

# MICHIGAN'S TEACHER OF THE YEAR – IS HERE!



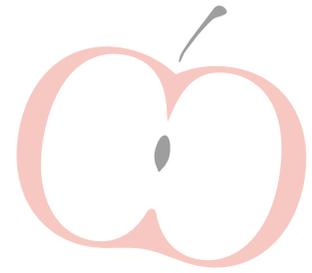
# THE RED AND WHITE

MAY/JUNE 2018

VICKSBURGCMMUNITYSCHOOLS.ORG



## FROM SUPERINTENDENT CHARLES GLAES



### SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

As you are most likely aware, this is my last Superintendent's Corner, as I will be retiring at the end of June after 36 years of service with the District.

As I prepare to wrap things up and hand over the office to my successor, Mr. Keevin O'Neill, my heart is full, not with sadness but with gratitude.

You see, Vicksburg is a special community. It is a place that is small enough to form close, caring relationships but yet large enough to offer the resources and opportunities that people want and need in the larger world. While it holds many Midwestern values of small town life, it also encourages its younger generations to experience the wider world and, more importantly, make a difference in it.

I am so very grateful to have been given many opportunities to serve the families and community of Vicksburg, to spend time with its young people, and to lead and guide a school staff whose members over the years have been passionate about learning for their students and themselves! I am grateful for those who shared and encouraged me in our successes and also supported me in life's more challenging moments. I am grateful that first my children and now my grandchildren have been able to experience the incredible benefits and support that comes to every student who walks our halls. We are blessed indeed.

For over 150 years, Vicksburg has been a place steeped in traditions of excellence. I am grateful that I can pass the torch to the next generation of leadership and assure you that these traditions will continue for the generations to come.

### ABOUT THE FRONT COVER...

On May 18th, The Michigan Department of Education announced that our own Laura Chang of Sunset Lake Elementary was **Michigan Teacher Of The Year!** She was chosen from a field of over 400 nominees statewide through a selective process of interviews over the past several months. A member of the State Board of Education came to Sunset to reveal the selection, surprising Mrs. Chang and the entire Vicksburg school community. The pictures on the cover show Mrs. Chang in her classroom, on a field trip, and during the second grade economic sale. You can read more about this prestigious award and about Mrs. Chang on page 6.

### DUCK DERBY

The Annual Vicksburg Community Schools Foundation Duck Derby will be held on June 9 during the Old Car Festival. The kids' race will start at noon with the adult race to start at 1:00 p.m. The kids' race is a challenge between the three elementary schools with a chance to win prizes and an ice cream party for their school. Raffle Tickets for both races are on sale now. Contact the Foundation office at 321-1006 for more information. Proceeds from this event helps VCSF financially energize the Vicksburg Community Schools to achieve its objectives and needs beyond traditional educational funding.



Get up to date school news anytime at our website [www.vicksburgcommunityschools.org](http://www.vicksburgcommunityschools.org)

Cover: Top middle - Laura Chang (R) with Interim State Superintendent Sheila Alles (L). Photo by Sue Moore.

## VHS HONORS IT'S TOP STUDENTS

Roll out the red carpet! Here come the top seniors of the Vicksburg High School class of 2018. Among the honorees are the best and the brightest of this year's graduates.

At the top of the list is the valedictorian, **Morgan Preston**, earning a GPA of 4.38. At VHS she has been a highly recognized volleyball player, earning all-conference and all-state honors. She plans to attend San Angelo University in Texas next year and continue to play volleyball. Her interests are in English and political science as her college major.

**Autumn Locey** is salutatorian with a 4.30 GPA. She has attended the Kalamazoo Area Math and Science Center (KAMSC) for all four years of high school. She earned a bio-med science award for her research paper on zebra fish embryo. Her plans include studying biology at the University of Michigan with a desire to go into medicine.

**Alexander Smith's** passion is film and video, not surprising when his father is the film and video teacher in the high school. He filled the lead role in this year's production of Tarzan along with being in marching band, choir, and stage management. He has earned Best of Show in the Michigan Student Film competition. Higher education plans have not been decided but he knows he is already committed to his field of film-making.

