



HOCO VICTORY FOR KHS

Blazers off to 5–0 start after Homecoming Game shutout

Spirit Week at Kalkaska High School was a huge success, filled with creativity and energy that brought out the best in the Blazers. Participation was impressive, with students from across the school joining in the themed dress-up days. On one particular day, when students were encouraged to dress like the type of person they admired or loved, even some boys wore crop tops, skirts, and other outfits they wouldn't normally try. It was refreshing to see Blazers stepping out of their comfort zones, showing confidence, and being celebrated for it.

Each day brought fun, laughter, and a strong sense of unity. Even students who usually stay on the sidelines or don't get excited about school activities took part. Many described it as one of the best spirit weeks yet—not only because of the creative outfits, but also because of the positive, judgment-free atmosphere it created. Students were kind to one another, friendships formed across groups, and the Blazer spirit was more visible than ever.

Spirit Week gave students a break from the stresses of assignments and testing, offering a chance to celebrate together and create lasting memories. It highlighted the importance of tradition in building school pride and community. The more Blazers who participate, the more exciting and inclusive these events become. Parents and families are encouraged to support involvement, since Spirit Week not only fosters creativity and happiness, but also strengthens the bond that makes Kalkaska High School special.

■ By Mahala Konsdorf

INSIDE THIS EDITION

BULLETIN

Kalkaska Public Schools

315 S. Coral St.

Kalkaska, Michigan 49646

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# Welcome Back, RCE School Students

*New staff join RCE as 2025–2026 kicks off*

The 2025–2026 school year is here, and we couldn’t be more excited to welcome back all of our Rapid City Elementary students and families! After a summer filled with sunshine, adventures, and well–deserved rest, it’s time to return to the classroom, friends, and all the fun of learning together. This year promises to be full of new opportunities, special events, and lasting memories.

### Big News

Rapid City Elementary has received a special honor from the Michigan House of Representatives. State Representative John R. Roth (104th District) congratulated the school for earning a spot on their list of 100 Most Improved Public Elementary and Middle Schools in Michigan. In a formal letter to the school, Rep. Roth praised the dedication and hard work of the students, staff, and

families that led to this achievement. The award is not just a reflection of academic improvement, but also a symbol of the school’s resilience, teamwork, and strong support from the Kalkaska area community.

### Welcoming Our New Staff

We are excited to introduce Kevin Malbouef as the new Dean of Students! He brings a wealth of experience, passion for education, and dedication to creating a supportive learning environment for all students. Our school year will center on strengthening academics, fostering a positive school culture, and engaging with our community.

RCE is also thrilled to welcome Loren Schwab to our teaching team! She is eager to bring fresh ideas,

energy, and a love for learning into the classroom.

### Special Events

- ★ Trunk–or–Treat in the RCE parking lot on Friday, October 17, from 4–6 pm
- ★ 1st quarter ends Friday, October 31



### BACK IN ACTION!

RCE is ready to go for the 2025–2026 school year. The year promises to be full of new opportunities, special events, and lasting memories.





# School is in session

*Exciting activities in progress at Birch Street!*

Welcome to the 2025–2026 school year! We’re thrilled to see our students back and ready to learn. October brings cooler weather, colorful leaves, and lots of exciting activities here at Birch Street Elementary. Thank you for helping us start the year off strong—we can’t wait to see all the growth and fun ahead.

### Tips for a Great Start

- ★ Arrive on time every day — learning starts at 8:10 a.m.
- ★ Label jackets, lunchboxes, and water bottles
- ★ Read at home for 15–20 minutes every night
- ★ Ask your child: “What did you learn today?”

### Please Remember

If you are trying to reach the Birch Street Office for your kindergartner, first or second grader, please call (231) 258–8629.

If you are trying to reach the Kalkaska Upper Elementary Office for your third, fourth or fifth grader, please call (231) 258–9146.

### Morning Drop–Off

Students may not be dropped off before 7:30 a.m. Doors are locked and staff are not present to ensure student safety.

Any student getting dropped off by entering the carline, must exit the vehicle on the right hand side, in the right lane. For safety reasons, the left lane is ONLY to be used to exit the carline after your

student has exited the vehicle.

We appreciate your continued patience and understanding.

Please remember we have our students and community in our best interest, and are working together to provide the best experience possible!

Please welcome our new kindergarten teacher, Ms. Wozniak.

