

# AAPSNews

News, features, profiles and activities in The Ann Arbor Public Schools

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Issue No. 21, September 20, 2010

## Board names Allen as interim superintendent

### Hiring of firm to aid with search expected at Sept. 29 meeting

Robert Allen has been named interim superintendent for The Ann Arbor Public Schools as the search begins for a new superintendent.

Allen, the district's deputy superintendent of operations, will take over no later than Oct. 12 as he works through the transition process with Superintendent Todd Roberts. Roberts will leave next month to take over as chancellor of the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics.

Allen came to Ann Arbor in 2006 from the Flint Community Schools where he served as chief financial officer. He has also worked in executive finance posts for Eastern Michigan University and Norfolk State University. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees in Business Administration from Eastern Michigan University.

Several other interim changes were also announced this week: Nancy Hoover, director of financial operations, will take on Allen's responsibilities as he takes the interim superintendent's post; LeeAnn Dickinson-Kelley, director of elementary instruction, will become the interim deputy superintendent for instruction; recently retired elementary principal Ruth Williams will take over Dickinson-Kelley's role as the administrator for elementary instruction.

Meanwhile, the process for hiring a professional services firm to assist in the superintendent search is under way. Five finalists will be interviewed next week; the board is scheduled to select a search firm at its Sept. 29 meeting.

Board President Deb Mexicotte has said the board plans to have a new superintendent in place on or before July 1, 2011.



Carpenter Elementary was among five schools whose students shucked corn during the district's first week of Farm Fresh Features. Students are served Farm Fresh produce three days per week during September and October as part of this district initiative. For more, please turn to Page 6.

## Aww ... shucks

Kids prep golden ears for eating as part of district's Farm Fresh Features

### Featured story

## German-American Partnership involves hundreds over 45 years

By Casey Hans  
AAPSNews Service

■ U-M scholarship for German students at Huron High School, Page 4

Summer was full of language and learning for students who participated in the most recent German-American Partnership Program.

The exchange through the spring and summer marked the 45th year of the program in The Ann Arbor Public Schools, where German students travel to Ann Arbor and Huron and Pioneer students visit Ann Arbor's sister city of Tübingen in southern Germany. The

See Partnership, page 4



Hanna Schwank, Nate Clyde and Maggie McCoy recently returned from Germany as part of the German-American Partnership Program, done at both Huron and Pioneer high schools. The three attend Huron.

# Van Dusen represents Pioneer, Ann Arbor as U.S. Dept. of Education teaching fellow

### Staff in the Spotlight

From AAPSNews Service

Tracey Van Dusen will wear an extra hat this fall in addition to teaching government and American Studies classes at Pioneer High School.

In her new role as a 2010-11 Teaching Ambassador Fellow with the U.S. Department of Education, Van Dusen plans to involve her AP Government students as well as teachers and the community to help shape education policy in Washington during this school year.

She said she hopes to do roundtable discussions with those who are interested in education policies. "It's just such a wonderful opportunity," she said. "I hope I can take full advantage of it and do this district proud, do the Department (of Education) proud."

Van Dusen is one of 15 teachers around the country to be so honored. Five will serve as Washington Ambassadors, working at the U.S. Department of Education headquarters in Washington, D.C. and 10 – including Van Dusen – will be Classroom Ambassadors, teaching in their home classrooms while working as fellows part-time. She attended a summer Fellowship Summit where she spent time with staff and other fellows.

"It's a really exciting time to be doing this," Van Dusen added. "Education is changing and I hope people become engaged in these discussions."

Even more students will have the opportunity to become part of policy discussions in Van Dusen's classes. In years past, there was usually two or three sections of AP Government, but this year, she has four sections and many more students, mainly because of the implementation of the Michigan Merit Curriculum – which requires more rigorous graduation standards this year.

In a typical advanced government class, Van Dusen said she not only teaches about the structure of government, but also engages students in discussion and that includes talking about today's political blogs. "They love to argue," she said. "They are often highly partisan on both sides."

She said it is important to keep students engaged and interested and "open to both points of view. Kids need to get all the information they can to make informed decisions," she said. One of the most important things is that they do well on the AP Government test.

