



# TROJAN TODAY

YOUR SCHOOL TOWN OF HIGHLAND SOURCE FOR NEWS AND EVENTS | OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2024

## HIGHLAND GIRLS HIT THE MAT

A decision by the governing board of Indiana prep sports to add girls wrestling to its roster was met with jubilation by girls around the state.

No where is that enthusiasm more apparent than in Highland, where more than 20 girls are eager to become part of the first group of young women to catapult their sport – and their team – onto the stage of elite high school athletics.

Highland Athletic Director Ryan Harrington said the Indiana High School Athletic Association's timing is perfect.

"This is an up-and-coming sport. All of the data shows girls wrestling is the fastest growing sport in the nation," Harrington said.

"The NCAA recognizes girls wrestling at the college level and scholarship opportunities are expanding," he said. "We have been fortunate to see the dynamic growth right here at the Highland schools."

After years of promoting wrestling for boys – and girls – at the elementary level, competitive wrestling has blossomed at Highland with state- and nationally-ranked female wrestlers.

"I am really excited," Harrington said. "This is a great opportunity for ladies to participate in the sport. It's fun to see the excitement growing."



### HIGHLAND GIRLS WRESTLING

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Athletic Director Ryan Harrington has named Lauren Bastaic as the girls wrestling team head coach. The first match is scheduled for **November 6**. Mark your calendars for the second annual Highland Girls Wrestling Invitational **November 16**.

**Girls Wrestling Schedule:** Visit the athletics portal on the Highland High School website for a complete schedule.

## School Town of Highland ramps up social media, communications

The School Town of Highland is getting more social these days, adding its presence through a host of widely used social media platforms.

From TikTok, Instagram and LinkedIn to Facebook, X (Twitter) and YouTube, the goal is to reach students and parents on the social media platforms they like best.

Ethan Roberts, who heads up District Communications for Highland schools, said the outreach is already having an effect.

"It is truly a pleasure to be able to highlight all the awesome things happening in our school district each and every day," Roberts said. "Whether it be a fun lesson or a great student or staff accomplishment, I want to make sure that people can see how great STOH is."

Roberts is also working with the schools and their PR liaisons to ensure each school's web page is up-to-date and easier to navigate.

**INSIDE:** See page 3 for our social media links.



## ADMINISTRATION

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## SCHOOL BOARD

**Victor A. Garcia**, President  
**Patrick Krull**, Vice President  
**Allencia Ballard**, Secretary  
**Robert Kuva**, member  
**Erica Smith-Gomez**, member

The school board meets the third Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. in the Administration Building, 9145 Kennedy Avenue, Highland.

**INFO:** Visit [highland.k12.in.us](http://highland.k12.in.us) for the latest information, including meeting agendas, school policies, board mission, beliefs and values.



[ Photos courtesy of R.H. Walker Photography ]

## Close-knit Girls Cross Country team exceeding goals

Highland Girls Cross Country – all 25 of them – are making this a season to remember.

For the first time, the girls team won the New Prairie Invitational where they beat 21 other teams to take their division. With that, the girls, who spend almost every day together, set their sights on what are outstanding prospects for the rest of the season.

Coach Andrea Cunningham couldn't be prouder or happier for this very special group of girls.

"Team Captains Jolie Burtleson and Kayla Guajardo are true leaders. These girls are passionate about their sport and driven to do their best – not for themselves, but for the teammate standing beside them," Cunningham said. "They never give up and always put each other first."

Inside and outside of the classroom, the girls are best friends.

### BOYS CROSS COUNTRY

Jalen Strietelmeier began his senior year in cross country by logging the second best 5K in Highland High School history. "I'm feeling more confident than at any other time in my running career," he said. "I'm more fit than ever and running longer and faster and working out in between. I'm enjoying every race and hoping for the best as we make our way through the rest of this all-important season."

"They embody a culture where they are family in every sense of the word," she said. "These girls have exceeded every goal they set. I'm looking forward to seeing what they do next."

Following sectionals at Highland, the top 15 individuals from non-advancing teams and the first five qualifying teams will advance to regionals.

### LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

## "Highland academics, sports and learning take center stage"

I want to congratulate and thank our students, parents and staff for collectively working to make this one of the smoothest transitions to the new school year.

The level of enthusiasm is also at an all-time high. All of those positives make it so academics and learning take center stage every day.

**Highland Sports:** A big congratulations to our boys and girls cross-country teams, girls soccer and the cheerleaders, who are gearing up for their state competition November 9. Each of these teams is giving it their all. The competitions are exciting to watch. If you haven't been to a sport-

ing event, check the online calendar. If you can't make it, get connected with the School Town of Highland at our expanded social media platforms.

**Parent's take note:** First quarter ends Oct. 11 but any day is a good day to check on your child's academic progress through RDS access. If you are having difficulty accessing RDS, please contact the office staff at your child's school. They are more than happy to help.



**Brian Smith**  
Superintendent  
School Town of Highland





[ Photo by Ethan Roberts ]

# Strike up the band!

## New director Amelia Thurman joins Trojan family

Amelia Thurman was presented with the opportunity of her professional life when Highland offered the Crown Point native the position of Band Director for the School Town.

In that capacity, the experienced flautist directs the Marching Trojans along with the pep, jazz, high school and middle school bands.

“I’m living my dream,” the Butler University graduate said. “My mom was in band. I was in the band. I was just a high school sophomore when I knew my career path would be focused on being a band teacher.”

