schools ranked in the top 100: Dow High at #48 and Midland High at #82. In the 2025-2026 year, 83% of AP testers and 77% of IB exams taken by MPS students scored high enough to qualify students for potential college credit and/or advanced placement.

MPS SENIORS ACHIEVE NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLAR RECOGNITION

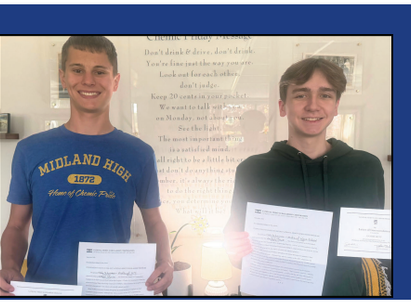
Five MPS seniors were among the 535 Michigan students named as semifinalists for the 2027 National Merit Scholarship Program. Chargers Justin Corle, Marcos Grzesiak, and Sanvi Patel, and Chemics Andrew Herman and Lucy McDonald qualified based on their Spring 2026 PSAT scores and a competitive application. They represent less than 1 percent of the nation's high school graduating seniors and have an opportunity to receive Merit Scholarship® awards.

In addition, each school had several Commended Scholars. Commended Scholars have placed in the top 34,000 scorers on the PSAT out of over 1.5 million test-takers. This recognition doesn't come with any monetary awards, but can still strengthen a student's application and show colleges a high level of academic achievement. Commended Scholars are Megan Caldwell, Amelia Corbett, Amy Casipit, James De Vries, Yassin Elsaadany, Aidan Johnson, Selene Moor, Nishi Narayan, Jenny Niu, and Noah Schoener (Dow High) and Zachary Skutt and Ethan Wynia (Midland High).









SINKING FUND
MILLAGE PROPOSAL



Investing in Safe and Secure Schools

The Midland Public Schools Sinking Fund Millage Proposal will appear on the Tuesday, November 3 ballot. The proposal is a result of months of planning, community input, and evaluation of Midland Public Schools' facilities.

The 1.5-mill, 10-year sinking fund proposal is based on a recommendation from the Blueprint for Tomorrow Steering Team. As a group of 30 Midland community members, the Steering Team balanced survey data, public input from board meetings, and feedback from community engagement sessions with needs identified in the 2025 Midland Public Schools Facilities Assessment. The Sinking Fund Millage Proposal would generate approximately $4.57 million per year for 10 years.

If passed, the sinking fund would address some of the district's most pressing school safety, security, and basic infrastructure needs.

STUDENT SAFETY AND SECURITY

- ✓ Installing secure buzzer entry systems at all schools
- ✓ Updating security cameras
- ✓ Improving site and playground safety



NECESSARY REPAIRS TO AGING INFRASTRUCTURE

- ✓ Repairing roofs to prevent leaks and protect facilities
- ✓ Updating heating, cooling, and ventilation systems
- ✓ Updating electrical and plumbing systems



TRANSPORTATION AND TECHNOLOGY REPLACEMENTS

- ✓ Replacing school buses to ensure a safe bus fleet
- ✓ Updating technology infrastructure



Our Commitment to the Community

If the sinking fund is approved, MPS commits to managing the funds with transparency and accountability:

- Funds will be spent in alignment with the priority areas of our Strategic Plan.
- MPS will regularly share Sinking Fund Program progress and updates.
- The Sinking Fund will receive an independent audit each year.
  Should a critical sinking fund need emerge, there will be an open discussion about an adjustment to the plan at a scheduled Board of Education meeting.

Current conditions the Sinking Fund would address include:



Roof Repair:
Northeast Middle School



Roof Repair:
Adams Elementary



Roof Repair:
Central Auditorium



Masonry Repair:
Dow High School



Updated Security Cameras:
All Schools



Secure Buzzer Entry Install:
All Schools



Site Drainage Issue:
Chestnut Hill Elementary



Site Drainage Issue:
Plymouth Elementary

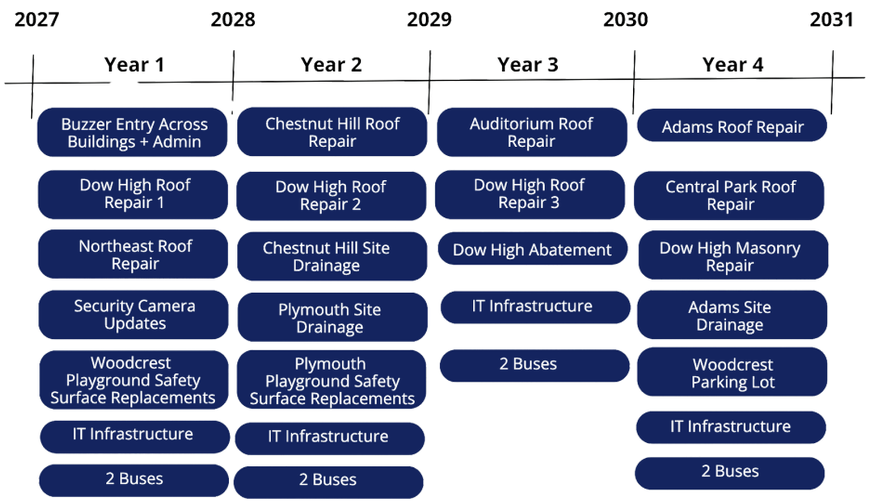


Safety Surface Replacement:
Plymouth Elementary

SINKING FUND
MILLAGE PROPOSAL



What to Expect



What would the MPS sinking fund be used for?

