



THE

# RED & WHITE

MAY 2025

## A LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

### Dear Vicksburg Community Schools Families,

As we enter the final stretch of the school year, May brings excitement and celebration across our district. Graduation is just weeks away– a proud milestone for our seniors and their families. We look forward to honoring their achievements and bright futures at multiple events this month. In this issue of the Red and White, you'll read about our top graduating seniors and their incredible accomplishments. It's one of my favorite times of year when we get to celebrate not only the

achievements of our students, but the hard work of all the teachers and staff who helped them through their years here in Vicksburg.

In addition to sending off our seniors, we are also in the process of welcoming our newest Bulldogs into our schools at our Kindergarten kick-offs and screenings. If your child will be 5 by September 1st, please reach out to start the process to join Vicksburg Community Schools. We can't wait to welcome them! Our 5th and 8th grade

students have also been working on their transitions to their new buildings for next year. It really is an exciting time all across the district.

I invite all our teachers, students and staff to finish out the school year strong and I thank our community for their continued support and for being #BulldogsUnited with us.



**Kind regards,**  
**Kevin O'Neill, SUPERINTENDENT**

## 2025 Excellence in Education Awards

Congratulations to the Vicksburg High School 2025 Excellence in Education Award Winners!

Thomas Christiansen, Scarlett Hosner, Ethan Jastifer, and Grant VanWoert were designated in the top 2-percent of students in the county. It's an amazing honor for the four VCS students to receive.

At the reception they thanked their significant educators. Thomas and Grant both picked VHS teacher Kristina Porter, while Ethan chose his piano teacher, Ronald Cung, and Scarlett chose her flute teacher, Suzanne Rucker.

Each year, the Excellence in Education program holds a reception to reward students for their academic achievements and provide them the opportunity to honor those educators who have contributed to their success.

Since 1986, the Kalamazoo County Excellence in Education program has become one of the most noteworthy and far-reaching recognition programs implemented in west Michigan.





VHS  
CLASS  
OF

2  
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2  
5

4

TOP 13



Kelsey Campbell

*Kelsey is senior class president and a student senate member. She is a 4 year academic award winner, NHS Leadership Award winner, GVSU Award for Excellence scholarship winner. Kelsey is also captain of the Color Guard and has a part time job as a shift leader at Biggby, in addition to completing numerous volunteer hours with the Big Read Machine over the summer.*

*Kelsey plans to attend Grand Valley State University to study cardiovascular sonography with a minor in psychology.*



Co-Salutatorian

Thomas  
Christiansen

*Thomas is the co-salutatorian for the class of 2025. He's a 4 year academic award winner, who took 13 AP classes at VHS. He's an academic all state in tennis and skiing. Thomas is an Excellence in Education award recipient.*

*Thomas is also a pilot and has plans to attend Western Michigan University to study aviation.*

## VHS Class of 2025 Summa Cum Laude

The VHS Class of 2025 Summa Cum Laude students have an impressive high school resume and an even brighter future ahead.



Lyla Kling

*Lyla is a 4 year academic award winner, a KRESA Outstanding Achievement Award nominee, an AP Capstone student and she's been recognized as Academic All State in competitive cheer and track. Lyla is also a HOSA State Conference Finalist. She volunteers as a coach for Rocket Cheer.*

*Lyla plans to attend Spring Arbor University where she will take part in competitive cheer and study nursing.*



Victoria Langdon

*Victoria is a 4 year academic award winner who took 9 AP classes at VHS. She's a member of DECA, Model UN, ITS, NHS and Student Senate. She also won Best in Show at the Michigan DAFT Student Film Festival. Victoria volunteered each summer as a theater camp counselor.*

*She plans to attend Calvin University to major in mathematics and double minor in theater and film.*



Hunter Noel

*Hunter is a 4 year academic award winner who took 10 AP classes at VHS. He also earned the AP Scholar Award. Hunter is a member of NHS and worked on the theater set crew. Hunter also volunteers at the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission with children.*

*Hunter plans to attend Western Michigan University to study marketing.*





Ashley Gerber

Ashley is a 4 year academic award winner. She took 7 AP classes at VHS and is an AP Scholar Award recipient. Ashley is currently working to get her EMT certification at KVCC while still in high school.

She also joined the VHS trap shooting team and enjoys hunting and fishing.

Ashley plans to attend Liberty University on a pre med track while also joining their Air Force ROTC. She plans to be a trauma surgeon in the Air Force.



Scarlett Hosner

Scarlett is a 4 year academic award winner. She took 11 AP classes at VHS. She's an NHS member who has been recognized as Academic All State in volleyball, tennis and basketball. Scarlett is also an Excellence in Education award recipient. She plays the flute and this year, broke the VHS record for most points scored in a single basketball season.

