



THE

RED & WHITE

NOVEMBER 2022

A LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Vicksburg Schools Families,

Our first quarter has wrapped up and we are already approaching the season of Thanksgiving. This school year feels like it's flying by and that is thanks, in part, to all of the wonderful things we've had happening at VCS.

This first quarter was packed with celebrations and events at every school, as well as student achievements and athletic triumphs. I am so proud of our Vicksburg students for such a wonderful first quarter. And I am

thankful to our community for supporting them along the way.

As this second quarter begins, we are starting the next phase of our strategic planning for the future of Vicksburg Community Schools. We will be looking to interview families, community members and students about their experiences and what they're looking for in the district.

By working together, we know we will put out students' best

interests at the heart of our mission.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the Red and White. It is packed with stories of our students going above and beyond and our community stepping up time and time again to show their support.



Keevin O'Neill, *Superintendent*

Johnny's Teacher of the Month

High School English teacher, Jessie Dekoning, was named Johnny's Market's Teacher of the Month for the month of October!

In appreciation for everything she does, Jessie earned the award and a free month of Johnny's coffee!

Congratulations, Jessie! We are proud you are a Bulldog!



Johnny's
TEACHER
..... of the
MONTH

OCTOBER'S WINNER IS...

**JESSIE
DEKONING**

VICKSBURG HIGH SCHOOL

"Jessie puts students first in all aspects. She is always willing to help a student out, even if it means she has to stay late after school or help during a planning hour. She has many students that have told her that she is the reason they come to school every day. Teaching is not just a job for her, it is a passion!"

-Jake DeKoning

2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR

Sarah Phillips Awarded by the Red Wings



Sunset Lake Kindergarten teacher, Sarah Phillips recently traveled to a Detroit Red Wings game on behalf of the team, Coke and Meijer.

For the last two years, Phillips has been taking part in The Red Wings for Reading

Program. The program is designed to improve literacy in Michigan by offering an incentive-based reading program to local teachers at no cost.

She won a drawing and received two tickets to the

game as well as a dinner.

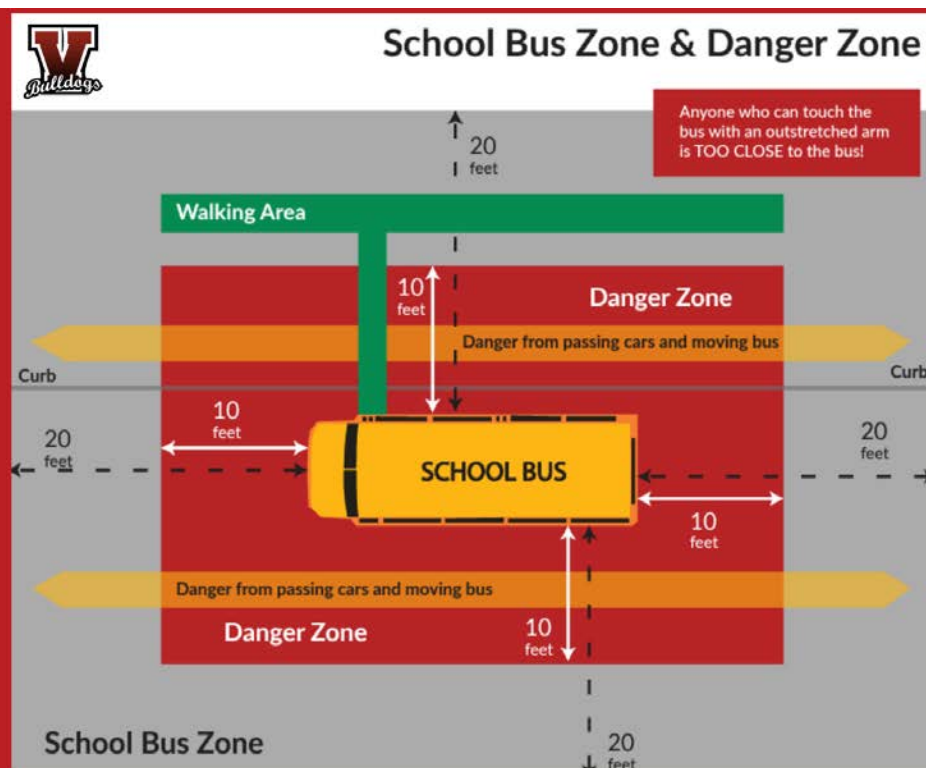
As part of that, former player and current TV announcer, Mickey Redmond, spoke to the group of 25 teachers and their guests. Each teacher also received a \$500 gift card to Meijer as an appreciation gift!