**Austin Bresnahan** is a three-season athlete for the Bulldogs (football, basketball and baseball). For his football career he is being recognized in the Addix All-Star football game in June, as a linebacker. Kalamazoo College is his school of choice, where he will continue to play football. He plans to major in business and marketing.

**Anna Schriemer** earned several honors, among them is being selected for Principal O'Neill's Leadership award, DAR Good Citizen, science student of the month, and serving on student senate. She is committed to a three-week study abroad to Ghana where her job will be to promote kids' rights in education. When she returns, she plans to attend Calvin College, studying psychology and medical science and playing volleyball.

**Tanner White** serves as the senior class president and president of the National Honor Society. He is an Eagle Scout and organized his troop members to beautify the playground with landscaping and building improvements at Sunset Lake Elementary. He has committed to play football at Kalamazoo College in the fall, while studying communications and Spanish.

**Emmaline Miller** is the current vice president of the National Art Society in Vicksburg and has been a member of the marching band for four years. She is a Girl Scout who has earned her silver award and is committed to community service, accruing 50 hours of volunteer work at the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission. She will attend Grand Valley State University majoring in psychology and minoring in art.

**Rachael Brewer** has been a member of Vicksburg's competitive cheer team and participated in choir during her four years here. She will attend Western Michigan University, studying biomedical sciences and Spanish, and is thinking of going on to medical school.

**Chase Young** holds the recognition of completing 11 AP classes during high school and played lacrosse for all four years, too. He is an entrepreneur who plans to go to the University of Michigan in hopes of attending law school.

**Connor Seifert** is a tennis champion for Vicksburg playing four and two singles. He is an Eagle Scout and has produced a pair of videos to teach students with severe autism. He is considering studying aviation or engineering at either Western Michigan University or Michigan State University.

**Avery Slancik** is a player on the all-state academic team for softball and a four year varsity player. She wants to play varsity softball and major in neuroscience at Hope College.

These are the celebrity seniors of 2018. Congratulations! Thanks for all you have done to make Vicksburg Community Schools great. We can not wait to see what the future holds for these young adults.



From Left to Right Tanner White, Avery Slancik, Rachael Brewer, Connor Seifert, Autumn Locey, Chase Young, Morgan Preston, Anna Schriemer, Emmaline Miller, Alex Smith, Austin Bresnahan

## VMS ROBOTICS TEAM

After a tremendous 3rd place finish last year in the state competition, the VMS Robotics Team continues to thrive under the direction of Kyle DeVries, Eric Hackman, Jason Caster, and Andy Ackerman. The team participated in three competitions this year including one in Marshall, Coloma, and Battle Creek.

The competitions are quite involved and require the team come prepared with a robot designed by the students that can be moved remotely with the ability to complete a variety of tasks, including picking up an idol and stacking blocks. The task required changes each year, thus stretching the programming requirements of the team members. To gain a better understanding of the robotics competitions, you may access an animated explanation at the following link:

<https://www.firstinspires.org/robotics/ftc/game-and-season>. Vicksburg is proud of the ingenuity and creativity shown by these young problem-solvers.



## KAMSC ACCEPTANCE!

After a long and rigorous application and testing process, the Kalamazoo Area Math and Science Center (KAMSC) has selected three eighth-graders to join the school in the fall. Congratulations are in order for the following students:

Grace Romig will spend her freshman year at the prestigious Kalamazoo Area Math and Science Center. She was inspired to apply by her interest in biology and a desire for the fun challenge. Grace hopes her experiences at KAMSC will prepare her for her future plans to go into the medical field. She advises future applicants to “have trust in their own thinking” when completing the testing portion of the application process.

Ben Hambright is excited for the opportunity to go beyond the typical high school experience by attending KAMSC during his freshman year of high school. Ben hopes to study medicine in college and knows KAMSC will give him opportunities to explore different areas of the medical field, helping narrow his focus for a career. Ben also shared how well-prepared he felt to handle the essay portion of the testing for his KAMSC application through his time in English at VMS.

