

John Wood Elementary Newsletter

October 2026

Greatness Grows Here

Mission Statement: John Wood School

Together with parents and community, the John Wood team shall provide a safe learning environment and prepare students to be productive, tolerant, and respectful citizens by fostering individual development and striving for highest academic achievement.



A Message from the Captain's Quarters

Dear Wood Families,

Our students are doing a fantastic job! Thank you to everyone who attended our Title I Family Event on October 15th. We had an amazing turnout, and it was wonderful to see so many talented artists in our school community. The students' pumpkins looked absolutely amazing! Thank you for your continued support and involvement in making John Wood such a special place.

This past week, we celebrated students who missed one or fewer days of school during the month of September. We love recognizing our students for their commitment to being at school and ready to learn! Throughout the school year, students have opportunities to earn prizes and participate in celebrations for their attendance on a weekly, monthly, and trimester basis. We understand that illnesses and emergencies happen, and student health always comes first. Our goal is to provide multiple opportunities to recognize and encourage regular attendance while celebrating students along the way.

Communication is essential to your child's safety, learning, and success. Please take a moment to ensure that your email address and phone number in Skyward are accurate and up to date.

If you have not already done so, please download the **ParentSquare app**! ParentSquare is a great way to communicate with your child's teacher, view photos from the school day, and receive important updates about school and corporation events. Staying connected helps us work together to support your child throughout the school year.

Important Upcoming Dates

As we continue through the school year, please mark your calendars for these important dates:

- **October 19–23:** Fall Break
- **October 26–30:** Red Ribbon Week
- **October 27:** AM In-Person Learning / PM eLearning at Home
- **October 27:** Fall Picture Retakes
- **November 3:** eLearning Day at Home (Election Day)
- **November 4:** PTO Call-Out Meeting at 4:00 PM

Thank you for your continued partnership and support. We appreciate all you do to help our students grow, learn, and succeed. Together, we will continue to make John Wood a place where **Greatness Grows Here!**

Warmly,
Sharon Igras
Principal, John Wood Elementary

John Wood Elementary School • 6100 E. 73rd Ave. • Merrillville, Indiana 46410
(219) 650-5305 • https://wood.mvsc.k12.in.us/

Greetings John Wood Family,

At John Wood, we like to celebrate the positive as often as possible. One of my favorite positive things that we do at our school each month is our Good Citizen/One In A Melon ceremony. This is a special event to celebrate our students of the month. Students are nominated by their amazing teachers. The first award is the Good Citizen Award. This award is for students that uphold the John Wood Best Pledge all month, as well as going above and beyond with all the qualities of being a good citizen. The second award is the One In A Melon award. This award too is for students that uphold the John Wood Best Pledge all month, as well as for students who show the great qualities of the character traits that we uphold dearly at our school. Our first celebration ceremony of the year was held on Tuesday, October 6th to celebrate our September recipients and their families.

~ Dean Cline

SEPTEMBER RECIPIENTS

Grade & Teacher	Good Citizen	One In A Melon
K - Anderson	Bellami Murphy	Trevion Brown Jr.
K - Scott	Kinsley Bianco	Genevieve Marquez
1 - Hedrick	Symiah Lewis	Alani Maxfield
1 - Talian	Indy George	Marius Williams
2 - Carney	Jacob Logan	Brenly Maxwell
2 - Foster	Isaiah Johnson	Cain Ramos
2 - Marshall	Ariana Barcenas	Jordi Winesberry
3 - Pace	Juan Shaw	Aylin Barajas
3 - Robles	Adrian Cedillo	Ivy Fiste
4 - Jongsma	Marshall Vaughn	Gabriella Abel
4 - Pulphus	Brantley McKown	Jaila Valenzuela
ED - Jackson	Layla Hanley	Nasir Scruggs

THE JOHN WOOD SCHOOL BEST PLEDGE!