### Events

- ★ October 23 – ½ day students – Parent Teacher Conferences (afternoon *and* evening)
- ★ October 24 – No School
- ★ October 31 – End of 1st marking period



### READY TO LEARN!

BSE students and staff are ready to go! Welcome to our new teacher, Ms. Wozniak (left).



# Introducing Leo, KUE’s new therapy dog

*Upper elementary students have a new best friend*

**Therapy Dog**

The Kalkaska Elementary School has a new volunteer! Leo is a trained therapy dog who will be visiting the school throughout the year. Mr. and Mrs. Moore have worked with Leo to be certified by Pet Partners. At the school, Mr. Moore will act as the handler for Leo. This allows Leo to come into the school to work with our students. Leo enjoys greeting the students as they enter the building and visiting with students as they transition to class. He has also helped some students who have been having a rough day. As the school year progresses, Mr. Moore will be working with the staff to help determine

the best uses for Leo. In the meantime, Leo is happy to attend school, and be with the students and staff.

**5th Grade Field Trip**

The entire 5th grade was able to travel to AuSable Institute for the first in a 10-part REYS (Restoration Ecology for Young Students) program.

Students learned how to identify many plants, trees, and animals. They also learned about food chains, biodiversity, and the difference between native and invasive species. Kids played games to learn about carrying capacity, scarcity of resources, and predator/prey.

**Blazer Store Reboot!**

The Blazer Store has been active in the Upper Elementary for quite some time. It is a part of our positive behavior support system. It has been redesigned based on student feedback. Students still earn Blazer Bucks for positive behavior, and the store has been renamed The Blazer Boutique.

Additionally, we have added student representatives from each classroom who work with student council to help run the Boutique. The Blazer Boutique is now open and has items students have requested: school supplies, snacks, and fidgets.

Mrs. Bridson introduced the changes at an assembly — opening the door for the return of the Blue Blazer! The students were excited and this seems to be an improvement on our positive behavior support system.



**FUN AT THE UE!**

In addition to everyone’s new best friend, Leo, showing up, the upper elementary has been busy with many new activities and learning opportunities.



# KMS Blazers ignite Spirit Week with dragon-sized pride

*Kalkaska Middle School recently celebrated Spirit Week in honor of Homecoming, bringing energy and excitement to the halls with themed dress-up days each day of the week.*

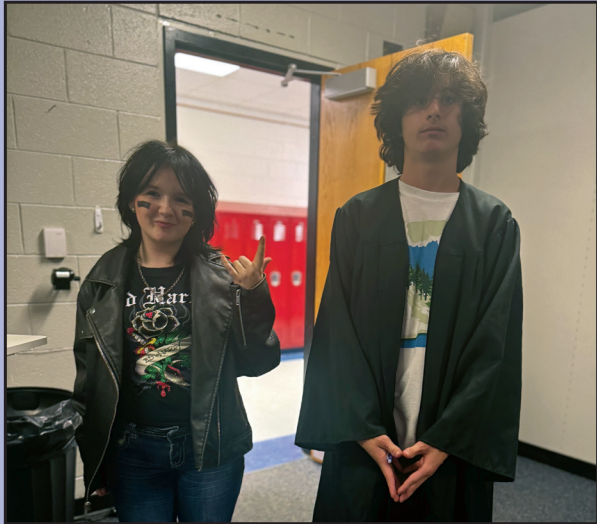
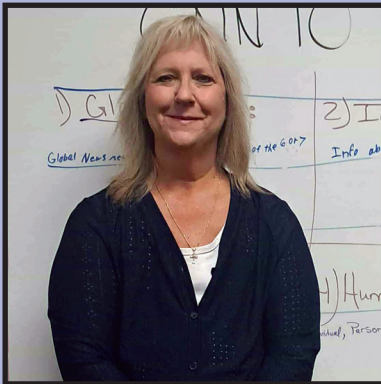
The fun kicked off on Monday with Pajama Day, when students arrived in their coziest sleepwear, from fluffy slippers to colorful onesies. Tuesday was Career Day, showcasing a wide range of future aspirations as kids dressed as doctors, athletes, teachers, and more. On Wednesday, the school was filled with capes and masks for Superhero Day, as

students channeled their favorite heroes, both real and fictional. Thursday brought out the camouflage for Camo Day, with students blending in with nature-inspired gear.

The week wrapped up on Friday with Blue and White Day, as everyone showed their school pride by wearing Kalkaska's colors head to toe.

