

The Buzz!

Pellston Public Schools

SEPTEMBER 2023

Home of the Hornets



From the Superintendent

Pellston Public Schools families,

I couldn't possibly be more excited to start the 2023-2024 school year. Pellston Public Schools is such an amazing place with the absolute best students in the world.

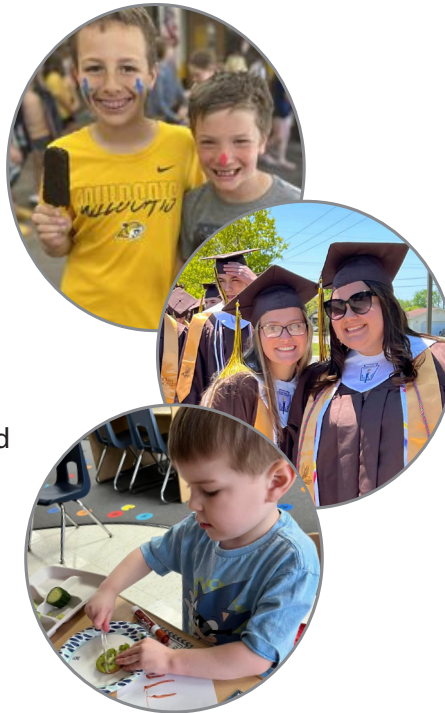
I couldn't be more proud of all that we have accomplished together and I couldn't be more excited to see what incredible things we will accomplish this year. You'll find highlights of our new staff, programming, and messages from district leaders in this edition of the Buzz.

I am counting the moments until children fill our halls again. I am always available to you, please reach out to me any time.

With kind regards,

Stephen Seelye ■ sseelye@pellstonschools.org
Superintendent, Pellston Public Schools

#HORNETSWORK



District Calendar 2023-24

2023

- Sept 4** Labor Day
- Sept 5** First day of school
- Oct 12** Half-day, parent teacher conf.
- Nov 1** No school, ISD-wide PD Day
- Nov 22-24** Thanksgiving Break
- Dec 22-Jan 2** Winter Break

2024

- Jan 26** Half day, end of 1st semester
- Feb. 16** No school, PD day
- Feb. 19** No school, mid-winter break
- Feb 29** Half day, parent teacher conf.
- Mar 1** No school, PD Day
- Mar 22-Apr 1** Spring Break
- May 24** No school, ISD-wide PD Day
- May 27** Memorial Day
- June 7** Last day, half day

Important Pellston Public Schools Contacts

- Superintendent: (231) 539-8421, ext. 10001
- Middle/High School: (231) 539-8801
- Elementary School: (231) 539-8421
- Transportation: (231) 539-8801, ext. 10080
- Athletic Director: (231) 539-8801, ext. 10029

Find all district staff contact information on our website: www.pellstonschools.org

INSIDE:

- Meet our new staff!
- Messages from the Middle/High School
- Career tech courses
- From the kitchen
- PARENT SQUARE
- Athletic info



The Buzz!

Messages from the Middle/High & Elementary



Greetings, Middle/High Hornets!

I could not be more honored and excited to begin my 2nd year as Pellston Middle/High School Principal. I am looking forward to continuing to make an impact with the young people of this community, and to be a partner with families and other community members that we serve. We have been eagerly awaiting the return of staff and students, and I cannot wait to see all of our new and returning faces.

Through our #HORNETSWORK and Hornet Halls initiatives, we will continue to enhance our culture while addressing the needs of our students and families. The overall well-being of our students will continue to be a priority for myself and our amazing staff. Once again, I am so honored and humbled to serve as your Pellston Middle/High School Principal.

Sincerely,

#HORNETSWORK

**Mr. Chris Schlappi, cschlappi@pellsonschools.org
Middle/High School Principal**



Hello Hornets!

I hope you have all enjoyed the summer break and are refreshed and ready to join us for the new school year. Like Mr. Schlappi, I cannot wait to see all of your faces in the building! I look forward to continuing to support you on your journey through middle and high school, from overall well-being to career exploration, academic coaching, and planning for your futures. Please feel free to visit my office if you need help with anything. It is an honor to be a part of the Pellston community and to serve as your school counselor!

Sincerely,

**Mrs. Jennifer Dilworth ▪ jdilworth@pellstonschools.org
Middle/High School Counselor**



Welcome Back, Hornets!

I am so excited for the upcoming 2023-24 school year and the strong sense of community that continues to make our school an incredible place to learn and grow. Whether you are a family returning to Pellston Elementary or new to our district, I am thrilled to have you at Pellston Elementary School where our mission is to build leaders, inspire learners, and create a sound partnership in educating each and every child. I am honored to serve as the principal of Pellston Elementary School. It is a privilege to be part of a community where parents, teachers, and students promote a safe, positive, and loving learning environment.

Sincerely,

**Mrs. Tammy VanAntwerp ▪ tvanantwerp@pellstonschools.org
Elementary School Principal**

Beyond Basics partnership will help readers K-12

Pellston Public Schools is one of four local districts partnering with Beyond Basics, a nonprofit that provides intensive literacy tutoring to students in all grades who need extra reading support. Tutors provide one-on-one support to help students who are not reading at grade level or who are struggling. There is no cost to districts.

