



The Next Steps

Staff planning, preparing protocols

Kalkaska Public Schools has trained all staff in protocols for how to respond in the event of any emergency. Furthermore, staff was trained in how to reunify families after such an event. The initial training was Monday, January 20.

Learning

The training was not just for school violence, but any type of emergency that might occur, including fires, tornadoes, chemical spills on the highways or railroad tracks going through Kalkaska, etc.

Follow Up

KPS schools are creating safety teams at the elementary and secondary levels. Those teams will begin meeting right away, and will also form a district team to ensure everything is aligned PreK-12.

The Response Protocols

The chart at the right shows the different types of situations that may arise: Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuate, and Shelter. We will be practicing all of these during our normal safety drills. Not only do we want our staff to know the responses, our students need to know, as well. If you have questions, please contact your child's school for additional information.



STANDARD RESPONSE PROTOCOL

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS
Our school has adopted The "I Love U Guys" Foundation's Standard Response Protocol (SRP). Students and staff will be training, practicing, and drilling the protocol.

COMMON LANGUAGE
The Standard Response Protocol (SRP) is based on an all-hazards approach as opposed to individual scenarios. Like the Incident Command System (ICS), SRP utilizes clear common language while allowing for flexibility in protocol.
The premise is simple - there are five specific actions that can be performed during an incident. When communicating these, the action is labeled with a "Term of Art" and is then followed by a "Directive." Execution of the action is performed by active participants, including students, staff, teachers and first responders. The SRP is based on the following actions: Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuate, and Shelter.

HOLD
"In Your Classroom or Area"

Students are trained to:

- Clear the hallways and remain in their area or room until the "All Clear" is announced
- Do business as usual

Adults and staff are trained to:

- Close and lock the door
- Account for students and adults
- Do business as usual



SECURE
"Get Inside. Lock outside doors"

Students are trained to:

- Return to inside of building
- Do business as usual

Adults and staff are trained to:

- Bring everyone indoors
- Lock the outside doors
- Increase situational awareness
- Account for students and adults
- Do business as usual



LOCKDOWN
"Locks, Lights, Out of Sight"

Students are trained to:

- Move away from sight
- Maintain silence
- Do not open the door

Adults and staff are trained to:

- Recover students from hallway if possible
- Lock the classroom door
- Turn out the lights
- Move away from sight
- Maintain silence
- Do not open the door
- Prepare to evade or defend



EVACUATE
"To a Location"

Students are trained to:

- Leave stuff behind if required to
- If possible, bring their phone
- Follow instructions

Adults and staff are trained to:

- Bring roll sheet and Go Bag (unless instructed not to bring anything with them, dependent on reason for evacuation.)
- Lead students to Evacuation location
- Account for students and adults
- Report injuries or problems using Red Card/Green Card method.



SHELTER
"State Hazard and Safety Strategy"

Hazards might include:

- Tornado
- Hazmat
- Earthquake
- Tsunami

Safety Strategies might include:

- Evacuate to shelter area
- Seal the room
- Drop, cover and hold
- Get to high ground

Students are trained in:

- Appropriate Hazards and Safety Strategies

Adults and staff are trained in:

- Appropriate Hazards and Safety Strategies
- Accounting for students and adults
- Report injuries or problems using Red Card/Green Card method.



INSIDE THIS EDITION

BULLETIN

Kalkaska Public Schools
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Kalkaska, Michigan 49646

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RCE focuses on friendship, fun, memories

Students celebrate “Fabulous February”

This past month we’ve celebrated “Fabulous February” with friendship, fun, and memories that will warm our hearts until spring!

Our month kicked off with team-building stations that had everyone laughing and working together. Students rotated through a lineup that included jumbo volleyball, an epic Super Bowl flag football match, and the fan-favorite, “Hungry Hungry Rockstars.” It was a day filled with camaraderie and smiles!

The RCE family proudly embraces

everyone, proving that “You can’t have Inclusion without US!” We have received a Unified Champion School grant from Michigan Special Olympics. Our leadership team of 4th and 5th graders meets monthly to discuss inclusion activities and helps plan all-school events. Occupational Therapist, Mrs. Bittenbender, led us through some fun and challenging bean bag and bouncing ball activities designed to improve our focus. Each student received Special Olympics swag, a lasting reminder of the importance of unity and support.

Happy Valentine’s Day,

We celebrated friendship and love with some friendly competitions that brought out our inner champions! Students exchanged Valentines and treats and ended the day with a glow-in-the-dark dance party! The energy was electric, and the smiles were contagious. Thank you to everyone who participated and made this day unforgettable. Here’s to friendship and love at RCE!

Let’s keep the spirit alive all year round!



