



Alena Zachery-Ross, Superintendent
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October 2026

Dear GRIZZLY FAMILIES,

We've had a strong start to an extraordinary year! I am filled with tremendous gratitude, pride, and excitement about the remarkable start to our school year. Across the district, our scholars are exploring, creating, and driving their own learning. October is National Principals Month, and I want to express my deepest appreciation to our outstanding school leaders. Every day, our principals lead with vision, compassion, courage, and an unwavering commitment to our scholars, staff, and families.

As we reflect on the first months of the school year, there is so much to celebrate. From exciting academic milestones to innovative learning experiences and stronger community partnerships, we are making meaningful progress toward our shared vision of excellence.

Guided by our "Fans First" philosophy, we remain committed to keeping scholars at the center of our decisions. This commitment is reflected in our 2025–2030 Strategic Plan, built around three priorities: **Accelerating Academic Excellence, Advancing Future Readiness, and Allocating Resources Equitably**. These priorities are more than words in a plan. They are coming to life every day in our classrooms, schools, and community.

One of our most significant milestones this year is the official authorization of Ypsilanti Community High School to offer the **International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme**! This historic accomplishment means YCHS now offers two authorized IB programmes: the Career-related Programme (CP) and the Diploma Programme (DP). These internationally recognized educational pathways provide scholars with rigorous academic experiences, opportunities for college credit, career preparation, and the skills necessary to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

We are also celebrating significant investments in literacy! Through grant-supported initiatives, **2,260 book bag packets** were distributed to scholars in PreK–5, and **7,374 new books** were added to our district libraries. These resources help build home libraries, inspire a love of reading, and ensure scholars have greater access to engaging books.

At YCS, preparing scholars for the future means giving them opportunities to experience it today. Across the district, we are expanding access to artificial intelligence, career and technical education, and experiential learning experiences that connect classroom instruction to real-world possibilities.

We are also investing in the spaces where scholars learn and grow. Soon we will open the **new Beauty Salon** supporting the cosmetology CTE at YCHS. At Holmes STEAM Elementary School, the new **STEAM Center** is providing an exciting space for collaboration, design thinking, creativity, and hands-on exploration. The community is welcome to join us for the ribbon-cutting of this new space on Tuesday, November 24 at 12 p.m. (1255 Holmes Rd.).

Stronger Together



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One of the things that makes Ypsilanti Community Schools extraordinary is the strength of our partnerships. We thank **Eastern Michigan University** for awarding the Extra Yard Award and a \$1,000 grant to YIES. Scholars and staff enjoyed a special assembly and recognition during halftime at an EMU football game.

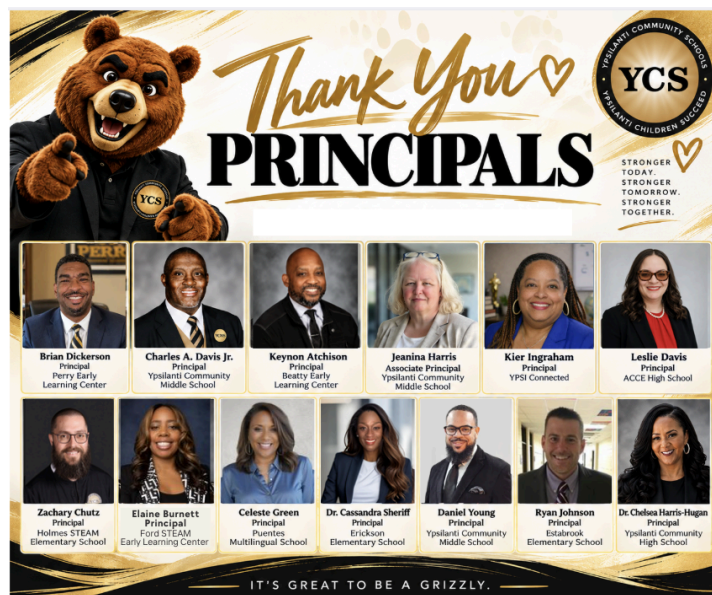
We are also excited about our **new food service program** in partnership with Southwest Foodservice Excellence (SFE), bringing fresh, scratch-cooked meals and nutritious dining options to our scholars. Together, these dedicated teams play an essential role in creating a healthy, safe, and supportive learning environment across YCS.

This month, we proudly recognized our dedicated custodial team during **National Custodial Worker's Recognition Day** (October 2) and celebrated our transportation team during **National School Bus Safety Week** (October 19–23). We are grateful for their commitment to keeping our schools clean, safe, and welcoming and ensuring our scholars travel safely each day.

As we approach the winter season, we want remind families that the **YCS Resiliency Center**, located at 1960 Holmes Road and led by Cherisa Allen, continues to provide essential resources and family assistance every Friday by appointment.

Our fall break kicks off on Thursday, October 29 with a 1/2 day of school for staff professional development, and then fall break extends through November 3. We look forward to welcoming our scholars back on Wednesday, November 4.

Dr. Alena Zachery-Ross
Superintendent
Ypsilanti Community Schools



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