



The Grizzlies Gazette



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Self care isn't something that comes naturally to most of us. It is like any habit – it needs repetition, repetition, repetition!

*It's not selfish
to do what
is best for you*



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Office of the Superintendent
Hello everyone, I hope that you and your families are well! As we continue to watch the pandemic data and move towards the holiday season, I would like to remind you to please stay safe. I can't reiterate it enough that we need you to put on your oxygen mask first as they say in the airplane and take care of yourself! Get rest, take your vitamins, exercise, listen to your physician, wear face masks, and remain six feet apart from others. Your family and friends need you, our students need you and we need you to be your best so please do what you can to be preventative!

Something Professional
Thank you for participating in the array of conversations that have taken place throughout the district over the past few weeks. I truly appreciate your commitment and engagement. YCS staff members were quite honest about their concerns regarding returning students back to school during the month of November due to the increased number of positive COVID cases in our community and the holidays. As a result, I plan to recommend a plan that has our staff returning on January 4th and students (in phases) returning to school on January 19th. We will continue to watch the numbers and if there is not flat numbers of cases or a decline in positive cases over two weeks, we will move to our contingency plan. Your safety is our number one priority!

Something Personal
I submitted my absentee ballot a few weeks ago. I am asking you to also exercise your right to vote on Tuesday, November 3rd. We do have professional development, yet, it is spread out to allow those of you who would like to participate in in-person voting the opportunity. PLEASE don't let this opportunity pass by you. There are items at the local, state, and federal levels that impact you on this year's ballot, and as a leader in the community, I am personally asking you to participate and VOTE!

Also, I keep asking you to follow me on my YouTube channel, as usual, I hope you will check me out and subscribe. It should be fun! Check it out here! [Alena Zachery-Ross](#)

Something Profound From the Thought Catalog

Hail The Gemms

From one of my students when we were done with our lesson:

Him: "Oh boy, my parents aren't here yet! I get to sit in the lobby!"

Me: "Why is that a good thing? Isn't your dad taking you to your favorite restaurant tonight?"

Him: "Yeah, but I like being alone. Every other time in the week there's always someone in charge of me, at school, at home, or when I'm here. When I'm sitting waiting for my dad to pick me up, I get to be in charge of myself and it's fun!"

That Rotten Eggs Mell

From my 5 year old nephew: I asked him "Why did the chicken cross the road?"

He looked pensive for about 10 seconds, then looks up at me, completely serious and says "Because he looked both ways and there were no cars coming."

Kafke

"A wet man does not fear the rain."

Changed the way you think about things.

Alena Zachery-Ross — Superintendent



Student Support Services

The staff and students in our classes have been getting into the spirit of Halloween and enjoying the fall season. Ms. Debra Stevens showed up with what one student described as a “Chicken on her shoulder” when she was dressed as a very friendly pirate with a beautiful parrot. Other classes have been entertained with Zoom parties that them and their parents could enjoy.

We still need two parents to represent us as Parent Advisory Committee members for the Washtenaw County PAC. Please contact the Student Support Services office at (734) 221-1951 or (734) 221-1952 if you are interested in serving.

E. Ruth Jordan — Student Support Services Director

Statewide Field Team (SWFT): Blueprint Installation

We are working together to support the systems based approach to continuous improvement and to plan professional learning that connects to the #1 Top Priority Goal:

To substantially improve the quality of teaching and learning and thereby significantly advance the learning for all YCS students. We will accomplish this by ensuring that all:

YCS staff will advance the learning and achievement of all students by making significant strides in *improving the quality of instruction in all of our classrooms by teaching the priority standards and following the curriculum outlined in our pacing guides.*

YCS staff will conceive firmly and in substantial detail *what good teaching looks like and sounds like.*

YCS staff will take the *measure of the quality of instruction against this yardstick, and will work relentlessly to move the quality of instruction forward using formative assessments.*

Sarah Scott, — SWFT Coordinator of Professional Learning

(Ypsilanti Community Schools)

scotts@calhounisd.org



Business Office

The 2019-2020 Financial Audit is complete and was presented to the Board during the October 26, 2020 Board meeting. We have officially closed out the 2019-2020 fiscal year and look forward to giving our full attention to the 2020-2021 school year.