FEBRUARY FUN!

RCE has had many events and activities throughout February! The plan is to keep the fun happening throughout the year!

Happy Heart Month

BSE celebrated the 100th Day of School!

Happy Heart Month!

As the days get longer and the weather starts to warm up, we're excited to share what's happening at Birch Street Elementary.

100th Day Fun



We celebrated our 100th day of school on February 12 and kindergarten had so much fun with it. The kids were excited to



dress up with suspenders, bow ties, long dresses, aprons, spectacles and walking canes. They have learned to count to 100 by ones, fives, and tens.

Classroom News

Winter-Themed Activities: We'll continue to enjoy winter-themed activities while looking forward to the warmer weather.

Important Reminders

Winter Clothing: While the weather may be warming up, it's still a good idea to have your child wear layers of clothing. When the weather permits we are going outside



please remember to send students with winter gear.

Parent-Teacher Conferences: Mark your calendars for our upcoming parent-teacher conferences on March 19.

Calling all Readers!

We are gearing up for National Reading Month. Our theme this year is **Reading Helps Us Grow**. Throughout the month students will be celebrating reading by participating in the following activities:

Themed Spirit week

We're hunting for Mrs. Zenner the "pollinating bee," and working to complete the pollinating mission with a daily reading challenge

Guest reader's will be visiting to read a story during library time.

A pollinating mission assembly at the end of the month.

We have joined with Kankaska County Library as part of our celebrations. The library will be giving each student a "pollinator" color page, and if students bring it to KCL they will receive a prize.

We hope you have a wonderful February filled with love and kindness!



March is Reading Month at KUE

Upper elementary students enjoy many opportunities

March is approaching, and with it, March is Reading Month activities. Kalkaska Elementary School has many different activities to encourage reading. Book fairs, themed days, a tournament of books, and a bookmark contest are all activities that we have planned. The month often culminates in a “reading in the dark” event. Students use a light source of their own (flashlights, headlights, even lamps) to read in the gym – which is completely dark.

The Iott’s Seed Farm has reached out to KES to offer a great opportunity for our students. They have funded the ice time, instruction, and skate rental for our 3rd and 4th graders to learn to skate. Mrs. Hixson takes the students over to the Kaliseum where Mr. Dudek teaches the students how to skate. Students are

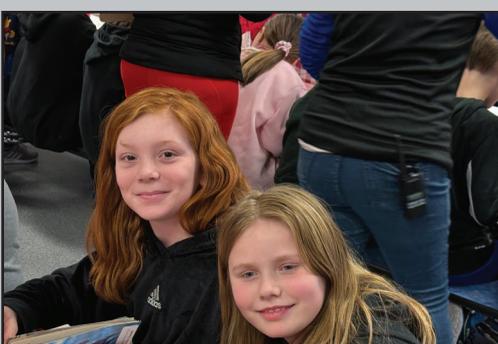
having a lot of fun and get a unique experience for their gym period.

The Rockwall is finished! KES installed a rockwall last year, but it was not completed until recently. A huge thank you to Jimmy Laurent and Julie Barresi for installing the holds to complete the wall. The Upper Elementary students were able to use it for the first time, this week, when they had to stay inside for morning recess. Students were excited.

They said it ... rocked!

The fifth grade student council has started a mentoring program with first graders. Fifth grade buddies sit with their mentee twice a week during their lunch period. On indoor recess days, the students all have an opportunity to play together in the multipurpose room. This helps to grow their special connections, and helps first graders feel more connected to school.

The fifth grade teachers hosted a “Book Tasting” event. This brought families to the school to read with their children. Each table had a large selection of one genre. Students browsed books and made notes about different titles or genres they might like to explore. Students and families rotated through each genre. This was a great experience to show the students that reading is a novel idea!



Reading Helps Us Grow				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
March is Reading Month 2025				
<small>BSE/KUE - Other events happening all month long: Tournament of Books, Mystery Readers, Penny Wars, Flashlight Reading, FREE Tacos, Pit Spitters Reading Program, and MORE!</small>				
3	4	5	6	7
BOOK FAIRS	BOOK FAIRS	BOOK FAIRS	BOOK FAIRS	BOOK FAIRS
10	11	12	13	14
Wear a shirt with words today!	Tongue Twisters & Tacos! Wear mismatched clothes!	Wear a hat today to honor Dr. Seuss!	Dress as a favorite book character!	FREE Popcorn & Poetry! Wear Blazer gear!
17	18	19	20	21
Bookmark Contest Ends!	KUE Poetry War ENGJ! Proceeds go to the Kalkaska County Library!	Parent Conferences pm only	FLASHLIGHT Reading Day!	NO SCHOOL Enjoy your break!
<small>RETURN YOUR PIT SPITTERS' READING LOG at the end of March! Students who meet the reading goal of 15 minutes per day during March is Reading Month will receive a FREE ticket to attend a Traverse City Pit Spitters home game!</small>				

FUN AT THE UE!

