

Local school districts busy over summer gearing up for new year

By [Mitch Hotts](#), The Macomb Daily

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Thomas Leahy, 5, of St. Clair Shores, finds his new desk in Linda Russell's first grade class at Masonic Heights Elementary School during a recent orientation session. RAY SKOWRONEK -- THE MACOMB DAILY



After a two-year closure, King Academy in Mount Clemens will re-open with a focus on Science-Technology, Arts and Math (STEAM). MITCH HOTTIS -- THE MACOMB DAILY

Macomb County school communities were bustling over the summer months renovating buildings, enhancing learning facilities and bringing in new leaders.

New superintendents were appointed in four local educational communities and went right to work overseeing details for the coming year.

In recent weeks, it's all come together.

Education officials say this is a special time of year -- schools smell freshly cleaned, empty classrooms waiting to be filled with children eager to learn, educators ready to dispense knowledge.

Here is a brief look at some of the new places and new faces for school communities as the fall semester starts this week:

Armada Area Schools

New Places:

- A foreign language class has been added to Krause Elementary School, allowing students to have a foreign language experience from kindergarten through the 12th grade.
- A new science elective is available for Krause students in addition to the regular science instruction.

- Armada High School has a new CTE program, a certified nursing assistant certification through a partnership with Macomb Community College for health care positions.
- The district is adopting a Restorative Justice discipline philosophy to prevent student suspensions and stress personal responsibility.

Anchor Bay Schools

New Faces:

- Jordan Ackerman is the new athletic director. He formerly served in the same position at Warren Woods-Tower.
- Dave Boeskool, the former athletic director, is assistant principal at Anchor Bay High School.
- Joe McDonald is secondary curriculum director.
- Jack Stanton, formerly principal at Ashley Elementary, is principal at Anchor Bay High School.
- Melissa VanHulle, a longtime district teacher, is now principal at Ashley Elementary.
- Sherry Kenward is the district's new career technical education director.
- Heidi Stephenson, former assistant principal at the high school, moves to principal at Naldrett Elementary.
- Former Naldrett Elementary principal Phil Latona is principal at Middle School South.

Center Line Public Schools

New Places:

- Internet cable in K-Hall locker rooms and power/data poles for robotics were installed in Center Line High School.
- New LED lights were installed at Wolfe Middle School.
- Painting projects were completed at the Early Childhood Center, Crothers and Roose, along with plumbing work at Crothers and the Administration Building, and HVAC cleaning at Peck.
- Academy 21 and Home-School Partnership continues to expand for virtual and home-school offerings.

New Faces:

- 12 veteran staff members retired in June, making way for a new generation of educators. So far, 10 new staff members have been hired.

Chippewa Valley Schools

New Places:

- Improvements from a voter-approved bond issue included new sidewalks and/or parking lots at 21 sites, portable laptop carts for every school adding 2,600 student computers district-wide, and skylight replacements for both high schools.
- Chippewa Valley is partnering with the American Heart Association to become first district in Macomb County to offer CPR in school to teach students life-saving skills.
- New courses include forensic science and college writing.
- The district is celebrating its 50th anniversary of the first graduating class of Chippewa Valley High School.
- A new Strategic Plan developed by a 75-person committee will guide decisions over the next 3-5 years focusing on technology, curriculum, and culture and other areas.

New Faces:

- Marina Licari is assistant principal at Ojibwa Elementary, but moves into the principal's role later this year when current principal John Rose retires.
- Nicole Faehner is assistant principal at Seneca Middle School, replacing Licari.
- Ebony Carter leaves teaching to become assistant principal at Dakota High School.
- 28 new teachers have been hired to replace vacancies created by retirements and accommodate enrollment growth.

Clintondale Community Schools

- Greg Green, former Clintondale High School principal, took over as superintendent.
- Dawn Sanchez is assistant High School principal and continues to serve as 9th Grade Center coordinator.
- Meloney Cargill is the new High School principal.
- Coleen Brunni, a former Middle School counselor, is director of curriculum.
- Shannon King is principal at Parker Elementary.

