



THE

RED & WHITE

DECEMBER 2025

A LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Vicksburg Community Schools Families,

As we enter December, I want to extend my appreciation to our students, staff, families, and community for a remarkable fall here at VCS. This month gives us a chance to reflect on recent accomplishments that speak to the strength of our district.

Our football team's historic run brought tremendous pride to Vicksburg. Their hard work, resilience, and sportsmanship inspired all of us and united our community in a memorable way.

We also continue to be

recognized for academic excellence. Multiple schools across the district earned Best Schools honors from *U.S. News & World Report*, highlighting the dedication of our teachers and the commitment of our students.

Finally, our first ever district-wide food and personal care drive collected thousands of pounds of donations for local families. The generosity shown by our students, staff, and community partners reflects the very best of who we are.

I look forward to closing out the year with the same energy and collaboration that make Vicksburg Community Schools such an exceptional place to learn and grow.

I hope you and your families have time over the coming winter break to be together and rest and recharge. Happy Holidays!



Warm regards,

Keevin O'Neill, SUPERINTENDENT

Historic Football Run Ends at State Semifinals

The season didn't end the way Vicksburg hoped, but it did end with something this community will never forget: history.

Our Bulldogs fell 45-17 in their first-ever state semifinal appearance, but that score will never tell the full story. It won't capture the heart, the grit, or the way this team brought together our entire community.

This year, Vicksburg won its first District title and first Regional championship in school history. They fought their way into uncharted territory, carrying generations of dreams with them. They gave our town games we'll be talking about for years, and they showed every younger Bulldog what's possible with belief, hard work, and brotherhood.

To our coaches, families, and fans: your support built something truly special. And to this team: you didn't just make a run. You made Bulldog history.

Hold your heads high, Bulldogs. This is only the beginning.



The Bulldogs celebrate a District win. Photo by Jake DeMink.

Thank You for Your Support!

We want to take the time to once again thank our amazing community for all their support surrounding our football team and their historic run this season.

We received more than \$7,000 in donations to help get as many students as possible into the stands for the state semi final game on Saturday. Those donations helped to cover the 3 spirit buses and ticket fees for more than 120 students who came to cheer on the team. They also covered t-shirts for those fans, as well as snacks for the buses and pizza on the ride home the football team, the band, cheerleaders and all the student fans.

We want to extend a huge thank you to the following businesses and families who gave so generously: Main St. Pub Vicksburg, Armstrong International, Inc., Absolute Homecare and Medical Staffing, Niles, Buchanan, Dowagiac, Hamilton Biggby Coffee stores, Walther Farms, Cripps Fontaine Excavating, Inc., Shaver Road Animal Hospital, Mr. Gutter, Restoration Concepts, Vicksburg Athletic Boosters, Julie Reisner and Kate Garvey NextHome ONE, Tona Ambrosen RE/

MAX Elite, DY Mortgage, First Impressions Salon and Spa, Jaspars's Pizza Vicksburg, Jaspers Pizza Sprinkle Road, Jaspers Pizza Gull Road, The Awe Family, The Havera Family, The Spicer Family; as well as individual donations from Kelly Moore Smith Lloyd Kessler, Mike and Alisha Sprinkle, Marcie Bailey, Steve Thomas, Jake DeMink, Avery Slancik, Kimm Willmont, Nate and Kristin Thompson, Chris Sparrow, Glenlyn & John Kessler, Barb Vizard, Pat & Nan Hunter and others who gave anonymously!

We also want to extend a thank you to Live Fire Republic for sponsoring a great tailgate before the game for all our fans! Owner David Olson is a 1998 VHS grad who welcomed more than 500 people at the tailgate.



Thank you also to everyone who traveled to Caledonia to cheer on our Bulldogs! The tailgate and stands were packed with Red and White. Our players and coaches could certainly feel the support all around them.

Thank you for being #BulldogsUnited with us this season and always!

Vicksburg Community Schools Earn Top Rankings Across the District

Vicksburg Community Schools continues to be recognized as one of the strongest districts in Michigan. In the latest statewide and national rankings, 4 of our schools earned honors for academic performance and student achievement.

For the latest rankings, two elementary schools earned a Best Elementary award and Vicksburg Middle School earned a Best Middle School for placing among the top 40-percent in the state. Vicksburg High School also received honors for being in the top 40-percent of public high schools in the nation.

