

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENTS!

We hope you had an enjoyable summer! Our Ionia Public Schools (IPS) Facilities Team has been working diligently meeting weekly over the summer to ensure all of our Sinking Fund promises and our Bond promises are coming to life. We continue to meet twice a month with our architecture and engineering firm (GMB), as well as our construction management firm (Owen - Ames - Kimball).

We are pleased to report progress on our Sinking Fund projects as well as progress on designs for our bond projects. A list of Sinking Fund promises kept as well as a tentative timeline for our bond construction projects can be accessed on our website at www.ioniaschools.org. *continued on page 2*



Concept design for our future IPS Performing Arts Center that will be located at the east end of IHS

BULLDOG BEGINNINGS PRESCHOOL!



Our Bulldog Beginnings Preschool provides a free, fun, high-quality education for 4-year-olds. Our caring team is fully licensed and highly trained. Please call 616-527-4900 to sign up or for more information.



UPDATES FROM SUPERINTENDENT GURK

Continued from page 1

Thank you to Mr. Avery, Mr. Nevills, and our maintenance teams who completed many upgrades to our facilities and fulfilled Sinking Fund promises this summer. Our summer upgrades included:

- New IHS Track
- New IHS Softball Field ADA Access Path
- Updated IHS Athletic Commons Bathrooms
- New Welch/IHS West Driveway Paving
- New Rather Playground
- New Twin Rivers Playground
- Updated Twin Rivers Gym & Kitchen
- New IMS Cafeteria Floor



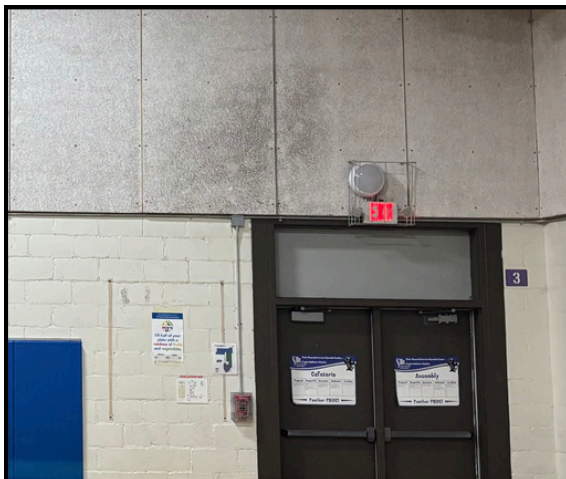
Superintendent Gurk



As a reminder, we have upgraded our student information system from Skyward to PowerSchool. This will modernize our capacity to communicate student grades, attendance, and coursework. Parents/guardians, please follow the steps in the email you received in July to download the PowerSchool App and log in. Students will simply use their existing school Google accounts to log in; no special codes are required. Please contact (616) 841-4153 or support@ioniaschools.org with questions.

Have a great 2026-2027 school year!

Benjamin Gurk
Benjamin Gurk



TR Gym before & after photos

IPS CALENDAR

August 2026							August 2026	
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	17	New Teacher Orientation
						1	18	6th-8th Grade Orientation
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	19	Staff PD All Day
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	20	Staff Welcome Back 1/2 day AM
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	24	Staff PD All Day/No school students
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	25	First Day for Students 1/2 Day All
30	31							

September 2026							September 2026	
S	M	T	W	T	F	S		
		1	2	3	4	5	4	No School
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	7	Labor Day No School
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	25	Staff PD Day/PLC/No school students
20	21	22	23	24	25	26		
27	28	29	30					

October 2026							October 2026	
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	7	Student Count Day
							19	PTC K-5 5:00-7:30 PM
				1	2	3	20	PTC 6-8 5:00-7:30 PM
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	21	PTC 9-12 5:00-7:00 PM
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	22	Students AM
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	PTC K-12 1-4PM, 5-7PM
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	23	No School
							30	1/2 Day Students/Staff PLC

November 2026							November 2026	
S	M	T	W	T	F	S		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	25-27	Thanksgiving Break
15	16	17	18	19	20	21		
22	23	24	25	26	27	28		
29	30							

December 2026							December 2026	
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	17	Students AM Staff Records PM
		1	2	3	4	5	18	Students AM Staff Records PM
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	18	End of First Semester
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	21-31	Winter Break
20	21	22	23	24	25	26		
27	28	29	30	31				

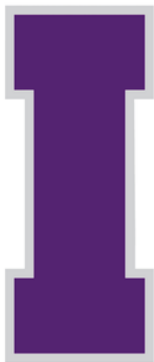
IONIA COMMUNITY AWARENESS

Ionia Bulldogs are proud to continue partnering with Ionia Community Awareness (ICA). Please join us to support our local Fighters, Survivors, and Taken. Please see the below events and visit the Ionia Community Awareness (Purple Week) Facebook page for more information.

