

MARQUETTE AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Jon Hartwig, Superintendent  
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February 26, 2010

The [Lastname] Family  
[Address]  
[City – State – Zip]

Dear Parent:

With the School Board's decision to create a 5-8 middle school finalized, specific program planning is now underway. I am writing this letter to provide parents of fourth graders with my personal assurance that Bothwell's 2010-2011 fifth grade program is being designed to meet educational, social and emotional needs of your child. We are excited about opportunities awaiting next year's middle school youngsters and look forward to serving your family.

Bothwell is already one of the region's most successful middle schools. Programs are varied and of high quality. Our faculty members specialize in meeting educational needs of emerging adolescent children and have chosen to work with this special age level of students. Adding experienced fifth grade teachers to Bothwell's faculty will enhance our ability to support extraordinary levels of student achievement.

In months ahead, Bothwell and Graveraet staff, in conjunction with Superior Hills, Cherry Creek and Sandy Knoll teachers and administrators, will provide many 5-8 middle school orientation opportunities for you and your child. Visits to Bothwell as well as evening discussion meetings in each elementary school are being planned. We recognize the importance of keeping you informed of plans and actively involved in shaping next year's 5-8 middle school program.

We value your support and will work tirelessly to earn your trust. Please let us know how we can best meet your needs. After reviewing the *Frequently Asked Questions* on the reverse side of this letter, please feel free to contact me for additional information.

Sincerely,

Jon Hartwig, Superintendent  
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906-225-4200

## Bothwell Middle School – Frequently Asked Questions

***Q: Will next year's 5-8 middle school be crowded?***

**A:** Bothwell's current design could accommodate up to 1,000 middle school students. Current enrollment is 685. By adding fifth graders, we project 2010-2011 enrollment at approximately 863. All classrooms will be used, but ample space will be available to accommodate all student activities. Large gym, cafeteria, computer labs and sport deck areas provide additional space needed for small and large group middle school activities.

***Q: How will next year's fifth grade program differ from MAPS' current Graveraet effort?***

**A:** Next year's Bothwell Middle School program will provide at least the same opportunities as currently exist. Fifth grade classes will be self-contained, and it is our intention they will be taught by the same teachers. Music, art, technology and physical education classes will also be provided. Like Graveraet, Bothwell fifth graders will be housed in a specific building location, allowing shared classroom activities and close relationships among them.

***Q: Do Bothwell administrators know the needs of fifth grade children?***

**A:** Principal Bill Saunders was Superior Central School District's principal. His school housed grades K-12 within the same building, providing Mr. Saunders with ample elementary-aged student experiences. He is also the father of two young children. Assistant Principal Dan Gannon is a father of two children and has been an intermediate and elementary school principal in previous administrative experiences. Bothwell administrators and staff are both excited and qualified to lead a 5-8 middle school.

***Q. Will my child be protected from bullying by older middle school students?***

**A:** Yes. Our goal is to eliminate bullying in the school district. No student can do his or her best if feeling the stress of bullying. Because Bothwell will now house an additional grade level of children, we will increase opportunities for students to learn about and thus resist bullying attempts. Prevention of bullying will be our priority.

***Q: How will Bothwell staff communicate with parents about their children and how will parents contact Bothwell middle school counselors?***

**A:** We increasingly rely on voicemail, email, and other technology-enhanced communication systems to stay connected with parents. Those avenues, plus newsletters, personal conferences, pre-scheduled parent/teacher conferences, progress reports, report cards, and specially-scheduled conference sessions are methods through which parents and teachers stay connected. All teachers have classroom telephones, email accounts, and voicemail.

***Q: Bothwell currently has no playground space for fifth grade students. Will that problem be resolved?***

**A:** Yes. We will recruit a committee including fifth grade parents to assist staff in planning appropriate playground, coat storage, cubby space and other building-specific facilities to meet needs of our young middle school children. By fall 2010 age-appropriate playground space and other necessary building upgrades will be in place.

***Q: Traffic congestion is an issue for Bothwell pedestrians, parents in automobiles and bus drivers. Adding fifth grade to the building will intensify concerns. What can be done to alleviate traffic jams before and after school?***

**A:** Changing the flow of traffic and buses is being examined to help resolve this problem. A Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) grant related to this issue is being pursued.

***Q: Bothwell students have access to band, orchestra and choral electives. Will fifth graders have those same opportunities?***

**A:** Not immediately. We will begin 2010-2011 by offering fifth grade students the same special classes as have been provided to previous classes. Opportunities including orchestra, band and choral instruction, plus woodshop and other elective programs, will be developed long-term.

***Q: Middle school students have access to counselors. Will next year's fifth grade students also benefit from counseling staff?***

**A:** Yes. Both middle school counselors will be responsible for meeting needs of Bothwell 5-8 students. Mrs. Addison and Mrs. Landick are experienced counselors and have much to offer all grade levels of developing adolescents.

***Q: Are extracurricular activities being planned for fifth grade Bothwell students in 2010-2011?***

**A:** We will begin the year by offering the same before-school and after-school offerings as currently exist for Graveraet students. Many new ideas will evolve through staff, student and parent input. If it can be envisioned, it can be created.