



# THE RED & WHITE

OCTOBER 2019



## Vicksburg Sport Teams Off to a Great Start

Plenty of students, parents and fans turned out for Vicksburg's football game against Edwardsburg. Rocket football participants were honored along with the rocket cheerleaders. The eighth-grade band members were included in the opening ceremonies. Vicksburg won its first three football games while dropping into the loss column against Edwardsburg.

The tennis team is winning and the soccer team is showing lots of improvement. Cross country for girls is particularly strong with several big wins while the boys have placed well in each meet. Volleyball is setting up for success as the season moves toward district contests.

The Big Red Machine marching band will host its 4<sup>th</sup> annual band Invitational on Saturday, October 5.

The fall is off to a great start for Vicksburg Community Schools students and families.



# New Staff at Vicksburg High School



Jennifer Teall on the left and Emily Chalut on the right.

## Brendan McCaw

Teaching U.S History and AP U.S History, Brendan McCaw is excited to return to the academics of a high school classroom. Brendan has an extensive education background, receiving his undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan and his master's in education from Aquinas College. He taught at Mendon and Hackett High Schools and comes to VHS after three years at the Vicksburg Middle School. Brendan has also assumed the role of Model United Nations Advisor and Freshman Class Advisor. Brendan is interested in family history and genealogy, and he and his family enjoy summers at their cottage on Beaver Island. Brendan appreciates his students and the welcoming environment of the district.

## Adam Wallace

As Adam Wallace joins the Seminar Support Staff, he looks forward to helping students better their academic success. A 2014 graduate of VHS, Adam earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Western Michigan University with a major in Organizational Communication and a minor in Psychology: Behavioral Analysis. A skilled pianist, Adam enjoys music, theatre, television, video games, sports, and board games. Adam is pleased with his interactions with staff and students and looks forward to the year ahead.

## Mike George

After working nineteen years at Vicksburg Middle School as a math teacher, Mike George joins VHS as the Advanced Placement Coordinator and Math Lab Interventionist. Mike graduated from St. Johns High School in 1986 and

Alma College in 1990 with majors in Math and Business. He completed his Masters of Education in 1991. Mike has many interests, including SCUBA diving, which he has been teaching for five years. He also enjoys running, biking, reading, and spending time outdoors. Mike has been married for twenty-nine years and has two children, one a senior in college and the other in his third year of graduate school. According to Mike, Vicksburg has been a great place to work, and he is happy for the opportunity to work with high school students.

## Bethany Dolezal

A native of Nebraska, Bethany Dolezal has assumed the role of athletic trainer at Vicksburg High School. Bethany graduated from the University of Nebraska-Kearney in 2019 with a BS in Athletic Training. She is currently pursuing her master's degree in Advanced Athletic Training at Western Michigan University. She is volunteering extensively as a student athletic training and currently stays active by hiking, playing in sport leagues and tournaments, and working out. Bethany loves watching Husker Football and Volleyball as well as supporting her favorite hockey team back home, the Tri-City Storm. Bethany is excited to work at VHS and appreciates the welcoming attitudes of staff and students.

## Lorrie Jancarz

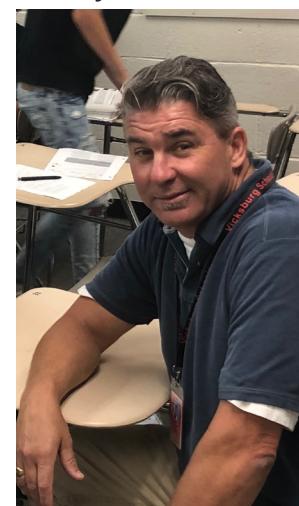
Always up for something new, Lorrie will work this year as the Teaching Assistant in Computerized Manufacturing and Mechatronics. Married nearly forty years, Lorrie and her husband Ken have one daughter Bridget



Bethany Dolezal.



Lorrie Jancarz.