Scarlett plans to attend Kalamazoo College where she will play both volleyball and basketball. She plans to study science and math.



Valedictorian

Ethan Jastifer

Ethan is valedictorian of the VHS class of 2025. He is a 4 year academic award winner and has a 4.49 GPA. He's a member of NHS, the Big Red Machine, the cross country team and plays piano. Ethan is also a KAMSC research student and an Excellence in Education award recipient.

Ethan plans to attend the University Notre Dame University to major in mechanical engineering on a pre-medicine track.



Lily Johnson

Lily is a 4 year academic award winner. She took 8 AP classes at VHS. She's a member of NHS and ITS and is an AP Scholar Award recipient. Lily earned her Global Seal of Biliteracy in French. She spent last summer volunteering with the Vicksburg Cultural Arts at their Art in Nature summer camp at the Outdoor Education Center.

Lily plans to attend the University of Olivet to study psychology.

13 students rank in the top of the class. Together they all have GPAs above 4.15. They took a combined 120+ AP and dual enrollment classes. The students are active in varsity athletics, band, choir, the musicals, academic competitions and so much more.

Here are the top students of the class of 2025, in alphabetical order.



Allie Spencer

Allie is a 4 year academic award winner who took 6 AP classes at VHS. She is NHS President, a member of the Student Senate, AIM Higher, and ITS. Allie also earned the Global Seal of Biliteracy in French. She is also an active member in theater, most recently playing Mary Poppins in the spring musical.

Allie plans to attend the Culinary Institute of America to become a food chemist.



Sydney Stender

Sydney is a 4 year academic award winner who took 10 AP classes at VHS. She holds a part time job in addition to her rigorous school schedule.

Sydney plans to attend Western Michigan University.



Co-Salutatorian

Grant VanWoert

Grant is the co-salutatorian for the class of 2025. He is a 4 year academic award winner who took 13 AP classes at VHS and was named Academic All State for tennis. Grant is also an Excellence in Education award recipient and has earned his AP Capstone diploma. He is a member of the Big Red Machine Marching Band and volunteers for the Miracle League in Schoolcraft.

Grant plans to attend Michigan State University to study chemical engineering in the honors college.



Lauren Zahnow

Lauren is a 4 year academic award winner who took 10 AP classes at VHS. She also earned her Global Seal of Biliteracy. She is active in the Big Red Machine Marching Band, competitive cheer and is a pole vaulter on the track team. She's hoping to break the school record this spring.

She plans to attend Spring Arbor University where she will continue to be a pole vaulter on the track team and study exercise science in the honors college with hopes of becoming an occupational therapist.



# Senior Day of Service Puts Students to Work

For the third year, the Vicksburg High School graduating class held their Senior Day of Service.

The class of 2025 spent a day spread out at more than a dozen sites around the community, giving back in a variety of ways.

They did lots of clean up projects all across Vicksburg and at all our school buildings.

Thanks to those who helped sponsor the day and our community partners for finding ways to put our seniors to work. Great job class of 2025!



## Several Students Receive Seal of Biliteracy

The World Language Department at VHS is proud to share that 22 students earned their Global Seal of Biliteracy in either French or Spanish this year! This is a new record for VHS for the most students receiving their seal of biliteracy in one year.

Seven students also earned their Michigan Seal of Biliteracy, which is an even higher proficiency benchmark, awarded by the Michigan Department of Education.

Students are seen here with their certificates and medals:

Front row: Mrs. Allie Lamers (VHS Spanish teacher), Jodie White (Spanish), Lily Johnson (French), Morgan White (Spanish), Gabbi Balazs (Spanish), Allie Spencer (French), Mrs. Jennifer Teall (VHS French teacher)

Middle row: Sophia Gray (Spanish), Lauren Zahnow (Spanish), AJ Wurfel (Spanish), Kaela Koole (Spanish), Mario Pontes del Rio (French), Isabel Koeman (Spanish), Norah Hossink (French), Ella Mann (Spanish)



Back row: Blake Sutherland (Spanish), Daymon Witters (Spanish), Lucas Johnson (Spanish), Austin Androsky

(Spanish), Noah Briggs (Spanish), Braedon Akans (Spanish)

Not pictured: Matthew Hunt

(Spanish), Torrie Langdon (Spanish), and Matteo Cresci (French)



# Middle School Track Team Breaks Records

At the first middle school track meet of the season, 3 Vicksburg Middle School records were broken! And the very next week the team broke 3 more!

