

# ALLENDALE PUBLIC SCHOOLS FALCONER NEWS

May 2025

[www.allendale.k12.mi.us](http://www.allendale.k12.mi.us)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**\*\*Please continue to check our website for the most up-to-date information on events taking place\*\***

- May 1 Collage Concert, 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM, Ceglarek Fine Arts Center
- May 2 No school, Young 5 – 12th Grade
- May 2 Prom, Allendale High School
- May 6 Election Day
- May 12-16 Middle School Art Show, 3:00 PM – 8:00 PM, Ceglarek Fine Arts Center
- May 12 Board of Education meeting, 6:00 PM, Oakwood Board Room
- May 13 Middle School Choir Concert, 6:30 PM, Ceglarek Fine Arts Center
- May 14 Seniors Last Day
- May 15 Middle School Band Concert, 7:00 PM, Ceglarek Fine Arts Center
- May 16 Middle School 8th Grade Award Ceremony, 6:00 PM, Ceglarek Fine Arts Center
- May 19 Senior Honors Convocation, 7:00 PM, Ceglarek Fine Arts Center
- May 21 ECC Fine Arts Show, 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM, Allendale Early Childhood Center
- May 21 Evergreen Ensembles, 7:00 PM, Ceglarek Fine Arts Center
- May 22 Graduation, 7:00 PM, Allendale High School
- May 26 No School, Young 5 – 12th Grade, Memorial Day



**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR ALLENDALE PUBLIC SCHOOL SENIORS!  
HAPPY GRADUATION SEASON!**



**VOTE VOTE VOTE**

**VOTE  
MAY 6, 2025**







## EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

- ▶ Security Enhancements
- ▶ HVAC Enhancements
- ▶ Accessible Playground Surfacing and ADA Equipment
- ▶ Parking Expansions
- ▶ Bus Pickup/Dropoff Expansion
- ▶ Building Expansions
  - ▶ New Classroom Wing
  - ▶ Kitchen/Dining Expansion
  - ▶ Main Office Expansion
  - ▶ Media Center Expansion
  - ▶ New Multi-Purpose Room



## EVERGREEN ELEMENTARY

- ▶ Security Enhancements
- ▶ Boiler/HVAC/Temp Controls Systems Upgrades
- ▶ Accessible Playground Surfacing and ADA Equipment
- ▶ Replace Shingled Roofing
- ▶ Replace Select Areas of Bus Loop and Entry Parking
- ▶ Renovate Second-Floor Boys' Bathrooms



## OAKWOOD INTERMEDIATE/ ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

- ▶ Security Enhancements
- ▶ HVAC/Controls Systems Upgrades
- ▶ Lighting Controls Replacement
- ▶ Replace Shingled Roof
- ▶ Replace Selected Parking Areas
- ▶ New Playground Surfacing and ADA Equipment



## MIDDLE SCHOOL

- ▶ Security Enhancements
- ▶ HVAC/Temp Controls Systems Upgrades
- ▶ New ADA Playground Equipment
- ▶ Lighting Controls Replacement
- ▶ Bus Loop and Parking Replacement
- ▶ New Soccer Bleachers, Concessions Service Counter and HVAC Equipment



## MULTI-PURPOSE FIELD HOUSE

- ▶ Year-round indoor space for educational, athletic, music and community programming
- ▶ Walking Track
- ▶ Turf All-Sports Field
- ▶ Collaboration Space
- ▶ Locker Room/Team Area
- ▶ Weight Training Room
- ▶ Storage
- ▶ New Parking Area



Scan for  
Bond  
Information



## HIGH SCHOOL

- ▶ Security Enhancements
- ▶ Cafeteria Renovation and Expansion
- ▶ Service Entry and Dock Expansion
- ▶ Food Lab Renovation
- ▶ Industrial Technology/Skilled Trades Addition
- ▶ Lighting Controls Update
- ▶ Galvanized Piping Replacement
- ▶ Industrial Arts Remodeled to Red Zone, Music and Concessions
- ▶ Exterior and Interior Door Replacements
- ▶ Boilers, HVAC and Control Systems Replacements
- ▶ Roofing Replacement
- ▶ Entry and Dining Outdoor Areas Remodeled