Brendan McCaw.



Adam Wallace.



Mike George.

and a son-in-law, Ben. Lorrie graduated from Loy Norrix High School and attended Western Michigan University, earning a B.S. in Business Education, General Business, and Vocational Education. She enjoys gardening, landscaping, and travel, and Lorrie is a Disney enthusiast. Lorrie's students are her top priority and states, "If I can help them be successful, I have done what an educator should do." Lorrie looks forward to the year ahead and helping prepare her students for the future.

## Nina Ledford

Nina joins the VHS staff as a Math Lab Paraprofessional. Married for twenty years, Nina and her husband have two children. Nina has a degree in Early Childhood Education from Saint Petersburg, Russia and an Associate of Arts in Secondary Education from Kalamazoo Valley Community College. (Her plans include pursuing a bachelor's degree in education.) She has worked as a paraprofessional at Riverside Elementary School in Battle Creek and Vicksburg Middle School. Nina enjoys gardening, music, playing piano, reading, and spending time with family and friends. Nina loves her job and is happy to be a part of the VHS team.

## Jennifer Teall

This fall, Jennifer Teall assumes a new role: Instructional Coach for VHS. Jennifer previously taught French at VHS for nineteen years. She earned her undergraduate degree from WMU in History, French, and Social Studies. She later earned her Master's Degree in Educational Leadership, also from WMU. Jennifer and her

husband Eric live in Portage, and they have two children. In her free time, Jennifer enjoys reading, traveling, cooking, walking, and biking. In talking about the year ahead, she expresses excitement but also shares she is adjusting to not being in a classroom and seeing her students daily.

## Emily Chalut

The French Class at VHS has a new face: teacher, Emily Chalut. She is a graduate of Miami of Ohio with degrees in history and French. Emily continued her education at DePaul where she earned her Master of Education degree. Previously employed at St. Patrick High School in Chicago, Emily enjoys skiing, the Irish Fiddle, running, playing golf, and riding horses. Emily is married to Erik and they have three children. Emily is excited to be at VHS, and she appreciates all the support from her coach and the World Language Department.

## Sheri Ritchie

Meet special education paraprofessional, Sheri Ritchie. She enters VHS with an interesting background, having worked in the non-profit world for many years and was employed as an instructor at KVCC and WMU. Sheri graduated from Gull Lake High School, earned a degree in Political Science from WMU, where she later completed her Master's Degree in International Relations. Sheri loves to travel, read, and garden. She also enjoys meeting people and continuing to learn. Sheri is impressed with the dedication the teachers and staff have for students.

# Vicksburg Middle School Welcomes New Faces



*Front row, left to right: Jill Blanchett, Renae Cummings, Kristina Spanding, Laura Wilson, Jillian Roth. Back row, left to right: Phil Timko, Jennifer Lyle, Jared Meyer, Jeff Heisler, and Josh Noble. Not Pictured: Emily Chalut and Christy Campbell.*

Vicksburg Middle School welcomes a number of new faces this year to its staff! If you are in the building or around town and happen to run into one of these new staff members, be sure to introduce yourself and welcome them to the community.

## Jennifer Lyle

Mrs. Lyle is the new Math/Reading Intervention teacher at VMS. She comes to us from Niles, where she taught 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Ballard Elementary School. She grew up in Plainwell, so being back in the area feels like coming home for her. She has two children, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader and a 5<sup>th</sup> grader, and her husband is a pastor. She enjoys reading, traveling, and watching high school and college football. Mrs. Lyle is most excited to be focusing on her two favorite subjects all day—math and reading! As a graduate of CMU, being in Bronco country is really hard for Mrs. Lyle who says, “Fire up, Chips!” all day long. Welcome, Mrs. Lyle!

