Pirate Pride

The Newsletter of the
Merrillville Community School Corporation
November 2019

Mark your calendars!

Nov. 11
No school. Teacher work day

Nov. 14
No school for K-6 students; Parent/Teacher Conference for K-6 students, 12:30-7:30 p.m.

Juniors & Seniors
Nov. 18-26,
ISTEP retest: it is imperative all students that have not yet passed either one or both parts of the ISTEP attend school on these dates ready to test.

Juniors & Seniors
Dec. 2-6
Make-up ISTEP tests for juniors and seniors.

Nov. 27-29
No School/Thanksgiving holiday

Dec. 5
Grades 9-12 Parent/Teacher Conference, 3:30-6:30 p.m.

Dec. 23-Jan. 3
No school/winter holiday

Partnership helps more MHS students earn college credit

There are more opportunities than ever for Merrillville High School students to experience rigorous college level course-work and earn college credit during their high school careers, thanks to the school's partnership with Notre Dame and participation in the AP TIP-IN (Advanced Placement Teacher Investment Program).

A special note of celebration for the school was its percentage of qualifying AP test scores in calculus during the 2018-19 school year: 72 percent!

A qualifying score means it was high enough to earn college credit. Therefore, 23 out of the 32 students who took the advanced placement test in calculus earned college credit.

What makes this percentage even more significant is that it surpasses the qualifying percentage of all participating AP TIP-IN schools, 38 percent, as well as the percentage from all Indiana

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Advisory Team assists Superintendent



The Superintendent's Advisory Team meets monthly during the school year and is designed to provide input, feedback, and guidance to the superintendent about the operation of Merrillville Community Schools and the implementation of the strategic plan. The group is made up of appointed members of the school board, administration, staff, community, along with parents and students.

Merrillville Education Foundation awards grants

Projects in the Merrillville schools that include coding and circuit kits, a lyric opera teaching artist, puppets and boomwhackers will receive funding, thanks to more than $7,500 in grants that will be awarded by Merrillville Education Foundation (MEF).

The foundation typically awards grants twice a year to support public education where public funds are not available. Teachers and administrators propose programs that encourage educational innovation, promote excellence, and create educational opportunities for students.

More information about these projects is available on the foundation website, merrillvilleeducationfoundation.org.

Since 2002, the Merrillville Education Foundation has awarded 425 grants, totaling $364,139.55. These grants have impacted more than 116,726 education experiences for students in grades K through 12.

This fall grant award includes funding for 14 projects:

Fieler

Kindergarten Teachers Kathy Machura and Amy Burkhart will get funding for their project "Puppets as a Teaching Tool," allowing them to purchase additional puppets to encourage learning and engagement in all subject areas.

Iddings

Kindergarten Teacher Shannon Cicero will receive funding for her project "Sing, Move, and Learn!" to incorporate HeidiSongs, with multisensory activities, to meet the unique needs of students entering her classroom.

In addition, Instructional Coach Jennifer Pozdzal's project "Reset to Refocus" will receive money to help decrease the number of discipline referrals in kindergarten through fourth grade by increasing students' awareness of their own neuroanatomy and providing them with an area supplied with manipulating textural objects to help regulate their brains. The objective is to supply the teachers with the resources and supplies necessary to create a reset area in their room and be successful in helping to regulate their students.

Salk

First Grade Teacher Carrie Brown will receive funding for her project "Building Our Brains with STEM," an interactive, hands on approach utilizing progressive building projects that will eventually be incorporated into her classroom.

Additionally, First Grade Teacher Rachael Hull will receive funds for her program "Manipulatives for Remedial Math" to offer flexible hands-on remedial math groups to boost students' confidence, assist them with difficult skills, prepare them for the iLearn test, and build a foundation for their future classrooms.

Wood

Kindergarten Teacher Stacie Anderson won funding for her project "Teaching ELA and Math with Problem Solving Technology" to utilize the OSMO Program, a technology based program to present activities for letters, sounds, CVC words, numbers, counting, shapes and problem solving to students at their own individual pace, with progress monitoring and goal setting along the way.

All Elementary Schools

School Corporation Director of Media Services Janelle Bowen won funding for her program "Reading is a

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Merrillville Education Foundation Walk-A-Thon 2019 Highlights



Merrillville Education Foundation (MEF) Executive Director Mary Hoffman (above) awards a gift basket to Iddings Elementary School third grader Cameron Griffin for raising the most money in donations for the event, collecting $220. Salk Elementary School was also recognized for having the most participants at the event. Salk Elementary School Principal Nicholas Petralia (below left) was presented with an award by MEF President Bruce Woods. View more photos at merrillvilleeducationfoundation.org



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Merrillville Education Foundation awards grants

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Real Treasure" to provide new and exciting books and bags to kindergarten through fourth grade students. The program will enhance the development of reading skills and promote recreational reading over the summer months.