"Obviously, I would like them to leave (class)



### About Tracey Van Dusen:

Tracey Van Dusen is a teaching veteran who has worked at Pioneer High School for her entire career with the Ann Arbor Public Schools. Last year, she was part of the Summer Teaching Fellowship with C-SPAN in Washington, D.C., working with the network's Education Team to develop and enhance its online resources for teachers. She is currently working for C-SPAN as one of 11 national Ambassador Educators and this year has been named one of 15 U.S. Department of Education Teaching Ambassador Fellows. In her classroom, she has sponsored student panel discussions with local Congressmen, invited a variety of higher education professors and instructors into the classroom to speak to students and encouraged her students to use technology in their learning. Van Dusen has a master's degree in history and a bachelor's degree in political science and plans to pursue a doctorate in either public policy or educational leadership. She has two daughters, both attending the University of Michigan.

finding information, thinking critically and knowing how government works."

In its third year, the Teaching Ambassador Fellowships program was created to give outstanding teachers an opportunity to participate in policy development and to contribute their expertise. The Ann Arbor Public Schools has signed an agreement with the federal government to allow Van Dusen to participate in the fellowship.

The 2010-11 fellows join a network, working with the Department's 38 previous fellows from the first two years of the program.

This year's fellows were selected from among 500 teaching and instructional specialist applicants from charter and traditional public schools. Applicants submitted essays about their leadership,

impact on student achievement, and insight into educational policy from school and classroom experience. Applications were received from teachers at every grade level and instructional area in urban, rural and suburban schools, according to information from the Department of Education.

Van Dusen is the only teacher representing Michigan in the program.

Although Van Dusen said being a Washington Ambassador in the capitol would have been fun, she is happy to remain in her classroom at Pioneer. She has worked her entire career at Pioneer, including her student teaching and her permanent teaching assignment since 1987. She has taught American History, Western Civilizations and Government and AP Government.

"I love teaching. I love the classroom," Van Dusen said. She chose to pursue education as a career in 1984, when she was attending graduate school at the University of Michigan and watched a television special about the National Commission on Excellence in Education report "A Nation at Risk."

"My interest in pursuing a graduate degree was in large part due to my desire to teach, and I went to talk to an advisor in the School of Education the next day," she said in a biographical summary for the fellowship application.

This is Van Dusen's second major fellowship. Last year, she was one of three teachers selected for a summer fellowship with C-SPAN, working on curriculum that the government network produces for teachers. She continues as a C-SPAN National Ambassador Educator, conducting workshops and exhibits at conferences and networking with educational leaders in the region.

Stemming from that experience, she and a C-SPAN fellow colleague combined AP United States History and AP Government classes on a social networking site last fall. They did interactive assignments using the Virginia Governor's race as a case study for units on campaigns, voting, and elections that encouraged students to one step further and enter C-SPAN's StudentCam competition. Then-juniors Michael Huang, Yusef Houamed and Darien Sharp earned an Honorable Mention from C-SPAN.

Van Dusen said she expects her fellowships to build one upon another and bring a level of richness to her classroom and to Pioneer and the district. She said she is excited about opportunities for other teachers as well. Anyone interested in pursuing similar opportunity can contact her at vandusen@aaps.k12.mi.us.

# Before-school robotics club popular at Pittsfield

By Casey Hans  
AAPSNews Service

A before-school enrichment program at has students designing, building, programming and using robots at Pittsfield Elementary. The Robotics Club has become so popular, that half of the students in grades three through five wanted to participate last spring.

Students work in teams of four to participate in the 10- to 12-week program that takes place for 45-minutes one day each week before the start of school. It's in its fourth year.

"That's how engineers work together," explained Charlotte Mayhew, who with her husband, Dirk, launched the program four years ago. "They are working for the goal. It is how most science careers work and that's why we started with that model. We're hoping for some of these kids to spark a lifelong interest in science."

Mayhew said the club has really taken off and given students a sense of confidence.

"We've seen any number of kids in the club who were interested in science but didn't think they were good at it," she said. "It's really grown over the years."

Using Lego Mindstorms, each group selects a mission, a moon and a name for their team robot. They must research how large the moon



*Pittsfield students during the before-school Robotics Club. (Photo courtesy, Jim Carroll.)*

is, how far away it is and how they will get there by creating a mission plan and goal. They then explore their moon.

"They all handle it differently," Mayhew said. "Some do phenomenally well, others have problems with the building or the programming. That's why it's good to have the teams."

The Mayhews and parent Jim Carroll have coordinated the club with the help of media specialist Joyce Followell who recently retired.

Principal Carol Shakarian said the program has been popular and draws large numbers of students. She hopes to see it continue.

"It's extremely exciting and motivating for

our students," she said. "They're brainstorming and problem solving and learning to work well together."