If you have received any invoices for the orders placed and have received until now, please forward them to the Business Office to process. Let us know how we can support you throughout the year. If you need to purchase supplies for your classroom, please contact your Building Principal and your building secretary to help you with the Purchase Order. We would like to take a districtwide initiative of using more of our PO system to keep us on track and within the budget limit.

It is that time of the year again. To ensure you receive your W-2 in a timely manner, please make sure your mailing address is updated and accurate in eSuite.

“ Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.” - Helen Keller

Priya Nayak — Director of Business and Finance

livehappy

"Self-care is giving the world the best of you, instead of what's left of you."

— Katie Reed

SAVE LIVES
IT'S WHAT WE DO



Technology

Hello Ypsilanti Community Schools! We are pushing ahead with a lot of infrastructure modernization and improvement projects. We have completed the wireless upgrade and now are moving on to modernizing the security camera system. The plan is to have an up-to-date modern and centrally

managed security camera system in the district. And finally, we will also be looking at leveraging E-Rate to upgrade the wired network infrastructure. These are important upgrades to the district as more and more curriculum migrates to a digital platform and that we have become a 1 for 1 device district. In order to support the thousands of devices and programs we have deployed, requires a truly strong and robust modern technology infrastructure to support all of these initiatives.

We have seen a sharp increase in fake and phishing emails and just want to pass along some good practices to be aware of. First, when you receive an email, to check the authenticity of the email, look at the origin. How, you ask? Simple enough, hover your mouse pointer over the **from:** field and you'll see a box popup with details. Look at the information in the box, and you will see in the example below, that this email did in fact come from a ycschools.us email domain. Most fake ones can use any primary name they want (we call that a label), but they can't change the domain information.

Most fake emails will always come from anywhere that is not ycschools.us, take a look at the email example below.

From: [REDACTED] <executivedirector@list.ru>
Date: Wed, Aug 28, 2019 at 2:23 PM
Subject: Available
To: <@ycschools.us>

Look carefully!

Let me know your availability at your convenience, There is something i need you to do.

I'll look out to your response.

Thanks.

Kind Regards

[REDACTED]

The email said it came from a district administrator (called label), but upon closer inspection you can see the origin email address is executivedirector@list.ru. .RU is a Russian domain email. This is clearly a phishing attempt.

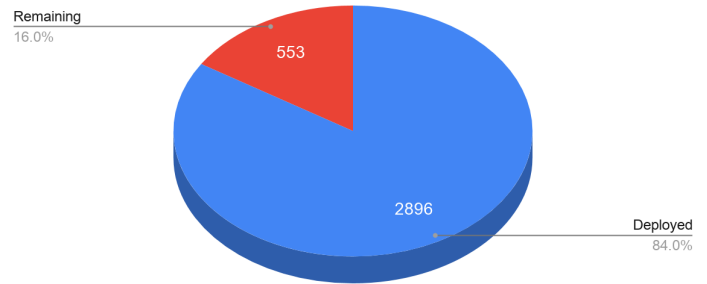
And some other security quick tips include:

1. Keep your software up-to-date.
2. Practice good password management.
3. Pay attention to what you click on.
4. Never leave any of your devices unattended.
5. Always backup your data and documents.

If you'd like any additional information to any of these types, please don't hesitate to contact the technology department.

