

L'Anse Creuse News December 2024

"No matter our backgrounds, we all have one common thread; our students and their success."

#### Fall Edition Table of Contents

1. Thank you, L'Anse Creuse!
  - a. Downey's Double Play at the DIA
2. From the Superintendent
3. Shining a Light: Technology
4. Learning in Action
5. Learning in Action cont.
6. Fall Athletics
7. Stellar Students
8. Community Ed. and Hiring Information

#### **Thank you, L'Anse Creuse!**

The district is grateful to the community for approving the \$188.7 million No-Tax-Rate Increase Bond Proposal.

On November 5, the L'Anse Creuse community voted to approve the \$188.7 million No-Tax-Rate Increase Bond Proposal put forth by the district to enhance safety and security, improve instructional spaces and technology, update building infrastructure, and enhance arts, athletics, and playgrounds.

The district is incredibly grateful to voters for giving us the opportunity to enhance our schools and create lasting improvements for our students and community. With the passing of the bond, our district will begin work on the approved projects and provide updates to our community on the progress being made.

"We understand that this work cannot happen overnight, and we are committed to keeping you informed along the way," said Superintendent Keith Howell. "As we move forward with bond projects, we will regularly share updates on our progress and on how these improvements are making a positive difference in our schools and for our community as a whole."

Mr. Howell's 100-day transition plan highlighted his commitment to the district and to the students, staff and families who call L'Anse Creuse their home. The passing of this bond proposal is another step to shaping the future of the district and providing a welcoming learning environment to students. Mr. Howell extends his gratitude to the community for their support and confidence in the passing of the bond proposal.

"Thank you for being student-focused and community-minded," Howell said in a statement to staff and families. "Your commitment to the future of our schools is what makes these advancements possible, and together, we are building a brighter future for all of our students."

#### **Downey's Double Play at the DIA**

LCHS students came together to create a beautiful memorial for Coach Downey.

At the end of last school year, beloved teacher and coach from L'Anse Creuse High School, Lisa Downey, passed away unexpectedly. Her legacy at the school lives on through the students and staff, who have been committed to showcasing Lisa's passion and dedication to the community.

At the beginning of September, the AP Spanish Department and National Art Honor Society (NAHS) submitted a prompt for the Detroit Institute of Art's "Ofrendas: Celebrating el Dia de Muertos." This annual exhibit featured a collection of 11 ofrendas, which is an offering made during the Mexican holiday of Día de los Muertos, and is made to honor and celebrate those who have passed.

After a panel surveyed the applications, Spanish teacher Erika Lesniak and NAHS sponsor Juliana Schewe-Jackson received the exciting news that they had been selected, and work began on an ofrenda honoring the life of Coach Lisa Downey. Their ofrenda, lovingly named "Downey's Double Play," featured the likeness of a Lancer softball player, showcasing her time as a player and coach. The base of the piece had various memorabilia from her career in L'Anse Creuse, including pictures, her Hall of Fame induction, an LC basketball and softball, and Lancer gear.

Not only was this an exciting learning opportunity, it was a wonderful way for the Art and Spanish students to work together, engage in a different culture, and remember a teacher who had a significant impact on the community. Their piece was showcased in the DIA's exhibit from September 28 through November 3, though it can still be seen on the museum's website.

On November 18, Ms. Schewe-Jackson, Ms. Lesniak, and all of their Spanish and Art students were invited to the Board of Education meeting to recognize their efforts and congratulate them on a job well done.

### **From the Superintendent**

Dear L'Anse Creuse Community,

As I reflect on my first two months as Superintendent, I am overwhelmed with gratitude and excitement for the journey ahead. Starting my role on October 1, I've had the unique opportunity to dive right into the heart of our district, and I could not have asked for a more welcoming and supportive community. From the Board of Education to our staff, students, and families, the kindness and collaboration I've experienced reaffirm my belief that L'Anse Creuse is a special place.

One of the true highlights of this time has been meeting so many new people and immersing myself into the day-to-day operations of L'Anse Creuse. Over the past two months, I've attended a variety of events that showcase the talent and dedication of our students and staff. From celebrating academic excellence at award ceremonies, cheering on our athletes at competitions, and enjoying a couple trunk-or-treats, to being entertained at the showing of Mean Girls, every event has been an opportunity to see our students and community in action. I even had the chance to play pickleball with a group of middle schoolers. These experiences have been the perfect introduction to the incredible people who make up our community.

