

St. Ignace Schools Among Those Offering Full Day Kindergarten; Districts Report Changes This Year

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 longer session has allowed St. Ignace to extend art, physical education, and music classes from 20 to 35 minutes.

These special classes will be taught by certified expert teachers this year, owing to new federal regulations which demand higher qualifications for certain teachers. Each will be able to structure activities to closely match the developmental levels of the youngsters, Mrs. Ledy said.

Having experts teach art, music, and physical education allows classroom teachers more planning time. Kindergarten planning periods will be a collaborative effort, Mrs. Ledy said. In a group setting, teachers will draw from each other's experience and imaginations to create their lesson plans.

This year, the youngsters will take advantage of a new computer laboratory, she added, and they will also have regular library time under the direction of school librarian and aide Betsy Wheeler.



Olivia Champion of St. Ignace Township receives her name tag as her mother, Kelly, looks on, at St. Ignace Area Schools' kindergarten orientation Wednesday, August 23.

At nearby Gros Cap School, where Mary Cullen teaches kindergarten, registrations rose, said secretary Julie Moore. The tentative count for the coming year is 13 kindergarten students, compared to last year's final count of eight. The increase has enabled Gros Cap to break with tradition and offer a kindergarten-only class. In years past, kindergarten and first grade students were combined in the same room, owing to the small size of the district.

For the first time, Gros Cap will also offer all-day kindergarten. "The feeling is that kindergartners are ready for full days," Mrs. Moore said. The increased prevalence of pre-schooling means that many five-year-olds are prepared for longer sessions, she said, which allows them to be taught more during the year.

Unlike most schools in Michigan, Gros Cap is not funded by per-pupil allowances from the state, so the increased number of students will have no bearing on the district's revenue, Mrs. Moore said.

Engadine Consolidated Schools
 To the west, at Engadine Consolidated Schools, elementary and high school secretary Lesa Baker reported 21 kindergarten students tentatively enrolled, compared to 18 in last year's final count. The numbers are slightly higher, she said, but there are not as many kindergarten students coming in as there were 12 years ago.

Kindergarten teacher Kelly Stack also conducts all-day classes, but hers are divided into two overlapping groups. One comes in from Monday through Thursday. The other comes in Tuesday through Friday. This arrangement means each group has one day off, and one session with fewer students, each

has enabled the school to offer two sections of kindergarten, to be taught by Julie Davis and Carrie Carr.

The flux of kindergarten students is unusual in a time of generally declining enrollment.

"We usually graduate more students than we take in," Mrs. Rutledge said. "Who can explain it?"

Part of the answer, she added, is that new families are moving into the area.

Les Cheneaux schools is working to maintain its program in a time of budgeting difficulties, but this year, textbooks have been updated and use an approach that combines reading with social studies and science.

The program also emphasizes writing, said Eric Cardwell, the elementary school principal.

"It's not like when you and I were in school," he told *The St. Ignace News*. Early academic training for kindergarten has been enhanced, and the young students are "producing some really fantastic writing samples," he said.

Mackinac Island Public School
 Kindergarten registration numbers at Mackinac Island Public School are down this year, but like Gros Cap, the district does not receive per-pupil funding from the state, so the district's revenue will not be affected.

Three students signed up, and of that number, two are twins who will be out of the area for part of the year. Last year, there were six kindergarten students enrolled. Their teacher will be Vicki Urman. Two of her students speak fluent Polish as well as English, bringing language awareness to their class, said secretary and bookkeeper Barbara Fisher.

Classes at Mackinac Island School, which has fewer than 100 students, are combined. The three

grades four through six. "It's very exciting to see the changes it makes," Mrs. McArthur said. "Once students learn to read, they can be engaged in class, and discipline is no longer an issue."

"We're looking forward to a great year," she added.

Les Cheneaux Community Schools
 At Les Cheneaux Community Schools in Cedarville, the number of registered kindergarten students has jumped. Thirty have enrolled so far, compared to last year's count of 21. This will contribute to smaller class sizes and more revenue for the school.

"This is wonderful," said secretary Susie Rutledge. The increase

kindergarten students will share a room with first grade students.

Mackinaw City Public Schools
 Nineteen kindergarten students have enrolled so far this year at Mackinaw City Public Schools, compared to a final count of 18 last year.

Generally, enrollment in the area has remained stable for at least 12 years, said secretary Kathy Brey.

Replacing kindergarten teacher Lynn Balyo, who retired, is recent Central Michigan University graduate Emily Brey. She will teach kindergarten in the morning and the school's "readiness program" in the afternoon. The readiness program is a class for four-year-olds.

Mackinaw City also hosts a program called junior kindergarten. Taught by Becky Valot, the class focuses on helping students develop, preparing them for the regular kindergarten class, said superintendent Jeffrey Curth.

In the afternoons, Mrs. Valot teaches reading and assists teachers in other classrooms under the district's Title I program.

Mackinaw City runs a traditional half-day program for kindergartners, but at teachers' request, the kindergarten school day has been extended by one-half hour. The new hours are 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

"More contact time will obviously help them," Mr. Curth said.

Rudyard Area Schools
 Kindergarten enrollment is up at Rudyard Area Schools, which also runs all-day classes. Forty-two students have registered at Turner-Howsen Elementary, compared to last year's count of 34. At R. J. Wallis Elementary, 51 students have registered, compared to last year's count of 47, said superintendent Gary Davis.

"We're hopeful this rise will be a trend," he said, commenting on the district's steadily declining enrollment over the past several years. Student counts are unpredictable in the district.

"There is a lot of movement," Mr. Davis said. "There are always more students in the fall count than in the winter count."

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 Golf course frontage. Superb building lot with deeded water access next to Cedarville Golf Links. **\$55,000. #572-06-0015.**

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Commercial

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 Large, lakefront lot on coveted Island #8. Enjoy the view and tie your boat close to shore. **\$149,000. #572-06-0013.**

South Pine River Road, Hessel/St. Ignace area.
 2.30 acres. 291.6' on St. Martin's Bay overlooking the Mackinac Bridge. Building permit in place. **\$90,000. #572-05-0037.**

Klier Rd., Sault Ste. Marie.
 100' of Lake Huron waterfront with 5 acres m/l adjoining State land. Awesome freighter view and hunting! **\$65,000. #572-06-0024.**

North Pine River Road.
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Residential

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 3 BR, 1 BA home with 40 acres of private property adjacent to State land. **\$159,000. #572-06-0017.**

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268 N. Ontario Street, DeTour
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Cozy 3 bedroom, 1.5 bath home on St. Mary's River in DeTour. Great views of the freighters and Drummond Island. Dredge with 3' of water, floating dock, break-wall and walkway. Along with 24'X32', 2-car garage with a workshop and storage. Home has a full basement.

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13288 S. Scenic Drive, Barbeau #05-1148
Reduced **\$10,000 to \$149,900**

150' of waterfront on the St. Mary's River, Barbeau. Three bedroom, 1.75 bath home overlooking the shipping channel with knotty pine tongue and groove throughout. Year around home, 5 stall garage along with 3 out buildings.

13101 S. Cottage Rd, Barbeau
#06-863 **\$85,000**

Sandy beach, 50' frontage x 713' deep on St. Mary's River - view of freighters. Two bedroom, 1 bath cottage with large, glassed front porch, well, septic and storage building.

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\$122,900

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3522 E. M-134, Cedarville #05-518 Reduced **\$25,100 to \$349,900**

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