

AAPSNews

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

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Sweet! Honey bees a unique teaching tool

By Casey Hans
AAPSNews Service

Honey bees dance around a cluster of six hives on Richard Raynor’s family farm in Superior Township. Campers from Ann Arbor’s Rec & Ed’s Green Adventures Camp suit up in head-to-toe protection to experience the hives – and the bees – firsthand.

They are accompanied by retired Ann Arbor Public Schools elementary teacher Jane Levy, who still teaches with the summer camp, and Raynor, whose family has owned and farmed the 60 acres in Frains Lake since 1936. Both are beekeepers and share their knowledge of life that is teeming in the hives.

“You stay calm and walk slowly,” Levy tells the first group, laying out the rules. “You don’t swat at the bees. You’re going to stand in a “U” behind the hives. You don’t have to worry.”

Both beekeepers use “smokers” lit with kindling, puffing smoke into the hives before opening them and peeking in. “When



Jane Levy pulls a honeycomb from a hive at Frains Lake and checks out the honey making activity.

VIDEO: Watch Jane Levy and her campers at the beehives and harvesting honey: <http://news.a2schools.org>

you smoke them, it slows them down. They think the beekeeper is here,” Levy explains to students.

Raynor, who owns two of the hives on site, says his bees recognize him and he generally wears no protection. He says the honey bees have their mission and don’t need encouragement to get to work. “Bees pretty much know how to take care of themselves,”

he says.

Campers have more fun in store at Lakewood Elementary camp headquarters, where Levy brings honeycombs from the hives and helps youngsters spin out the honey – and get some tasty, free samples.

There are more than 300 unique kinds of honey in the United States, all depen-

See Bees, page 7



Campers take a taste of the sweetness as they help to harvest honey at Lakewood Elementary.

Superintendent addresses staff, search for new leader begins

From AAPSNews Service

As Superintendent Todd Roberts prepares to say farewell to The Ann Arbor Public Schools this fall, he told staff that he is confident everyone is flying in formation and ready for the change.

The district operates with everyone’s contribution to the whole, he said. “It’s your leadership and roles that make that happen. The superintendent plays a very small role.”

He noted that the district has a “concrete plan to make sure our students graduate college and career



Superintendent Todd Roberts greets staff members following the traditional staff Opening Day at Pioneer High School.

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Featured story

VIDEO: Excerpts from addresses to staff at <http://news.a2schools.org>

Cyber school at Ann Arbor's Stone will serve at-risk students

By Casey Hans
AAPSNews Service

Plans are under way for Ann Arbor's Stone High School to host a countywide cyber-school pilot this fall for up to 180 high school students who have either dropped out of school or who are at risk of doing so.

Called WAY Washtenaw, (Widening Advancements for Youth), the year-round secondary program is coordinated through the Washtenaw Intermediate School District and Inclusion U.S., a nonprofit that provides technology and program support for managing student projects.

"We found the kids are out there and they want to come to school," said WISD Assistant Superintendent Rick Leyshock. "We want them to be in a safe learning environment where they can really develop and learn."

In the project-based program, students are expected to learn and interact remotely in an online community, reporting to Stone twice each week where they can get help from on-site staff. They also will be in touch regularly online with mentors and project leaders to ensure they are making progress and meeting mandatory high school graduation requirements.

Officials said an estimated 600 students have dropped out of high school in Washtenaw County, prompting the desire and need for such a program. WAY Washtenaw will target students age 16-19 who have dropped out or who have disengaged from traditional school.

Students will remain part of their home school district, so they can participate in sports, music or other extracurriculars at their home high school while

'... The kids are out there and they want to come to school. We want them to be in a safe learning environment where they can really develop and learn.'

— Assistant Superintendent
Rick Leyshock, WISD

enrolled in WAY Washtenaw. Their degrees will be earned through their home district.

Coordinating the program at the Ann Arbor site will be Stone High Principal Sheila Brown and Ann Arbor's Director of Instructional Technology Monique Uzelac.

Uzelac said a Washtenaw County curriculum team visited other cyber-schools last December, which generated excitement and planted the seed for the Washtenaw model. She said 180 student seats were selected as a proposed starting point after the team reviewed county dropout rates, talked with superintendents to gauge interest and estimated how many students might possibly enroll.

Although each district is assigned a number of seats in the program based on their dropout numbers, Leyshock said seats can be used by other districts if slots are not filled.