Merrillville Intermediate School (MIS)

Fifth Grade Teacher Julie DiFiore will receive a grant to purchase 65 books from the "Who Was, Who Is, What Was" book series for students to use to research and learn about people and events.

In addition, MIS Music Teacher Laura Dinkins will receive funding to use boomwhackers in fifth grade general music classrooms. Boomwhackers are musical instruments that are made from plastic tubes that range in size and pitch. Since each boomwhacker plays a single note, students learn fun and creative ways to work as a team to play songs.

Clifford Pierce

Computer Science Teacher Danielle Kowalewicz won grant funding for "Ultimate Coding and Circuit Kits to Teach C++" to help students to learn variables, functions, loops, statements and syntax and troubleshooting through fun activities and projects like building a 'clapper' light switch.

Merrillville High School (MHS)

Theater Teacher Tom Mackey won money for his project "Explore Opera with Lyric Opera of Chicago" to engage a Lyric Opera Teaching Artist to guide students through a creative process to reinterpret select operatic scenes with their own words and music.

In addition, MHS Music Teacher Melinda Reinhart won a grant for her proposal "Together We Perform at a High Standard" for students to learn, cultivate, practice and master numerous life skills throughout the journey of auditions, rehearsals and live performances of the spring musical.

MHS Math Teacher Charles Seligman won funding for "2019-20 Half Field for the Robotics Club" to cover the shipping for this year's half field in order to practice for this year's competition.

MHS Family and Consumer Sciences Department Head Carol Von Behren, sponsor of the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) Club, will receive a grant for her program "Inclusion Dance." The program is held for special needs students from seven schools, allowing them to interact with club teens. The program benefits club members as well as the special needs students.

Support Merrillville students with one click!

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You Shop. Amazon Gives.

The gift of giving for the holidays just got better when you shop using AmazonSmile.

The Merrillville Education Foundation has partnered with AmazonSmile to make it easier than ever to make a difference in the lives of Merrillville students.

Amazon shoppers can simply use smile.amazon.com to make their purchases and will find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com. Simply choose Merrillville Education Foundation as the charitable organization.

With each purchase, Amazon will donate a portion to the Merrillville Education Foundation.

Established logins for Amazon and Amazon Prime accounts will work the same through smile.amazon.com.

Group shows available at Planetarium



Scouts, seniors, clubs, turn your next gathering into an experience by holding it at the Merrillville Community Planetarium. The private show fee includes up to one hour in the theater for a planetarium show of choice and one hour in the waiting area where food can be served and party activities can take place. For further information, visit www.mcpstars.org, call (219) 650-5486 or email info@mcpstars.org.

Partnership helps more MHS students earn college credit

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schools, which was 52.2 percent. MHS student test average of 3.28 outscored the International/Global Average of 2.97!

Calculus teacher Mike Hoffman has been in the Notre Dame AP TIP-IN since it started at MHS.

"The program gives me access to various support materials and activities written by teachers from around the state," Mr. Hoffman said. "I can focus on teaching and helping kids to understand the content. Credit must go to the kids though, because they are the ones who bought in to the program and made the choice to put in all the hard work."

During the 2014-15 school year, prior to participating in the Notre Dame program, MHS marked a total of 63 qualifying scores. In 2017-18, after two years in the program, qualifying scores jumped 223 percent to 141. Additionally, after only two years participating in the program, MHS AP English Language teacher was recognized by Notre Dame as the AP TIP-IN English Teacher of the Year!

According to the website, the Notre Dame AP TIP-IN Program prepares "Indiana students for college by engaging them in rigorous math, science, and English coursework. We support them by delivering high quality professional development to their teachers, and we continue to support those teachers through the use of our Content Directors. We provide greater opportunities for students to engage in their work, and we reward them for their success."

MHS Assistant Principal James Stamper is a former AP teacher.

"Before this program, AP teachers saw few resources or opportunities for professional development or collaboration" he said.

The Notre Dame AP TIP-IN Program gets teachers interested, trained and certified to expand the school's AP courses offerings. This year, the course selection includes: English language and literature, biology, calculus, art, physics, statistics, chemistry and two different computer sciences.

Teacher training consists of namely four aspects: a fall conference, regional meetings, mock exams and trials, and a summer institute.

