



THE

RED & WHITE

JANUARY 2026

A LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Vicksburg Community Schools Families,

I want to start by wishing you a happy new year. I hope you had a joyful holiday season and a chance to rest and recharge.

As we prepare to wrap up the first semester, I want to commend our students, staff, and families for their hard work, dedication, and perseverance. Your commitment to learning and growth continues to make our schools a place of excellence.

Looking ahead, we have an exciting remainder of the school year. Let's continue to support one another, celebrate achievements, and finish the year strong. Together, we can make 2026 a year of learning, growth, and success for every student!

In this month's Red and White you will read about the many ways our students and staff

worked to support others in our community over the holidays as well as how community groups are giving back to VCS.

Thank you for your continued partnership in education. Here's to a fantastic year ahead!



Kind regards,
Kevin O'Neill, SUPERINTENDENT

Get the Latest VCS Alerts and Notifications

Make sure you're getting snow day and emergency alerts from Vicksburg Community Schools!

Please take a moment to check that your Skyward contact information is current so you don't miss important alerts from Vicksburg Community Schools. This includes notices about snow days, schedule changes, or other urgent updates.

In Skyward, the *Primary Phone* field must contain a phone number if you wish to receive automated calls. If you prefer the call to go to your cell phone, enter that same number in the Primary Phone field.

If a Primary Phone number needs to be added, select 'Student Info' in the left column, select 'Request Change for' on the top right, and then enter the primary number. Then make sure to hit 'Save' to save whenever changes are made.

To receive text messages, be sure your cell number is also entered in the designated text message area. Be sure to also hit 'Save' so your changes are saved.

The primary number and text



Missing important school alerts??

CHECK YOUR
SKYWARD
ACCOUNT

SCAN
ME! >>



Make sure your contact information
is correct!



messages are 2 separate fields you must fill in.

We encourage families to review all phone numbers and email addresses to confirm

they are correct. Keeping your information up to date ensures you receive timely communication from the district.

If you need additional Skyward

help, please contact your school office and ask for the building tech.

Stay informed, Bulldogs!

Lions Club Gift Helps Pathways Students

Vicksburg Pathways High School recently received a \$2,000 gift from the Lions Club of Vicksburg to support the purchase of a washer and dryer for student use.

This addition will allow Pathways students to take care of their laundry needs while at school, removing a barrier to their education and supporting their daily success.

Pathways Principal, Kelli Luke, accepted their contribution from Lions President Adam Fort.

We are grateful for the Lions Club's continued commitment to our community and students. We appreciate their partnership and the positive impact it brings to our students!



Upcoming Important Dates

January 14th – Half day for students

February 27th – MID WINTER BREAK, NO SCHOOL

January 19th to 22nd – VHS EXAMS

March 11th – Half day for students

January 23rd – NO SCHOOL, Records Day

March 26th – Half day for students, Records Day

January 26th – First day of second semester

March 27th to April 3rd – SPRING BREAK



A FLEXIBLE WAY TO EARN YOUR HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA



Enrollment is open for January 2026!

- The VPHS lab is staffed with certified teachers to help students
- Our online content is available 24/7/365
- Pathways offers 2 different diploma options



**APPLY
TODAY!**

Questions? Call (269) 321-1088

Adelynn Beery Presents at IAAPA Expo



Vicksburg High School senior Adelynn Beery recently earned national recognition after becoming the only high school student selected to present at a major international professional conference.

Beery presented her research at the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) Expo in Orlando, Florida, the premier global conference for professionals in theme parks, attractions, and experiential design. The event draws industry leaders from around the world, including representatives from Disney, Universal, zoos, water parks, and universities.

Beery's work originated in her AP Research class at VHS during the 2024-25 school year, where she studied methods for measuring cultural representation in culturally themed parks. Through that work, she connected with a professional in the field who encouraged her to submit a proposal to IAAPA. Her research was accepted as a poster presentation, a rare honor for a student still in high school.