Nik Jackson — Technology Director

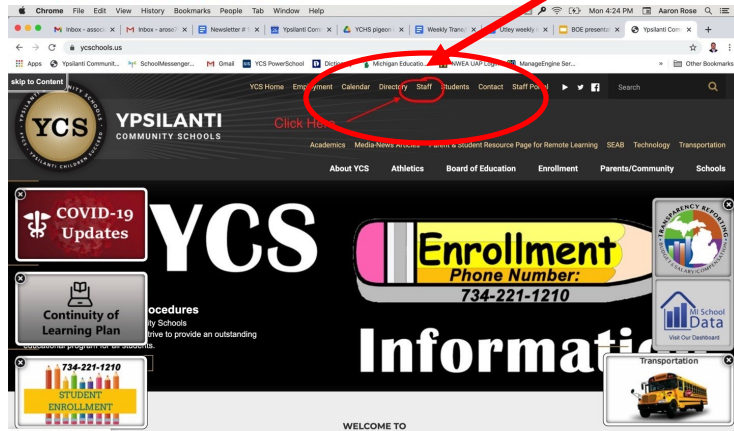
Ypsilanti Community Schools





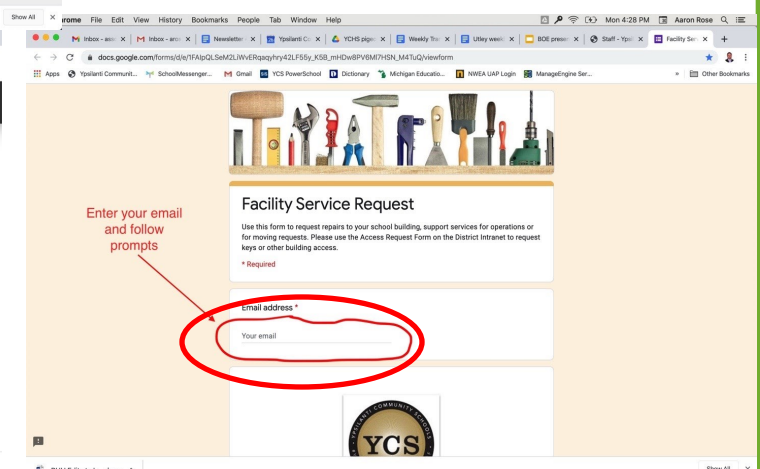
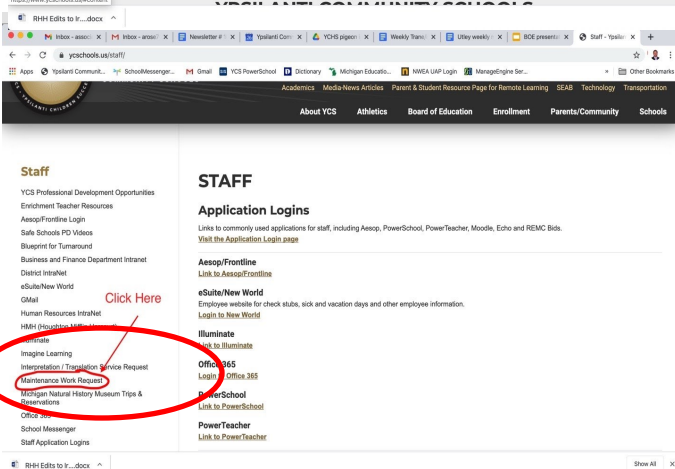
Facilities

Do you know how to enter a work order service request? Our Facilities staff complete their work partly based on the requests entered into the YCS service request system located on our district website. Below are screenshots and details to assist staff with entering requests into our system.



I hope this information supports you with entering service requests whenever they are required. It is our goal to service the district, providing a safe, healthy and comfortable work and learning environment. If we can do anything to improve your experience in these areas, please be sure to reach out via a service request, email me at arose@ycschools or call us at 734-221-1190. Take care and go Grizzlies,

Aaron Rose — Director of District Operations



Data Coach

In recent weeks there have been so many new additions to our suite of tools available to us as educators. I completely understand it can be overwhelming to wrap our mind around the new platforms and discover ways on how to integrate it into our existing workflows (all while still teaching)! However, these platforms have been chosen to fill a specific need in our district and their adoption will be to provide additional support to our students, families, and you (our wonderful staff) in educating our wonderful students.