**Welcome to KMS**

Kalkaska Middle School is proud to welcome a fantastic group of new staff members to the Blazer family this year. Joining the team are Bryan Hawkins (7th Grade Social Studies), Gail Lugiewicz (8th Grade ELA), Jennifer Yalden (PE), Julia Messingschlager (Special Education), and Laura Gehman, who steps in as the new KMS principal. The school is excited to have them on board as they bring fresh energy and dedication to the blue and white community.



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT**

(From Left to Right) Mrs. Zebolsky, Miss Kimmy, Ms. Krissy, Mr. Wojdan, and Mrs. Bruso; Mr. Bryan Hawkins; Mrs. Gail Lugiewicz; Ms. Jennifer Yalden; Gwen Finley (Left) and Zane Willis (Right) during Career Day; Kylie Losch (Left) and Zeke Wyskochil (Right) during Career Day; Mason Noel during Career Day; Miss Kimmy, Mrs. Bruso, Mrs. Henderson, and Mr. Henderson; Mrs. Julia Messingschlager; Mrs. Laura Gehman.



# Athletically Speaking

## Blazer Athletics: Off to a Roaring Start!

The energy is electric around the high school, and for good reason — Blazer Athletics is absolutely on fire this fall! From the football field to the volleyball court, our student-athletes are making us proud and showing what it means to bleed Blazer blue.

### Football Fever is Back!

Our varsity football team is turning heads with an incredible 5-0 start to the season — the best we've seen since 2016! The boys are playing with heart, determination, and a chemistry that's been years in the making. Friday night lights have never felt brighter, and the community is rallying behind these warriors as they chase something special this year.



### Volleyball Dominance

Speaking of special, our JV volleyball team just put on a clinic at the Johannesburg-Lewiston tournament on September 13! Not only did they bring home the championship trophy, but they did it in dominant fashion — losing just three sets throughout the tournament. The 8th grade volleyball team won the Mio tournament to kick off their season too! These young athletes are setting the bar high and showing that the future of Blazer volleyball is in excellent hands.



### Cross Country Grit

The cross country teams hosted their home meet on September 15, and what a day it was! Our boys' squad powered their way to a solid 2nd place finish, showcasing the endurance and determination that defines distance running. There's nothing quite like watching our runners give everything they have on their home course.



### Soccer's Triumphant Return

After taking a year to regroup, soccer is officially back! With 19 dedicated boys ready to take the field, the team is enthusiastic and ready. It's inspiring to see these student-athletes come together, ready to rebuild and create new traditions for Blazer soccer.



### The Season Ahead

This is just the beginning, Blazer Nation! With momentum building across all our fall sports, we're witnessing something truly special. Whether you're cheering from the stands on Friday nights or supporting our athletes at away games, your energy makes all the difference.

Here's to our student-athletes who are giving their all, our coaches who are leading with passion, and our community that never stops believing.







Dear KPS Parents and Caregivers,

One of the very best things librarians do is foster a love of books and reading in our kids. Lately, though, it's apparent that the number of young Blazers reading for enjoyment is fewer and fewer. We see that by the time they enter middle school nearly all of our students own smartphones. The average student reports spending eight or more hours every day online. For far too many of our kids the time spent reading physical books as a pastime, in contrast, has virtually disappeared, meaning literacy suffers. More and more, we're hearing from parents and teachers that smartphones and screen time are out of hand. We agree. So this year we've decided to do something about it. Throughout the year we'll be promoting organizations, sharing ideas and resources, and hosting programs and events, to help tackle the unhealthy digital environment we find ourselves in.

Let's get to a better place together. A great place to get started is the Wait Until 8<sup>th</sup> organization. It's hard to act alone. Change for the better is much easier when we act together. Let's take the pledge. We agree with one parent who said that delaying smartphones isn't only about limiting screens. It's about restoring childhood.

Sincerely,  
Blazer Libraries

MAKE THE PLEDGE. DELAY THE SMARTPHONE.  
**WAITUNTIL8TH.ORG**



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# #BLAZERPRIDE

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# BLAZERS



# HOMECOMING 2025



2025 RD Sports Photo - Rob DeForge



RD Sports Photo  
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2025 RD Sports Photo  
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## SCENES FROM HOMECOMING 2025

Many facets of Homecoming can be seen within this edition of the Blazer Bulletin. Thank you to © Rob DeForge Sports Photos for the use of images!