



The Norsemen Pride

August 2024 | Issue 36

THE NEWSLETTER FOR NORTH MUSKEGON SCHOOL DISTRICT

- 02 Superintendent Message
- 03 NM Transportation on the Move!
- 04 Staff Spotlight
- 05 Local Penpals in Third Grade
- 06 Solar Eclipse at School
- 07 Law Day Award Winners
- 08 NM Students Hooked on Fishing
- 09 Students Explore from Inside Out
- 10 Fifth Grad Class of 2031
- 11 Track & Field Teams Make History
- 12 Mr. Al Karaba - Epic Teacher!
- 13 Norse Pops 2024
- 14 NMHS Class of 2024
- 15 Students of the Month
- 16 State Honors Norse Artist

INSIDE



Norsemen NEVER Fight Alone!

North Muskegon Elementary Staff showed their support for two of our staff members who are battling cancer, Beka Ambrose and Karen Persicke. Norsemen NEVER Fight Alone!

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A Message From Our Superintendent!



Welcome Back Norse Nation!

It is with great excitement that I welcome everyone back from what I hope has been a very relaxing and fun summer! The 2024/25 school year is just about to begin – get ready for a

wonderful school year at NMPS.

As tradition proves - our students, staff, parents and greater school community are going to make this an amazing year at NM. I am so proud of the incredible collaboration we have here at NM! Also, stay tuned for a community communication coming soon introducing our incredibly talented new staff members!

Get ready, because here we go...another year of high academic expectations, wonderful performances, fun athletic events, an incredible sense of school community and so much more. I am truly honored and feel privileged to be our school's superintendent. Please do not ever hesitate to contact me regarding any questions, concerns and/or celebrations you may have. Together we will make this a wonderful 2024/25 school year.

The tradition of excellence continues! It is a GREAT day to be NORSEMEN! It is always a GREAT day to be NORSEMEN!

With Pride,
Curt Babcock, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

*"We are an Educational Community
that gives our BEST and expects the BEST."
Go Norse!*



NM Transportation is *On the Move!*

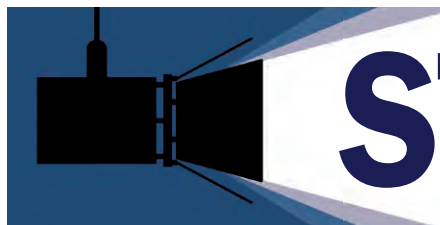
NM has two “new to us” buses! These are both 2020 buses and are awesome! Our transportation director, Penny Evert, was able to find and purchase these high-quality buses, which will provide safe and comfortable transportation for our students for many years to come.



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STAFF SPOTLIGHT



MRS. SCHUMACHER

2nd Grade Educator

"I love many things about North Muskegon. One thing that stands out the most to me is the dedicated staff and parent support that is shown throughout the year. I love the small quaint village that we are surrounded by. I love the family friendly atmosphere. I love knowing the names of all the children in second grade, even the ones that are not in my class. Last but not least I loved watching my own two children attend school here from Kindergarten to graduation."

- Jan Schumacher

WHAT ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES?

My responsibilities are to provide a safe, respectful, and fun learning environment for all of my second graders.

WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE TO TEACHERS JUST STARTING OUT?

My message to a teacher just starting out would be to develop a meaningful relationship with each student, be consistent, and enjoy your job!

HOW DO YOU RELAX AFTER A LONG DAY?

After a long day I enjoy reading a good book, putting puzzles together, and cooking. In the summer I love to ride my bike around Bear Lake, relax by my pool, or go for a boat ride.

HOW DID YOU GET TO WHERE YOU ARE TODAY?

My career in education started in a first-grade classroom at Ada Elementary in Grand Rapids. I was lucky enough to get hired at North Muskegon also as a first-grade teacher in 1987. I have taught thirty-seven years at North Muskegon teaching first or second grade. I have sincerely enjoyed my amazing teaching experience, dedicated colleagues, and outstanding students.



MR. COOKE

Athletic Director MS/HS Educator

I grew up in the NM community. I've been around NM a long time and have been exposed to and learned from many NM staff, NM coaches, NM teams, NM student/athletes since the 1960's.

- Jeff Cooke

HOW DID YOU GET TO WHERE YOU ARE TODAY?

First and foremost, my family, Kim, Rylee, Jesse and Josee. Without their understanding, patience and trust, I would not be where I am today. Second, my work ethic, to do my best

and do the extra to get the job done. If I don't know the answer, I'm not afraid to ask for help, always control what I can control.

