



**For release the week of: December 3, 2018 (or as soon as practical)  
For questions, please contact: Tammy Woller, 715-536-4581, ext. 10002**

### **Superintendent's Corner...**

#### **Great Speaker Committee**

Our Great Speaker Committee recently met for the second time to decide on this year's speaker. On behalf of the committee, I am pleased to announce Terrence Tally as the selection for the 2018-2019 school year. The presentation will be held for our PRMS and MHS students in the Merrill High School Fieldhouse on April 24, 2019 at 1:00 p.m. The community is also invited to attend.

Terrence brings a message to students addressing a variety of the pressures faced today. In Terrence's own words: *"Today, students face an uphill battle against bullying, peer pressure, family hurts and life altering choices. If we can help bring students together, give another option, heal some hurts and help realize positive life choices; we would have better students and a positive school atmosphere. This is where I can help assist you with this school assembly presentation. My hope is that students will know "that you matter and because you matter you can make a difference." With the battle students face, they have to know there's hope."*

I continue to be impressed by the dialogue that takes place among our students as members of the Great Speaker Committee. Formed in 1978, the primary purpose of this student committee is to bring positive influence to our district by selecting speakers with a relevant message. Students are selected during their sixth grade year and remain on the committee until they graduate from high school. Our student committee members include Aimee Black (Grade 12); Dawson Dengel (Grade 11); Ahna Meyer (Grade 10); Ben Freyer (Grade 9); Evelyn Blennert (Grade 8); Joshua Watzka (Grade 7); and, Logan Seeger (Grade 6). Our staff sponsors include PRMS teacher Nathan Grams and MHS counselor Kasie Holt. Community member representatives this year include Renea Frederick, Lynne Reindl and Sarah Smith.

#### **Technical Education and Fab Lab Updates**

The Technical Education Program at the high school has certainly seen its share of progress this school year. Here are just a few of the recent developments taking place:

Instructor - Mr. Tim Krueger

Our MHS Bluejay Graphics class is in the first year of transforming the class into a student-run business where students are simulating real-world work experience in the field of graphics. Students are creating products for resale, such as canvas prints and vinyl stickers, all while

accepting orders and requests from school and local community groups. Students receive a portion of the class profits at the end of the year and work towards bonuses, all while improving their college and career readiness skills.

Instructor - Mr. Aaron Svcek

Our Design and Engineering students in Computer-Aided Design and Drafting (CADD) began a community civics project shortly after the start of the second quarter. The students are using their talents and skills to make a contribution during this holiday season, and to give back to the community. Each student began modeling and designing (using SolidWorks); a puzzle, brain teaser, or game that would ultimately be given to children during the giving holiday season. Each student is using the design and engineering process to create a prototype and problem solve. Ultimately, each student will be manufacturing a run of ten projects.

The project was also intended to integrate our engineering/design students with our high school art students through professional collaboration. The art students are deeply involved in creating packaging that will spark a sense of wonderment when the child receives their gift.

Our CADD students will be donating all of their work to the community.

Instructor - Mr. Tim Osborn

The MHS Building Construction class is in the third year of a partnership with the Merrill Area Housing Authority. This partnership, called Bluejay Build, is a wonderful collaboration between MAPS, the Housing Authority and various local contractors. Through this partnership, MHS students learn valuable skills and knowledge as it relates to home building, work with various contractors to learn about plumbing, electrical and HVAC systems and build a complete house on campus. The Housing Authority supplies the blueprints and the materials needed to build the house. Once complete, the house is moved to a vacant lot in the City of Merrill that has a foundation poured and waiting for the new house to arrive. When the home is set in place and finished, the Housing Authority makes the home available for low-income housing in our community and the process starts all over again the following fall with a new plan, and a new home. MAPS is excited to be part of this partnership and values the role we play in improving our community.

Fab Lab Director - Mr. Josh Zalewski

The Fab Lab was awarded a Beyond Crayons and Computers grant. This grant will allow our high school students to partner with our fifth grade elementary art students to create a mosaic tile art piece for their school that will be on display in the community at several locations. The students will identify what they are proud of within our community, drawing their ideas on paper and our Fab Lab students will help to take their paper drawings and transform them to a digital format. Finally, they will program a CNC router to make their individual tile for their elementary partner's art piece. This partnership opportunity will allow our teams to work on communication, collaboration, cooperation and problem solving.

On behalf of the entire Merrill Area Public Schools family, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and all of the best for the New Year!

John Sample  
Proud Superintendent