Thank you Mrs. Phillips for your commitment to helping your students learn to read and congrats on winning the prizes from the Red Wings!

School Bus Safety Reminders

With both our mornings and evenings covered in darkness this time of year, we want to remind the community to be aware of our school buses and children standing at bus stops and walking to and from school.

This is a great time to also talk with your children about bus stop and walking safety.



BUS STOP SAFETY FOR STUDENTS:

- Mind the Danger Zone, don't get too close to the bus.
- Wait at least 10 feet off the road at the bus stop.
- Be aware when walking to the bus stop, don't assume cars will stop when you cross the street.

BUS STOP SAFETY FOR DRIVERS:

- Be prepared to stop when a slowing school bus has its overhead yellow lights flashing.
- Stop outside the School Bus Zone, at least 20 feet away from a school bus that has its red overhead lights flashing.
- Watch and be alert for children waiting at and walking to their bus stops.

Vicksburg Homecoming Festivities

Fall Homecoming was a fun day for the whole community!

The day began with a high school spirit assembly where each class went head to head in various games.

Followed by the annual homecoming parade, which was able to show off downtown Vicksburg for the first time in years. Hundreds lined the streets to cheer on all the entries.

The day ended with the game

and crowing of the homecoming court.

Congratulations to the King and Queen: RJ Vallier and Abigail Bush!

Along with the rest of the court:

Avery Barker, Lucy Glerum, Lacey McConnaghy, Molly Young, Cole Gebben, Daxton Rugg, Bryce Town, and Kenny Youngs.

It was a great game too, with the Bulldogs winning 28-7 over Plainwell!



Equestrians Go to State



Congratulations to the VHS Equestrian Team on their 3rd place finish at State!

Senior Makenzie Freund, junior Megan Burke and sophomores Kenzie Horning and Madelyn Miersman represented Vicksburg at the State Tournament in October. They continued the

great tradition of being one of the best equestrian programs in the state of Michigan.

Big thanks to head coach Mike Fleetwood and assistant coaches Kaiti Fink, Karin Fleetwood and Dawne Steele.

Way to go team!



SHE KILLS MONSTERS

Young Adventurer's Edition

November 18-20, 2022



Get your tickets!

At the Vicksburg Performing Arts Center

She Kills Monsters tells the story of Agnes Evans following the death of her teenage sister, Tilly. When Agnes finds Tilly's Dungeons & Dragons notebook, she finds herself catapulted into a journey of discovery and action-packed adventure in the imaginary world that was her sister's refuge. Acclaimed playwright Qui Nguyen offers a heart-pounding homage to the geek and warrior within us all.

Tobey Elementary Kiss the Pig Fundraiser

The Tobey PTO playground fundraiser was a huge success!

When the school reached their \$70,000 goal all the teachers and

staff members had to kiss a pig!

The Kiss the Pig Fundraiser was the ultimate incentive for students to collect donations for

the new playground.

They cheered with delight each time one of their teachers puckered up for a smooch!

Congratulations to the Tobey tigers, enjoy your new playground!



VCS wins Bike Friendly Award

Thank you to Bike Friendly Kalamazoo for presenting Vicksburg Community Schools with their 2022 Civic Leadership Award!