The program will have 30 part-time mentors, three full-time program leaders and two technicians. It is funded through state per-pupil foundation allowance money, Leyshock explained. Registration for the program is taking place now

and will continue through mid-September, when the state's official count of students takes place to determine the level of funding to school districts.

Parents and students interested in the program can apply online or call for information. They will have a personal interview and receive full application packets. Once enrolled, staff conducts home visits to ensure there is proper connectivity for the online program and then students are assigned a mentor who will work with them on their projects, which will be reviewed weekly for progress in meeting Michigan high school standards.

Original plans called for piloting WAY Washtenaw in fall 2011, but Leyshock said local superintendents were so enthusiastic that the launch was moved to this fall. "I feel there enough legs to this that we will want to scale up big for this the following year," he added.

Washtenaw's virtual school project is based on NotSchool (www.inclusiontrust.org/notschool/) in the United Kingdom. A program looked at locally was Wayne County's Westwood Cyber School, which has had success since it launched in February 2009.

Activity in Michigan comes after recently enacted state education reforms boosted the dropout age from 16 to 18 beginning with students graduating in 2016. Officials said the Michigan Department of Education earmarked \$650,000 last fall to address dropout rates.

For more information, visit <http://wash.k12.mi.us> or contact WISD Director of Assessment, Planning & Research Naomi Norman by calling (734) 994-8100, ext. 1263 or e-mailing wayinfo@wash.k12.mi.us.

School Bells

Ann Arbor kudos: Websites say education is 'one of the best'

Kiplinger's Personal Finance has named Ann Arbor as one of its "Best Cities for the Next Decade," basing the list on job growth, healthy economies and a vibrant local culture. Staff also included cities that are family oriented, have quality schools, low crime rates and lots of parks and recreation.

The report stresses that Kiplinger's is listing the top 10 as recommendations, not rankings. The report says this about education in Ann Arbor:

"The Ann Arbor Public School District is consistently ranked one of the best in the country, and its students score far above average on state and national standardized tests. Add that to the city's low crime rate and high family income, and you have a stable, progressive place to raise a family, 40 minutes from Detroit. Plus, it's the home of the top-ranked University of Michigan, with three museums and great NCAA sports programs."

School rankings in the report are based on information from GreatSchools.com For the full report, visit online: www.kiplinger.com.

In addition to the Kiplingers report, GreatSchools.org Top Cities survey, selected The Ann Arbor Public Schools among its Top 10 school district in mid-sized cities in the United States. Ratings were based on a combination of GreatSchools ratings and data from the National Assessment for Educational Progress.

To read the full article, Best Cities to Live and Learn, visit www.greatschools.org. Ann Arbor Public Schools is featured in the Top Public Schools: Midsize U.S. Cities slideshow.

Permanent appointments made at Tappan Middle School

Tappan Middle School families will see two familiar faces in the main office this fall. Jazz Parks and Rick Weiler, who served in interim positions, have been appointed to permanent posts as principal and assistant principal, respectively.

Parks recently completed her third year as a Tappan administrator and Weiler taught at Tappan for 14 years before moving to an administrative post.

In a letter to parents announcing the appointments, Superintendent Todd Roberts called the two "an effective administrative team capable of providing high-quality leadership for Tappan in the coming years."

Eberwhite's Willets continues love of music, stage

Vocal music teacher overcomes vocal chord trauma to go on with a career in the arts

Staff in the Spotlight

By Casey Hans
AAPSNews Service

Jeffrey Willets is back in the classroom for a new school year, encouraging Eberwhite Elementary students to tune up their vocal chords and share his love of music.

A product of the Ann Arbor Public Schools, music has been an integral part of who Willets is and what he does but he thought, at one point, it had abandoned him.