WHAT ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES?

MS/HS teacher, MS/HS athletic director and many other school related jobs and responsibilities.

WHO ARE SOME OF YOUR BIGGEST INFLUENCES?

I could name many who played a big part in my profession, but I would hate to forget or leave a name out. Therefore, I'll just name one and that is my Dad, Dave Cooke. My Dad was a former NM educator, counselor and coach, and the North Muskegon summer recreation director for over 40 years in education.

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN?

Trust – with co-workers, athletes, etc.

Integrity – I represent NM.

Honesty – in my thoughts and my actions

Reliability – helps create respect

Resilience – toughness

WHAT IS THE MOST VALUABLE SKILL YOU'VE LEARNED?

Adapt, make the best of what we have and roll with the changes.

Local Penpals in Third Grade

By Mrs. Ronda Pek

At the beginning of the school year, Mrs. Pek met her student Rilynn's mom, Mrs. Szatkowski, who is a third grade teacher at Mona Shores. Together they decided that their two classes should be penpals. They began writing penpal letters in September and continued all the way through the last week of school. Each month students eagerly awaited their mail, and they couldn't wait to write back! It was rewarding to watch their writing skills improve throughout the year. The students went from printing to cursive, and finished with using their Chromebooks to type the letters.

The last week of school, we planned for the two classes to meet at Heritage Landing to have a picnic lunch and to play. They enjoyed meeting their penpals and sharing popsicles together!



A SOLAR ECLIPSE AT SCHOOL!

On Monday, April 8, 2024, North Muskegon experienced a partial solar eclipse at the end of the school day. Teachers taught students about the science of a solar eclipse and some basic instruction on planetary motion and the relationship between the earth, moon, and sun. Students also learned how to view an eclipse safely and what

they could expect to experience. The North Muskegon PTO provided glasses for each student to safely view the eclipse, and at the end of the school day, students spread out all over the grounds and looked up! Everyone noticed the suddenly cooler temperatures and the unusual color of the sun's light. It was neat to have so much of our community experience something so unique together!





ELEMENTARY NORSE LAW DAY AWARD WINNERS!

Two of our North Muskegon Elementary Students were chosen as winners of the Muskegon County Bar Association’s Law Day Art Contest! Roman Budzinskiy (4th grade) was the 1st place winner, and Avery James (3rd grade) was the 3rd place winner! Their parents attended the ceremony along with Avery’s 3rd grade teacher, Mrs. Ronda Pek, and Roman’s 4th grade teacher, Mrs. Terri Fortmeyer. We are proud of our students for using their artistic talents to share what they have learned about our democracy!



NM Students Hooked on Fishing!



Several of our NM Middle School and Elementary students participated in the 31st Annual Youth Fishing Derby on June 20 at Fisherman's Landing in downtown Muskegon. Prizes were awarded for each age group, for participants ages 8-12 years old. The Tommy Davis Memorial Fund generously provided a tackle box to each child. Kids and families also enjoyed food from Da Kidd BBQ!

Dominic McFarren and Tripp Cutler tied for first place in their age division. Other Norsemen fishing were Jayden James, Everett McClain, Willem DeBoode, Graham Peterson, Kylie Riedl, Cohen Sytek and Ty Guilez. The



students showed good sportsmanship and demonstrated some amazing fishing skills! Everyone enjoyed a beautiful day on Muskegon Lake, and the kids can't wait for next year's event!





NM Students Explore Biology From the Inside Out!

The highlight of the course, though, was the dissection experience. Students dissected four different organisms including the following: perch, starfish, dogfish sharks, and fetal pigs. One student, Freshman Elliott Irving, said the class “taught me more than I thought it would and it was really fun...it made me reflect on what I need and noticed that we are like many animals.”

By Ms. Phoebe Schroeder

During the last six weeks of the school year, our Spring Term provides high school students the opportunity to include a number of elective courses. One such course offered this year, Bioethics and Dissections, engaged students in exploration of ethical topics like animal experimentation and organ transplantation. Students heard from Gift of Life Michigan’s Alison Gillum. She brought in plasticized human organs for them to see and hold as well as introduced students to the many ways that human organs and tissues can both save lives and improve quality of life.



For three of their dissection experiences, high school students worked with small groups of third or fourth grade students who had a chance to both observe and participate. Each third and fourth grade group spent a class period with high school students dissecting



and learning about a different organism. Junior Matt Lertra said it “...was different from anything I’d done before, and I had to figure out how to explain things in a way that young students could understand.”



