Pirate Pride

The Newsletter of the
Merrillville Community School Corporation
September 2020

A Message from the Superintendent

Dear Parents, Students, Staff and Community Members,

Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year. While the start of the school year may look different than in past years, the excitement for a new year is still very high. We are excited and enthusiastic about welcoming back our staff and students even if it is virtually at this time.

I want to thank each and every one of you for your patience and understanding, as this has not been the traditional beginning to a school year. Principals, teachers, and staff are fully aware of the challenges we are all facing this year. Our staff is hard working and dedicated to help students learn and succeed at a high level as well as supporting parents as they support their children. Teachers have been attending professional development to ensure the virtual experience provides students meaningful interactions as well as high quality learning experiences. We look forward to partnering with parents to meet their children's needs.

There are many resources available to parents as we meet the challenges of this school year. Please be sure to reach out to your teacher or principal if you have needs or questions. They can help you with access to available resources.

Here is a quick bulleted list of some parent and family resources:

- Our Food Service Department is providing both hot and cold meals for students to be served at home.
- We have a technology help hotline: email **helpdesk@mvsc.k12.in.us** or call 219-650-5376.
- Our social workers are available to provide support to students and families.
- Teachers and support staff are working with children daily and can be reached via email or telephone with questions.
- Parents please let your principal know if you are having connectivity issues in your home with the internet.
- Opportunities for supervision assistance during Virtual Academy through Adventure Club and Boys and Girls Club are available. Parents can contact their school for additional details.

As we face this unusual school year, I know that working together we will be successful supporting our students' needs. The entire staff at the Merrillville Community School Corporation misses the students being in the classrooms. It is our goal to monitor the pandemic situation closely and strive to get our students back to school as safely as possible. Stay safe, healthy and Pirate Strong!

Sincerely,

Nicholas G. Brown, Ed.S.
Superintendent

Introducing our new teachers!

MERRILLVILLE INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

- Dayna Bacon, Music/Choir
- Madison Bell, 5th Grade
- Amelia Hiestand, 6th Grade - Math
- Leah Johnson, EL
- Kyleigh McCoy, 6th Grade Sci/SS
- Kortina Gates, 6th Grade
- Tijana Raketic, Art
- Melissa Walker, Music/Orch

IDDINGS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- Catherine Augustyn, 2nd Grade
- Kasey Hartzell, 1st Grade
- Kristina Kostides, 2nd Grade

PIERCE MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Magdelana Ahearn, English
- Valerie Johnsen, Art
- Edyta Nurek, Science/Grade 8/Yellow
- Karlee Peloza, Social Studies
- Zachary Waters, Social Studies/Grade 8
- Patricia Weil, English
- Lily Wisniewski, Math/Grade 7/Green
- Colin Yarnelle, Social Studies
- Elizabeth Hardy, FACS
- Brent Jones, PE
- Joseph Traina, Science
- Marc Ulrich, EP

MERRILLVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

- Tiffany Dillner, Science - Chem/Physics
- Angela Escobedo, World Lang/Spanish
- Antoine Lewis, Business
- Sandra Lozano Leon, Spanish
- John Robinson, AFJROTC
- Emily Rothbauer, Science
- Hannah Gaffney, FACS
- Sonja Pierson, Business

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

Thomas G. Bainbridge
President

Judy C. Dunlap
Vice-President

Mark S. Lucas
Secretary

Linda C. Jonaitis
Member

James Donohue
Member

SUPERINTENDENT

Nicholas G. Brown, Ed.S.

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.

MILLER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mark Blank, PE

SALK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- Jacqueline Fielder, 4th Grade
- Christine Zylstra, Art
- Camryn Rassbach, 1st Grade

FIELER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- Katie Green, 4th Grade
- Meagan Hanchar, 1st Grade
- Megan Krug, 4th Grade
- Jade Mickey, Head Start

Click here to order your spirit wear to show off your PIRATE PRIDE!

Civic arts pathway provides new option for MHS students

Merrillville High School offers a new way for its students to use their artistic talents and interests in preparing for their futures.

The Indiana Department of Education recently approved the school's application to utilize the Civic Arts Pathway, giving its students the opportunity to earn their diplomas through a combination of fine and performing arts classes.



