

January 24 The KURTZ CONNECTOR

School resumes! Happy New Year!	1/8
4th grade DIA field trip	1/10
PTA meeting in the cafeteria @ 9:30	1/10
Kids Healthy Heart Challenge assembly (K-2 / 2:00 - 3-5 @ 2:45)	1/12
MLK Day - No school.	1/15
1/2 Day for Stu- dents. Dismissal is at 12:40.	1/19
Early release for students. Dis- missal is at 2:37.	2/6
Student Count Day	2/14
PTA meeting in the cafeteria @ 9:30	2/14
Midwinter recess - No school	2/19 through 2/20
Teacher inservice No school for students.	2/27

Building Hours:
9:10 1st Bell (students may enter) / 9:15 2nd Bell (school starts) / 4:08 Dismissal

The State Grades Are In!

Huron Valley Schools, like many of the district's in the state, across the country and even the world, have been navigating some of the most challenging of obstacles that are in place for all of public education. As a district, we have focused on compassion over compliance during the years of the pandemic. Coming out of the pandemic, your Kurtz staff has shifted thinking back to the work of preparing solid learning foundations for our students.

Your Kurtz staff has a reputation for consistently putting students first by remaining focused on learning. We utilize every moment we can to make sure that each of us is on track in order to deliver our curricular-based topics in meaningful ways, that are rooted in best practice strategies. Our staff members work diligently in grade level teams that have been created with the vision of collaboration and attention to detail. It is our belief that our strong, data-driven and child-centered approach to both teaching and learning sets Kurtz out in front, especially coming out of the challenges of the pandemic.

With the new year, the State of Michigan has released report cards for all of our learning institutions. **Overall**, Kurtz is currently designated with the score of a **B**. This designation is based on the data from the 22-23 school year and is heavily weighted on a few components. The components are **proficiency** (Kurtz is rated a **B**), **academic growth** (Kurtz is rated an **A**), **student subgroup performance** (Kurtz is listed as **significantly above average**), **attendance** is listed as **average** and **assessment participation** is listed as **significantly above average**.

The only area Kurtz was rated low was when Kurtz was compared to other schools with similar demographics or with similar characteristics. Our performance among **similar demographic schools** was rated a **D**. This designation rank orders the overall scores from a number of schools with those similar demographics, in order from highest to lowest. We find this rating significantly brought our overall rating down and ultimately resulted in us receiving the **B** rating, even though we are deemed to be a **Reward School**, by the same entity of the state. This information is available for your review on www.mischooldata.org now.

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Kurtz Elementary School



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Kurtz Elementary

Students in the Spotlight

Congratulations to Miles Mac-Donell and Alyssa Strait for being recognized as our Students in the Spotlight this month.

Miles is a fourth grade student in Mrs. Shaw's class. He is a leader in school. He sets goals, works hard and goes above and beyond to lift others up. Miles is always willing to try new things and to take responsible learning risks.

Alyssa is a fifth grader in Mrs. Spurlock's class and is also viewed as a leader and role model among her fifth grade peers. She works hard at learning and is also ready to help others whenever opportunities

arise. Alyssa does an amazing job in her role on the WKZR news team. She is an intelligent, kind and thoughtful leader in every way.

Both students exemplify the type of leadership attributes our staff and students recognize as meaningful and effective.

We celebrate our Students in the Spotlight each month because they make a difference at school and in our great community.



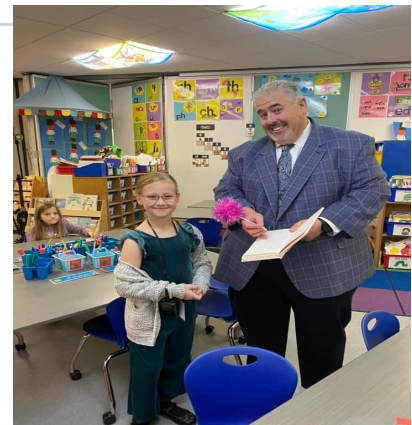
Principal for 1/2 Day!

Each year, Mr. Chisik offers the two highest fundraisers in our Color Run to be the principal for 1/2 day at Kurtz. Congratulations to Edith Stanislav and Annalisa Fikany for earning those two spots. They were dedicated fundraisers in the fall and seemed to have a blast taking on the role of principal on their special days.

Both students received a few tokens of appreciation from Mr. Chisik and were able to put together their own schedules on their day. Each student chose to spend time doing the things they wanted to like reading to kin-

dergarten classes, helping out CATS students and taking their classes out for an unscheduled recess. Each student was also able to invite a friend to attend a special lunch meeting in the principal's office.

