

Improvements & Promises Kept!

Ionia Public Schools (IPS) is continuing to implement our Strategic Plan's Shared Vision of Success by improving our facilities and infrastructure. Our Facilities Team meets monthly to prioritize our continuous improvements and updates to our schools, playgrounds, parking lots, roofs, and athletic facilities. Over the summer, we installed new basketball courts at Boyce Elementary and Rather Elementary. (cont. on pg. 2)



"Before" & "after" photos of one of Boyce Elementary's updated basketball courts

IONIA BULLDOG AQUATIC CENTER



We are excited to announce that our Ionia Bulldog Aquatic Center (IBAC) is now open! You can become an IBAC member by completing the registration at www.ioniaschools.org. Contact Mr. Barr with any questions at (616) 841 - 4004 or abar@ioniaschools.org.



The EXCEL is the official publication of the Ionia Public Schools (IPS). Copies are available in the IPS Central Office and on our website at www.ioniaschools.org.



Page 1 & 2 - Superintendent's Updates
Page 3 - Ionia Community Awareness
Page 4 & 5 - Ionia High School
Page 7 - Ionia Middle School
Page 14 & 15 - IPS Calendar

UPDATES FROM SUPERINTENDENT GURK

(continued from pg. 1) Thanks to the diligent work of Mr. Mike Avery and our maintenance team, our other summer projects included the following:



- Summer cleaning at all of our schools
- New carpet across our District
- New paint at Jefferson's main office, gym, restrooms, staff lounge, & several classrooms
- New paint at Twin Rivers in four classrooms and six restrooms
- New basketball nets and painted basketball polls at Emerson Elementary
- New paint and carpet in the Rather Media Center and five Rather classrooms
- New paint at IHS in several classrooms and 31 exterior doors
- New AC unit in the IHS trainer's room
- New IHS sign on Tuttle Rd.
- New windscreen at IHS tennis courts
- Successful State elevator inspections
- Successful fire safety inspections
- Successful HVAC primary maintenance
- Successful man lift & forklift safety inspections
- Successful repairs & inspections of our emergency generators
- Successful fire extinguisher pressure & hydrostatic testing
- New repaved parking lot at our Transportation Maintenance Data Center (TMDC)
- New SafeBolt door security system at TMDC
- Repaired IMS south wing parapet wall
- New safety handrail at Emerson Elementary west entry

Thanks to our Ionia Affiliated Athletic Boosters (IAAB), our IHS gym concession stand was remodeled and painted Bulldog Blue and Bulldog Gray!

Our administrators have also been busy this summer, having completed safety and security training with Dr. Margaret Coggins. Dr. Coggins is a former federal executive who has served nearly 20 years as a psychologist, senior manager for the U.S. Secret Service Office of Protective Research, and chief of its behavioral research program.

Our administrators also completed a book study regarding Generation Z, and completed training in the *Five Dimensions of Teaching and Learning* to support raising student achievement.

Have an inspired 2024 - 2025 school year!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Benjamin Gurk". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Benjamin Gurk

