

PANTHER NEWS

STOCKBRIDGE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Summer 2025

Presenting the Class of 2025

On Sunday, June 1st, Stockbridge Community Schools proudly celebrated the Class of 2025, honoring their dedication, perseverance, and achievements over the past 13 years.

This year's valedictorians, Brock Rochow and Ava Vaccaro, and salutatorian, Zavien Torrey, exemplify the academic excellence and leadership that define this remarkable class.

We are deeply grateful to our graduates for the lasting contributions they've made to our school community. The Class of 2025 is truly exceptional—empathetic, ambitious, and incredibly talented.

One unforgettable highlight from this year was during the Unified Basketball game, where senior Brendon Fletcher thrilled the crowd with an epic, buzzer-beating half-court granny-style shot! It was a perfect reflection of the spirit and heart this class brings to everything they do.

Whether in the classroom, on stage, or in athletics, our seniors have consistently excelled. In true Stockbridge fashion, they've shown what it means to have GRIT—and we couldn't be prouder of each and every one of them.

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The Senior Class of 2025 returned to the elementary schools one final time as Stockbridge students, walking the halls lined with cheering children and waving to the teachers who helped shape their early years.



To Our Stockbridge Families,

As we wrap up the 2024–2025 school year, we want to take a moment to celebrate all the great things our students, staff, and community have done—especially the Class of 2025! Their leadership and strength made a big difference. From learning in the classroom to success in sports and clubs, **it's been a year full of achievements, and we're proud of everyone.**

We're also excited about what's coming next school year!

SMITH ELEMENTARY

Our Early Childhood programs are growing! Pre-K for All (formerly called GSRP) will now be offered five days a week, so more kids and families can benefit. Amanda Mathews, who was our Young Fives teacher, will now be our new Director of Early Childhood. We'll also keep offering our popular three-year-old preschool class.

Please welcome Julie White, the new principal at Smith Elementary! We've added some great new team members: special education teacher Mike Jensen, school social worker Sierra Saunders, custodian Lindsey Raehtz, and Brian Smith (who moved over from Heritage to work as a custodian at Smith).

Dena Sommers will continue helping with special education and early childhood, and she'll now also be supporting community education.

To support student behavior and well-being, Josh Nichols will work with both Smith and Heritage schools during the 2025–2026 year.

HERITAGE ELEMENTARY

Next year's fourth-grade class is a little smaller, so we've made a few staffing changes and worked with the team to make it a smooth transition. Lynn Balkus is returning as paraprofessional and Lynn Beauregard is joining the team as a special education teacher. We also welcomed Connor Goss as a new custodian.

JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Ben Kruse will continue as our athletic director and is also now our assistant principal! He'll no longer be in charge of community education, as Dena Sommers is stepping in to lead that work. Rachel Tierney has joined as the new social worker for the Jr./Sr. High School.

Our PASS Program (alternative education) will continue at the Unadilla Township building and will now run five days a week. The program helps students recover credits, explore careers, find job placements, and take virtual classes. Big thanks to Steve Allison for leading this important work.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Looking ahead, we're preparing for an important bond proposal on the November 4, 2025 ballot. **Thank you to everyone who joined our planning meetings and connected with us at events like Day in the Village and the Gregory 4th of July Parade. We'll keep sharing updates through community events, district newsletters, and our website.**

Thank you to everyone who has reached out to me with questions—it really helps!

If you ever have concerns, I encourage you to talk directly with the person most involved. It's the best way to get answers and build strong relationships.

It's an honor to serve this district and get to know so many of you. Our community is full of amazing Panther supporters, and your energy and kindness make a real difference.

Thank you for your continued support, partnership, and Panther pride as we work together to create a bright future for our students.

Sincerely,
Brian Friddle



BRIAN FRIDDLE

Superintendent
517-851-7188, ext. 5503
friddleb@panthern.net



Meet Ms. Jennett – Our New Special Education Supervisor!

We're excited to welcome Kelsey Jennett as our new Special Education Supervisor! She joined the district in February and has already started building strong connections with students, staff, and families.