John Wood is the BEST of schools,
Spell out BEST you'll know the rules,
First is B, that's the way.
Be responsible every day.
Next is E, that's correct.
Everyone deserves respect.
Third is S. This is cool.
Safety counts when you're at school.
Finally, it's letter T.
We will **T**alk appropriately.



MCT First-Grade Vision Screening

from Nurse Jen

First-grade MCT Vision Screening
Thursday, November 12th at Salk Elementary

The Indiana Legislature requires that first grade students have a free vision screening using the modified clinical technique (MCT), which is a method performed by a licensed eye doctor. The screening consists of near and far acuity tests, cover test, and an internal and external inspection of the eyes to check for any problems. The MCT screening is NOT invasive or painful in any way and takes about 10 minutes to complete. In the event your child requires further screening a note will be sent home requesting further evaluation with an eye care professional.

Local optometrists have agreed to screen Merrillville first graders at Jonas E. Salk Elementary school on Thursday, November 12, 2026. The Merrillville Community School Corporation requires each child to have advanced written permission to be transferred from school to school. Students who do not have written permission will NOT be able to participate in the testing. If you have any questions or concerns, I can be reached at the number below or at jennifer.bartos@mvsc.k12.in.us

Yours in Health,
Jennifer Bartos, RN
219-650-5305

No School-Fall Break

Monday, Oct. 19-Friday, Oct. 23

NOTE: THIS IS A FULL WEEK

School resumes Monday, Oct. 26th



Every Friday
Pirate Pride Day
Show your Pirate Pride! Wear purple!

October 19-23
No School – Fall Break
NOTE: This is the first time we will have a full week for Fall Break. Classes will resume on Monday, Oct. 26th.

October 26-30
Red Ribbon Week
Check the spirit week planned for this week on page 6 of this newsletter.

October 27
Picture Retake Day
Picture retakes will be taken today for students who did NOT have their photo taken because they were either absent or enrolled after Picture Day. If you are having retakes because of a problem with your first picture, you ***must return the entire original package*** at the time of the retakes!

October 27
Monthly Professional Development Day
12:35 Dismissal
Students will be dismissed early and have eLearning lessons in the afternoon.

November 1
Daylight Savings Time ends
Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour!

November 3
Virtual Learning Day
This is the first of two pre-scheduled full-day virtual learning days this year. Your child's teacher will send you more information about this day.

November 4
PTO Meeting
4:00, Cafeteria
See attached flyer

November 11
Veteran's Day
Make sure you remember to thank a vet today! See attached flyer for a school-wide event!

November 13
End of the 2nd grading period, End of 1st trimester
Please check your child's grades through our Skyward system.

Continued on page 4

Merrillville Education Foundation "Denim & Diamonds" Gala

The Merrillville Education Foundation is a not-for-profit organization whose primary goal is supporting Merrillville schools in areas where public funds are not available. This is accomplished by providing grants. Twice a year, teachers can apply for grants. The MEF encourages teachers to look for educationally innovative ideas and creative opportunities for students. Since 2002, the MEF has awarded over 450 grants totaling over $400,000 impacting more than 125,000 Merrillville students in grades K-12. This cannot be accomplished without support from the public.

The MEF is inviting the public to attend a fun-filled afternoon with basket raffles, DJ, buffet dinner, and more!

Sunday, November 15, 2026
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Croation Center
8550 Taft St.
Merrillville, IN 46410

See the flyer attached to this newsletter for more information!

Keeping the Lunchroom Safe (and Clean)

To keep our lunchroom safe, please keep these simple guidelines in mind:

- **No glass containers.** Broken glass can quickly become a safety hazard in a busy lunchroom.
- **Skip the carbonated drinks.** After a bumpy ride in a backpack, they tend to erupt at the lunch table – and nobody wants a lunchtime surprise!

Thank you for helping us create a safe and enjoyable lunch experience for all students.

Learning something new isn't always easy, and that's okay! Mistakes are opportunities to practice, try a different approach, and discover what works. Encourage your child to keep trying. Greatness grows when we don't give up!

READY, SET, SPELL!