"AP Research was, without a doubt, my favorite class I've ever taken," Beery said. "I never would've written the paper without it, let alone made it this far." She explained that the course closely mirrors professional research expectations. "At the end of the year, we drafted academic posters to simulate professional research, and this was actually the poster I ended up presenting

at the conference."

Beery noted that the class also prepared her for live questions from industry experts. "The other major aspect of our AP score was a slideshow presentation and response to oral defense questions. This helped immensely when I was presenting. I was already prepared with on-the-spot answers."

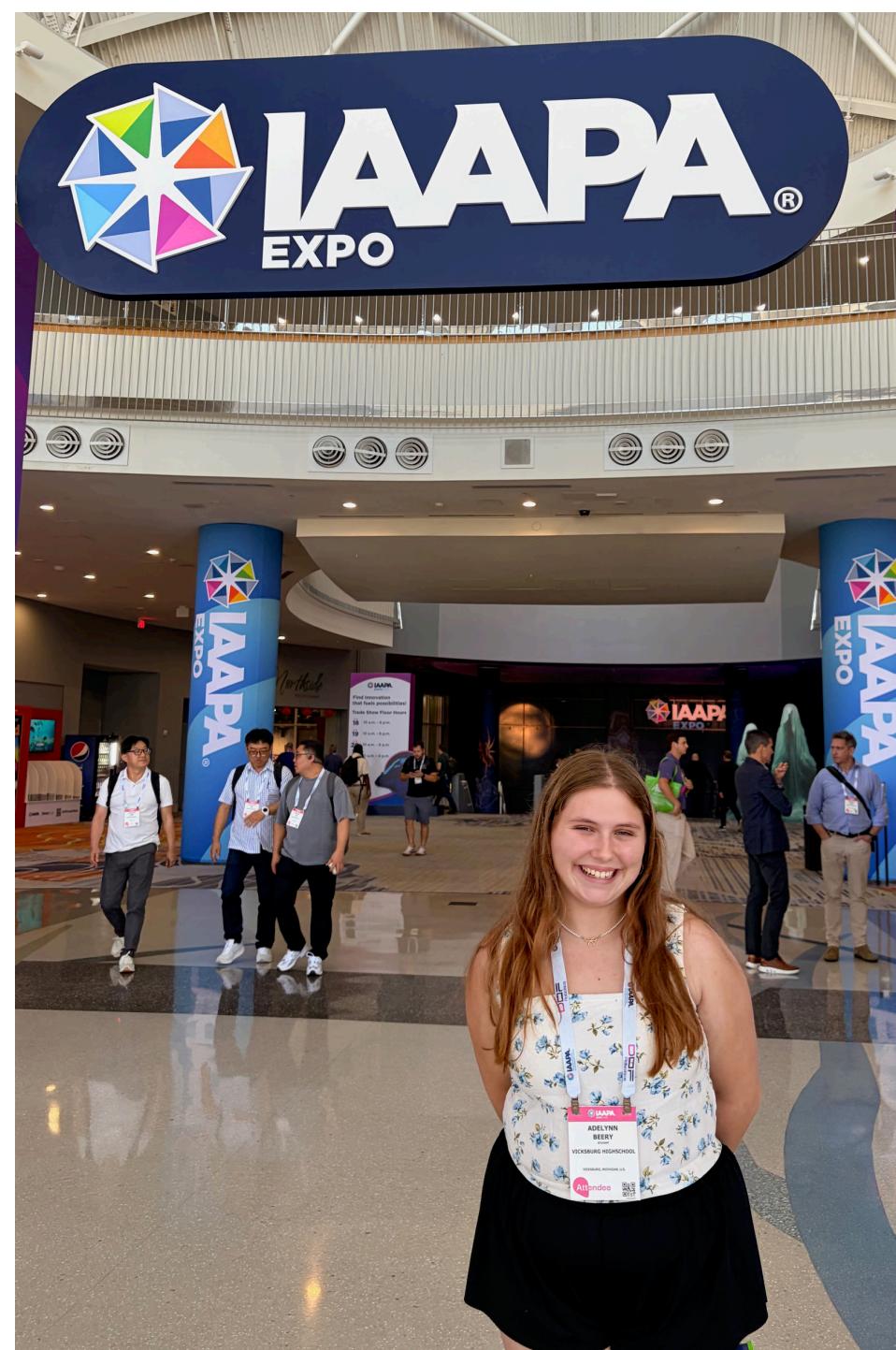
Presenting at IAAPA proved to be a defining moment.