Overall, the ladies seemed to really take their roles seriously and represented the role of principal for the 1/2 day, with integrity. Thank you Edie and Annalisa for being such great partners. Your fundraising efforts really made a difference!



Congratulations to our Artists!

Each year, we have students submit entries in our yearbook, school planner and school folder contest. Last month, a group of esteemed Kurtz staff members dove into the many quality entries and designated their work to be shown prominently in the near future.



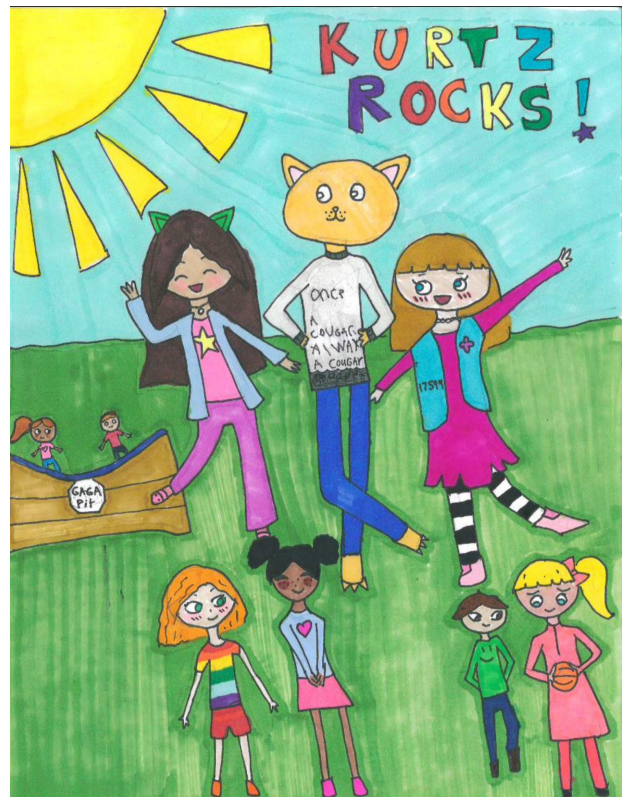
We want to thank every child for taking the time to create amazing pieces of art that really show just how much talent we have in our artists at Kurtz. Please take time to congratulate Bryn, Addy and Luna for their hard work. We will all look forward to seeing these images on the cover of our materials in the near future.



Bryn Bradley: 24/25 Student Planner Cover



Adelynn Felt: 23/24 Yearbook Cover



Luna Kovacs: 24/25 Student Folder Cover

Holiday Help Happens when the Community Steps Up!

We are very fortunate to have great relationships with our community partners at Kurtz. This year, we were able to help twenty-four families during the holiday season. Our efforts are lead by our social worker, but only happens with the help and support of so many holiday heroes. Thank you to everyone who reached out for help and to our partners who made the magic happen this year.

Donors for Holiday Help:

Village Elves- Greg Brainer (organizer)

Huron Valley Chamber of Commerce -Andrea Perry (organizer)

Milford Miracles

Pet Supplies Plus (Organizers: Melissa Segura/April Moore)- Special Thank you for all of her help coordinating

Email Angels-(Organizer:Jenny Macdonnell) - Special Thank you for all of her help coordinating

Melinda Mahil

Kayla Kollien & Family

Cristin Gerwolds & Family

Laura Dodd & Family

Jennifer Vincent & Family

Melissa Hornyak & Family

Kirwin Family

Boni Family

Michele Quigg

Bob Brugger Organized toy donation from Shark Club and Overtime in Waterford.

Wilcox Family

Peterman Family

Beth Ginsbach Group

Faith Lutheran

United Methodist Church -Ann Koss (organizer)

St Mary's Church-JV and Cathy Long-core (organizers)

PTA-Holiday Shop

McKinney Vento-Lena Moore (organizer)

Suzie Gallision

Staff Helpers!!!

Jackie Hancock-Special Thank you for all of her help coordinating!!

Julie Sienko

Cristin Gerwolds

Karina Board

Itzel Gutierrez

Alyssa Hathaway

Susan Dinnan

Joan Hess

Julie Farmer



Continuous Growth at Kurtz

At Kurtz, students and staff are on an exciting new literacy journey. The journey is driven by new research in the education field based on how young brains learn to read. Lower elementary staff have participated in multiple trainings centered on phonics and word study. Some of the training has focused on the University of Florida Literacy Institute Foundations program (UFLI), Orton-Gillingham Strategies (OG), and the LETRS courses. All this new learning has generated enthusiasm across the building to know more, learn more and teach more effectively.