MHS band students are now able to earn their diplomas through a combination of fine and performing arts classes.

Students will use this locally created pathway to fulfill the employable skills and the postsecondary-ready competencies for the Indiana State graduation requirements.

Although career fields within the Civic Arts Pathway cannot be defined by high wage or high demand, they are of high value and high passion in the region, according to administrators at the Merrillville Community School Corporation.

"Our teachers' conviction that arts should play a fundamental role in boosting the opportunities of all populations throughout our public school curriculum was the driving force of this application to the state," said Marnita Taylor, executive director of curriculum and instruction. "By connecting students to civic arts programs, their talents are further developed, maintained and supported which leads to future successes in civic arts fields of study and careers."

Current MHS students primed to meet the requirements can take immediate advantage of this new pathway, which consists of fine arts classes, visual arts and art history, and performing arts classes; band, orchestra, theater and choir.

This pathway incorporates project-based learning, providing students with a foundation for an e-portfolio where their experiences can be captured, maintained and built upon for future years.

"Merrillville High School has had a state-recognized fine arts and performing arts program for many years," said Mike Krutz, MHS principal. "The Civic Arts Pathway will allow us to strengthen our programs and give students the ability to do what they love.

"Our goal is to always allow our students the ability to express themselves through the arts and to pursue their passion toward the path of success," he said.

High school engages in new relationship with Amazon

Merrillville High School graduate Jerry Walker got more support than he bargained for to remotely complete his AP computer science exam last spring.

When his personal laptop crashed days prior to taking the test last spring, Walker reached out to his MHS teacher Mr. Niksich for help and came away with a new personal computer, compliments of the Amazon Future Engineer Program.

"He's a great student," Niksich said. "I'm glad it worked out."

According to Mr. Niksich, last year was the first year MHS has been associated with Amazon's Program. In order to participate, schools must go through an application and interview process.

"Along with scholarships and other opportunities, Amazon is making laptops available free of charge for students to keep," said Mr. Niksich.

The goal of the program is to increase awareness and participation in computer science classes in schools like Merrillville High School, he said.

"It's also a way for Amazon to give back," Mr. Niksich added.



2020 MHS graduate Jerry Walker

According to Walker, the computer arrived quickly, and as his mom Parmella added, "in the nick of time."

"It happened really fast," said Walker. "As soon as I contacted them, I got it in like two days."

"I was going to get him one as a graduation gift," his mom said. But he couldn't wait.

"It's not a reflection of our Technology Department, as they did a phenomenal job getting devices out to kids," said Mr. Niksich. "In this situation, I think Jerry felt he didn't need one through school."

Walker is going into computer science and run track and field for Indiana Tech, where he was awarded a scholarship. His goal is to learn more about web design, graphic design and software development.

Merrillville High School offers a well-rounded and diverse computer science curriculum, according to Mr. Niksich, including an introduction computer science class that includes programming in Python, more advanced classes in Java, databases, and IC3 certification.

"In 2021, we hope to add a cyber security class and another AP class, computer science principles," he said.

They also hope to tour one of Amazon's fulfillment centers, another perk of the Amazon Future Engineer Program.

MCSC Virtual Academy Resources



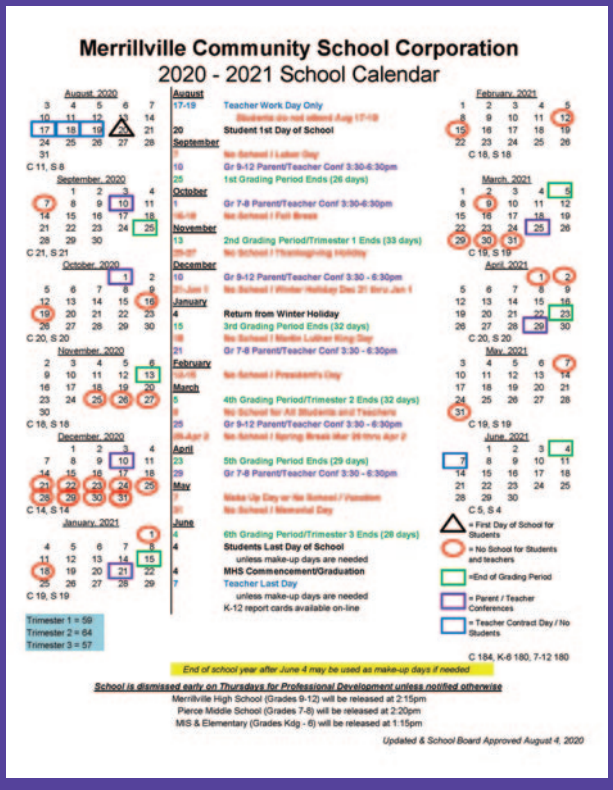
Click the areas for documents and information you'll need for success!