## CEGLAREK FINE ARTS CENTER

- ▶ Replace HVAC Cooling Systems
- ▶ Replace Dimmer Racks, Theatrical and House Lighting Systems
- ▶ Replace Life Safety Generator
- ▶ Parking Expansion
- ▶ Extend Snowmelt and Add Sidewalks
- ▶ Storage Area Expansion
- ▶ Add Maintenance Building



## STADIUM & FIELD PROJECTS

- ▶ Enhanced Football Stadium Entry
- ▶ New Concessions and Ticket Booth
- ▶ New Visitor and Home Team Rooms
- ▶ New Turf Football Field
- ▶ New Stadium Lights, Sound System and Scoreboard
- ▶ New Tennis/Pickleball Courts (10) and Parking Area
- ▶ New and/or Renovated Baseball and Softball Fields



## TRANSPORTATION/ MAINTENANCE

- ▶ Enhanced Security
- ▶ Office Renovation
- ▶ Fuel Pump Canopy
- ▶ Parking Lot Expansion

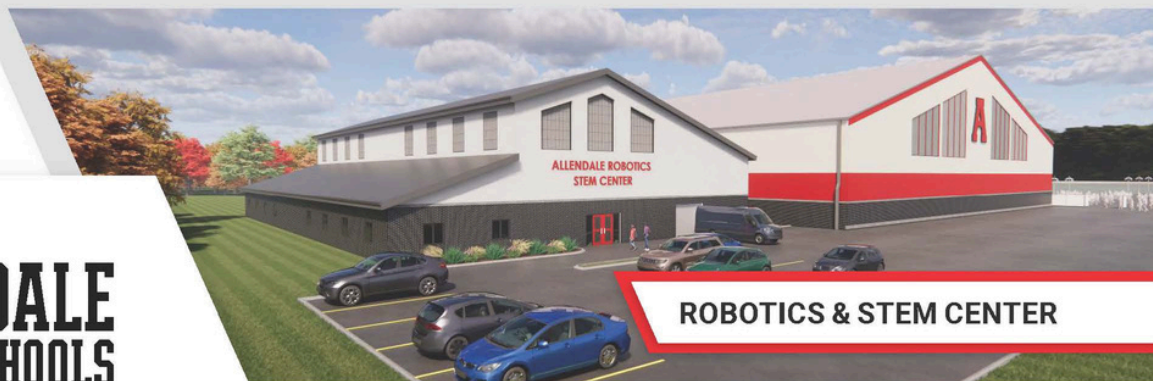


## ROBOTICS & STEM CENTER

- ▶ Innovative Space for Growing K-12 Robotics Team
- ▶ Storage
- ▶ Parking Lot
- ▶ Multi-Purpose Space for Hands-On Learning Opportunities for K-12 Students



**ALLENDALE  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



**ROBOTICS & STEM CENTER**

## High School Happenings

The Woodworking Technology II students recently finished their Adirondack Chair Manufacturing and Mass Production unit. The students took the raw material (lumber) and machined it to specifications, while focusing on quality throughout the process. They manufactured all the parts needed for the chairs and completed the pre-assembly of the leg and arm units. Next they used the assembly line process to Mass Produce the chairs. They met their goal of 40 chairs in 30 class periods and hit another goal of producing 10 chairs in a single class. Between set up and clean up, they produced a chair every 3 minutes to hit their 10 chair goal in one class period!

**A big shout out to these amazing students!  
We Are Allendale!!!**





## High School Happenings continued

**AHS Science Olympiad** is headed to the State competition! Great work to each and every one of you! Here are some specific shout-outs and placements:

Individual events we placed in are:

