



TROJAN TODAY

YOUR SCHOOL TOWN OF HIGHLAND SOURCE FOR NEWS AND EVENTS | APRIL-MAY 2023

YOUR VOICE. YOUR VOTE.

“WHAT’S GOOD FOR OUR SCHOOLS
IS GOOD FOR OUR COMMUNITY”

School Board President Victor Garcia acknowledges there is a strong connection between home values and quality schools.

It’s one of the points he makes when talking to groups about the many positives of the town’s first-ever referendum for increasing funding to schools.

“It has been shown that quality schools are a big positive when it comes to maintaining and growing home values,” he said. “What’s good for our schools is good for our community.”

The strength of Highland schools has been credited with stability in the local housing market and the increasing price for established homes in Highland.

Decades of research by elite institutions, such as Duke

University and the Brookings Institute back up the assertion.

Couples with young children and those looking to start families place a high priority on school quality and even the home’s proximity to a neighborhood school.

Closer to home, Garcia said he and his wife are examples of a couple who chose Highland for their family in large part because of the quality of the schools.

“We had heard great things about the Highland schools. We checked it out and found it was all true,” he said. “We are asking our neighbors and friends to invest a few more dollars a week to increase funding for our kids. It’s good for them and it’s good for the community.”



YOUR VOTE MATTERS.

On May 2, residents residing within the School Town of Highland will have the opportunity to invest in our schools, students and community. If supported, the estimated \$4.7 million in annual revenue raised by the referendum will be used to retain and attract quality educators, bolster educational programming as well as enhance safety and security.

LEARN MORE

Early voting continues through May 1. Absentee ballots are due April 20. Visit indianavoters.in.gov to find your voting location and voting hours. Learn more about the referendum at highland.k12.in.us/page/referendum.

Trivia Night raises record \$12,500 for teacher grant program

It’s impossible to know which team had more fun at Highland Education Foundation’s annual Trivia Night. The undisputed winner: Teachers who will receive education grants thanks to the generosity of those who participated in the event.

Johnston Elementary Principal Amy Harrington, said there were more trivia teams

than ever before, filling the banquet room at Lincoln Community Center.

“We had an amazing turnout of participants, sponsors and donations,” said Harrington, who serves on the Highland Education Foundation Board. “This has truly become a much-anticipated community event and we are grateful.”

Superintendent Brian Smith said the record-setting fundraiser will go a long way toward paying for innovative ideas that enhance the education of our students.

“We haven’t seen a project proposal that isn’t worthy of consideration,” Smith said. “This year the board will have more options when it comes to funding them.”

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SCHOOL BOARD

Victor A. Garcia, President
Patrick Krull, Vice President
Allencia Ballard, Secretary
Robert Kuva, member
Erica Smith-Gomez, 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.

MUSIC IN OUR SCHOOLS



GREEN DAY: A week celebrating Music in Our Schools was capped off this year at Warren Elementary with a special performance by local musician Mike Green, who also happens to be the husband of Kindergarten Teacher Anne Green on the traditional day of wearing the green – St. Patrick's Day. Music Teacher Aline Berdine organized the themed dress-up week featuring soul, country and everything in between. Music in Our Schools, now in its 38th year, was created by the National Association for Music Education to raise awareness of the value of music in our schools. "Every person on the planet needs music and its indescribable power to instill meaning in our lives," NAFME President Scott Sheehan said. "Thank you to everyone who believes music is an essential component of every child's education and advocates for equitable access for music education in schools." [photo provided]

LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

"Passing the referendum will help our programs – performing arts, boys-girls bowling, cheer – thrive"

We have been talking about the need to increase funding beyond what the state provides for the last several years. We have cut everywhere we could while still maintaining the great education Highland residents have come to expect. Our best, last hope is to pass the first-ever referendum for education. This referendum will determine the future for the kids who attend our schools today and those who will follow.

THE BEST OF ACADEMICS

Whether it's our STEM curriculum, choir or cheer; what we offer our students helps them find their way for what's next in their lives. When asked, most adults say they found their way to their passion – and a career path – by the time they graduated high school. It is our job and our privilege to provide a curriculum that combines the best of academics with art, music, athletics and more. We need your support.

