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Bloomfield Hills Schools and Oakland County Parks Announce New Agreement, \$3 Million Investment in Bowers School Farm and Johnson Nature Center

- *Bloomfield Hills Schools will retain ownership and priority educational access of the two beloved properties. Oakland County Parks will bring new investment, operational support, and expanded programming to both sites.*
- *The partnership is a direct result of Oakland County Parks' Mission 26 — a visionary framework to strengthen and expand access to high-quality parks, natural spaces, and recreational opportunities for all residents.*

Bloomfield Hills, Mich. (April 9, 2026) – Bowers School Farm and Johnson Nature Center are cherished community spaces where children learn, families gather, and nature is celebrated. These much-loved places reflect the shared values of both Bloomfield Hills Schools and Oakland County Parks. With that in mind, Bloomfield Hills Schools and Oakland County Parks are pleased to announce a new interlocal agreement that will bring new investment, operational support, and expanded programming to both sites.

Approved by the Bloomfield Hills Schools Board of Education and the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, the agreement outlines a long-term partnership with each entity contributing \$1.5 million for immediate capital repairs, as part of a \$3 million total investment.

Under the agreement, Bloomfield Hills Schools will retain ownership of both properties while Oakland County Parks brings operational capacity, public programming expertise, and long-term support to maintain, enhance, and help oversee day-to-day operations and management. The agreement reflects a shared commitment to preserving valued community assets while modernizing how they are supported, experienced, and sustained for the future.

“Bowers School Farm and Johnson Nature Center are truly special places that have connected students and families to agriculture and the outdoors for generations,” said Oakland County Parks Director Chris Ward. “This partnership represents exactly what our strategic vision, Mission 26, is designed to do – invest in precious community resources, ensuring they will continue to thrive for generations to come.”

Residents will benefit from expanded public access and new opportunities for recreation, agriculture, and environmental programming supported by the expertise of Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) and Oakland County Parks staff.

Owned and operated by Bloomfield Hills Schools since 1967, Bowers School Farm is a 93-acre working farm and educational center on Square Lake Road in Bloomfield Hills. It serves as a community resource for agricultural education, featuring livestock, gardens, a farm store, and seasonal events like a Fall Festival and winter tubing.

Johnson Nature Center is a 40-acre protected natural site on Franklin Road in Bloomfield Hills. It features more than two miles of hiking trails, a four-acre pond, native plants, a variety of wildlife habitats, and seasonal and educational programming for students and families.

“Through this partnership, we are strengthening our commitment to students and our community by pairing responsible financial stewardship with expanded access and opportunity,” said Rick West, Superintendent at Bloomfield Hills Schools. “This agreement allows us to preserve what matters most, ensuring Bowers School Farm and Johnson Nature Center remain vital community assets, while also leveraging this partnership to enhance programming and community use. By maintaining priority access for our students and thoughtfully expanding opportunities for the broader community, we are positioning both sites to thrive for generations to come.”

The partnership also reflects a broader model for how school districts and park systems can work together to maximize public investment, expand community access, and support the long-term sustainability of treasured public spaces.

As the agreement is implemented, both organizations will work through a thoughtful transition focused on continuity of operations, quality experiences for visitors, and long-term success for both properties.

The farm and nature center have historically relied on a combination of school funding, user fees, memberships, and donor support to sustain programming. Under this partnership, the mission of both sites will continue with expanded resources, deeper operational support, and a stronger foundation for future growth.

Learn more about programming, hours, and upcoming opportunities [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

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About Bloomfield Hills Schools

Bloomfield Hills Schools, located in the Oakland County suburbs of Detroit, Michigan, is a distinguished public school district. The district comprises four elementary schools, two middle schools, two high schools, a preschool program, and the Wing Lake Development Center. BHS takes immense pride in the diverse range of programs we offer to cater to the needs of all our students. These programs include the International Academy, Model High School, PREP, and our robust Deaf and Hard of Hearing program.

The student body encompasses learners from various areas, including the City of Bloomfield Hills and Bloomfield Township, as well as select parts of West Bloomfield, Birmingham, and Pontiac. Serving these communities, Bloomfield Hills Schools has established a rich educational legacy within Oakland County.

About Oakland County Parks

Founded nearly 60 years ago, Oakland County Parks has 17 locations boasting more than 7,000 acres of natural areas and miles of scenic trails that provide guests with year-round opportunities for recreation, wellness and connection to nature.

From accessible playscapes and flourishing wildlife habitats to a destination waterpark, summer discovery camps and more, Oakland County Parks offers something for everyone while staying committed to promoting inclusion, environmental stewardship and strengthening communities through innovative programs, partnerships and events that bring people together. Learn more: [OaklandCountyParks.com](https://www.oaklandcountyparks.com).