This fall also brought a monumental achievement with the successful passage of our \$188.7 million bond proposal. This milestone reflects the deep commitment of our community to the future of education in L'Anse Creuse. The bond will allow us to make transformative improvements, including enhancing safety and security, upgrading instructional spaces and technology, and revitalizing arts, athletics, and playground facilities. These upgrades will support teaching and learning, ensuring that every student has the tools and environment to thrive. As we move forward with bond projects, we will regularly share updates on our progress and how these improvements are making a positive difference in our schools and for our community as a whole.

I encourage you to enjoy this edition of the L'Anse Creuse News, which highlights the incredible achievements of our students. These stories are a testament to the talent, hard work, and dedication of everyone in our schools and community.

As we move forward, our focus remains on being both student-centered and community-minded. These guiding principles shape our work and ensure that our decisions prioritize the success and well-being of every learner. Together, we will continue to strengthen the foundation of L'Anse Creuse Public Schools and build a bright future for our students.

Thank you for your partnership and trust in this journey. It is an honor to serve as your Superintendent, and I look forward to the years to come.

Superintendent Keith Howell

### **Michigan School Band & Orchestra Association (MSBOA) All-State Musicians**

Two L'Anse Creuse students were selected for the All-State Band and Orchestra.

The middle and high school students here in L'Anse Creuse have the opportunity to join their school's band program and hone their skills as a musician. The talented band teacher and director in the district do a fantastic job teaching students how to master their instrument and perform in front of audiences.

Each year, the MSBOA selects talented middle and high school students to perform in a special band made up of the best young musicians from across the State of Michigan. Two L'Anse Creuse students, Sonny S. from L'Anse Creuse Middle School – East (MSE) and Caden W. from L'Anse Creuse High School – North (LCHS-N), were selected to perform in the All-State Band and Orchestra.

Sonny, an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student at MSE, will perform as a percussionist in the Middle School Band after completing a rigorous audition process for an expert judging panel this fall. Caden, an 11<sup>th</sup> grader at LCHS-N, will perform as the only piccolo player in the All-State Orchestra, beating out tough competition in the flute section to earn his spot.

The two will perform with their respective groups on January 25 at the DeVos Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Both Sonny and Caden are invited to the Board of Education meeting on December 16 to be recognized at the district level for their fantastic achievement. The district is incredibly proud of both students and look forward to their performance at the end of January.

### **Shining a Light: Technology**

As of this school year, all L'Anse Creuse students are able to benefit from 1:1 technology.

At the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year, 1:1 technology was fully implemented at the elementary level, meaning every student in L'Anse Creuse now has their own personal device to use as an educational tool. After much planning and execution, teachers and staff across the district have been utilizing their new technology in ways that promote growth and learning for all students.

The district began the first 1:1 initiative at the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year with a Chromebook for every student in grades 6-12. As of this school year, there are over 10,000 devices currently in use on a 1:1 ratio by L'Anse Creuse students, staff, and teachers. The 1:1 technology looks different at each level – elementary students use iPads and secondary students use Chromebooks. Each device has applications that are designed to work hand in hand with the curriculum and aid students in understanding the material they are learning.

Zachary White, a third-grade teacher at Francis A. Higgins Elementary School, said he and his students use the iPads for a wide range of learning activities. Students learn new information by conducting research, review information through educational games, and produce papers and projects by using apps on the iPad. White believes the use of the iPad has encouraged his students academically both in and out of the classroom.

“I think it's a confidence thing,” he said, “because they're so familiar with iPads that when you give them a math problem with the iPad, and they get to draw on it, they think it's a game. It's the trick – we're doing math, it's fun, and then it gets them to that next level.”

White said he also uses the iPad to connect with his students with daily emotional check-ins. Each morning, students fill out a survey to tell Mr. White how they feel and why they feel the way they do. This provides a great opportunity for White to connect with his students and provide a little extra support if they had a rough morning.

Though teachers may use many of the same applications and programs, each teacher is able to customize the use of the iPad to fit with their personal teaching style. Kelly Ervinck is a second-grade teacher and utilizes the iPads as a supplemental tool to enhance the hands-on material she provides to her students.

For example, Ervinck's second grade students are working on improving their handwriting, and using paper and pencil is still the best way for students to learn and practice this skill. When the class moves on from handwriting, students are then able to use their technology to read, practice vocab words or math problems, and even brainstorm future ideas.