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The MCSC Virtual Academy will provide instruction to students during traditional school times. Providing the best possible education for our students requires a partnership between students, teachers, and parents. The MCSC Virtual Academy provides families with a fulltime comprehensive, interactive learning experience created through technology in which the student is separated from the teacher.

DOWNLOAD THE LATEST 2020-21 SCHOOL CALENDAR

(updated Aug. 4)



Merrillville Community School Corporation

2020 - 2021 School Calendar

August 17-19 Teacher Work Day Only

Students do not attend Aug 17-19

20 Student 1st Day of School

September 7 No School / Labor Day

10 Gr 9-12 Parent/Teacher Conf 3:30-6:30pm

25 1st Grading Period Ends (26 days)

October 1 Gr 7-8 Parent/Teacher Conf 3:30-6:30pm

12-16 No School / Fall Break

November 13 2nd Grading Period/Trimester 1 Ends (33 days)

25-27 No School / Thanksgiving Holiday

December 10 Gr 9-12 Parent/Teacher Conf 3:30 - 6:30pm

21-Jan 1 No School / Winter Holiday Dec 21 thru Jan 1

January 4 Return from Winter Holiday

15 3rd Grading Period Ends (32 days)

18 No School / Martin Luther King Day

21 Gr 7-8 Parent/Teacher Conf 3:30 - 6:30pm

February 15-19 No School / President's Day

March 5 4th Grading Period/Trimester 2 Ends (32 days)

9 No School for All Students and Teachers

25 Gr 9-12 Parent/Teacher Conf 3:30 - 6:30pm

29-Apr 2 No School / Spring Break Mar 29 thru Apr 2

April 23 5th Grading Period Ends (29 days)

29 Gr 7-8 Parent/Teacher Conf 3:30 - 6:30pm

May 7 Make Up Day or No School / Flexible

31 No School / Memorial Day

June 4 6th Grading Period/Trimester 3 Ends (28 days)

4 Students Last Day of School unless make-up days are needed

4 MHS Commencement/Graduation

7 Teacher Last Day unless make-up days are needed

K-12 report cards available on-line

Trimester 1 = 59

Trimester 2 = 64

Trimester 3 = 57

△ = First Day of School for Students

○ = No School for Students and teachers

▭ = End of Grading Period

▭ = Parent / Teacher Conferences

▭ = Teacher Contract Day / No Students

C 184, K-6 180, 7-12 180

End of school year after June 4 may be used as make-up days if needed

School is dismissed early on Thursdays for Professional Development unless notified otherwise

Merrillville High School (Grades 9-12) will be released at 2:15pm

Pierce Middle School (Grades 7-8) will be released at 2:20pm

MS & Elementary (Grades Kdg - 6) will be released at 1:15pm

Updated & School Board Approved August 4, 2020

ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



STUDENT ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES

Learn the requirements during the virtual learning experience.

SUPERVISION ASSISTANCE FOR BUSY PARENTS

- Adventure Club K-4
- Boys & Girls Club

FOOD SERVICE:

General food service program information



Electronic devices and internet connectivity

CHROMEBOOK/iPADS:

*** Responsible Use Policy * Chromebook Use Policy * Chromebook Insurance**

TECHNOLOGY HELP DESK: helpdesk@mvsc.k12.in.us or call 219-650-5376

INTERNET CONNECTIVITY

- Comcast, which owns Xfinity, offers **Internet Essentials**, an internet access program that is normally $9.95 a month:
- Access from **AT&T provides low-cost internet** service for eligible households.
- Charter Communications will offer **Spectrum Internet Assist**, a program offering low-cost broadband internet.
- A limited number of hot spots are available to Merrillville students. Please contact your school if interested.
- Free Wi-Fi is available in the parking lots of all Lake County libraries



DOWNLOAD OUR APP

Merrillville school information is available at your fingertips.

