



THE

RED & WHITE

FEBRUARY 2024

A LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Vicksburg Schools Families,

Our second semester has officially begun and we are excited about the great things we have planned for the second half of the school year.

I want to take a moment to thank our families for their patience and support during our recent extreme cold temperatures and snow days. I recognize how difficult multiple snow days in a row can be. The safety and security of our students, staff and community will always be our number one priority. Please know multiple factors go into deciding snow days and we have a team of administrators

who drive the roads, consult with village and county officials, monitor the weather and speak with other Kalamazoo County school districts before decisions are made.

We are now turning our sights to Winter Homecoming and the exciting winter sports season that's underway. Our schools are also busy working on spring concerts and performances.

In this edition of the Red and White you'll read about some great partnerships between local Vicksburg businesses and our students and programs. The

support we receive is unparalleled and we are so thankful for those who help make sure our students succeed.

You'll also learn about opportunities for our students to learn more about our Kalamazoo County Career and Technical Education programs and how they can apply for the annual scholarships from our Vicksburg Community Schools Foundation.



Regards,

Keevin O'Neill, SUPERINTENDENT



COACH OF THE WEEK



TIM KIRBY

VICKSBURG HIGH SCHOOL



FROM THE NOMINATOR

"COACH KIRBY HAS BEEN A STAPLE IN VHS ATHLETICS FOR OVER 10 YEARS. THE AMOUNT OF TIME THAT HE GIVES UP FOR THE KIDS IN THE VICKSBURG COMMUNITY IS UNMATCHED. KIRBY COACHES THREE DIFFERENT SEASONS OF SPORTS SERVING AS AN ASSISTANT COACH FOR VARSITY FOOTBALL IN THE FALL, THE HEAD VARSITY GIRLS BASKETBALL COACH IN THE WINTER, AND AN ASSISTANT FOR THE VHS VARSITY SOFTBALL PROGRAM IN THE SPRING. I KNOW FIRST HAND HOW MUCH HE CARES ABOUT ALL OF THE STUDENT-ATHLETES THAT HE COACHES AND HAVE NOT SEEN ANYONE GO OUT OF THEIR WAY TO MAKE SURE THAT EACH AND EVERY ATHLETE HAS A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE AS A HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETE.

COACH KIRBY IS IN HIS 6TH YEAR AS THE HEAD VARSITY GIRLS BASKETBALL COACH AND HAS ALREADY ACHIEVED HISTORIC SUCCESS FOR VICKSBURG HIGH SCHOOL. KIRBY HAS ONLY HAD ONE LOSING SEASON ON THE COURT DURING HIS TIME AT THE HELM AND LED THE BULLDOGS TO THEIR FIRST EVER WOLVERINE CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP LAST YEAR."

"COACH KIRBY HAS TAKEN THE VICKSBURG GIRLS BASKETBALL PROGRAM TO HISTORICAL SUCCESS OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF SEASONS, WHICH RESULTED IN A TEAM THAT BROUGHT BACK 8 OF 10 PLAYERS FROM A TEAM THAT WON THE SCHOOLS FIRST CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP AND FINISHED 23-1 LAST SEASON. HE HAS GUIDED THIS YEARS SQUAD ALONG TREMENDOUSLY WELL THROUGH A TOUGH START TO THE SEASON AND HAS HIS TEAM SITTING AT 8-1 RECORD

WHILE HIS SUCCESS ON THE SIDELINES HAS BEEN IMPRESSIVE, WHAT REALLY DRIVES COACH KIRBY IS SEEING THE SUCCESS OF ALL OF HIS STUDENT-ATHLETES BOTH ON AND OFF THE COURT. ALL OF HIS CURRENT/FORMER PLAYERS WOULD BE THE FIRST TO TELL YOU THAT HE CARES MORE ABOUT EACH OF THEM AS PEOPLE THAN HE CARES ABOUT WINS AND LOSSES.

KIRBY WILL ALWAYS BE THE FIRST TO TALK ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TEAM AND GIVE 100% OF THE CREDIT FOR HIS COACHING SUCCESS TO HIS ATHLETES, BUT HE ALSO DESERVES RECOGNITION FOR HIS ROLE IN THESE ACCOMPLISHMENTS!"

Tobey Preschool Kids Have Fun in the Snow

Our Bulldog Beginnings preschool students at Tobey Elementary were very excited to finally see snow!

They got to enjoy the Tobey sledding hill for the first time.

Check out those big smiles!



New Pizza at Vicksburg High School



Vicksburg High School is the first in the state of Michigan to launch the Smart Mouth Pizza brand in the cafeteria. And it's getting rave reviews!

The personal sized pizzas meet all the standards from USDA for school meals. They are low in sodium, low in fat, and whole grain. Smart Mouth pizza has a formulation for their crust that is superior to other whole grain crusts on the market, making the usual whole grain taste nonexistent.

Along with pizza, the school nutrition team will be able to periodically offer calzones and cheese bread.

The pizzas also count as an entree item for free school lunch and students are able to purchase a second pizza if they choose.