In our classrooms, students are excited to be a part of this journey as well. The new resources being implemented provide consistent, explicit instruction. The routines that are estab-

lished not only promote student learning they also promote student confidence. “They are thriving on routine,” shares Jennifer Boyd, a 2nd grade teacher. “Their writing now compared to the beginning of the year has improved so much.”

Walking into classrooms during the phonics lessons, you can see students are engaged and excited to participate. They are studying words



and talking about phonics concepts in ways they never have before. “I like to sound out the word”, shared Troy, after his 1st grade class has been learning and practicing a strategy for finding syllable parts to read longer words. “I like to read and

phonics helps me read”, shares Violet, a 2nd grade student.

Our upper elementary teachers are also a part of this literacy journey. Four classroom teachers are participating in the district word study pilot. Two other teachers completed a course this fall focusing on morphology. This new learning is helping improve instruction and positively impact student learning. “Students are using and applying new skills in their reading and writing,” Kate Shaw, a 4th grade teacher participating in the district pilot has commented, “Studying morphology opens the door for students to explore words and make connections to their writing and reading.”

We can’t wait to see where this literacy journey is going to take our staff and students!

Built Kurtz Tough

Our theme this year has been, “Built Kurtz Tough!” We would like to say thank you to our friends at Ford Motor Company for donating one synch string backpack to each elementary aged student and staff member at Kurtz. Students were given

these backpacks right before break to help them take home all of their things. We hope that our students appreciated the gesture from our friends at Ford and hope that these backpacks prove to be useful.



PTA Corner

December was a busy and exciting month. The PTA provided the Holiday Shop, with lots of awesome gifts, for all grades. The Holiday Shop was well attended. All the students were excited to give their special holiday gifts to their loved ones and friends. Thank you to all the wonderful volunteers who helped make selecting and

buying holiday gifts, in the school setting, possible. Because of your help, the Holiday Shop ran so smoothly.

The Yoga, Cocoa and Crafts group had lots of yoga kids sipping hot chocolate while making winter crafts.

The PTA has lots of exciting events coming up like Breakfast

with a Buddy, Stem Night , Shamrock Shuffle and the Penny Wars.

Thank you to all who volunteered in 2023. The PTA is excited for the year ahead. Please mark your calendar on January 10 and join us for the next PTA meeting @ 9:30, in the cafeteria.



Bringing a Little Magic to Kurtz

You may have noticed there was a magical buzz in the air at school last month. Our staff works very diligently to ensure a non-denominational holiday experience at school for each and every student.

This year, our hope was to capture a little holiday spirit leading up to winter vacation. This is where Eddie the Elf came in and spread his

mischief around the building. Students seemed to be sitting on the edge of their seats each morning when they came in to the building to find out what Eddie had done the night before. It is a fun experience interacting with the students as they had so much fun tracking the events from day to day.

It is our sincere hope that every child had a great time with this endeavor and that they will always remember that pesky little elf as fond

memories from their experience at Kurtz. Here are some highlights!





Pick Up and Drop Off

We are very proud of the pick-up and drop-off processes we have in place at Kurtz. We work hard to make this daily routine safe and effective. There are Kurtz staff members assigned to ensuring our systems work effectively, while still making sure to use the time to connect with students and provide support when and if support is needed. We assure you that our system works and is most effective when visitors follow our plan. We are always focused on getting you in and out of the parking lot as quickly as possible. Visitors can help us make pick-up and drop-off times flow best by not parking on the curb during pick-up and drop-off times.

- Mind the 15 MPH speed limit on Kurtz Drive.
- Vehicles should be pulling all the way up and quickly getting child(ren) in and out of the car. Please do not get out and help children in or out of the vehicle.

- Utilize pick-up and drop-off Kurtz staff or park if your child requires extra support.
- Visitors should never pass in the left lane of the loop because it is not safe for our students and could (and has) resulted in damage to vehicles, adding unnecessary stress on individuals. We feel strongly that passing really only has the potential to save a few seconds on your commute and strongly expect you not to do it.



- If you are planning to park, please park in a designate parking space. Kurtz staff members park in the back of the lot in order to make it as easy as possible for parents to find a parking space in our small parking lot. Al-

so, students should never be walking through the parking lot without an adult. Parents, please observe the posted speed limit sign on Kurtz Drive.

- We ask parents to respect our neighbors and never block driveways when you are picking up or dropping off. We have also been contacted by our neighbors at the Document Store to ask parents not to use their parking lot as a pick-up space.

Parents are not to escort their child(ren) to their classrooms for various health and safety reasons. Teachers meet their students outside each morning to start the day in a positive and personal manner. Your participation in this process is both expected and appreciated. Please feel free to share ideas and suggestions in writing with me, Mr. Chisik, at your earliest convenience.

Welcoming+Empoweing+Achieving=GREATNESS!