Inspire

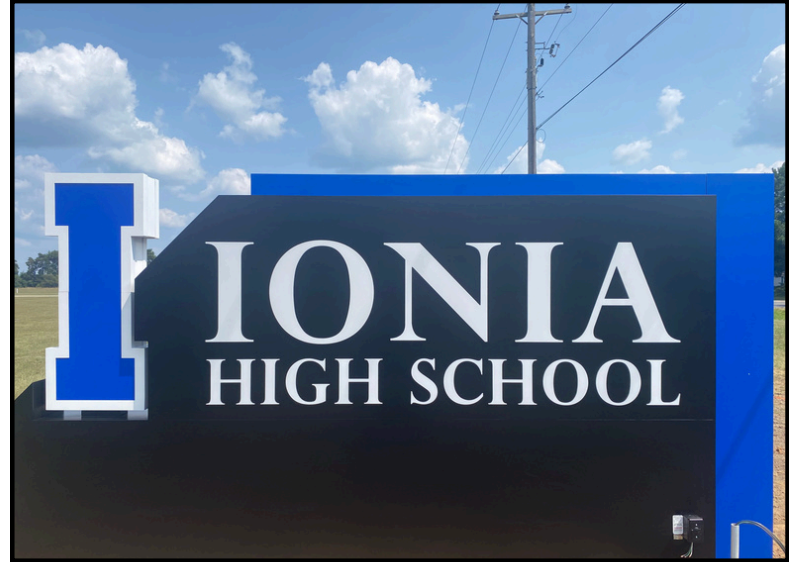


Persevere



Succeed

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENTS!



"Before and after" photos of the old broken sign(s) and new sign featuring our iconic Block I in Bulldog Blue. The new design was the result of months of collaboration between students, staff, parents, administration, our architecture firm and construction management firm.

ICA PURPLE WEEK Sept 22 - 28

IONIA COMMUNITY AWARENESS

Saturday, Sept. 7	Purple Golf Scramble, 10 am
Monday, Sept. 23	Purple Golf, 3:30 pm
Tuesday, Sept. 24	Purple Volleyball, 6 pm
Tuesday, Sept. 24	Purple Soccer, 7 pm
Wednesday, Sept. 25	Purple Tennis, 4 pm
Thursday, Sept. 26	Purple Swim, 6 pm
Friday, Sept 27	Purple Football Game, 7 pm
Saturday, Sept. 28	Cruisin' For A Cause, 7 - 9 pm, \$10 per car/vehicle
Date/Time TBA	Caitlin Cusack, "You Carry Me" video project



SIT. STAY. HEAL.



See *Ionia Community Awareness (Purple Week)* on Facebook for more information

Ionia High School

We are excited to welcome our new Ionia High School staff members!



Mr. Kevin Zschak
Special Education



Mrs. Carmen Bieske
Counselor



Mr. Jacob Raleigh
Social Studies



Ms. Jennifer Johnson
Special Education



Mrs. Dawn Farrell
Principal's Secretary



Ms. Mira Zaranek
Math



Ms. Adriana Dent
College & Career Advisor



Mrs. Shannon Nevills
Teacher Consultant



Mrs. Bridget Martin
Special Education Para

IHS IONIA HIGH SCHOOL

Our maintenance and custodial teams have been busy making the school look its best for the start of the 2024-2025 school year with new carpet installation, drywall repair, painting, and deep cleaning!



Freshman orientation was well attended on August 15th. LINK Crew members and their advisors, Ms. Tackmann and Mrs. Dahms, led students through a variety of activities to help with the transition to IHS.



IHS FAMILY SCHOOL GUILD VIRTUAL MEETINGS

September 18, 6:00 pm

October 23, 6:00 pm

November 20, 6:00 pm

December 18, 6:00 pm



Scan to Join!

IONIA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS

Our student-athletes have continued demonstrating GRIT in the classroom and on the athletic fields! We are proud of our coaches, parents, and Ionia Affiliated Athletic Boosters, whose continued support is integral to our success.

We are very grateful for the inspired leadership provided by IPS graduates Matthew McCoy, Alex Barr, and Carter Castillo who earned MHSAA Baseball All-State Honors! They also served as our team captains and helped lead our team to a District Championship and a subsequent win over Harper Creek (ranked 11th in the State) in the Regional round.



Our Fall Trap Team season begins on September 15 and ends on October 20. Participants must register online with USA High School Clay Target League; the registration deadline is September 9 at 12 pm central time. If you are under 18, a parent or guardian will need to register for you. The Trap Team is open to IPS students in 6th through 12th grades. To register, go to www.claytargetgo.com and click on AMS, then register as a new athlete, team code ioa382. If you have signed up in the past, log in under your preexisting profile.