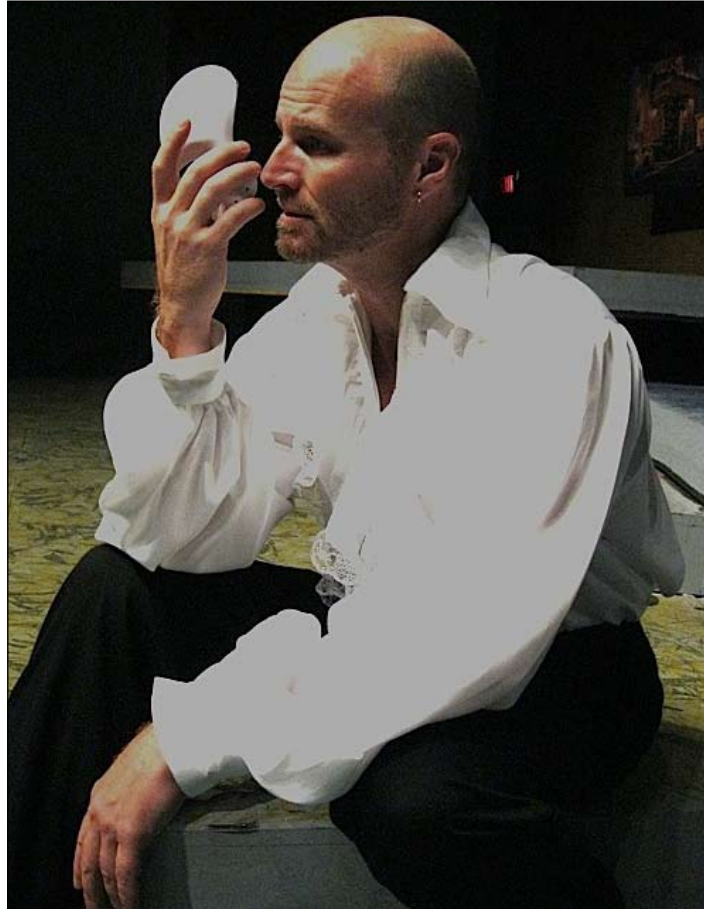
In 1994, he developed a paralyzed vocal chord. Without knowledge of what had happened to cause it, he flew around the country seeking help from experts – both singing coaches and then medical professionals – only to be told that there was nothing to be done.

Not only did it affect his singing, but his speaking voice as well. He was a lifelong singer and teacher who had effectively been silenced.

A friend suggested Dr. Steven Zeitels of Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, an innovative leader in the approach to voice disorders. Zeitels is also the professional that helped singing legend Julie Andrews find her voice again.

Willets knew had the right guy. After surgery and five years of voice therapy and Zeitels' help, he was able to retrain his voice. "Everyone told me to hang it up, you're finished," he said. "I've been singing and doing great ever since. My philosophy? Don't ever give up."

Today, Willets is back in form and a listener would never know the damage he had sustained. This accomplished tenor played the lead role in the summer stock production of "Phantom" at Canton Township's Village Theater at Cherry Hill Village, a production of 8th Wonder, a theater company



Eberwhite Elementary vocal music teacher Jeffrey Willets on stage at the Village Theater in Cherry Hill Village in Canton, where he performed the lead role of Eric the Phantom, in the summer production of "Phantom." At left, he is seen with Broadway actress Maria Couch, who played opposite Willets. The longtime teacher had a paralyzed vocal chord several years ago and found help, allowing him to sing again.

of professionals and faculty from the Eastern Michigan University Theater Department. Proceeds from their productions go to scholarships and service awards for EMU students who are studying music, theatre or dance.

But the paralyzed vocal chord changed Willets forever. It changed his approach to life and encouraged

him to see things differently.

"It made me look at myself and realize that we all look at ourselves based on our accomplishments," he said. "It made me realize I'm more than that. I've been given a second chance and I'm very grateful for that.

"I know now that it's OK to make boo-boos. It's OK to fall

down. Just pick back up again and keep going."

Willets was raised in Pittsfield Township where he was the second youngest of five children. His dad was an EMU accountant and his mom a teacher. His dad is now deceased, but Willets remains close to his mom, who is 79 and has traveled the world.

He attended Carpenter Elementary, then Scarlett and Huron where he graduated. He was encouraged by teachers Ken Westerman, then at Scarlett, and Rick Ingram at Huron to pursue music as a vocation. Ruth Datz, now-deceased, who, among others, helped to found the Ann Arbor Youth Chorale, was instrumental in his decision about music, as was EMU professor Glenda Kirkland. "She said here it is – the world is your oyster. Go get it," he said of Kirkland.

Willets studied and trained at EMU and the New England Conservatory of Music and has tackled a variety of roles over the years ranging from opera and operetta to musical theater, cabaret and everything between.

He began teaching in Ann Arbor in 1985 and has worked at many elementary schools. He started in the district's Open School program at Wines, Bach and Mack and also spent time teaching at Mitchell, Northside and Angell. Before arriving at Eberwhite a couple of years ago, he also worked at Pittsfield and at Clague Middle School.

Will he do any local theater in the coming year? "That depends on how much energy I have," he said. "I give it all to the kids. I love the kids and seeing what they can do. When they do their musical plays or do things for their parents, it just blows me away."