ICA PURPLE EVENTS

TBD	Purple Golf
Saturday, Sept. 12	Purple Golf Scramble, 10 am
Tuesday, Sept. 15	Purple Swim, 6 pm
Tuesday, Sept. 15	Purple Soccer, 7 pm
Friday, Sept. 18	Purple Football Game, 7 pm
Saturday, Sept.19	Cruisin' For A Cause, 7 - 9 pm CA Glow Run, 9 pm
Tuesday, Sept. 22	Purple Volleyball, 6 pm

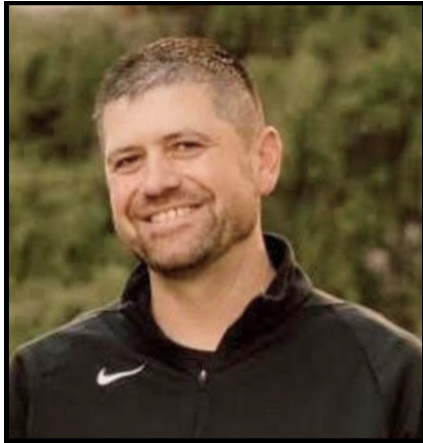
Wednesday, Sept. 23 Purple Tennis, 4 pm



IONIA ATHLETICS

We have been busy improving facilities for our student-athletes over the summer. Upgrades this summer include a new IHS track, updated athletic commons bathrooms, and a new ADA accessible ramp leading to our softball field.

We are excited to welcome our new IPS Athletic Director /Attendance Liaison, Mr. Brock Shaw. Mr. Shaw is an Ionia High School alum and the father of IPS student-athletes.



Mr. Shaw

Favorite Hobbies: College Football, Golfing, Fishing

Favorite Book: American Assassin

Favorite Podcast: SmartLess

Favorite Food: Lasagna

Favorite Season: Fall

Greatest American: Jim Harbaugh

Dream Vacation: England and Scotland



Our athletic facilities upgrades this summer included a new ADA accessible ramp at our IHS Softball Field!



Super Booster Membership

Join us in showing your Bulldog pride while ensuring continued success for our teams, school, and community by becoming a Super Booster for the 2026-27 School year!



Family Passes

Family Passes are on sale in the high school athletic office. Passes can be used at all home IHS and IMS athletic events and are good for the entire year. Scan the QR code for more information on Family Passes.



IONIA HIGH SCHOOL

Our maintenance, custodial, and tech teams spent the summer preparing our school for the 2026 - 2027 school year! Updates include deep cleaning, fresh paint, drywall repairs, fully renovated Athletic Commons restrooms, a new ten foot wide IHS Wordmark wall-wrap in our choir room, and tech upgrades featuring voice-lift systems and CleverTouch interactive boards in every classroom.



Congratulations to our Unified Sports for earning the Detroit Lions *Touchdown in Your Town* grant! Our Unified Dance & Cheer team was awarded \$5,000 to expand the program, along with new uniforms, Lions gear, and a special invitation to attend a Detroit Lions game this season.



Special thanks to coaches Ms. Chaffins and Ms. Johnson for their dedicated leadership, and to the Detroit Lions for supporting our commitment to inclusion!

**IHS FAMILY SCHOOL GUILD
VIRTUAL MEETINGS
6 PM**

**September 10
October 8
November 12**

**December 10
January 14
February 11**

**March 11
April 8
May 13**

IONIA HIGH SCHOOL

We are excited to welcome our new gritty Ionia High School educators!



Mr. Michael Musson
ELA Teacher



Ms. Lexi Roberts
ELA Teacher



Mr. Matt Danstrom
ELA Teacher



Ms. Erika Brown
Math Teacher



Mr. Dan Fleet
Math & PE Teacher



Ms. Chantae Reuschel
Science Teacher



Mr. Zach Poff
PE Teacher



Ms. Madison Ramos
College Advisor



Mr. Ryan Gregory
Interventionist



Ms. Kristen Avery
Secretary

IONIA MIDDLE SCHOOL

We hope our IMS school-family had an excellent summer! We are looking forward to welcoming back our Bulldogs! We are excited to welcome our new IMS Administration Team, who have demonstrated extraordinary service to IPS and our community!



