

# THE HIGHLAND HIGHLIGHT

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*Published by the Highland Local Schools to promote our students, staff and programs.*

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## HHS RECIPIENT OF COLLEGE SUCCESS AWARD

### *It's a great time to be a Hornet!*

Highland High School is proud to announce that it has again received the prestigious College Success Award from GreatSchools.org, the nation's leading nonprofit providing school information to parents and families. The annual recognition honors schools that excel at preparing students to enroll and succeed in college, as determined by available data in each state. HHS also earned a College Success Award in 2018, 2019 and 2020.

HHS is among 1,838 high schools from 25 states that have demonstrated a successful track record of graduating students who enroll in two- or four-year college, are ready for college-level coursework, and persist on to their second year. School, district, and state education leaders in these 25 states were undeterred by the pandemic's challenges and provided the critical data transparency needed to help communities understand paths to success from high school to college.

In addition to winning this year's annual award, Highland High School has also been selected as one of only 1,770 schools across the nation to win the inaugural College Success Award – GOLD – an additional, elevated level of distinction to recognize schools that have a multiyear track record of college success. Awardees are selected based on available college preparation and postsecondary data provided by each state.

The College Success Award is possible because Ohio is leading the nation in both collecting and transparently sharing information on how students perform after high school, which is valuable information for families, educators, and policy makers.



*"Pride of Highland Marching Band" members Kennedy Steinbacher (senior), Jameson Sattler (freshman) and Jenna Liebhenguth (sophomore).*



*Lydia Lanier (senior) shows off her Hornet pride!*

"Despite the continued disruptions to the educational landscape over the past two years, we have adopted and upheld many best practices to support our students' college preparation and success," said Mrs. Carrie Knapp, HHS Principal. "We continue to provide access to rigorous academic offerings both within school and through extracurricular programs, we work to identify and support students at-risk of adverse academic outcomes and we provide enhanced college counseling -- all in an effort to place our students on the path to bright futures."

To learn more about the HHS Rating and the College Success Award, please visit [www.GreatSchools.org](http://www.GreatSchools.org).

**THANKSGIVING BREAK: NOVEMBER 24-26 – NO SCHOOL**



# MAKING HEADLINES...

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From left are Andrew Chand, Jackson Shaw, Drew Thomas, Emily Dunn, Brian Marasco and Jason Yen.

## CONGRATS TO OUR NATIONAL MERIT SEMIFINALISTS

In September, Highland High School released the names of six seniors who were selected as National Merit Semifinalists for the 2021-22 school year. Congratulations to:

- Andrew Chand, son of David Chand of Copley Township and Addie Chand-Hull of Granger Township;
- Emily Dunn, daughter of Julie Dunn of Montville Township;
- Brian Marasco, son of Brian and Valerie Marasco of Sharon Township;
- Jackson Shaw, son of Jeffrey and Marcie Shaw of Sharon Township;
- Drew Thomas, son of Marc and Diane Thomas of Montville Township; and
- Jason Yen, son of Daniel and Vickie Yen of Hinckley Township.

These seniors have the opportunity to continue in the competition for some 7,500 scholarships worth nearly \$30 million. Semifinalists must fulfill several requirements to advance to the Finalists level of the competition.

About 16,000 students were notified in early September that they qualified as Semifinalists. To ensure that students from all parts of the United States are included in this talent pool, Semifinalists are designated on a state-representational basis. They are the highest scoring entrants in each state.

To be considered for a National Merit® Scholarship, Semifinalists must advance to Finalist standing in the competition by meeting high academic standards and all other requirements explained in the information provided to each Semifinalist. Finalists will be named in the Spring of 2022. About 95 percent of the Semifinalists are expected to attain Finalist standing, and approximately half of the Finalists will win a National Merit Scholarship, earning the Merit Scholar title.

## CRAWFORD IS TOP RUNNER IN AKRON MARATHON

Congratulations to Hinckley Elementary School physical education teacher Annie Crawford who ran the Akron Marathon on September 25 and placed 12th out of 256 female runners. She was also 1st in her age group (35-39) out of 33 female athletes! Overall, Mrs. Crawford placed 99th out of 676 runners and maintained an average pace of 8:32 per mile. Her finish time was 3:43:25 -- a personal record! Kudos on your awesome accomplishment and for setting such a great example for your students!