And while the pizzas taste great, they also give back! For every 10 pizzas that are sold at VHS, one free meal is given to No Kids Hungry, which is an organization that feeds children in the US and Central America. Smart Mouth Pizza is able to give 45,000 to 50,000 free meals every week, thanks to schools all across the country.



Local Businesses Support Writers Club

The Vicksburg Middle School Writers Club got a special treat with the help from the local businesses.

Kimm from Gilbert and Ivy, LLC gifted each student with a book titled, "Writing Character" and led them in a meaningful questioning activity. The activity was designed to help the young writers develop believable characters.

We are grateful for the partnership with this amazing Vicksburg business!

And thank you to Mackenzie's for letting the club use the space and providing a student discount on cookies for the hungry writers.



Pathways Students Attend Dance Performance

Students at Pathways High School got to witness a special performance by the Wellspring/ Cori Terry and Dancers.

The visit was part of the Education for the Arts program, giving the students a glimpse into possible careers and classes that are open in the arts.

EFA brings artists and art experiences to students across Kalamazoo County.

The dancers, which included one Vicksburg High School graduate, performed a special dance number and also talked about their positions in the dance company.

It was a great way to expose the alternative school students to classes and experiences they don't always have access to.



A Citizen's Guide to Stormwater

Michigan's rivers and tributaries stretch across hundreds of square miles in Michigan, including highlands and lowlands. The rivers carry rain and snowmelt runoff, or stormwater runoff, into inland lakes and the Great Lakes. The quantity of stormwater entering our rivers, lakes, and streams along with the pollutants it carries can degrade aquatic habitat and water quality. We can all take simple steps to reduce stormwater pollution. After all, the cheapest way to stop pollution is at the source.

What is stormwater pollution and where does it come from?

Actually, it comes from all of us. Even if we don't mean to, many of our everyday actions add to stormwater pollution. Stormwater picks up oil, metals and salts, pet waste, fertilizer, grass clippings and other materials left on sidewalks and

streets before it enters a catch basin. In most

areas with storm sewer systems, this polluted runoff washes from the catch basins straight into the nearest lake or river without being treated. Stormwater is different from wastewater from toilets and sinks, which goes to a treatment plant before being discharged into the river.

What else is polluting Michigan's rivers?

Bacteria are also a serious problem. E. coli is the strain of bacteria that people hear about most, because it indicates the presence of other disease-causing bacteria. E. coli lives in the digestive systems of humans and animals, and can be found in sewage. In some places, sanitary sewers have been incorrectly connected to storm drains, causing sewage to enter our waterways. Cracks and leaks also allow stormwater to

get into sanitary sewers during major storms, overwhelming our treatment plants and causing sewage overflows. Fixing these problems is expensive and time-consuming, but our communities are working hard to correct them.

5 Simple ways you can help Michigan's rivers:

1. Use a pooper scooper! Bacteria, parasites and viruses from pet waste can easily wash into storm drains and end up in the river without being treated.
2. Limit your pesticide and fertilizer use. Pesticides are one of the biggest pollutants of all. Limit fertilizer use, and make it a habit to sweep your grass clippings onto the lawn rather than into a catch basin.
3. Check your vehicles for fuel and oil leaks. When it rains, grease and oil drippings wash into storm drains, and go straight into our rivers and streams.
4. Wash your car on the lawn or go to a car wash (where the water goes to a wastewater treatment plant). Dirt and oils you wash off can harm fish and animals if it goes straight in the storm drain. Grass filters pollutants - and you'll water your lawn at the same time!
5. Only Rain Down the Drain! In other words, use trash cans! Even if it means a slight inconvenience for you, it's better off for everyone who shares Michigan's rivers.



2024 BOOSTER BOUNCE!

The VHS Athletic Boosters Winter Fundraiser



Saturday, February 17th

7:00 - 11:00pm

Indian Run Clubhouse

\$30 per person or \$50 a couple | Adults only



Join us for a fun filled evening including:

A DJ | Cash Bar | Raffle Prizes & Auction | Hors d'oeuvres

For tickets contact any booster rep or text:

Lucas Hillard 269-760-3139 or

Anne Howard 269-615-7373

Or pay via the Vicksburg Athletic Boosters

PayPal by scanning the QR code:



VCSF Scholarship Program

The Vicksburg Community Schools Foundation has launched the 2024 scholarship program. Vicksburg High School seniors who are considering a 2 or 4-year college or a trade school are eligible to apply for up to 38 different scholarships by completing one application.

The scholarship application process opens February 5th and applications must be submitted no later than March 17th.

Scholarship winners will share nearly \$60,000 of award money this year.

Winners will be announced at the Senior Honors Banquet on May 16th.



**VICKSBURG COMMUNITY SCHOOLS FOUNDATION
2023 SCHOLARSHIPS**

**APPLICATIONS OPEN
FEB 5, DEADLINE IS
MARCH 17TH.**

**AVAILABLE TO
VICKSBURG STUDENTS
APPLYING TO A 2 OR 4
YEAR COLLEGE OR
TRADE SCHOOL**



SCAN ME **REGISTRATION LINK - OPENS FEB 5!**
<https://apply.mykaleidoscope.com/scholarships/VCSS2024>

Our Office: 301 S. Kalamazoo St. Vicksburg MI 49097 **269-321-1006**

Middle School Ski Club Hits the Slopes

After a slow start to the winter season, the Vicksburg Middle School ski club has had a great

January of skiing at Bittersweet!
Great job middle school skiers!