East Detroit Public Schools

New Faces:

- Ryan McLeod is the new superintendent. Previously an assistant superintendent for Monroe Public Schools, he had worked as an administrator in Monroe, and held teaching positions in Novi and Airport high schools. He replaces Joanne Lelekatch, who left to become superintendent of Grosse Ile schools.
- Kimberly Busuttill is principal at Forest Park Elementary.
- Sam Chaptini is supervisor at Kellwood Alternative High School.

Fitzgerald Public Schools

New Places:

- Students and staff will enjoy the benefits of several new items financed by the voter-approved sinking fund.

The Fitzgerald High School football field has been renovated with synthetic turf and an 8-lane running track.

- Phase 4 air conditioning replacement has been completed at Chatterton Middle School, along with improvements to the gym floor. Phase 4 of air conditioning in classrooms at the high school is complete.
- Chatterton students in grades 7 and 8 can enroll in a new STEM Lab Innovations class.

Fraser Public Schools

New Faces:

- Jessica Carrier is director of special education.
- Huston Julian takes over as principal at Richards Middle School.
- Kyle Ray is assistant principal at Fraser High School.
- Shane Redshaw is athletic director.

New Places:

- The district is following a three-year strategic plan that calls for competency-based learning models, increasing student achievement and developing systems to respond to students' needs.

Lake Shore Public Schools

New Places:

- More Lake Shore students will be going to Italy as the district has expanded its foreign exchange program. In October, students from sister school programs from China, Germany and Italy will all be in the district at the same time.
- The district has added an additional Great Start Readiness class at Rodgers Elementary.
- Four new Chromebook carts have been added - two at the high school and two at the middle school. More wireless access points have been added to every building to support the increase in electronic devices being used in classrooms.
- High School students will be working with St. Clair Shores Senior Center to offer technology classes to seniors. Students will help seniors work on iPads, Skype and other programs.

Lakeview Public Schools

New Places:

- All Lakeview High School students this year will take a computer application course as a local graduation requirement. A new computer lab is being added to the high school to accommodate the class.

- New playground equipment has been installed at Ardmore Elementary. It is made of stainless steel, vinyl coated steel surfaces and hard plastic.
- A new bell schedule at Jefferson Middle School will create additional minutes in the core content areas for instruction.
- A new electronic marquee was installed at the Wheat Educational Campus.
- Hundreds of new books were received for the K-8 elementary curriculum English/Language Arts program.

New Faces:

- Sara Dobbelaer is principal at Greenwood Elementary, replacing Diane Koenig, who retired. Dobbelaer had been a teacher for Memphis Community Schools.

L'Anse Creuse Public Schools

New Places:

- Italian language is now offered at the high schools, giving students a choice from five world languages, the others being Chinese, French, German and Spanish.
- A first-grade Chinese Immersion class is now at two of the elementary schools.
- Computer-aided design (CAD) will now be available.
- Fourth and fifth grade students who meet certain criteria will be eligible for a new math structure being developed by curriculum experts.
- Advanced English Language Arts classes are available at the middle schools.

Mount Clemens Community Schools

New Places:

- Closed in 2013, King Academy re-opens this fall as King STEAM Academy under the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) philosophy.
- The high school has implemented a PSAT/SAT prep program to promote college readiness.
- High school students will be supported by a core academic support team.
- A new K-12 math series and learning platforms have been added.

New Faces:

- William Pearson, former superintendent in South Lyon, is interim superintendent.
- Timm Kelly, formerly a principal at Flint's Linden Charter Academy, is principal at King STEAM Academy.
- Elizabeth Manning is principal at Seminole Academy. She was an assistant elementary school principal in Maryland.

- Joseph Gibson is principal at Mount Clemens High School.

New Haven Community Schools

New Faces:

- Todd Robinson, formerly a principal at Avondale Middle School in Rochester, is the new superintendent. He replaced Keith Wunderlich who took a position in Waterford.
- Jennifer Szlachta is principal at New Haven Elementary.