Indian Lake Elementary made a significant jump this year. Indian Lake is ranked 114th in Michigan Elementary Schools!

That's big growth over last year's rank of 178th in the state. In the last two years, Indian Lake Elementary has moved from the top 15-percent of the state to the top 8-percent of all schools in Michigan. This steady trajectory highlights the commitment of our teachers, staff, and students.

Meanwhile, Tobey Elementary

ranked 528th in the state, also receiving a Best Elementary award for being in the top 40-percent of Michigan schools. While Sunset Lake comes in at 833, which is among the top half of elementary schools in the state.

The 2026 rankings reflect an analysis of about 2,600 public schools as part of the publication's annual education series. Schools are ranked on their performance on state-required tests, graduation, and how well they prepare their students for high school.

Vicksburg Middle School continues to build momentum as well, ranking 196th in Michigan. That's up from 230th the previous year. This movement into the top 200 reflects the school's continued focus on academic progress and student success.

Vicksburg High School also received honors for the 2025-2026 school year, ranking in the top 40-percent of the nation. Out of nearly 18,000 public high schools, VHS ranks 2,478 in the U.S. VHS ranks 80th in the state



of Michigan and for the 2025-2026 school year is the number one high school in Kalamazoo County.

"Our staff and students continue to raise the bar," said Vicksburg Community Schools Superintendent, Keevin O'Neill. "These recognitions reflect their dedication and the strong support we receive from our

families and community."

Vicksburg Community Schools remains focused on strong instruction, student support, and a school culture where every child can succeed. We are proud of the steady growth happening across the district and we look forward to what comes next.

Food and Personal Care Drive a Success

Vicksburg Community Schools is proud to announce the successful completion of our first ever district-wide food and personal care drive. Thanks to the generosity of our students, families, and staff, we reached our goal of filling an entire school bus with essential items for local families!

This year's effort expanded on the annual Vicksburg High School National Honor Society food and

personal care drive by involving all Vicksburg school buildings. For one week, every VCS school collected items from a list of much needed food and personal care supplies.

The collaboration made a strong impact, reflecting the compassion and commitment of our community.

All donations were taken to South County Community

Services. It took a team of NHS students to unload everything.

Together, our schools collected:

1,550.4 pounds household supplies

5,232.7 pounds food

For reference, the big Postal Food Drive brought in 4,575 pounds of food this spring, and almost no household supplies!

We extend our sincere appreciation to everyone who contributed. Thank you to our VHS National Honor Society members for organizing this and to all our schools for participating! Your support ensures that families in our area have access to vital supplies, and it reinforces the strength of our community when we work together! Thank you for being #BulldogsUnited with us!



FFA Students Awarded at Nationals

We are very proud of our Vicksburg FFA Dairy Judging team!

They recently competed at FFA Nationals in Indianapolis and received a bronze award as a team.

Avery Bosker, Koy Kolvaska and Shae Willis each earned bronze individual awards and Viktor Robertson Wicks earned a gold individual award.

Congratulations to you all!



Community Forum Asks for Your Input

Vicksburg Community Schools families and community members- we need your input on upcoming projects at our schools!

We are kicking off the first of our community forums to discuss a Zero Millage Bond Proposal for 2026.

Will be presenting the community survey feedback results and holding an interactive discussion on the proposal.

We encourage you to join us for this important meeting on Wednesday, December 10th from 6pm to 7:30pm, in the Vicksburg Middle School Library.

COMMUNITY FORUM

We want to hear from you!