The club started with 16 students and four robots, with teams of four each and has since expanded to 30 students thanks to the generosity of the Pittsfield PTO and an Ann Arbor Public Schools Educational Foundation grant. They charge \$25 per student to handle robot parts and maintenance, but have waived the fee as needed.

Parent organizers have helped to design the lessons and have handled much of the behind-the-scenes work needed for the club to function. The club has done demonstrations at the school's Math-Science Night, Science Fair and at the ice cream social in the spring.

Shakarian said it is a great example of a school program that thrives with parent involvement. "It really connects with the school improvement framework," she said. "It's a nice marriage of parent involvement. Our own community offers some of our best resources."

The club teaches more than science, technology and engineering. Teamwork is important, and Mayhew said that the club offers some quieter students a chance to shine and still others a different way to learn. "We try to give them a sense of flexibility – it's supposed to be fun," she added.

## Huron teacher's Japan travels become classroom lessons

### Staff in the Spotlight

Huron High School business and social studies teacher Dorothea Bryant called her summer trip to Japan a "cultural experience of a lifetime."

She was among 10 North American educators selected as a 2010 Keizai Koho Center Teacher Fellow a program allows teachers to experience educational, cultural and industrial aspects of Japanese society and promotes closer ties between North America and Japan.

The most memorable part of her trip was meeting the people. "They're very hard-working people – service is paramount," Bryant said. But the generation that built a very modern, clean and safe present-day Japan faces many challenges, she said, including an aging society and low birth rate which is creating a critical labor shortage, she said.

Bryant said she was excited to share her experience and has begun integrating her fellowship experience into the classroom. Bryant's visits to Tokyo's Nishi High School and Asa Kita High School in Hiroshima were eye opening, she said. Class sizes are larger, schools use less technol-



*Dorothea Bryant works with her class at Huron High School after returning from Japan, where she served as a Keizai Koho Center Teacher Fellow.*

ogy than U. S. schools, and teachers are required to work longer hours than teachers here, she said. Bryant was also surprised to learn that the students are responsible for keeping their schools clean; the schools have little operational or support staff.

She discovered that students in Hiroshima wear uniforms, but not in Tokyo. Bryant said

**VIDEO AND SLIDES online at**  
<http://news.a2schools.org>

that during the roundtable discussions between students and teachers, she found students and staff to be very open-minded and friendly. Bryant also observed students in after-school activities. Sports are favorites, but young women in both high schools were involved in the Tea Ceremony Club and served hot tea and cookies in a quiet ceremony to the fellows. Bryant said she felt humbled by the experience.

In addition to visiting the two high schools, other highlights of the trip included: lectures about business and cultural changes; visits to businesses/research facilities including Panasonic Center Tokyo and Mazda Motor Corporation; viewing the Tokyo Stock Exchange; a home stay with a Japanese host family; and visits to cultural locations such as Edo Tokyo Museum, Miryama Island and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. "I was very touched to have gone to

*See Japan, page 5*

# Exceptional Education

## Partnership, from page 1

program is typically conducted every other year and about 40 students take part. An estimated 800 have gone through the program since its inception.

Hanna Schwank, a Huron junior, said the experience was well worth it. "We got to be good friends with them," said Schwank, speaking about the exchange families. Nate Clyde, also a junior, and friend Maggie McCoy, a sophomore, all sat down recently to share some of their experiences with the program.

German students were here from May 11-June 1 and Ann Arbor students made the return trip for three weeks in late June. In most cases, it was a true exchange: German students visited their "partner student" in Ann Arbor and then the Ann Arbor students visited, staying in the partner students' homes in Germany.

German teachers Andy Smith at Huron and Robert Lederer at Pioneer have most recently coordinated the high school program. The two take groups to the same German city, but they partner with different schools so have different experiences.

Smith said he still hears from graduates who went through the exchange and have found ways to blend German into their lives. "It's about kids that live on opposite sides of the world forming friendships," he said. "It's something that a lot of them will carry with them their whole lives."

Students enrolled in German classes are eligible to participate, and partial funding comes from the German American Partnership Program, via grants from the U.S. federal government, the German government, and private corporations, Smith said. Families and students pay for the remainder of the trip, this year about \$1,800 per person. If students can't afford all of their portion, organizers help them. "We work hard to keep it affordable," he said.

Smith first went on the German exchange trips when he was a student at Pioneer. He started volunteering as a chaperone in the early 1980s and then went as a teacher. "It's just an incredible educational experience," Smith said. "There's nothing quite like the real thing."