At the very first competition the following records were set:

High Jump: Greyson Buikema (8th grade) broke the 5'5 record by PRing with 5'8.

Boys 4x100 Relay: Tanner

Council, Ja'Kobi Reed, Austin Shaw and Andres Flores (all 8th grade) broke the 49.64 record by PRing with a 47.88.

Boys 4x200 Relay: Ja'Kobi Reed, Andres Flores, Tanner Council and Greyson Buikema (all 8th grade) broke the 1:43.27 record by PRing with a 1:40.07.

Meanwhile, the next week the team did it again! They re-broke 2 records and set a new one!

Boys 4x100 Relay: Tanner Council, Andres Flores, Evan Wilcox-Noble and Ja'Kobi Reed broke their own 47.88 record by PRing with a time of 47.29

Boys 4x200 Relay: Tanner Council, Greyson Buikema, Ja'Kobi Reed and Andres Flores broke their own 1:40.07 record by PRing with a time of 1:39.96

While the Boys 4x400 Relay: Evan Wilcox-Noble, Ben Roiniotis,

Micah Hostetler and Andres Flores broke the 4:01.94 record (2023) by PRing with a time of 3:59.22

With all the records, and other great showings, a total of 20 middle school athletes have qualified to compete at the State meet!

Congratulations, VMS track team!





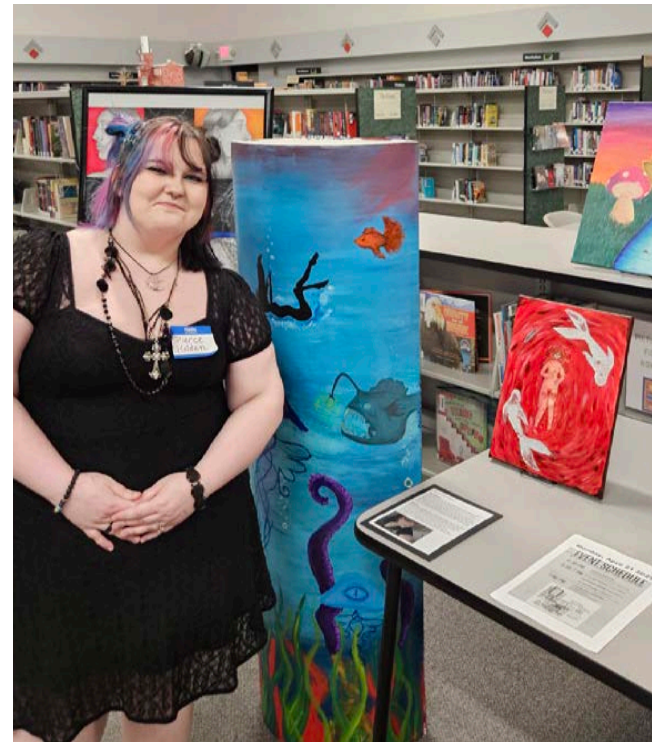
# The Celebration of Arts at VCS

The Celebration of Arts was a wonderful celebration of our talented students here at Vicksburg Community Schools!

The every other year event featured artwork from Kindergarten through 12th graders, video presentations by VHS film students, a dance recital by the Community Education dancers, a concert highlighting the talents of our string players, as well as the elementary, middle school and high school choirs and band students!

11th and 12th grade students in Mrs. Lacey's AP art also showcased their art portfolio work that they have been creating all year. They will be submitting their portfolios to the College Board to earn college credit in a few weeks.

In addition to the vast amount of art and music, the Vicksburg Fine Arts Boosters also held an auction opportunity called "Take a Seat for the Arts" There were 17 amazing stools and chairs created by our incredible students that will be up for auction, all to benefit the local arts.



## Tobey Tigers Learn the Ukulele

Students at Tobey Elementary recently worked with local musician and ukulele extraordinaire, Megan Dooley, to learn more about playing the ukulele.

Thank you to Megan for supporting these future musicians!





# Baseball Tournament Honors Coach Knapp

The First Annual Ed Knapp Memorial Baseball Tournament helped to honor the long-time Vicksburg coach on April 26th.

As part of the tournament, Knapp Field was rededicated in honor of the coach who spent 35 years leading Vicksburg teams to success.

Coach Knapp's number 17 jersey was also retired and VCS officials unveiled a new tribute to him.

They hope to make the memorial tournament a yearly event.



SATURDAY, MAY 10TH



Sign up for the  
Hearty Hustle today!



