

DISTRICT NEWS

District News is published for the residents of the School District of the City of Pontiac • Winter 2002-03

Students add dimension to their futures: Building Trades Program

Years ago, one space at Pontiac Northern High School accommodated woodshop class and Driver's Education, and also served as a car storage for an auto mechanics class. Today, that same space houses the school district's innovative Building Trades program.

"We are very excited to offer this special program to our students," said Mr. Ezra Sloan, Director of Career and Technical Education, "The school district researched several, available programs and found this one to best fit our curriculum and the needs of our students." Questech, which is a Farmington Hills, Michigan-based company that designs pre-apprenticeship programs for middle and high school students, created the Building Trades program. Questech partners with the National Center for Construction Education & Research (NCCER), which offers trade programs with nationally recognized credentials.

The school district's Building Trades program requires a one-year commitment from registered students for one full credit hour toward high school graduation. According to Mr. Sloan, 25% of the class work requires that students read course-related material from a curriculum binder, produce written work, and pass a comprehensive exam; while 75% of the Building Trades program involves hands-on activities. Students spend three to five days at individual workstations, where they perform actual job tasks using full-sized, professional tools. Each student rotates through a series of construction trade modules and applies principles acquired from reading and direction from the course teacher, Mr. Larry



Mullen, on subjects such as electrical wiring, plumbing, bricklaying, carpentry, and drywall installation.

"There's a lot to remember," said Mr. Mullen. "Each workstation has a mounted tape recorder with audio instructions for each trade subject." The audiotapes assist students in curriculum comprehension by shadowing the course manuals word-for-word.

Although classes take place exclusively on the Pontiac Northern High School campus in a two-hour block, the school district offers the program to all students enrolled in, both, regular and special education programs from both high schools. Pontiac Central High School students schedule the program in a three-hour block to include roundtrip travel time. According to Mr. Sloan, students who live in the Pontiac Central area also have the option of selecting Pontiac Northern as their "school of choice," which means that students can literally switch school campuses to complete their high school degrees.

The School District welcomed the return of the Building Trades program, which was once offered to students through the Northeast Vocational Center.

When the center relocated to Clarkston in 1999, the school district was unable to offer the program to students due to the impractical commute. However, the School District of the City of Pontiac decided to adopt the program this year after fiscally sound decision making during the 2001-02 school year resulted in an \$11.4 million fund balance for the school district.



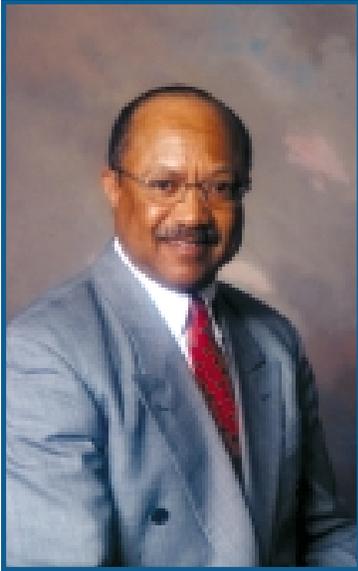
"It was our objective to bring back this and other important programs to the school district," commented Dr. Walter L. Burt, Pontiac Schools Superintendent. "This type of course offering is in alignment with the school district's philosophy of creating a certainty of opportunity for all Pontiac school district graduates. Our intention is to ensure that our students' curricular experiences prepare them for a future commitment to the workforce."

"When I graduate I want to do something in construction trades. There's good money in it," commented Pontiac Northern senior Oliver Gibson. "It's easy to do, and it's fun." According to Mr. Mullen, however, the skills only come easy to those who are committed to the program and who are serious about learning.

"This is a good group," Mr. Mullen added. "Attendance is pretty good in this class. Students can really see the benefits of their training in here and they want to come."

When asked if he would recommend the Building Trades program, senior Oliver Gibson said with enthusiasm, "Oh, yeah. I've already told a lot of my friends about it."

From the desk of the Superintendent
Walter L. Burt, Ph.D.



Building Project Update – Schools Tour

In December, Dr. Walter L. Burt, Pontiac Schools Superintendent, hosted thirty members of the Bowens Senior Citizens Center on a Schools Tour. The group visited Longfellow Elementary School, Jefferson Middle School, and Pontiac Central High School. Each of the schools' principals took the visitors through the buildings and explained the strengths and weaknesses of the structures, and how the current physical state of the facilities affects student achievement.