See all the events in the district or select an individual building.

Find out what bus your student rides and the rules and regulations of Transportation.

Get links to Family Access, Food Services, District Calendars and more!

The app can be downloaded at the Apple and Google Play stores.

Available on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play

Box Tops help our schools

Traditional Box Tops clips are being phased out, but may continue to be found on many products throughout stores. Clip and save them for 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! All Merrillville schools participate, except the high school.

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



Merrillville Education Foundation funds 10 projects in schools

Ten grants supporting Merrillville Community School Corporation programs that encourage educational innovation, promote excellence and create educational opportunities for students were recently awarded by the Merrillville Education Foundation. The award money totaled $7,943.11.

At Salk Elementary School, Technology Aide Kevin Kerr will use the funding to renew the program Classkick for teachers to use with their students.

Classkick is an interactive web-based application that supports teacher creativity and classroom feedback, allowing the teachers to see each student's screen whether they are using an iPad or Chromebook. Teachers can monitor students' actions and provide instant feedback.

Miller Elementary School Fourth Grade Teacher Heather Barsich won grant money to purchase "Storyworks," a print magazine with extensive digital resources to supplement the English and language arts curriculum.

Miller Elementary School Dean of Students Toni Blaszczyk and Social Worker Nancy Fleming were awarded funding for Classroom Amygdala Stations that use sensory activities and books. The stations will teach children how to build self-awareness and effectively handle their emotions by properly utilizing the tools and strategies to help them get back into the right mindset for learning.

In addition, Wood Elementary School Fourth Grade Teacher Morgan Vlassopoulos won funding to purchase Flocabulary, a creative, multisensory form of instruction that will benefit all students at the school, including special education and English language learners.

Flocabulary integrates with Google classroom and offers fun, engaging pedagogy that supplements teachers' direct instruction. It can be used as an introduction to a topic, as a review, and as a for mal or informal assessment.

Since 2002, the Merrillville Education Foundation has awarded 435 grants to teachers totaling $372,082.66. These grants have impacted more than 119,426 education experiences for students in grades K through 12.

Vlassopoulos also won funding for her program "DynaMath for DynaPirates" for both Wood and Miller Elementary School fourth grade students. DynaMath is an offshoot of the "Scholastic News" magazine, offering high-powered math instruction that incorporates language arts standards through a combination of non-fiction reading and problem-solving practice.

DynaMath uses real-world problems to teach math, which helps students connect standards to real-life situations, and offers educators another way to keep students engaged through small group, whole group, peer group work and even individualized, independent instruction.

Merrillville Intermediate School's Nicole Perez, K-6 college and career readiness counselor, was awarded grant money for her program "Out in the Garden," a project for students to grow their own seedlings in the classrooms and monitor their growth.

The hands-on experience will incorporate both math and science and intro-

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Ways you can support Merrillville schools

By supporting the Merrillville Education Foundation, you help provide Merrillville students with additional educational programs. Support the Merrillville Education Foundation by purchasing a "Committed to Education" License Plate from the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

Besides publicly showing your support for education by displaying your plate, a portion of your license registration fee will make its way to MEF available grant monies.

For more information about the Committed to Education License Plate program, visit the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles: www.in.gov/bmv/2620.htm

You can also support Merrillville Schools through Amazon Smile! Supporting Merrillville students is only one click away!

When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to the Merrillville Education Foundation.

Be sure to choose Merrillville Education Foundation as your favorite charitable organization.



amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.

Merrillville Education Foundation funds 10 projects in schools

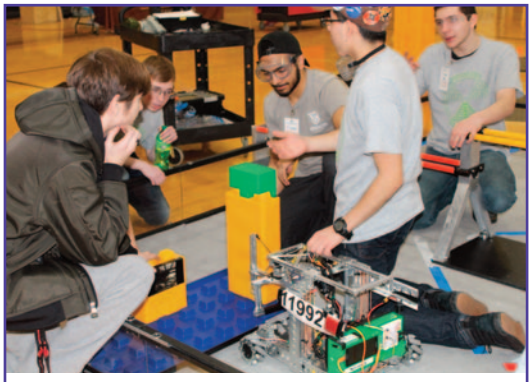
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duce them to careers in environmental and agricultural systems and how those careers tie-in to the vegetable gardens.