Ms. Jennett brings over 10 years of experience in both general and special education. She's been a sixth grade teacher, taught in a special education classroom, worked in resource rooms, and was recently an Assistant Director of Special Education in a large school district.

She's passionate about helping every student succeed and believes in the power of teamwork between schools and families. Ms. Jennett is excited to support Stockbridge students and staff, and we're so glad to have her on our team!



Stockbridge Students Show Bravery During Bus Accident

On May 15th, what started as a normal afternoon quickly changed when a Stockbridge school bus was hit from behind. Even though the situation was scary, the students on the bus stayed calm, followed safety rules, and helped each other. Their quick thinking and bravery showed what it really means to be a Panther.

To recognize these students, the Stockbridge Transportation Department teamed up with Hungry Howie's to throw a special celebration. The students were treated to pizza, praise, and lots of smiles for the way they handled the unexpected event.

This moment reminded us all of what makes Stockbridge such a strong community—students who act with courage, schools that teach important values, and local businesses that step up to support others.

We're so proud of these students. They showed strength and leadership in a tough moment, and they made our whole community proud. Together, we are Stockbridge. Together, we are Panther Proud.



The Stockbridge Area Educational Foundation is a public non-profit 501(3)(c) committed to supporting educational opportunities for members of the Stockbridge community. To make donations to the Stockbridge Area Educational Foundation, or apply for grants or scholarships, please contact the Central Office at 517-851-7188.

www.panthernet.net/saef

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Curriculum Update

Dear Panther Families and Community Members,



AMY HODGSON

Assistant Superintendent
of Curriculum
517-851-7770

hodgsona@panthernet.net

It is my pleasure to share an overview of our school improvement process and our academic goals for the 2025-26 school year with you. **A few years ago we adopted a multi-year district improvement plan focused around four main areas: literacy, math, social-emotional learning, and assessment.** In the fall, we will continue working towards accomplishing our goals in each area. **The full district improvement plan with details related to associated strategies can be found on the district website by clicking “Our District” and then selecting “District Improvement Plan.”**

Each area has a Panther Improvement Team (P.I.T. Crew) made up of staff members from across the district that meets on our professional development days to make progress towards implementing the associated strategies. We look forward to getting our state assessment data in the fall to better understand the progress we’ve made towards accomplishing our goals.

OUR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT CYCLE LOOKS LIKE THIS...

- **Over the summer:** Using feedback from the staff and the documented end-of-year progress, the District Improvement Plan is updated.
- **In the fall:** We roll out the updated District Improvement Plan when staff return. The updated District Improvement Plan will be posted on the website no later than the first day of school.
- **Fall, Winter, and Spring:** We analyze our benchmark (FastBridge for literacy and SpringMath) data and/or state data to determine progress, set grade level and/or department goals, and monitor implementation of the plan.
- **Half-Day Professional Development Meetings:** Our PIT Crews meet throughout the year to work on implementing the strategies with each goal.
- **June Regular Board Meeting:** The PIT Crews share out their team’s progress with the Board, and then the cycle repeats.

EXAMPLES OF STRATEGIES USED TO ACCOMPLISH GOALS

We have been implementing Science of Reading and Science of Math approaches to improve literacy and math outcomes for our students. Preliminary data has been very promising. We have also been re-establishing an MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support) framework, including creation of a MTSS handbook to ensure we document our systems.

In both of these content areas, we have been working on ensuring a guaranteed, viable curriculum for all students by having teams of staff identify priority standards and then work on vertical alignment between grade levels. **This means that no matter who a child’s teacher is, all students in the same grade will be taught the most important standards, with the goal of helping every student learn and succeed.**

Our SEL team has ensured staff have been trained in several research-based practices such as: de-escalation techniques, creating trauma-sensitive learning environments, and suicide prevention training called QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer). This team also re-booted PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) to ensure behavior expectations are explicitly taught and reinforced to improve student behavior. **Our discipline data has shown significant improvements in this first year of implementation.**

Our assessment team has been trained and in turn trained the entire staff in best assessment, instructional, and grading

Continued on Page 5



CURRICULUM UPDATE

Continued from page 4

practices over the past two years. Our team also spent time evaluating which district-wide assessments students are taking, which resulted in an overall reduction of assessments. We have been developing a warehouse to ensure staff have access to all of this training and resources. Our team has also focused on student motivation and what can be done in our instructional approach to foster student hope and confidence.