## FREE HOLIDAY CONCERTS

Join us for one or more of the following [free](#) holiday concerts featuring our many talented Highland students. All concerts below will be held in the Highland High School Auditorium.

- Thursday, December 9  
HMS/HHS Orchestra Holiday Concert, 6:30 p.m. & 8 p.m.
- Monday, December 13  
HMS Holiday Choir Concert, 6:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, December 15  
HHS Holiday Band Concert, 7 p.m.
- Thursday, December 16  
HHS Holiday Choir Concert, 7 p.m.



## 'BE A BLESSING' TO OTHERS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Students at Sharon Elementary School will be collecting donations for "Blessing Bags" throughout the month of November to benefit St. Paul's Sharing Center and the Highland Community Support Network (HCSN).

Simply fill a gallon-sized Ziploc bag with personal care items and have your student return it to school. If you don't have a student at Sharon, please drop it off at the main office. All items should be new -- both travel size and full size items are acceptable. No food items, please.

Ideas include: shampoo, conditioner, bar of soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, tissues, band aids, chapstick, comb, hand sanitizer, mouthwash, lotion, deodorant, etc.



## GROH IS HOMECOMING QUEEN

Congratulations to Highland High School's 2021 Homecoming Queen and Court. Pictured from left are HHS seniors Madison Miller, Grace Lukens, Emily Groh (Queen), Kathryn Siliko and Maria Davis. Also on the court were Grace Weber, freshman; Maya Weber, sophomore; and Lizzie Porter, junior.

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

Dr. Norman Christopher, M.D., President  
Diane Thomas, Vice President  
Robert Kelly   Mike Houska  
Christopher Wolny

## CONTACT US

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3880 Ridge Rd., Medina, OH 44256



From left are Connor Oviatt, Jonathan Wuchter, Maria Davis, Austin Addington, Lauren Webb and Peter Marinelli.

## 6 NAMED COMMENDED SCHOLARS

Congratulations to six Highland High School seniors who are among the 34,000 students to be named Commended Scholars in the Annual National Merit Scholarship Program. They are now eligible to become candidates for special scholarships provided by corporate and business sponsors. They include the following:

- Austin Addington, son of Jim and Shawna Addington of Sharon Township;
- Maria Davis, daughter of Calvin and Tina Davis of Montville Township;
- Peter Marinelli, son of Gregory Marinelli and Kimberly Davey of Granger Township;
- Connor Oviatt, son of Chad and Marianne Oviatt of Sharon Township;
- Lauren Webb, daughter of Jeremy and Stacy Webb of Montville Township; and
- Jonathan Wuchter, son of Gerald Wuchter and Kimberly Blair of Sharon Township.

Of the 1.6 million entrants, some 50,000 with the highest PSAT/NMSQT® Selection Index scores qualify for recognition in the National Merit® Scholarship Program. These students are among the more than two-thirds (about 34,000) of the approximately 50,000 high scorers who received Letters of Commendation in recognition of their outstanding academic promise.

The mission of National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) is to recognize and honor the academically talented students of the United States. NMSC accomplishes its mission by conducting nationwide academic scholarship programs. An enduring goal of NMSC's scholarship programs is to shine a spotlight on brilliant students and encourage the pursuit of academic excellence at all levels of education.



# HORNET'S NEST

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# HIGHLIGHTS

## HIGHLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL WEB LEADERS



## A NEW BEGINNING: ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OPEN!

September 8 was not only the first day of school for Highland students, but it was an extra special day for elementary students in grades K-5, as they experienced their brand-new school buildings for the first time! Each building is equipped with flexible and collaborative learning spaces for each grade level, state-of-the-art technology, full-service cafetorium and gymnasium, media center, vocal and instrumental music rooms and an expanded art room. Additional features include increased safety and security measures, more efficient ingress/egress for student arrival/dismissal, staff and visitor parking, outdoor play areas and bright and colorful interior throughout. A very special thank you is extended to Highland taxpayers who voted in favor of building new schools for our students. Without your support, our new schools would not be a reality. Appreciation is also expressed to Highland School Board members Dr. Norman Christopher, Diane Thomas, Robert Kelly, Mike Houska and Chris Wolny, Superintendent Catherine Aukerman, Treasurer Neil Barnes, administrators and staff who were instrumental throughout the planning process. Thank you for your dedication to our students and to the Highland community.