One more little piece of timely trivia: Willets turns 48 as school begins today. Students who have him in class can sing him a rousing rendition of "Happy Birthday."

4 named as elementary principals

Wines, Lakewood, Lawton and Abbot leaders meet their students this week



David DeYoung

Occupation: Principal at Wines Elementary School

Residence: Ann Arbor

Education: Ph.D. and MA in Educational Administration, Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education, all from The University of Michigan.

Age: 37

Family: Married to Trish Cortes. They have 2½-year-old twin boys, Lucas and Nicolas.

Pets: Recently lost their 16-year old dog, Barnes, but hope to add another to the family soon.

Hobbies: Scuba diving (“We try to get under water as much as possible”), spending time in the mountains, hiking and camping and traveling with his family.

Community service: Has done volunteer work both here and in Colorado with adults with developmental disabilities.

Favorite meal: Trish’s Paella, a Spanish rice dish. “Anytime we have friends over, we usually serve Paella. It serves a big crowd.”

Last book read: “South of Broad” by Pat Conroy, his favorite author. Personally and professionally, he loves to read. “That’s one of the most important things we can teach kids – to see themselves as a reader.”

From AAPSNews Service

New principals take the helm this fall at four Ann Arbor elementary schools:

David DeYoung – Wines

David DeYoung has come home again to Wines Elementary.

Not only does he start the year as the school’s new principal, he has fond memories of attending Wines, Forsythe and Pioneer and growing up just down the street from Wines on Sunset Road.

He still lives in the neighborhood, but instead of commuting to West Bloomfield – where he served as a principal for the past five years – he will travel just a few blocks to Wines. DeYoung said the school still has the same, comfortable feeling he remembers.

“Wines is the epitome of a neighborhood school,” he said. “This is a community that’s really attached to this building. Parents love this building. This is a really important place for people. There’s a great amount of pride.”

He recalled as a youngster having to leave Wines to attend Newport Elementary School, now closed. “I remember coming back to Forsythe,” he added. “I had friends from both Wines and Newport – it was like a reunion. I knew everyone.”

Five of his closest friends today remain people he met while a student at Wines and Forsythe, he said.

As principal, one of his first roles will be learning his students’ names and working on building a sense of trust in the Wines community. “It’s building the relationships with parents, kids and the larger community,” he said. “And that takes time. We need to know each other and trust each other.”

He pledges to know each student’s name by Halloween. If he misses a name, he carries trinkets and offers them to students as a prize.

DeYoung has a career history in Ann Arbor starting as a student teacher at Northside Elementary. After moving to Colorado to teach from 1996-2000, he returned here for his master’s and Ph.D. in educational administration at the University of Michigan and interned at Bach Elementary under Principal Shelley Bruder.

He then served as Acting Principal at Abbot before being hired as a principal by the West Bloomfield School District.

DeYoung is married to Trish Cortes, who

works for Washtenaw County, and they have two twin preschool sons. His wife’s family is from Spain, so DeYoung has become multi-lingual and said they are teaching their sons to be bi-lingual in the home. “We’re committed to having language be a part of who they are,” he said.

His parents were both educators, his mother a principal in Ann Arbor. He said he chose education after spending summers working in camp and deciding elementary education was his passion.

DeYoung takes his job leading a school seriously, but he says there has to be a balance. “School is a serious place and we want students to be challenged,” he said. “But you need to have fun times and positive experiences. You can have a rigorous curriculum and you can have a good time doing it.” He said one of his goals is to see students “smile coming and smile leaving” school each day.

Michael Johnson – Lakewood

Michael Johnson said he does not call himself a school principal, but a “chief learner.”

The label reflects his philosophy of always learning at least three new things each day – something his grandmother taught him when he was a boy. He has carried that to his own family and wants to impart that lesson at Lakewood, where he begins this fall as the new principal.

“You have to model the learning you want to see,” he said. “I want to see Lakewood reach its fullest potential.”

Johnson said he plans to continue the tradition of excellence put in place by former principal Rick O’Neill: “He is a pillar of excellence,” Johnson said of the now-retired principal.

He said he is looking forward to working with the staff at Lakewood. “I’ll always be a teacher,” he added. But I have a different perspective now. I get a chance to see a lot of teachers do a lot of great things.”

Johnson started his career in Ann Arbor in 2005 as a fifth-grade teacher at Thurston Elementary School, where his class each year had a “star” theme for students.

