



Traverse City Area Public Schools
NAVIGATOR

SPRING 2024



Letter From The Board President

Dear Community,

On behalf of the Board of Education, I am pleased to share that over the last year we have celebrated the opening of our new TCAPS Montessori building, broke ground on two

high school Innovation and Manufacturing Centers, and will soon host a ribbon cutting at the new Titan Athletic Fields at West Senior High School. These are exciting advancements and improvements for our school district, and I wish to thank our community for the support of these projects, and many others, as outcomes of the 2018 bond.

Looking ahead, our Board of Education has established, in collaboration with district leaders, a strategic plan to move TCAPS forward. I invite you to read through the targeted goals, along with the vision, mission, and values of our district as a whole included in this publication. Education is an ever-evolving and complex system and I am grateful for the trust our community has placed in our Board and our staff to lead these initiatives.

We also recognize the tasks yet to be tackled. Your Board of Education voted in January to place a bond proposal on the ballot in August 2024. We value the insights received to this point and understand the importance of maintaining our current millage rate. I encourage all community members to take part in conversations on this topic. I invite you to attend a Board of Education meeting - either in person or online - and visit Board office hours to learn more and to share your thoughts with us. When it comes to children, we know it takes a village.

Scott Newman-Bale
President, TCAPS Board of Education



Strategic Plan in Action

Since its inception in the summer of 2022, the COMPASS Strategic Plan has guided district goals, programming, and initiatives. Now in its second year of operation, TCAPS has made substantial strides in addressing many of the outlined goals and objectives.

Goal 1A

Continuous improvement of academic achievement to maximize student success.

Goal 1B

Develop and implement structures and systems of support to increase mental and emotional health and social well-being.

Goal 1C

Focus on preventing and addressing harassment and bullying to provide a safe and inclusive environment for all.

Goal 1D

Identify and implement strategies regarding student behavior to maximize learning.

Goal 1E

Provide additional resources and support for diverse learners so that all students can be successful.



2022-2025 Strategic Plan

Traverse City Area Public Schools (TCAPS) Board of Education approved a three-year strategic plan for the district at a study session held Wednesday, July 27, 2022. The strategic planning process involved extensive focus groups with students, parents, staff, and community leaders followed by in depth surveys with all stakeholders. The COMPASS Strategic Plan Overview and Focus Areas were presented to the Board of Education at the December 12, 2022 meeting. Learn more at www.tcaps.net/strategicplan.

VISION

An educational community providing opportunities and resources to relentlessly support all learners in achieving their full potential.

MISSION

TCAPS educates, inspires, and supports all learners to maximize individual excellence and success.

VALUES

Students First

Prioritizing the needs of all learners

Excellence

Offering a world-class educational experience to all students

Integrity

Operating with honesty, transparency, and fairness

Inclusive

Ensuring equitable access and acceptance for all

Success for All

Supporting each learner to maximize their full potential

Leadership

Developing high-quality programs and people through innovation, empathy, and mindfulness

Community

Connecting with each other and our community to serve our students greater

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Goal 1F Assess current conditions and identify areas of improvement related to safety and security, using the best practices to enhance a healthy and productive school environment.	Goal 2A Attract, recruit and retain a diverse and robust employee workforce to provide a world-class learning environment.	Goal 2B Develop a 3 to 5 year facilities plan to provide optimal student learning environments.	Goal 2C Implement strategies to attract and retain students, leading to sustainable enrollment.	Goal 3A Analyze and improve communication systems to establish a culture of collaboration and transparency.	Goal 3B Develop a collaborative plan for the exploration of a Regional Enhancement millage to prioritize safety, security, and other operational needs.	Goal 3C Engage and collaborate with the community to address resources to the district leading to student success.
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GREAT COMMUNITY | GREAT MUSIC

TCAPS STAFF HONORS

Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association (MSBOA) - Teacher of the Year