Kalkaska Upper Elementary School students have been involved in many activities.

KMS students showing leadership skills

Quarter 2, 4.0 Students: 6th — Joncee Arnold, Ransom Comfort, Gwendalyn Finley, Alexis Freeland, Bentley Henning, Tristan McKinney, Issac Muzikar, Jack Rowell, Kason Stumm and Joshua Urquhart. 7th — Brynn Foerster, Sophie Garcia, Alexia Kniss, Jayda Kuhn, Aubrey Paynter, Harrison Sutton and Nicholas Wegener. 8th — Evelynn Amidon, Lucci Fortuna, Asher Guggemos, William Morris, Scott Urquhart and Isabella Wegener.



January 2025 Students of the Month were chosen after SIC (School Improvement Committee) asked staff to nominate students who already execute these core P.R.I.D.E values every day. January focused on being Prepared. 6th Grade: Abigail Brewer, Sadie Karazia, and Lillian Roesstorff; 7th Grade: Madilynne Adams, Madison Cahill, and Brynn Foerster; 8th Grade: Payton Bonofiglio, Elizabeth Emery, and Isabella Wegener.



Another fabulous **Pastries for Parents** turnout this winter. Parents, grandparents, family and friends came and celebrated with their student by eating a large array of pastries prepared by our amazing Food Service department. We appreciate all who were able to join us and celebrate being a KMS family.

Candy bar and smiles — Along with friendly competition, students have been fundraising for student activities with World's Finest Chocolate candy bars. Top seller prizes included: 1st place — **Nintendo Switch** — Bentley Biallas; 2nd place — **\$100 bill** — Henrik Schellie (not pictured); 3rd place — **Large Squishmallow** — Jadeyn Myers. Additionally, any student who sold one box of chocolates had their name in the drawing for a crisp **\$100 bill** — Mason Kies. Thank you to all who participated and supported our students in their sales.



Athletically Speaking

What's Happening in Blazer Nation

CONGRATULATIONS VARSITY WRESTLERS!

They are Team District Champions for the first time since 2007! Senior Gabe Buyze-Prieto, who won the conference championship in his weight class for the third year in a row, qualified for the Individual Regional Tournament, as did Sophomore Evan Carlson who qualified for the first time. Though they did not advance to the state finals, we are very proud! Freshman Serenity Fukino made history as the first in school history to win a match at the Girls Individual Districts!

MOSES TO LEAD VARSITY BASEBALL

Congratulations to Mason Moses who has been selected to take over as Varsity Head Coach of the baseball program. A Blazer through and through, Coach Moses played for Hall of Fame Head Coach Bill Vandergriff, and has been coaching in several of our sports programs, including the past three as our JV head coach. Coach Moses will be joined by Jeremy Wilkinson who was hired as the Varsity Baseball Assistant Coach, and in the next few days we will be selecting a new JV Baseball Head Coach. We are tremendously excited for the future of Blazer baseball!

MS BASEBALL CLUB

Bridging the gap between our youth baseball and high school baseball programs is a top priority for Coach Moses and Athletic Director Bryan Hawkins. Sign ups are already in progress at KMS to determine numbers,

and we are exploring our scheduling options. If you know a student who is interested, or if you have interest in coaching a club team, please contact AD Bryan Hawkins (athletics@kpschools.com).

ALL SPRING SPORTS PRACTICES BEGIN MARCH 10TH!

Athletes are reminded that they will need to have a current physical form on file with the Athletic Department in order to



practice. Pay to Participate fees are due before the first scheduled competition. Watch for more information about team practice times and locations posted in the student announcements.

KHS ATHLETES OF THE WEEK

- ★ Week of 02/03- Junior Jackson Shetler, Varsity Boys Basketball, Senior Kylee Moore, Varsity Girls Basketball
- ★ Week of 02/10- Sophomore Serenity Fukino, Varsity Wrestling, Freshman Eli Smith, Freshman Boys Basketball
- ★ Week of 02/17- Sophomore Dwayne Rice, Varsity Wrestling, Freshman Marissa Manchester, JV Girls Basketball
- ★ Week of 02/24- Senior Sarah Morgan, Varsity Girls Basketball, Freshman Owen McGlone, Freshman Boys Basketball

Kalkaska Fight Song

Smash right through that line big Blue.
 Watch the points keep growing.
 Blazer teams are bound to win.
 They're fighting with the vim.
 Rah, rah, rah!
 See that line, it's weakening.
 We're going to win this game.
 Fight, fight, rah, team fight!
 Victory for Blue and White!