“We couldn’t pass up the opportunity to bring in the Beyond Basics team to work with our students. Their mission to directly work with students on reading support during the school day will greatly help our kids who are struggling to become successful readers,” said superintendent Stephen Seelye.

Tutors are being sought and would be employees of Beyond Basics. For more info about tutoring visit www.luminatestaffing.com/emmetcounty, or www.beyondbasics.org.

Hornet’s Nest Food Pantry

The Hornet’s Nest Food Pantry made a buzzing entrance into the MS/HS building last school year and will continue into 2023-24. This student-focused pantry was started in collaboration with local volunteers and the Northmen Den Food Pantry. From personal care items to food, this pantry is open one day a week during the MS/HS lunch.

School day schedules

Middle/high

Full day - 8:10 a.m.-3:10 p.m.

Half day - 8:10-11:30 a.m.

Elementary

Full day - 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Half day - 8:00-11:20 a.m.

Welcoming new staff to the Nest!

www.pellstonschools.org



KAREN DERRIS, MS/HS Special Education Teacher

My husband, Bob, and I have five grown children and four grandsons. I obtained my teaching degree from LSSU. Upon graduating I was employed by Bishop Baraga School in Cheboygan where my family resides. My favorite activity is anything with my family- especially the grandsons. I also enjoy the chance to take out the pontoon and jump in the lake during the summer, puzzles, playing cards and piano. After retirement I began to substitute teach and that's when I became acquainted with Pellston Schools. I am excitedly coming out of retirement to teach the 8th and 9th grade students! I feel very blessed to be a part of this school community and look forward to meeting everyone and joining the Hornet Nation.



AMANDA HAGERL, High School Social Studies Teacher

Approaching my fifth year of teaching, I'm grateful to return to my alma mater as an educator. I hold a Bachelor's in Secondary Social Studies and Health and a Master's in Instructional Design from Northern Michigan University. With most of my adult life spent in the Upper Peninsula, I enjoy kayaking on Lake Superior, backcountry skiing, and embracing nature. Reconnecting with this community feels like a cherished family reunion. Here's to a year of inspiration and impactful learning!



MARY OCKO, GSRP Associate Teacher, 3 year olds

I am Mrs. Mary Ocko! My family makes my heart happy. I am married to Andrew, and we have 4 "Ocklets" (Oliver, Alaina, Linora, Elias) that attend the best elementary school right here in Pellston. I love to be outside all seasons! I play in the dirt and my garden. Also I love to hang out with my kids going fishing, out for a bike ride, and sledding. I am very excited to work with the Little Hornets Preschool!



DEBBIE WHITTAKER, Special Education Interventionist

I have been married to my amazing husband for 32 years and together we have four beautiful daughters. I was recently promoted to Grandma to two perfect grandbabies and have been enjoying every second of it. While my daughters were in school I spent most of my time volunteering in their classrooms and substituting in their buildings. I am very excited to get back into the school setting and can't think of a better district to join. I look forward to being a part of the Hornet Nation and all it has in store.



COURTNEY WILBER, Farm to School Coordinator

I transitioned from FoodCorps to Farm to School Coordinator over the summer. I can be found in the hoop house or kitchen working on scratch made additions to our menu. I am from Petoskey, and went to school at Grand Valley State University where I studied anthropology and sustainable food systems. I have lived in Boulder, CO, Minneapolis, MN, and even spent some time learning about food systems in New Zealand's north island. I currently live in Harbor Springs, where my partner and I just purchased our first house! I am excited to get the hoop house thriving, work on our school's menus, and officially join the Pellston team!





The Buzz!

What's cooking in Pellston's kitchen!

After a very busy summer foods program, we have switched gears to prepare for the upcoming school year. We continue our efforts to menu healthier foods, local produce, and new from-scratch recipes. Last year's Food Corps Service Worker, Courtney Wilber, is our district's new Farm to School Coordinator. Courtney, along with Hornet preschool teacher and parent, Laura Nicholls, devoted a large portion of their summer caring for our Hoop House. Kale has been in abundance, along with zucchini, onions and now tomatoes & Brussels sprouts. The Hoop House has never looked so vibrant and beautiful! We are excited to be growing fresh vegetables we can use in our school kitchens. Both the elementary kitchen and the MS/HS kitchen were in need of full-time cooks for the fall. We are fortunate enough to be adding two women to our kitchen crew who have extensive school kitchen experience!



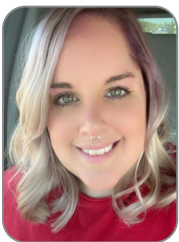
Breakfasts and lunches will continue to be free for ALL of our students, preschool-12 and our Char-Em ISD classrooms. Please encourage your student(s) to participate in our school meals program to fuel them for their days of learning and school activities.

