

2009 Annual Report



The mission of Van Buren Public Schools is to educate children, youth and adults for full participation in a rapidly changing society and to build and maintain a learning community that improves the quality of life.

Located at the western edge of Wayne County with a small portion extending into Washtenaw County, the district's geographic center is located in the City of Belleville, nestled around beautiful Belleville Lake. The district's seventy-four square miles encompass the City of Belleville, Sumpter and Van Buren Townships, and portions of both Canton and Ypsilanti Townships.

Since the first school building opened in 1827—a hand-hewn log cabin with an open fireplace—the residents of the district have shown strong support for education. Today, Van Buren Public Schools is comprised of six elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school, an alternative high school and an early childhood development center. The building and staff operate under the direction of a seven-member elected Board of Education. The Board meets on the second and fourth Mondays of each month to set goals and establish policies for the district, emphasizing quality education for every student.

2008-2009 Enrollment

Van Buren Public Schools serves approximately 5,750 students in grades pre-kindergarten through twelve, plus an additional 200 students that are enrolled in its Alternative Education Program.

District Employees

The Superintendent is Thomas W. Riutta, who is assisted by a Director of Personnel, Director of Instruction, and Director of Business. There are fifteen school administrators and five program supervisors. The District employs 393 certified staff members, including school psychologists, school social workers, learning specialists, speech and language therapists, resource classroom teachers, and homebound/hospitalized service staff. A total of 750 people work for the district.

Accreditation

Accreditation is a process whereby staff, district personnel, and the Board of Education collaborate to maintain a set of preconditions or standards identified as necessary for quality education. These standards are identified by an external source, such as the North Central Association and by the State of Michigan. All Van Buren Public Schools are accredited by the North Central Association except the Alternative Education Program which was initiated in the Fall 2005. The 2008 Michigan School Report Card Composite Grade is available in the annual report of each school. The district did meet AYP in mathematics and English Language Arts.

Core Curriculum

The core curriculum of the Van Buren Public Schools provides learning experiences in all areas of language arts (reading, writing, speaking, listening, spelling, and handwriting), mathematics, science, world studies, arts, physical education and health, technology, career and employability skills, life and personal management, and aesthetic and cultural awareness. In addition to a well-rounded curriculum, our students enjoy a full complement of extracurricular and athletic activities.

The district has developed and implemented a core curriculum guided by the Michigan State Model Core Curriculum Standards and Benchmarks in the following areas: K-12 Language Arts, K-12 Mathematics, K-12 Physical and Health Education, K-12 Arts, K-12 Social Studies, Foreign Language, Life Management, Career and Employability, and K-12 Technology. In 2005, the Board of Education approved a new K-12 mathematics curriculum aligned with the Michigan Curriculum Framework Standards and Benchmarks and the Grade Level Content Expectations. The English Language Arts Curriculum was board approved during the summer of 2006.

Parent Involvement Crucial to Success

One of the most important factors in a child's success in school is the involvement of parents and guardians in the educational process. The district is fortunate to have active parent involvement. During the 2008-2009 school year, 90% of parents attended parent-teacher conferences at the elementary schools, 40% attended conferences at the middle schools, and 21% attended at the high school. Each building's Open House attendance was commendable and PTO membership at each building is increasing. As indicated in each building's Annual Report, parents participate in a wide variety of school activities throughout the school year.

Students Served by Specialized Programs

In addition to the regular K-12 program, the school district provides educational alternatives and opportunities for its students, including special education needs. Academically gifted students are transported to the district's Gifted and Talented classrooms housed at Tyler Elementary School for grades one through five and to North Middle School for grades six through eight. Students become eligible for this program through a specific nomination and assessment process with the final decision for participation in the program being made by the student's parents. Our Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC) offers Pre-primary Impaired, Autism, Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) and Tuition Pre-School programs. Also, the district participates in a Vocational Education Consortium with Romulus Community Schools. Students in grades eleven and twelve that have an interest in taking vocational education courses not available in their own district are transported by school bus to the district where the program of interest is being taught. The Romulus/Van Buren Adult Education program provides education, training, and high school completion services for the adults in both communities.

