



THE

RED & WHITE

DECEMBER 2024

A LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Vicksburg Schools Families,

As we enter the holiday season, I want to take a moment to reflect on the accomplishments and milestones we've achieved already this school year. This year has been one of growth, collaboration, and shared success across our school district. I am continually inspired by the hard work, dedication, and commitment demonstrated by our students, educators, and support staff.

December is a time to celebrate, to express gratitude, and to look ahead to the new year with

optimism. Whether through winter concerts, classroom activities, or community service projects, this season brings us together and reminds us of the strength of our school community. A community I am proud to call home and thankful to be a part of.

In this month's Red and White, you'll read about some honors many of our schools have received this fall. You'll also see how our students at all levels are giving back to our community.

I hope this holiday season provides an opportunity to recharge and connect with your loved ones. Thank you for your partnership and support in making our schools a place where everyone can thrive.

Wishing you and your family a joyful holiday season and a happy New Year.



Regards,

Keevin O'Neill, SUPERINTENDENT

Vicksburg Schools Receive High Honors

Two VCS elementary schools and the middle school have all made U.S. News and World Report's Best of list.

Congratulations to Indian Lake Elementary for once again being named one of the best elementary schools in the state of Michigan!

According to U.S. News and World Report, Indian Lake ranks in the top 12-percent, coming in at number 178 out of 1,492 elementary schools. Last year they were in the top 15-percent so they have seen some exciting growth!

Meanwhile, the Tobey Tigers have been recognized for being in the top 40% of elementary

schools in the state of Michigan! Tobey Elementary was ranked at 498th in the state.

Vicksburg Middle School has also been honored by U.S. News and World Report as a top Middle School in the state!

VMS ranks 230th out of more than 1,900 middle schools in Michigan.

Thank you to all the teachers, students and staff who made these honors possible.

CONGRATULATIONS
INDIAN LAKE & SUNSET LAKE ELEMENTARY
AND VICKSBURG MIDDLE SCHOOL!

BEST
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
U.S. News & World Report
2025

BEST
MIDDLE SCHOOLS
U.S. News & World Report
2025



Save the Dates for These Holiday Shows

Join us in celebrating the holiday season!

Please mark your calendars for the following events at the Performing Arts Center:

Tuesday, December 3 at 7pm -- Tobey 2nd & 3rd Grade Program

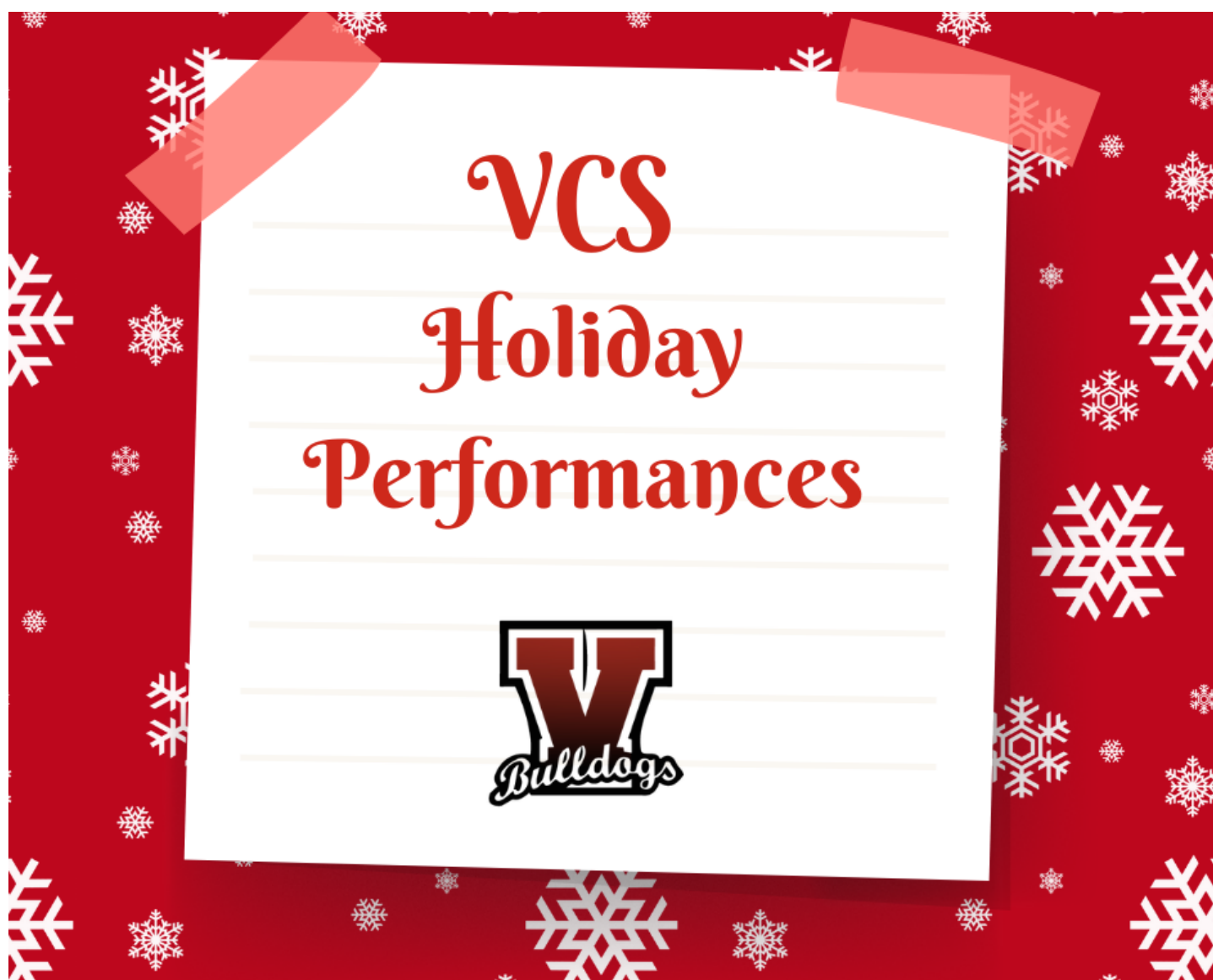
Thursday, December 5 at 7pm -- Indian Lake 2nd & 3rd Grade Program

Tuesday, December 10 at 7pm -- VMS Holiday Band Concert

Thursday, December 12 at 7pm -- VHS Holiday Band Concert

Tuesday, December 17 at 7pm -- VCS Holiday Choir Concert

Wednesday, December 18 at 7pm -- Sunset Lake 4th & 5th Grade Program



Sunset Lake Elementary Collects Peanut Butter

Great job to the students of Sunset Lake Elementary!

They held a peanut butter drive during the month of November and collected 795 jars of peanut butter!!

The second grade classes ran the collection and helped pack up all the jars. They were then delivered to Generous Hands.

Generous Hands says this was a record donation for them. Peanut butter is an important part of their food packs each week and these 795 jars will help a lot of families in need!

Way to go Sunset Lake students and staff!