Dr. Burt hosted the Bowens group on a second fieldtrip in January to the Lake Orion School District, to visit newly constructed schools. As a result of rebuilding with a modern design, Orion Oaks Elementary School, which mirrors the Pontiac School District in student-teacher ratio (28:1), offers a Neighborhood concept curriculum, which allows students to work effectively in several common area spaces where students can work on computers, written assignments or in small learning groups, with more independence.



Mrs. Phyllis Hayes, from Bowens, said that the fieldtrip could have been improved by having more people go on the trip. However, she believes the best part of the tour was “being with other people interested in improving our schools.”

When asked to identify the most valuable part of the Lake Orion School District fieldtrip, Mrs. Betty Richburg, also from Bowens, commented: “. . . that you got to see how behind our schools are . . . behind in everything.”

The Pontiac School District has planned a series of events designed to educate the community on the need for facility improvements, which include additional visits to other school districts to benchmark new facilities and to further research programs that support the alignment between

curriculum delivery and building resources.

Twain Elementary teams with NuSoft Solutions

In November, Twain Elementary School launched an educational partnership with NuSoft Solutions, Inc., a Bloomfield Hills-based, technology services company. NuSoft implemented Junior Achievement's new "Adopt a Whole School" program at Twain Elementary, which encourages corporations to sponsor a school and provide employee volunteers who each teach a one-hour class per week for at least five weeks.

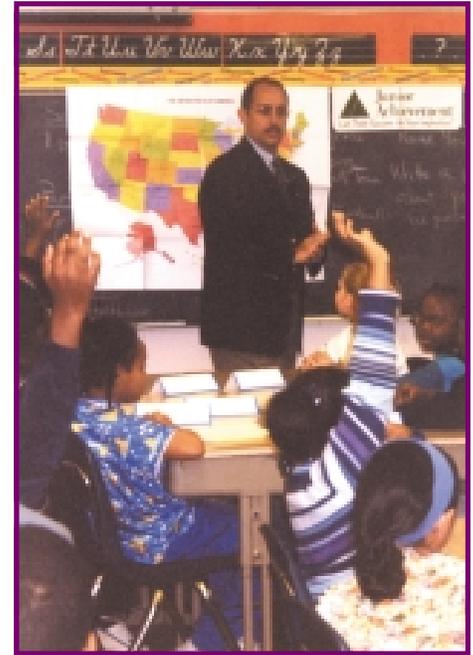
"NuSoft Solutions is proud to serve the children of Pontiac as mentors and educators," said Mr. Dale Mansour, President of NuSoft Solutions, who volunteers in Ms. Cynthia Rush's class of 4th graders teaching the value of human and natural resources in the economic system. "Our adoption of Twain Elementary is part of our ongoing commitment to maintain a positive impact on neighboring communities." NuSoft's contributions include classroom instruction, program materials, and volunteer training.

Mr. Mansour, along with 10 NuSoft employee volunteers present Junior Achievement lessons in personal financial literacy and free enterprise to more than 250 Twain students in Kindergarten through fifth grade. Junior Achievement is an organization dedicated to educating young

people about business, economics and free enterprise, with programs reaching more than four million students nationwide.

"The experience and commitment that these people bring to the classroom is terrific. They offer students a unique insight into business and economics," said Ms. Roselyn Northcross, Principal at Twain Elementary School. "Early education on the basics of economics and entrepreneurship is an important piece of the puzzle for our kids, and it works best when the community is willing to put forth an investment to make it happen."

Twain Elementary School serves about 380 students from the neighborhood just northeast of downtown Pontiac. This year, the school initiated Preschool classes as part of the Michigan Schools Readiness Program. Twain Elementary Parents and community participate in school life through book fairs, family-oriented workshops, Earth Day cleanups, and other special activities. The school offers an extended-day program, including homework help, special math instruction, and enrichment activities. Twain Elementary actively partners with businesses and other organizations such as



Dale Mansour, president of NuSoft Solutions volunteers with 10 other employees at Twain Elementary School. The partnership is part of Junior Achievement.

NuSoft Solutions and Junior Achievement of Southeastern Michigan on special projects that promote student achievement.