## Josh Noble

Mr. Noble is the new 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies teacher. He graduated from Vicksburg in 2004 and is excited to be back in the area. Previously, he taught middle school History in Columbia, South Carolina for six years before moving to Haiti to teach in the 2017-2018 school year. Last year, he taught at Howell High School in Howell, Michigan. This winter he will be leading the Boys’ Basketball program for VCS and he is really looking forward to that opportunity. Welcome, Mr. Noble!

## Jared Meyer

Mr. Meyer will be teaching 7<sup>th</sup> grade Math and joins us after relocating here from the Ann Arbor area. He is not a newbie with middle schoolers, having

taught Social Studies and Math previously in Atlanta for two years, and in Ann Arbor for the past six years. He is also the 7<sup>th</sup> grade football coach at VMS. He is excited to join the Vicksburg community as a teacher, coach, and volunteer. Mr. Meyer is enjoying Southwest Michigan and welcomes the change from the busy chaos and traffic of Southeast Michigan. He enjoys spending time with his family, grilling out, and playing a lot of golf. Welcome, Mr. Meyer!

## Kristina Spanding

Mrs. Spanding joins VMS in the Special Education department. Her first teaching experience was at Paramount Charter Academy where she taught for two years before moving to Northeast Middle School in Comstock where she taught for the last four years. She is thrilled to be at VMS because she lives in Vicksburg and is excited to be part of the community. Her son is also a student at VCS and she is looking forward to being on the same schedule as him. She likes to consider herself an outdoorsy person that is horrible at outdoorsy stuff. After graduating from MSU, she moved to Colorado and played in the mountains for two years. She moved back to Michigan to be with her now husband. Together they like to go to Lake Michigan, find new restaurants, and visit farmers’ markets in the summer and fall. She is scared of heights but has been skydiving three times! Welcome, Mrs. Spanding!

## Jillian Roth

Ms. Roth is new to the Special Education department at VMS. She taught at Lakeshore High School for three years. She is looking forward to getting to know the students and staff of Vicksburg and seeing the growth and development of the students. Ms.

Roth is a Spartan! She earned both her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from MSU. In her free time, she likes kayaking, baking, watching football and basketball, and bowling. Welcome, Ms. Roth!

## Jeff Heisler

Mr. Heisler joins the Special Education department this year at VMS. Previously he taught at Starr Commonwealth and Lakeside Academy. He is a history buff and enjoys writing. He is a published writer and you can read his work in Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul IV. He is excited to be working with a dedicated and supportive staff to help the students at VMS excel. Welcome, Mr. Heisler!

## Laura Wilson

Mrs. Wilson joins the VMS staff as a 7<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher. She is a familiar face in the district having taught since 2003 at Sunset Lake Elementary and also having served as an Instructional Coach for VCS as well. She is excited to connect with her students and get to know them on a personal level. She loves reading, spending time with her family, exercising, and attending her kids’ sporting events. Welcome, Mrs. Wilson!

## Emily Chalut

Mrs. Chalut is the new French teacher at VMS. She is from the Chicago area where she taught French at St. Patrick High School.

After being away from teaching for 13 years to raise her children, Mrs. Chalut is excited to join VCS. She has been really impressed with the support from her instructional coach, Mrs. Jennifer Teall, and her World Language department. She is looking forward to working with the students at VMS. She has three children, ages 14, 11, and 6, and enjoys running, playing Irish music, and doing ski yoga. Welcome,

Mrs. Chalut!

## Jill Blanchett

Mrs. Blanchett is joining VMS as a lunchtime supervisor. After retiring from Stryker, she is excited to be working part time with some pretty great people at VMS. She also is a demonstrator for Stampin’ Up! and loves sharing her love of papercrafting. Welcome, Mrs. Blanchett!

## Christy Campbell

Mrs. Campbell is joining VMS as a paraprofessional. She has previously worked for Albion and Battle Creek Public Schools, and as a mortgage lender. She is very excited to be back in education, especially working with students in interventions. She loves to read, take walks, and spend time with her family. Welcome, Mrs. Campbell!

