



THE

RED & WHITE

OCTOBER 2026

A LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Vicksburg Community Schools Families,

It's starting to feel like Fall and that has so many exciting things on the horizon here at Vicksburg Community Schools.

It has been great to see our buildings filled with energy, our classrooms buzzing with learning, and our students getting involved in the many opportunities VCS has to offer.

We are seeing wonderful things happening throughout the district. Our new DAWGS mentorship program is connecting high school students with peers, and students across our schools are taking advantage of new oppor-

tunities to create, explore and learn. We are also continuing to see the benefits of investments in our classrooms, programs and facilities as we work to provide the best possible experience for every student.

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our annual Community Tailgate. It was wonderful to see so many families, staff members, community organizations and local businesses come together to celebrate our schools and support our students! Your enthusiasm and involvement are a big part of what makes Vicksburg such a special community.

Now we turn our attention to Homecoming and another opportunity to come together as Bulldogs. I hope you will join us to celebrate our students at the annual parade and game.

As we move into the fall, I want to thank our students for the energy they bring to our schools, our staff for the incredible work they do each day, and our families and community for continuing to support Vicksburg Community Schools.



Kind regards,

Keevin O'Neill, SUPERINTENDENT

October Is National Principals Month

National Principals Month is celebrated every October to recognize the significant contributions and leadership of principals in K-12 schools.

This month provides an opportunity for the school community to express appreciation for our principals' dedication, passion, and tireless efforts in creating positive and effective learning environments for students and staff.

Please join us in thanking our wonderful school principals!

Front row: Allison Dygert, VMS Principal; Dr. Sarah Bacalia, Indian Lake Principal; Kelli Luke, Pathways Principal; Brittinae Bolz, Sunset Lake Principal.

Back row: Bill Dygert, Tobey Principal; Joe Werkema, VMS Assistant Principal; Matt Hawkins, VHS Assistant Principal; Adam Brush, VHS Principal.



Thank You
VCS PRINCIPALS!



Community Tailgate Kicks Off the Year Right

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the 2026 Vicksburg Community Tailgate.

We were thrilled to welcome hundreds of students, families, staff members and community members to kick off the school year together. Even a little Michigan weather couldn't stop the fun!

While the storm may have interrupted the evening, it was great to see so many people return after the skies cleared to continue the celebration.

A special thank-you goes out to our amazing community partners and local businesses. This year's Tailgate featured our largest number of booths ever, and we are especially grateful to everyone who safely rode out the storm with us, waited for the weather to pass and kept the event going!

We would also like to extend a special thank you to our generous sponsors who helped make this event possible.

Our Bulldog Sponsors

- Vicksburg Community Schools Foundation
- Fredrick Construction
- Connections Community Church
- Vicksburg Family Home Care
- Main St. Pub
- DeNooyer Ford

Our Red Sponsors

- Edward Jones
- Grace Maids LLC
- Lyster Exteriors
- Bulldog Lacrosse Club

Our White Sponsors

- ChapNaz Church
- The Mill Group
- Highstreet Trust Shield Insurance
- Ivy Rehab
- The Home Rest Collective
- Vicksburg Optometry
- Linda Hoard Photography
- Hoard Chiropractic

And, of course, thank you to the dozens of additional community partners and school groups who hosted booths and helped make the evening such a special event.

The Vicksburg Community Tailgate continues to grow each year, and we are grateful for the incredible support and Bulldog pride shown throughout our community!



Sixth Graders Join the Vicksburg Band

The newest members of the Vicksburg band family have their instruments!

Our 6th grade band students at Vicksburg Middle School received their instruments in mid September and they're ready to make some music!

This year, we have 85 students in 6th grade band, one of largest

groups we've ever had!

Pictured are brass and percussion students with new band co-director Cheryl Thomas.

We're excited to watch these young musicians learn, grow and find their place in the Vicksburg band program.



The Giving Pump Donates to Vicksburg Schools

Have you spotted the Giving Pump at the Vicksburg Johnny's Markets Shell gas station location?!

Shell is giving 1 cent per every gallon sold from the purple Giving Pump at the Vicksburg location to Vicksburg Community Schools!

Give back simply by filling up your gas tank! The Giving Pump runs through October 31st.



ValleyHUB Brings Fresh Food to VCS

We're thrilled to announce that Vicksburg Community Schools is officially partnering with ValleyHUB to bring fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables straight to our school cafeterias!

This partnership gives our students more opportunities to enjoy fresh, Michigan-grown produce while supporting local growers and our community.

So, what is ValleyHUB? Their farm includes a greenhouse and growing space and they also work with farmers across the state to source even more fresh fruits and veggies. ValleyHUB Processing takes the locally grown produce during peak

season, processes it and freezes it so those fruits and vegetables can be enjoyed long after their growing season has ended.

That means some of the delicious summer fruits we love — like berries — can be preserved and served to our students throughout the school year!

We're excited to see what's in store and, more importantly, to see our students enjoying fresh food right here at school!

A big thank you to ValleyHUB for helping us bring more fresh, local choices to VCS!



Bulldogs Get New Baseball Coach

Introducing the new Vicksburg High School Varsity Baseball Coach: Derek Gribler!