He said he will miss his classroom at Thurston, which he called “some of the most rewarding time ever,” but is looking forward to the new challenge at Lakewood. “I can’t wait to get started,” he said.

Johnson grew up in the Willow Run district,

See New principals, page 5

Meet the principals



Michael Johnson

Occupation: Principal at Lakewood Elementary School. He was previously a fifth-grade teacher at Thurston Elementary School in Ann Arbor .

Residence: Pittsfield Township

Education: Master's degree in Education and Administration from the University of Phoenix, bachelor's degree in English and History from the University of Michigan with an elementary teaching certificate from Eastern Michigan University.

Age: 29

Family: Married to Joanna, who is an English teacher at Stone High School. They have two children: Lorenzo who is an eighth-grader at Scarlett and Kellen, who is a kindergartener at Carpenter Elementary.

Pets: A Lhasapoo named Cinnamon (a combination Lhasa Apso and poodle.)

Hobbies: Loves to golf, plays Scrabble every night with his family and is an avid reader. The family goes to the library together each week and he said he loves to spend time with his sons.

Community service: In his second year as president and sixth year of membership in Theta Zeta Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha, a service fraternity that mentors young men. He also is involved with Ronald McDonald House and Habitat for Humanity. Johnson was the 1998 Ann Arbor Young Citizen of the Year – an award given by the former Ann Arbor News.

Favorite meal: "I love steak."

Last book read: Johnson said his students offer suggestions for some of his best reading. He is currently reading "Al Capone Does My Shirts" by Gennifer Choldenko – a young adult book recommended by one of his students.

New principals, from page 4

graduating as class valedictorian in 1998 and earning the first Ann Arbor Young Citizen of the Year honor given by the former Ann Arbor News. Johnson went on to study English and History at the University of Michigan, earned his elementary teaching certificate at Eastern Michigan University then earned a master's degree in Education and Administration from the University of Phoenix.

He is married to Joanna who teaches at Stone High School and they have two sons, eighth-grader Lorenzo who attends Scarlett Middle School and the Kellen who is entering kindergarten at Carpenter Elementary. They live in Pittsfield Township. His family is close-knit, visiting the library weekly, playing Scrabble at night and, on Christmas Eve, doing an overnight with extended family of siblings and nieces and nephews and ringing in the holiday together.

Originally, this man with the huge smile wanted to become an orthodontist – until, in his sophomore year at U-M, a professor told him he was a born teacher and influenced him to pursue education.

He's glad he did.

Johnson said he has had about 120 students come through his classes at Thurston and said all have stayed in touch, many returning to visit him. "It makes you feel you have the power to influence children for the rest of their lives," he said.

His approach and expectation of staff is simple: "You put kids first," he said. "As long as everyone puts children first, I say 'let's run.' When you put children first, you take individual agendas out of the equation."

He said he had two dynamic teachers who influenced him as a young person: His third-grade teacher, Mrs. Dorothy Bonich who introduced him to books and the love of reading and his high school Communications teacher, Mrs. Roseanne Haselschwerdt who "showed me the importance of building relationships with people." He said he called her to share the news when he was appointed to the principal's post.

Amy McCusker – Lawton

Choosing education as a career didn't occur to Amy McCusker until she was enrolled and attending Western Michigan University as an undergraduate student.

Having grown up with a mom who was a teacher, she thought her study route might include psychology or sociology. But, she found herself volunteering in classrooms and "it ignited a passion," said the new principal at Lawton Elementary. "Once I got into the program, it just felt like the perfect fit."

McCusker said she has approached her classrooms and schools with this philosophy: "Every child can learn – you just have to discover the way they learn," she explained. "You never stop – you just keep reaching for your goals."

She is eager to get into the new year. She hosted open hours for staff and parents and met with her PTO co-presidents about what is planned for the coming year. "It's a really warm community," she said. "I've felt very welcome."

McCusker brings a special understanding to her role in education: She is dyslexic and so has worked extra hard – spending many hours in her youth with a tutor – to achieve her educational goals. McCusker said she was told in high school that she would probably never attend college, but persevered to earn multiple, advanced degrees. She has contacted her tutor with each degree she has received and is proudly continuing her education.

In addition to her teaching degree, She holds an EDS and master's degrees in Educational Leadership and is working toward her doctorate, as well.

After earning her teaching certification, McCusker went on to become a reading recovery teacher, taking a special interest in helping students who needed extra help, and, five years ago, accepted a principal's post in the Wayne-Westland district. She also taught in the Westwood and Livonia districts.