### GRANGER ELEMENTARY:

Enrollment: 450 in grades PK-5  
Square Footage: 74,686  
Construction Cost: \$22.6 million

### HINCKLEY ELEMENTARY:

Enrollment: 380 in grades K-5  
Square Footage: 63,108  
Construction Cost: \$20.9 million

### SHARON ELEMENTARY:

Enrollment: 665 in grades K-5  
Square Footage: 83,147  
Construction Cost: \$24 million

## Program Aims to Create Place 'WHERE EVERYONE BELONGS'

Thanks to the generosity of The Highland Foundation, Highland Middle School has adopted a nationwide program called "WEB: Where Everyone Belongs."

Officially launched this school year, the purpose of the new orientation and transition program is to welcome 6th graders and make them feel comfortable throughout the first year of their middle school experience. Built on the belief that students can help students succeed, the program trains mentors from the 8th grade class to be WEB Leaders. As positive role models, WEB Leaders are mentors and student leaders who guide the 6th graders to discover what it takes to be successful during the transition to middle school and help facilitate 6th grade success.

On September 7, 6th graders attended Orientation Day alongside nearly 60 trained 8th grade WEB Leaders. Students had the opportunity to interact with one another in a more relaxed setting, talk, laugh, ask questions and learn the layout of their new environment with the assistance of WEB Leaders.

More and more studies show that if students have a positive experience their first year in middle school, their chances for success increase dramatically. WEB provides the structure for 6th graders to receive support and guidance from 8th graders who have been through the challenges that middle school poses and understand that the transition to a larger school can sometimes be overwhelming.

WEB also acts as an anti-bullying program as student leaders are trained to look for bullying behavior and help stop it. WEB gives older students permission to be aware of and report any negative behavior they see, creating a safer school for everybody.

This yearlong transition program includes four components that contribute to its success:

1. Middle School Orientation — WEB Leaders and 6th graders start building the mentor relationship and receive information about how to be successful in middle school.
2. Academic Follow Ups — WEB Leaders support 6th grade academic success and character development through classroom visits.
3. Social Follow Ups — WEB Leaders and 6th graders connect outside the classroom at social events to increase student engagement and promote positive school climate.
4. Leader Initiated Contacts — WEB Leaders connect with their 6th graders on a more individual basis.

The goal of WEB is to help students make real connections with each other, thus increasing school safety and reducing incidents of bullying. Through this program, students learn that people at school care about them and their success. WEB ultimately contributes to increased student achievement, enhanced character development and anti-bullying environment.



*Architect: GPD Group  
Construction Manager:  
Hammond Construction*







*Alexis Mutch, Carley Niese, Holly Gale.*



*Aleksander Djordjevic, Lincoln Mast, Braden Gryskiewicz and Kallen Whitling.*

## COURTYARD CLEAN UP!

Several members of the National Junior Honor Society at Highland Middle School rolled up their sleeves on the afternoon of October 18 to participate in a "Courtyard Cleanup" project to help beautify the back courtyard area, as well as the front of the school building. Under the supervision of NJHS adviser Mark Raczynski and parent volunteer Steve Vojtko, these 8th grade student leaders did basic landscaping duties including weeding, trimming, raking of leaves, etc. Thank you to the following students who were able to lend a helping hand!

