



KALKASKA BLAZER BULLETIN

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

December 2024
Vol. IV | No. 4
#GoBlazers
HOME OF THE
BLAZERS



Someone Let It ... Snow ... Snow ... And Snow

Thank you for understanding why we have decided to close school recently. The weather did not cooperate with us. Not only have we had to cancel school but also events. Whenever we are faced with the decision of closing school, we look at many factors. We will always choose based on student safety.

We look at the current weather, the forecast, and check with other professionals who understand the weather. In addition,

we have people out on the roads at around 4:30, checking them to ensure they are safe for travel. We have 440 square miles of school district, so it may be "safe" in the southern part of the district, but unsafe in the rest. In addition, we talk to school officials at nearby districts to determine what they are thinking, and how their contiguous roads are. In fact, we always communicate with our most proximate schools.

When the temperature hits an extremely negative windchill, we know that it is time to close school. How often does it get this cold? Not often. But when it gets this cold, we have the duty to do the right thing.

What happens on a day we close

Whenever we close, we automatically cancel middle school-level games and practices. On most occasions when BOTH school districts are closed, we will not play a high

Please See Snow on Page 8

INSIDE THIS EDITION

BULLETIN

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Kalkaska, Michigan 49646

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PTO Giving Tree Food Drive Success

Rapid City Elementary continues to give to community

Quarter 1 Honor Roll

We are thrilled to announce our Rockstar Honor Roll recipients for the first quarter of the 2024/25 school year! These outstanding students have demonstrated remarkable academic excellence, and we couldn't be prouder of their hard work and dedication.

3rd Graders

- ★ Orianna Amidon
- ★ Azelle Finley Underhill

4th Graders

- ★ Ivaine Amidon
- ★ Ella Deater
- ★ Glenn Howe

World Diabetes Day at RCE

On November 14 Rapid City students learned about diabetes from kindergartner Maralyn Roach. Maralyn,

who has lived with type 1 diabetes since birth, generously gifted each student with World Diabetes Day swag and shared her inspiring story, answering questions about her journey. This event not only educated our students but also encouraged empathy and understanding within our community.

PTO Giving Tree Food Drive Success!

In the spirit of giving Rapid City Elementary proudly participated in our annual PTO Giving Tree Food Drive. Each classroom competed to collect nonperishable food items for Rapid City's local food pantry, with a goal of gathering 1,000 items. Thanks to the generosity of our Rockstars and their families, we surpassed our goal and collected 1,192 items! A special shout out to Mrs. Zamaites' class for leading the charge

with an impressive total of 448 items. The 4th and 5th graders even teamed up with local pantry volunteers to deliver the donations, earning themselves some well-deserved extra recess time!

A Day of Caring

November 26 marked our traditional "Day of Caring" event, where every class spent time with Mrs. Gehman, sharing inspiring stories about kindness. Together, they assembled bags filled with winter essentials and toiletries, complete with handmade cards from our students. These bags were distributed to individuals in our community who could use a little extra kindness as we head into the holidays. It's heartwarming to see our students take the initiative to care for others, embodying the spirit of giving that this season represents.

RCE Christmas Program

Ms. Klaft has put together a special Christmas Program, showcasing the extraordinary talents of our Rapid City Rockstars! The gymnasium was filled with the sounds of holiday cheer as families gathered to enjoy the performances. The evening was made even sweeter with cookies, lemonade, laughter, and the warmth of our close-knit community. Thank you, Ms. Klaft, for creating such a memorable event for our students and families!



WINTER FUN!

In addition to the many winter adventures, RCE's Christmas festivities included getting ready for the giving season.

Happy Holidays!

BSE celebrates with a Winter Wonderland

AWESOME NEWS!!!

Birch Street Elementary is on the RISE and has been awarded the “BEST Elementary Schools” ranking by the U.S. News and World Report. We are listed as #378 out of 2,633 elementary schools in the State of Michigan – that’s the top 14%!!! We were identified as Beating the Odds by outperforming the State in both Reading and Math. Schools are ranked on their performance in Math and Reading proficiency on the M-STEP assessment.

Happy Holidays!

As the year comes to a close, we’re excited to share what’s happening at Birch Street Elementary.

