

IMPROVING TRANSPORTATION SAFETY!

To enhance safety, route efficiency, and parent communication, we are partnering with BusRight, a school bus technology company that offers a bus-tracking app for parents. The BusRight Parent App allows you to track your child's bus in real time, directly from your phone. If you are the parent/guardian of a bus rider, you'll be able to create an account and view your child's bus route, live stop ETAs, and receive notifications when your child's bus starts its trip and arrives at its stop. *Continued on page 2*

Parent App Goes Live in March 2025!

We plan to launch our parent bus-tracking app to the IPS community in March 2025! We'll send you an email that walks you through creating an account.

View your Child's Routes

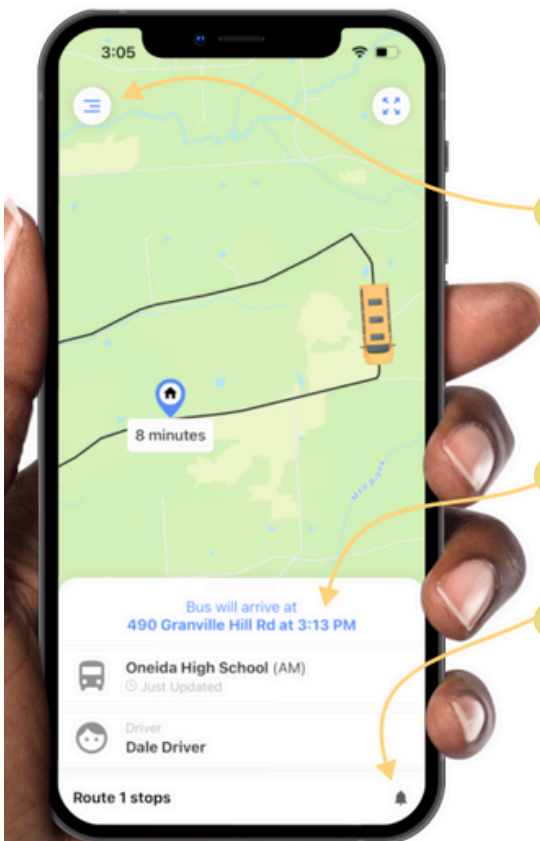
Switch routes to view morning and afternoon runs or routes for multiple children

Know Where Your Child's Bus Is

View the real-time ETA to your child's stop

Receive Notifications

Customize your settings and receive alerts when your child's bus starts its trip and arrives at its stop



IONIA BULLDOG AQUATIC CENTER

We are excited to announce that our Ionia Bulldog Aquatic Center (IBAC) is open and thriving! Become an IBAC member by registering at www.ioniaschools.org/bulldog-aquatic-center. Contact Mr. Barr with any questions at (616) 841 - 4004 or abarr@ioniaschools.org.



UPDATES FROM SUPERINTENDENT GURK

Continued from page 1

In addition to enhancing communication with parents/guardians, our new BusRight technology will allow our transportation team to better optimize our routes, track all buses in our fleet in real-time, and record the driving speed of all buses at all times.



We'd like to thank our Ionia Community Awareness (ICA) team and everyone who participated and contributed to our Fall Purple campaign which raised \$38,513.97 for our fighters, survivors, and those taken by cancer.

IPS parents/guardians are invited to a free parent seminar that we're hosting on February 6th at 6:30 p.m. in IHS room 304. We're hosting the Protect Young Eyes organization to assist parents in navigating social media with children. Free babysitting and pizza will be provided. Please see page 3 for more information.

You and your families are invited to our annual Community Awards & Ice Cream Social in our IHS gym on Wednesday, April 16. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., and our program begins at 7 p.m. We hope you will join us as we honor students, staff, and parent volunteers.

You and your families are also invited to participate in our community discussions to help inspire the future of IPS. We are committed to updating our facilities and maintaining safe, modern learning spaces. Our facilities are aging, and we are seeking your perspectives as we continue to act in a fiscally transparent and responsible manner. Please see the times and dates listed below and contact me with any questions.

February 6: IPS Parent Seminar (room 304), 6:30 p.m.

March 18: IPS Community Discussion (room 304), 7 p.m.

March 20: IPS Community Discussion (room 304), 10 a.m.