WEDNESDAY,
DECEMBER 10TH

6 TO 7:30 PM

VICKSBURG MIDDLE
SCHOOL LIBRARY

Help shape the future of
Vicksburg Community Schools



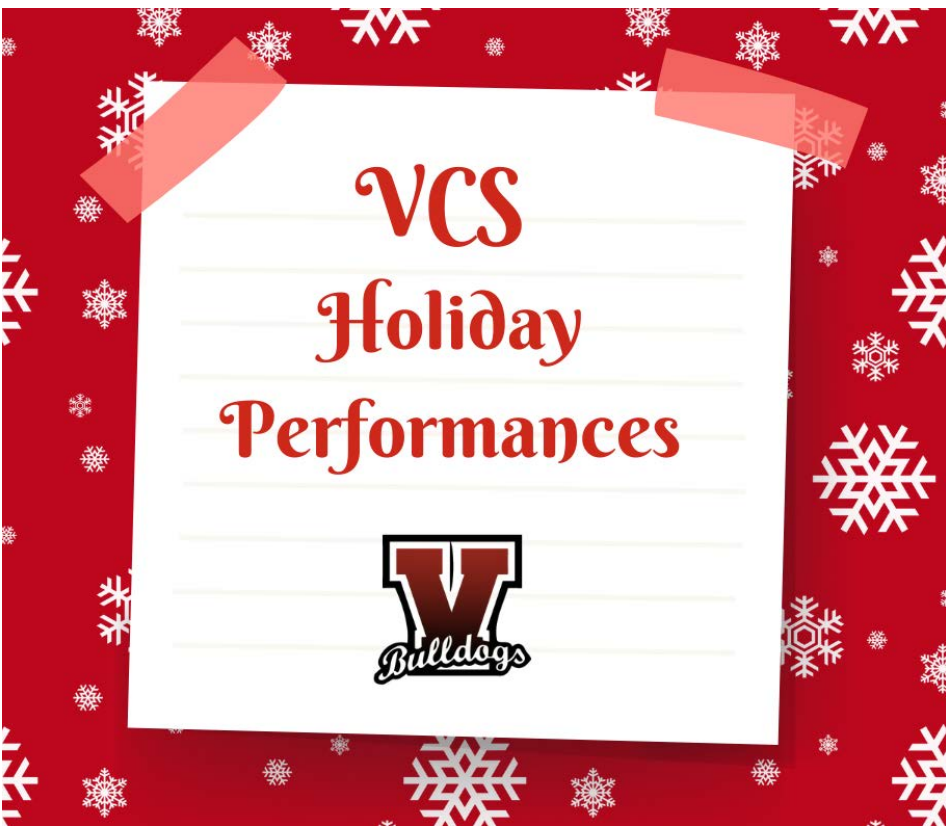
Vicksburg PAC Holiday Event Listings

Join us in celebrating the holiday season!

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

- Tuesday, December 2 at 6pm -- Tobey 2nd & 3rd Grade Program
- Wednesday, December 3 at 6pm -- Indian Lake 2nd & 3rd Grade Program

- Tuesday, December 9 at 7pm -- VMS Holiday Band Concert
- Thursday, December 11 at 7pm -- VHS Holiday Band Concert
- Tuesday, December 16 at 7pm -- VCS Holiday Choir Concert
- Wednesday, December 17 at 7pm -- Sunset Lake 4th & 5th Grade Program



Tobey Principal Gets Slimed

Tobey Elementary wrapped up their annual fundraiser in the best way possible: by sliming Principal Dygert!

Students and staff came together for an all-school celebration after soaring past their fundraising goal, and the big moment didn't disappoint.

Congratulations to the entire Tobey community, and thank you to everyone who helped students raise more than \$34,000. What a fun way to mark an incredible achievement!



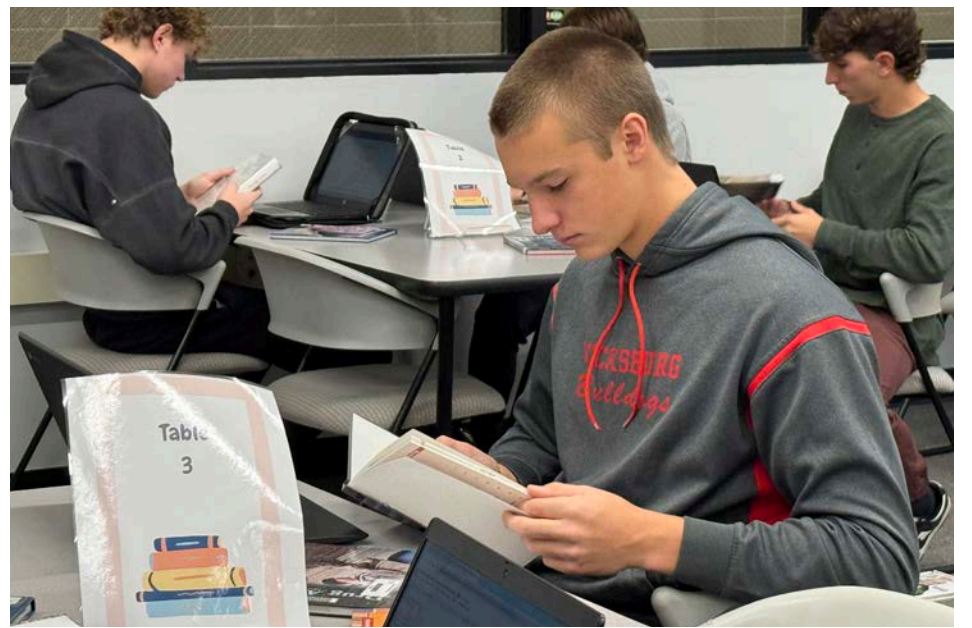
Tasted Any Good Books Lately?