"The presentation itself was both nerve-wracking and exhilarating," Beery said. "I was, for the full day, acutely aware of some of the professionals in that room—designers from legendary theme parks like Disney and Universal, and professors from universities like UCF and Texas A&M."

During the conference, Beery met a longtime personal hero, the former president of Walt Disney Imagineering. "He spoke to me about my project, my future, and his road to success," she said. "That conversation reinforced my desire to design experiences that balance technical precision with emotional and educational impact."

Beery and her mother also spent time exploring the massive expo floor. They were able to view the lights and water displays, animatronics from around the world, VR experiences, and much more.

In a thank-you letter to the



Vicksburg Community Schools Foundation, which provided a grant to support travel costs, Beery described the experience as unforgettable. "If you have seen the Pixar movie *Inside Out*, recall the 'core memories' referenced in the movie," she wrote. "I can say with certainty that I developed a 'core memory' on this trip."

Also in her thank you letter to the Vicksburg Community Schools Foundation, Beery said the support the foundation provides for Vicksburg students is invaluable. "Your investment in students like me reaches far beyond a single project or trip—it opens doors, fuels confidence, and creates opportunities that shape who we become."

As one of the youngest presenters, Beery said the experience was surreal. "I had several people ask me if it was my graduate project," she said. "Everyone was incredibly kind and complimentary of both my work and of Vicksburg's programs."

Looking ahead, Beery plans to pursue a career in engineering



and themed entertainment design. She has applied to several universities and expects to make a final decision later this winter. She hopes to study engineering with a minor in themed entertainment design or Spanish.

For Vicksburg High School, Beery's achievement highlights the impact of advanced academic programming and community support, and places a local student on an international professional stage.

Grilled Cheese Competition at VHS

Vicksburg High School students in Karen Rikkers's Nutrition class recently turned 5th hour into a delicious showdown with their Grilled Cheese Competition. Staff members were invited to serve as judges, sampling creative twists on the classic sandwich before casting their votes.

This year's top honors went to Hunter Matthies, Jaelyn Shears, and Jocelyn Burland for their Peach Delight Grilled Cheese, a sweet and savory winner that stood out from the pack.

A fun event, great food, and plenty of Bulldog spirit all around!



Tobey Students Learn About Theater

Tobey Elementary students have been getting an extra treat during music class.

Music teacher Patty Heintzelman has teamed up with the Education for the Arts PACE theater program through KRESA.

At Tobey, students in Kindergarten through 3rd grades meet once a week during music class for these extra special classes.

The Professional Artists and Co-operating Educators (PACE) Program provides K-8 students with free in-school creative move-

ment and drama residencies taught by professional Teaching Artists. PACE residencies teach students the elements of the art form, emphasize artistic exploration and the creative process, and celebrate the students' creative work.

Mrs. Heintzelman is team teaching with artist in residence Bianca Washington, where they work on combining music and theater skills.

Pictured here are students learning how to use props through imaginary play.