One outcome of all of this work was bringing The Lion Heart Experience to our school and community in April. This experience aligned with goals of both the SEL and assessment teams, as it addressed bullying through the metaphor of students painting either a masterpiece or a mess in the lives of others with our words and was timed to help encourage and build up our students through the positive songs and messages.

We're working hard to make our school the best it can be by teaming up and focusing on shared goals. After building a strong foundation over the past few years, we're excited to grow even stronger partnerships with our families this year. Each of our improvement teams will be adding new ideas to help make this happen.



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It's an honor to be here to serve alongside so many wonderful professionals as we strive to make school the best it can be for each of our students. **If you have any questions about curriculum, instructional/assessment practices, or if I can be helpful in any other way, please don't hesitate to reach out.**

Sincerely,
Amy Hodgson

Host Families Needed

Stockbridge Junior Senior High Schools is always interested in bringing students from different cultures together with our Panthers to learn and build lifelong memories. The International Student Exchange Program is looking for families to host students in Stockbridge.

Host families do not need to have kids in the district; they only need to be willing to open their home to a student.

If you are interested in hosting for Fall of 2025 or have questions, please contact the office at 517-851-7770 for more information.



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STOCKBRIDGE JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

FIELD DAY FUN!

This year's school-wide Field Day and cookout brought students and staff together for a day of teamwork, fun, and school spirit. Our leadership students planned the event from start to finish, creating games and activities that everyone could enjoy. It was an awesome way to build friendships and end the year on a high note!



ROBOTICS STUDENTS BECOME TEACHERS

Ms. Zemke's Robotics students took their skills on the road to Heritage Elementary, where they taught STEM students about underwater ROVs (Remotely Operated Vehicles). It was a great example of students sharing knowledge and being leaders for younger learners



FLOWERS FOR OUR STAFF

Our junior high floriculture students created and delivered 50 flower bouquets to staff at the high school. It was a kind and thoughtful gesture that helped spread smiles and show appreciation for our hardworking team.



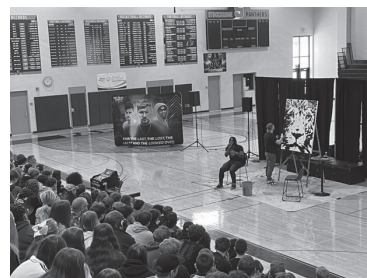
STUDENTS HELP AT NATURE PRESERVE

Students volunteered at Beckwith Nature Preserve to help protect the environment. They pulled invasive garlic mustard plants and picked up litter to support Legacy Land Conservancy's efforts. Their work made a real difference and showed responsibility and care for nature.



THE LIONHEART EXPERIENCE

In April, our school participated in The LionHeart Experience—a powerful event filled with music, art, and storytelling. The program focused on building self-worth and reminded students that they matter. It was a moving and inspiring experience for everyone involved.



Congratulations, Mrs. Cummings!

We want to thank and celebrate Mrs. Leslie Cummings as she retires. Her years of dedication have left a lasting impact on our school. We wish her all the best as she starts this exciting new chapter!



The Class of 2025 Graduation ceremony was a heartfelt celebration of our seniors and their journey through Stockbridge.

Mr. Mike DeMint delivered a powerful and deeply personal speech that resonated with students, encouraging them to discover their true calling beyond high school.

Drawing on his own experiences and the many moments he shared with them as their teacher, Mr. DeMint reminded the graduates that no matter where life takes them, they will always be a part of the Stockbridge family.



CELEBRATING THE CLASS OF 2025

The Senior Class of 2025 made some great memories as they wrapped up their final year! From Senior Nights for sports, to Honors Night, and ending with a beautiful Senior Sunset, these events gave our seniors time to celebrate all they've accomplished and look forward to what's next.

PROM NIGHT AT CRYSTAL GARDENS

This year's Junior/Senior Prom was held at Crystal Gardens in Howell. The venue was stunning, and the night was filled with dancing, laughter, and memories. Students showed up in style and had a great time celebrating together.