March 25: IPS Community Discussion (room 304), 7 p.m.

March 27: IPS Community Discussion (room 304), 10 a.m.

April 16: IPS Community Awards Night (IHS gym), 6:30 p.m.

April 28: IPS Community Discussion (room 304), 7 p.m.

May 1: IPS Community Discussion (room 304), 7 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Benjamin Gurk".

Benjamin Gurk



"Before & After" photos of new IMS carpet!

FREE PARENT SEMINAR!

Protect Young Eyes

6:30 pm - 8 pm, February 6, 2025

Room 304 - Ionia High School

Free Pizza & Childcare will be provided

RSVP to RLittle@ioniaschools.org



CREATING A TECH-READY HOME IN A FAST-PACED DIGITAL WORLD

Michelle Lothschutz, Protect Young Eyes

After 10+ years, over 1,500 presentations, testifying in front of Congress, and countless conversations with parents, students, educators, and officers, Protect Young Eyes has discovered that parental controls alone don't work and instead, there are 5 traits that often determine digital success in many families. They are called the 5 traits of the Digital Trust Framework. What is Digital Trust? Do you have it? How does it apply to conversations about social media? Pornography? YouTube? TikTok? This fast-paced talk will use stories, simple examples, and quick tips that will give your family immediate actions.

Our desired outcomes include:

- A deep understanding of how to build Digital Trust in your family.
- Awareness of the hardware and software tools that support your digital goals.
- How to use practical solutions so that your family is prepared, balanced, and protected online.

www.protectyoungeyes.com

Ionia High School

We are proud of our performing arts and extra curriculars at Ionia High School!



Hadestown: Theater students shine under the direction of Ms. Thaxton and Mr. Peterson.



Vocal Music: Students spread holiday cheer at elementary schools under Mr. Peterson's direction.



Interact: Supported the Ionia Rotary Club at the annual Corrections Officers of the Year Ceremony.



SADD: Students, along with their advisor Mrs. Aves, encouraged safe decision-making during Homecoming season.

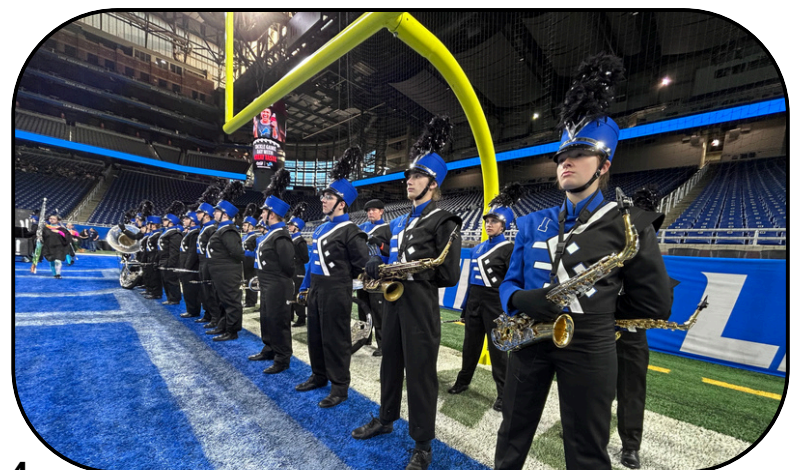


Debate: Under the guidance of Ms. Thaxton, students competed in multiple competitions this semester!



Quiz Bowl: Our JV team, led by advisor Mr. Cairns, earned 1st place in the league and has been invited to the National Tournament in May!

Our IHS Marching Bulldogs Band, under the direction of Mr. Beyer and Mr. Grant, had another excellent season. We earned Division 1 ratings for the 19th consecutive year and also made school history by competing at the State Finals for the first time, placing 8th!



90 Donors!
Our National Honor Society (NHS), under the guidance of their advisor Ms. Tackmann, successfully hosted two blood drives!



PBIS: Students earn GRIT coins for positive behavior and play board games during Achieve. Thanks to Mrs. Maguire for organizing!

The holiday season is a special time for our students to give back while spreading holiday cheer!