School Improvement Planning Teams

Members of the School Improvement Planning Team are as follows:

Edgemont Elementary: Nancy Bateman, Jan Ley, Karen Mida, Kari Montgomery, and Anita Norman

Elwell Elementary: Cathy Alter, Linda Clayton, Cherie Gilmore-Forczak, Eva Harris, Elise Harrison, Dominick Maniaci, and Kimberly Nofz

Haggerty Elementary: Jill Atchley, Jill Binert, Brenda Keele, Mary Lou Bell, Candace Myshock, Aleisa Pitt, Pat Reavis, Christine Roperti, Kelley Villa, and Karen White-Twigg

Rawsonville Elementary: S. Carol Brown, JoLynn DeBuysscher, Susan Farber, Becky Gajda, Kahlia Kaigler, Deb Mounsey, Cindy Neubauer, Lori Spangler, and Mary Ellen Vago

Savage Elementary: Lauren Altenbernt, Pam Bradley, Michelle Briegel, Sarah Emerson, Angela Harding, John Harding, Teresa Kuehnel, Kathy Nofs, Sharon Peltier, Pam Ray, Becky Tennis, and Kristine Stasiak

Tyler Elementary: Jeremy Abbott, Tonia Bos, Kim Dybicki, Virginia Falk, Scott Hunwick, Kaleena Jedinak, Lindsay Pawlowski, Lisa Preuss, and Barb Santo,

North Middle: William Cline, Sarah Igonin, Susan Kennedy, Angie Larson, Timothy Miller, Stephanie Mull, Pam O'Neill, Tonya Porzondek, Todd Stehle, Ron Stokes, and Dianne Tilson

South Middle: Erin Baker, Michelle Baker-Herring, Debbie Gerst, Sue Kapcia, Jeff Moore, John Thompson, Bonnie Stamm, Michelle Wagner, and Marie Whybark

Belleville High: Stacey Buhro, Deb Cooper, Matt Davenport, Marcus Hosman, Rachel Jager, Karen Johnston, Laurie Lintner, Erin Radtka, Carl Shultz

Alternative Education: Bernice Ball, Saul Davis, Walter Power, April Rolph, William Spinks, and Michael Schwartz

District: Robert Binert, Brooke Ballee, Tom Fielder, Paul Henning, Michelle Herring, Linda Olson, David Peer, Priscilla Rice, Karen Sanders, Barb Santo, Carl Shultz, Dianne Tilson, Peggy Voigt

In compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title II of the Americans with Disability Act of 1990, and Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act of 1977, it is the policy of the Van Buren Public Schools District that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, gender, age, disability, height, weight, or marital status be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to, discrimination during any program, activity, service or in employment. Should you need to contact someone about discrimination of any kind in the school district, contact the Director of Personnel at 555 West Columbia Avenue, Belleville, MI 48111 or (734)697-9123, ext. 211.

Staff Members Build Skills

In order to ensure a well-trained staff that understands the importance of learning for teaching, 94% of the district's total instructional staff of 400 persons spent approximately 9,000 "person hours" participating in professional staff development activities. A detailed listing of specific activities is included in each school's Annual Report. These inservice activities are designed to assist individual teachers in enhancing their skills and understanding to better meet the needs of their students.

Points of Pride

1. District schools are proud of their partnerships with area businesses - Visteon, Meijer, Walmart, Clark Gas, IBM, Cisco, ExxonMobil, Best Buy, and the Salvation Army.
2. Operation Warm raised over \$5,000 in donations from businesses and community members to purchase winter coats for those students who had none.
3. The 4th Annual Parent Involvement Expo drew hundreds of parents and teaching professionals in community. This year's topic was bullying in the schools and how to prevent it.
4. The 3rd Annual Help Unity Grow (H.U.G.) event drew over a thousand participants that came out for a fund-raising breakfast, hold hands around Belleville High School, and participate in school beautification projects.
5. The Van Buren Public Schools Education Foundation awarded \$16,000 in mini-grants to schools throughout the district supporting the education of our students.
6. The Van Buren Civic Fund awarded nearly \$12,000 in grants to North Middle School and Savage Elementary School for technology and playground equipment.
7. The Belleville High School construction and renovation bond for \$79 million passed in the November 2008 election. Planning for the construction and renovation of Belleville High School continued on schedule and under budget throughout the school year.
8. Katherine Sabharwal, an eighth grade student at North Middle School, has been named a local winner in the 37th annual *America and Me Essay Contest*, sponsored by Farm Bureau Insurance.
9. The District in Partnership with the Salvation Army participated in the Back to School Blitz. The donations exceeded last year's numbers and more than 103 students were helped with school supplies, a back pack, and a gift card to go to Payless to get new shoes..
10. One of our most exciting and important additions to this school year is the Honeywell Instant Alert® for Schools. This system is an essential tool for notification and communication. Within minutes of an emergency, school officials can use Instant Alert to deliver a single, clear message to the students' parents or guardians by telephone, cell phone, email, pager, or PDA in any combination.
11. Summer education programs were held in all of the schools within Van Buren Public Schools District to great success. These were not mandatory classes, but were offered to students that could use the extra help to boost their educational experience. The Extended School was a no-nonsense program that included prompt and regular attendance, hard work, and proper behavior.
12. Dyllan Rafail, a 12-year-old 6th grader at South Middle School, had his book published entitled *Super Senses: A child's description of the rewards and challenges of living with Autism/Aspergers*. The first book signing was held at Edgemont Elementary School to great success.