Coach Gribler is no stranger to VHS. For the last several years he has helped out with football, basketball and baseball.

We are excited to have him in this new position!







**INTRODUCING THE NEW
VHS BASEBALL COACH:
DEREK GRIBLER**

Enjoying Fall in the Outdoor Education Center

We've had the best weather for the Vicksburg Schools Outdoor Education Center this fall!

One of our favorite parts of the day is when classes take walks in the woods and to the docks to explore the OEC grounds.

Sunset Lake 3rd graders in Mrs. Ebert's class took a silent walk to listen for bird sounds with OEC Teacher Kelly Christiansen. They observed the sounds nature makes and used a phone app to identify what types of birds they heard.

We love seeing our students learn and explore in nature!



3D Printers at Sunset Lake Elementary

Two brand-new 3D printers arrived at Sunset Lake, thanks to the incredible generosity of Sunset Lake families and the hard work of the school's PTSO!

These printers will give students exciting opportunities to design, create and bring their ideas to life while also supporting hands-on learning across all grades.

Teachers can use them to enhance science lessons, such as designing and testing different catapults or creating life-sized animal skulls to study the features of different species.

The possibilities are truly endless, and we can't wait to see what Sunset Lake students create!

Thank you to our Sunset Lake families for supporting their yearly Fun Run fundraiser and to the Sunset Lake PTSO for all of the work that made this possible!



Tobey Elementary Celebrates Dot Day

Creativity, Courage & Collaboration!

Tobey Elementary first graders in Mrs. Wester's class celebrated International Dot Day with a little creativity and a lot of fun!

They read "The Dot" by Peter H. Reynolds and then created and decorated their very own dots. The Dot is the story of a caring teacher who dares a doubting student to trust in her own abilities by being brave enough to "make her mark".

The exercise helped remind them that everyone can make an impact in their own way.



Indian Lake Elementary Practices PAWS

At Indian Lake Elementary, they kicked off their first few weeks of school with reminders about their building expectations.

Those expectations are called PAWS:

P: Practice Kindness

A: Act Responsibly

W: Work Hard

S: Stay Safe and Focused

Students are learning that PAWS can happen anywhere even on the playground and all around Indian Lake! They rotated between stations around the school- from the hallway to the cafeteria, the pick up and bus line to the playground and the school office- learning the various rules of the school and their expectations in each space.

It was a great way to set the tone of the new school year!



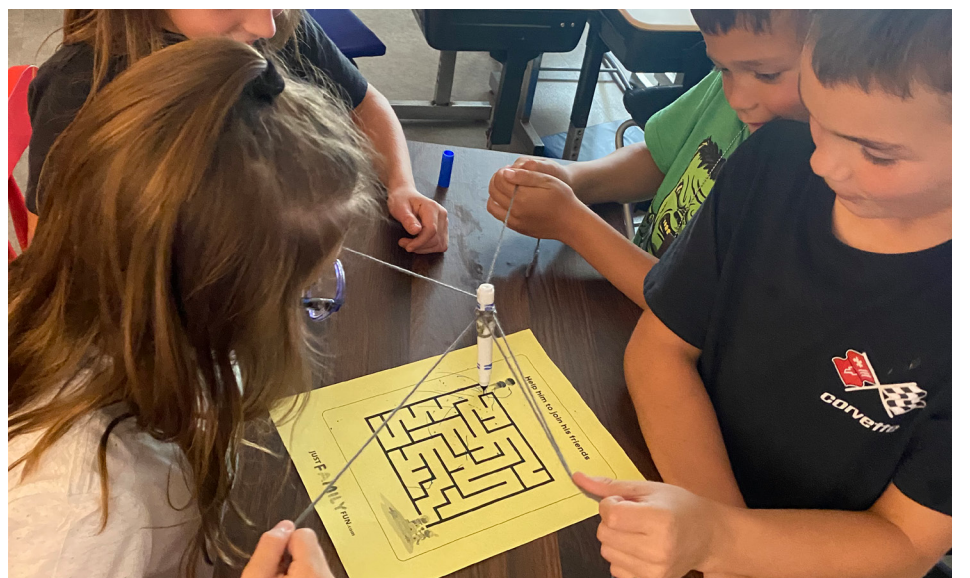
Third Graders Learn Teamwork

Teamwork makes the dream work in third grade!

The third graders in Mrs. Wilkowski's class at Tobey Elementary have been working hard on team-building activities since the beginning of the school year! One of their challenges was to work together to solve a maze using just ONE marker.

Students had so much fun with this challenge while practicing communication, patience, problem-solving, and teamwork.

We are so proud of the way this group is learning to support one another and are already creating such a sweet classroom family!



DAWGS Mentor VHS Students

Meet the Vicksburg High School DAWGS!

DAWGS — Dedicated Advocates Willing to Guide Students — is a brand-new student mentorship program at Vicksburg High School designed to help students feel welcomed, connected, supported and successful.

As the program gets underway, our first group of DAWGS men-

tors recently took part in training and team-building activities to prepare them for their important role in supporting and guiding fellow students.

We're excited to see these students step up as leaders and make a positive difference in our VHS community. We can't wait to see where this first year of DAWGS takes us!