- 1992 John Campbell (Band)
- 1995 Dorothy Kunkel (Orchestra)
- 2006 Pat Brumbaugh (Band)

Michigan School Vocal Music Association (MSVMA) - Teacher of the Year

- 1994 Tom Stokes
- 2005 Wendee Wolf-Schlarf
- 2014 Russ Larimer
- 2022 Erich Wangeman

American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) - Maynard Klein Award: for contributions to choral music in the state of Michigan

- 1994 Mel Larimer
- 2009 Mark Puchala

Michigan Music Education Association (MMEA) - Music Educator of the Year

- 2012 Wendee Wolf-Schlarf

The TCAPS music program stands out as a cornerstone of educational excellence, offering students a diverse range of enriching experiences throughout their academic journey. At the heart of this distinguished program is TCAPS' unparalleled K-12 music curriculum, a visionary initiative that took root over six decades ago. Led by dedicated educators, the program encompasses general music, band, choir, and orchestra. The curriculum is noted for its region-specific design, crafted exclusively by talented TCAPS music staff.

TCAPS ensembles are known for not only performing challenging music, but also music that demonstrates the highest level of musical expressiveness. Many ensembles and soloists have been selected as top in the state through a multi-level festival structure.

Graduates of the program consistently earn scholarships, including to renowned institutions like the Eastman School of Music and the New England Conservatory. TCAPS students are regularly sought after by colleges and universities, both for music majors and for participation in ensembles at musical colleges and universities nationwide.

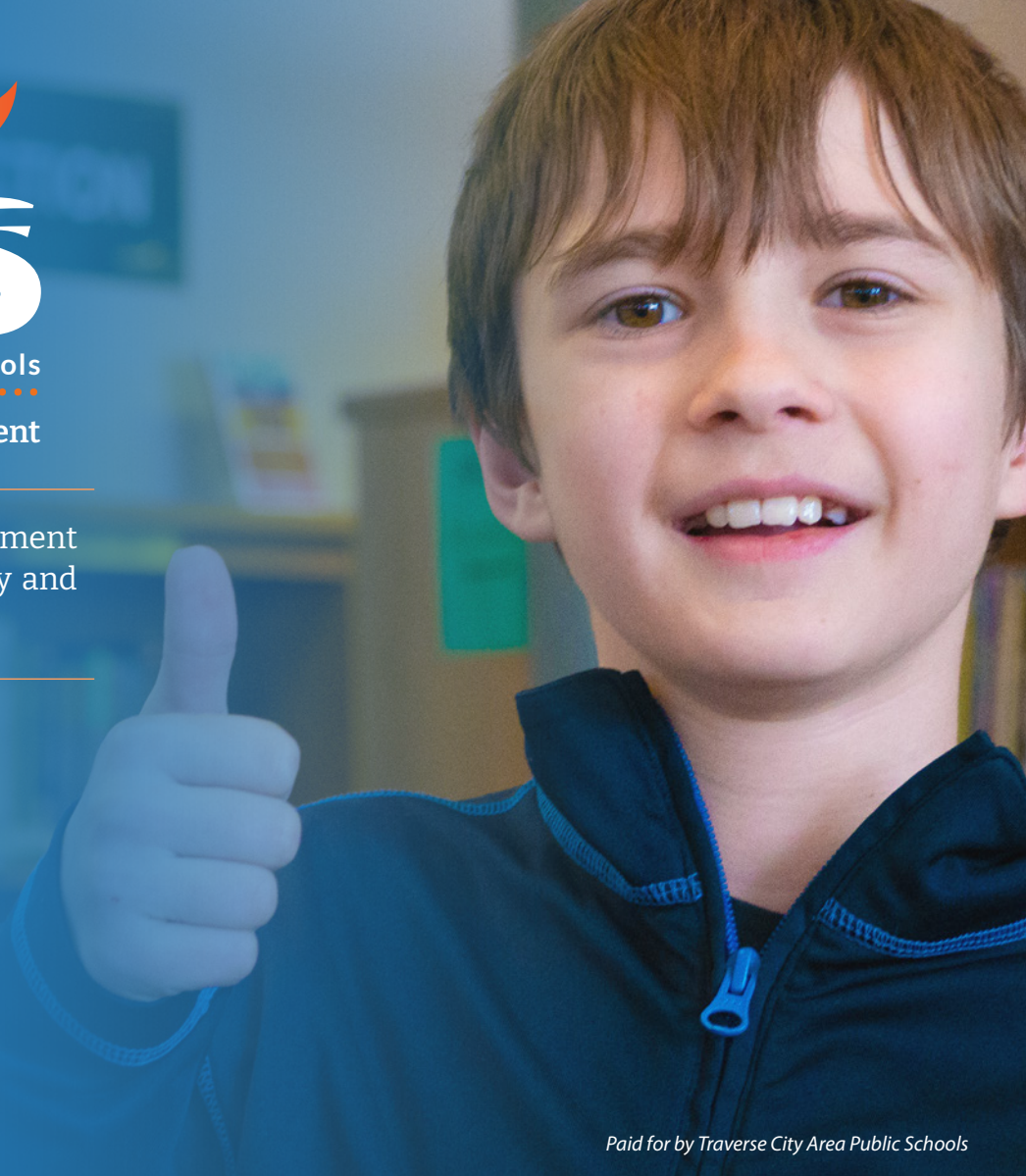
Alumni and staff of TCAPS' music program have made significant contributions to the music industry as performers in national and international professional ensembles. Some accolades include prestigious awards from organizations such as the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association (MSBOA), Michigan School Vocal Music Association (MSVMA), American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), and Michigan Music Education Association (MMEA).