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STOCKBRIDGE HERITAGE SCHOOL

MOVIE NIGHT & DODGEBALL DELIGHT

Heritage Student Council brought fun to campus with two exciting events! Families came together for Movie Night, watching Ratatouille and Inside Out with snacks and cool decorations. Later, students competed in a co-ed Dodgeball Tournament with 12 teams! The gym was full of laughter and great energy. Congrats to "Dodgeball Kids" for winning it all!



BOWLING FUN FOR 4TH GRADE

Mr. Rehmann's 4th grade P.E. classes wrapped up their bowling unit with a trip to Stockbridge Bowl. Students got to show off their bowling form and teamwork in a real alley. After weeks of practice, it was a great way to celebrate what they learned—with lots of strikes, spares, and smiles!

MARCH MADNESS MEETS READING

Heritage celebrated "March is Reading Month" with the theme March Madness – Readers Are Leaders! Each class picked a college to follow during the NCAA tournament and learned about their traditions. Some colleges even sent swag! Students read tons of minutes, enjoyed The Million Dollar Shot, and got visits from high school athletes who read to them. It was a slam dunk month for reading!



HERITAGE MILE

Students laced up for the Heritage Mile, a fun event to encourage fitness and school spirit. Some ran the mile while others cheered from the sidelines. The day was full of energy and teamwork. Everyone who took part showed amazing effort and sportsmanship!

LIONHEART INSPIRES STUDENTS

In April, Heritage hosted the LionHeart Experience, thanks to Panther Cubs PTO and SRSLY Stockbridge. The program featured music, art, and a powerful message from Joe Vercellino and the LionHeart Crew. Students were reminded of their worth and the importance of turning challenges into strengths. It was a moving and uplifting day!



SPRING CONCERT SHINES

3rd and 4th graders wowed the crowd at their spring music concert! Led by Mrs. Laveirge, students sang, danced, and played instruments with excitement and pride. The show was a fun way to celebrate all the musical skills they've learned this year.



FIELD DAY FUN!

Heritage's Field Day was packed with games and school spirit! Students rotated through stations like relay races, gaga ball, and rock-paper-scissors battles. Even though it was chilly, the sun and smiles kept everyone warm. In the big Tug 'O War showdown, Mrs. True's class won for 5th–6th grade, Mrs. Allen's class took 3rd–4th, and the staff beat the students in the final round. What a day!



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STOCKBRIDGE SMITH ELEMENTARY

SPRING MATH G.O.A.T. AWARDS

Mrs. Nichols, our math coach, brought some fun competition to Smith Elementary this semester with monthly G.O.A.T. Math Awards! Each month, the class with the biggest improvement on their Spring Math scores won a trophy and a flashy bling necklace. This friendly contest helped students stay motivated and do their best in math.

FROG AND TOAD CAME TO VISIT

During March is Reading Month, classrooms got a visit from some famous friends—Frog and Toad! Students enjoyed listening to a story with them and even got to take pictures. Thanks to the Capital Area District Library for helping make this fun reading event possible. It was a big hit with students and teachers!

PRESCHOOLERS VISIT KINDERGARTEN

To help preschoolers get ready for kindergarten, they visited kindergarten classrooms this month. They made self-portraits and joined in a storytime where they got to predict what would happen next. It was a fun way for students and teachers to meet and start building connections before next school year.

KINDERGARTEN ROUND-UP WAS A HIT

Kindergarten Round-Up took place in February—and it was better than ever! Families rotated through nine fun stations designed to help them get ready for school. Kids played math games, got new books, practiced writing, and more. Parents received important health info and learned about our PBIS program. Everyone even got a Panther Pride shirt to show their school spirit!

was better than



Happy Retirement Mrs. Borowy!

After 26 years with Stockbridge Community Schools, special education teacher Nichole Borowy is retiring. She has made a big impact on students from preschool through middle school and says this job has been her purpose and passion. We are so thankful for everything she's done and wish her all the best in her next chapter!





PANTHER ATHLETICS

A Season to Remember!