Being responsible for an entire school has its benefits, she said. "What's nice about being a principal: you're able to affect students throughout the building," she said. "I'm able to see all of the students at all grade levels and that's nice."

She said she enjoys working with classroom teachers and "tries to get as interactive with the students as much as possible. It curtails potential problems with behavior and makes them feel good about their achievements."

See New principals, page 6

Meet the principals

New principals, from page 5

McCusker is married to Mike and has two daughters. She enjoys doing all sorts of outdoor activities. They live in Plymouth Township.

Pamela Sica – Abbot

Working as a School Success Teacher in the Monroe Public Schools was something Pamela Sica enjoyed and it prepared her well for an administrative post.

She handled student interventions, some one-on-one and others in small groups, and coordinated duties of an assistant principal, often interacting with parents. Following her success as a teacher, she went on to work for two years as an elementary school principal first in Monroe and then in Flat Rock after her school was closed.

This fall, Sica joins the Ann Arbor district as the new principal at Abbot Elementary. “I can’t wait to meet the kids,” she said in the weeks leading up to the start of school.

Sica decided to study education when her daughters – now in college – were in elementary school and she was a mom who was involved. She especially enjoys the elementary level. “I like the independence they have and the curiosity they still show,” she said. “There’s something that draws me to the kids when they’re so open.”

She studied education and went on to get a master’s degree and Educational Leadership Specialist of Arts degree preparing her for a



Amy McCusker

Occupation: Principal at Lawton Elementary School.

Residence: Plymouth Township

Education: Ed Specialist in Educational Leadership from Eastern Michigan University; Masters degree in Educational Leadership from Wayne State University; Bachelor of Science degree in Education and reading recovery certification from Western Michigan University. She is pursuing her doctorate in Educational Leadership at EMU.

Age: 35

Family: Husband, Mark; two daughters: Camille, 11, and Chloe, 8.

Pets: Lucky, a Boston terrier, and a black Lab named Duncan.

Hobbies: She enjoys anything out-of-doors. The neighborhood gets together for kickball and she runs and jogs, plays tennis and bikes.

Favorite meal: Pizza. The McCuskers have Pizza Fridays at their house, a carryover from the same tradition when she was a kid.

Last book read: “The Last Lecture” by Randy Pausch

leadership role.

Sica said she is looking forward to working with an experienced team at Abbot and said her focus will be on the children who attend school there. Her philosophy always has that at the fore: “Any decision I make in education is made with the question: ‘Is this best for kids?’” she said.

To that end, she will integrate not only into the school community, but also with community groups that influence families and

students, such as the nearby Peace Neighborhood Center. “I do a lot of observation, but I think you need to know what going on outside of school,” she said. “I like an open dialogue and want parents to feel free to come in and see me.”

Sica hopes to institute weekly lunches with Abbot students. “I’ve always done that,” she said. “I usually have a teacher pick a child and they can bring a friend. I want to see every child eventually. The kids

really seem to like it.”

Teaching is still her first love but she finds ways to stay involved and engaged, and that’s not sitting behind her desk.

“I try to get into classrooms as much as I can. I read stories to every classroom a couple of times and covered for teachers when they were away, she said of her past principal posts. “If you really miss kids, get in the classroom and get involved.”

Sica is married to Paul and



Pamela Sica

Occupation: Principal at Abbot Elementary School.

Residence: Green Oak Township near Brighton.

Education: Educational Leadership Specialist of Arts degree from Siena Heights University, Master in the Art of Teaching degree from Marygrove College, bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education from Wayne State University.

Age: 41

Family: Married to Paul. Three children: Alex and Rachel who both attend college and Kyle, who is in kindergarten this fall.

Pets: A cat named Callie.

Hobbies: Reading.

Favorite meal: Lebanese and Greek food.

Last book read: “Sarah’s Key” by Tatiana de Rosnay. She enjoys historical fiction, suspense and adventure books.

School Bells

Summer projects completed on time

A whole host of summer construction projects were completed on time over the summer months, with some final work to be done this fall at Pioneer, Executive Director of Physical Properties Randy Trent told the school board in August.

Most work was funded from the district's Sinking Fund with work at Pioneer done as the final construction project funded by the voter-approved 2004 bond issue.

The large project at Pioneer included renovations to the cafeteria, book depository, business labs, SISS suite and the attendance and principals office area as well as the removal of portable classrooms from the south side of the building and a green courtyard installed. Work on the grass in this area is expected to be completed in early October to accommodate the fall growing season.