TCAPS commitment to excellence allows teachers to provide quality music opportunities and thrives on the passion of its students, who value the sense of community fostered in their musical pursuits. Ultimately, TCAPS Music stands as a testament to the enduring power of music education.

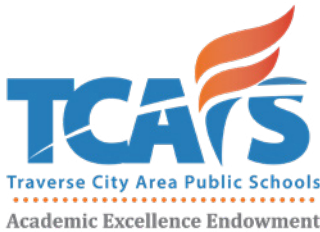


Traverse City Area Public Schools
Academic Excellence Endowment

Supporting educational enrichment opportunities for students today and for years to come.



Paid for by Traverse City Area Public Schools



DONOR FORM

Please identify how you'd like to support TCAPS

TCAPS Academic Excellence Endowment

(previously known as the ACE Endowment)

- Immediate Use
- Long Term Endowment

Or you can gift directly to other areas within TCAPS, including:

- Titan Excellence Endowment
- Trojan Excellence Endowment
- Maverick Endowment

• Thank you for your donation •

Please indicate how you would like your donation to be recognized:

- In Memory of
- In Honor of

Name to be recognized

Donor Name

Phone

Email

Mailing Address

*Please make checks payable to
Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation
and mail to 223 Lake Street, Suite B, Traverse City, MI 49684*



community foundation

ANTRIM · BENZIE · GRAND TRAVERSE · KALKASKA · LEE LANAU

Donate online at: gtrcf.org

Our Community

Thank you for your support!



TCAPS HIGHLIGHTS: **Father Fred Foundation**

Each year, the Father Fred Foundation blesses TCAPS students with an abundance of supplies for the school year ahead and throughout the year. Whether it's filling backpacks or filling food pantries, Father Fred has been there to lend a hand.

This past summer, Father Fred partnered with TCAPS' Student Support Network to host a Sunshine Bus, which delivered free food and basic needs throughout the district, three days a week, all summer long. The program will return for season two this summer.

TCAPS thanks the Father Fred Foundation for their relentless support, time, resources, and for truly making a difference in the lives of TCAPS students and families. Learn more about the Father Fred Foundation at www.FatherFred.org.