Welcome, new kitchen staff



VERA CLINE, Elementary food service

I'm a newly retired resident of Cheboygan. My husband and I moved from Vicksburg where I worked for Vicksburg Community Schools for 21 years. I started working in the kitchen when my youngest of four children started school. I've worked in both the high school and elementary kitchens as a cook and a kitchen manager. I love spending time with my 5 grandchildren, working on my flowers, being on the water, snowmobiling, baking and scrapbooking. In the past year of retirement I missed interacting with the students and am so excited to be starting in the Pellston Elementary kitchen this new school year.



SAMANTHA MARIHUGH, Cook

I am excited to be joining Pellston this year as the cook for the middle/high school. I am married to Brian and we have two children in the district: Evalynn in 9th grade and Ivan in 3rd grade. My hobbies include reading, crafting, camping, hiking, kayaking and sitting on the sidelines of my children's sporting events. I am on the Pellston Fire Department as a medical first responder. I have about five years of experience working as a cook in the Petoskey school district. After more than a year away from the kitchen and the kids, I'm excited to jump back in and am looking forward to continuing to build my kitchen skills at Pellston.

FREE BREAKFAST & LUNCH FOR ALL ENROLLED STUDENTS!

We are pleased to inform our families that Pellston Public Schools will be participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) as part of the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program for the 2022-23 school year. ALL students enrolled in our district can receive a healthy breakfast and lunch at NO CHARGE to your household each day.

Please fill out and sign the Household Information Survey that has been mailed home; this form is needed for administrative purposes, not to determine eligibility. *This survey allows our school to benefit from various state and federal supplemental programs and is critical in determining the amount of money the school receives from a variety of supplemental programs. All survey information is confidential.* Without your assistance, the district cannot maximize utilization of available state and federal funds. This survey will also be available in both the elementary and high school offices.



More Hornet highlights!

Career Tech offerings continue to provide hands-on learning

Pellston High School's career and technical education offerings continue to provide unique opportunities for students to learn hands-on skills that translate directly into employment. Pellston is setting the bar regionally for our CTE offerings. We now offer: Business Administration and Management, Construction Technology, Health Occupations, Public Safety, PowerSports Technology, and Welding. These programs are offered to our students and open to any student in any Char-Em ISD school district.

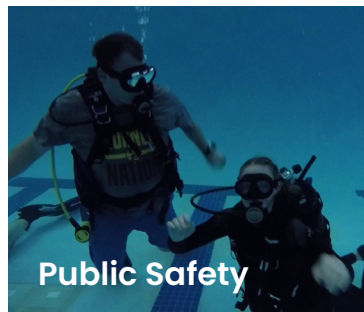
CTE programs are open to all of our high school students, and we encourage students and their parents/caregivers to take a look at our offerings and talk to the high school counselor about enrolling! View all of Pellston's programs, and all ISD CTE programs, online at www.charemidscareertech.org.



Health Occ



PowerSports



Public Safety



Construction

Pellston pride, district wide!



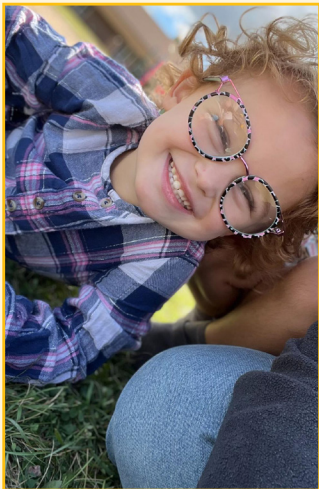


PELLSTON ATHLETICS READY TO SOAR INTO A NEW YEAR!

Welcome back Hornet Nation! Our student-athletes and coaches have been working hard for months to make this Fall season a success. As always, the best place to find the most up-to-date information regarding Pellston Middle/High School sports (and district news) is at www.pellstonhornets.org!

Homecoming football game is Oct. 14, 2023!

#HORNETSWORK



FROM THE GSRP PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR

As Little Hornets Preschool enters its 13th year of providing quality programming, we're proud to report that we've tripled in size! Pellston Public Schools continues to be a leader in Early Childhood Education because of our community's tremendous support. Currently, we are operating one, 3-year-old classroom and two, 4-year-old classrooms, while maintaining a five-star rating from the state. While these might be our youngest hornets, their school and community impact is profound. Thank you for investing in them.

REGISTER FOR PARENT SQUARE COMMUNICATIONS

All district, school, grade level and classroom information will now be sent via email and/or text. For even more convenience, download the ParentSquare app (available for free for iOS and Android devices). These are the first steps that you need to take in order to sign up for the ParentSquare program:

1. Visit www.parentsquare.com/signin
2. Under Sign Up/Create Password, enter your Email or Cell Phone Number. You must use the same email or phone number you provided to your school.
3. Click Go.
4. If the email or phone number matches the information in ParentSquare, you will receive an account activation email or text to register.
 - a. If the email or phone number does not match the information in ParentSquare, please contact the office to update your personal information.
5. Follow the instructions from the activation email or text.

PELLSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

Jim Milbrandt, President ■ Robert Thomson, Vice-President ■ Kristen Bauer-Frye, Secretary ■ Mark Zink, Treasurer
Bryan Searles, Member/Trustee ■ Stephanie Bromley, Member/Trustee ■ Serenity Dankert, Member/Trustee