Astronomy – 3rd place – Zach Torno and Kenzie Bustraan

Codebusters – 3rd place – Zach Torno, Kylee Rowell, Sofia Lin

Ecology – 4th place – Andrew Kurmas, Jenna Smith

Entomology – 5th place – Megan Meindertsma, Chloe Thomsen

Experimental Design – 4th place – Jenna Smith, Sofia Lin, Chloe Thomsen

Forensics – 5th place – Grace Duchaine, Zach Torno

Geological Mapping – 4th place – Grace Duchaine, Zach Torno

Optics – 2nd place – Jenna Smith, Andrew Kurmas

Air Trajectory – 2nd place – Noah Venema, Noah Forslund

Robot Tour – 4th place – Rowan Francis, Logan Nelson



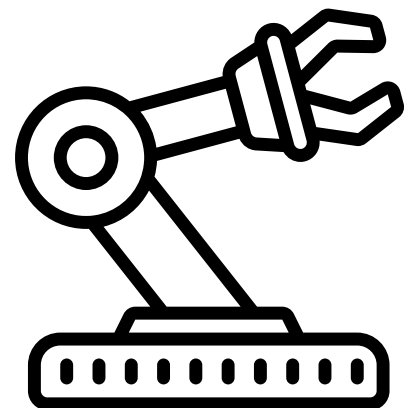
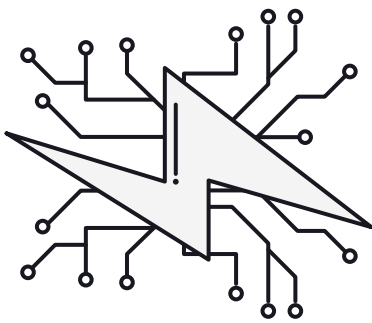
## High School Happenings continued

We have an amazing robotics program in our community that strives to take technology and innovation to the next level. **Allendale's robotics** program has recently grown to over 100 students within the K-12th grade teams. The elementary kids K-3rd build smaller robots and use vex 123 and vex go platforms. As they enter the next group vex IQ, the teams build bigger robots and start competing with other area teams. This age group did really well this year.

The high school team (TriSonics) got a weight limit of 115 pounds this year. The team designed machine parts, built, wired and programmed (autonomously and student-driven) all within 10 weeks time. They competed this year in Mt. Pleasant and won the Excellence in Engineering Award (which celebrates the team that demonstrates a professional approach to the design process) and then competed at GVSU and won the Quality Award (which celebrates machine robustness in concept and fabrication).

Allendale Robotics also has a business and marketing team. This is for the students who want to be a part of the group but are unsure of the other sub-teams. They created presentations, essays, talked to current and new sponsors, animation, newsletters and learned how to run a business. They are now also reaching out to many people in our community about volunteering.

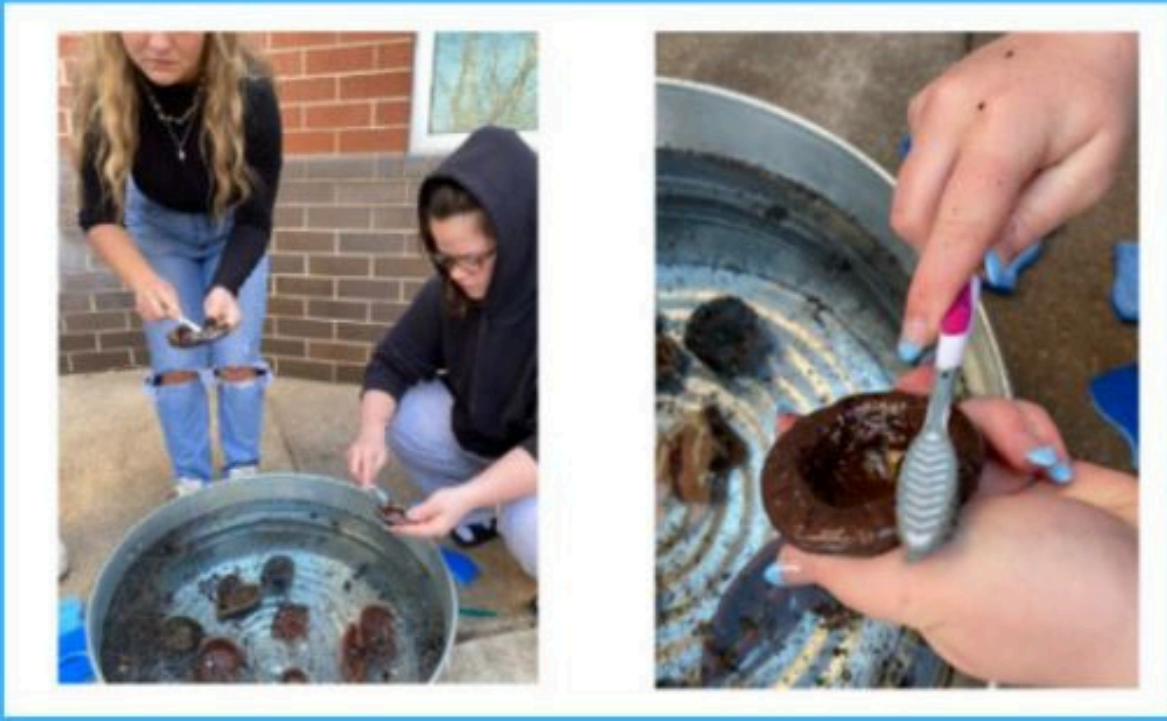
Allendale Robotics has a place for everyone. Much of their success is thanks to our sponsors, mentors and students who make this a great team. AcenTek is proud to support such a great program in our community!