John Wood's Spell Bowl team is on a mission! Learn 750 words! The students meet every Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday after school to practice and sharpen their spelling skills.

They'll participate in a practice competition against other Merrillville elementary schools, then take on other area schools in the official showdown.

Team members:
Gabriella Abel, Savanna Brown, Oliver Calvert, Ian Castillo, Jackson Daughtry, Skylar Dixon, Gus Herrera, A'Layah Jones, Elias Navarro, Kela Richardson, Leah Topor

Sponsors:
Mrs. Mahy and Mrs. Jackson



Good luck to our team – greatness grows here!



Cooler days are perfect for curling up with a good book! Ask your child what they're reading, have them tell you about their favorite character, or take turns reading aloud. A love of reading is a wonderful thing to grow!



Continued from page 2

November 15
MEF Denim & Diamonds
See the article on page 4 and the flyer attached to this newsletter for more information.

November 16
Teacher Work Day
No school for all students. Teachers will use this day to prepare for conferences.

November 17
Parent-Teacher Conferences
12:30-7:30 p.m.
No school for all students. Conferences are scheduled to be held on this day. Watch for an important note to be coming home with your child with more information as we approach this date.

November 25-27
No School, Thanksgiving Break
Enjoy time with family and friends and remember all the things you have to be thankful for this year. School will resume on Monday, November 30th.



Once a Pirate, Always a Pirate

To promote pride in our school community, students are encouraged to wear purple on Fridays.

Students can wear ANYTHING "John Wood" (Spirit Wear, etc) or "Merrillville" (Athletic Department Spirit Wear, Pop Warner shirts, etc) or just plain purple.

At the beginning of the school year, you might even find "Merrillville" t-shirts and sweatshirts at some of our local big box stores and sometimes even at Walgreens and CVS! Many times, sizes are usually adult, but it's worth a look!

Making a Difference: Meet the 26-27 Student Council

Miss Jongsma, Ms. Pulphus,

Our new student council is ready for the 2026-2027 school year! These students will take on many responsibilities, helping out with school events and community service. They may serve as greeters at events, organize collections for Riley Hospital and other causes, sponsor Food Drives, assist with Red Ribbon Week and Sprit Days, and help decorate the school for special occasions.

This year's student council members are:

Xavier Boone, Elijah Brown, Savanna Brown, Mia Bounds, Ollie Calvert, Selena Eubanks, Saida Lewis, Mariam Mazashokova, Mia Rosas, Naomi Shea, Valentin Silva

Red Ribbon Week

Red Ribbon Week is the nation's oldest and largest drug-prevention program, reaching millions of children since it began in 1988. Each year, people across America wear red ribbons to show support for a drug-free life.

John Wood Elementary is proud to join this campaign! We'll celebrate with a week full of activities that promote healthy choices and positive lifestyles.



coats for kids and families

Help keep our children warm in the winter cold!

Our school corporation is participating in a community-wide effort to provide coats for children and families facing economic hardship.

You can help the people of our community by donating new or gently-used winter coats.
Please do NOT donate light jackets or hoodies.

Place the coats in the designated bin in the front entrance of your child's school.

Collection for the ***Coats for Kids (and families)*** drive will run through **October 30th.**

Also, you can connect to Coats for Kids on Facebook for additional information.

"Beary" Good Attendance

Each year, our School Improvement Plan (SIP) committee identifies ways to help students grow and succeed. One ongoing goal is to improve attendance because ***every day at school matters!***

One way we encourage students to attend school each day is through our "Beary" Award. Each month, the class with the highest attendance percentage receives "Beary", our attendance trophy, to display in their classroom, along with a small treat.

September Winners (IT'S A TIE!!)
Mrs. Foster (2nd grade) 97.99%
Mrs. Pace (3rd grade) 97.99%

Congratulations to both classes for their excellent attendance and for setting a great example for their fellow students.



Experience S'more Girl Scout Fun



Hey Girls come join us for some Girl Scout FUN!