Operation Christmas: Student Council advised by Ms. Kay

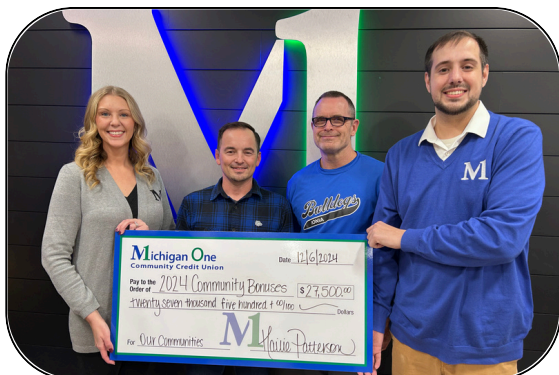


Toys for Tots: NHS advised by Ms. Tackmann



Shop with a Hero: Interact advised by Mrs. Pfaller

We are grateful for continued support from our community partners!



IHS was awarded \$500 through M1's Community Bonus Day! Thank you, Mrs. Patterson and Mr. VanSyckle, for your continued support!



Detective Sergeant Lynn, an IHS graduate, spoke to Mrs. Aves' and Mr. Pischea's government classes on Constitution Day.

IONIA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Ionia Middle School (IMS) held a walk-a-thon fundraiser to support those affected by Hurricane Helene and all other catastrophic natural disasters that ensued. We are thrilled to report that our students walked approximately 500 miles in total and raised over \$1,600! The enthusiasm and dedication displayed by our students, staff, and families is truly inspiring.



We are incredibly proud of the efforts of our students, families, and staff, coming together to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others. In partnership with our Parent Teacher Group and with the support of our student council, our IMS community provided Thanksgiving dinners to 17 local families and Holiday meals and Christmas gifts to six local families.



IONIA MIDDLE SCHOOL

At IMS, recognizing our HEROes of the month is important because it highlights students who are Hardworking, Encouraging, Respectful, and Owing it. Showcasing these students celebrates their achievements and serves as an inspiration to others, showing that hard work and positive behavior are valued. By publicly acknowledging and displaying the students as seen in the picture below, it encourages everyone to strive for their best and fosters a positive, supportive school community where success is celebrated and modeled. Congratulations to all of our HEROes of the months for the first half of the school year: Ernie Holmes, Noble Chartrand, Winnie Udell, Krisalynn Cooper-Fedewa, Roman Kleibusch, Teric Hogan, Sophia Brown, Peyton Batista, London Sullivan, Royale Sherman, Gio Velasco, Chloe Stalter, Chloe Ring, Mallory Husman, Madison Wendling, Ryelee Daugherty, Neithan Cruz Pagan, Colton Flanders, Benjamin Ludwick, Macianna Esparza, Wyatt Koelsch, Ezekiel Ondersma, Samantha Flohr, Lillyanna Wilks, Gentry Flanner, Madelyn Walters, Ashlynn Lepley, Analiyah Lopez, Colter White, Brooklyn Nash, Khloe Hardy, Ellee Carrier, Bane Thompson, Harper Borton, Savannah Walsh, and Braidyn Stokes.



We are so thankful for our IMS Parent Teacher Group (PTG). Our PTG plays a vital role in supporting our students, teachers, and school community. From organizing events to raising funds for enrichment programs, our PTG helps create an environment where students can thrive both academically and socially. We encourage all parents and guardians to get involved – whether it's volunteering for events, attending meetings, or offering ideas. Your involvement, no matter how big or small, makes a difference in enhancing the educational experience for all our students. Together, we can continue to make IMS a place where everyone succeeds!

IMS PTG Meetings

January 8

February 5

March 5

April 2

May 7

June 4

**Held in IMS Library
at 6:00 pm**

Please email ioniamsptg@gmail.com if you would like more information about joining.

BOYCE WILDCATS

Here at Boyce, through our commitment to strong academic programs, engaging activities, and a positive school climate, we are fostering a love for learning that extends beyond the classroom. We believe that every day is an opportunity to create lasting memories.



Teachers and students taking part in outdoor education!



Everyone showing support for Camo Day!



Our Boyce Thanksgiving Feast was delicious!



Families love our Breakfast Buddies!



One School at a Time Winner Grant Winner!



Students learned a lot from our NED Assembly!



Fourth graders enjoyed our Geode science lesson!