## High School Happenings continued

# RAKU FIRING, 2025!



Raku firing was done in our art classes. This is a great, immersive experience our students are able to participate in thanks to Ms. Overmeyer! Great artistry to all involved, we have some very talented artists at AHS!

Raku firing is inspired by ancient Japanese methods and allows you to see the entire firing process from beginning to end.

Raku glazed ceramic ware is fired in the Raku Kiln, taken out when it is red hot, and put into a bin of combustibles (anything from sawdust, to newspaper, to horse hair, to feathers, etc). When the lid is placed on the bin it creates an oxygen reduction environment that causes amazing results.

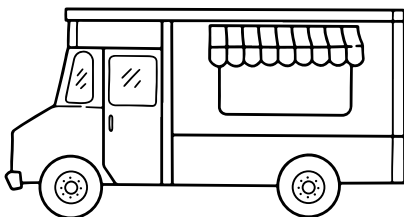
Students are able to see and create connections between concepts learned in chemistry, physics and art class.

## High School Happenings continued

Our Jazz band performed at the Jazz festival in Hastings and received a lot of very positive feedback! They were selected to perform in the Waldorf room which was a high honor!



Mrs. Harness' Health classes did a food truck rally! They made a signature dish and had to identify if their food met (or didn't meet) the dietary guidelines of MyPlate. Teachers and students visited each food truck and voted on which truck and food they thought was best. What a fun event showcasing our student's understanding of a balanced meal, while allowing them to showcase their creativity!





## Middle School Happenings

### Allendale Middle School Science Olympiad Team

Gibson and Alexandra - 1st place - Reach for the Stars

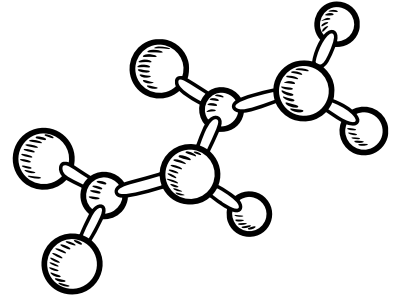
Caleb and Addy - 4th place - Air Trajectory

Zach and Ryan - 4th place - Microbe mission

Cole and Wesley H - 5th place - Potions and Poison

Addison, Violet, Ryland, and Alex - 3rd and 4<sup>th</sup> place in  
Meteorology, Experimental Design and Ecology

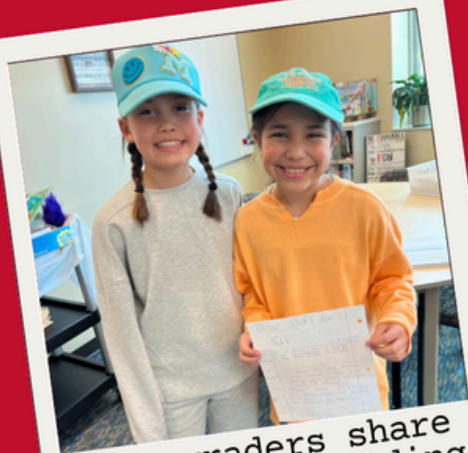
Landon and Caleb - 7th place - Scrambler



**Congratulations to the Science Olympiad Team on the MSU State Competition.  
Well Done, Team!**







4th graders share ideas for building improvements



'Lunch Bunch' with Mrs. Luban

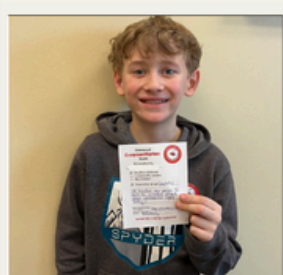


5th Grade Represented Well for 'Hat Day'



4th Grade Fine Arts Night was a HUGE success!