With that being said, here is an overview of the new tools currently at our disposal and some yet to come:

1. **Remind**: for communicating with students and families, no app required! Get started today by clicking the icon in your Clever portal and connecting to your account!
2. **Clever**: a launchpad for all (most) of our technology platforms. Remember teachers, you can add your own apps directly from the Clever library!

Here are some programs we are currently working to fully deploy or integrate into Clever:

- Seesaw for TK-5 (roughly one to two weeks)
- Reflex Math for Erickson (can use right now, Clever integration coming in the near future)
- TeachPoint (deployed by building for a dedicated professional learning tracking platform)

Did you know? You can make phone calls with Remind and it will mask your number? As long as the phone number is on your class list you're good to go! Learn more by clicking [here](#)!

NWEA's fall window will be wrapping up on November 12th! Keep those emails coming if you run into issues. Remember to check out our [guidance document](#) for help tips and some troubleshooting techniques. After wrapping up NWEA it's time to jump into the data and that means dusting off the covers on Illuminate DnA. More on that in our next update!

As always, you can email or ping me on chat if you have any questions or concerns!

Solomon Zheng — Data Coach



Food Service

Our Grab and Go Bus Distribution continues to grow. We are able to deliver over 8,500 meals throughout the Ypsi community to ensure that our students are receiving meals.

Our Eastern Michigan University Dietetic Interns have created a nutrition newsletter that will be sent home in our food distribution bags. Each newsletter will contain fun, healthy, kid friendly recipes, nutritional facts and links to educational nutrition sites. [Nutrition Mission](#) \

We Are YCS!!!!

Tiffany Houston — Food Services Director

The Nutrition Mission



Grants

Equity Grant Approved!

Last week the Michigan Department of Education approved our Equity Grant application. The Equity Grant is part of the COVID relief funds and YCS received \$363,000. The funds will be used for the following:



- Chromebooks (300)
- Hotspots (200)
- Seesaw (3 year license) <https://web.seesaw.me>
- Panorama (5 year license) <https://www.panoramaed.com>
- Walking/Running Club
- Oasis Rooms (for adults and students)

Seesaw, which is an on-line platform, uses a variety of powerful and intuitive tools (like draw+record, collage, video, and more!) to show what they know in the way that works best for them.

Panorama brings together social-emotional learning, a multi-tiered system of support, response to intervention, college and career readiness tracking, school climate, and student voice—all in one easy to use and intuitive platform.

Many thanks to all of those who collaborated to provide support for our students.

Mark Coscarella — Director of State and Federal Grant Programs



Transportation

Professional Development for all YCS staff will be **Tuesday, November 3, 2020 8:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.** PD is mandatory and attendance will be taken. This PD is exclusively for YCS, Dr. Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz will hold a courageous conversation with us. This PD promises to be information we can all use.

The zoom will start at 8:00 a.m. and end at 11:30 a.m. You will only be able to sign on using your district email. We do have a limited number of devices available at transportation.

Many drivers were registered for advanced drivers' class on 11/3/20. That has been postponed to a later date TBD.

We would like to thank our amazing Transportation staff for their exceptional job in transporting our in-person students safely! Their ability to be flexible and provide our students with a safe ride both to and from school is appreciated. In addition, many of our Transportation Department staff members have been participating in meaningful work. Your presence and additional support has been appreciated by all! Thank you for you dedication and commitment to our YCS students and their families.

Kim Searcy — Director of Transportation



Communications Department

Remember to cast your vote **on or by Tuesday, November 3rd**. You may vote on the absentee ballot **until November 3rd**, but it is advised **not to mail** in your ballot at this point.

- Consider voting early or do so on election day as [safe as possible](#).
- Same-day registration is available in your city or township clerk office up until 8 p.m. on Election Day. Check your registration and find your clerk's office at Michigan.gov/Vote. (Source: Washtenaw County Health Department)

Also, remember that local elections are as important as the presidential election! Inform yourself on local elections and candidates running for office by visiting your county websites.

YCS has three candidates running for the Board of Education for two open seats.