Winter Wonderland

Holiday Decorations: Our school is adorned with festive holiday decorations, creating a magical winter wonderland.

Christmas Concert: The Elementary Christmas concert was a heartwarming showcase of talent and spirit, bringing together students, teachers, and families in a joyous celebration of the holiday

season. Countless hours of practice led to delightful performances featuring singing, dancing, and even instrumental presentations, highlighting the dedication and creativity of our young performers. Each child’s enthusiasm radiated throughout the auditorium, creating an atmosphere filled with laughter and applause, while festive decorations and cheerful decorations enhanced the magical ambiance. The concert not only fostered a sense of community but also provided a wonderful opportunity for our students to express themselves and share the joy of Christmas with all those in attendance.

Classroom News

Winter-Themed Activities: Our classrooms are filled with winter-themed activities, including making snowflakes, building snowmen, and reading holiday stories.

Important Reminders

Winter Clothing: Please ensure your child has appropriate winter clothing for school, including a warm coat, hat, gloves, and boots.

Holiday Break: Our school will be

closed for the winter holiday break from December 23 to January 6 when school resumes. We hope you have a wonderful December filled with joy and wonder!



STEAM students learn about robots

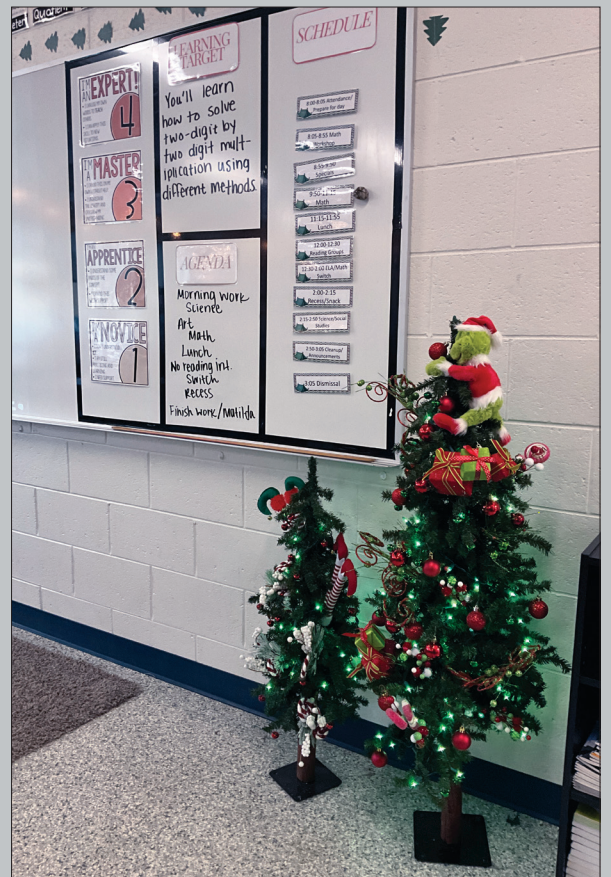
Upper elementary students continue projects, learning

7ifth grade students worked on a STEAM project. This project was done in coordination with help from our REMC team.

Students were divided up into groups that focused on writing, art, and coding. The teams worked together to develop

a setting and track for a series of robots to follow. It was a “Balloons over Broadway” parade. Students had to take measurements that helped them develop the correct code which allowed the robots to follow the proper path down the hallway. The end product was shared with our students.

Holiday is in full swing at the Upper Elementary. Staff is gearing up for the holidays and we are seeing more and more holiday decorations. The week before the holiday break is a holiday spirit week with in order to make school festive for the holidays.



FUN AT THE UE!

Students have been learning about how robots work as well as getting ready to celebrate the Christmas Holiday Season at the UE.