October 30, 2026

5:00-7:00pm

THIS IS NOT A SCHOOL SPONSORED EVENT

Check out the back to see all the fun activities and event info!







Event Information:

Date: Friday October 30, 2026

Time: 5-7 pm

Location: Living Grace Church- Nazarene

Address: 2408 W 78th Ave. Merrillville, Indiana

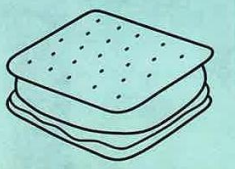
Cost (if any): FREE

This is not a drop off event your girl must be accompanied by an adult.

This is not a school sponsored event.

Ready to RSVP?

Scan the QR code or type in the URL
to sign your family up for this SWEET event!



URL Image file
Qnia6eYIk0G9IWK_S'more Girl Scout Fun Oct 30

girl scouts of greater chicago and northwest indiana

Questions? Contact:

Lisa Massey 219-472-1953 lmassey@girlscoutsgcnwi.org


JOHN WOOD PTO
The Village
It takes a village to help our children thrive.
Join us. Share your ideas.
Make a difference.
CALL-OUT MEETING
November 4th • 4:00 p.m.
John Wood Cafeteria
Wood Elementary
MERRILLVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
Your voice, your time, and your support help our school community grow.
Every family belongs in The Village.


JOHN WOOD PIRATES
POPCORN FRIDAYS
Poppin' for a Purpose!
KICKS OFF NOVEMBER 6TH
Popping once a month!
$1 PER BAG
Wood Elementary
MERRILLVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
Students can purchase popcorn on our monthly Popcorn Friday!
CASH ONLY
Every bag helps our PTO raise funds for school activities and events.


JOHN WOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
JOHN WOOD PIRATES
HONORING OUR VETERANS
Our Pirates Salute Your Service
VETERANS DAY
NOVEMBER 11, 2026
John Wood Elementary School
Presentation of Colors ★ Songs ★ A Tribute to Our Veterans
Join us as we honor the veterans in our John Wood Pirates family.
RSVP
On Wednesday, November 11, 2026
John Wood Elementary School will honor our Veterans with a special morning tribute and light refreshments. If a veteran is part of your student's family or circle of loved ones, we warmly invite them to join us so our John Wood Pirates can celebrate their service and sacrifice. RSVP by Nov. 9th, 2026
Students Name:_____
Teacher/ Grade:_____
Veterans Name / Branch:_____
VETERANS DAY


JOIN US FOR A
DENIM
AND
Diamonds
MEF 25TH ANNIVERSARY
FUNDRAISER EVENT
SUNDAY
15
November
1-4 pm
Croatian Center
8550 W. TAFT STREET
MERRILLVILLE, IN 46410
TICKETS $50 PER PERSON
Basket Raffles, DJ, Buffet Dinner and More!
Please Come Dressed in Blue Jeans and Bling!
ALL PROCEEDS FROM THIS EVENT WILL SUPPORT THE MERRILLVILLE EDUCATION FOUNDATION
ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE VISIT MERRILLVILLEEDUCATIONFOUNDATION.ORG

Greatness Sighted in the Halls of John Wood School

Snapshots of creativity, fun, and learning around our school!

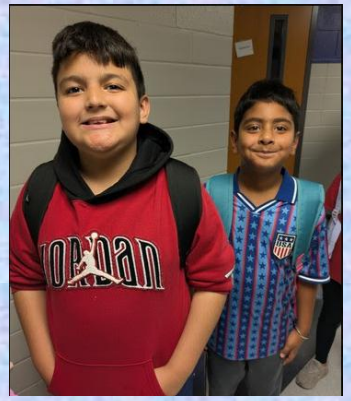


Pajama Day

Anti-Bullying Spirit Week



Team Day



Orange Day





Matching Outfits Day



A visit from the fire department







Title 1 Family Night and PTO Pumpkin Decorating Event





MHS Dance Team sends us off into Fall Break!