“We are still using pencil and paper for a majority of our stuff, however we can use the iPads to help us when we're typing up our final copies or during our planning process where they can record their ideas,” she said. “For our math curriculum, I do send home some homework and it's great having those math apps, and the kids have used those to help them complete their homework.”

With advanced curriculum comes advanced technology, and middle and high school students need more than an iPad to effectively utilize 1:1. For three years now, the secondary level has had access to Chromebooks, which allow older students to utilize other applications and programs appropriate for their level of learning.

Martin Zurawski teaches Social Studies to sixth and seventh grade students at L'Anse Creuse Middle School – East and said the Chromebooks are useful for everything his students do in Social Studies. With such a powerful tool at their disposal, his students have access to research from around the globe for their projects and can view current local and world news to spur positive class discussions.

Moving away from pencil and paper has also been a big advantage, and using Chromebooks has made his job as a teacher more streamlined. Since assignments are available to download online, Zurawski said it is easier to assign makeup homework for absent students, provide work in advance, and reduce the amount of work lost between school and home.

Tanya Leon, a K-12 Instructional Technology Coach for the district, said the 1:1 initiative is an important step in preparing L'Anse Creuse students for the future. With how quickly careers, technology, and the world evolve, the implementation of technology, such as the iPads and Chromebooks, equip students with the skills they need to navigate and shape their world responsibly.

“The success of 1:1 technology extends far beyond providing students with devices,” she said. “It's about fostering a culture of active creation over passive consumption. By leveraging technology, students are encouraged to collaborate, create, and think critically, building essential 21st-century skills.”

L'Anse Creuse is grateful to have the opportunities that come with 1:1 technology and the support it provides for our students' academic growth.

### **Learning in Action!**

#### **Crime Scene Investigation**

During their semester, Mr. Mitchell's CSI class at Middle School – East learn about several different crimes and the way they are investigated and solved. At the end of September, the class had a unit on arson, and were visited by the Chesterfield Fire Department, who spoke with students about how firefighters react in different scenarios and identify that a crime has been committed.

To finish the unit, the class built mini houses from various materials to explore first-hand how fire travels through a home. By utilizing proper fire safety, the class was able to enjoy an interesting experiment and learn more about how arson is investigated by professionals.

### **A Trip to Europe**

Ove the summer, the foreign language programs at both L'Anse Creuse High School and L'Anse Creuse High School – North took a trip across the pond and visited multiple countries in Europe. Not only was this a wonderful chance for students to learn about other cultures, it also provided students with the opportunity to practice conversations with native speakers of foreign languages.

On their trip, LCHS-N students visited France and Spain, taking time to explore famous landmarks like Notre Dame and the Eiffel Tower. The LCHS trip took students around Belgium and France first, allowing students to sightsee before finishing their trip by relaxing in the beautiful scenery of Switzerland.

### **Science is Magic!**

On October 9, Green Elementary students were visited by Science Wizard David Hagerman, who used exciting experiments to show students how magical the STEM world can be. Hagerman put on two shows, one for younger students and one for older students. Each show was tailored for the age of the students, providing an assembly that was both entertaining and educational.

Hagerman's scientific magic show included experiments showcasing STEM concepts such as electricity, inertia, chemical reactions, and wind power. From hair-raising static electricity to disappearing cups, David's experiments had students engaged and excited to learn more.

### **Veteran's Day**

November 11 is Veteran's Day, and L'Anse Creuse elementary schools use the national holiday as an opportunity, not only to thank veterans for their service, but to teach students about the armed forces and the sacrifices made by those who serve. South River Elementary held a special ceremony and breakfast for veterans, which featured the student body signing "America the Beautiful," "The Star-Spangled Banner," and a medley of the anthems of the various armed forces.

Atwood held a parade for veterans and invited them into the classrooms to speak about their experiences, giving students the chance to learn about the armed forces and the experiences of veterans first-hand. Tenniswood students circled the flagpole to recite the Pledge of Allegiance and since “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

### **Lions Leaders for Life**

On September 20, South River Elementary School welcomed guests from the Detroit Lions to host a special presentation! The exciting assembly, called “Lions Leaders for Life,” brought mascot Roary and a crew of presenters to the school to teach students about what it means to be a leader both in and out of school.