TCAPS HIGHLIGHTS: **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern Michigan**

Big Brothers Big Sisters serves nearly 300 regional children annually, changing outcomes and reversing the downward spiral brought on by poverty and childhood trauma. Their impact is significant and apparent in students across the TCAPS district. Comparing children in the same demographic who did not participate in the Bigs program to children who were matched with a Big Brother or Big Sister:

- 77% did better in school
- 52% reported their Big kept them from dropping out of school
- 42% earned a four-year degree
- 46% have a household income of \$75,000 or more

TCAPS thanks Big Brothers Big Sisters for their ongoing support and efforts in improving the lives of children and students in northern Michigan. Learn more about Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern Michigan at www.BigsUpNorth.com.



The Student Support Network (SSN) is a program administered by Traverse City Area Public Schools that provides free, supportive, education-related services, and non-academic support to help overcome obstacles that may create barriers to learning for all students, ages 3-20. This might include:

- Clothing and shoes for school purposes
- School supplies and/or backpacks
- Personal hygiene products
- Support for extracurricular activities
- Referrals to community agencies for housing/transitional living, food, medical, dental, optical care, and mental health

Over 400 students have received support this school year alone. In addition, the SSN also oversees a population of students who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate overnight residence. Students living in a shelter, motel, vehicle, camper, staying with friends, or have inadequate accommodations for their residence are provided services at TCAPS through the McKinney-Vento Assistance Act.

The SSN relies upon numerous donations and is funded only through donations and grants.

If you would like to learn more about TCAPS programming to support vulnerable students and their families, please contact Katie Kubesh at kubeshca@tcaps.net or 231.933.1789.




TCAPS
Student Support Network

**You Can
HELP**

- Not All Student Needs Are Academic -

TCAPS

Traverse City Area Public Schools
Great Community, Great Schools

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2024 BOND

SAFE • WARM • DRY

Election August 6, 2024 | www.tcaps.net/bond

PRE-BOND PLANNING

TCAPS followed a comprehensive pre-bond planning process, which included the collection of data and information from district-wide programming assessments, facility condition assessments, and outreach surveys to students, staff, parents, and the community.

Please contact Dr. John VanWagoner, TCAPS Superintendent with any questions or feedback.
231.933.1727 | vanwagonjo@tcaps.net



RECOGNIZING NEEDS

“Developing a facilities plan based on a professional needs assessment, which was further enhanced by the direct community and facility user group feedback, was a strategic plan goal for the district and a key component of our efforts to ensure students have the facilities and tools they need to be successful.”

- Dr. John R. VanWagoner II

KEY PRIORITIES

Safety and Security

- Secure entrance vestibules
- Interior and exterior doors
- Cameras, electronic access, communications

Aging Infrastructure

- Roofing, roof access, and roof drains
- Boilers, heat pumps, unit ventilators
- Septic systems
- Storm water drainage
- Hot water heaters
- Central Grade School - Renovation / Reconstruction
- Brick, soffits, lintels, and fascia
- Parking lots, sidewalks, and curbs
- Interior and exterior doors

Performance Management

- Lighting upgrades
- Controls and switches
- Windows
- Lockers
- Bleachers

VALUED FEEDBACK: Outreach Survey Results

STAFF SURVEY

317 responses

FACILITY SURVEY

147 responses

STUDENT SURVEY

580 responses

PARENT/COMMUNITY SURVEY

1,127 responses



What are the key priorities you would like to see addressed in the next bond millage proposal?