New Places:

- A partnership is in place for Virtual Education grades 7-12 with Lake Huron Virtual School-MyVirtualSchool.com and Michigan Educational Partnerships.
- New Haven High School's math department is implementing new strategies involving "flipped instruction" program.

Richmond Community Schools

New Places:

- The district will provide students in grades 3-12 with laptops, while K-2 students will receive tablets and K-1 classrooms will have SMART tablets in each classroom.

New Faces:

- David Mangune is principal at Will L. Lee Elementary.

Romeo Community Schools

New Faces:

- Eric Whitney, former assistant superintendent for curriculum, took over as superintendent when Nancy Campbell retired in June.
- Paul Essian, a former assistant principal at Romeo Middle School, is principal at Hevel Elementary.
- Andrea Hasse is principal at Hamilton-Parsons Elementary. She comes from Fitzgerald Public Schools, where she was an instructional coach.
- Mike James, a former language arts teacher, is assistant principal at Romeo Middle School.
- Jim Ellis is assistant principal at Romeo High School. He was dean of students at L'Anse Creuse High School-North.
- Jennifer McFarlane, former principal at Warren Woods Middle School, is assistant superintendent of academic services.

Roseville Community Schools

New Faces:

- Dennis Borse is the new athletic director for Roseville High School and assistant principal for Eastland Middle School. A former English teacher, he replaces Major Mickens, who is now principal at Eastland Middle School.
- Donovan Stec is the new principal at Dort Elementary. He takes over for Charles Felker, who is principal at Steenland Elementary.
- Longtime Assistant Superintendent Michael LaFève retired after 20 years of service. He will be replaced by curriculum director Mark Blaszkowski.
- David Rice, former Middle School principal, is the new curriculum director.

South Lake Schools

New Places:

- All of the bathrooms at South Lake High School have been renovated.
- South Lake Middle School has new locker rooms.
- South Lake elementary schools are having new secure entries installed by November.
- The athletic complex has been upgraded with a new track and field turf facility.
- Elementary school students will have a new specials class in technology.

New Faces:

- Mark Adamski is new principal at South Lake High School.

Utica Community Schools

New Places:

- The district made more than \$5 million in facility improvements as part of a voter-approved 2009 bond issue. That includes infrastructure improvements, new laptops at the secondary schools, enhancing the high-speed wireless system, and purchase of 20 buses.
- At the elementary level, the district continues to implement its English/Language arts program to include K-2. Students will have more emphasis on computer science through more programming skills and coding.
- At the secondary level, Utica partnered with the College Board for an instructional pilot that gives algebra and English students skills they can use for college-level programs.
- A new parent tool Family Connection is available to secondary schools to help guide students on post-secondary interests.

Van Dyke Schools

New Places:

- The district has partnered with the Michigan Department of Education, along with 14 other state districts, on a five-year initiative to improve adolescent health through exemplary sexual health education, improved access to sexual health services, and establishment of safe environments for students and staff. The project is supported through a cooperative agreement from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other agencies.

Warren Consolidated Schools

New Places:

- The Middle School's Mathematics Science Technology Center has been expanded to include grades 6-8 and the Middle School's Visual Performing Arts program will include grades 7-8.?
- St. John Providence has a school-based health center at Warren Mott High School.
- A new transitional kindergarten program is in place.

New Faces:

- Anne Donato is director of special education.
- John Bernia is principal at Carleton Middle School.
- Khris Nedam principal at Black Elementary School.

Warren Woods Public Schools

New Faces:

- Leo Kondziolka is principal at Pinewood Elementary.
- Don Sikora, Pinewood's former principal, is now the middle school principal.
- Craig Cutshaw is the district athletic director.
- At Warren Woods Educational Center, Kara Beal is curriculum director and Stacy Santamaria is Early Childhood coordinator.

New Places:

- Construction on the Early Childhood Center is scheduled to be complete Sept. 9.

Katelyn Larese contributed to this report