## Renae Cummings

Mrs. Cummings is not a new face to Vicksburg. After working primarily as a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Indian Lake Elementary, she comes to VMS as an intervention paraprofessional. She is excited about sharing her love of Math and Reading with the students at VMS. In addition to teaching and learning, she loves spending time with family and friends, camping, kayaking/boating, cycling, dancing and “the Arts”. Welcome, Mrs. Cummings!

## Phil Timko

Mr. Timko is the new 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Math teacher at VMS. He has previously taught Math at Hillside Middle School and has worked at our own Vicksburg High School too. He is excited to make a difference at VMS this year. He considers himself to be an outdoorsy person—he enjoys climbing, cycling, and playing disc golf. Welcome, Mr. Timko!

# Meet the New Staff at Sunset Lake Elementary



From left to right: Laura Richardson, Morgan Ryskamp, Maddie Haskell, Jessica Quist, Melissa Collins, Rachelle Caswell.

Sunset would like to let our new staff introduce themselves.....

## Laura Richardson

My name is Mrs. Richardson and I will be teaching fifth grade at Sunset Lake Elementary this year! Although I am coming to Sunset Lake Elementary from the middle school, this will be my sixth year teaching fifth grade. I graduated from Central Michigan University with endorsements in Language Arts, Math, and Physical Education. I love to teach and can't wait to share my math knowledge with all the fifth graders at Sunset and help prepare them to be successful as they begin to transition to the middle school! I grew up on the east side of Michigan and my family and I spent some time in the Chicago suburbs before making the move back to Michigan to be closer to our family. My husband and I have two children and love to spend our free time participating in all sorts of water and sports activities.

## Morgan Ryskamp

My name is Morgan Ryskamp. This is my fifth year teaching. I previously taught 2nd grade in Sturgis for four years. I graduated from Grand Valley State University with a degree in Integrated Science and Elementary Education. Currently, I am working on my masters in Special Education at Spring Arbor University. I have been married to my husband, Dan, for four years. We have a three year old dog named Nala. In my free time I love to take my dog for hikes and watch Michigan Football! I am excited to be a part of Vicksburg Community Schools this school year!

## Jessica Quist

My name is Mrs. Quist! I attended Grand Valley State University with a major/minor in Language Arts and Elementary Education several years ago. I am originally from the Grand Rapids area, but lived in Houston, Texas the last three years. I've taught in both Michigan and Texas for the past four years. I am excited to be

teaching 3rd grade here at Sunset Lake! My husband and I have a 6 month old, Jonas, and we are loving every minute of this new chapter of parenthood. In my spare time, I enjoy reading, running, Michigan football, camping, art, music, and good food!

## Rachelle Caswell

My name is Rachelle Caswell. I have been Married to Cody for 14 years, we have four wonderful children Caiden-10, Renna-9, Ryker-7, and Calla-4. I enjoy watching my kids play sports, crafting, being outdoors, and spending time with my family. I was a stay at home mom for 10 years where I gained lots of knowledge, patience and experience with young kids. Super happy to be back in the workforce touching lives!

## Melissa Collins

My name is Melissa Collins and I teach BK this year at Sunset Lake Elementary. I am from a small town on the east side called Richmond. I went to Western

Michigan University and got my degree in Elementary Education. Although, it is my first year teaching I did my internship in second grade, worked as a literacy interventionist and was a long term sub for first grade at Sunset. In my free time I like to spend time with my friends, family and my dog. I also like to spend time outdoors running or biking.

## Maddie Haskell

My name is Maddie Haskell and I am the new kindergarten teacher at Sunset Lake. I graduated from Western Michigan University in 2013 and taught in Arizona for 4 years. I moved back to Kalamazoo to teach Young Fives in 2017. Now, I'm a Vicksburg Bulldog! In my spare time I love going to football games, hiking, reading, and traveling! I love my two dogs, Fisher and Penny Sue. In October, I will graduate with my Master's degree in Special Education. I look forward to this amazing year with my amazing students!

