



THE

# RED & WHITE

MAY 2024

## A LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

### Dear Vicksburg Community Schools Families,

In just a few short weeks we will be bidding farewell to the class of 2024. Their graduation is quickly approaching and I hope they look back at their time in Vicksburg Community Schools with fond memories and pride.

Graduation season seems to foster a sense of pride, belonging, unity and excellence among our students, staff and community. It's always a great

day to be a Bulldog, but even more so when we watch the newest group of seniors prepare to head off into the world. My hope is that they take with them all they have learned at VCS, including the values of respect, integrity, and perseverance. I know, thanks to our amazing staff and community, they will go on to do great things.

In this month's Red and White

you'll meet the Vicksburg High School class of 2024 students named Summa Cum Laude. The top 11 students represent in the best way, our motto of Traditions in Excellence. Their extraordinary accomplishments certainly make our district very proud.



Regards,

**Keevin O'Neill, SUPERINTENDENT**

### Athletic Award Goes to Emma Steele

The Michigan High School Coaches Association, the professional organization of school coaches and athletic directors, (MHSCA) has selected Vicksburg High School senior Emma Steele as one of eight state finalists for MHSCA Rich Tompkins Multi Sport winners!

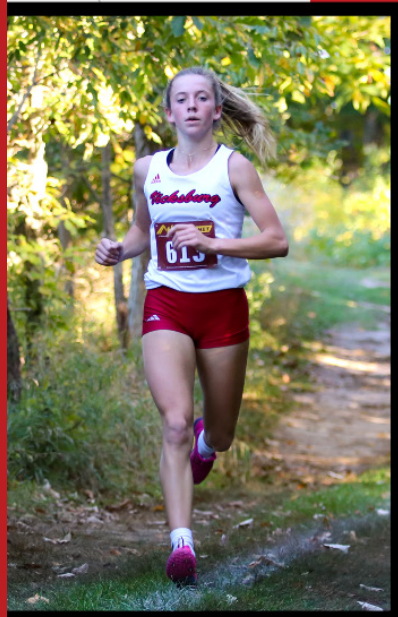
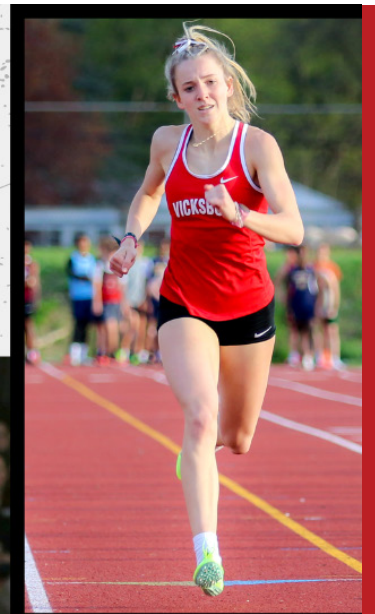
The award will be presented to Emma at the senior honors award ceremony.

The Rich Tompkins Multi-Sport Athletic award recognizes the accomplishments of student athletes who have excelled in a variety of athletic, academic, school, and community endeavors. Athletes are nominated based on their three seasons of interscholastic athletic participation in each of their four years of high school and their accomplishments as a scholar, and as an active participant in school and community activities.

The MHSCA are very proud to spotlight Emma Steele – a person whose work and values best mirror those of interscholastic sports. And we are very proud at VCS that Emma is a Bulldog!

## EMMA STEELE

**Rich Tompkins MHSCA  
Multi-Sport Athlete Award  
& Scholarship Winner**



VHS  
CLASS  
OF

2  
0  
2  
4

4

TOP 11



Gracie Breitenbach

*Gracie is a 4-year academic award winner, who took 10 AP classes at VHS. She has also passed every AP exam with her lowest score being a 4.*

*Gracie has already earned her AP Capstone Diploma. She is a College Board National African-American Recognition Award Recipient and is also involved in the CTE Professional Health Science Program. Gracie also volunteers at the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission and for the Big Read Machine.*

*She plans to attend the University of Michigan to study biology, focusing on health science.*



Valedictorian

Clara Centofanti

*Clara is the Valedictorian for the class of 2024.*

*She is a 4-year academic award winner, who took 10 AP classes at VHS. She is also a 4-year KAMSC research student. Clara is involved in marching band, robotics, and varsity tennis. She also attended a mission trip to El Soto El Salvador. Clara plans to attend Michigan Technological University to study chemical engineering with a focus on environmental sustainability.*

The achievements of this remarkable group during their four years at Vicksburg High School are nothing short of extraordinary!