- 65.4%** Safety & Security
- 61.5%** Aging facility upgrades (ex: new roofs, flooring)
- 53.2%** New building systems (ex: heating and cooling, electrical)
- 39.2%** Technology Upgrades
- 28%** Energy Conservation Improvements
- 8%** New Buses

COMMITMENT TO OUR COMMUNITY

HIGHLIGHTS

No Projected Increase - Maintain Current 3.1 Mills

Same Bond Millage Rate for the Last 26 Years

40% Lower than State Average Bond Millage of 5.4 Mills

Responsible Management of \$400 Million in Assets

MAJOR PROPOSED PROJECTS

Safety and Security Improvements

Facility Improvements District Wide

Elementary School Renovation / Reconstruction

Aging infrastructure upgrades, instructional enhancements
(including Music and STEM), and improvements for ADA access

Technology Upgrades

Bus Replacements

www.tcaps.net/bond

**CAPITAL
BOND
MILLAGE**
COMPLIANCE

Legal Uses of Capital Bond Funds

Capital Bond Proceeds **CAN** Be Used For:

Construction of new school buildings & additions to existing buildings

Remodeling of buildings and infrastructure

Purchasing school buses

Purchasing technology (with certain limitations)

Energy conservation improvements

Asbestos abatement

Purchasing land

Developing/improving sites

Developing/improving athletic facilities

Purchasing loose furnishings & equipment

BY THE NUMBERS

MILLAGE RATE : **3.1 Mills**
: **No Increase**
: *over current levy*

Approximately **35,000** square feet of Learning Space Enhancements including improvements for STEM and Music upgrades at the middle schools and high schools

9 Roof Replacements
Approximately **800,000** square feet of coverage across the district

Approximately **26** boilers

260 heat pumps

1 Elementary School Renovation / Reconstruction

Central Grade School, the District's oldest and largest school building

5 playground drainage upgrades

6 building bleacher replacements with ADA upgrades

13 site improvements to driveways, curbs, sidewalks, and parking lots

BOND MILLAGE PROPOSAL

Election Date: August 6, 2024

Bond Authorization Amount: \$180 Million

Ballot Language

The TCAPS capital bond proposal will appear on the August 6th ballot as follows:

TRAVERSE CITY AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS BONDING PROPOSAL

Shall Traverse City Area Public Schools, Grand Traverse, Leelanau and Benzie Counties, Michigan, borrow the sum of not to exceed One Hundred Eighty Million Dollars (\$180,000,000) and issue its general obligation unlimited tax bonds therefor, in one or more series, for the purpose of:

erecting, furnishing, and equipping additions to and/or remodeling, furnishing and refurbishing, and equipping and re-equipping existing school facilities; erecting, furnishing, and equipping new school facilities; constructing, equipping, developing, and improving playgrounds and outdoor physical education, athletic, and storage facilities; acquiring, installing, and equipping and re-equipping school facilities for educational technology; purchasing school buses; and acquiring, developing, and improving playgrounds, play fields, athletic fields, and sites?

The following is for informational purposes only:

If this proposal is approved, it is estimated that the debt millage for the new and existing bond authorization shall be 3.10 mills, for a -0- mill net increase over the prior year's levy. It is anticipated that the bonds will be issued in series. The estimated millage that will be levied for the proposed bonds in 2025 is .67 mill (\$0.67 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation). The maximum number of years the bonds of any series may be outstanding, exclusive of any refunding, is twenty (20) years. The estimated simple average annual millage anticipated to be required to retire this bond debt is .98 mill (\$0.98 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation).

(Pursuant to State law, expenditure of bond proceeds must be audited and the proceeds cannot be used for repair or maintenance costs, teacher, administrator or employee salaries, or other operating expenses.)

Capital Bond Proceeds **CANNOT** Be Used For:

Employee salaries, benefits, or professional development

General operating repairs, parts, labor, maintenance, or maintenance contracts

Textbooks/curriculum

Student supplies, office supplies, or instructional materials

Automobiles, trucks, or vans

Uniforms

Technology software systems or subscription services



Traverse City Area Public Schools

Health + Wellbeing

.....
“...we are not only promoting social skills and inclusion among all our students, but also strengthening ties through local partnerships and community members.”

- Heidi Maltby-Skodack
.....



With an initial three-year systems change grant provided by Rotary Charities, Traverse City Area Public Schools (TCAPS) took on the challenge of improving the mental and physical health of TCAPS staff and students through sustainable practices and new initiatives.