Once your profile is created, we will be able to invite you to take the online SAFE Range Safety Training that MUST be completed before the season starts or any live fire practice. If you did this in the past, then you will not have to do it again. Once the online portion is completed, print your certificate and bring it to the first practice along with your eye protection, ear protection, shotgun, and ammunition. We will then complete the Range Safety Field Day portion and will be able to begin live fire practice. Practice will begin Sunday, September 15 at 4:00 pm at the Western Michigan Rifle and Pistol Club on Lincoln Ave in Ionia. All participants will need to provide their own ammunition; there is a 20 and 12-gauge shotgun available to those who may need it. Students will need 50 rounds (2 boxes per night) and pay the West Michigan Rifle and Pistol Club \$5.00 per round (\$10 per night). Participants also must use factory ammunition; no hand loads are allowed per league rules. Eye and ear protection are mandatory, and no open-toed shoes or sandals are allowed.



Estin Lyons and Dalton Badder earned All - State Honors!

Please contact Coach Joe White at Jwhite4780@yahoo.com with questions. We look forward to having a safe and fun season!

IONIA MIDDLE SCHOOL

We are excited to welcome the following teachers and staff to Ionia Middle School!



Loren Preuss
6th grade



Brandi Alpizar
6th grade



Haley Lloyd
6th grade



Tia Halstead
6th grade SE



Katie Dipzinski
6th & 7th grade SE



Karine Walters
8th grade ELA



Karissa Hutton
7th Grade Math



David Moreno
7th Grade Math



Mason Hemmila
7th Grade Science



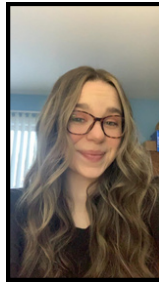
Tony Ellison
Computers



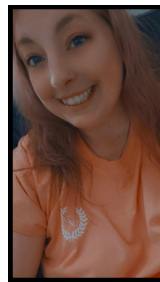
Amber Nicholson
STEM



Audra Leland
Paraprofessional



Julia Kananen
Paraprofessional



Danielle Speckin
Paraprofessional

IMS PTG Meetings (Library)

September 4, 6:00 pm

October 2, 6:00 pm

November 6, 6:00 pm

December 4, 6:00 pm

We are so proud of and grateful for our new carpet, fresh Bulldog Blue and Bulldog Gray paint, and furniture throughout our school!



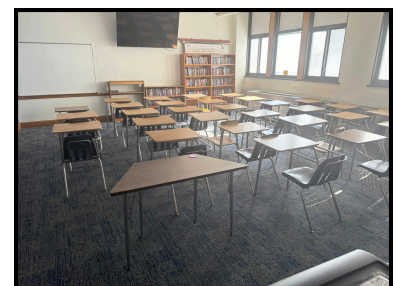
Hallway of HEROes



Conference Rooms



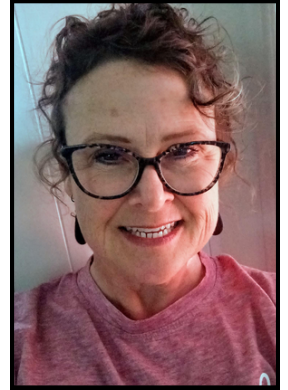
Classrooms



BOYCE WILDCATS

We are excited to welcome some new faces to Boyce Elementary! Help us give them a warm welcome to our Wildcat Family!

Meet Amy Larsen! She is super excited to be starting her first year at Boyce Elementary, where she will teach kindergarten. This is her 22nd year as a classroom teacher. Her favorite thing about teaching kindergarten is seeing students' tremendous academic and social growth throughout the school year. A few things she loves besides teaching are kayaking, reading, running, and her dog, Princess.

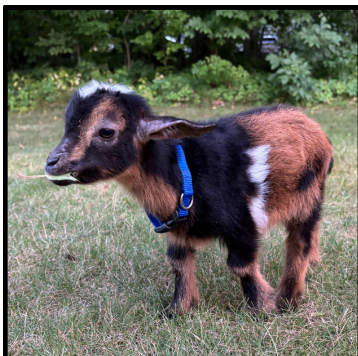


Meet Victoria Ruhlig! She is a recent graduate of Ferris State University and the new second-grade teacher. She is super excited to be joining the Ionia family and becoming part of the community! She is looking forward to getting to know her students and helping them grow and learn throughout the school year.