Our **baseball and softball teams** made impressive district tournament runs, fueled by a strong group of senior athletes. **The boys finished 6th in the conference and the girls finished 4th!**

The **Boys' Track Team** tied for 4th in the league, with **Brock Rochow, Foster Pybus, and William Gancer** earning **All-Conference Honorable Mentions**.

The **Girls' Track Team** finished 6th in the league, with **JayLee Chapman and Megan Mackinder** also receiving **All-Conference Honorable Mentions**.

Track & Field is on the rise! With a promising Middle School program feeding into it, our **Boys' and Girls' teams sent 12 athletes to the state meet**—and the future looks fast!

Our **Boys' Golf and Girls' Soccer teams** wrapped up their seasons with class and a touch of spunk!

The **Golf Team** finished 3rd in the league—congrats to **Wyatt Loso** on earning **All-Conference honors!**

The **Girls' Soccer Team** placed 4th in the conference, with **Grace Lackey** receiving **All-Conference recognition as Goalkeeper** and **Rose Beauregard** earning **Honorable Mention**.

WANT MORE UPDATES?

Follow us on Facebook:

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@Stockbridge Jr/Sr High School



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Investing in Our Students...

Understanding the 2025 Bond Proposal

The Stockbridge Community School District is asking the community to consider a bond proposal on November 4, 2025. **Over the past few months, we've met with teachers, staff, coaches, transportation workers, and community members to listen to their ideas and needs.**

The projects in this bond are needed to keep up with and improve the quality of services we provide. While consistently working to create more opportunities for students and staff, many of the items are simply about replacing old equipment and fixing areas that need repairs. **We'll spread the purchases from this bond over the next five years so that our students and staff can benefit from these improvements for the next ten years and beyond.**

Your vote on November 4, 2025, will help shape the future of our schools and our community.



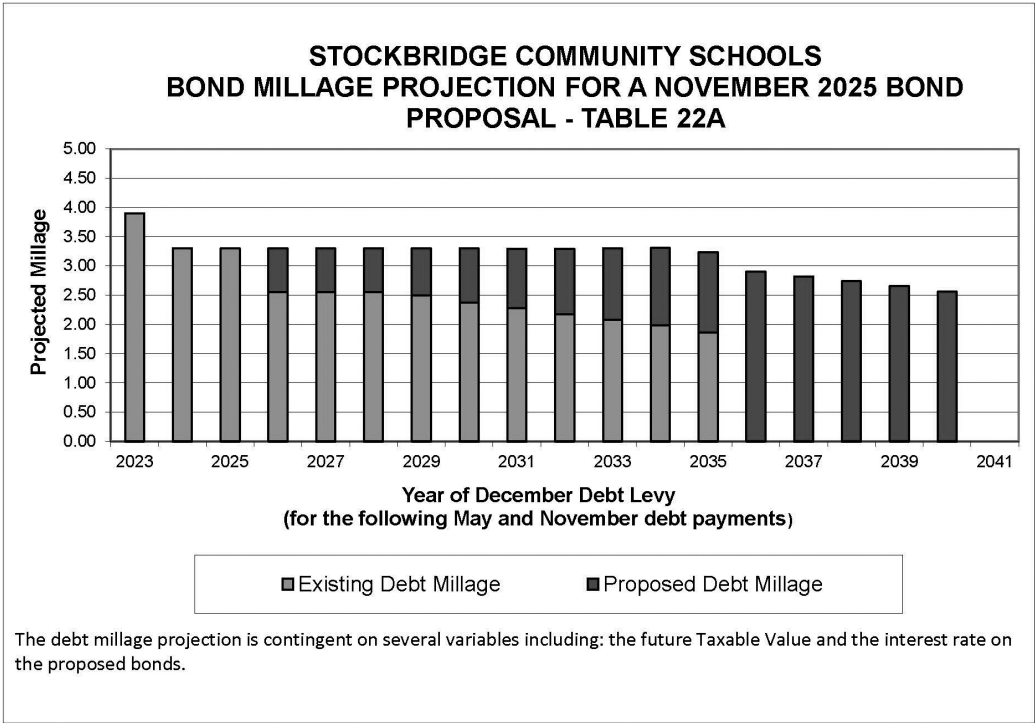
If approved,
this bond would
generate about
\$15.1 million
and be paid off
in 16 years.