# Oakwood May '25



Communitarian



5th Grade Fine Arts Night was a Fantastic Evening!



Student Winners from the PTO ReAd Fundraiser



More Student Winners from the PTO!



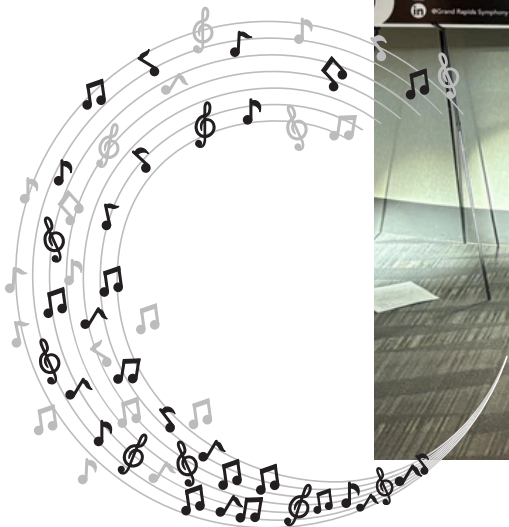
Tablets, Nintendo Switch, Books, Prizes, Etc.

# OAKWOOD: WE BELONG HERE



## Oakwood Happenings

On Friday, April 25 and Saturday, April 26, Xylophonix, the 4th and 5th grade barred percussion ensemble, played in the foyer prior to the Grand Rapids Symphony's Carmina Burana concerts. Both Carmina Burana and much of the music played by Xylophonix come from the composer Carl Orff. These were great opportunities for symphony goers to hear music Carl Orff created for children and the families of Xylophonix to experience music created by the same composer for professional musicians!





## Oakwood Happenings continued

### 5th Grade Playwrights Bring Big Ideas to the Stage

A group of advanced 5th grade creative writers took on the exciting challenge of answering the question: How can we, as playwrights, create a fun and meaningful play that teaches an important lesson to our classmates and will be performed by a cast of actors?

The students began their journey by going through a design thinking cycle. They created a “bug list” — a brainstorm of common challenges faced by 4th and 5th graders — and used those real-life issues as inspiration for the messages they wanted to convey in their plays. From there, they developed story mountains to map out their plots, pitched their ideas to their peers, and used dot voting to select the strongest concepts. Once the top ideas were chosen, students divided into teams and began writing their original plays. We also met with one of Mrs. Daly’s high school English classes to share our plays and get feedback.

In an exciting next step, we partnered with actors from the Grand Rapids Civic Theater. Through a virtual meeting, the students shared their scripts, discussed character roles, and collaborated with the actors to bring their stories to life. The project culminated in a live performance at the Fine Arts Center, where the plays were performed for an audience of 4th and 5th graders by both our student writers and the talented Civic Theater actors.

After the curtain closed, the actors generously stayed to answer questions and offer feedback, creating a powerful moment of mentorship and connection for our young playwrights. We are deeply grateful for the time and energy they shared with us, and proud of the creativity, empathy, and collaboration our students demonstrated throughout this project.





## Oakwood Happenings continued

### 5th Grade Designers Shine at First Annual West Michigan Design Challenge

This year, a group of creative and forward-thinking 5th graders, led by Anna Haveman and Sarah Lema, represented Oakwood Intermediate in the first annual West Michigan Design Challenge—an exciting opportunity to apply design thinking to a real-world issue and make a positive impact in our community.

Students were challenged to answer the driving question: *How can our team design a creative product that encourages everyone in our community to connect and enjoy public spaces respectfully and harmoniously?* We launched the project with a fall visit to the Kent ISD, where students learned more about the challenge and explored the technology fair for inspiration.

Back at school, we dove into the design cycle by identifying public spaces in our community that could be more welcoming and inclusive. The team chose to focus on the beach and took a field trip to Kirk Park, where they made observations, gathered ideas, and considered the needs of various stakeholders. With that knowledge in hand, students began brainstorming and developing their top concepts.