Students singing festive songs with the Ionia High School Choir!



Santa and The Grinch visited Boyce for an afternoon of fun!

EMERSON EAGLES

Every day feels like an extraordinary adventure at Emerson Elementary, thanks to the incredible people and activities that make our school so special. From dedicated teachers and staff to our amazing students and families, we are surrounded by everyday superheroes who inspire, support, and uplift one another. Whether it's through engaging lessons, special events, or acts of kindness, our school community comes together to create a place where everyone can shine. These special moments remind us that our school isn't just a building, it's a home where greatness takes flight and together, we S.O.A.R.!



Halloween fun for everyone at Emerson! Mrs. Phelps transforms the gym into a thrilling holiday adventure.

A special thank you to our wonderful Food Service Team for the perfect Thanksgiving.

Incredible
Holiday
Concert
held at the
Ionia
Theater.



Congratulations to our very talented student, Mackenzie Williford, in Mrs. Shattuck's 5th grade class. Her artwork was featured on the cover of this year's Ionia Veterans Ceremony program.



This year, students are having a great time participating in some of their favorite extracurricular activities, including pottery in art class, yoga, and engaging in STEAM projects.

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



JEFFERSON JAGUARS

Since the beginning of the school year, we have had the pleasure of welcoming new team members! Let's extend a warm welcome to Jefferson's latest additions to the team.



Amber Cross
Student Teacher



Grace Misner
Parapro



Betsy Roath
Parapro



Allyson Strasser
Parapro



McKenna White
Parapro



Janet Defever, a Michigan author, inspired Jaguars by reading her book, *Second Chance Christmas: A True Story*.

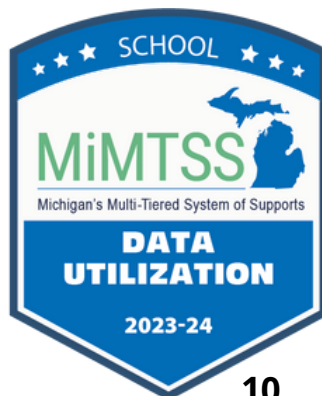


A new tradition at Jefferson: Mrs. Sykes and Mrs. Betts' 4th grade JRI group performed *A Tale of Two Thanksgivings*. Great job, everyone!



Purcell and our amazing students delivered a spectacular Winter Concert!

Jefferson Elementary was recognized by the State of Michigan for effectively using data to support students in reading and behavior, offering targeted interventions in these areas.



RATHER RAMS

We were so blessed to have many special activities and events at Rather Elementary School during the first half of our school year! We greatly appreciate the amazing family involvement and community support that we receive!



Lunch with Principal Magley at Ionia Pizza Hut was good!



Family Accelerated Reader Night is the place to be!



We love our Fall Book Fair!



Fun Fire Safety Assemblies with Ionia Public Safety!

RATHER PARENT TEACHER GUILD MEETINGS, 2025

January 13, 5:30 pm

February 10, 5:30 pm

March 10, 5:30 pm

April 14, 5:30 pm

May 12, 5:30 pm



P.T.G. Funded Wildlife Safari Assemblies are wild!



Important learning at our 911 Safety Assemblies!



Santa's Secret Shop was a blast!

TWIN RIVERS PANTHERS

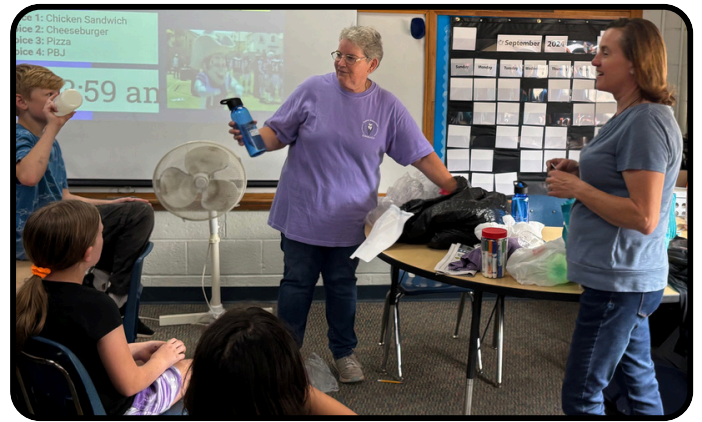
Twin Rivers had a great fall semester with a lot of help from our staff and community. Thank you to everyone who helps us provide a top-notch experience for our students!