Facility planning partners GMB, Clark Construction, and Three Rivers Corporation and the MPS Operations team collaborated to vet projects identified as urgent in the Facilities Assessment. These projects were considered alongside 'real-time' observations from MPS Operations team members and anticipated revenues vs. project costs. Priorities identified by MPS stakeholders through survey data and Board of Education feedback served as an additional lens to create a 1- to 4-year scope of work, which you can see in the chart to the left. Projects for years 5-10 will be developed over time, utilizing the same process.

The Board of Education has committed to openly discussing any significant alterations or additional projects that emerge as a result of emergency/urgent facility needs.

What is the financial impact on homeowners in the MPS district?

For the average homeowner, the proposed sinking fund would cost approximately **$15 per month.**

Example:
For a home with a market value of $240,000 and a taxable assessed value of $120,000:

$120,000 x .0015 = $180 / year
$180 ÷ 12 months = $15 / month

Home Market Value	Home Taxable Assessed Value (typically ½ of market value)	Approximate Monthly Cost
$100,000	$50,000	$6.25
$150,000	$75,000	$9.38
$200,000	$100,000	$12.50
$240,000	$120,000	$15.00
$300,000	$150,000	$18.75

VOTE BY NOVEMBER 3!

To learn more about the MPS Sinking Fund Millage Proposal, scan the QR code now or visit **www.midlandps.org/sinkingfund.**

midlandps.org/sinkingfund

Paid for by Midland Public Schools, 600 E. Carpenter Street, Midland, MI 48640

CURRICULUM CORNER

USING AI TO HELP STUDENTS PREPARE FOR AN EVER-CHANGING WORLD

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly changing how the world lives and works. At MPS, preparing students for this reality goes beyond simply teaching them how to use new tools; it is about developing critical thinkers who can navigate an evolving digital landscape responsibly.

For the 2026-2027 school year, MPS has introduced SchoolAI, an educational platform available as an optional tool for grades 6–12 only. Younger students, including those in elementary and kindergarten, will not use the platform. After extensive piloting by a district task force, SchoolAI was selected because it prioritizes safety, privacy, and teacher-led instruction. Unlike general-purpose AI models like ChatGPT, SchoolAI acts as an interactive tutor that asks questions and guides students through problem-solving rather than simply providing answers. It does not replace teachers or student learning; rather, it serves as an additional instructional tool to help personalize education.

Safeguards are central to this platform. Teachers establish learning boundaries and monitor student interactions through a dashboard called Mission Control, which immediately flags potential safety concerns or off-topic conversations. Student privacy is strictly protected: data is encrypted, never sold, and never used to train public AI models, fully complying with FERPA and COPPA data protection standards.

Ultimately, MPS is focused on building AI literacy. Secondary students are learning to question information, evaluate bias, and make ethical decisions about technology. The goal is not to teach students to rely on AI, but to empower MPS graduates to think for themselves in a world where AI is increasingly present.



MPS LAUNCHES K-5 LITERACY PILOT AIMED AT STRENGTHENING READING INSTRUCTION

As part of its ongoing work to strengthen reading and writing instruction, Midland Public Schools is launching a literacy curriculum pilot this fall for students in kindergarten through fifth grade that district leaders say is designed to strengthen instruction and, ultimately, improve student outcomes. The pilot aligns with Michigan's Literacy and Dyslexia legislation, Public Act 146 of 2024, which requires districts to use evidence-based reading instruction and curriculum aligned with the science of reading beginning in the 2027-28 school year.

To make an informed decision on the curricular resource that best meets the needs of MPS students and educators, the district is piloting two state-approved comprehensive literacy resources: HMH Into Reading and Collaborative Literacy.

Teachers began using their assigned resource on October 19, with the formal pilot running through March 25, 2027.

Regardless of which comprehensive resource a classroom is piloting, all K-5 instruction will be guided by the district's literacy framework. The district will use several areas of input to evaluate the two programs. Classroom observations, teacher input on their experiences, instructional materials, and other data will all contribute to the evaluation.

By March 2027, the pilot team is expected to reach consensus on which resource it recommends. If approved, MPS would purchase the selected curriculum during summer 2027 and prepare for districtwide implementation in the 2027-28 school year.

NEW TECHNOLOGY GUIDELINES FOR THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR



Technology in the classroom is an incredible tool. It opens up worlds of research, interactive learning, and essential skill-building. In the 2026-2027 school year, Midland Public Schools is placing renewed focus on ensuring classroom technology serves as a meaningful tool for academic growth.

At every grade level, the updated philosophy is simple: device use must be intentional and directly aligned with the curriculum. Moving forward, Chromebooks and other school-issued devices will be used exclusively for educational purposes.

What does that look like in practice?