MIS Fifth Grade Teacher Joy Kent also received funding to purchase two Qballs and covers to increase student engagement in the classroom. The Qball is a portable, throwable microphone ball made of soft durable foam. Kent will use it to help students improve and share their understanding of concepts taught and advance their social and emotional growth through interactions with peers and teachers.

MIS Special Education Teachers Harmony Hofstra and Jeanine Harley won funding for their "Coffee Cart" program for Autism and Intense classrooms. The program helps students develop and continue to work on their social, functional and academic skills. Students, staff and school climate will benefit from this real-world opportunity.

Merrillville High School Robotics Team Mentor Charles Seligman won funding for the Robotics Team to replace the control system of the robots for the next season. The control system includes the replacement of the telephones, the main means of communication between the robot and the students and will give students a chance to learn how to solve complex problems at every competition.


MHS Robotics Club members at the 2020 competition in Griffith.

Lastly, Director of Media Services Janelle Bowen received a grant for building Little Free Libraries outside each of the Merrillville Schools and Central Office. Little Free Libraries are community libraries where people can take a book or share a book in the area where they live.

MHS students will build and paint the libraries using the theme "Merrillville pride; we are all readers." An MHS service club and MHS libraries will collect new and used books to fill them. Students as well as community members will be able to select or donate books.

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

Since 2002, the Merrillville Education Foundation has awarded 435 grants to teachers totaling $372,082.66. These grants have impacted more than 119,426 education experiences for students in grades K through 12.

The foundation is committed to being the primary private sector partner in supporting public education where public funds are not available in the Merrillville Community School Corporation.

Merrillville Education Foundation, Inc. is designated a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, and participates in a variety of ongoing fundraising events to generate monies for grants. All donations are tax deductible.

Pirates get new turf

The turf on the MHS football field was replaced last May, so our Pirates are playing football on brand- new turf this season.

The turf that was removed was 12 years old and had surpassed its life expectancy. The brand installed is Fieldturf.

As you can see by the photos, installing new turf is quite an undertaking. They actually sew the turf in every five yard sections.

Check out the field the next time you attend a football game.







Click here to watch the "*Spirit of '76 – The Complete Story of the 1976 Merrillville Pirates*," produced by Region-Sports.com



Pierce Middle School construction project completed

Clifford Pierce Middle School is sporting its new look. The $1.6 million construction project that brought the administrative offices to the front of the building and changed visitor traffic flow through the entrance was completed over summer.

The building project has increased the building's security. Now staff can better monitor visitors and see what's going on in front of the school. Administrators also have better access to the cafeteria, where additional supervision may be necessary.

The project created new offices for the principal, two assistant principals and dean of students; work areas for the office staff and receptionist; conference room for confidential meetings with parents; workspace and supply area; and also add utilities and ventilation.

Visiting parents also have increased access to administrators.

The bulk of the renovation was paid for by savings that resulted from refinancing a previous bond.

In addition, a small portion of the project cost was paid by the balance of a fund that was used to accumulate reimbursements from previous projects.







MERRILLVILLE
COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION

Bus Drivers Needed

Very Competitive Wages

Full-time benefits package available with Part-time hours.

Paid Training

Paid CDL Skills Test & DOT physicals

To apply on-line or for more information, visit our web page at
www.mvsc.k12.in.us/transportation

High School Robotics Team

All high school students are invited to join. Anyone interested can email cseligman@mvsc.k12.in.us



Verification of information confirms enrollment

If you haven't yet gone online to verify your information, please take a moment to complete this process.

Online verification of information is for all returning students, whether they participate in traditional or distance learning.

This information is used to update school records, provide a safe environment for children and confirm enrollment for the new school year.



All parents are requested to log into their accounts using Skyward Parent Access login and password to complete this process.

If you need a computer on which to complete this process, please feel free stop in at the Merrillville Community School Corporation Central Office, where you can use ours. The office is located at 6701 Delaware St.