Vicksburg Community Schools earned BFK's 2022 Civic Leadership Award for its ongoing work and encouragement to make the area more bicycle friendly.

The award was presented during the October school board meeting.



Students Get Ready for the Workforce

Vicksburg Community Schools believes in helping our students get real world experience to prepare them for the future, whether that be college or the workforce.

So far this year, we have 267 students enrolled in the KRESA Career and Technical Education classes. They spend parts of their school days working in and learning about fields that interest them.

About 70% of our students take at least one CTE class or take part in a CTE program before they graduate. Some of those students are able to work right in our buildings as part of their CTE studies.

At VHS, junior Connor DeVries takes part in the Work Based learning program, working with the building tech. Connor gets both school credit and is paid for the 10 hours a week he spends there.

He repairs broken chromebooks, works on printers and other computer needs for teachers, and helps to update the school clocks.

Connor hopes to go into programming and knows that the valuable work experience he's gaining this year will help him in the future.

At Indian Lake Elementary, junior Lilyann Campbell takes part in the CTE Teacher Academy, working as a kindergarten helper. She is able to assist teacher Julie Hughes with some of her lessons.

Lilyann takes students to the hallway for one on one work with their letters and letter sounds.

She is interested in becoming a teacher one day and says this experience is only strengthening her desire to work with elementary students.

At Sunset Lake Elementary, sophomore Bailey Hutchinson works as a custodial support intern.

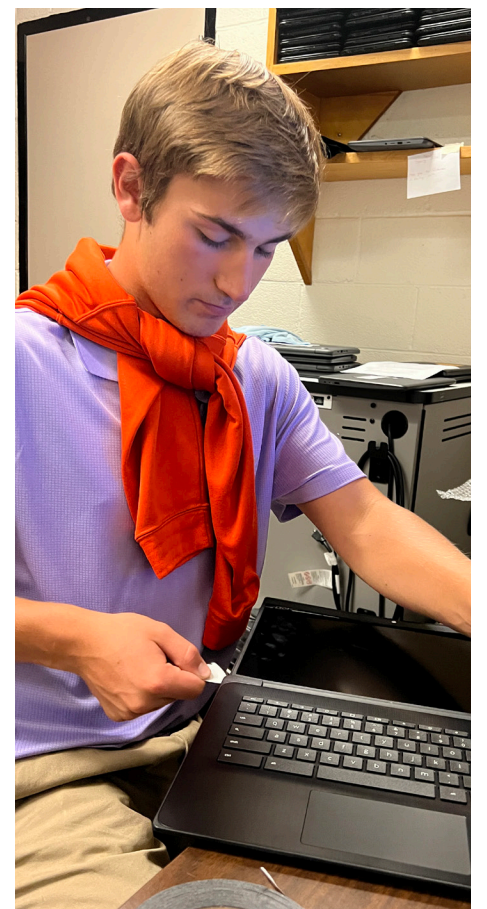
While not part of CTE, she's part of the work based learning program through the special education department.

Bailey keeps the teacher supply closet and lounge clean and organized. She cleans, sanitizes, organizes supplies and handles the recycling. It's a huge help for busy teachers and staff in the building.

The program typically only allows juniors and seniors to take part, but Bailey has proved herself as an excellent student and worker.

She spends two days a week at Sunset Lake and 2 days working at the Dome in Schoolcraft.

Next year she hopes to take the skills she's learning and get a job at a local business in Vicksburg.



Connor DeVries works in the VHS tech department helping with computer repair, and working on printers and Chromebook carts.



Lilyann Campbell works with Kindergarten students at Indian Lake Elementary.



Bailey Hutchinson works twice a week at Sunset Lake Elementary cleaning the teacher supply and break rooms.

Volleyball Team Gives Back to the Community

Shoutout to the VHS volleyball team for giving back to our community!