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Registration Information



STOCKBRIDGE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS



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SMART INVESTMENTS FOR STRONGER SCHOOLS

JR./SR. HIGH SCHOOL

- Replace the roof
- New equipment for Home Economics classes
- Fix plumbing and drainage problems
- Replace student devices and technology
- Replace classroom equipment and technology
- Build a new pole barn for Ag Science, FFA, and Career Technical Education and storage space for the district
- Renovate locker rooms
- Replace the athletic track
- Make improvements to athletic fields
- Replace the shot put area
- Repave parking lots
- Add more parking near the ball fields
- Upgrade the press box and concession area
- Add new T-ball field

HERITAGE SCHOOL

- Replace boilers
- Replace student devices and technology
- Replace classroom equipment and technology
- Replace the roof

DISTRICT

- Purchase busses
- Replace infrastructure to support modern technology

SMITH ELEMENTARY

- Update the kitchen and cafeteria
- Renovate restrooms
- Replace student devices and technology
- Replace classroom equipment and technology
- Replace the roof
- Repave the parking lot
- Add more parking spaces near the school

This bond will fund practical improvements that benefit every part of a student's day — from safer buildings and updated classrooms to better spaces for learning, playing, and growing. It's a responsible investment in a safer, stronger school experience for all Panthers.



QUESTIONS

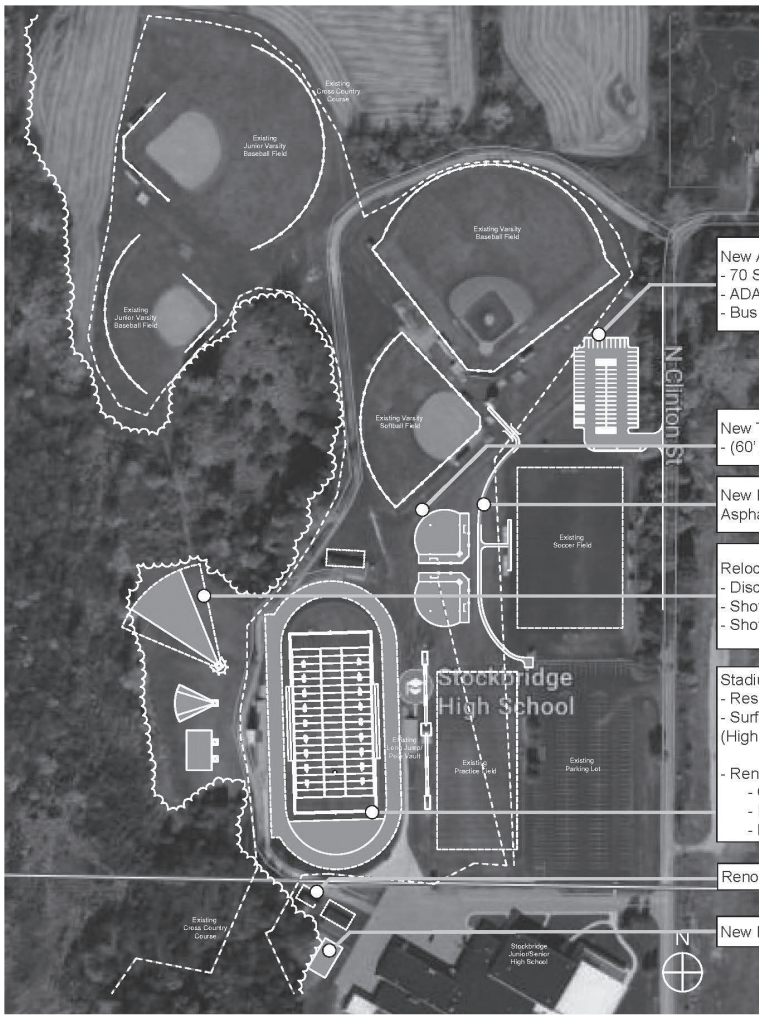
BRIAN FRIDDLE
Superintendent

517-851-7188, ext. 5503
friddleb@panthernet.net

SMART INVESTMENTS. STRONGER SCHOOLS.

