



TROJAN TODAY

YOUR SCHOOL TOWN OF HIGHLAND SOURCE FOR NEWS AND EVENTS | DECEMBER 2022 - JANUARY 2023

VAPING & ADDICTION

Students learn about physiological impact addiction has on the brain and how to get help

A few months after the high school banned cell phones in the classroom, the middle and high schools scheduled convocations to provide information and tools to help students know they are not alone when it comes to escape issues, such as vaping, drugs, alcohol, food, screen time and gaming.

High School Principal John Zack said it's all part of a holistic plan to assist students in making smart choices and getting tools too help when the need arises.

"We know students as young as the middle school can be faced with making life-changing choices without the tools that are required to say "no" to dangerous behaviors they may use to escape

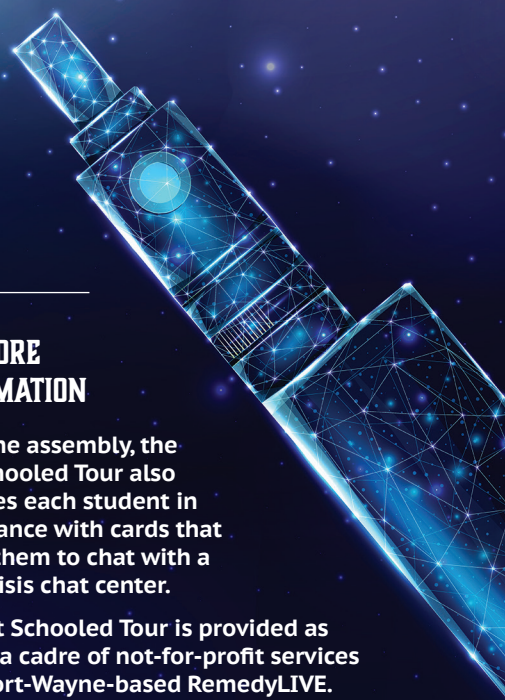
problems they can't solve on their own," Zack said.

The Get Schooled Tour tackles tough topics, such as:

- Secret struggles
- Depression/mental health
- System of care and how to get help when struggling
- How to "friend up" and help a friend get care
- How too much screen time effects our brains

"We were so excited to have a knowledgeable group come in and speak 'real talk' to our students," Zack said.

"Hearing this message from people other than their teachers and parents is so influential and critical to understanding that the dangers are real."



FOR MORE INFORMATION

After the assembly, the Get Schooled Tour also provides each student in attendance with cards that invite them to chat with a 24/7 crisis chat center.

The Get Schooled Tour is provided as part of a cadre of not-for-profit services from Fort-Wayne-based RemedyLIVE.

Learn more at getschooledtour.com or lookupindiana.org/worth-the-effort.

Warren Elementary students collect nearly \$2,000 in donations for food bank

When they heard more local families would be struggling this Thanksgiving, Warren Elementary Student Council members took the message to heart, implementing a food drive that collected 1,537 canned goods in just five days.

Student Council Sponsor Rachael Hornyak, who does double-duty as the school librarian, said the nearly \$2,000 in food donations that will feed about 525 families was donated to the

Northwest Indiana Food Bank.

Lindsey Rosing's third grade class was treated to ice cream from a private donor in thanks for bringing in the greatest amount of donations.

"The real heroes in this event were the students," Hornyak said. "Council members helped collect, sort and box the items. It was heartening to see how supportive our students and Warren family are."



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SCHOOL BOARD

Robert Kuva, President

Victor A. Garcia, Vice President

Patrick Krull, Secretary

Luanne Jurczak, member

Allencia Ballard, member

The school board meets the third Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. in the Administration Building, 9145 Kennedy Avenue, Highland.

INFO: Visit highland.k12.in.us for the latest information, including meeting agendas, school policies, board mission, beliefs and values.

Highland High School's Ryan Harrington named Athletic Director of the Year 2 years in a row

Highland High School Athletic Director Ryan Harrington has been named Indiana District 1 Athletic Director of the Year by his Indiana Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association peers.

This is the second time in as many years Harrington, who joined HHS athletics in 2015, has been lauded by colleagues for his work to enhance high school sports and encourage athletes to balance their academic, athletic and personal lives.

"Ryan always puts the safety and well-being of kids first. During COVID, he was one of the first to update emergency action plans and protocols," HHS athletic trainer Patrick Ohazer said. "At the same time, he works with students to help them realize their athletic potential."

In Indiana District 1, which is made up of 13 Northwest Indiana counties including: Benton, Carroll, Cass, Fulton, Jasper, Lake, LaPorte, Newton, Porter, Pulaski, Starke, Tippecanoe and White, Athletic Department Secretary Kathy Mahler said her boss is a standout.

"Prep athletics never gets old for Ryan," Mahler said. "He loves it all – football Fri-



days, basketball, volleyball, golf, tennis and the rest of the high school sports line-up.

"He is always looking for opportunities to improve facilities. Students and coaches know he has their backs. It's all about the love of the game and the positive impact of athletics on these students' lives."

LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

"Grateful for the extraordinary staff, parents and community that is invested in the education of all our Highland children"

Reflecting on the year that was 2022, what comes to mind first and last is thankfulness. I am grateful for the extraordinary efforts of a great staff, parents and a fantastic community that is invested in the education of Highland children whether they have students in the school or not.

PERFORMING ARTS ...

I want to commend our performing arts students for another memorable performance. This time it was: A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum. Without bringing these incredible musicals back to the local stage, the creative genius of icons like Stephen Sondheim would be lost to generations of students and their parents. It is impossible to measure the impact performance art has had on the career choices of students right here in Highland.

NEW FACES ...