Jefferson/Whittier partners with GE

In December, GE Fund, the philanthropic foundation of the General Electric Company, awarded a \$250,000 grant to Jefferson/Whittier Middle School to extend the "College Bound" program, which is designed to significantly increase the number of students who pursue secondary education. The grant provides the middle school, which has 623 students in grades 6th-8th, with \$50,000 annually for five consecutive years.

College Bound is the GE Fund's 15-year, \$30 million initiative to encourage students at selected schools in GE communities around the country to graduate from college. The program supports a combination of professional development, curriculum enhancement, student enrichment activities, and GE employee and retiree volunteers in the schools.

A 1999 evaluation, conducted by a team from Brandeis University, found that College Bound graduates, compared to students nationally, were more likely to go to college; more likely to go to a four-year college; and more likely to remain in college.

"We are committed to helping our students experience that type of success," said Dr. Walter L. Burt, superintendent of the City of Pontiac School District. "This program provides the framework around which we can build these students' futures."

The real strength of the program goes far beyond what happens within the classroom, according to Jefferson/Whittier Principal Arlee Ewing. "This grant is important to me because it indicates that someone in the private sector is taking an interest in our students. They are saying, 'Yes, you are college material. Yes, you can

do this. Yes, we believe in you.' That is a powerful message for these kids to hear," she said.

And while the monetary value of the grant will go a long way toward enhancing the curriculum and helping students make solid life choices, the time donated by the GE volunteers has the most value, according to Ms. Ewing. "One of the first questions I had for (GE representatives) was: 'Are you in this for the long haul.' But we've been working with them for several years now and this truly is a partnership. They aren't here because they have to be; they are here because they want to be. And the students know that. That is what makes this program work."

Good Advice From Your School Nurse When should you keep your child home from school?

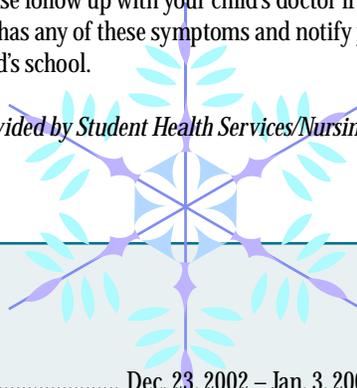
Cold and flu season is upon us. In an effort to keep your child as healthy as possible, and to minimize the passing of illnesses from one student to another, please keep your child at home if she or he has any of the following symptoms:

- ✓ Red, runny or itchy eyes
- ✓ Yellow or green discharge from the nose
- ✓ Coughing up yellow, green or blood tinged mucous
- ✓ Cough not related to allergies lasting more than 2-3 days
- ✓ Red, swollen, draining sores or crusting on the scalp, face or body
- ✓ Any skin rash that has not been seen by the doctor

- ✓ Sore throat
- ✓ Swollen or tender glands on the face neck or body
- ✓ Fever
- ✓ Nausea and vomiting
- ✓ Pain and stiffness in the neck and/or headache
- ✓ Jaundice – yellowing of the eyes and/or skin
- ✓ Diarrhea (more than five watery stools in a 24 hour period) and /or ongoing abdominal pain

Please follow up with your child's doctor if he or she has any of these symptoms and notify your child's school.

Provided by Student Health Services/Nursing



K-12 Academic Calendar January – March 2003

Winter Break – No school – students/teachers	Dec. 23, 2002 – Jan. 3, 2003
Students & teachers return	January 6, 2003 (M)
Middle Schools – 9:50 a.m. report	January 14, 2003 (T)
MLK Day – No school – students/teachers	January 20, 2003 (M)
End of first semester	January 23, 2003 (Th)
No school - all students	January 24, 2003 (F)
First day of second semester	January 27, 2003 (M)
Middle Schools – 9:50 a.m. report	February 4, 2003 (T)
Half-day - all students	February 19, 2003 (W)
Mid-Winter Break – No school - students/teachers	February 24-28, 2003 (M-F)
Middle Schools – 9:50 a.m. report	March 4, 2003 (T)
Half-day - all students	March 12, 2003 (W)
Middle Schools – 9:50 a.m. report	March 18, 2003 (T)
High School PT Conferences/Half-day - HS students	March 26, 2003 (W)

Our Mission

in partnership with students, parents, and community, is to create a learning/teaching environment that ensures quality and equity for all children to succeed.