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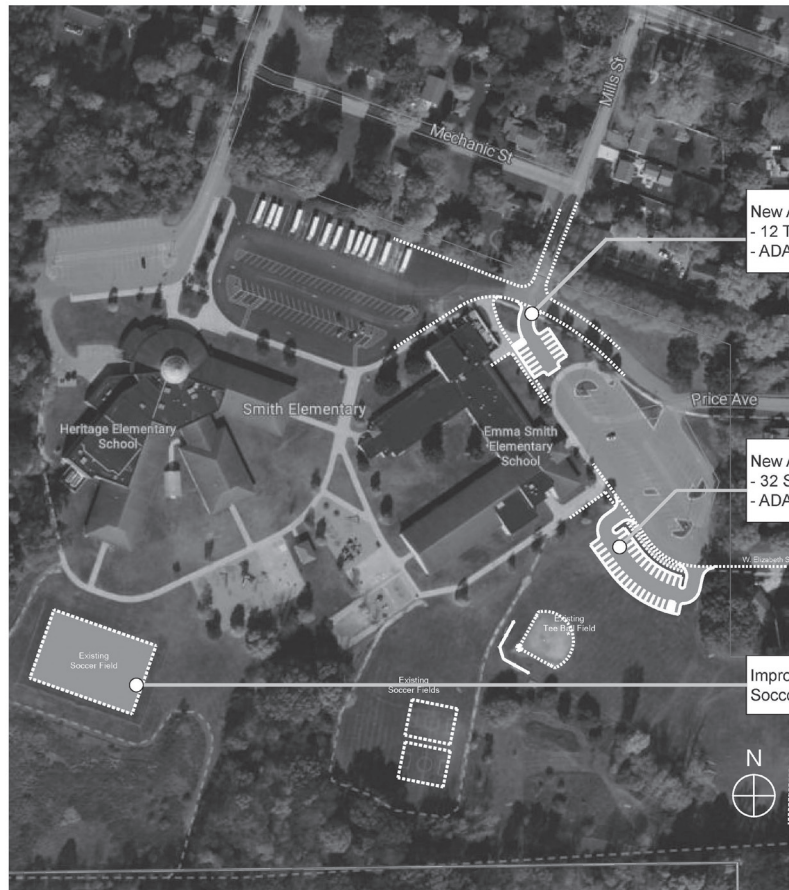
- New Asphalt Parking lot
- 70 Stalls
- ADA Parking (4)
- Bus Parking (2)
- New Tee-Ball Fields (2)
- (60' Bases)
- New Pedestrian Path (6' Wide) -
Asphalt Millings
- Relocated Field Events
- Discus
- Shot Put (1)
- Shot Put Warm-up Area
- Stadium Improvements
- Resurface Track
- Surface South D-Zone
(High Jump)

- Renovate Football Field
- Crown Field
- Irrigation & Underdrainage
- New Goal Posts
- Renovate Existing Buildings
- New Pole Barn

Stockbridge Community Schools is excited for the opportunity to work together with our community — building spaces where our kids can learn, grow, and thrive!



Every building has a life span — and even well-maintained spaces need updates to stay safe, efficient, and ready for the future.



- New Asphalt Parking Lot
- 12 Total Stalls
- ADA Parking (1)

- New Asphalt Parking Lot
- 32 Stalls
- ADA Parking (2)

- Improve Existing Soccer Field Drainage



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Regular meetings of the Board of Education will be held as posted each month at 6:30 pm at the Junior/Senior High School Student Success Center, 416 N. Clinton, Stockbridge, MI 49285. All regular meetings are open to the public.

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Pride of the Pack... New Alumni Spotlight to Debut in Back to School Issue

We're looking for alumni stories and photos to feature in our newsletter.

If you—or someone you know—have accomplishments, milestones, or memories to share, send them our way. Let's celebrate the people who make this community great! Submit your info and photos today! We're looking for alumni stories and pictures to feature throughout the year in the newsletter, *because every one of you is part of this community's story.*

Send us your updates and snapshots
— let's laugh, celebrate, and stay
connected...one spotlight at a time.

SUBMIT TO...
w.rosedesigns2000@gmail.com