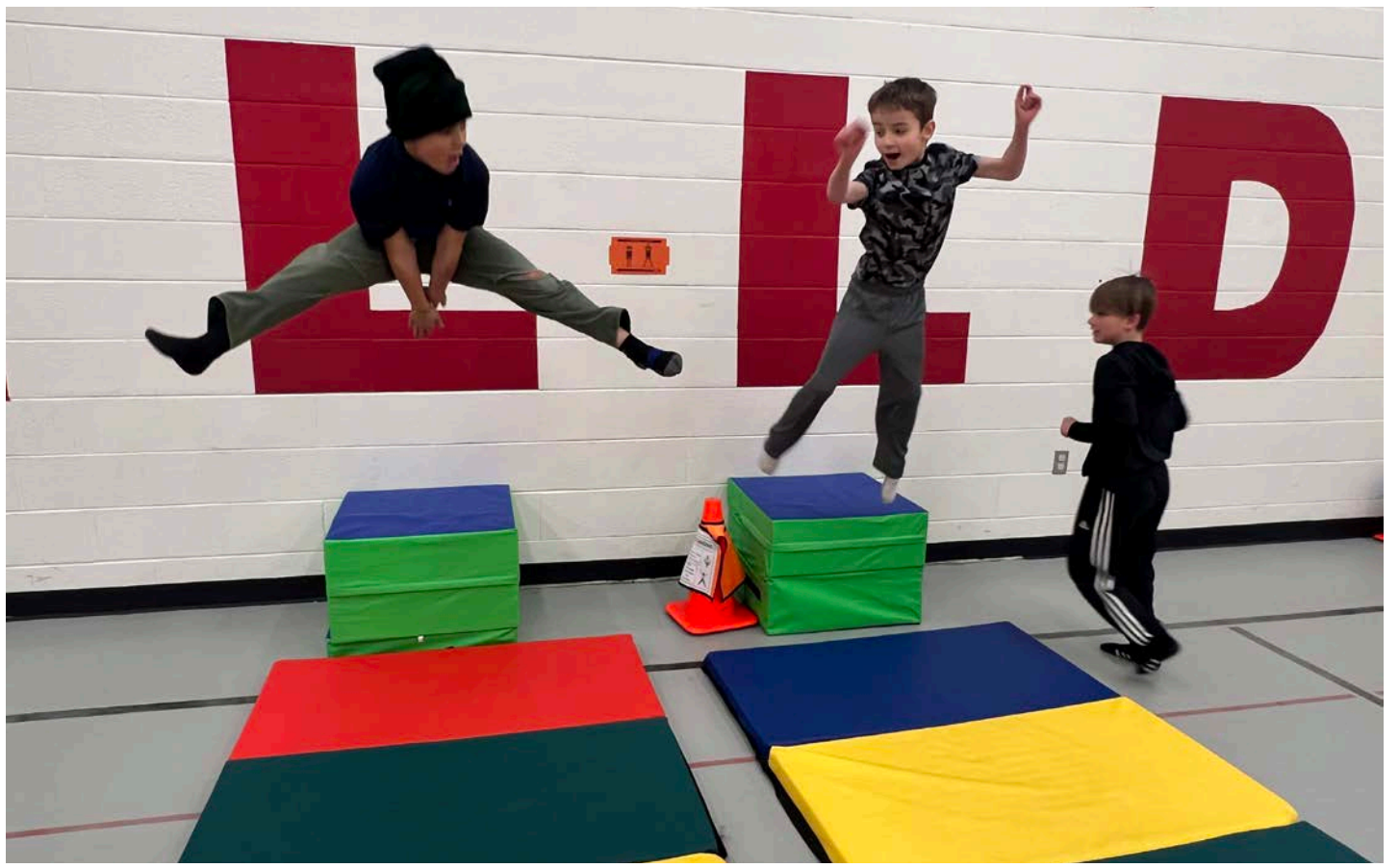


# Indian Lake Elementary Enjoys New Gym Mats

Students at Indian Lake Elementary are “flipping” over their new mats for PE class!

Mr. Cardoso received a Bardeen Grant from the Vicksburg Community Schools Foundation for the new gymnastics mats and cubes to teach a gymnastics unit in all his PE classes.

During class, students rotated between different stations to test out their gymnastics skills.



## CTE HORTICULTURE PLANT SALE

Saturday, May 10th  
9am - 2 pm

Vicksburg High School Greenhouse  
501 E. Highway

### WE'RE SELLING

- HERBS
- GARDEN STARTERS
- BEDDING/FLOWERS
- HOUSE PLANTS
- AND MORE!



**VCS COMMUNITY EDUCATION 2025 SUMMER CAMPS ARE OPEN FOR REGISTRATION!**

Register today on the Community Ed tab of our website or scan here:



**V Bulldogs**