Test Results

Several procedures are utilized to measure and report student progress and achievement. Developmental progress is recorded in portfolios of student work that contain writing samples, records of books read and other special projects. Report cards, teacher observations, standardized test results and teacher-made evaluations are examples of other assessment measures used. A historical perspective of district students' success on standardized tests is also included on this page and the following page.

MEAP Scores by Grade Level					
Additional disaggregated test data is on file at the school building and on the district web site at www.resa.net/vanburen					
	2007-08	2008-09		2007-08	2008-09
Grade 3			Grade 6		
Reading	82	84	Reading	72	75
Writing	46	59	Writing	64	68
ELA (reading and writing)	76	80	ELA (reading and writing)	69	73
Math	90	92	Math	60	77
			Social Studies	67	65
Grade 4			Grade 7		
Reading	81	76	Reading	59	77
Writing	34	39	Writing	67	72
ELA (reading and writing)	72	68	ELA (reading and writing)	62	75
Math	76	86	Math	56	78
Grade 5			Grade 8		
Reading	80	76	Reading	73	65
Writing	57	59	Writing	64	69
ELA (reading and writing)	75	73	ELA (reading and writing)	67	68
Math	67	69	Math	62	66
Science	81	83	Science	71	64

High School Grade Test Results

	2007-08	2008-09		2007-08	2008-09
Grade 9			Grade 11		
Social Studies	78	72	Reading	62	
			Writing	39	
			ELA (reading and writing)	50	54.18
			Math	32	36.99
			Science	42	47.49
			Social Studies	79	79.57

Advanced Placement Classes College Equivalent Exams and Post-Secondary Classes

		Number	Percentage (%) of Class
2005-06	Students enrolled in postsecondary courses	28	.01%
	AP level courses offered at BHS	6	N/A
	Students enrolled in AP level courses at BHS		
	11th Grade	63	16%
	12th Grade	152	38%
2004-05	Students in AP courses taking college equivalent credit exams	74	Percentage (%) of Enrolled Students 39%

Challenges We Face

To continually refine the K-12 Core Curriculum to ensure that the needs of all students are met.

To continually improve and evaluate the learning process so that all students have an opportunity to succeed to the best of their abilities.

To plan effectively to meet the needs identified by our facilities report.

To maintain the resources we have committed to meet the needs of the "at-risk" students.

To obtain the resources necessary to support a comprehensive professional staff development program, which is crucial to updating the professional knowledge and refining the instructional skills of staff.

To expand the quality of technology education, especially computer education, for all children.

To develop an innovative approach to vocational education, which will offer students career opportunities through apprenticeships and other partnerships with community business.

To continue to encourage and welcome community involvement in the schools.

To strengthen the relationship and dialogue between all members of the district and the community as they collectively determine the future of the schools, and thus, the children.

To improve and strengthen our Alternative Education Program.

Highly Qualified Staff

One hundred percent of the teaching staff at Van Buren Public Schools are highly qualified or currently progressing towards being highly qualified by the end of the 2008/2009 school year. Only one percent of the total district teaching staff is teaching with an emergency certificate in the area of special education. Based on federal standards and definitions, all Van Buren Public Schools receive Title I support with the exception of the alternative education program.