Smith said the exchange also gives students a global feel. "These kids are beginning to form ideas of what it's like to be in a different country. The obvious advantage is the academic knowledge. They're immersed 24-7 in the language."

And that's a key part of the exchange. Schwank said the students spoke German when there, but at times the effort was more successful than others. "I knew my sentences weren't always correct, but I was getting my point across," she said.



Scenes from Tübingen, Germany, where Huron and Pioneer students visited last summer. (Photos courtesy, Hanna Schwank)

**SLIDE SHOW online at**  
<http://news.a2schools.org>

Clyde noted that the German students "were much better in English than we were in German," something he noticed during their time in Ann Arbor.

Clyde and Schwank are in third year German at Huron this year and McCoy in her second year of study. Schwank chose to study German because it was a natural for her. Her father is Austrian, so she has many relatives who speak the language. Clyde said he loves history, so German seemed an interesting language to study. McCoy took Spanish, but tired of it.

While in Tübingen, Ann Arbor students got to experience World Cup soccer play, German-style, where large outdoor screens were set up for the entire community to enjoy. Another thing they noticed: Youngsters in Germany are much more multi-lingual than in the United States. "They were taught language from the second grade and then they add a language," said McCoy, the youngest member of the Huron travel group.

Students noticed some differences in the way German high school students function in their everyday lives. Most everyone walks or uses public transportation

Plus, there's an independence about the German culture, Clyde said. "The freedom was nice. We really liked the public transportation."

Schwank's mother, Lynne Schwank, said the exchange program offers more than just a fun trip for the students as well as hosting families.

"I would tell people don't be afraid to open your home to somebody," she said. "It's mutually beneficial. It helps you look at your world differently. It enriches people to be aware of other cultures."

## U-M offers scholarship for Huron students with German language skills

The University of Michigan Germanic Languages and Literatures Department is organizing a scholarship for Huron High students who have had at least one year of German language study.

According to German teacher Andy Smith, the Huron High School German Scholarship was developed after businesses told the university that knowledge of German was a skill they were seeking. Although students can major in any area to qualify for the scholarship, specific areas that need German language skills include: engineering, chemistry, physics, Life Sciences or business.

The scholarship offers \$1,000 as a one-time award that will be made beginning with the class of 2011, Smith said.

The scholarship was started with seed money from several area businesses including: Richard Sheridan, CEO of Menlo Innovations; Ray Digby, co-founder of Am Can Financial; Certified Financial Planner Dave Granner of Thrivent Financial; and Judith Dabertin, CEO of Boulevard Health Care. Other private donors have also contributed.

Granner, a Huron High School parent and Ann Arbor businessman, spent his childhood living in different parts of the world and felt he should learn a language to enrich his life. He took German throughout his schooling, enrolling in a German class during every semester he attended U-M. "I had a resolution I would learn this language with the intent to speak it fluently," he said.

Smith said students interested in applying should see him for help with the process.

## School Bells: Briefs from around the district

### Technology, cyber school, early college OKed

The Ann Arbor Public Schools is continuing technology update plans with the board approving expenditure of \$3.058 million on Sept. 15, with funds taken from the voter-approved 2004 bond proposal.

Voters approved the 2004 bond which resulted in approximately \$17.6 million in funds to refresh technology around the district.

This is the second phase technology improvements for the district. The board approved \$5.6 million for the first phase in January 2009 which replaced some mobile laptop carts as well as teacher and administrator laptops and desktop computers for secretaries. It also upgraded the district's central server. The second phase will replace fixed labs districtwide; evaluate and replace projection technology districtwide, as needed; complete districtwide WIFI access, add 12-pair fiber expansion to Skyline High School, complete a 10-gigabyte switch upgrade and upgrade of 21 laptop carts.

Also on Sept. 15, the school board approved participation in the WAY Washtenaw cyber school program to be housed at Stone

High School this year and the Early College Alliance through Eastern Michigan University. Both programs serve students throughout Washtenaw County.

WAY Washtenaw is pilot program designed to serve up to 180 students who have dropped out of high school or are at risk of doing so. The Early College Alliance offers students a chance to take college-level classes during high school, earning both a high school diploma from their home district as well as college credit by the time they graduate.