Indian Lake Elementary Giving Tree

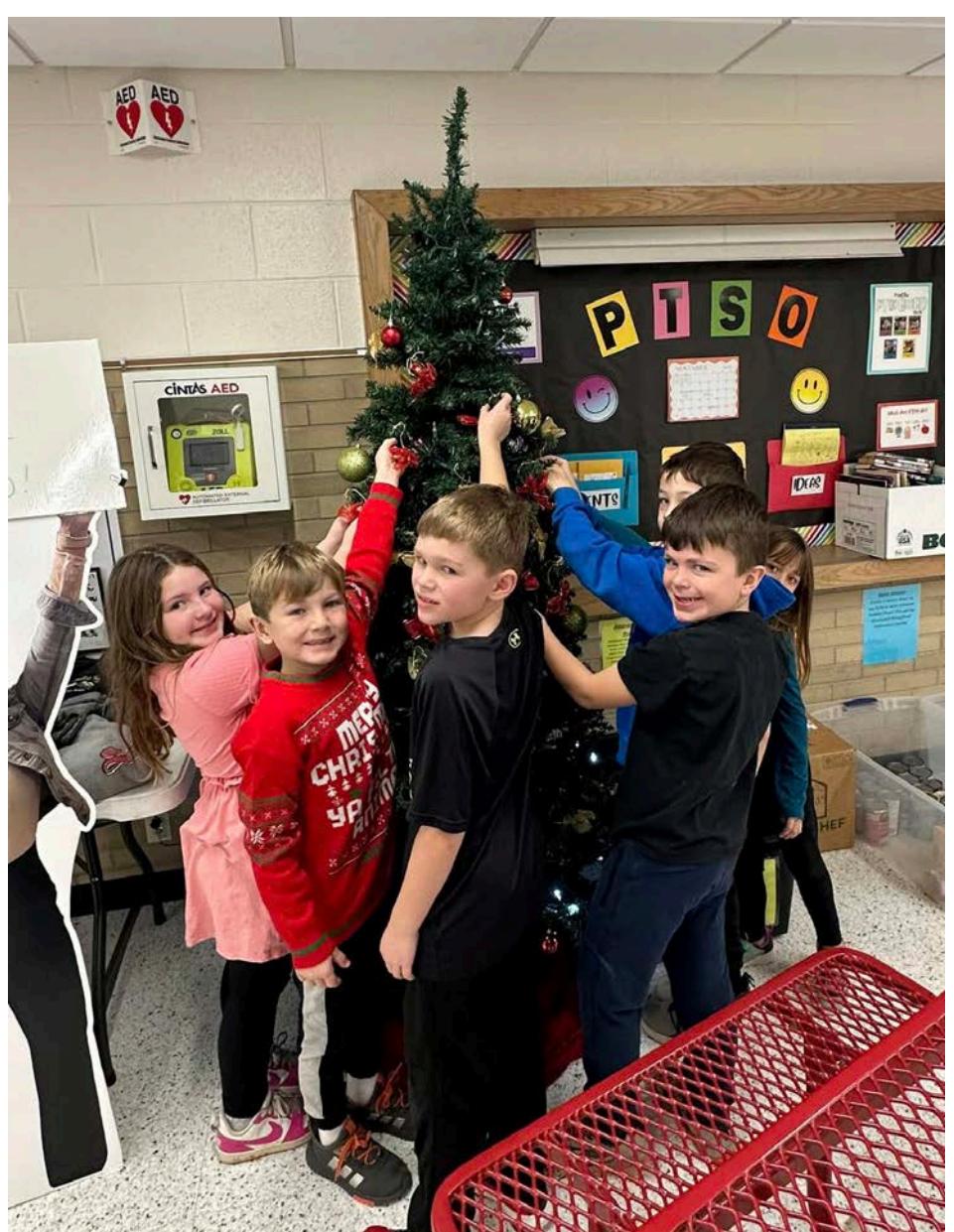
Thanks to the very generous families at Indian Lake Elementary School who collected items and donated to three different organizations this holiday season!

This year's Giving Tree took collections for Generous Hands, Senior Services, and Animal Res-

cue Project.

Students, families and staff members filled their giving tree with bows for every donation received.