Merrillville families with a change of address or incorrect address listed in Skyward Parent Access must visit their children's schools with verification of address. Families whose children attend multiple schools can simply visit the school of the oldest student.

Address verification can take the form of either driver's licenses, utility bills, mortgage statements or leases. For additional information regarding acceptable proofs of residency, parents can call their children's schools or visit the school website.

All school bus information for Merrillville Community School Corporation is based on the addresses listed in Skyward Family Access.

Online payment for student textbook fees for kindergarten through grade six are available through Skyward Parent Access; online payment for grades seven through 12 will be available beginning Sept. 14.

For more information, call the Merrillville Community School Corporation, 650-5300.

Miller Elementary principal sets 2020-21 Facebook Live read alouds



For the second year in a row, Miller Elementary School Principal Mrs. Griffin will be reading books to children on the Miller PTO Facebook Page, www.facebook.com/MillerSchool.PTO, using Facebook Live

Gather the family together and tune in every Tuesday at 6 p.m. beginning Sept. 8 to see what Mrs. Griffin will read next.

Before the pandemic hit, Mrs. Griffin took the Facebook Live Read Aloud to different locations, featuring local businesses of interest to families with young children. This photo was taken at Southlake Mall's Busy Bee Pottery & Arts Studio in March.

High school equivalency diplomas, preparation within reach

Merrillville Adult Education (MAE) can help individuals earn their High School Equivalency Diplomas by preparing them to complete the TASC (Test Assessing Secondary Completion) Test.

Upcoming TASC Test dates include Sept. 14 and 15, registration deadline Sept. 10; Sept. 28 and 29, registration deadline Sept. 24; and Oct. 12 and 13, registration deadline Oct. 8.

MAE's free TASC preparation classes are designed for students to go from their current knowledge to a point where passing the TASC test the first time is a reasonable goal.

Instruction is available Mondays through Thursdays, as long as the Lake County COVID-19 numbers allow. MAE also offers modified online classes.

TASC Preparation classes are not required prior to taking the TASC Test.

Free career training is available to those who qualify.

For more information, visit **www.mvsc.k12.in.us** or contact the Adult Education Office: 219-650-5318 or **sgreen@mvsc.k12.in.us**. MAE is located using the Door F entrance of Merrillville High School, 276 E. 68th Pl.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Sept. 10: Grades 9-12 Parent/Teacher Conferences, 3:30-6:30 p.m.

Sept. 25: First grading period ends

Oct. 1: Grades 7-8 Parent/Teacher Conferences, 3:30-6:30 p.m.

Oct. 16-19: No school/Fall Break

FOLLOW US!

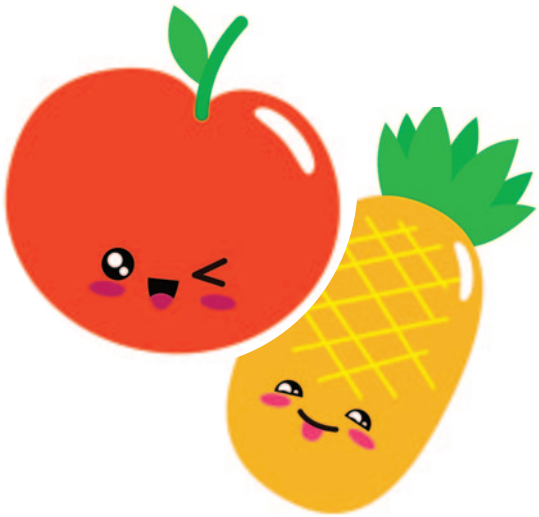
Merrillville School Superintendent @MerrillvilleSu3
Merrillville High School . . . . . .@MerrillvilleMHS
CTE Program . . . . . .@MerrillvilleCTE
Clifford Pierce Middle School . . .@PIERCEadmn
Merrillville Intermediate School . . .@mis_principal
Fieler Elementary School . . . . . .@FielerPirates
Iddings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

FREE & REDUCED LUNCH PROGRAM



If you were on the free or reduced meal program in 2019-2020 and have not reapplied for this school year, please be aware that your application will expire on Sept. 29.

If you are in need of this benefit, click here for more info.



Merrillville Community Schools

Head Start Preschool Enrollment!