Congratulations to Erica Smith-Gomez, who will join the School Board in January 2023 as a first-time board member. She will join returning board members Bob Kuva and Victor Garcia as the School Board creates plans that will advance education for all of our students and staff.

I want to also congratulate the most recent recipients of Highland Education Foundation grants. It is the largest cohort of educators to receive funds to advance innovative educational projects at their respective schools that will come to fruition in 2023.



Brian Smith
Superintendent
School Town of Highland

Highland Education Foundation awards \$11,530 in teacher grants

The newest round of Highland Education Foundation grants includes 14 extraordinary projects that address the needs of students – from sensory tool kits and a Lego wall to decodable readers and PLTW activities.

Each application identifies a gap in education the projects will fill.

Special Education Teacher Erin Torres said the sensory tool kits will be a godsend to Johnston Elementary students who have difficulty receiving and responding to information in traditional ways. The tools in the kit are intended to promote regulation, improve focus and increase participation.

HHS Project Lead the Way Teacher Dylan Marich will be using his grant to purchase a large-scale

CNC router that will be available for students working on a myriad of school-based projects, including larger-scale houses, display signs, more intricate designs for theatre sets and more.

Superintendent Brian Smith, who also serves on the HEF board, said he is excited to see the newest projects take shape.

“In just five years, we have watched the grant program grow beyond our wildest expectations – 68 grants totaling \$39,000 – thanks to the creativity and drive of our teachers and the generosity of the community,” he said.

“Without their gifts to the children of Highland, we would never have been able to afford any of these programs,” Smith said.

TRIVIA NIGHT

Join the Highland Education Foundation for a night of trivia, silent auction, raffles – and fun for a great cause! All proceeds go to innovative educational teacher grants – like these – to enhance learning and achievement.

WHEN: Saturday, February 25 – Doors open at 6 p.m. Trivia starts at 7 p.m.

WHERE: Lincoln Center Banquet Hall

TICKETS: \$280 for teams of eight or just \$35 per person.

RSVP: highlandedufdn@gmail.com

DONATIONS: We are seeking sponsorships as well as silent auction and raffle items. If you would like to support Highland teachers and students, please consider donating. Please call (219) 741-5014 today!

2022 GRANT RECIPIENTS

CAROLYN ANDERSON

5th Grade Teacher
Southridge Elementary
Chasing Vermeer Series: \$365

CHRISTINA DAVIS

Principal
Warren Elementary
One Book, One School: \$2,000

KELLY GEFPERT

3rd Grade Teacher
Merkley Elementary
PLTW Activities: \$450

JENNIFER HUNT

Kindergarten Teacher
Johnston Elementary
Decodable Readers: \$450

LISA KELLY

Kindergarten Teacher
Johnston Elementary
Diversity Stories: \$430

DYLAN MARICH

PLTW Teacher
Highland High School
CNC Router: \$1,835

CARRIE PASKO

Kindergarten Teacher
Southridge Elementary
Chair Pockets: \$400

DONNA POLITES

3rd Grade Teacher
Johnston Elementary
Portable Lap Desks and Storage: \$800

BECKY RAYCROFT

3rd Grade Teacher
Southridge Elementary
Lego Wall: \$1,050

SUZANNE RODRIGUEZ

5th Grade Teacher
Merkley Elementary
Seat Storage and Math Games: \$500

ALI ROSS

5th Grade Teacher
Merkley Elementary
Novels and Teaching Easel: \$460

CHERYL ROTHMAN

4th Grade Teacher
Johnston Elementary
Classroom Transformation: \$700

ERIN TORRES

Special Education Teacher
Johnston Elementary
Sensory Tool Kits: \$1,500

JULIE WHITNEY

K-5 Teacher
Southridge Elementary
Block Programming: \$590





TUTORING

After-school programs expanding to accommodate more students

Peer tutoring

Research shows peer-tutoring leads to an increase in academic performance, school attendance, socialization, self-esteem and attitude toward school for all involved. At HHS, Principal John Zack said it is working. "We began with students involved in National Honor Society and Key Club, working to stretch the opportunities for students in need of assistance and those able to provide a leg-up to their fellow students," Zack said. "After Thanksgiving, we added teachers to the program. We want to ensure that students are taking advantage of the opportunity for help."

INFO: Free Peer Tutoring is available in the high school library during advisory period and from 3-4 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays. No appointment is necessary.

Tutoring with Teachers

Added bonus: Teachers also participating with the tutoring program after school on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

INFO: Please see the "Tutoring with Teachers" button on our website for more information on days and times.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS & DELAYS

The School Town of Highland prepares for closing early when bad weather is expected. We try to make informed decisions as quickly as possible – 6 a.m. is decision-making time unless the conditions drastically change. Neighbors can help keep children safe by shoveling walks and putting down salt.

DELAYED START

In order for roads, sidewalks and weather conditions to improve and become safe for travel, the School Town may delay the start of school by two hours, which impacts the schedule as follows:

- Bus routes run two hours later.
- Elementary classes start at 9:50 a.m. instead of 7:50 a.m.
- Middle school students report to first hour at 10:25 a.m. instead of 8:25 a.m.
- High school students report to first hour at 9:30 a.m. instead of 7:30 a.m.

Please note: All students may arrive 30 minutes earlier at their respective schools for breakfast.

NOTIFICATIONS

The School Town of Highland always posts closings and delays on its home page at **highland.k12.in.us**. Please refresh your web browser each time you check!

Families will also be notified through our Thrillshare messaging system. Be sure we have up-to-date emails and phone numbers to receive these important messages. You may also check:

- **emergencyclosingcenter.com**
- **Radio:** WJOB 1230 AM, WAKE 1500 AM, INDIANA 105.5 FM and WZVN 107.1 FM.
- **Television:** Channels 2, 5, 7, 9, FOX and CLTV