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Fifth Grade Promotion - Class of 2031

Congratulations to the class of 2031! You are a wonderful group of kiddos, we are so proud of you! Keep leading by example, being kind and including everyone!

Have a wonderful summer!

Best wishes, your fifth grade teachers—Mrs. Bentley Kittel, Ms. Marietti and Mr. Reeths



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Track and Field Teams Make History!

By Ms. Phoebe Schroeder

This track & field season was one of historic success! The girls’ team finished runner-up in the West Michigan Conference - Rivers Division, while the boys’ team was both Conference and Regional champions. It was the first Regional championship in 50 years for the boys, since 1974 when the team went on to be Class B State Runners Up. Thirteen athletes finished their season competing at the MHSAA Division 3 State Finals Meet:

- Cullen Bartos (4x100 meter relay, 4x200 meter relay)
- Drew Bartos (shot put, 4x100 meter relay)
- DaQuon Bates (300 meter hurdles, 4x400 meter relay)
- Hank Husmann (4x100 meter relay)
- Barrett Nance (4x400 meter relay)
- Sylvia Skujins (4x800 meter relay)

- Keira Staley (4x800 meter relay)
- Talan Thompson (high jump, 4x200 meter relay, 4x400 meter relay)
- Jaden Villalpando (high jump, long jump, 4x200 meter relay)
- Ani Weaver (4x800 meter relay)
- Abbie Wiegers (4x800 meter relay, 400 meter dash)
- Jerry Wiegers (100 meter dash, 200 meter dash, 400 meter dash, 4x400 meter relay)
- Hunter Wilder (4x100 meter relay, 4x200 meter relay)

- Additionally, five different school records were set over the course of the season:
- Abbie Wiegers - 400 meter dash
 - Jerry Wiegers - 400 meter dash
 - Jaden Villalpando - long jump
 - Cullen Bartos, Hank Husmann, Drew Bartos, & Hunter Wilder - 4x100 meter relay
 - Barrett Nance, DaQuon Bates, Talan Thompson, & Jerry Wiegers - 4x400 meter relay

Congratulations to our Norse Athletes!

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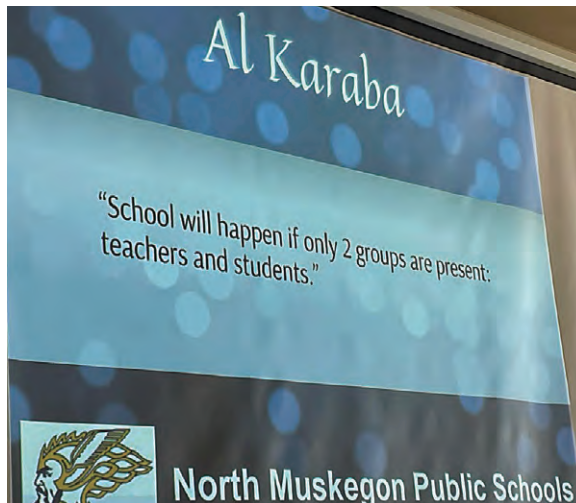
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MR. AL KARABA - AN EPIC TEACHER!



Congratulations to Mr. Al Karaba, who was honored by the MEA's Shoreline Educational Coordinating Council with an EPICS award! EPICS stands for Exceptional People in Community Schools. We have long known that Mr. Karaba is a skilled, experienced, and dedicated teacher who has contributed to the academic success of so many of our NM students and alumni! Thank you for sharing your exceptional talents with our community!



**The North Muskegon
Athletics Calendar
is available online at
www.nmps.net/athletics**

Schedules are regularly updated to reflect necessary changes

Norse POPS 2024!

By Mrs. Beth Slimko

Connecting to music connects us to the colorful harmony of life! Over 250 Junior and Senior North Muskegon singers, clad in costumes with professionally choreographed songs, immersed the senses in a medley of songs performed on April 25-26, 2024 at the gorgeous Frauenthal Theater. Thank you to the numerous donors and supporters for helping us produce a memorable show!