If you are a resident in the Merrillville Community School Corporation boundaries with a preschool aged child, call to hear about the benefits of the Head Start program. Applications are being accepted now.



2020 - 2021 School Year

HEAD START AGE 3 or 4 on or before August 1, 2020

Questions? Call Lesley 219-756-5940

Officers in schools add more than extra safety



Det. Cpl. Allison Ellis



Cpl. Kevin Furman



Ofr. Mike Bunnell

Merrillville elementary schools will have their own school resource officer (SRO) this year, taking the total number of officers in the Merrillville Community School Corporation up to three.

Merrillville Police Detective Corporal Allison Ellis will visit all five elementary schools to provide positive support and resources to students and staff.

"We want to reach kids at young ages to let them know we are here to help," she said. "We are normal people wanting to make a difference."

The days of D.A.R.E. and G.R.E.A.T. programs are long gone, so school corporations like Merrillville work closely with their local police departments to create partnerships that benefit students and the community.

According to Merrillville Chief of Police Wiley Luther Cuttino, it's important for them to take this opportunity to show police officers in a positive light.

"Sometimes kids don't come in contact with police until they are riding in cars with their parents who get pulled over and given tickets for violations," Chief Cuttino said. "Then children are left with the impression of officers that parents give after those incidents, which are mostly unfavorable.

"Sometimes you can only reach the kids in school where they can see us in a whole different light," he said.

Det. Cpl. Ellis said even parents trying to control their children often unknowingly give officers a bad rap.

"I can't tell you how many times a parent will say to their children, 'if you don't behave, that officer over there is going to take you to jail,'" she said. "In a bad situation, we don't want kids to run away from us and toward the bad guys."

Chief Cuttino started with the Merrillville Police Department in 1994 and recently became the town's first African American Chief of Police. He said for years, police were called off the streets to MHS to write citations for tobacco use, creating negative experiences for some unfortunate students.

Chief Cuttino said an officer in school is always a great threat deterrent.

"We have excellent professionals on the scene," he said. "We go through constant training for different scenarios. We are always on alert."

Brad Best, director of security for Merrillville Community School Corporation, served as MHS school resource officer from 2004 to 2008.

According to Mr. Best, the benefits of having officers in the schools start with building positive relationships with students and staff.

"While the SRO's primary responsibility is safety, their duties can also include teacher, counselor and mentor," Mr. Best said. "As I gained experience and built relationships with the students as the SRO back in 2004, I found that the students were more comfortable approaching me with a question or some information related to school safety."

Mr. Best said most of his day as the SRO was spent interacting with the students during passing periods, lunch hours and after school.

"I would field a lot of questions about being in law enforcement and what they would have to do to become a police officer," he said. "There were also situations where students would want to talk privately about bullying, drugs and alcohol, and present information about criminal activity in the schools."

Officers may seem more approachable in schools for students to reach out to in order to discuss sensitive situations they many not want to discuss with parents or teachers, according to Chief Cuttino.

He says he's proud Det. Cpl. Ellis will serve in Merrillville Schools' newest role.

"I like to see diversity," he said. "Many females want to go into law enforcement. I have two daughters who graduated from MHS; one is a nurse, and the other is in law enforcement. One of the reasons she's in law enforcement is because she knew Det. Cpl. Ellis, as she was coming up."

During the 2019-20 school year, Officer Mike Bunnell became the first school resource officer at both Pierce Middle and Merrillville Intermediate schools, while Merrillville High School has had officers for more than 20 years. Currently, Corporal Kevin Furman serves in the role.

Who is an MHS Yearbook Photographer?

Students. Parents. Teachers. Coaches. You!

This year, more than ever, it will take everyone's help to capture the moment.

By taking and submitting candid photos throughout the year, you will make it possible for the Merrillville High School yearbook staff to create a terrific yearbook that covers all aspects of school and student life, no matter where we are.

We are looking for any and all photos of students. We want to see their hobbies, their talents, their fashion. Photos of them at work and with family. How they study and how they spend their free time.

It's easy to submit your photos online:

1. Just log into images.jostens.com
2. Enter login ID: 415466742
3. Browse to select the photo(s) that you wish to upload and click on "Select My Images."
4. Enter some information about the photo.
5. Click "Upload Chosen Images."
6. Bookmark the site to easily access next time!