We are proud of their efforts to help those in need in our community!



Sunset Lake Elementary Stuffed Animal Day

Students in Kim Parsons's first grade class at Sunset Lake Elementary earned a special stuffed animal day as a reward for reaching their independent reading goals!

Look at these adorable young readers and their special stuffies!



Middle School Minds in Motion

The Vicksburg Middle School Minds in Motion class took another informational and exciting trip to a local business.

The students visited Zoja Beauty. Sara, the shop owner, took the time to explain her job and demonstrate the process of making her product.

The best part? Each student left with their own cherry lip balm!

We appreciate local businesses taking the time to help our students understand what goes into owning and running a successful business.

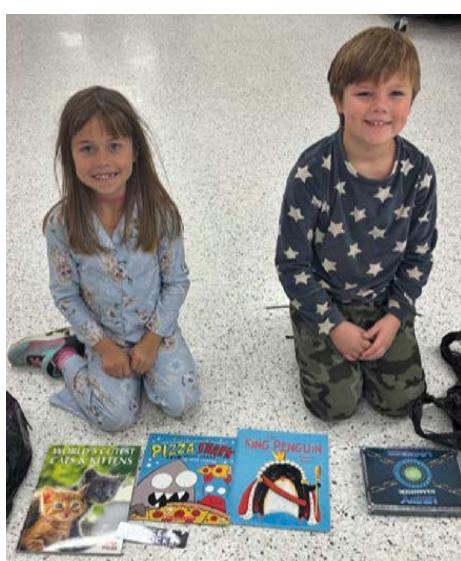
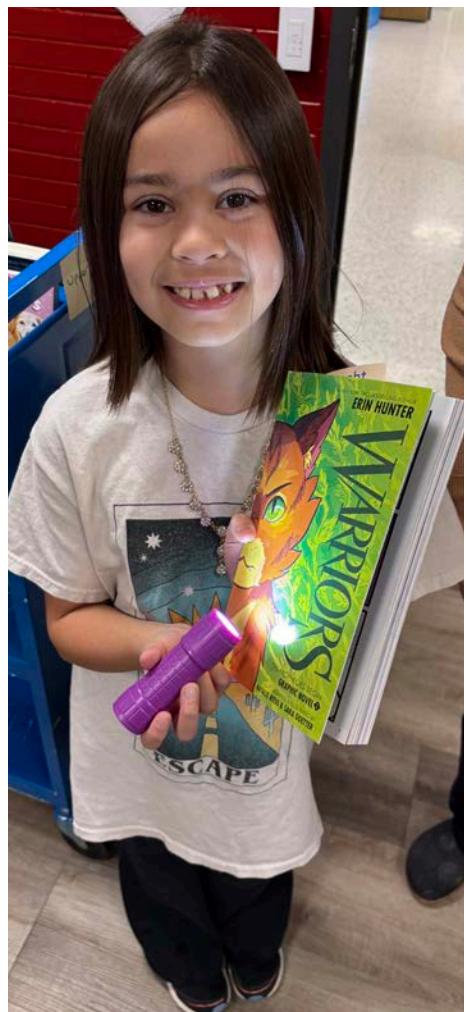


Big Donation Boosts Indian Lake Book Fair

Thanks to a very generous donation at the recent Indian Lake Elementary book fair, many students were thrilled to be able to purchase their book wishes!

All of the students are enjoying new books in their classroom libraries, too.

Thank you very much to our donor, as well as all who supported our elementary book fairs!



Sunset Lake Elementary Toy Drive

A huge thank you and a big congratulations to the families and staff at Sunset Lake Elementary!

For the last 2 weeks they have been collecting new toys for kids in need.

They had a goal of 100 toys and more than doubled it-- collecting 230 toys!!

All donations were packed up for Family and Children's Services as part of the 'Burg Days celebration.

Thank you for helping us spread joy, kindness and holiday cheer this season! Way to go Sunset Lake!