Ms. Purcell and our students worked hard to put on a fantastic Winter Concert!



Tpr. Rogers showing off his cruiser to Mrs. Bertie's first-grade class.



The Lyons/Muir Wellhead Protection Committee distributed water bottles and talked about protecting our water resources with our students.



Mrs. Carole Sanicki crochets 100 hats every year and donates them to our students!



WELCH WARRIORS

We had a wonderful fall semester at Douglas R. Welch High School! Thank you to our community members, parents, grandparents, families, and friends who have helped support IPS and our students. This year, we began recognizing one student each month from our Virtual Program who demonstrates Safety, Tenacity, (Positive) Attitude, and Responsibility and awarding them as Student of the Month.



We enjoyed visits from DRWHS alumni William “Billy Strings” Apostle (Class of 2011), James Mason (2022), and Gennavive Froelich (2024).



Grammy Award winner Billy Strings spoke to our students about his path to the music industry.



Gennavive Froelich spoke to students about her experiences at Northern Michigan University, where she is studying Elementary Education.



PV2 James Mason shared his experiences serving in the U.S. Army, and what led him to enlist.



Important Dates

- February 12 - Count Day
- March 12 & 13- Parent Teacher Conferences
- March 27 - WorkKeys
- May 16, 2025 - D.R. Welch Graduation



Follow us on Facebook!

IONIA ATHLETICS

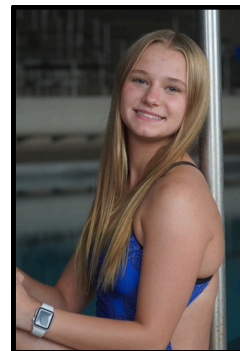
We are proud of the GRIT shown by our student-athletes, coaches, and Ionia Affiliated Athletic Boosters!



IHS student-athletes Ethan Wenzel, Nolan Hart, Teddy Sprank, Wolton Sandborn, Josie Lee, Bella Delgado, Amelia Griffith, and Carleigh Thompson represented IHS at the 2nd Annual CAAC Leadership Conference!



IHS student-athlete Lila Redder was the CAAC White League Girls Golf Champion!



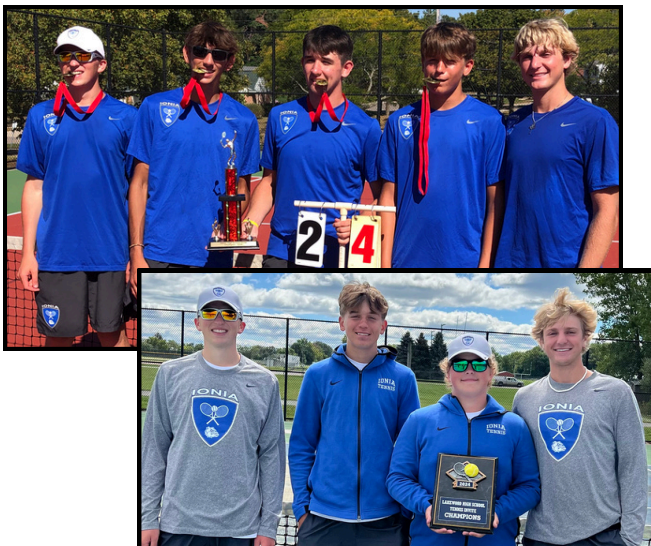
IHS swimmer Amelia McGee finished 9th in the State in both the 100 yard backstroke and 100 yard freestyle, earning All State Honorable Mention in both!



200 yd freestyle IHS Swim State Qualifiers!
Isabelle Robinson, Ella Udell, Amelia McGee & Katelyn Lamphere



IHS hosted the Wood TV8 Football Frenzy Tailgate broadcast for Homecoming!



IHS Boys Tennis Team won the Grand Rapids Union and Lakewood Invationals!



IHS finished the season with its 5th straight win over Lakewood in the rivalry game and qualified for the MHSAA playoffs for the second year in a row!

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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