Meet Toni McPherson! She is the new Behavior Specialist. This is her first year working at Boyce; she has spent the last 33 years working with students at the ISD. She is excited to join our family and create a positive environment for children. She just celebrated her 39th wedding anniversary. She has one son who recently got engaged. She enjoys gardening, cooking, outdoor activities, and sports.



Boyce is continuing to expand our Outdoor Adventure Club! We added two pygmy goats, updated our hoop house with garden boxes and flowers, and have a bird-watching area and butterfly garden!



Meet Rocky and Raya!



Updated Boyce Outdoor Adventure Hoop House!

JEFFERSON JAGUARS

Our Jefferson team is gearing up for another outstanding year! Join us in welcoming new team members to the Jaguar family!



Alexandra Naab - Secretary



Rachel Osheka - Kindergarten



Beth Johnson - 5th Grade



Allie Lanz- Paraprofessional



Jennifer Miller - Paraprofessional



Makenna Waterman
Paraprofessional



New paint in our gym!



New classroom carpet!

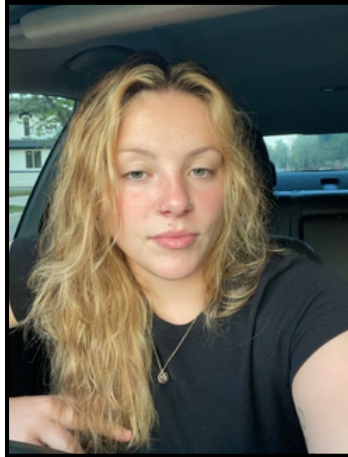
EMERSON EAGLES

Welcome to an exciting new school year. This year we are embracing our inner superheroes! As Eagles, we S.O.A.R. into new challenges and victories. Together, we'll harness our superpowers to create a safer, more empowered, and more respectful community. Let's make this year legendary by soaring to new heights!

Please help us welcome Emerson's new team members:



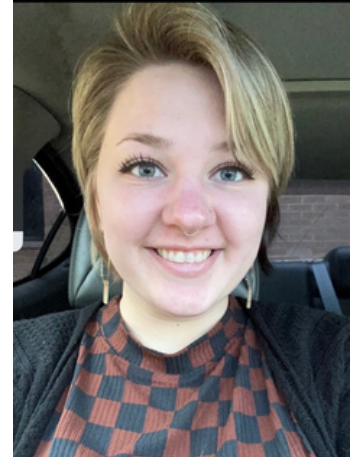
Emma Kapp
Paraprofessional



Mackenzie Patrick
Paraprofessional



Jessica Wittenbach
Paraprofessional



Lexie Bowerman
Paraprofessional



Safety & security additions at
entrance



Updated polls & nets



New carpeting

Safety **O**wnership **A**chievement **R**espect



RATHER RAMS

It has been such an amazing, busy summer at Rather Elementary School! We are very blessed and grateful to welcome the following educators to our staff:



Jessica Lafler - 1st Grade



Melissa Seldon - 1st Grade



Allison Karasch - 2nd Grade

We made many building improvements and updates at Rather Elementary over summer break:



Updated landscaping in our front circle drive!



New carpet & paint in several classrooms!



New basketball court surfacing on our playground!



New carpet & paint in our media center/library!

TWIN RIVERS PANTHERS

Twin Rivers freshened up many of our rooms with new paint and flooring this summer. We would like to welcome our new staff this year.



Rebecca Bertie - 1st Grade



Leslie Thomas - 3rd Grade



Kyanne Root - 3rd-5th ASD



Karlee Thomas - K-2 ASD



Lacey Spohn
One-on-one Parapro



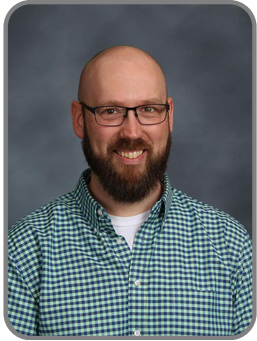
New carpet and paint!