Pontiac School Board, 2002-2003

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Notice of Non-Discrimination

The Pontiac School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, height, weight, marital status, or disability in its programs and activities. The following office has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, 47200 Woodward Avenue, Pontiac, MI 48340 248.451.6860.

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DISTRICT NEWS

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School Closing Information

For a list of school closings due to weather, tune into the following media outlets:

- WDIV/TV 4
- WKBD UPN50
- FOX 2 News
- WJLB-FM 98
- WPON-AM 1460
- WJR-AM
- WWJ-AM 950
- WCSX-FM 94.7
- WOMC-FM 104.3

Messages about school closings will apply to **that day only**. Parents should assume that school resumes the following day, unless otherwise notified by a new media message the following day.

Family of Pontiac graduates makes good

When Mrs. Shirley Ross, a Media Specialist at Herrington Elementary School, thinks about her son, Quinton T. Ross, Jr., she becomes misty-eyed because she is so proud of all that he has accomplished. "What most impresses me about Quinton is that he was so humble as a child, so good at following directions," said Mrs. Ross. "But he was then- and is now- a born leader."

State Senator Quinton T. Ross, Jr. recently won a seat in the Alabama Legislature with 78% of the popular vote in the city of Montgomery's District 26, during the 2002 elections. Senator Ross, who currently serves as Principal of Booker T. Washington Magnet High School in Montgomery, AL, is a graduate of Pontiac Northern High School, along with the rest of his family.

As a former student in the Pontiac School District, Senator Ross also attended Herrington Elementary, and Weaver and Kennedy Middle Schools. Mr. Ross displayed leadership ability throughout his academic experience in Pontiac Schools. He served as President of his freshman class, and played junior varsity and varsity football. Senator Ross went on to receive a bachelor's degree in Political Science and a Master's degree in Education from Alabama

State University. Mr. Ross, who, along with his father and brother, is a member of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, also has received an Administration Certification and has pursued post-graduate work towards his law degree at Jones School of Law.

Most members of the Ross family have had employment with the Pontiac School District since all have graduated from the school system. In addition to mother, Shirley Hicks, father, Quinton Ross, Sr. recently retired from 31 years of teaching at Lincoln Middle School; and younger son, Quinton Ross currently teaches at Emerson. Daughter, Ursula Ross, is a financial counselor at University of Phoenix. All five members of the Ross family have earned degrees from Alabama State University.

Mrs. Ross points to her son's website message when commenting on the sincerity of his intentions, which reads: "With continued guidance from God, and support from my family and my friends, I will remain committed to improving the quality of education for all children." For more information on Senator Quinton T. Ross, Jr. go to: www.rossforsenate.org.

Careers in Cooking (pic)

Judge Fred Mester (l), President of the Pontiac Alumni Foundation, receives a \$1,000 scholarship donation from Dawn Aubrey, Director of Food Services for the School District of the City of Pontiac, to be awarded to Pontiac high school graduates interested in pursuing a career in the Food Industry.

Read To Achieve (pic)

In October, Franklin Elementary School students attended the Detroit Pistons' second annual literacy campaign kick-off at the Palace of Auburn Hills. Students visited booths decorated with flags and cultural items from different countries, as Detroit Pistons' players and staff read aloud from nationally acclaimed books. Pictured: Franklin 3rd grader Marshae Coleman, poses with "Count Chocula" at the event.

Franklin students Jaron Craggette (in red designs) and Lorente Washington proudly wear sombreros during a "visit to Mexico."

Japanese Impressions (pic)

A delegation of educators from Kusatsu, Japan visited Pontiac in early November as part of the school district's Education Exchange Program, initiated in 1994. Pictured during a visit with Rogers Elementary School students are second elementary school Principal Nobuichi Terao (6th, l) and fourth grade teachers, Toshiko Sugie (3rd, l) and Yoshiko Kandatsu (4th, l), with Dr. Don Cordell (2nd, l) and Japanese interpreter Sean Johnson (2nd r). Rogers Principal Vivian Terry (5th, l) and Pontiac School Board President, Tommaleta Hughes (r) agreed that the renewed relationship between the sister cities was an asset to the school district. Last year, Superintendent Walter L. Burt accompanied four Pontiac School District teachers on an exchange visit to Kusatsu.

Top Performers

Congratulations to the top performing schools in the School District of the City of Pontiac for significant progress on last year's Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) exams.

Rogers Elementary School
LeBaron Elementary School
Longfellow Elementary School