Introducing our Vicksburg High School Summa Cum Laude graduates, in alphabetical order: Gracie Breitenbach, Clara Centofanti, Noah Dinzik, Sydney Glerum, Carter Johnson, Landan Johnson, Brendan Kelly, Luke Malocha, Zane Sandelin, Nathan Schnepp and Megan Zahnow.



Brendan Kelly

*Brendan is a 4-year academic award winner, a member of NHS, and took 11 AP classes.*

*Brendan also plays varsity lacrosse and is involved in DECA. In addition, he works at McDonald's and volunteers coaching for youth lacrosse camps.*

*Brendan is still deciding between attending NC State and Iowa State with plans on majoring in industrial engineering.*

*Congratulations*  
to the top students of the  
**CLASS OF 2024!**



Noah Dinzik

Noah is a 4-year academic award winner, he is a member of NHS, and took 8 AP classes at VHS. He is also a member of the Big Red Machine and plays lacrosse.

He was also involved in the CTE Construction Trades Program. Noah currently works for the landscaping and maintenance department at White Oaks Retirement Home.

Noah plans to attend Michigan State University to double major in mechanical engineering and actuarial science.



Sydney Glerum

Sydney is a 4-year academic award winner, is a member of NHS, and she took 6 AP classes. She also earned the Global Seal of Biliteracy in Spanish. Sydney is involved in varsity tennis where she is a team captain and involved with AIM Higher. She has had part-time jobs at Subway and Starbucks.

Sydney plans to attend Western Michigan University to major in chemical and paper engineering while minoring in Spanish.



Carter Johnson

Carter is a 4-year academic award winner, he is a member of NHS, and he took 8 AP classes, and is also dual enrolled at Kalamazoo Valley Community College, taking multiple business classes.

He has also earned more than 80 community service hours and is an Excellence in Education Award winner.

Carter plans to attend the University of Michigan to study business.



Landan Johnson

Landan is a 4-year academic award winner, a member of NHS, and he took 12 AP classes.

He also took 1st place at the KidWind Michigan Regional Engineering Competition at WMU, where he and a team of students built their own wind turbine.

Landan has played varsity soccer for the past 4 years and he also served as team captain.

He plans to attend the University of Michigan to major in aerospace engineering.



The Summa Cum Laude distinction is typically given to the top 5% of students or those with a cumulative GPA of 4.0+.

Each of the 11 students boasts a GPA surpassing 4.14, a testament to their academic prowess. Collectively, they've completed more than 120 AP and dual enrollment courses! Beyond academics, they participate in a variety of activities from varsity sports to band and choir. Many also juggle part-time jobs alongside their commitments and still manage to find time for volunteering.



Salutatorian

Luke Malocha

Luke is Salutatorian for the class of 2024.

He is a 4-year academic award winner, he took 14 AP classes, is an AP Capstone student, and Outstanding Scholar Award winner. He is a 4-year varsity Golf and soccer player, and he was captain for both teams earning all-state honors for both teams. Luke is also an Excellence in Education Award winner. In addition to all that, he's worked at Target for 2 years.

Luke plans to attend the University of Michigan with a pre med major.



Zane Sandelin

Zane is a 4-year academic award winner, who took 10 AP classes at VHS and is also a 4-year KAMSC research student. Zane is also an Excellence in Education Award winner.

Zane is also a member of the varsity track and cross-country teams.

Zane plans to attend Case Western Reserve, majoring in mechanical engineering.



Nathan Schnepf

Nathan is a 4-year academic award winner, who took 11 AP classes at VHS, and is working towards his AP Capstone Diploma.

He is involved in NHS, FCA, and played varsity football and track and field. He also enjoys fishing, weight lifting, and camping, and even finds time to volunteer for the Vicksburg football youth program.

Nathan plans to attend Western Michigan University, majoring in biomedical sciences.



Megan Zahnow

Megan is a 4-year academic award winner, a member of NHS, and she also earned the Global Seal of Biliteracy in Spanish.

She has taken 11 AP classes and has been recognized as an Academic All-State athlete in track three times. She also is a youth group leader and helped with hurricane cleanup in Florida last spring.

Megan plans to attend Wayne State University for an exercise science major to become a physical therapist, while minoring in Spanish. She also plans to run track.