The candidates are as follows:

- [Yvonne Fields](#)
- [Maria Goodrich](#)
- [M. Jeanice Townsend](#)

Over 73 million people have already voted throughout the United States!
Get out and VOTE! YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

Please continue to remind your students and families about Parent-Teacher Conferences coming up on Wednesday, November 4th, and Thursday, November 5th. If they have not reached out to you to schedule a conference, please contact them as it is important to be engaged with parents while learning remotely.

Attendance matters! If you have students that are not attending classes regularly, it is important to communicate with their families and your building administrator. We are tracking attendance and want to improve our attendance, plus make sure students are fully engaged!

Join us **on Friday, November 6th, at 7 p.m.** for a virtual evening of jazz with Charles & Gwen Scales! The Zoom link is below:

[Link to Zoom](#)

The Athletic Department has Grizzly Swag available for purchase through an [online store](#). Items will be shipped directly to your house.



Lastly, thank you to the bus drivers and food service workers for their weekly efforts to feed our community. On Friday, I had the opportunity to stop by one of the stops to see how Grab and Go Friday's operation worked, and it works well! Families know when the bus will be at the location and are ready to accept bags of food.

Taryn Willis — Marketing and Communications Coordinator





Office of the Assistant Superintendent

Dear Staff, as we continue to develop and grow our *racial literacy with compassion, dedication, and urgency...I would like to thank each of you for having the courage to continue to grow your knowledge, experience, and skills needed to lead this deep antiracist work forward. This work requires each of us to commit to really listening to the voices of students of color so that we can learn from them. It requires us to position ourselves in a vulnerable space as we eagerly learn and grow our racial literacy forward.*

Please know that we at YCS continue to take an antiracist view of our policies, procedures, and practices that by design hurt our most vulnerable student populations. We understand that we must continue to grow our pool of educators that serve as co-conspirators who radically act on the behalf of our Black and Brown students. Please note that this does not exclude the needs of all of our other students.

I urge all educators to use this time in education to grow your *racial literacy by reading great books, participating in great racial equity professional development opportunities, watching videos, participating in book studies, learning from your students, etc. This is a time for educators to prepare themselves for what they will encounter in the 2021-22 school year and forward. This Pandemic has brought to light how public education has served as a racist institution in this country by the policies, procedures and practices that have been previously honored. Today, public education finds itself at a Crossroad. The Old Paradigm of continuing to do the same and expecting different results is not working, is not just, is not acceptable, and is quickly falling apart. The new Antiracist Paradigm offers a more promising and inclusive educational opportunity where all our Black and Brown children are treated with respect, are viewed and valued for the genius they bring with them to our classrooms, and they are seen, heard, valued, and respected for the great individuals that they are.*

Ypsilanti Community Schools

Responsive Teaching Institute - A Conversation with Dr. Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz

Tuesday, November 3, 2020

8:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3198613603?pwd=NGdKd3pEMVA1S3JqR2w4ekdESmk3UT09>