Benjamin Boggs  
Elizabeth Coleman  
Aleksandar Djordjevic  
Neil Flannery  
Holly Gale  
Joseph Gray  
Allison Gryskiewicz  
Braden Gryskiewicz  
Heather Hardesty  
Andres Head  
Kamryn Heldreth  
Colin Keeley  
Gavin Kennedy  
Lincoln Mast  
Gianna Melillo  
Alexis Mutch  
Carley Niese  
Elizabeth Noall  
Ava Pallante  
Emma Price  
Cooper Richnafsky  
Grace Shondel  
Lily Vojtko  
Kallen Whitling  
Ryan Zahir  
Vanessa Zufall



*Grace Shondel, Sam Vojtko (1st grade at Granger) and Lily Vojtko.*

## ROBOTICS TEAM NABS 2ND PLACE AT MVRC EVENT



Congratulations to the Highland High School Steel Stingers Robotics Team for performance at the Mahoning Valley Robotics Challenge (MVRC) on October 16-17. They captured 2nd place after competing against 16 local teams at the off-season event. The Steel Stingers were also nominated by the other teams -- and awarded -- the MVRC 2021 Award for Best End Game. The team is looking forward to another exciting season of competition beginning in January 2022! Good luck!

# Join us for a Farewell Walk Through

[www.highlandschools.org](http://www.highlandschools.org)

**Saturday, November 13, 2021 ~ 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.**

The Highland Local School District is pleased to offer a final, farewell walk through of the former Granger, Hinckley and Sharon elementary schools. Each building has served our students and community well over the past 90-plus years and we are proud of their history.

***Please stop by for a final, self-guided tour.***

**EST. 1929**



**Granger Elementary**  
3940 Ridge Road

**EST. 1922**



**Sharon Elementary**  
6335 Ridge Road

**EST. 1949**



**Hinckley Elementary**  
1586 Center Road

*a legacy of excellence*



# THE HIGHLAND FOUNDATION

for educational excellence

## SHELTON JOINS HF BOARD



The Highland Foundation is pleased to announce the appointment of Melissa Shelton to its Board of Trustees.

MELISSA is currently the COO of Lease Purchase Ohio, LLC. Her career spans nearly 30 years in the areas of community relations and fund development primarily in the non-profit sector.

Active on the annual dinner committee, fund development and finance committees, she is eager to put her skills to work for The Highland Foundation in an effort to benefit the Highland Schools, its students, teachers and the community-at-large.

Residents of Hinckley Township, Melissa and her husband Doug have two children, Mirabella an 8th grader, and Doug a 7th grader, both attending Highland Middle School.

### BECOME A VOLUNTEER!

Help us enrich academic excellence and enhance academic innovation in the Highland Schools! The Highland Foundation is always looking for staff or community volunteers to further advance its mission. We have several committees to choose from. Please visit our website to find your fit!



*From left are Dwier Brown, Jenny Napier (widow of William Wagar), Mary Fran and Paul Kudla (parents of Mike Kudla); Todd Bischof and Gary Green.*

## NEWEST MEMBERS OF ALUMNI HOF INDUCTED

The Highland Alumni Association, in partnership with The Highland Foundation, inducted its third class of Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame members on October 8. The district and community celebrated the honorees at a special ceremony and reception held at Highland High School, followed by recognition during halftime at Highland's Homecoming football game.

The six newest inductees span generations of Highland graduates, reinforcing the district's ongoing commitment to educational excellence. Congratulations to Todd Bischof (1981), Kimberly Bolas Miller (1989), Gary Green (1970), John Kobs (1999), Mike Kudla (2002) - Posthumously, and William Wagar (1983) - Posthumously. Also honored were 2019 inductees Dwier Brown (1976) and Jim Ritcher (1976) who were unable to attend their induction ceremony held in 2019.

The Highland Alumni Association recognizes a new class of honorees every two years, with nominations accepted via The Highland Foundation website. The Selection Committee, composed of members of The Highland Foundation executive committee, considers various criteria when selecting Distinguished Alumni, including a nominee's accomplishments in their chosen vocation, their demonstrated leadership skills and their commitment to the community. All nominees must have graduated from Highland at least 10 years ago. To learn more about each inductee and their outstanding accomplishments, please visit [www.highlandfoundation.org](http://www.highlandfoundation.org).



*Kim Bolas Miller*



*John Kobs*



*Jim Ritcher*