

In Session with the “Oriole” Superintendent

By, Mark D. Rosekrans, Superintendent of Charlotte Public Schools

Charlotte Public Schools Experiencing Enrollment Increase

For the second fall in a row, Charlotte Public Schools is experiencing an increase in enrollment. This is truly a welcome change and is exciting for our school district and community. Although the State of Michigan official count day is not until October 3rd, we are anticipating our increases to hold until then. Presently, the school district is up about 40 students from last fall and we are cautiously optimistic this will stay stable at this higher level as we approach the official count day.

We have been a declining enrollment district, like many other districts in the State of Michigan, for the past several years. The declines in students made the school district change, adapt and adjust programming and services throughout the many years of reduced enrollment. A few of the painful reductions came with Galewood and Weymouth closing as elementary schools as well as grade level restructuring and reconfiguring at the Middle School and Upper Elementary. We also experienced staff reductions, contractual agreements with employees that were financially tight as well as other adjustments in programming. The declines in enrollment were challenging and difficult for us and for the families and students we serve.

This school year and last school year have been different. We have seen increased enrollment at almost all levels of the school district and are managing the growth by constantly monitoring numbers at all buildings. We have had to advance section sizes at the lower elementary and upper elementary levels. We are forecasting the increases at these two levels to roll forward in the coming years and are making strategic plans to address them with teachers and support staff, instructional spaces, materials and furnishings.

The reopening of Galewood Early Elementary School is an outstanding indicator of the new trend we are experiencing with increased enrollment. Galewood is serving over 200 students and families. We have heard many positive comments about the school being active and back serving the Charlotte area children.

The community should also know that Weymouth Child Development Center is at capacity. We have renovated the former library into an infant care room and have a waiting list for many of the Center's programs. This too is an example of the increasing enrollment trend.

The Middle School and High School are also seeing increased numbers. We feel these will also roll forward in the coming years and are making plans to be prepared. The additional educational programming options at the High School that include several college partnerships, the Charlotte Early Middle College and new this year, Project Success, all provide non-traditional education options to our area families.

The Operations department in the district is also adjusting and gearing up. We have had to add buses and routes, technological devices, and increased food service capacity to name a few.

We are excited about the current enrollment trend and the increased opportunities available for our students and families. It is far better to manage the recent growth in enrollment than the years of painful reductions.

Please let me extend my appreciation for the increases because from my perspective, this represents shared ownership with our entire staff, our Board of Education, our families and our entire community. I firmly believe everyone is playing a critical and significant role in advancing our district and our community.

Charlotte community enhancements are easy to site, a few of note include:

- City of Charlotte advancements in road and infrastructure improvements – including the wonderful improvements to State Street that our staff and families are all enjoying
- Construction and renovation of many businesses
- Growth in the industrial parks
- Expansion efforts at Spartan Motor’s Charlotte campus
- CharlotteRising, the downtown improvements and the energy surrounding these efforts
- Residential developments, with the development behind Washington Elementary as a prime example
- The Hayes Green Beach Hospital and Sparrow Hospital merger and their construction project
- Al!ve and its many services and community engagement efforts

And the list goes on. Everyone needs to feel extremely positive about the things happening here in Charlotte, and more seems to be on the horizon. I know we are getting noticed in the mid-Michigan area for all of these efforts, so stay tuned.

My respect and gratitude goes out to everyone for your continued collective efforts in helping to make Charlotte and Charlotte Public Schools a place to grow and thrive!

Go Orioles!! Oriole Pride!