Partial roof replacements were also done at Huron and Pioneer.

Accessibility work for sidewalks and other concrete work at Allen and Haisley elementary schools, Scarlett Middle School, Stone High School and the transportation area is completed. After engineers check the slopes, handrails will be installed where necessary, he said.

Site renovation work this summer included driveway replacement from Washtenaw Avenue at Angell Elementary, a bus loop dropoff replacement at Carpenter Elementary, rear driveway replacement at Mitchell elementary, parking lot replacement at Thurston Elementary.

Work at middle schools included rear parking replacement at Clague, asphalt replacement at Scarlett, rear maintenance entrance replacement at Slauson and asphalt replacement around most of the building at Tappan. Partial roof replacements were done at Clabue, Forsythe, Mitchell, Northside, Preschool & Family Center and Slauson.

Bees, from page 1

dent on the types of nectar bees find and process, according to the National Honey Board. Honey is a natural sweetener comprised of natural sugars, water and trace enzymes, minerals, vitamins and amino acids. It also has antioxidants: generally, darker honeys have a higher content and a more robust flavor than lighter ones.

Levy became enamored with bees while working as an elementary teacher at Ann Arbor Open School @ Mack. In the summer of 2007, she was one of 20 teachers to take an Integrated Beekeeping course through Oakland University's Apiary Science in Schools program that was funded through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The program included an initial federal grant that provided one hive and full protective gear.

She started a Bee Buddies program at Ann Arbor Open that fall with about 100 students. She taught each multi-aged first-second grade class (five total classes) and the blended seventh-eighth grade class once each year. The bee education program will continue this school year, Levy said.

Additional grants from the Ann Arbor Public Schools Educational Foundation over the last two years have allowed the program to grow with the purchase of kid-sized beekeeper suits, an extra honey extraction tank and two additional hives. Levy now works with three hives at Raynor Farm, one hive at Ann Arbor Open, an observation hive at the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum and one in her backyard.

Levy's interest in science education harks back to her first career: She was a laboratory scientist at the University of Michigan before making the move into teaching.

"I volunteered in my son's class (at Wines)," she said. "It was so much fun, I decided this is what I wanted to do." She taught grades kindergarten through two for 20 years, retiring three years ago.

But retirement appears to be just a word for Levy, who stays



Top: Jane Levy cuts honey from the honeycombs at Lakewood Elementary, while student campers take turn spinning out the honey and – most importantly – sampling it. Above: Richard Raynor, who owns Raynor Farms in Superior Township, where Ann Arbor students get to visit beehives and learn about bees and honey production.

busy all year. She took students to visit the beehives throughout the summer as a camp teacher, volunteers during the school year as an Environmental Education guide and with the Bee Buddies program and does education programs at the Waterloo State Recreation area. "It's definitely what I like to do," she added. "To continue to make the world a better place."

Students also planted and harvested vegetables this summer at Raynor Farm and fifth-graders visit during the school year for a Winter Survival program as part of the district's Environmental Education curriculum.

Anyone interested in working with Levy about bee education may contact her at jane.levy@sbc-global.net or call 734-995-0113.

About Jane Levy

Jane Levy is a retired Ann Arbor Public Schools elementary teacher and beekeeper who continues to stay busy helping with Environmental Education field trips during the school year, is involved with the Bee Buddies program at Ann Arbor Open School @ Mack and also does programs about beekeeping at Waterloo State Recreation Area. During the past two summers, she has been a teacher in the Ann Arbor Public Schools Green Adventures Camp which includes taking students to working beehives in Superior Township. She entered a career in the classroom in 1988 after working as a laboratory scientist at the University of Michigan. Levy has master's degrees in Elementary Education and Biochemistry and a bachelor's degree in Biochemistry. She loves to travel and reading mysteries and thrillers is a passion. She is married to Jerry, also a scientist; they live in Scio Township and have two grown children: Ben, 32, a computer software developer, and Kate, 29, a programmer who studied both computer science and English and also loves to write. The Levys also claim many pets including dogs, cats, fish and numerous other backyard visitors.

Superintendent, from page 1

ready” and said that plans are underway to have eighth-graders take the gatekeeping course of Algebra I in middle school, preparing them for the more rigorous Michigan Merit Curriculum. The class of 2011 will be the first to graduate under the new state standards.