### Skyline's Scaling leaves for South Lyon principalship

Ann Arbor Skyline High School Assistant Principal Chad Scaling has accepted the principal position at South Lyon High School; he left the district on Sept. 14. "It was a very tough decision and I hadn't planned on leaving Skyline so soon," he said. "The staff, students and families of Skyline are wonderful and I will miss working with them." Scaling was the Diversity Small Learning Community principal at Skyline. He had worked for the district for 15 months and, prior to that, taught in Chelsea then served as a building

administrator in the Crestwood district before coming to Ann Arbor. Judy Conger, a former dean at Community High School who has retired from the district, will take over Scaling's position on an interim basis.

### Boshoven selected for counseling program

John Boshoven, Community High School guidance counselor, has been selected by the Colleges That Change Lives membership for inclusion in the "Counselors That Change Lives" program.

Boshoven is being recognized for helping students frame their search beyond the ratings and rankings and to help them find a college that cultivates a lifelong love of learning and provides the foundation for a successful and fulfilling life. He was nominated by admissions counselor Kate Riordan on behalf of Lawrence University. "While walking through the hallways of his high school, you can see his strong connection to his advisees as he interacts with them on a daily basis," she said. "He not only listens to their concerns about the college search "but he is dedicated to helping students look past the rankings and into the heart of what makes a student and college a good

fit." Boshoven is also a director of the National Association for College Admission Counseling.

### AAPSEF Harvest dinner to honor Todd Roberts

The Ann Arbor Public Schools Educational Foundation's Harvest Dinner celebration is scheduled for Oct. 20 at Zingerman's Roadhouse. Chef Alex Young will prepare a feast of seasonal foods, many harvested from his own Cornman Farms.

This year's event will be dedicated to departing Superintendent Todd Roberts who leaves the district in October. The AAPSEF suggests that contributions in his name be made to AAPSEF's Endowment Fund to honor his leadership in the district.

Tickets are \$100 per person for the full-course meal, served at 7 p.m.; \$150 tickets include a pre-dinner reception with the superintendent, beginning at 6 p.m. A cash bar, including wines specially selected for the menu, will be available.

Live music from the Community High School Jazz Program will accompany the event. For tickets, call (734) 994-1969 or order online at [http://www.aapsef.org/newsevents/harvest\\_dinner.html](http://www.aapsef.org/newsevents/harvest_dinner.html)

## Japan: Huron teacher impressed with Japanese company's business model, from page 3

Hiroshima and stood where the A-bomb was dropped," she said. "It was a really solemn moment for me."

On a visit to Nihon Rakagaku Co. in Tokyo – a company that makes dustless chalks – Bryant was impressed to learn the company has a commitment to hire workers with special needs. About 75 percent of the workers had a mental or physical challenge.

"It started out as an experiment a number of years ago," Bryant said. "As a group, they were immensely loyal employees, and so it worked out well. The company's business model warmed my heart. They seem to take the role of corporate social

responsibility seriously."

Bryant said a special time was the overnight home stay with a local family. Here she got to experience Japanese home life firsthand. "They treated me like royalty," she said.

Bryant said she was impressed with how close-knit Japanese families are. "They really believe in taking care of family and of each other."

On a humorous note, Bryant realized, despite preparation for the trip, that she did not know how to eat with chopsticks. It's something she was able to master with many tries over a couple of days.

On the final day of the program, they took part in a seminar about

"Challenges in North American Classrooms," where each fellow presented about school and community. Bryant discussed the Ann Arbor Public Schools and the diversity in the district. She also touched on the issue of bullying and explained about some of the initiatives at Huron High School, including the school's "Tolerance Week Activities."

Bryant has begun to share her experience with her World History students, most recently during "Current Events Friday," where she teams with student teacher Kyle Locke. They recently used news articles about Japan collected on her trip for an in-class assignment.

"The experience was wonderful and I was proud to represent the Ann Arbor community," she said of her trip. "The Kezai Koho Center is a phenomenal organization with a dedicated staff... that did an outstanding job at planning a very meaningful experience."

Bryant began teaching in the Ann Arbor Public Schools in 2001. Prior to coming to Ann Arbor, she worked as a permanent substitute teacher in Detroit. Bryant also worked as an adjunct instructor at several universities, and she had a career in the banking and finance industry for 22 years.

This year, she teaches Economics and World History at Huron.

# Pioneer Class of 1980 starts new ed foundation fund

From AAJPSNews Service

Alumni from Pioneer High School's Class of 1980 got a real kick out of their 30th class reunion this year.

They raised money for the Ann Arbor Public Schools Educational Foundation by selling athletic shoes designed especially for the class.