At the fall conference in Indianapolis, teachers are introduced to resources, training and best practices and have ample opportunities to network.

MHS was the site of a recent regional meeting, hosting 32 different schools Oct. 2. Mock exams ready students for the big exam day and are graded by their teachers who learn from the experts how to grade like members of the college board. Teachers from all over the state grade the exams together and go back to their classrooms with more training and insight into their subjects.

The program also gives the students extended online access to tutoring and lessons.

Mr. Stamper says the next steps are getting students more access to these courses by reducing barriers that may prevent them from enrolling. In addition, school counselors will increase recruitment efforts for these classes that will prepare students for college.

"Only 31 percent of students are enrolled in cohort AP classes," he said. "We think we can get that higher and give more kids a taste of college classes."

Merrillville Senior Citizens Center welcomes all seniors



The Merrillville Senior Citizens Center, located at the high school, 276 E. 68th Pl., Door P, offers a place for senior citizens to enjoy fellowship, bingo, guest speakers, and more.

The center is open at 10 a.m. most Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. All senior citizens are welcome, regardless of where they live.

For more information, contact: Judy Czarnecki: 219-769-4709; Bev: 219-313-7256; or Renee: 219-413-8642. Information is also available on the Merrillville Community School Corporation website, www.mvsc.k12.in.us.

Ross Township subsidizes bus transportation through South Lake County Community Services for the disabled and senior citizens of Ross Township. This subsidy allows riders to pay a discounted fee. Call 219-663-3869 to schedule a ride to the Senior Citizens Center.

JROTC program earns Air Force approval

Lt. Col. Allen (center) from Maxwell Air Force Base, located near Montgomery Alabama, visited MHS Nov. 4 to evaluate the JROTC program, under the instruction of Senior Master Sgt. Daniel J. Wrasman, to make sure it is in compliance with Air Force regulations and directives.

The evaluation included briefings by the cadets, who used PowerPoint presentations to illustrate the details of their program and efforts while Lt. Col. Allen asked questions; a drill performance; and uniform inspection.

This Unit Evaluation (inspection) takes place every three years.

C/Lt. Col. Daziele Pierson and C/Major Bailey Smith both received Top Performance Recognition!



Scrooge the Musical opens day after Thanksgiving

The public is invited to experience a Northwest Indiana holiday tradition.

M & M Productions and Ross Music Theatre will present their lavish production of Leslie Bricusse's "Scrooge the Musical."

The show opens its 21st year the day after Thanksgiving at Reinhart Auditorium, located in Merrillville High School (MHS), 276 East 68th Pl. Attendees should use entrance M to the Hall of Flags and auditorium lobby.

The musical will feature dozens of MHS choir students and alumni. Tickets are available from choir students who sell them as a fundraiser to support the choir program.

Performances are 7:30 p.m. Fridays, Nov. 29, Dec. 6, and Saturday, Dec. 7; and 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8.

Besides choir students, tickets are available online at www.ticketor.com/rossmusic or at the box office: adults $10, senior citizens and students (ages 13-18) $9 and children 12 and under $8.

For more information or to order tickets, call (219) 650-5307 x7012 or (219) 413-1213.



Financial Aid Night

Wednesday, Nov. 20, 6 p.m.
High School
Main Lecture Hall
Enter Door F

Learn about the college financial aid process via a presentation by a financial aid representative from Purdue University Northwest.

Afterwards, parents and students will be able to apply for financial aid that night in the MHS computer lab with help from the financial aid representative.



Photo by Skitterphoto from Pexels

GET ENGAGED!

FOLLOW US!

Merrillville School Superintendent @MerrillvilleSu3
Merrillville High School . . . . . .@MerrillvilleMHS
Clifford Pierce Middle School . . .@PIERCEadmn
Merrillville Intermediate School . . .@mis_principal
Fieler Elementary School . . . . . .@FielerPirates
Iddings Elementary School . . . . . .@IddingsElem
Miller Elementary School . . . . . .@miller_elem
Salk Elementary School . . . . . .@SalkNews
Wood Elementary School . . . . . .@PrinPetralia

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

K-6 Students
Nov. 14,12:30-7:30 p.m.

Grades 9-12
Dec. 5, 3:30-6:30 p.m.

Iddings Elementary School

Popcornopolis fundraiser
Help us sell popcorn through Nov. 15.

Eat at McDonald's
U.S. 30 @ Taney Pl.
1st Tuesday of each month, 5 -7 p.m.
to support the PTO!