Our young designers split into teams to create prototypes of their best ideas. Along the way, they received invaluable support from local partners. We visited DeWys Manufacturing for a behind-the-scenes tour and shared our early prototypes with their lead designer for feedback. We also partnered with a design student from Kendall College of Art and Design, who helped bring the students' visions to life by creating professional renderings of their projects for display.

Among the innovative ideas presented were the *Dog Bot*, a beachgoers best friend that delivers snacks, drinks, and helps facilitate signing up for group games; the *Everything Vending Machine*, stocked with essentials for a great day in the sun including items for dog owners and a fun "leash match" challenge; and the *All-Terrain Monster Buggy*, designed to allow visitors to rent remote control monster buggies and participate in challenges that pair people together into teams.

The project culminated in a showcase at the Grand Rapids Art Museum, where students presented their prototypes, posters, and pitches to a panel of judges. We are incredibly proud of our 5th grade designers, who spoke with confidence to share their creative designs. A special congratulations goes out to the *All-Terrain Monster Buggy* team, who earned 1st place in the competition!

We can't wait to see how these future innovators continue to make waves in the world.

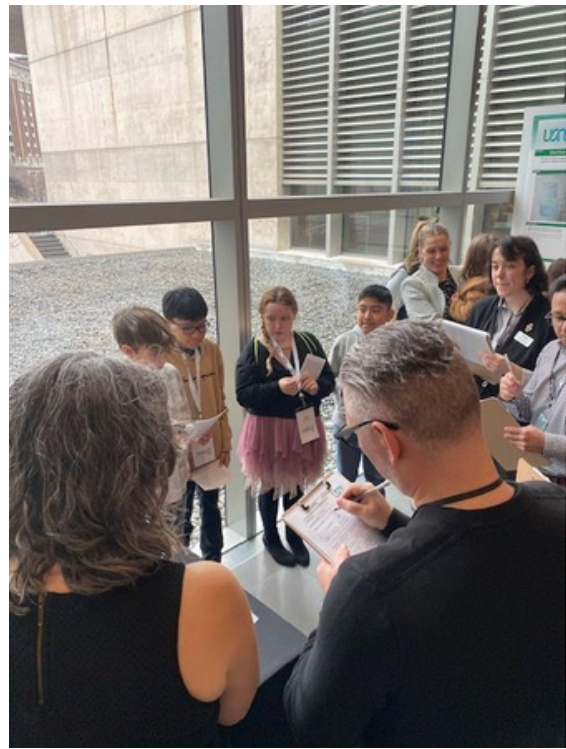
## 5th Grade Designers Shine continued



Nick DeVowe and Tucker Zeller being interviewed for the video production of the design competition.



Everything Vending Machine, Dogbot and All Terrain Monster Buggy teams pitching their ideas to the judges.





## 5th Grade Designers Shine continued

Dogbot and Everything Vending Machine team pitching their idea to the judges.



All Terrain Monster Buggy earned 1<sup>st</sup> place

The medals were very unique and special because they were designed by a Kendall College student and made of real metal!



# APS STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

## Special Education



**Theresa Florian**

Occupational Therapist

- Mrs. Florian has been with APS 10 years.
- Mrs. Florian is a wealth of knowledge. She has worked at Allendale as an Occupational Therapist for 10 years and has supported many students in making progress, meeting goals, increasing independence, and reaching their potential. Mrs. Florian works very well with students and has the skillset to support a wide range of student needs. Mrs. Florian is also excellent at working with parents. She is very respectful and supportive. We are fortunate to have Mrs. Florian on our SE team!
- Mrs. Florian enjoys traveling with her husband, Patrick, to many National Parks! They both rode their bicycles up the Going to the Sun Road in Glacier National Park!