The project gave them not only a purple-and-white memento of their time at Pioneer, but chance to help their alma mater. The shoe design carried an insignia of "80/30/10" which followed the reunion slogan: "80 does 30 in 10." (Class of 1980, 30th reunion, in the year 2010.)

Class member Art Rogers and reunion committee chairs Eric Jensen, Kathy (Rouse) Masinick and George Helmke came up with the idea to tie in a classic Chuck Taylor high-top shoe with the teacher grant fund that will be earmarked for special education classrooms.

Rogers, who works in sales for Massachusetts-based Converse, said because it was the milestone reunion, organizers thought the shoe would be fun to do and a way to contribute.

Rogers has a nephew with special needs who attends Forsythe Middle School and the donation for special education seemed like a good way to earmark the money.

The \$30 specialty shoes were sold at alumni events from July 23-25, paying for the shoe production and allowing for a \$5-per-pair donation to the AAPSEF fund. With shoe sales and other donations, the group was able to present a check for nearly \$3,000 that was used to start the "Pioneer High School Class of 1980 Fund for Special Education;" grants of up to \$1,000 can be awarded.

Rogers said he hopes that other Ann Arbor graduates might consider contributing to the fund to keep the grant opportunities going. "It's really there for everybody to donate to it," he said. "We've got to keep the fire stoked."

Applications for the grant take place during the regular teacher grant process, which is going on now.

AAPSEF Executive Director Wendy Correll said although the foundation did not directly approach the alumni for donations,

### Apply for AAPSEF teacher grants

**What:** Ann Arbor Public Schools Educational Foundation 2010-11 Teacher Grants

**Where:** Visit <http://aapsef.org/teachers/teachers.html> to download an application and instructions.

**Deadline:** 4 p.m. Friday, Oct. 1. Applications due in a hard copy format to: Ann Arbor Public Schools Educational Foundation 2555 St. State St., Ann Arbor, MI 48104.

**Notification:** Grant funding will be announced on Oct. 22.

project reached out to other parts of the country and world, she added. The Pioneer alumni grant is one of seven categories now listed on the AAPSEF application. General grants are funded for up to \$1,000. Correll said teachers applying for grants can check any or all categories that apply to their project.

Correll said the foundation is seeing more and more special education staff applying for grants as resources for programs in the schools dwindle due to budget cuts.

As a side note, Correll said the foundation is beginning to reach out to others in the Ann Arbor Public Schools alumni community.

With seed money from the Ann Arbor Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, the foundation has set up a website (<http://annarboralumni.org>) and plans to officially launch it this fall. The password-protected site is for alumni, parents, faculty and friends of Ann Arbor's public high schools.

Correll said she expects it to be used for alumni to reconnect, plan reunion events, and learn about what is going on in the Ann Arbor Public Schools.

she was pleased to have them offer to help. "They wanted to give back," she said. "We found a way for them to make a significant contribution and have an impact. It was their idea to do something for special education classes." Many of the alumni have moved from the area, so the

## Fresh eating is featured throughout the fall in Ann Arbor school cafeterias

Farm Fresh Features is back this fall, providing students with fresh produce from southeast Michigan every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday in September and October. Formerly known as Farm Fresh Fridays, the program began on Fridays and was expanded to offer local produce to students more frequently.

Featured items are served in the Fruit and Veggie bars at elementary schools and are made available for the taking at the secondary schools.

On Wednesday, students at several schools – Mitchell, Ann Arbor Open @ Mack, Lakewood, Carpenter and the Ann Arbor Preschool and Family Center – shucked and cleaned corn during the school day that was to be served as part of the Friday "Farm Fresh" lunch for students.

"The Farm to School Collaboration is always looking for ways to expand on the program," said Sara Aeschbach, the district's director for community education and recreation who helps

to coordinate the district's wellness efforts.

"One goal of the program is to increase student awareness about locally grown food, so we thought that husking the corn would get kids more involved and interested in eating it. When the corn arrived from the farm, some ears were still attached to large stalks. That definitely made a different impression than eating corn out of a can."

The Farm Fresh project also provides in-class visits by local farmers and fruit and vegetable tastings and reaches hundreds of students in Ann Arbor schools each fall. It is made possible by the Ann Arbor Farm-to-School Collaboration which includes: The Ann Arbor Public Schools, Chartwells Dining Services, Project Healthy Schools, The Agrarian Adventure, The Ann Arbor Farmers' Market, Food System Economic Partnership and The Washtenaw County Health Department. The collaboration embraces regionally grown produce as a healthy choice for students and a way to educate them on the availability of fresh foods in their area.