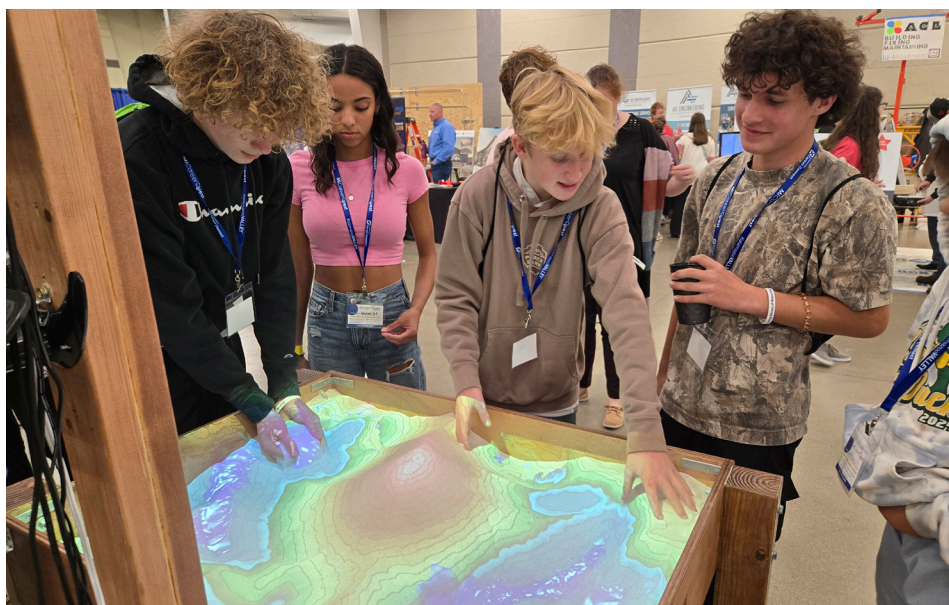
MiCareerQuest Southwest Returns

Vicksburg Middle School 8th grade students once again attended the MiCareerQuest Southwest event at the Kalamazoo Expo Center.

It's the region's largest interactive career exploration event that hosted thousands of eighth grade students from Kalamazoo and Calhoun Counties.

The event exposes students to a broad range of exciting, rewarding career opportunities. They also had the opportunity to touch, feel and work with the equipment, tools and technology used by people every day in a broad range of in-demand jobs.

The goal is to connect classroom learning with real-world jobs and their requirements.



Fourth Graders Make Seed Bombs

VCS 4th graders all got to take part in a new exercise at the Outdoor Education Center.

They created seed bombs to help spread native plants around the Vicksburg area.

They worked in groups to measure out their ingredients, which included soil, clay and water. They had to create a mixture to roll the seeds into.

Each 4th grader got to take home multiple seed bombs. They are designed to sit on top of the soil and slowly break apart and take root. The clay mixture protects them from the elements as they begin to grow. The types of wildflowers used in the seed packs need colder weather in order to germinate so making them in the fall was the perfect time.

More than 1,000 seed bombs went home with 4th grade students to be planted throughout our community. The wildflowers will go on to provide food for insects, birds, and small animals as well as help the soil, water and ecosystem.



Honoring Skip Knowles and Carol Lohman

After 40 years of incredible service to Vicksburg Community Schools, two cherished board members have decided to retire.

On December 11th a retirement reception will be held for Virgil "Skip" Knowles and Carol Lohman.

They both were elected to the Vicksburg Community Schools Board of Education in 1983. Skip has served as president of the board for more than 36 of his 40 years.

The district will be honoring their dedication and service to VCS with a reception on Wednesday, December 11th from 4pm to 7pm at Indian Run Golf Club in Scotts.

The community is invited to attend.

YOU ARE INVITED TO

*Celebrate
40 Years of Service
to Vicksburg Community Schools*

IN HONOR OF VCS SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Virgil "Skip" Knowles
&
Carol Lohman

WEDNESDAY | 11 | DECEMBER
4 TO 7PM | 2024

Indian Run Golf Club
6359 RS Ave.
Scotts, MI

VCS
Vicksburg Community Schools
Traditions In Excellence

Vicksburg Middle Schoolers Love Pickleball



VHS Makes the AP Honor Roll (Again)

Vicksburg High School received two awards this fall, both highlighting their work to help students achieve after high school.

VHS has made the College Board Advanced Placement (AP) Honor Roll yet again this year.

The AP School Honor Roll recognizes schools that have done outstanding work to welcome more students into AP courses and support them on the path to college success.

Research shows that students who take AP courses and exams are more likely to attend college and graduate on time. And even for those who don't earn college credit for their classes, AP coursework provides early exposure to college-level work, giving them an advantage.

This award shows the commitment by VHS to provide access for all students to advanced classes and to support them through the process.

And for the 3rd time in 6 years, VHS also received the College Success Award!