- **Grades K-2: Foundation**
  - Screen time limit: 0-10% of the day
  - Daily target use: None to minimal
- **Grades 3-5: Transition**
  - Screen time limit: 0-15% of the day
  - Daily target use: Low, time-bound
- **Grades 6-8: Application**
  - Screen time limit: 0-3% of each class
  - Daily target use: Moderate
- **Grades 9-12: Mastery**
  - Screen time limit: Variable & curriculum-driven
  - Daily target use: Integrated

One of the biggest takeaways from the policy review was a strong community desire to limit device screen time and provide fewer opportunities for technology use, particularly in younger grades. Chromebooks will no longer come home with elementary students, and will stay at school for middle school students beginning in the 2027-28 school year.

To ensure we still prepare students for the ever-changing future, MPS is actively exploring a district-wide curriculum to teach foundational computer skills such as typing, word processing, and email etiquette.

This year, under the new guidelines, will be an opportunity to gauge its impact in our classrooms and make adjustments as needed.

MPS ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Kofi Ofori-Darko
Dow High School, Class of 2016

After graduating from Dow High School in 2016, Kofi Ofori-Darko went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts in Biology and Science in Society from Wesleyan University. Today, his career is focused on strategic investments and building business partnerships—a path he says was shaped by the mindset he developed during his time in Midland Public Schools.

Currently an associate at Dunes Point Capital, Kofi evaluates acquisitions, provides board oversight for operating businesses, and researches new sectors to identify companies for future partnerships. Prior to this role, he was a founding investment professional for a climate investing strategy at a global firm, where he helped build a growth equity practice from the ground up.

“Midland Public Schools taught me that the people around you set your ceiling, and mine kept raising it,” Kofi shared. “I had teachers who never accepted ‘good enough’ and who always asked what it would look like if I tried it differently. I had classmates who made excellence feel contagious, and who showed me you grow to meet the people you spend your days with.”

That environment of high expectations continues to influence how he operates in the professional world. “In my job today, I still lean on that,” he said. “Question the obvious answer, look for where there’s an opportunity to win, and hold myself to a standard no one else has to enforce.”



Aly Hebert
Midland High School, Class of 2023

Aly Hebert is finishing her Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) at Grand Valley State University this semester, but her foundation in patient care started right here at Midland Public Schools. Today, she’s the President of the GVSU Student Nurses Association and a patient care tech at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital, with plans to work in the pediatric ICU.

Aly credits the MPS Health Care Technology (HCT) program for giving her a major head start. By taking dual-enrollment classes at Delta College and completing paid work-based learning at MyMichigan Health during her senior year, she earned her CNA credential and logged real-world clinical hours before even stepping onto a college campus.

"Working at MyMichigan as a high school student was the most incredible experience and shaped my future in really profound ways," she shared.

Beyond the college credits and technical skills, Aly says the HCT program provided a built-in support system of classmates she still relies on today. Looking back at her time at Adams Elementary, Northeast Middle, and Midland High School, she is thankful for the teachers, staff, and extracurriculars that helped shape her journey.

"Everyone was dedicated, caring, and pushed me to be my best."



Shelbee Simanskey
Dow High School, Class of 2021

Shelbee Simanskey knows a thing or two about building a strong foundation. Today, she is an Engineer 1 at Delfield, with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, a minor in Electrical Engineering, and a passing score on the notoriously rigorous Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) Mechanical Exam.

At Delfield, Shelbee designs commercial kitchen prep and serving equipment used across the country in schools, businesses, and national restaurant chains. But before she was designing equipment on a national scale, she was figuring out her career path in Dow High’s Career and Technical Education (CTE) classrooms.

“Taking the engineering-focused CTE courses at Dow High gave me a better understanding of what I wanted to pursue in college and beyond,” Shelbee shared. “Through project work, presentations, and industry tours, I gained a well-rounded introduction to the day-to-day work of engineers in various fields.”

She credits her high school engineering mentors, Mr. Luke Richard and Mr. Corey Spurling, for encouraging her curiosity and challenging her to explore new ideas. In fact, a field trip to Case Systems during her Principles of Engineering class led directly to her first engineering internship.

During her three years at Case Systems, Shelbee had the unique opportunity to see products evolve from initial concepts to final production.

She contributed to the design and prototyping of the SALTO educational furniture line, developing a mounting system for a mobile storage cart that was later scaled into a modular wall-mounted whiteboard and storage system.

“Through their classes, I gained a strong engineering foundation and valuable real-world experience that gave me the confidence to pursue engineering as a long-term career,” she said.

SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION

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Follow along with MPS!

There are amazing things happening at Midland Public Schools!
Keep up-to-date on what's going on at MPS and see how we're inspiring excellence via the methods below.



Website:
midlandps.org

Social media:
Facebook: Midland Public Schools
Twitter (X): @MidlandPS
Instagram: @midlandpublicschools
YouTube: @MidlandPublicSchools

MPS-TV:
Charter Spectrum channel 190
AT&T Uverse channel 99
Roku, Apple TV, & Amazon Fire TV

Email:
Forward Together newsletter
Sent twice per month

Contact the MPS Administration Center

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