# Four New Staffers at Indian Lake Elementary



*Back Row, left to right: Erin Courtney & Susan Frisbie. Front row, left to right: Margaret Hale-Smith & Nikki Gerber.*

## Margaret Hale-Smith

Margaret Hale-Smith joins the Indian Lake Elementary staff as a Reading Interventionist. She has 3 degrees from Michigan State University, including a Masters degree in Counseling and a Doctorate in Higher Education. She has been a director, dean, and vice president at several colleges and universities.

When asked why she applied for the Reading Interventionist position, Margaret responded, "I believe the philosophy that education is "all one system." After retirement, I began to sub at local elementary schools. There I learned the importance and impact of reading achievement at the third grade level. Research led me to the program spon-

sored by Michigan Education Corps. I wanted to make a personal effort to assist our children so I applied to become a reading interventionist. That was one of the best decisions ever because it brought me to Indian Lake."

Margaret has one adult son who is her pride & joy. In her spare time, Margaret enjoys taking photos of nature with birds and butterflies being her favorites.

## Susan Frisbie

Susan Frisbie joins the Indian Lake Elementary staff as a BK Parapro. She is a graduate of Vicksburg High School and worked in research for 15 years before deciding to stay home with her now adult sons, Chance & Keegan. Over the years, she

has volunteered in numerous capacities throughout the Vicksburg school district including classroom aide, field days/field trip chaperone, one on one tutoring, athletic boosters, special ed at the high school and sports physcials for the middle & high school.

When asked why she applied for the BK Parapro position, Susan replied, "Education has always been a #1 priority in our household. It's necessary for preparing children for the future. They should learn the tools at an early age to become life-long learners." She is hoping to help instill this concept into the minds of the young BK students. Susan and her husband, Tim, have been married for 25+ years and enjoy

boating, swimming, family game night and visiting their cottage in Wisconsin. In her spare time, Susan enjoys gardening, cooking and spending time with family and friends.

## Erin Courtney

Erin Courtney joins the Indian Lake Elementary staff as a Lunchroom/Recess Supervisor. After being a stay-at-home mom for the past 10 years, her love for children and for Indian Lake Elementary made the decision easy to return to the workforce. As Erin says, "These kids are the whole reason I decided to take this job. Every day they bring a smile to my face. They are the best!"

Erin is very familiar with the students and staff as she has volunteered in many capacities at Indian Lake since her now twin 12-year-old daughters, Rylie & Kamie, were in Bulldog Beginnings, and her 5-year-old son, Lincoln, just started his journey at Indian Lake as a Kindergartener.

In her spare time, Erin enjoys being outside. Whether she is gardening or taking a walk in the woods, if she's outside, she is happy. She also enjoys reading but with 3 kids, she doesn't always get much time to do it.

## Nikki Gerber

Nikki Gerber joined the Indian Lake Elementary staff as the Computer Support Technician at the end of last school year. She has an Associate's Degree in Office Administration from KVCC and after 10 years working for the City of Portage, she resigned to become a stay-at-home mom. During her 11 years as a stay-at-home mom, Nikki has been active in the community volunteering for several non-profit organizations and also spent the last 7 years as a parent volunteer in many capacities at Tobey Elementary.

While volunteering at Tobey, Nikki noticed some kids needed a little more attention than others. She befriended some of these kids and have developed some wonderful friendships with the families. By accepting the position at Indian Lake, she hopes to do the same.

Nikki and her husband, Vaughn, have been married for 15 years next month and have an 11-year-old daughter, Ashley, who is currently in 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Vicksburg Middle School. In her spare time, Nikki enjoys spending time with family & friends (including her pets), listening to music and attending her daughter's many extracurricular activities.

# The New Team Members at Tobey Elementary



From left to right: Carrie Long, Angie Byrne, Katie Salik, Aaron Willett.