# Hearty Hustle Race Registration Begins

Registration for the 37th annual Hearty Hustle 5K Race is now open!

All the proceeds from the fun community event benefit the Vicksburg Community Schools Foundation, which funds programs that would not otherwise be supported by tax revenues. Teachers and students directly benefit through educational, literary, scientific and extra-curricular activities.

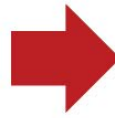
The Hearty Hustle is taking place Saturday May 11th at 9am. It's \$30 to register and that includes a 37th annual commemorative t-shirt. There is also a one mile fun run for the kids.

You can register on the Vicksburg Community Schools Foundation tab on [vicksburgschools.org](http://vicksburgschools.org) or by scanning the QR code.

**SATURDAY, MAY 11TH**



**Sign up for the Hearty Hustle today!**



# MAEO Legislative Day

**By Pathways student, Reign Lathrop**

This spring, 7 students from Vicksburg Pathways High School traveled to Lansing to the Capitol building. Students were welcomed by MAEO with a filling breakfast and a tour of the Capitol building. Students from eight alternative schools gathered together around tables to discuss their political views, expressing their voices. This was a great opportunity to hear other students' opinions of what they want their own community to look like along with having the freedom to be who they want to be.

Guest speaker Dawn Levey, an election clerk, spoke for about 30 minutes. She explained her responsibilities along with encouraging students to vote properly and how that works. Ed policy guest speaker Representative Weiss spoke about policies with education and wanting to adjust it for students. Students learned new and exciting things.

The day ended with pizza and raffle tickets. Going on the Lansing trip is a great opportunity to meet new people like you and learn new things, laugh, make new friends and memories. The sights you see along the way are gorgeous. As an added bonus, this experience can be put on your resume and college applications.

As an alternative highschool student I would take this trip again.



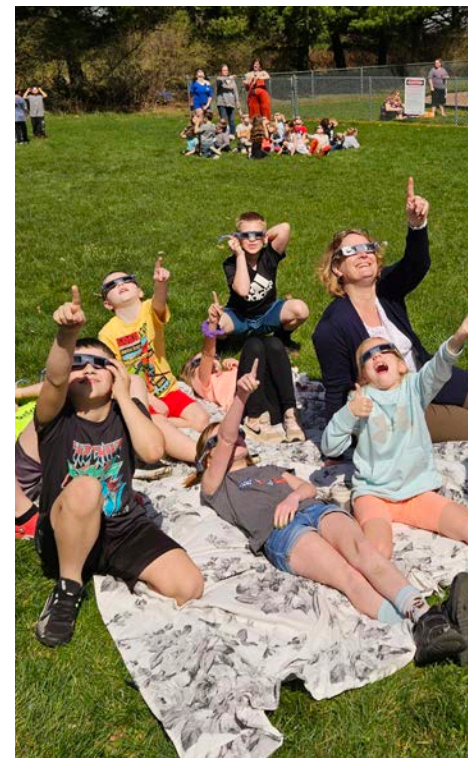
# Solar Eclipse Viewed by VCS Students

The April solar eclipse was a district-wide event where students, teachers and staff gathered to witness the historic event.

Vicksburg Schools provided solar glasses to everyone to make sure their eyes were protected.

Many of our youngest students created extra face masks to help cover the area around their glasses and keep them protected.

It was certainly a science-lesson-come-to-life that none of them will forget any time soon!



# Pickleball at Indian Lake Elementary

Pickleball has arrived at Indian Lake Elementary thanks to the Vicksburg Community Schools Foundation!

PE teacher Josh Cardosa submitted a Bardeen Grant for the pickleball supplies.

Students started out slow, learning with balloons and beach balls.

They've had a great time learning this fun sport.



## VHS Artist at the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts

Congratulations to Kyren Shields, a junior at VHS, who had his artwork selected for the High School juried art show at the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts!

The piece is titled "(ONSHOT) KIRAKIRA 0" and is a digital illustration. He was awarded three different scholarships from Frostic School of Art at WMU, Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design, and Siena Heights University.

The show was on display in April at the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts.



## VHS Musicians to Perform at BRAVO! Concert

Two Vicksburg High School students have been picked among a small group of local musicians to perform at the Fontana Chamber Arts 2024 BRAVO! Concert.

Congratulations to the BRAVO! Competition winners: Emelyn Germay and Isaac Sandelin.

Sophomore Germay, who plays Clarinet, will perform a piece with freshman Sandelin, who plays the piano. Sandelin also won a solo spot in the concert on the piano.