North Muskegon High School

CLASS OF 2024

Ellis Scott Archer
Evan James Atkinson-Miller ***+
Samantha Jo Baker **+
Maddison Rae Balon
Ethan Joseph Bates
Anna Mae Blastic ***+
Layne Zacrye Brady
Sage Elizabeth Brewer ***+
Amarion Jevon Bridgeford
Wyatt Steven Brock **
Matthew John Buikema *+
Kendra Ellen Canfield ***+
Andrew Phyllip Logan Cech
Landon Emery Christensen *
Reese Marie Cooper
Rylee Grace Cooper ***+
Maya Grace Corbin ***+
Emily Rose Crawford **
Katie Marie Crawford ***+
Lauren Kay Dahlquist ***+
Braden James Dalm *+
Isabella Ruth DeJonge ***+
Sofia Marie Dekker
Ryan Thomas Delora *
Logan Alexander Eerbeek
Avery Elwood Freeland
Allison Nicole Friesner **+
Marilyn Joyce Gaston ***+
August David Gerardi
Lamarkis Amere Graham *+
Mattie Margaret Houseman **+

Oskar Stanley Howard ***+
Leighton James Hunt ***+
Layla Bailey Hurst ***+
Allie D'Anne Jensen ***+
Cole Robert Johnson **+
Mikyla Ann Jones ***+
Katelyn Grace Kinahan
Owen Patrick Kitchka **+
Kennedi Alysse Koekkoek **+
Ella Grace Koon
Emma Lynn Lamiman ***+
Baila Mae Lang
Andre Demetrius Larkin
Natalee Katherine Lindell **+
Sophia Elizabeth Lindsay ***+
Jaxon Cole Lisinski
Addison Alejandra Lopez*
Ella Grace Mallon ***+
Zachary James Mallon
Abigail Mae Martinez **
John Logan McNally ***+
Benjamin Corcoran Meyers ***+
Olivia Katherine Midora ***+
Carter James Muzzy
Alec Sean Newille
Noah Benjamin Peoples **+
Owen Alexander Perry
Mitchel Scott Peterson **
Grace Marie Philpot *
Logan Andrew Pike *
Ava Rose Plichta **+

Michael Edward Proksa
Emilia Cadance Reid ***+
Xaiden Kristopher Roberts
Tyler James Rop *+
Cameron David Rose **
Gabriel Xavier Rosema
Caleb Carl Rumley ***
Jack Martin Sanocki **+
Braydyn Alexander Santos **+
Ayla Valoria Schwemin
Keira Helen Staley ***+
Dorina Zita Szekeres ^
Olivia Marie Thielbar
Talan Jay Thompson ***+
Tomas Uruena Diaz ^
Jacob Matthew Vander Velde
Aidan Scott Wehner
Abigail Marie Wiegiers
Charles Robert Wiegiers
Gerald Thomas Wiegiers
Miriam Rose Wilkie-Jones ***+
Analea Mae Wingard ***+
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Sophia Nanyonga Zziwambazza ***+

*Cum Laude (3.5-3.744 GPA)

**Magna Cum Laude (3.745-3.894 GPA)

***Summa Cum Laude (3.895-4.0 GPA)

+National Honor Society

^Exchange Students



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Students of the Month



March Students of the Month

Lauren Dahlquist is the daughter of Stephanie and Bill Dahlquist. She is a member of National Honor Society, Environmental Club, Interact, and Norse United. She is on the varsity volleyball, basketball, and softball teams. She loves to hang out with family and friends and is always up for a new adventure. Next fall, she plans to attend Michigan State University following the Pre-Veterinary program.

Isabella DeJonge is the daughter of Jason and Jessica DeJonge. She is a member of Choir, Orchestra, National Honor Society, Environmental Club, and Harmonics. She also swims and plays soccer. In her free time she enjoys spending time with friends and family, singing, and playing guitar. After graduation, Isabella plans to attend Calvin University on a Pre-Med track.



April Students of the Month

Owen Kitchka is the son of Jennifer and Patrick Kitchka. He is a member of National Honor Society, Environmental Club, Norse United, and a Student Representative on Student Council. Owen also plays on the Boys Varsity Golf team. In his free time, he enjoys hanging out with friends, playing basketball, and fishing. After Graduation, Owen plans to attend Michigan State University, where he will study psychology. He hopes to pursue a career as a School Psychologist.

Keira Staley is the daughter of Robert and Emily Staley. She is a member of Choir, National Honor Society, Environmental Club, Norse United, and Harmonics. She also participates in Varsity Competitive Cheer, Sideline Cheer, and Track and Field. In her spare time she loves going to the beach, running, baking, and spending time with her family and friends. After graduation, Keira plans to study at DePaul University on a Pre-PA track.





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State of Michigan Honors Norse Artist!



After being chosen as one of the winners of the NM Environmental Club's Earth Day poster winners, 4th Grader Sebastian Thompson's poster went on to win 1st place in the State of Michigan Earth Day Poster Contest! His poster is currently featured on the State of Michigan's website. Way to go Sebastian! Your artistic skill reminds us to take care of our beautiful Earth!