Thurman joined the district August 26 and hit the ground running with

marching band season in full swing.

“This was a big switch for students and new for me, but they made it easy,” she said. “The parents were just as eager to help. What I’ve found is that this group of kids are excited about music and performance. I’m excited to watch them grow as musicians.”

Thurman has plans to inspire students to join the group and grow the program.

“There is so much support for the music program – from the band boosters and the administration,” she said. “Not only do I want to grow the program, I want to challenge my students to grow as individuals.”



## Let’s get social!

Get involved and be in the know! Join the School Town of Highland on the following social media links:

### CENTRAL OFFICE

Instagram: @office\_stoh

X (Twitter): @OfficeStoh

Facebook: School Town of Highland

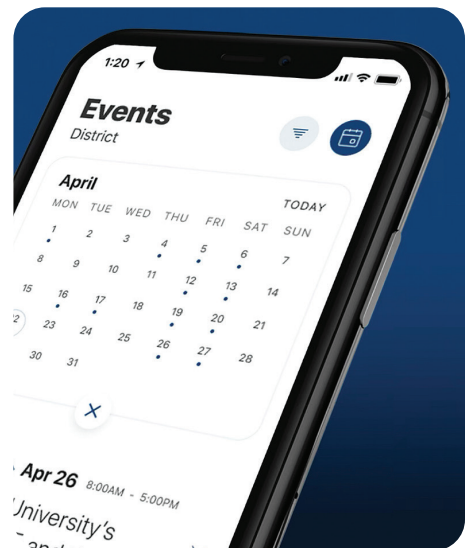
TikTok: @office\_stoh

YouTube: STOH School Board

LinkedIn: School Town of Highland

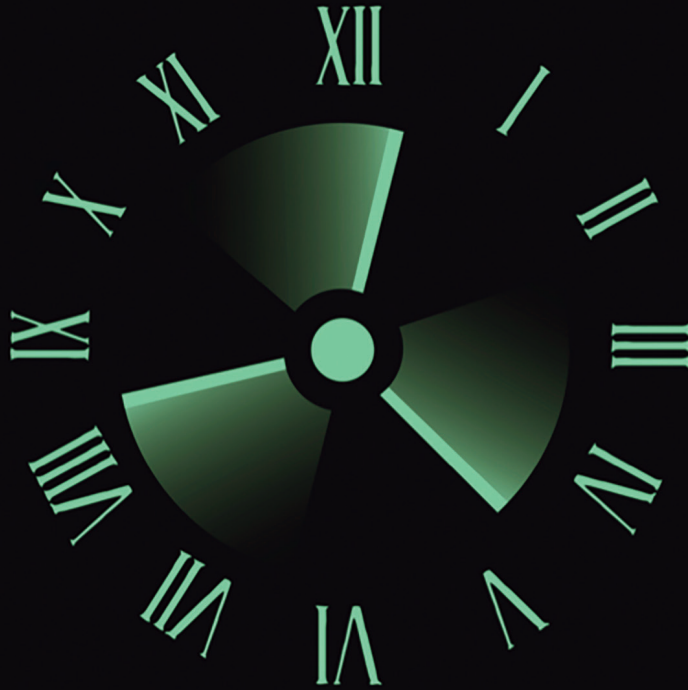


Scan this QR code to get direct social media links to all our schools throughout the district.



## Get the STOH app!

Did you know that STOH has a mobile app? It is a great way to stay up-to-date with everything STOH in one unified place. Simply visit Apple’s iOS App Store or the Google Play Store and download the app. Tutorials are available on YouTube in English and Spanish.



# RADIUM GIRLS

BY D.W. GREGORY

**7 PM FRIDAY NOVEMBER 22**  
**7 PM SATURDAY NOVEMBER 23**  
**2 PM SUNDAY NOVEMBER 24**

**MONBECK AUDITORIUM**

[www.highlandtheatrecompany.org](http://www.highlandtheatrecompany.org)

## Craft & Vendor Fair

Highland Bands Fall Craft & Vendor Fair will be held 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

**Saturday, November 2** at Highland Middle School, 2941 41st St. This free annual fundraising event offers you the opportunity to help Grades 6-12 bands while shopping for unique items from local crafters, artisans and vendors.

**INFO:** Crafters and vendors may apply through **October 14** by requesting an application from the Highland Band Boosters at [highlandbandindianacraftfair@gmail.com](mailto:highlandbandindianacraftfair@gmail.com).

## Fall Festival of Song

Enjoy the sounds of the season with the Highland Middle School and High School choirs at 6:30 p.m. **October 15** at Highland High School's Monbeck Auditorium, 9135 Erie St. Admission is free.

## Haunting on O Day

Dark windows, shadows at every turn playing tricks with your eyes, and the eerie silence before a scream.... Want to know the rest? Join us for a Haunting on O Day from 7-10 p.m. Friday, **October 25** and Saturday, **October 26** at 9424 O Day Drive, Highland. Admission is a \$5 donation, which will help with competition costs for the Highland Pop Warner and HHS Cheer Teams this season.

## Holiday Spectacular

Join us for our Holiday Spectacular at 6:30 p.m. **December 5** featuring the talents of the Highland Middle and High School bands and orchestras. Additionally, mark your calendar for the choir's Holiday Concert at 6:30 p.m. **December 13**. Both concerts are at Highland High School's Monbeck Auditorium, 9135 Erie St. Admission is free.