“Post COVID, it was evident to incorporate health and wellbeing into the school day with a new and unfounded approach” noted TCAPS Superintendent Dr. John R. VanWagoner II. “It wasn’t just academics that suffered through the pandemic; it was a personal experience for everyone, and for many, it was very traumatic. We knew we needed to address the issues with long-term solutions.”

Grant funding provided the district with funds to staff and lead the initiative to ensure equal programming and access were offered district-wide. The small changes lead to additional grants, causing a snowball effect for positive change. A Wellness Committee was formed at every building to encourage healthy habits such as the importance of drinking water, developing fitness goals, and taking time to focus on mental clarity and peace.

Larger initiatives followed, with student mental health groups formed along with calming spaces within the secondary buildings for students to retreat to when stress or anxiety are heightened or to simply talk with a peer. Research concludes most students prefer to talk with their peers compared to a trusted adult. The Peer-to-Peer programming uses this model to encourage healthy conversations. The program was taught by the University of Michigan Depression Center to high school students and select staff.

This fall, a lunch buddy and recess buddy program formed at all elementary and middle schools, bringing volunteers forward from across the region to either sit and talk with students, or to be a regular presence on the playground. All volunteers are vetted to ensure safety and security. “The lunch

buddy program is making a meaningful difference in the lives of students and the broader community,” commented Heidi Maltby-Skodack, TCAPS Executive Director of School Improvement and Innovative Programs. “By fostering connections through shared meals and recess activities, we are not only promoting social skills and inclusion among all our students, but also strengthening ties through local partnerships and community members.” Learn more or volunteer at www.tcaps.net/lunchbuddies.

Therapy dogs have also gained momentum across the district. Maverick, a longstanding icon at Traverse City High School, is a black lab named after the school mascot. He greets visitors at the main entrance with his calming demeanor and has a knack for capturing the hearts of students. Maverick has even been known to attend graduation.

Following Maverick’s overwhelming success, additional therapy dogs Gus, Gracie, Holly Jo, and Sherman were introduced at several schools across the district. Two additional therapy dogs are currently pending approval with hopes to begin working alongside students in the near future.

Smaller initiatives, such as a health and wellbeing expo, was held as an opening day activity for staff to welcome in the 2023-2024 academic year. The expo were organized with multiple community vendors who offered insight and motivation towards improved physical health and personal wellbeing.

Building toward the future, TCAPS will continue to promote strong relationships and will remain committed to the health and wellbeing of all who are part of the district and beyond.



“This is a highly valuable option for TCAPS families,” commented TCAPS Superintendent Dr. John R. VanWagoner II. “Whether a child is in need of primary care services or simply needs an added option for mid-day acute care appointments, we are excited to offer this onsite opportunity.”

While located on TCAPS property, the Health Center will be run solely by NMHSI. In addition, the Health Center formed a board committee, made up of TCAPS students, parents, TCAPS staff, and NMHSI staff to provide stakeholder input on Health Center initiatives.

Parking for the TCAPS Health Center can best be accessed through the bus entrance located off Franke Road, near Great Wolf Lodge. For more information, contact NMHSI at 231.947.0351.

Through a partnership with Northwest Michigan Health Services, Inc. (NMHSI), TCAPS opened an onsite health center available for all TCAPS students. Located on the property of West Middle School, the health center provides students with physical and behavioral healthcare services. NMHSI accepts all forms of insurance and offers a sliding scale fee for uninsured families.

<https://www.tcaps.net/healthcenter>

Traverse City Area Public Schools highlighted the 2023 International Day of Peace with the installation of new peace poles at five schools around the district.

