



# TROJAN TODAY

YOUR SCHOOL TOWN OF HIGHLAND SOURCE FOR NEWS AND EVENTS | MAY 2021

**2019-nCoV**  
coronavirus

SCHOOL TOWN OF HIGHLAND SPECIAL REPORT

## In-person graduation caps off pandemic year

With a few short weeks remaining in this school year, I want to offer up kudos to our team that is expanding remediation for summer and have plans for tutoring beginning in August. It's all part of a comprehensive initiative to give every student the opportunity to advance post-pandemic.

Whether it's the need for credit recovery at the high school, deficiencies in geometry in the middle school or reading stumbles in elementary, COVID-19 has been hard on education.

We are thankful federal dollars allocated to the School Town of Highland are available to put this program in motion. I have confidence we will be successful.

It's just going to take time.



**Brian Smith**  
Superintendent  
School Town of Highland

### CLASS OF 2021

We are putting out positive vibes for picture-perfect weather for our 267 graduating seniors.

We are on track for an in-person graduation June 6 on the football field with joyous family in the stands. Rain date is June 7. Let me be the first to congratulate the Class of 2021 on this major milestone.

### SPRING THEATER

Stay tuned for details on the revival of Highland Theatre Company's "Into the Woods." Production of the musical that was scrapped last spring is back on track. We have word that some of the seniors who were cast and rehearsing in 2020 will be returning.

### NEW GIRLS COACH

For the last four years, I have watched Darian Straughter grow into a fantastic assistant girls basketball coach in Merrillville. Please join me in welcoming Darian as the new head coach of the Highland girls team. She is a great addition to our coaching staff. I can't wait to see what she'll accomplish with our female athletes next season.



**Congratulations 2021 Highland graduates!**

## NO KID HUNGRY GRANT

The School Town of Highland received more than \$48,000 in grant funding to feed kids during the coronavirus pandemic.

The grant will be used to expand free meal service during the summer months, purchase a refrigerated truck to transport food and launch new programs – such as Second Chance Breakfast and After School Snack – during the 2021-2022 school year.

“This school year looks different than any we’ve seen before, but one thing remains the same: kids rely on us not just for their education, but also for nutritious meals,” Food Service Director Lisa Hayes said. “This grant from No Kid Hungry will help ensure that we can continue to provide our students with the nutrition they need to learn, while also helping our families.”

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## FREE SUMMER MEALS

This year, for the first time, we will be offering free daily summer meals to anyone in our community ages 18 and younger.

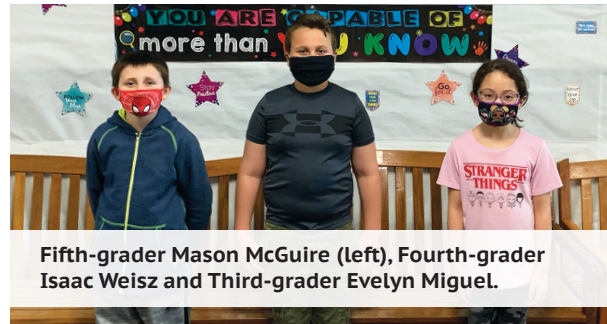
The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is a federally funded program that ensures access to healthy meals when students are not in school. The program is open to any child and is not based on income or need. The middle school program kicks off **June 1**. All other sites begin **June 7**. We will also be teaming up with Highland Community Partners and alternate weekly curbside “Fun Days” at Johnston and Merkle Elementary. Stay tuned!

**INFO:** Distribution sites, dates and times will be posted in June on the website – [highland.k12.in.us](http://highland.k12.in.us) – and in the next newsletter.

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## 10<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL ATHLETICS GOLF OUTING

Save the Date! The 10th Annual Highland Trojans Athletics Golf Outing will be held **June 25** at Wicker Memorial Park. Shotgun start is at 10 a.m. Cost is \$80 per golfer or \$320 per foursome. Registration deadline is **June 16**. **INFO:** Please call the Highland High School Athletic office at (219) 922-5611.



Fifth-grader Mason McGuire (left), Fourth-grader Isaac Weisz and Third-grader Evelyn Miguel.

## MERKLEY WEB DESIGN CONTEST

When Technical Resource Assistant Lucas Maciejewski saw how eagerly his Merkle Elementary students played games online and searched the internet that someone else built, he created a contest, sparking interest for them to build their own.

Cooperation from Education Director Nora Kasprzycki and her tech team meant adding an HTML editor application to all Merkle iPads and a new world opened to students who were able to write computer code and see what it would look like in real time.

Congratulations to Merkle Web Design Contest winners Fifth-grader Mason McGuire, Fourth-grader Isaac Weisz and Third-grader Evelyn Miguel, who each won an Amazon Echo Dot smart speaker.

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## SUMMER REMEDIATION

American Recovery Act funds and willing educators are giving students in grades K-5 the opportunity to put COVID learning gaps behind them. Enrollment will be determined by principal and teacher recommendations. Space will be limited in order to maintain a 1:10 teacher to student ratio.

Curriculum Director Ryan Erdelac said plans for an expanded summer remediation program is designed to help children who fell behind during the pandemic to augment their skills to grade level – and beyond.

“Students have suffered disparities in learning through no fault of their own,” Erdelac said. “We are preparing an 18- to 20-day curriculum that clicks with students and rebuilds their confidence.”