Merrillville Intermediate School

- **PTO Meeting,** first Tuesday of each month, 5:30 p.m.
- **Family Fun Night:** Nov. 13, 5:45-7:30 p.m. Meet other parents, engage with teachers, have fun and learn with your child!
- **Parent Resource Room:** Come and check out materials and volunteer to assist teachers with tasks Tuesdays and Wednesdays, from 8:30 to 10 a.m.
- **Dads and Dessert meeting:** Nov. 25, 6 p.m.
- **Volunteer for Book Fair:** Nov. 11-22
- **Books and Bingo Family Night:** Nov. 20, 5:30-7 p.m.



Fieler Elementary School

PTO Popcorn sale!
Nov. 22

Kindergarteners Grandparents Day
Nov. 26,1:15-2 p.m.

Miller Elementary School

Cookies and Convo
Nov. 21, 5:30-6:30 p.m.
Meet with the principal and enjoy some refreshments.

Salk Elementary School

PTO Breakfast Fundraiser
Nov. 16, 8-10 a.m.
Applebee's, 8425 Broadway
$8 per person; tickets available:
salkpto3001@gmail.com

Ongoing research shows that family engagement in schools improves student achievement, reduces absenteeism, and restores parents' confidence in their children's education. Students with involved parents or other caregivers earn higher grades and test scores, have better social skills, and show improved behavior.

"The Enduring Importance of Parental Involvement,"
***National Education Foundation*, Nov. 18, 2014**



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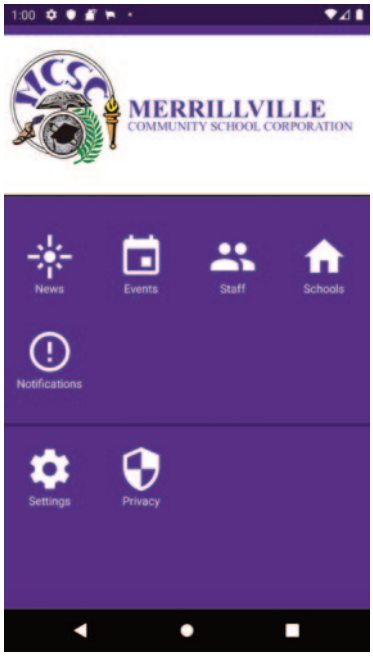


Merrillville school information is now available at your fingertips.

Merrillville Community School Corporation launched a free app to make connecting to the schools easier than ever.

The app can be downloaded at the Apple and Google Play stores. Please be sure to download the version with the icon you see here.

You'll find links to all the schools, news, staff contacts and more.

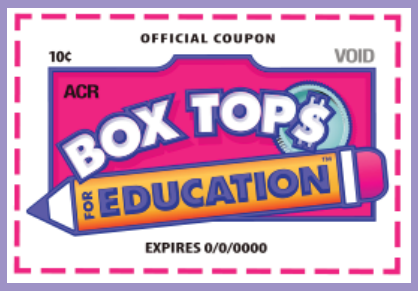


STRACK & VANTIL RECEIPTS FUNDRAISER

Save all your receipts and have your children bring them to school. Every dollar spent earns a point towards earning educational equipment. Receipts need to be dated from Sept.1, 2019, through March 2, 2020 and are due by March 13, 2020.

Participating Schools
Iddings Elementary School
Merrillville Intermediate School
Miller Elementary School





Traditional Box Tops clips are being phased out, but may continue to be found on many products throughout stores. Clip and send them to school.

Scan your receipts with Box Tops merchandise using the free app you can download from the app store. You'll earn money for your school.

The app will find participating products purchased at any store and instantly add cash earnings online.

Participating Schools
Iddings Elementary School
Miller Elementary School
Salk Elementary School
Wood Elementary School



Career Day presents options to students

Oct. 24 Career Day at Pierce Middle School, sponsored by Junior Achievement, featured many guest speakers representing different professions who took over classes and talked to students about their experiences in the workforce.

Students learned more about the opportunities available to them once they graduate high school.

Types of professions presented included technology, electrician, chef, national park service, education, firefighting, state police, banking, trades and more!



State Trooper R. Williams talks to middle schoolers about career opportunities in law enforcement.

College & Career Fair connects seniors to opportunities

More than 300 registered students attended the Oct. 24 MHS College & Career Fair.

Students and parents from the area connected with representatives from colleges, trade schools, employers, and the military from Indiana and neighboring states to learn about opportunities beyond graduation!

Some of the exhibitors that participated included: American College of Massage, Eastern Illinois University, American Academy of Art, Calumet College of St. Joseph, Manchester University, Franklin College, Goshen College, Indiana Wesleyan University, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Ivy Tech, Northwestern Illinois University, St. Mary's College Notre Dame, Vincennes University, Wabash College, University of Saint Francis Fort Wayne, Pipe Fitter's Union, Arcelor Mittal, and U.S. military: Army, Marines, National Guard, and Navy.