Principal Gill

Favorite Hobbies: Pickleball and College Football
Favorite Book: *Dungeon Crawler Carl*
Favorite Podcast: Mind Pump
Favorite Food: BBQ Rib Tips
Favorite Season: Summer
Greatest American: Abraham Lincoln
Dream Vacation: Hawaii



Assistant Principal Nevills

Favorite Hobbies: Reading and gardening
Favorite Book: *The Lincoln Highway*
Favorite Podcast: Schooling Around
Favorite Food: My dad's fried rice recipe
Favorite Season: Summer
Greatest American: Helen Keller
Dream Vacation: Ireland



The IMS Student Council welcomed their peers at 6th Grade Orientation.



Our amazing secretarial team has been busy preparing for the start of school!

IONIA MIDDLE SCHOOL

H.E.R.O. today. Stronger leader tomorrow. Bulldog for life.

We are excited to welcome our outstanding new IMS team members!



Shelbie Ramirez
Art Teacher



Sydney Mitran
English Teacher



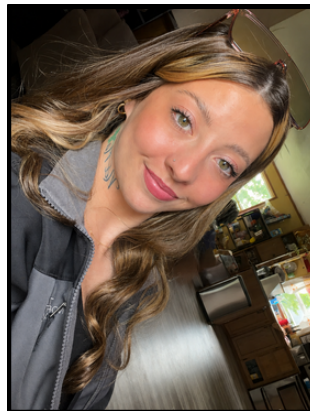
Andrew Rogers
STEM Teacher



Cassandra Bristol
Math Teacher



Emilie Gertz
Behavior Specialist



Jaysah Merrifield
Paraprofessional



Betsy Roath
Paraprofessional

To continue improving our facilities, last spring we updated our cafeteria floor, and this month we painted our outdoor handrails in Bulldog Blue! Please see the *before & after* photos below.



BOYCE WILDCATS

We are so excited to welcome our students, families, and staff back for another wonderful school year at Boyce Elementary! Our staff has been working hard to prepare for a year filled with learning, growth, and opportunities for every student to shine. We look forward to partnering with our families and community to make the 2026-2027 school year a successful and memorable one.

Please extend a warm welcome to our new Boyce Team Members!



Emma Corona
Fourth Grade Teacher



Alicia Hummel
Third Grade Teacher



Lisa Buys
Kindergarten Teacher



Ella Duran
First Grade Teacher



Kristen Gifford
Kinderstart Teacher



Jan Nummer
Kinderstart
Paraprofessional



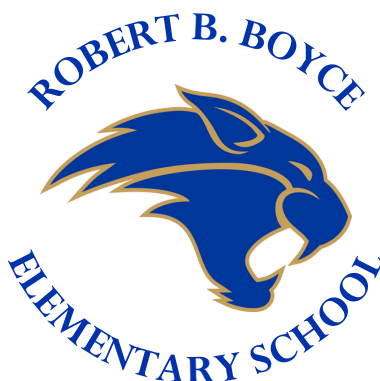
Zachary Brummel
Physical Education
Teacher at Boyce,
Emerson, & Rather



Allie Anticuar
ISD Speech Pathologist



Andrew Hickok
Paraprofessional



Elise Christensen
Paraprofessional

EMERSON EAGLES

Every day at Emerson Elementary feels like an extraordinary adventure, thanks to the incredible people and activities that make our school so special. Together, we S.O.A.R.!

We are excited to welcome Emerson's outstanding new team members!



Principal Phelps

Favorite Hobbies: Sports and Gardening
Favorite Book: *The Giving Tree*
Favorite Holiday: Christmas
Favorite Pet: Labrador Retrievers
Favorite Season: Fall
Greatest American: George Washington
Dream Vacation: Greece



Mr. Ellison, 3rd Grade

Favorite Hobbies: Golfing, Hiking and Reading
Favorite Book: *Lonesome Dove*
Favorite Podcast: *Freakonomics*
Favorite Food: Pizza
Favorite Season: Fall
Greatest American: Ben Franklin
Dream Vacation: Iceland

Calendar Reminder
2026-27

Aug. 24
Open House, 5:30pm

Aug. 25
First Day of School!