Vicksburg High School's AP Language students turned the library into a lively "book café" as they took part in creative book tastings.

Rotating from table to table, students sampled a variety of titles centered on social issues, getting a quick "taste" of each before choosing the perfect read for their next assignment.

After picking a book, they had to find some research that both supported and challenged their author's viewpoint.

It was a fun, engaging way to explore new perspectives.



Shark Tank Challenge at Davenport University

Vicksburg High School students were the Shark Tank Challenge champions at Davenport University this year!

Congratulations to Ayden McCleary, Addison Arnold, Andrew Roiniotis, and Isaac Byrne.

The event is like the show Shark Tank. Teams of high school business students had time to prepare their presentation/pitch once they found out the category of product they had to sell. Then they presented their pitches to a panel of judges. The VHS team scored the highest of all the competing teams.

Great job, Bulldogs!

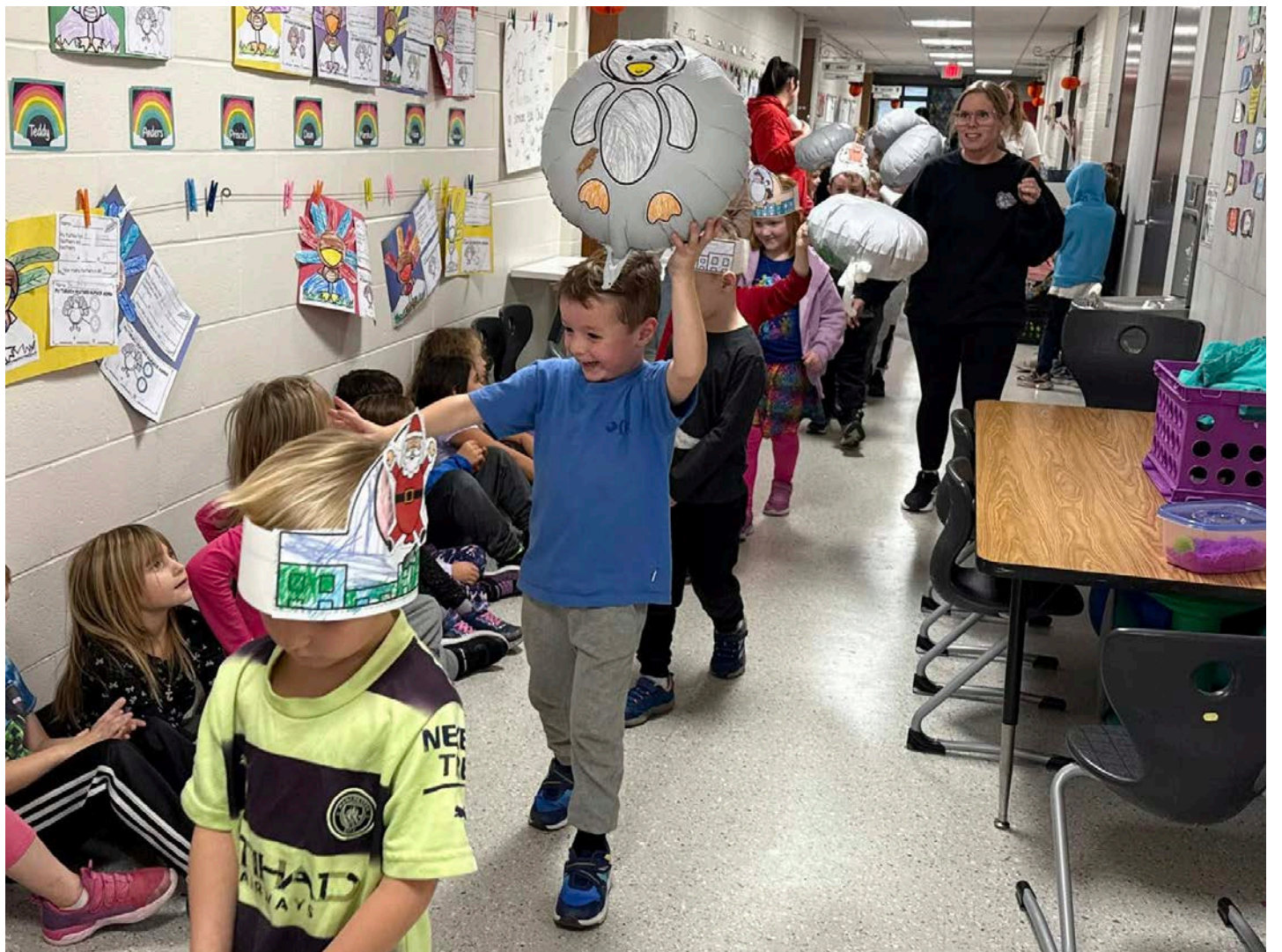


Sunset Lake Elementary Parade Floats

Move over, Macy's!

Kindergarteners at Sunset Lake Elementary held their very own holiday balloon parade!

Each student designed their own balloon and walked the halls to show off their parade entries.