THE NEED FOR FUNDING

For the last several months, I have been meeting with the community to explain why we need the referendum to pass.

I want to thank every person who has come to a meeting or been in contact with us at the schools to talk about our need for additional funding.

Many arrived in favor of the referendum. Some were opposed when they arrived, but left in agreement the schools need additional funding to afford necessities, such as expanded academic programs, teacher and support-staff salaries and security.

If you have questions, please call me at (219) 924-7400. My door is always open.



Brian Smith
Superintendent
School Town of Highland

CHEER TEAM WINS TWO NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS



In their first competition of the year, the HHS Cheer Team came home with a double win in the national competition in South Bend. First-year Head Coach Angel Blankenship was proud of what the 16 girls were able to accomplish. "These girls work hard every practice and were incredible at the competition," Blankenship said. "For three of our girls, this was the first time they had ever competed." After bringing home the Grand Champion Award and Overall Grand Champion of their high school division, Blankenship is already looking forward to the team competing in Wisconsin April 21-23. [photo provided]

BOWLING TEAMS TAKE STATE



Highland brought home a pair of big wins from the Indiana High School Bowling – 2023 IHSB Post Season Tournament. For the first time in the history of the event, both the boys and girls teams from the same school were named state champions in the same year. "They were phenomenal," Superintendent Brian Smith said. "We are excited and happy for these incredible bowlers and their families." [photo provided]

UPCOMING EVENTS

BEAUTY & THE BEAST

"Beauty and the Beast" is the fantastic journey of Belle, a bright, young woman who is taken prisoner by a beast in his castle. Despite her fears, she learns to look beyond the Beast's hideous exterior and realize the kind heart and soul of the true prince within.

WHEN: 7 p.m. **May 5-6**
and 2 p.m. **May 7**

WHERE: HHS Monbeck Auditorium, 9135 Erie St.

TICKETS: Available online at HighlandTheatreCompany.org or at the box office before show.

BELLE'S ENCHANTED TEA

Children age 3 and older are invited to Belle's Enchanted Princess Tea featuring some of your very favorite princesses. Boys are welcome!

WHEN: 1 p.m. Saturday, **May 6**

WHERE: HHS Cafe, 9135 Erie St.

TICKETS: \$30 child, \$10 parent. Reserve online at hpabi.org.

SPRING CONCERTS

Join us as we celebrate spring with free performances from our choir and musical ensembles.

Southridge Spring Choral:
6:30 p.m. **May 9**

Middle School Spring Choral:
6:30 p.m. **May 10**

High School Spring Choral:
6:30 p.m. **May 11**

Merkley Spring Choral:
6:30 p.m. **May 16**

MS/HS Orchestra Concert:
6:30 p.m. **May 17**

MS/HS Band Concert:
6:30 p.m. **May 18**

WHERE: HHS Monbeck Auditorium, 9135 Erie St.



Orchestra has changed my life. It helps you build friendships and confidence. I love to challenge myself with new music. My favorite part is experiencing new techniques.”

– Maricela, beginning orchestra



HITTING ALL THE RIGHT NOTES!

ENROLLMENT OPEN FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND, CHOIR, ORCHESTRA



“Coming into choir at the end of the (school) day is such a mood lifter.”

– Addison, 6th grade choir

Highland Middle School invites students to join its award-winning band, choir and orchestra programs.

“Making music has numerous benefits for students, including improved cognitive development, increased creativity, and enhanced social skills,” Director of Orchestras Benjamin Leonard-White said. “Our program offers personalized instruction and a welcoming community where students of all skill levels can thrive.”

Gracyn, a beginning band student, loves to create music. “I can actually play the songs that I like instead of just listening to them.”

INTERESTED? Visit JoinBCO.com to learn more about our programs. Want to try out an instrument and meet our directors? Simply register online for a 15-minute band or orchestra time slot from 4-7 p.m. April 19-20 at Highland Middle School.



“Performing with my classmates ... is really fun. It’s super rewarding after a concert to know that I learned music and played it in front of an audience.”

– Elle, beginning violist