# APS STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

## **Special Education**



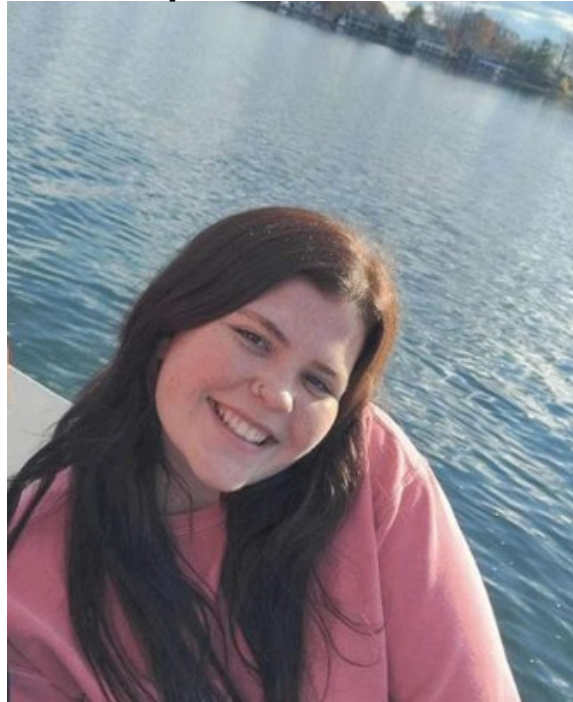
**Shilah Fewless**

Occupational Therapy Assistant

- Mrs. Fewless has been with APS 3 years.
- Mrs. Fewless does a great job connecting with and building a positive relationship with students. She is always positive, upbeat and makes learning fun. The therapy Mrs. Fewless provides is engaging. Students really enjoy working with her and learning from her. It is very impressive to see how well Mrs. Fewless works with the students and how great of a relationship she has with them. Mrs. Fewless is also very versatile. She works with multiple buildings in district as well as Allendale Christian School. She is appreciated in all buildings for the work she does plus the support she provides to both students and staff.
- Mrs. Fewless comes from a large family (she has 5 brothers) and she has 5 kids of her own. Her family lives on a small hobby farm. In her free time she enjoys watching her kids play sports, cooking, having big family dinners and traveling with family and friends.

# APS STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

## **Special Education**



**Teyha Sowers**

Paraprofessional

- Ms. Sowers has been with APS for 3 years.
- Ms. Sowers is awesome! She is a hard worker and is always working to support the students in the classroom. She is patient, caring, and dedicated. She is also knowledgeable of the students and has a great rapport with them. Her hard work and dedication have contributed to student success. Ms. Sowers is also a great co-worker and team member. She is greatly respected by the staff she works with. Ms. Sowers is a vital part of the ASD program's success at Oakwood and is greatly appreciated.
- Ms. Sowers applied for this job when she was 17.



# APS STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

## Jodi Wood

- Mrs. Wood is the Associate Teacher in the GSRP Caterpillar classroom. She has been with APS for 2 years starting off as a lunch aide.
- Mrs. Wood treats all of her students like her own children. She loves bringing humor, positivity and compassion to all of her students. She thrives on seeing all of the progress her students make from the start of school to the end of it. She loves being part of their first school experience and watching them grow so much while they are in her class!
- Mrs. Wood has been married for 14 years. She has three children that attend APS and a chocolate lab that is like her fourth child. In her free time she enjoys being with her family, going to the beach, visiting family in Chicago, and also napping.

## Ashley Kurti

- Ms. Kurti is the lead teacher in the GSRP Caterpillar classroom. She has been with APS for almost 2 years.
- Prior to joining APS, Ms. Kurti taught preschool in a private child care facility for 16 years. She brings warmth, patience, and a big heart to her classroom everyday. Her devotion to her students and their families is undeniable. She will do everything she can to help each one of her students be successful in preschool and ready for young 5's or Kindergarten. One of Ms. Kurti's favorite things about being a preschool teacher is seeing that "aha" moment on a student's face when they understand something new for the first time.
- In her free-time, Ms. Kurti enjoys spending time relaxing at home with her family and dogs. She loves traveling, anywhere and everywhere, but most vacations are spent in the Upper Peninsula looking for agates.

## Preschool



## Lisa VanderMolen

- Mrs. VanderMolen has been part of the Allendale GSRP team for 4 years. She has made a lasting impact on the kids, families, and staff she works with.
- When you see Lisa in action, it's clear just how much she loves her students — she is truly one of the most loving and nurturing people you'll ever meet. The kids are naturally drawn to her warm heart and joyful spirit. She gives them endless care, patience, and encouragement every day. Mrs. VanderMolen also brings a wonderful sense of humor and positivity to her team. She works hard, lifts others up, and makes every day a little brighter with her laughter and kindness.
- Outside of the classroom, you'll likely find Mrs. VanderMolen wherever there's spicy food — she's always up for trying something new and flavorful! She loves spending time with her family and friends, cooking, and making memories outdoors in the summer through walking, quad riding, and kayaking up north. We are so lucky to have Mrs. VanderMolen as part of our GSRP family!