Peace poles were funded through a generous donation from Veterans For Peace Chapter 50. On September 21, 2023, representatives from Veterans for Peace Chapter 50 unveiled the new poles and attended a school ceremony at TCAPS Montessori for a special unveiling. TCAPS Montessori, which opened its doors this fall at 4053 Franke Road, was one recipient of a peace pole. Additional installations were unveiled at Cherry Knoll, Courtade, Long Lake, and Westwoods Elementary schools.

“Our Veterans for Peace chapter feels our eminent responsibility is to reach out to the young members of our community with a message of peace,” stated Tim Keenan, President of Veterans For Peace Chapter 50. “There is so much divisiveness in our world today. Perhaps with the planting of these peace poles, we can create a culture of peace, rather than continued strife and division.”

TCAPS Superintendent Dr. John R. VanWagoner II, added “Peace poles are now installed at every TCAPS school. It is an honor to receive these poles from our local veterans as this connection highlights the importance of peace in our community and throughout our world. We are grateful for this timely gift and special community partnership.”



More Than A Day Of PEACE

Engineering Excellence:

High School Robotics Students Guide Future Innovators

In the ever-evolving world of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education, along with robotics, Traverse City Area Public School (TCAPS) high school robotics teams are establishing a tradition of excellence that extends far beyond their own individual achievements. Recognizing the importance of cultivating the next generation of innovators, TCAPS' seasoned FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) teams have begun mentoring the emerging middle school FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) teams.

From guiding the FTC through building a basic drive base, to supporting the budding inventors through challenges and competitions, FRC high school students are setting the bar for future TCAPS innovators. FIRST Robotics teams also rely on business and industry partners for mentorship and sponsorships supporting competitions and providing essential supplies and materials.

The collaboration within TCAPS' robotics and STEM community not only serves to impart technical knowledge and skills, but also fosters a culture of



FTC Robotics Kickoff Day at Traverse City West Middle School.

excellence, setting a high standard for both the TCAPS robotics program and the broader spectrum of STEM initiatives. By bridging the gap between high school and middle school teams, TCAPS is not merely nurturing aspiring engineers; it is building a continuum of success, ensuring that each new generation surpasses the last.



TCAPS

Traverse City Area Public Schools

FIRST STEPS

Kindergarten

Junior Kindergarten

Montessori

ENROLL NOW:
www.tcaps.net/enroll



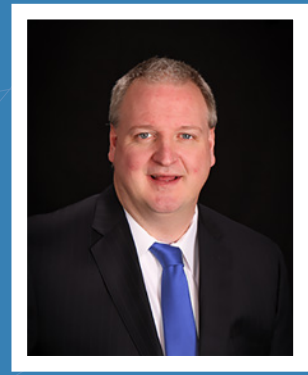
Letter from The Superintendent

Dear Community,

With our daily focus centered on teaching and learning, it is imperative to not lose sight of the value and importance of keeping our community up to date on the important happenings and changes within our local public school system. To that effort, we are pleased to share this publication as an added source of information. TCAPS values our community and the partnerships built throughout the years. Together, we remain committed to educating our youngest community members and providing them with the greatest opportunities as they prepare for a successful future.

With over 8,000 students and more than 1,400 staff, TCAPS is the second largest employer in Traverse City and the largest school district within 100 miles. We are proud to teach students from ages 3-20 in 16 schools, offering 27 AP courses, dual enrollment, Montessori, talented and gifted programming, specialized education plans, and English as a second language. Our students are provided numerous opportunities in co-curricular and extracurricular activities, including athletics, fine arts, STEM, music, language, robotics, and more.

This year, TCAPS plans to graduate over 800 students in the class of



2024. We are proud to serve our community, and are confident our students are prepared for the world ahead. While we know there is always room to improve, we take pride in our commitment to ongoing professional development for staff and being a national leader in teaching with insight and innovation. Thank you for supporting TCAPS programming and showcasing your pride for our students!

John R. VanWagoner II, Ph.D.
TCAPS Superintendent

Informational materials paid for by Traverse City Area Public Schools

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Traverse City Area Public Schools
Great Community, Great Schools



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