The Bulldog Fueling Station

Support from local groups is helping our Vicksburg High School student athletes power up before and after games and practices.

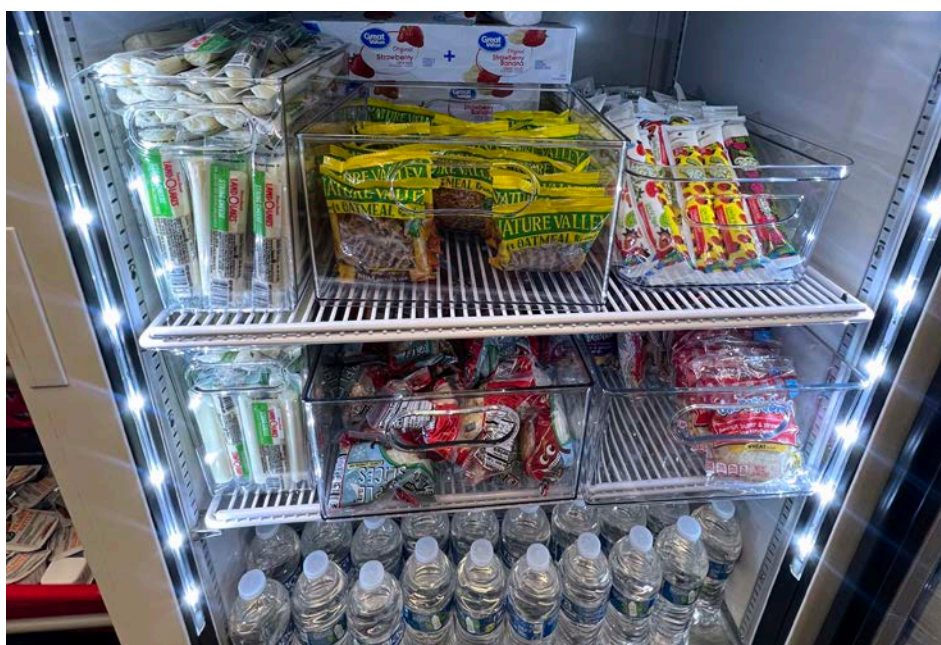
This winter, the athletic department launched the Bulldog Fueling Station.

The room at VHS started with a grant from the United Dairy Industry of Michigan. They provided the refrigerator to keep snacks for the athletes cold. Another grant from the United Way helped buy a freezer to store more nutritious snacks and yet another award from

Generous Hands helped to stock the shelves even further. The school nutrition team also works with the athletic department to order additional food items to help fuel the athletes.

Student athletes will find protein packed snacks and healthy carbs to replenish the energy they expel when working hard at practice and games.

It takes a lot to keep the Fueling Station stocked with healthy and filling snacks. They are always looking for donations. Those interested can contact Athletic Director Michael Roy.



Robotics Club Visits Nissha Eimo

Members of the Control Freaks Robotics Club got to witness automation in the manufacturing process at a local business recently.

17 VCS students, coaches and volunteers visited Nissha Eimo to learn and be inspired by their use of robotics. Their Plant Manager, Engineering Manager, Automation Managers, and a Controls Engineer took the group on a more than 2 hour tour of their facilities, including lots of questions and answers.

Thank you to Nissha Eimo for your support of our students interested in technical careers in manufacturing!



Building with Cups at Sunset Lake

The Bulldog Beginnings Preschool class at Sunset Lake Elementary is currently working on a water unit. They're learning all about different types of water, how humans and animals need water, things that live in water and how it changes as the temperature changes.

As part of one of their lessons, the students used plastic cups to observe water. They eventually used the cups to creatively build different structures. They had a great time seeing how high they could stack the cups.





OPEN HOUSE

2024

Tuesday, February 6, 2024 from 5:00-7:30 p.m. at the Air Zoo
(6151 Portage Rd, Portage, MI 49002)*

Kalamazoo County middle and high school students and their families are invited to discover many free educational opportunities at the Career Connect Open House!

JOIN US TO EXPLORE:

- ▶ **Career & Technical Education (CTE)**
Build your technical skills and earn industry-recognized credentials to prepare for the future
- ▶ **Out-of-School-Time Career Learning**
A continuum of career development services and internships through programs including CareerNOW, MyCITY and 2Gen
- ▶ **Education for the Arts (EFA)**
Dive into the arts during your school day
- ▶ **Discovery Lab**
Featuring hands-on technology in supply chain, welding and design
- ▶ **Early/Middle College (EMC)**
Leave high school with an associate's degree

Questions? Visit kresa.org/apply or call (269) 250-9300 to learn more.



*For weather cancellations, date will be Thursday, February 8, 2024.