Reading helps you Grow!



March is **READING MONTH!** So we have a special mission for all KPS elementary students: *Color your pollinator sheet* and bring it to the Kalkaska Library to collect a cool prize! Can't wait to see you!

March 1 – March 31



DID YOU KNOW?
Students are special in Kalkaska! All KPS students already have an account at the public library. Just tell the librarian your name when you visit to check out!

Questions? Contact the Library!

247 S. CEDAR ST, KALKASKA
231-258-9411 info@kalkaskalibrary.org



Teen Health Corner

Helping kids find the help they need



Social media plays a big role in teen culture today. Surveys show that ninety percent of teens ages 13-17 have used social media. Seventy five percent report having at least one active social media profile, and 51% report visiting a social media site **at least daily**. There are positive aspects of social media, but also potential risks. It is important for parents to help their teens use these sites responsibly.

- « Content quality matters! Learn what they are viewing and discuss alternatives if needed
- « Watch for signs of problematic behaviors (cravings, inability to stop, lying or sneaking)
- « Consider clear boundaries if social media impairs ability to engage in daily roles and routines
- « Limit social media so as to not interfere with adolescents' sleep, schoolwork and physical activity
- « Work together to engage in activities away from digital media (get outdoors, game night, pick up a new hobby)
- « Discourage use of social media for comparisons, especially related to physical appearance
- « Help kids recognize social media has "hooks" that keep us online longer than intended
- « Stay vigilant for signs of cyberbullying and harassment, which can be more severe than offline bullying
- « Seek help if social media is leading to increased anxiety or depression

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

All services are billable to all insurances or we offer a sliding scale fee for those with no insurance. We also offer assistance with applying for Medicaid.




#BLAZERPRIDE

KALKASKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Board of Education	Middle – 258-4040
Rachael Birgy – President	Scott Morey, Principal 3205
Steve Ordway – Vice President	Daryl Dimon, Dean of Students 3208
Wendy Watson – Secretary	Sara Waterman, Secretary 3201
Mary Scobey – Treasurer	Nickey Torrey, Secretary 3203
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Central Business Office – 258-9109	Birch Street Elementary – 258-8629
Rick Heitmeyer, Superintendent 1120	Arica Zenner, Principal 4204
Cari Jo Roberts, Executive Assistant 1101	Tracy Dimon, Secretary 4200
Jeffrey Scroggins, Director of Finance 1104	Melissa Patnode, Secretary 4202
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Senior High – 258-9167	Early Childhood Learning Center – 258-0257
Staci Short, Principal 2103	Arica Zenner, Director
Aaron Ostrander, Assistant Principal 2170	
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Rhonda Wurtz, Secretary 2102	
Kalkaska Alternative Program – 258-2777	Kalkaska Upper Elementary – 258-9146
Josh England, Dean of Students	Ryan Moore, Principal 5106
	Sue Woodruff, Secretary 5107
	Rapid City Elementary – 331-6121
	Laura Gehman, Principal 6103
	Robyn Czuk, Secretary 6101
	Athletics – 258-9167
	Bryan Hawkins, Athletic Director 2236
	Linda Colvin, Secretary 2185

Blazer Bulletin

Published by KPS

Superintendent: Rick Heitmeyer

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BLAZERS

Seniors participate in Reality Day

Aims to prepare students for financial challenges

Ralkaska High School seniors participated in Reality Day, an educational event aimed at preparing students for the financial challenges they will face after graduation.

The event provided an opportunity for seniors to simulate budgeting for their future by selecting careers they are interested in and creating a budget based on the expected salary for that profession. Students were tasked with managing monthly expenses such as rent, utilities, transportation, and groceries, while also

factoring in savings and other necessary financial decisions. The goal was to give students a practical understanding of how to balance income and expenses in the real world, helping them make informed financial decisions as they transition into adulthood.

The event was made possible through the collaboration of Forest Area Federal Credit Union and many local volunteers who donated their time and expertise. Volunteers from the credit union and other community organizations provided valuable support and guidance, helping

students navigate their budgets and offering advice on managing finances. Reality Day was not only a learning experience but also a fun and interactive way for students to gain real-life skills that will benefit them in their careers and personal lives.

By the end of the day, seniors walked away with a deeper understanding of financial responsibility and a greater appreciation for the importance of budgeting in the real world

■ **By KHS Yearbook Staff**



REALITY DAY

KHS seniors participated in Reality Day in February. The goal was to give students a practical understanding of how to balance income and expenses in the real world.



#BLAZERPRIIDE