Through the use of fun games, silly skits, and crowd interaction, the presenters taught the students body, not only what it takes to be a leader in life, but also how to maintain a healthier lifestyle. Their presentation revolved around the Lions Leadership List, a list of six character traits one needs to have in order to be successful: Listen to parents, teachers, and coaches, become better Educated by studying hard in school, be Ambitious in your desire for success, be Disciplined and do what is right, help your peers by being an Encouraging person, and win the game of life by being Responsible for your actions.

### **Camp Cavell**

In November, 69 students and 12 staff members from L’Anse Creuse High School took a bus to Lexington, Michigan to attend Camp Cavell, a special communications retreat for students and staff to learn problem solving strategies and effective communication skills. Attending this camp has been a tradition at LCHS since the early 90s, allowing for generations of students to take advantage of the education sessions Camp Cavell has to offer.

Once settled at camp, students were split into groups and spent three days attending communications sessions with staff leaders. One of the most important aspects of the retreat included “washing away” one’s status, in which students turn in their phones and focus on working with their peers,

On top of the communications sessions, students were also able to participate in many camp classics, including nature hikes, archery, bonfires, and the popular polar plunge in Lake Huron. During their stay at camp, the weather was perfect for camp activities, and clear night sky even allowed students and staff to witness the Taurid meteor shower.

For many past and present LCHS students and staff, this trip is one of the most fun and beneficial educational opportunities available to students. Not only do attendees walk away with new strategies and communication skills, they also have lifelong memories and a greater understanding and respect for their peers.

### **Performing Arts Performances**

L’Anse Creuse is home to several successful and prominent Performing Arts programs where high school students can let their talent shine. At L’Anse Creuse High School – North, students in the Crusader Nation Theatre work diligently under the leadership of their teacher, Mr. Mitchell Osadchuk, to hone their acting skills and put on spectacular performances for audience members. This year, the group presented their

fall play, "Beware the House on Haunted Hill," on October 17, providing a spooky whodunnit just in time for Halloween.

At the Frederick V. Pankow Center, students have the opportunity to take theatre as a class, working under the direction of teacher Gregory Trzaskoma to produce high quality musicals for the L'Anse Creuse community. On November 15, the Pankow Performing Arts students took to the stage in their production of "Mean Girls," stunning audiences with their outstanding work. The classic Tina Fey story has an age-old message that was a perfect lesson for high school audiences, by high school actors.

### **Michigan Girls Future Flight Challenge**

Emily B. and Maya S. from L'Anse Creuse Middle School – North participated in the Michigan Girls Future Flight Challenge, placing 4<sup>th</sup> out of 22 teams across the State of Michigan. This event, put on by the Women of Aerospace Industry Association of Michigan (WAIAM), was a virtual, state-wide aerospace competition that challenged young girls in 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade to create a unique, sustainable way of flight to solve real-world issues.

Emily and Maya created the HurriHelp, a drone that provides post-hurricane support. The pair recognized the increase in frequency of hurricanes and created the drone to deliver supplies to stranded individuals, while also collecting plastic to turn into sunglasses as a part of their fundraising efforts. Though the drone is theoretical, the learning experience is real, and the two had to conduct research and work with real aerospace professionals to make their project a success.

Over the course of four weeks, their team, "Mindful Engineering," worked with female industry mentors, designed and created a model of their drone, and presented their work to a panel of judges on November 9. Not only is this an exciting accomplishment for Emily and Maya, but it also gives young girls across the State of Michigan a fun and creative way to learn about a career in aerospace and further be involved in the world of STEM.

### **L'Anse Creuse Fall Athletics**

#### High School Sports

The fall season is filled with plenty of exciting moments for our high school athletes. Below are some of the accomplishments, highlight, and pictures of the many sports.

#### Soccer:

- The Lancer Varsity Soccer team became MAC Gold Division Champions after playing a fantastic season, going 9-1 against division opponents.
- The Crusader Varsity Soccer team had an exciting season as well, making it to the District Semifinal round. The team was very successful in the MAC Red Division, taking second place in their division and going 7-2 against opponents.

#### Volleyball

- The Lancer Varsity Volleyball team had a fantastic run at the end of their season, fighting their way to the district finals.

- The Crusader Varsity Volleyball team had a successful run in the MAC Red Division, taking second place and going 8-2 during the season. The team fought hard and made it to the district semi-finals.

#### Cross Country

- Crusader Xavier S. and Lancer Aidan D. represented their schools at the Cross Country State Finals on November 2.
- The Lancer Cross Country Girls team were very successful in the MAC Blue, earning the title of Division Champions and finishing their season with an impressive 18-1 record.