Roberts made his comments last week during the traditional Opening Day for staff at Pioneer High School as staff members began their return to the classroom. He thanked the staff for their commitment and received two standing ovations from those who filled Schreiber Auditorium.

On a personal note, Roberts told the district’s staff that his time in Ann Arbor has been “the best four years of my life” and that he was grateful to have been superintendent here.

Roberts has accepted the post of chancellor of the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics in Durham, a public, residential high school for upperclassmen with a specialized curriculum and he is expected to leave Ann Arbor and assume his new post by Dec. 1. He has served as superintendent in Ann Arbor for the past four years and has lived in the Ann Arbor community for 12 years. The Ann Arbor Board of Education has begun its search process, which is expected to continue into 2011.

Search timeline

The Ann Arbor Board of Education has started search process to replace Superintendent Todd Roberts, who will leave the district this fall for a new job in North Carolina. Following is a rough timeline of the expected process:

Sept. 10: Proposals from professional search firms due. Bid opening 10 a.m.

Sept. 29: Ann Arbor Board of Education expected to select a firm

October/November: Interim leadership considered; Roberts scheduled to start his new post by Dec. 1.

May-July, 2011: Board expects to hire a new superintendent who will start on or before July 1

As district accomplishments during his time here, he noted a boost in student achievement, overseeing a \$240 million renovation “on time and under budget,” handling fiscal challenges as well as improving communication and fostering teamwork.

Moving ahead, he encouraged the staff to continue working on and with the Strategic Plan and to reach



Superintendent Todd Roberts tells staff to continue the progress that has been made.

out to other groups and people outside of the district. “It’s more important now than ever to partner with others in our community,” he said.

He said the district should continue striving for improved student achievement, working on the issues of diversity and equity, engaging the 80 percent of the community that does not have students in public school, keeping quality education with fewer resources and encouraging innovation in the classroom.

Of diversity and equity, he said: “It’s important we continue that leading role. We’re light years ahead of many having this conversation.”

In the area of student achievement, Roberts said he is proud of the district’s accomplishments. He highlighted the fact that 97 percent of Ann Arbor students now take the ACT test, up from 30 percent three years ago. “Don’t ever let people tell us that ‘some students can’t do,’” he said.

Other highlights:

Fall publications: The annual Back-to-School Guide is available both at the Balas Administration Building and in individual schools. Information is available at <http://a2schools.org> under the “Especially for Parents” section where a PDF copy can be downloaded. Individual Back-to-School guides are also available for Huron, Pioneer, Skyline, Community and Stone high schools.

SchoolMessenger: The district continues to refine the ways it is using this new parent communication network, added last winter. Purchase was funded by a Department of Education REMS grant. It will be used to advise parents about student absences, school closings, major announcements and specific news from individual schools. Parents can log into their PowerSchool account to determine a preferred method of message delivery (phone or e-mail). Visit the “just for Parents” section of the Web site at <http://a2schools.org> for information.

Transportation: Bus service for Ann Arbor Public Schools students has been centralized at the Washtenaw Intermediate School District starting this fall. According to school officials, buses will still have the AAPS name and routes will generally follow the same patterns as last year, with the exception of some special education routes. Information can be found on the district Website or by calling 734-994-2330.

AAPSNews: The school district’s one-year-old online newsletter returns this fall with news and feature articles plus lots of photos and videos. Submitted news, article ideas and photos and videos of school events and programs are always welcome. E-mail District Editor Casey Hans at hansc@aaps.k12.mi.us or call her at 734-994-2090 (internal ext. 51220.) Visit <http://news.a2schools.org> for the most recent online feed, to subscribe via e-mail or to download a print PDF of twice-monthly editions. Prize drawings sponsored by area businesses will take place each semester for new e-mail subscribers.



VIDEO: Watch Slauson students learn at the U-M summer science camp: <http://news.a2schools.org>

Selected Slauson Middle School students got to design and play with Lego robots, create water-powered bottle rockets and do other hands-on activities in August during a free, weeklong summer science camp on the University of Michigan campus. “Making Sense of Senses” was the theme for this year’s U-M InnoWorks Summer Camp in which students from Slauson and Lincoln Middle School participated. The camp is its third year and everything used in the camp is either donated or funded by grants, organizers said. At left, students launch bottle rockets at Palmer Field, during the camp. “We try to make science fun – that’s the idea. We do as little classroom as possible,” said Eric Zhao, a third-year pharmacy graduate student who heads the U-M InnoWorks chapter.