Olivia Cannizzaro was inspired to apply for the opportunity to attend KAMSC because she welcomed an academic challenge and also knew participation in the program would put her in an optimal position for scholarship opportunities. Olivia hopes to study either marine biology or physical therapy once she starts college. Olivia's advice to future KAMSC applicants is to study, turn in assignments, and make a good impression on your teachers as they are the ones who recommend students for participation in the program!



Ben Hambright

Grace Romig

Olivia Cannizzaro

## READY, SET...WALK-A-THON!

Every year at Indian Lake, all students participate in a spring Walk-A-Thon. The Walk-A-Thon is the biggest fundraiser here at Indian Lake. The PTSO proudly sponsors the Walk-A-Thon. It all begins a few weeks beforehand by having a “kick-off” assembly where students are told what the funds raised will go towards and this begins the excitement and the hoopla surrounding the Walk-A-Thon. This year, the funds raised will go toward purchasing new playground equipment to replace the very old structures currently on the playground.

Students gather pledges for a few weeks. Classrooms and different grades have contests to see which room and grade has raised the most money. That classroom and grade are rewarded weekly by having a pajama day at school. On the highly anticipated day of the Walk-A-Thon, each grade level is assigned a specific time slot when it will be their turn to walk. Students have 30 minutes to walk as many laps around the track as they can. During their walk, there is some fun competition going on for sure. After the students have walked many laps, they are offered a Sno-Cone as a treat.

A huge thank you to the PTSO for organizing this successful event every year. Thank you also to the numerous volunteers it takes to run this yearly event. The Walk-A-Thon is a wonderful, positive experience for all involved. What kids learn is that when they give their time and energy and the community gives it's resources, good things will happen for everyone!

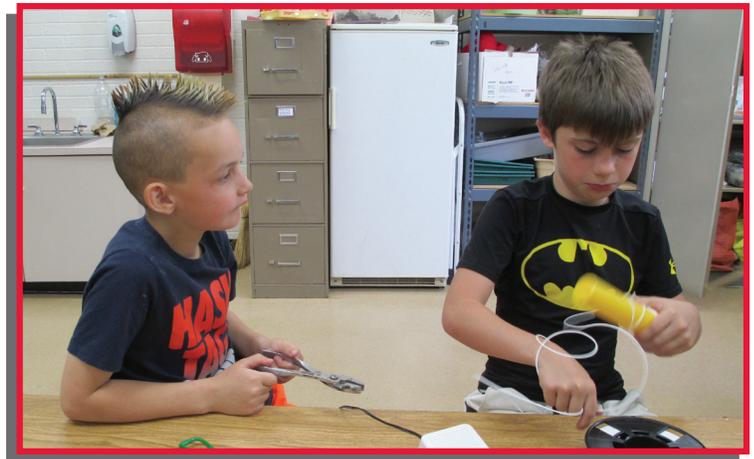


4th grade students ready for the starting bell to begin walking

## MAKERSPACE: AN INNOVATIVE PROGRAM

Makerspace is an innovative after school activity that involves repurposing/reinventing, exploring and thinking outside the box. This is a very popular program for students at Indian Lake. How does Makerspace work? Makerspace uses donated items (such as VCR's, hairdryers, flashlights, wires, etc) that the students are able to take apart and repurpose/rebuild. They can even take several different small items and try to build something out of them.

This is a very hands-on, student directed program that develops self-confidence by encouraging students to explore their ideas using their imagination. Students may either work in teams, or individually on their projects. Makerspace teaches students to problem solve by developing a concept or goal, coming up with a plan and putting that plan in place to build the project. Students working on a team also learn about teamwork and trying everyone's ideas to see what works best. When there are “bumps” along the way, the student or team uses problem solving skills to explore other ways to fix the issue. Students are also learning from their peers, watching them build their projects and turn failures into triumphs.