Emily Smalley - Secretary

WELCH WARRIORS

It is hard to believe that summer is coming to an end, but our Douglas R. Welch team is excited to welcome students back for the 2024-2025 school year!



Jason Little
Principal/Social Studies



Julie Blair
Science



Marti Gladding-Bennett
Virtual Mentor



Kathy Beebe
Secretary



Chad Rhynard
English Teacher



Michelle Tackmann
Math Teacher



Jay Sherman
Virtual Mentor



Our cafeteria has been transformed into a more exciting space following a recent renovation, which included a fresh coat of blue and light gray paint, and the installation of new bulletin boards. More upgrades are to come in phase two!



Important Dates

August 21 - First day of school - 1/2 day

October 2 - Count Day

October 19 & 17 - Parent Teacher Conferences

May 16, 2025 - D.R. Welch Graduation



Follow us on Facebook!

IPS 2024-2025 Calendar

August 2024							August 2024	
S	M	T	W	T	F	S		
				1	2	3	14	New Teacher Orientation
							13	6th-8th Grade Orientation
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	19	Staff PD All Day
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	20	Staff Welcome Back 1/2 day AM
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	21	First Day for Students 1/2 Day All
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	30	No School

September 2024							September 2024	
S	M	T	W	T	F	S		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	2	Labor Day No School
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	20	1/2 Day Students/PM PLC
15	16	17	18	19	20	21		
22	23	24	25	26	27	28		
29	30							

October 2024							October 2024	
S	M	T	W	T	F	S		
							2	Student Count Day
							14	PTC K-5 5:00-7:30 PM
		1	2	3	4	5	15	PTC 6-8 5:00 - 7:00 PM
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	16	PTC 9-12 5:00-7:00 PM
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	17	Students AM
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	PTC K-12 1-4PM, 5-7PM
27	28	29	30	31			18	No School

November 2024							November 2024	
S	M	T	W	T	F	S		
					1	2	1	Staff PD All Day
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	15	No School
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	27-29	Thanksgiving Break
17	18	19	20	21	22	23		
24	25	26	27	28	29	30		

December 2024							December 2024	
S	M	T	W	T	F	S		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	19	Students AM Staff Records PM
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	20	Students AM Staff Records PM
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	20	End of First Semester
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	23-31	Winter Break
29	30	31						

IPS 2024-2025 Calendar

January 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

- 1-3 Winter Break
- 6 First Day for Students 1/2 Day All
- 20 Staff PD

February 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

- 12 Student Count Day
- 14 Staff PD All Day
- 17 Mid-Winter Break - No School

March 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

- 10 PTC K-5 5:00-7:30 PM
- 11 PTC 6-8 5:00-7:00 PM
- 12 PTC 9-12 5:00-7:00 PM
- 13 Students AM PTC K-8 1-4, 5-7PM
- 13 PTC 9-12 1:00-3:30, 5-7 PM
- 14 No School
- 28 1/2 Students/ PM PLC

April 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

- 4 No School
- 7-11 Spring Break
- 18 No School - Good Friday
- 23 Freshman Welcome 6:30-7:30 PM
- 23 Freshman Welcome Staff 6-7:30 PM

May 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

- 23 Staff PD
- 26 Memorial Day

June 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

- 3-5 Students AM Staff Full Day
- 5 Last Day Students Half Day All

I IONIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

250 E. Tuttle Rd
Ionia, MI 48846

24 Hour Attendance Lines

Boyce Elementary 616 - 527 - 8011

Emerson Elementary 616 - 527 - 8045

Jefferson Elementary 616 - 527 - 8048

Rather Elementary 616 - 527 - 8033

Twin Rivers Elementary 616 - 522 - 0007

Ionia Middle School 616 - 527 - 8044

Ionia High School 616 - 527 - 2780

D.R. Welch High School 616 - 527 - 3530

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