Ms. Kuipers, 2nd Grade

Favorite Hobbies: Golf and Camping
Favorite Book: *Let's Do Nothing*
Favorite Pet: *She loves her cats*
Favorite Food: Mexican
Favorite Season: Summer
Greatest American: Pocahontas
Dream Vacation: Mediterranean Cruise

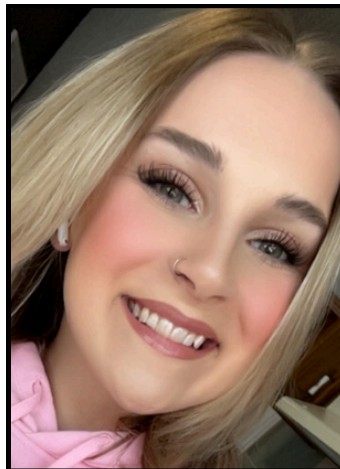
Safety **O**wnership **A**chievement **R**espect

JEFFERSON JAGUARS

Adventure awaits at Jefferson! As we launch the 2026-2027 school year, we're thrilled to welcome our students back to campus. Come check out our freshly painted classrooms, take a stroll past the blooming Jefferson Family Garden, and help us give a warm welcome to the newest staff members joining our Jaguar Family!



Kaitlyn Hickok
Kindergarten Teacher



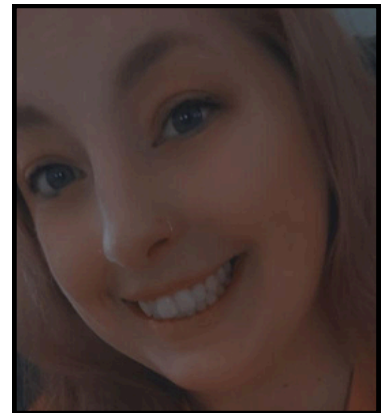
Niki Coon
Paraprofessional



Erika Smith
Paraprofessional



Kathy Montague
Paraprofessional



Danielle Speckin
Paraprofessional



Our Jefferson Family Garden is growing, and so is our Jaguar family! We're excited to create a space where students, families, and staff can learn and grow together. As we plant new seeds this year, we're reminded that great things happen when we grow together!



Important Calendar Reminders



August 19, 2026 - Open House, 6:00-7:00 pm

August 25, 2026 - First Day of School (half day - dismissal at 11:53 am)

RATHER RAMS

Our Rather team has been working hard to get ready for another amazing school year! We are very excited to welcome the following educators to our incredible Rather Rams Team!



Kenna Rosenstangel
Kindergarten
Teacher



Kamryn Nicholson
Third Grade
Teacher



LaToya Snyder
Kinderstart
Paraprofessional



MaKenna Waterman
Special Education
Paraprofessional



Thanks to the support of our amazing community, we were able to fulfill an original Sinking Fund promise and update our Rather playground over the summer! We are so excited about this wonderful blessing for our students and the families who use the playground after school hours!

RATHER BUDDY BREAKFASTS

5th grade - September 3, 7:10 am
4th grade - September 17, 7:10 am
3rd grade - October 1, 7:10 am
2nd grade - October 15, 7:10 am
1st grade - October 29, 7:10 am
K-Start/Kdg. - November 12, 7:10 am

PARENT TEACHER GUILD MEETINGS

Fall 2026

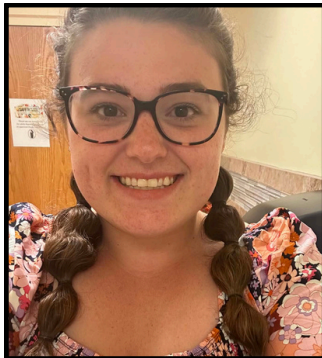
August 17, 5:30 pm
September 14, 5:30 pm
October 12, 5:30 pm
November 9, 5:30 pm