Jaxson Oswald (3rd grade) working on his Makerspace project as Braeden Kay (3rd grade) looks on

## SUNSET TEACHER **LAURA CHANG** HONORED AS MICHIGAN'S TEACHER OF THE YEAR

In a first for Vicksburg Schools and Kalamazoo County, a Vicksburg teacher has been selected to represent the state as Michigan's Teacher Of The Year. Laura was chosen from a field of over 400 nominees, noting her leadership, her servant's heart, and her passion for pairing students with the best teaching methods, technology, and access to learning that the district can offer. Principal Amie McCaw, who helped nominate Laura comments about her, "The outstanding characteristic is Laura's ability to always serve others. Laura has a unique talent of helping others and finding ways to bring a positive impact to everyone around her. Her students, families and fellow staff members have all commented on her ability to bring positive results to situations that could be otherwise difficult. Laura serves without hesitation and looks for ways to make everyone around her feel supported."

Chang learned of her selection as Michigan Teacher Of The Year during a surprise visit from Interim State Superintendent Sheila Alles during a school visit to highlight the school's academic success. Chang is the first honoree from Kalamazoo County in program history. "Educators like Ms. Chang are key in moving Michigan forward." Alles said. "She is knowledgeable and provides relevant and meaningful teaching and learning experiences to her students. She is a compassionate, positive, and inspirational role model."

"Preparing our young people to succeed in a healthy 21st Century economy is becoming increasingly more important to their future achievement, and teachers like Ms. Chang – who are able to engage students at a young age – are exactly what our state and the students who call it home need," Governor Rick Snyder said. "I appreciate the incredible work that Ms. Chang has done, and will continue to do, to prepare Michigan students to be successful later in life."

Chang has taught in Vicksburg Community Schools for her entire 18-year teaching career since receiving her Bachelor's Degree from Western Michigan University. She was selected by a panel of statewide education stakeholders following interviews with the 10 finalists for the honor. Vicksburg Community Schools Superintendent Charles Glaes described Chang as, "that rare classroom teacher who principals rely upon, parents lobby for, colleagues admire and enjoy working with, and students love."

As Teacher Of The Year, Mrs. Chang will chair the Michigan Teacher Leadership Advisory Committee. During their year of service, the committee will work with the Michigan Department of Education and other Michigan educational stakeholders to find solutions facing Michigan's education system issues, while ensuring that the voice of teachers is present in these discussions. In addition, the State Board of Education will honor Laura with a non-voting seat at the Board table during its regular monthly meetings, allowing her to engage with Board members in discussions on how best to move Michigan's education system forward.

"I was shocked," Chang said, "I'm just a second grade teacher, like everyone else in the building who's working hard and passionately for kids...I look forward to reaching out to as many educators as possible in order to fully represent the voice of our teachers in this great state. I am so blessed to teach in a district where I am surrounded by talented and dedicated professionals, families invested in our schools, and a community that supports all of us."



The moment of surprise when Mrs. Chang learns of her selection during an all school assembly.

Mrs. Chang receives her honor from State Superintendent Alles with her family standing beside her.

## MORE THAN A NUMBER

Tobey recently scored a 96 out of 100 on a new ranking system developed by the State of Michigan! Scores were generated based on several factors including how often students are absent, interventions available for English Language Learners, and student scores on state testing. This is the first year the Michigan Department of Education provided a state ranking based on this type of data.

Success on any state testing or ranking is a testament to the collective efforts of a staff to work on skills large and small, from fractions down to how to use a chromebook touchpad. But walk through Tobey in the spring, the prime of state testing season, and you will notice a staff that has enveloped students in a sense of comradery and positivity about expecting excellence and doing your personal best. The M-STEP is the battery of state tests given to students. The M-STEP can be daunting, even a little scary, but it is turned into an opportunity for students to be proud of all the knowledge they could demonstrate from a year of extremely hard work.

Tobey students K-5 resolved to “Rock the M-STEP!” during the kick-off assembly which included a zany theme song, tips for getting your body ready for the test, and a run through the tunnel of cheering Tobey tigers. Students and teachers taped up notes of encouragement on lockers, were celebrated by Mr. Barwegen on the announcements, and wished one another good luck each morning. Looking at the facts and figures, it is clear that students, staff, and parents have much to celebrate about Tobey! Our building ends the year knowing each student was acknowledged, supported, and cheered on 100 percent!