This season they made blankets for patients at Bronson Children's Hospital and also helped to fill Power Up Packs for Generous Hands. The food packs go home with students on the weekends to make sure they have enough to eat when not at school.

Great job helping those in need!



Students Help Animals at Gull Meadow Farms

Students in our Kalamazoo RESA Career & Technical Education program once again got hands-on experience at Gull Meadow Farms.

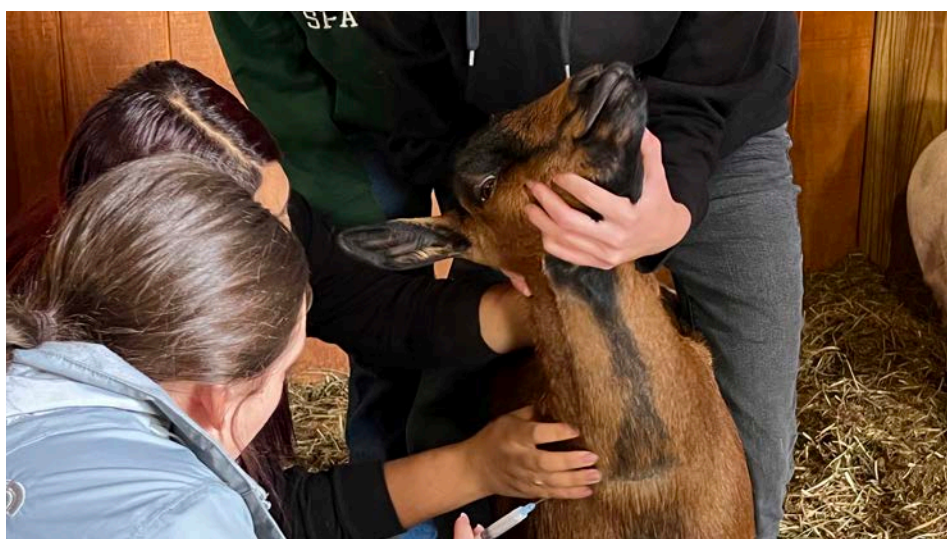
Dr. Noreen Heikes brought her vet science and animals and plants class students to give the animals check ups.

Twice a year they trim the hooves of the goats and other animals, as well as provide

vaccinations and check for parasites.

For many of the students, it's their time providing veterinary care. The partnership with the farm gives them an opportunity to try out a career in animal medicine before they have to decide on a college major.

It's a win-win partnership for everyone.



Vicksburg Schools Unite Against Bullying

Vicksburg Community Schools celebrated Unity Day along with schools all over the country.

Our elementary schools were a sea of orange as students pledged to show unity for kindness, acceptance and inclusion. They also took a stand against bullying.

Unity Day is sponsored by the National Bullying Prevention Center. Each year they ask the people to come together in one giant orange message of hope and support, to visibly show that our society believes no child should ever experience bullying.



Walkin' the Dawgs at Vicksburg Middle School

Vicksburg Middle School students took to the track for the annual Walkin' the Dawgs fundraiser, logging some impressive miles and raising money to support events at the school.

Students walked laps and got to play games and had a chance to win prizes.

In all, they raised \$14,670 with the walkathon.

Congrats to the top fundraisers from each class:

6th-Atticus Nagy

7th-Ari Martin

8th-Erica Centofani

In all, students walked 1,675.25 miles over the course of about an hour and a half!

3 students walked/ ran more than 10 miles, or 40+ laps, during the event!

The money raised will help provide additional funding for things like band, choir, Civil War Day, Science Night, Digital Citizenship presentations for parents, student council, student incentives for academic and behavioral goals and building improvements like a scorer's table for the middle school gym.

Approximately 600 students participated in Walkin' the Dawgs, which serves as the only fundraiser Vicksburg Middle School will conduct for the entire year. Thank you to the sponsors of this fun event and to all the students who participated!