The young VHS students have achieved something typically reserved for upperclassmen.

BRAVO! supports advanced-level high school student musical

talent by offering a competitive performance opportunity. Performers are selected for the competition via auditions for the concert that will showcase the highest level of musical proficiency represented by locally based students.

These talented young performing artists will be featured in a free recital at the Judy K. Jolliffe Theatre in the Epic Center in Downtown Kalamazoo on Wednesday, May 15th at 7pm.

Portions of the performance will be broadcast at a later date on WMUK's 89.9 FM "From the Top" and on Public Media Network with encore presentations.

Congratulations to Emelyn and Isaac! They make us very proud!

**FONTANA CHAMBER ARTS 2024  
BRAVO! COMPETITION WINNERS**

**Emelyn Germay**      **Isaac Sandelin**

Both will be featured in a concert Wednesday, May 15 at 7 pm at the Judy Jolliffe Theater in the Epic Center in Downtown Kalamazoo

## VHS Students Earn Seals of Biliteracy

AP Spanish students at Vicksburg High School once again had the opportunity to earn the Global and Michigan Seals of Biliteracy this year.

Nine students were awarded the Global Seal, which is an internationally recognized bilingual proficiency benchmark of an Intermediate to Mid level. Four students also earned their Michigan Seal of Biliteracy, which is awarded through the Michigan Department of Education, that indicates an Intermediate to High proficiency level.

Students earning their Global Seal are:

Colin Schramer, Sydney Glerum, Sydney Taylor, Megan Zahnow, Samantha Delvo, Sadie

Grossman, Mia Rodriguez, Janessa Rojas, and Josue Jimenez.

Students also earning their Michigan Seal of Biliteracy are:

Sadie Grossman, Janessa Rojas, Mia Rodriguez, and Josue Jimenez.

Congratulations and well done to you all!



# Kids Heart Challenge at Tobey Elementary

Tobey Elementary students set a new school record for the annual Kids Heart Challenge!

This year they raised an amazing \$30,036.32 to benefit the American Heart Association.

The students had wonderful support from their families and surrounding community.

During the month of March, students learn about healthy heart habits as well as a jump unit including short and long ropes, Chinese jump rope and agility ladders. They make improvement goals and then work all month to achieve those goals.

Congratulations to the top 5 classes:

- 4th Grade- Walters- \$3,744.81
- 4th Grade- Holladay- \$3,692.90
- 2nd Grade- Flickinger- \$3,411.41
- 2nd Grade- Flynn- \$2,876.04
- 3rd Grade- Hall- \$2,445.15

Thank you to everyone who gave to this great cause. The funds they raised will go right to the local American Heart Association.

By taking part in the challenge, Tobey students earned \$1,900 in gift certificates for replacing and ordering new PE equipment.



# Excellence in Education Scholarship Winners

Congratulations to the Vicksburg High School 2024 Excellence in Education Student Scholarship Award Winners!

Clara Centofanti, Carter Johnson, Luke Malocha and Zane Sandelin have the distinction of being in the top 2-percent of students in Kalamazoo County.

They were honored at the reception and given the opportunity to honor educators who contributed to their success.

Carter and Luke both picked VHS math teacher Denny Roehm as their significant educator. Clara and Zane each chose teachers from the Kalamazoo Area Math and Science Center, where they also attend.

Each year, the Excellence in Education program holds a reception to reward students for their academic achievements and highlight their most influential teachers.



## VCS COMMUNITY EDUCATION SUMMER CAMPS

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

## SPORTS PARTICIPATION PHYSICALS

For Middle & High School Athletes

Wednesday, May 29th

6 to 8pm

Vicksburg High School

\$20 per athlete

All VMS & VHS athletes for the 2024-2025 school year need an updated sports physical dated after 4/15/24 uploaded to planeths.com in order to participate

## Kindergarten Bikers Run Wild at Sunset Lake

Vicksburg kindergarteners are learning to ride bikes just in time for summer break! Pictured are students from Sunset Lake trying out the strider bikes for the first time.

For the fourth year, the kindergarten classes at VCS are taking part in the All Kids Bike Kindergarten PE program using strider bikes.

The program began thanks to the Vicksburg Community Schools Foundation.

The program teaches students balance, coordination, perseverance, bike riding and safety. And they get to have lots of fun along the way!



## Senior Day of Service

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

The class of 2024 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 2024!