TWIN RIVERS PANTHERS

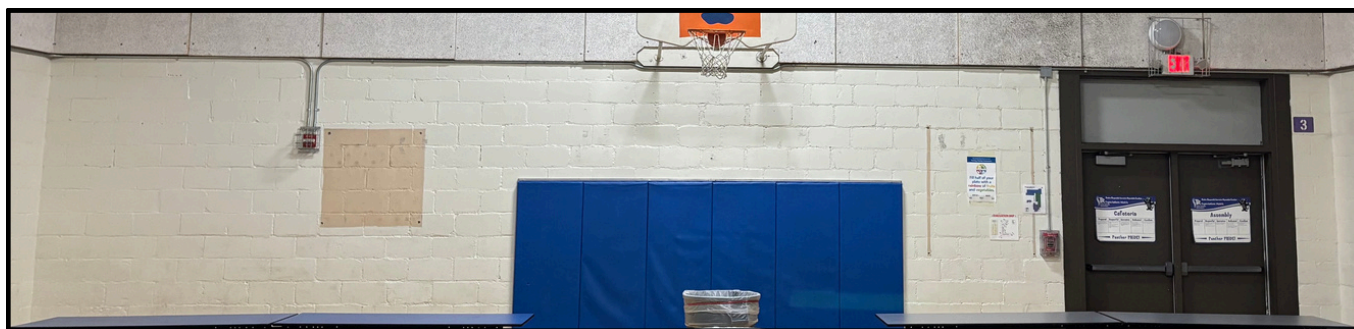
Twin Rivers is ready for the 2026-27 school year. We had some much-needed paint and flooring upgrades in our gym, kitchen, and some classrooms. Our playground was updated and looks amazing! We have a few new staff members we would like to welcome to Twin Rivers!



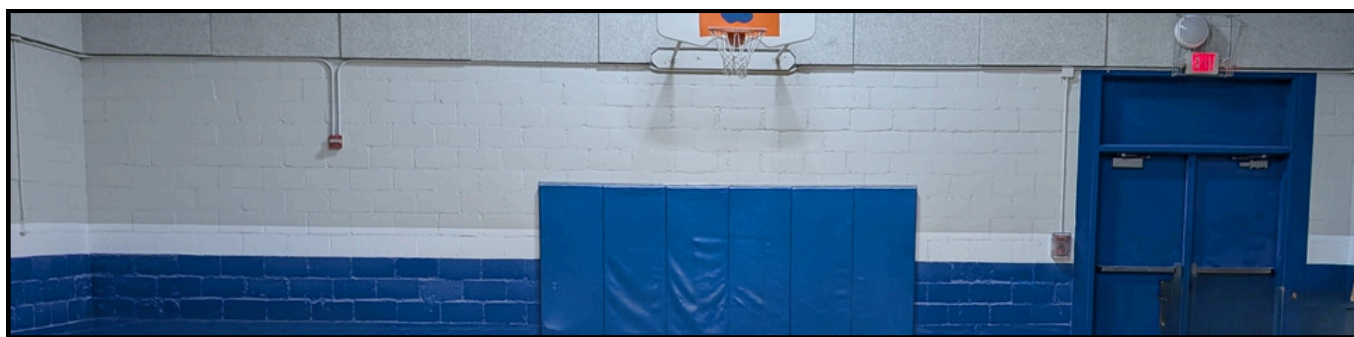
1st Grade Teacher Ashlyn Wilkes



Special Education Paras Ariel Soule and Lisa Lahr



Our gym and kitchen have received a much needed cosmetic upgrade. These *before* and *after* photos highlight the improvements. Both spaces look spectacular!



Our playground also got an upgrade with some new equipment and ground cover. Thank you to our community for your support so we could make these much needed improvements.



WELCH WARRIORS

Douglas R. Welch is excited for the beginning of the year 2026-27 school year. This year we will be adding three new staff members. Allen Wizorek comes on as a full-time teacher and will be teaching Math and Science this year. Kelly Senters will be joining Welch from IHS to teach an English class. Frances Updike will also be joining Welch from IHS to teach a Science class. Parents and students, please view emails previously sent on how to access PowerSchool ahead of the new school year.



Chad Rhynard
Welch Principal



Allen Wizorek
Welch Math and Science Teacher



Kelly Senters
English Teacher



Frances Updike
Science Teacher



Follow us
on Facebook!

IMPORTANT DATES

August 17: New Teacher PD

August 19: Teachers first Day

August 25: First Day of 2026 School Year





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

Board of Education

Danielle Yokom, President

Ken Baker, Vice President

Robin Marhofer, Secretary

Dayna Ellis, Treasurer

Ray Shippey, Trustee

Tim Montgomery, Trustee

Brian Siemen, Trustee



www.ioniaschools.org