Free performance of competition show

Thespian Troupe #1692 will compete in the Regional Competition with their performance of “Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind,” by Greg Allen.

They will hold a FREE PUBLIC PERFORMANCE of this show at 6 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 21, in the small theatre of Merrillville High School, 276 East 68th Pl. Use Doors L or M.

Come out and see this award winning group and wish them good luck in the upcoming Hobart competition.

Photo from the fall play “Ash Girl.”

Festive holiday music coming soon

What do you need to get into the holiday spirit?

If it's music you need, Merrillville schools will get you in the festive spirit. Come out and enjoy the talents of these students at these holiday events.

All concerts will take place at Reinhart Auditorium, located at the High School, 276 East 68th Pl., except the Pierce/MIS choral concert. Enter through Door M of MHS to get to the auditorium.

Choir

Join the Merrillville High School choirs as they present the "Sounds of the Season - Christmastime is Here," at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 19.

The event will feature the MHS Concert Choir, Noteables, and Choralteens under the direction of Melinda Reinhart.

MHS Choir alumni are invited to join the groups on stage for the finale "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's Messiah. This is a 60+ year old Merrillville Choir tradition you won't want to miss.

Admission for the concert is $5 for all seats. A family pass is available for $20 at the box office of the auditorium.

A separate concert showing off the talents of students at Pierce Middle School and Merrillville Intermediate School will take place in the Pierce cafeteria at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 10. Attendees should enter through door 5; admission is free!

Orchestra

Festive music awaits at the Thursday, Dec. 12, holiday concerts at 6:30 p.m. and again at 8:15 p.m.

Six different orchestras with students in grades 6-12 will perform seasonal music: Merrillville Intermediate School sixth grade orchestra makes its debut, under the direction of Melissa Walker; seventh and eighth grade orchestras, under the direction of Bethany Borgo; and MHS beginning, intermediate and advanced, under the direction of Diane Rosenthal.

Tickets are $6 adults, $2 students and seniors, MCSC employees free with ID.

Band

Festive music awaits at the Tuesday, Dec. 10 holiday concerts.

At 6:30 p.m.: MIS sixth grade band and the Pierce seventh grade band will perform; at 8 p.m.: Pierce eighth grade band and the MHS Advanced Band.

Admission is a donation of one canned food item per person for the Ross Township Food Pantry.



Beautiful voices at a beautiful venue: The Merrillville High School Choralteens led off the Oct. 19 Northwest Indiana Choral Festival, held at the Valparaiso University Chapel of the Resurrection, which featured nine other choirs, as well as the VU Chorale.

Tune in to Fieler bedtime stories

Each night Fieler Elementary School posts bedtime stories read by different staff members on its YouTube channel.

Tune in and check it out!



Newsletter Notes

We hope you've enjoyed this edition of Pirate Pride. If you have story ideas, questions or comments, please contact the Corporation's Public Information Officer at dstuckert@mvsc.k12.in.us or 219-650-5477.

K-6 students invited to Disney-themed fun fair

High School Y.E.S. Interact Club will sponsor "A Day At Disney!," a fun fair for Merrillville school K-6 students.

The event will take place from 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 21, in the freshman cafeteria. Attendees should enter through Door I.

Many MHS student organizations will be on hand to provide Disney-themed fun for attending families, including games, face painting, balloon animals, crafts and performances. Children must be accompanied by an adult. A concession stand will be available for snacks.

Admission is $5 per child or $10 per family (up to three children). All proceeds will be donated to charity. Y.E.S. Interact Club is affiliated with Rotary.

Pictured: Last year's theme was Dr. Seuss!



Sports highlights include:

2019 State Runner Up Girl's 4X100 team were presented with their rings at the Oct. 18 football game. The relay included, from left to right: Caiyla Davis, Romella Bozeman, Raina Jenkins, Payton McHenry, Jordan Yanders





Merrillville defeated Crown Point in the Class 6A Sectional 1 final to advance to the regional, set for 6:30 p.m. Friday against Warsaw at Demaree Stadium.

Annual Trick-or-Treat event moved inside

Nearly 400 Merrillville K-6 students participated in the annual Track-or-Treat, held in the high school fieldhouse Oct. 30 due to cold, rainy weather.

Sponsored by MHS student athletes, a total of 31 student groups dressed up and served up treats to all the kids.

Everyone stayed warm and dry!