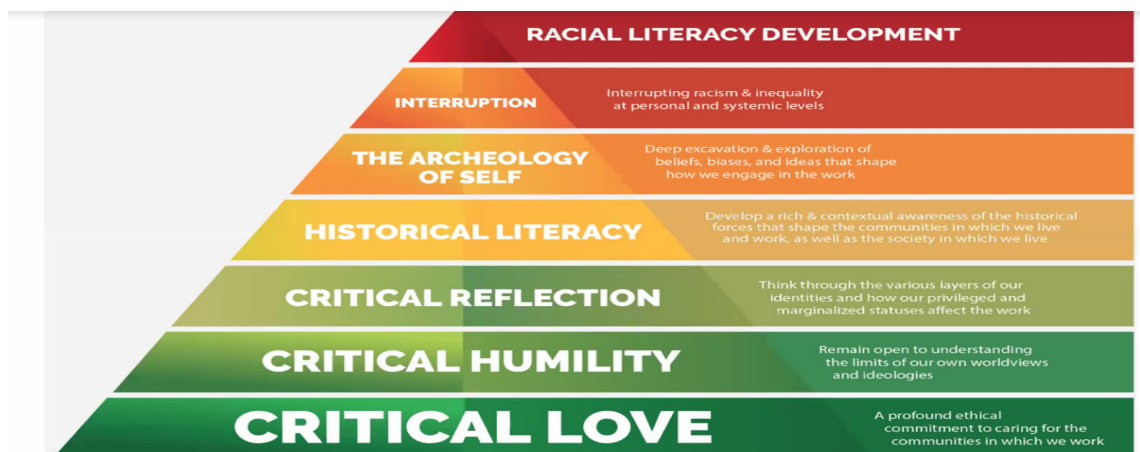
Meeting ID: 319 861 3603

Passcode: 979556

Please **SAVE THE DATE!** – Tuesday, November 3, 2020 – 8:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Dear YCS Staff:

Dr. Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz will hold a courageous conversation with us on how we can continue to grow our archeology of self, our racial literacy, focus on genuine self-care, and learn how to have honest conversations around difficult topics using effective norms intended for these types of conversations. She will invite us to stretch our thinking, show our compassion for self and love for others, work through hard to talk about social justice issues, and know that we have a moral responsibility to educate our children and show them love. Dr. Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz will connect the work to our Racial Equity Framework below.



Carlos Lopez — Assistant Superintendent

Distance Learning Partners Teachers-Parents-Students

During Quarter One, secondary students had opportunities to take responsibility for their learning and work on developing their agency. It seems a bit more challenging for younger students, so the dynamics of the partnership has to be more inclusive of parental roles. This move to distance learning made unintentional teachers' assistants out of parents and guardians.

Let's keep two things in mind: households are stressed and stretched; this year of "less is more" means using less material but getting as much as possible from it.

When we look at the driver systems for Blueprint for Turnaround the one at the center is Communication. Teachers **email, text and confer** with these household partners, regularly.
*How might we **positively communicate** with parents when [a student we'll call Taylor]...*

Student is not logging on to scheduled Meets or Zoom sessions:

Our class sessions are just not the same without Taylor joining us. Is there some way I can support more regular attendance this quarter?

Student logs on, but only stays a few minutes:

I appreciate Taylor arriving on time and being counted for attendance. I see there have been some sessions where he/she left early and did not return before the end. Are there reasons he/she can't always stay for the full class session?

Student logs on, but with a name or avatar and a muted microphone, is not participating:

Taylor is very good about muting the microphone when not speaking, and has chosen an interesting avatar for times not on camera. I get concerned when he/she is not speaking or not visible for the most or all of the session. Are there some distractions that can be moved from his/her study area until class is over?

Student has been provided with materials, yet does not have them next to the computer:

Taylor has been provided the few supplies needed to participate in our class activities. When students need a pencil and paper or their whiteboard and markers, could someone help Taylor to keep supplies in the backpack and near his/her study area?

Student has positioned computer in a way that denies the household privacy:

Is there a way to have the computer facing a corner while making Taylor's workspace more private for him/her and the family's activities?

We all have households that have become workplaces, schools, and where we live.

Student has assignments posted in Google Classroom, yet does not complete them or attempt to start them:

We have been using our online classroom for 8 weeks. It can be a fun and easy way for Taylor to do and turn in assignments. I see there have been times assignments have been missing or incomplete. How can we work together to get Taylor to visit me during my online office hours to get a bit of extra help if needed?

Student has adequate timeframes for each task, yet they don't indicate a need for assistance or more time from the teacher:

I know you join me in wanting Taylor to have a good Quarter 2 and a semester to be proud of. As the "at home partner", can you remind him/her that I can be reached by email or during office hours for any type of assistance? Thank you so much.

Beverly Whatley (K-12 ELA / Social Studies Instructional Coach) designed this powerful tool to help teachers to communicate more effectively with the parents/guardians of their students. These prompts are strategically open ended and are designed for having productive positive interactions with the adults responsible for your students.

Watch for our next issue!