#### Swim

- Lancer swimmer Miley M. competed in the preliminary round of the Division 2 State Finals at Oakland University on November 22. Though she didn't make it to the final round, she swam a great race and made the Lancer Swim Program incredibly proud. The Crusaders swam well this season, and made some great progress as they competed in the MAC Red Division.

#### Tennis

- Both the Lancer and Crusader Boys Tennis teams worked hard this season, making great improvements to their game while facing off against some tough opponents. We look forward to seeing the continued growth of the Tennis programs at both high schools.

#### Golf

- The Lancer and Crusader Girls Golf teams fought until the very end in the MAC White division, with the Lancers taking third in the division and the Crusaders taking fourth. We're proud of all our golfers for their commitment to their teams and for being great representatives for their schools.

#### Middle School Athletics

Middle school athletes had a great fall season filled with exciting competition and growth for a wide range of young athletes. During the fall season, middle school students in L'Anse Creuse can participate in football, volleyball, cross country, intramural sports, cheer and dance.

On October 9, Middle School – East and Middle School – Central hosted the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Volleyball Quad, inviting the volleyball teams from all four L'Anse Creuse middle schools to compete against each other in a fun and friendly showcase. At the end of the football season, the four middle school teams faced off against each other, providing several exciting games and well as entertaining performances from the cheer teams and school bands.

#### Fall Highlights

- Athletic Hall of Fame
  - o During their first home football game of the season, LCHS-NN hosted their Athletic Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony to honor five former athletes on their successes. Inductees included Eric Drake, Maureen Lilla, Erik Thompson, Katie Nebel, and Jim Zurek.
- LCHS Marching Lancers
  - o On November 2, the Marching Lancers competed in the MCBA State Championships at Ford Field, taking third place in Flight 2 and winning the caption award for best percussion.



This is the first caption award in program history and the 8<sup>th</sup> time the band has medaled at State Finals.

- Rival Football Game
  - o The Lancers and Crusader Varsity Football teams faced off in their annual rival game on September 13 to compete for the John Armstrong Jug. The Jug, named after the former Superintendent, went to the Lancers for the second year in a row after they defeated the Crusaders 54-20.
- New Tennis Courts
  - o Over the summer, the L'Anse Creuse High School tennis courts were redone, giving students a brand-new surface to play on for the start of their season. With the passing of the recent bond proposal, more updates to athletic fields and equipment are coming soon!

### **L'Anse Creuse Public Schools presents the Stellar Students – Leading by Example.**

#### October

- Anna Mae Burdi Center: Jaxon
- Atwood: Myla
- Middle School – Central: Ariana
- LC High School: Vincent

#### November

- Carkenord: Dominic
- Middle School – East: Sara
- LC High School – North: Vincent

#### December

- Early Childhood Center: Lucas
- Graham: Abbigail
- Middle School – North: Peyton
- Pankow: August

Congratulations to our Stellar Students!

### **Community Education and Upcoming Events**

The L'Anse Creuse Community Education program offers a wide range of trips, classes, and athletic opportunities for community members of all ages to enjoy. There are plenty of fun and engaging winter events coming up in January, so make sure you don't miss out on the fun! On January 18, Community Ed. will host a trip to the Fisher Theatre to see "Golden Girls: The Laughs Continue" with a special lunch at the Nautical Deli. The winter session will also include adult classes to learn the guitar, piano, ukulele, as well as youth classes such as yoga, Crayola Art, karate, and CPR Training.

For more information on Community Ed. and the programs they offer, visit [lc-ps.ce.eleyo.com](http://lc-ps.ce.eleyo.com).

## **Join L'Anse Creuse and Shape the Future with us!**

We are seeking passionate individuals who would like to make a difference in the lives of students.

Here at L'Anse Creuse, we are known for our "family" culture and EVERYONE is committed to the success of all students. Apply now and become part of one of the strongest districts in Macomb County, surrounded by highly talented staff who work everyday to provide the best education our future deserves!

The district is currently in need of the following positions:

- Food Service
- Childcare
- Paraprofessionals
- Noon aides
- Mechanic
- Grounds and Maintenance
- Special Education teachers
- SACC
- Visit [lc-ps.org/departments/human-resources](http://lc-ps.org/departments/human-resources) to apply today!

*The L'Anse Creuse News is published quarterly by Katelyn Hill, Community Relations Coordinator, for the L'Anse Creuse Public Schools Community.*

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