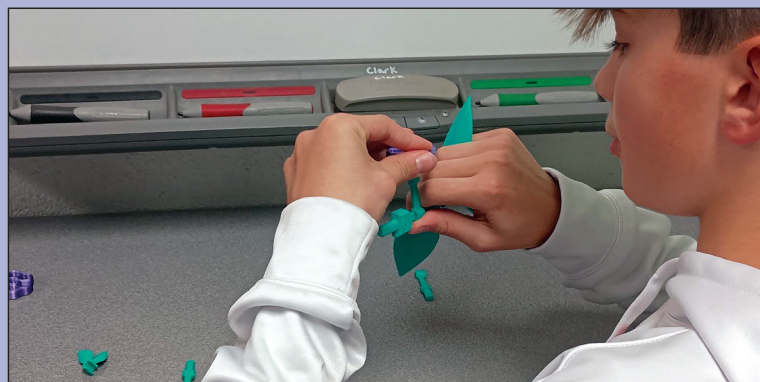
APPLE CHUNKIN' 2024

Another year of Apple Chunkin' is in the books and what a great time it was. We achieved some of our best distances to date and even reached the 40 feet range! Let's take a look back at how this KMS tradition started. Apple Chunkin' began in 2017 and was originally called Punkin' Chunkin' because we threw pumpkins instead of apples. Students were given a challenge to build a machine that could throw their pumpkin farther than that of their classmates. Parameters were set, many of which are still in place today such as a maximum base of 2x4 feet and no use of anything elastic. Students are given about a week of class days to create their machine with a full day to do so on the Friday of the event. Apple Chunkin' continues to give students an opportunity to work together, be part of a team, and learn life skills. We would like to thank Carter Lumber and Cherry St. Market for their years of wonderful support.



RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

Mrs. Clark's 6th Grade STEAM class is responsible for "random acts of kindness" going on at KMS, while learning the basics of 3D printing. Students created and assembled these beautiful, much-appreciated "works of art".



VETERAN' DAY

KMS is honored to have veterans and community members join us each year, gathering outside after morning announcements for the flag raising and the Pledge of Allegiance. Students and staff are welcome to shake hands or thank our honored guests. Afterwards, our Veterans visit Mr. Brown's classroom to answer questions. This is an amazing opportunity to honor and thank those who served in the United States Armed Forces, acknowledging the courage and dedication of veterans' service to our country.

ALGEBRA 1 KEEPS US GUESSING

Algebra I class is determining the bounce ratio of various balls and representing the data in tables, graphs, and rules. Each team had a different type of ball and conducted experiments to gather the data. Students used their math expertise from previous courses to build an understanding of a different function family.



A FRIENDLY FACE IN PLACE

We are so excited to welcome Mr. Ingram or Mr. "Leo," to our building. With a friendly smile, "Hey there or hello" to any he encounters, and easy manner, he has taken the reins to keep KMS clean, dusted, stocked, and any number of other things that come along when you are the day custodian to 310 middle schoolers. Welcome sir, we are so glad to have you.



BLAZER BAND WOWS AT WINTER CONCERT

The Blazer band plays a huge role in the events that happen at Kalkaska Public Schools. Whether they are playing for us during half time or even just populating the stands, supporting our schools. They always bring their A-Game, and December 10th was no exception.

On December 10, the band held its Winter Concert in our high school auditorium. It was a fun night filled with amazing music and lasting memories. The audience especially enjoyed it.

This was the symphonic band's first winter concert, and it was jazz band's second. The band members loved performing and can't wait to put on more performances for the community.

The band holds concerts every year, whether it's just for fun or for a competition. The band never ceases to

amaze the community. We have a fairly new band director, Samantha Ward, who has done a lot for the band to help drive their continued development into a powerful musical force.

Many of the band members interviewed said they loved performing and can't wait to put on more performances for the community.

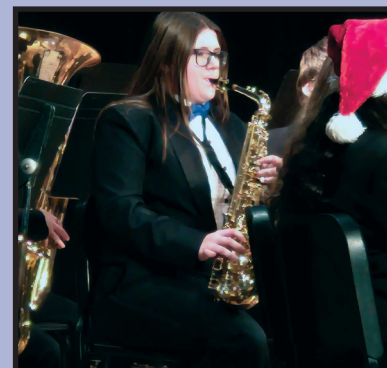
Senior James Eady was energized by the performance and says he is "stoked" to put on more amazing performances this year. He loved how the concert turned out.


"My favorite part of performing is definitely performing with my bandmates because it's something you only get to do once in a while and that makes it really

special to me." Eady said.

So many Kalkaska students express a desire to be in band though they have not yet had the chance to. The Winter Concert, with its energy and precision, was a tremendous advertisement. Anyone watching the band's enthusiasm and expertise might be moved to join.