Also, watch each week for emails about Photo Challenges -- where you can upload photos directly to a Google form about a certain topic.

If you have any questions, contact the MHS yearbook adviser, Alison Skertic, at askertic@mvsc.k12.in.us

You count!

The deadline to respond to the United States' decennial census is Sept. 30. If you have not responded to the census, please visit **my2020census.gov** and take 10 minutes to enter your information.

Along with distributing power at every level of government, the 2020 Census will also be used to allocate more than $675 billion annually to communities across our nation. In Indiana, an accurate census count means up to $30,000 per person in federal funding that our state will receive over the course of the next decade.

This federal funding will go towards programs that support education, healthcare, housing, transportation, emergency services, and more within your community, and everyone counts – regardless of immigration status.

Special offer on MHS yearbooks

If you are interested in ordering a MHS yearbook, take advantage of the early bird pricing.

Yearbooks are $60 through Sept. 16; if you purchase personalization for an extra $10, you will receive four icons for free.

The offer is good only through Sept. 16th. **Click here to order.**

Would you like to commemorate your senior in a special way? Senior ads are also 20% off through Sept. 30.

Information is also available from Jostens, just click on the link above.

Attention middle school parents, free virtual enrollment event

Have you heard about Indiana's 21st Century Scholars program?

It offers income-eligible Hoosier students up to four kidsyears of paid tuition at an eligible Indiana college or university after they graduate from high school, depending upon financial need.

21st Century Scholars is offering a free, virtual enrollment event where you can go to learn more about the program and find out everything you need to know about how to apply.

Tune in Wednesday, Sept. 9, 5 p.m. at **Facebook.com/LearnMoreIN**.

You can enroll your child in the program from the time they enter in 7th grade to June 30 of their 8th grade year.

For full requirements, including maximum annual income, visit Scholars.IN.gov/enroll. For more info, contact the 8th grade counselor, Kerry Wiersbe, **kwiersbe@mvsc.k12.in.us** or 650-5467 and 7th grade counselor, Aynnayka Davis, **adavis@mvsc.k12.in.us** or 650-5487.



MHS testing Info

- NMSQT/ PSAT (for 11th grades) will be Oct.14 for the top 100 juniors.
- PSAT 10 will be Jan. 26 for only the 10th graders

Family resources from our social workers

The MCSC Social Workers have created a **resource website for Merrillville families**.

Please note this is for information or questions and not emergencies.

Homework resources

Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology is once again offering FREE homework help in math and science for the 2020-2021 school year.

Call, chat or email, Sun-Thurs from 7-10 pm.

Access the link AskRose.org or call 877-Ask-Rose. AskRose.org

Every child. Every day. Whatever it takes.

Merrillville Community School Corporation

Virtual Learning Meal Distributions



Parents, drive through and pick up meals for your children. We offer both day and evening times on Mondays and Thursdays for your convenience. Go to any school listed; you do not have to go to the schools your children attend.

Like regular food service during school, meals will be charged to your Food Service accounts. Meals will be both cold and hot (heat at home).

In order to pick up meals: There must be funds in your student's meal account and you must have your student's name, home school and ID number.

DISTRIBUTIONS ON MONDAYS & THURSDAYS

DAY PICKUPS, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.:

Available at all schools except Merrillville High School; MHS students can pick up at any other schools.

LOCATIONS:

- Fieler Elementary School, 407 W. 61st Ave., Door C
- Iddings Elementary School, 7249 Van Buren St., Door L
- Merrillville Intermediate School, 1400 W. 61st Ave., Back door west of Door F
- Miller Elementary School, 5901 Waite St., Door A
- Pierce Middle School, 199 E. 70th St., west of Door 3
- Salk Elementary School, 300 W. 77th Ave., Door B
- Wood Elementary School, 6100 E. 73rd. Ave., Door C

EVENING PICKUPS, 5-6 p.m. :

ONLY available at these schools:

LOCATIONS (see addresses above):

- Merrillville Intermediate School
- Pierce Middle School
- Salk Elementary School



For more information, call 219-650-5300
or visit the MCSC website www.mvsc.k12.in.us.

Beyond 4 Walls Christian Center

875 S. Lake St. ~ Gary, IN

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