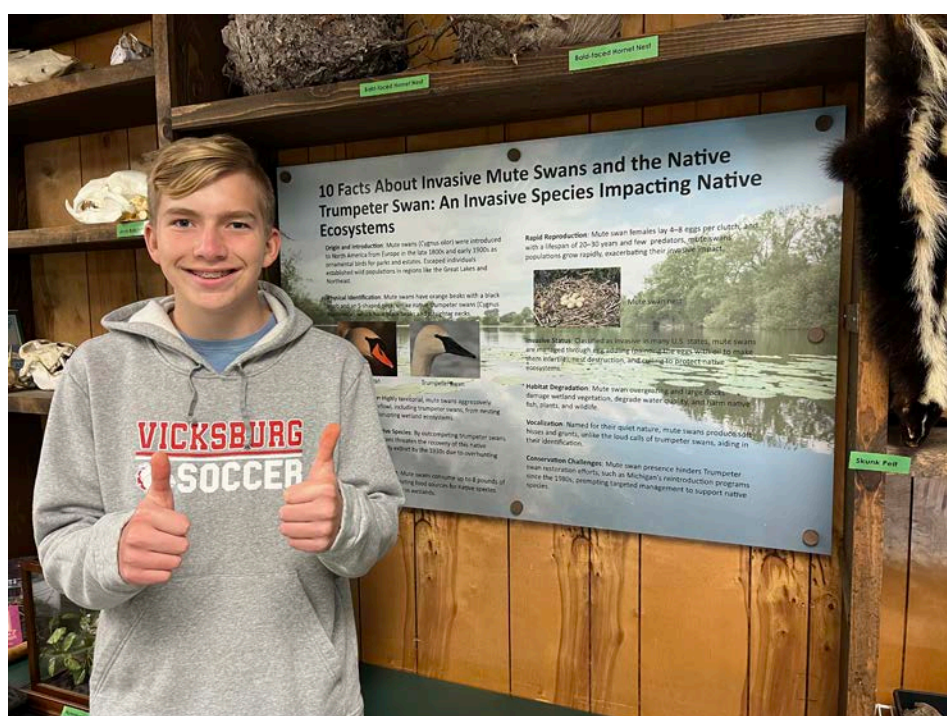
Eagle Scout Project Helps the OEC

Vicksburg Community Schools is proud to highlight the outstanding Eagle Scout project completed by Blake Jastifer. Blake designed and created an educational sign board for the Outdoor Education Center, helping students learn the difference between the invasive mute swan and the native trumpeter swan.

This fall, Blake and his volunteer team installed the sign, removed invasive plants on the property, and completed general clean-up

throughout the grounds. They also built a life-size model of a mute swan nest, complete with 3D-printed eggs, giving students a hands-on way to understand the true scale of these birds.

Blake's organization, communication, and attention to detail were exceptional from start to finish. We are honored to be the recipient of his Eagle Scout project and grateful for the lasting impact it will have on our students.



Indian Lake Buddies Mentor Kindergarteners

Buddies in action!

5th grade students at Indian Lake Elementary continued the tradition of teaming up with the kindergarten classes to mentor and encourage them.

Students in Mrs. Classen's class and Mrs. Baker's classes have been meeting to read together.

It's a great way to build leadership skills for the older kids and inspire the younger ones to read.