# APS STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

## Early Childhood Center



**Stephanie Sischo, Nicole Utter, April Johnson**  
Cafeteria Cooks

- Ms. Nicole, Ms. Stephanie, and Ms. April make up our fantastic cooking team here at the AECC. These ladies work hard to ensure that the students of the AECC never have hungry bellies, as they serve up the yummiest lunches around! They work as a tremendous team. Making sure our students are given nutritious and healthy breakfasts and lunches on a daily basis. We are beyond blessed to have such amazing cooks here at the AECC!

# APS STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

## Evergreen Elementary



**Marla Chapin**

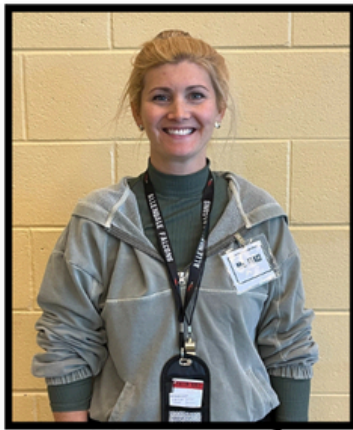
3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher

- Mrs. Chapin has been with APS 21 years.
- Mrs. Chapin has been a strong member of the APS teaching staff over her career. She provides excellent instruction in the classroom and also has found ways to contribute to the district as a teacher-leader as a Chairperson of the Elementary Science Department. Mrs. Chapin has a big heart for her students and loves to be an encouragement to them. An example of this is Mrs. Chapin's practice of yearly attending APS's senior graduation where she enjoys celebrating an important milestone with her former students.
- A fun fact about Mrs. Chapin is that in the 21 years Mrs. Chapin has been a 3rd grade teacher, she has been in the same classroom for 19 of them.





**Ms. Julie**



**Ms. Staci**



**Ms. Karen**



**Ms. Kelly**



**Ms. Sara**



**Ms. Leah**



**Ms. Nicole**



**Ms. Lindsey**



**May 2<sup>nd</sup> is Lunch/Recess  
Staff Appreciation Day.  
We ❤️ our lunch/recess staff  
at Oakwood!**

**SCHOOL LUNCH  
HERO DAY**



**Ms. Elise**



**Ms. Sarah**



**Mr. Roger**



**Ms. Noelle**



**Ms. Kris**



**No image  
available for:  
Ms. Jennifer  
Ms. Sam**



# APS STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

## Middle School



**Shawn McMaster**

Technology Teacher

- Mr. McMaster has been with APS for 29 years.
- Congratulations to Mr. McMaster, our Teacher of the Month! Mr. McMaster teaches all of our tech courses to grades 6th - 8th. He works hard daily to create curriculum that is fun and engaging for all students, often making alternative curriculum for students in unique situations. He has created Shark Tank competitions, partnered with Spring Lake Museum where his students created digital representations of different museum artifacts and presented them in the museum where they stayed to enhance visitor experiences. He created interactive educational apps for elementary aged Allendale students, and much more! In addition to all of the hard work he does for our students, he's also available to help our staff whenever needed, often giving up his room to classes who need the space and technology for presentations. Mr. McMaster is the definition of team player and hard work. Thank you, Mr. McMaster, for all of your hard work and commitment to our staff and students!
- In his spare time, Mr. McMaster travels around the tri-state area training teachers for Code.org. He also worked with the state to create a new middle school video game design competition called, Code and Conquer. By the way, he has an amazing wife and 3 awesome kids (including twins) who are his world.



# APS STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

## High School



**Jason Detter**

Math Teacher

- Mr. Detter has been with APS for 10.
- Students chimed in to recognize Mr. Detter. Here is what they had to say:
  - He was a GREAT coach last year!
  - He's funny.
  - He's REALLY good at explaining things - when someone doesn't understand he can explain it again in many different ways.
  - He gives you adequate time to do your work.
  - He's chill.
  - He explains difficult concepts really well.
  - He takes time out of his lunch to help students.
  - He is a great person to talk to - he can literally talk about anything and everything.
  - That is why Jason Detter is the staff member of the month.