## STUDENT RECOGNITIONS

To conclude such a wonderful school year, teachers were asked to identify the students who have gone above and beyond on Accelerated Reader and IXL, which are two of the school-wide programs that track daily progress on reading comprehension and specific reading, math, science, and social studies skills.

When asked what was notable about each student selected, teachers remarked that these students not only met the goals set for them each marking period, but were further driven to surpass these goals with extra reading or IXL practice at home.

Mrs. Wester said of her first grade student Lincoln Hurd, “He devours books. He takes multiple AR tests each day.” Mrs. McGill and Mrs. Myers recognized Maddy Ball for challenging herself with long chapter books such as Harry Potter. Ms. MacDonell reflected that, “Throughout the entire school year many of these students work hard to master each week’s skill and then offer to help others during IXL time.” Congratulations to all students for making the most of each day and truly “yearning to learn”!



**Students recognized for outstanding achievement on IXL and AR by grade: Dallas Cantrel, Cameron Howard, Zachary Peter, Adrianna Fletter (Kindergarten) Lincoln Hurd, Mason Lane, Abigail Pertner (1st grade) Sofia Martin, Griffin Schiedel, Caden Chisholm, Keenan Wilson (2nd grade) Maddy Ball, Livia Kline, Ember Ballentine, Bryce Johnson, Kendall Ettwein, Carly Spicer, Daniella Houts (3rd grade) Ellie Lincoln, Emmie Gernay, Taylor VanDam, Ashley Gerber, Maya Grossman (4th grade) Frankie Loriso, Ella Luegge, Benjamin Culver (5th grade).**

# COMMUNITY TAILGATE IS SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST 30TH

Vicksburg Community Schools will be hosting the annual Community Tailgate on Thursday, August 30th from 4:30-6:30 pm before the Bulldogs take the field for the first home football game of the 2018 season. This family fun event will include local vendors, free food, giveaways, and much more. We hope to see everyone there!



## BULLDOG BEGINNINGS PRESCHOOL

VCS offers a wonderful preschool experience for children 4 years old as of September 1, 2018. Bulldog Beginnings preschool is free for qualifying families in the district and includes meals and transportation. Our program offers a fun and safe environment while teaching school readiness skills. Applications are available online or by contacting the Community Education office located in the administration building (321-1022).

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

5/28	Memorial Day- No School		
5/29/	HS Band Concert	HS PAC	7:00 PM
5/30	Baccalaureate	HS PAC	7:00 PM
6/3	HS Graduation	Stadium	2:00 PM
6/4	Late Start for All Students		
6/4	Sports Awards	HS PAC	7:00 PM
6/11	Board of Education Meeting	VAB	7:00 PM
6/13	Last Day of School-Half day for students		
7/9	Board of Education Meeting	VAB	7:00 PM
7/12	Vicksburg District Library Color Run	SL	11:30 AM
8/30	Community Tailgate	HS	
9/4	First Day of School		
10/9	First Late Start day of the Year		

HS - High School • MS - Middle School • SL - Sunset Lake  
 IL - Indian Lake • TY - Tobey PAC - Performing Arts Center  
 VAB- Vicksburg Administration Building •VS - Vicksburg Stadium

For updated calendars and information all summer long, go to our website at [vicksburgcommunitieschools.org](http://vicksburgcommunitieschools.org) and click on "Family Links" to get to all of the calendars!

## SIZZLING SUMMER CAMPS

Looking for affordable and enriching activities for your family this summer? Check out the 2018 lineup of summer camps! Sign up now to join the fun, improve your skills, and beat the heat! Vicksburg Community Education has something for everyone: volleyball, cheer, football, basketball, tennis, karate, and lacrosse. Take a look online at [vicksburgcommunitieschools.org](http://vicksburgcommunitieschools.org), click on Community Education under the Departments tab. For more information, questions, or to register via phone, call 321-1022.



Community Tailgate 2017

Vicksburg Community Schools  
 301 S. Kalamazoo Ave. • P.O. Box 158  
 Vicksburg, MI 49097

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