When asked what advice he would give to future students interested in music, Eady stated, "Don't stop, don't give up even if it's hard. You may make a mistake or read your notes wrong and it may be noticeable to you but it's never as noticeable for the audience. The most important thing is to have fun; it's not meant to be super stressful."





Happy Holidays

from

TEEN HEALTH CORNER


Teen Health Corner provides medical and mental health care services to area youth at 3 locations. Our services include illness or injury care, preventive care (physicals/immunizations), and behavioral health / mental health care. We see youth ages 5-21 at our Kalkaska Middle School (M-T-W-Th)* and Forest Area (M-W-Th) locations and ages 10-21 at our Kalkaska Memorial Health Center/Kalkaska (M-T-W-Th-F) location.


Mental health services (outpatient counseling / psychotherapy) help youth address issues such as depression, anxiety, grief/loss, bullying, relationships, concerns of everyday life, self-harm, etc. We work with youth on healthy ways to manage stressors and emotions, and to build healthy relationships.


All services are billable to insurance and all insurances are accepted. We provide Medicaid enrollment assistance and also offer a sliding fee scale for the uninsured. Insurance information will be requested at the initiation of services. Appointments are available during or after school and virtually. Please call or stop in with any questions.

We are open during break!


CONTACT US:

 (231) 258-7791 Kalkaska
419 South Coral St, Kalkaska

 (231) 258-7922 KMS-E3
*Behavior Health services ONLY
Kalkaska Middle School
1700 West Kalkaska St, Kalkaska

 (231) 369-2000 Forest Area
7741 Shippy Rd, Fife Lake

Three convenient locations



Hey, parents!

Need help making media choices for your kids?

The Kalkaska Library recommends...



common sense

Age Ratings

Check out expertly assigned age ratings to help decide if a movie, book, game, app, or TV show is appropriate for your child.

Parent Reviews

Read thousands of content reviews from other parents like you who care about what their kids read, play, and watch.

Digital Education

Get free lessons and activities to help kids build better digital literacy skills.

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Explore the latest scientific studies about the impact of media on young people.



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#BLAZERPRIDE

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Blazer Bulletin

Published by KPS

Superintendent: Rick Heitmeyer

The Blazer Bulletin is published during the school year from September—June. If you have any suggestions, or questions, please contact the office at (231) 258-9109 between the hours of 8 a.m.—4 p.m. Editorial assistance provided by Kalkaska County Library Director John P. Roberts.

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BLAZERS

school event. However, as the day goes on, we work with our opponent schools to determine whether to play a high school (JV/Varsity) event. We will always err on the side of caution.

We will ...

- ★ ...always cancel MS games and practices on “snow days”
- ★ ...make decisions on other events by 1 p.m. and notify families via Remind
- ★ ...no matter what, make the best decision for our students, staff, and families

Further Information on Athletics (It Can Be Complicated)

Safety is always foremost in mind when decisions are being made. The Athletic Director gathers information and input from the National Weather Service office in Gaylord, the Kalkaska County Sheriff's Office, the Michigan

Department of Transportation (MDOT), the KPS Transportation Director, and KPS administrative colleagues.

As we all know, the weather in Northern Michigan can be quite variable, and factors such as timing of the weather event, duration, and if the conditions are expected to improve or degrade, influence our decision making.

When the decision is made to close school on a day when there are no athletic events, it is our policy to cancel all sports practices, with the following exception: varsity teams may practice if...

- ★ It is approved by administration, and
- ★ It is in the afternoon/early evening, and
- ★ It is voluntary and not required (deferring to parents' judgment whether it is safe/unsafe for their athlete to

participate)

Except in extenuating circumstances, we do not make a decision on a snow day until the morning. We try to make a decision by 5:15 a.m. and send out a message via School Messenger by 5:30 a.m. This will include a phone call and a text message. Information will be on local television and radio stations, as well. We make the decision and call as soon as possible.

We will...

- ★ ...send out a phone and text message
- ★ ...place the call on several media outlets
- ★ ...announce the message on Facebook

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the school. Your children's safety is our first priority!



SCENES FROM THE SEASON!

Kalkaska has had a lot going on. Students and staff alike have enjoyed the fun and celebrations.