The award, announced by GreatSchools, recognizes and celebrates public high schools that excel at preparing students to enroll and succeed in college.



VHS is one of only 1,436 public high schools in the nation to win this year's Award.

VHS ranks in the 94th percentile

when it comes to college readiness.

Congratulations to our amazing teachers and staff who help our

students succeed not just at VHS but well beyond.

VHS Groups Donate Items to People in Need

Vicksburg High School National Honors Society and DECA spent part of November collecting personal care items and food for South County Community Services.

Each year, the first hour classes at VHS host a friendly competition to see which class can bring in the highest percentage of needed items. They get points for the items needed most by South County Community Services.

This year they loaded up dozens of boxes with things like diapers, toilet paper, soap, cereal, and food items for the holidays.

Great job VHS students for giving back to your community!



Tobey Tigers Talk About Gratitude

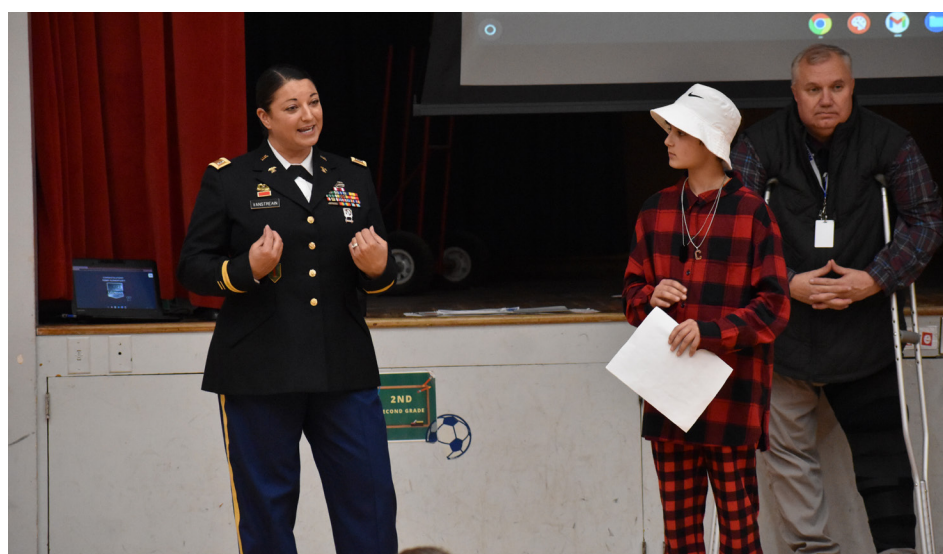
Tobey Elementary recently held a really touching assembly to talk to their students about Gratitude. Three special guests came to speak to students.

The first was Cassandra Vanstrein, a Tobey parent who also serves in the Army. She spoke about her service and many Tobey tigers took the time to thank her and show their gratitude.

The other two guests were members of the

Superintendent's Student Advisory Board (SSAB). They also helped explain what it means to be grateful and took the time to pay tribute to some special Tobey teachers in their lives.

Thank you to our special guests who helped show our students how to acknowledge and appreciate their teachers and our veterans and military members!



Tobey Donates to Twelve Baskets Food Pantry

Great job to the students and staff at Tobey Elementary! They worked to give back to their community just in time for the holidays.

They loaded up this van with items for Twelve Baskets Food Pantry!

The Tobey Character Council collected 167 items, all centered

around the Thanksgiving holiday. They filled the boxes with things like stuffing, paper products, cereal, canned goods and toothpaste.



Indian Lake Kindergarten Serves Up Soup

Stone Soup!

The kindergarten classes at Indian Lake Elementary recently made one of their books come to life with a classroom feast.

They read the book Stone Soup, a story about a town that comes together and each villager contributes an ingredient to make soup, creating a meal for everyone.

The student each brought in one ingredient and got to add them to the pot one by one. Then once it was all cooked, they shared the meal together.

The students enjoyed working together and trying their creation.

It was a yummy and fun lesson bringing one of their stories to life!

