

# Subdivision petitions to become part of Chippewa Valley School District

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By Nicole Tuttle  
Voice Reporter



Chippewa Valley Schools Director of Curriculum and Assessment Dr. Pamela Jones made a presentation regarding the use of testing and data to the Chippewa Valley Board of Education on June 1. (Photos by NICOLE TUTTLE)

During its June 1 meeting, the Chippewa Valley Board of Education briefly touched on an upcoming MISD hearing that could potentially increase the number of students in the district.

Chippewa Valley Superintendent Ron Roberts said that a subdivision located at 24 Mile and Card roads has petitioned the Macomb Intermediate School District (MISD) to become part of the Chippewa Valley School District.

“I’m not sure exactly of the requirements of the process, but if you are contiguous to a school district, you can petition to become part of that school district,” Roberts said, noting that the subdivision will have to turn in the proper paperwork and obtain a certain number of signatures.

The hearing will be held at the MISD in Clinton Township at 7 p.m. June 16.

The subdivision currently falls within New Haven Community Schools, the superintendent noted. If either New Haven Community Schools or the subdivision disagrees with the MISD decision, they have a right to appeal.

Chippewa Valley will not take a position in the matter, Roberts said.

“What the ISD will do, we will support,” he said.

If the MISD chooses to grant the request of the subdivision and allow it to become part of Chippewa Valley Schools, the district would then have to make some decisions about which schools the students of the subdivision would attend, Roberts said.

Also on June 1, Chippewa Valley Board of Education President Frank Bednard said the district’s strategic planning committee was expected to make a presentation to the board at its June 15 meeting. Bednard also made reference to a recent student death in the district.

“I wanted to mention that we had that tragedy in the district last week with one of our students passing...Ironically the school does make an effort through our coalition,” Bednard said.

In addition, Bednard also said the board had continued discussions about the future of the Destination Imagination program in the district.

“The board, as far as if you want to move it out of community ed into the district sponsored events, what that would take, and it was more of a recommendation, I believe, to leave it where it was and perhaps make a stipend for their finalists if they make it to a national championship again. I think there is some merit in that,” Bednard said.

Bednard asked Roberts what other school districts do as far as financially assisting Destination Imagination, and Roberts said he would investigate. Roberts said that currently, there is no other group in the district that falls under the heading of community education that receives any type of stipend or enhancement.

“The only thing that is different about this is that, I think, this more closely relates to academics than anything else we do,” Roberts said. “It fits with the academic mission of the district. That is what makes it different. But I understand the other side of it, too, that we don’t, through community ed, we have not done that with any other programs.”

The school board also recognized Science Olympiad students in the district on June 1.

Additionally, the board voted to approve Dawn Leone to the position of supervisor of human resources, with the effective start date of July 1. Leone was appointed to fill a vacancy created by a retirement. The board further approved Netech Corporation for the purchase of 165 computer systems at a cost of \$128,535 for the International Academy of Macomb. Funding will come from the IAM fund for this purchase, said Chippewa Valley Assistant Superintendent for Business and Operations Scott Sederlund.

The board also heard a presentation from Director of Curriculum and Assessment Dr. Pamela Jones regarding Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) data and district assessment data.

Jones said the district asks some essential questions in the area of data use, based on the idea that what is most important is to determine if students have learned essential concepts.

“In Chippewa Valley schools we have built a balanced assessment system and our goal is to ensure that when students get high-stakes testing, that they are confident and prepared to be successful on that testing,” Jones said. “NWEA or interim benchmark assessments help us make sure that children are prepared for those higher stakes tests that they take later on. We want to make sure that no child falls through the cracks and we want to make sure that any child that is ready to be stretched or challenged is given those opportunities. NWEA helps us adjust our teaching as the year goes along to meet individual students’ needs.”

Jones said the district has used NWEA for two years, and that it is administered to all students in kindergarten through 10th grade. Students in kindergarten through second grade take math and reading assessments, and students in grades three through 10 take math, reading and language usage. Each student tests for about six hours over the course of the year. Students in kindergarten through second grade and ninth and 10th grade are assessed three times a year and students in grades three to eight are assessed twice per year.

“We adjusted the assessment schedule for those students because of MSTEP. Students were motivated this year by knowing their own scores. So the students see their scores the first time they take it and then are motivated to try and beat that score. We know kids like competitions. Students also seem much more comfortable this year with the assessments and teachers and administrators are increasingly using the data to drive instructional decisions,” Jones said. “This year we measured our students in the fall and then again in the spring, and our

kindergarten through second-grade students exceeded our growth targets for them in mathematics and in reading we did very, very well.”

She said the schedule was reduced by 60 instructional days, but students are still exceeding their targets.

“But more important than just the data, what is most important is how we use this data, and during the course of the last two years we have been spending a tremendous amount of time and energy with teachers and administrators and parents learning to use the data to help drive instructional decisions for students. We want to be able to understand the data and we want to make sure that all of our stakeholders can use the data appropriately,” Jones said.

Teachers can pull up reports that have student names attached to specific skills that that student needs to learn at the point in time when they take the test, she noted.

“Another great resource that we shared with all of our teachers is the RIT to Resource, and this is a website that anyone can go to...students, parents, teachers can put in a child's RIT score and look for specific standards that we want to help students with, and it pulls up a just plethora of resources for the teacher to use or a parent to use at home,” she said. “It is just a great site for anyone to use to help students.

“And then an additional site is Khan Academy. We are very pleased to share with teachers that Khan Academy has partnered with NWEA and with the new SAT that is coming out and provides an open site where teachers again, parents and students can go on themselves to get additional resources based on their RIT score or based next fall on their PSAT score and it gives them an actual individualized tutorial program to help those students improve if they want to do extra work at home.”

This year an MTSS (Multi-tier System of Supports) handbook was disseminated to all of the buildings, Jones said.

“We have systemic protocols that are used everywhere to develop and facilitate staff working with kids and working with interventions and making sure we have all of the students in the correct interventions to meet their needs. All of our schools implemented data teams this year to ensure growth within students,” Jones said. “So you can see that we meet three times a year in most buildings to talk about each student and where they're at and how they are doing and how can we improve their learning. We have critical questions that each building uses to analyze the student data and talk about where kids are at and how we can help them. Another way that we are developing a culture of data use is to improve on student goal setting.”

Data will be used to seek how the district can improve its summer school curriculum, to add enrichment activities and to revise the English Language Learner program, as well as the elementary science specials curriculum, she noted.

“So looking at our essential questions again the data is only as important as it helps us consistently figure out ways to improve student achievement and growth. And so that is what we are using all the data for and hopefully we have come a long way I think in two years. I think our teachers have embraced it. I think our kids have embraced it and I think our scores show that,” Jones said.

*Nicole Tuttle is a freelance reporter. She can be contacted at [ntuttle.reporter@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ntuttle.reporter@sbcglobal.net).*