## Carrie Long

Carrie Long comes to Tobey Elementary after many years in education including Physical Education, Kindergarten, 5th grade, and the Great Start Readiness Program. She is teaching Tobey's Bulldog Beginnings class where she hopes to do everything she can that is best for students. In her free time, she runs and spends time with her husband, Steve and her three boys Matthew, Ryan, and Evan.

## Angie Byrne

Angie Byrne has joined the Tobey Staff as a second grade teacher after many years of subbing, volunteering as a parent, and one year running French Club. She also taught second grade in Battle Creek Public Schools for three years. Angie enjoys traveling with her husband Jim and children Hannah (8th), Elli (7th), Issac (5th), and Caleb (3rd), spending time with friends, and speaking French at home.

## Katie Salik

Katie Salik has moved into a new role as a first grade teacher after seven years in the classroom, including three as the Bulldog Beginnings teacher. She previously taught at KRESA and graduated from Western Michigan University. She lives in Portage with her dog Cooper, boyfriend Josh, and loves living close to her mom and sister. Katie also loves to travel and craft.

## Aaron Willett

Aaron Willett is the new Special Education teacher at Tobey Elementary. Aaron and his wife Stephanie are parents to Tobey's newest tigers Mackenzie (1st) and Kara (Kindergarten). He enjoys reading, hiking, and spending time with his family. He hopes to help every student learn academic and social skills that they will use throughout their life.

## Join the Superintendents for a Cup of Coffee!



Kevin O'Neill and Steve Goss will be hosting Coffee with the Superintendents on the following dates from 8:00 – 9:00 a.m. Please stop in for conversation,

to hear about the great things going on within the district, and a chance to ask any questions you may have.

October 4, 2019 at Yogi's Diner

November 8, 2019 at Michelle's Restaurant

December 6, 2019 at Rise-N-Dine

## DOWNTOWN CHICAGO BUS TRIP



**WHEN:** Saturday, **November 2, 2019**  
Leave Sunset Lake Elementary at 7:00 A.M.  
Return to Sunset Lake Elementary around 11:00 P.M.

**WHERE:** Drop off location is by Water Tower Place  
Pick up at corner of State and Superior at 7:00 P.M.  
(Michigan time)

**COST:** \$50 per person (non-refundable)  
Make checks payable to:  
**THE VICKSBURG COMMUNITY SCHOOLS FOUNDATION**  
301 S Kalamazoo St., Vicksburg MI 49097

**CONTACT:** Email Lynne Buell, [lbuell@vicksburgschools.org](mailto:lbuell@vicksburgschools.org) or Beth O'Roark, [boroark@vicksburgschools.org](mailto:boroark@vicksburgschools.org) or call Beth (VCSF OFFICE @ 321-1006) to make your reservation.

Proudly sponsored by the Vicksburg Community Schools Foundation



## Vicksburg Dance and Tumbling Classes



Get ready for a new year of Dance and Tumbling! We'll be offering a variety of classes for the new year and conclude with

a recital in May. Our experienced instructors are ready to teach students new skills in Ballet, Hip Hop, Hawaiian, Gymnastics, Jazz,

and more! Class offerings are listed on the Community Education page of the Vicksburg Community School's website and regis-

tration is open. The next session of classes start on October 21st. Don't miss out on the fun!

## KRESA Millage on the Ballot November 5



Michigan needs more skilled workers for high-demand, high-tech and high-wage jobs. Too many young people are leaving school without the skills that employers desire, and without a plan or hope for the future. Together, we can change the course with a systemic redesign of Career and Technical Education (CTE) in Kalamazoo County.

The Kalamazoo RESA CTE proposal is the next step. On November 5, Kalamazoo County voters will decide on a one-mill, 20-year Career and Technical Education proposal to fund this work.

Learn more about the Kalamazoo RESA CTE proposal online at [kresaCTE.org](http://kresaCTE.org).

