



TROJAN TODAY

YOUR SCHOOL TOWN OF HIGHLAND SOURCE FOR NEWS AND EVENTS | FEBRUARY-MARCH 2023

LESS CELL. MORE FOCUS.

HIGHLAND EDUCATORS SEE MORE STUDENTS ADJUSTING TO RULE SINCE IMPLEMENTING BAN

Six months into the state's ban of cell phones by students during instruction time, HHS Principal John Zack said classroom enforcement is going pretty well. Non-use of electronic devices during passing periods between classes is another issue.

"In the classroom, it is the teacher who makes the rules. For the most part, the kids are accepting and participating with that," Zack said. The problem I run into the most is in the hallways where the use of personal electronic devices is also banned. The use of electronics in that setting a safety issue."

Zack takes the issue seriously while offering a lighthearted way of getting his point across.

"We have used what we call the 'Box of Disappointment,' where we take electronics that are being

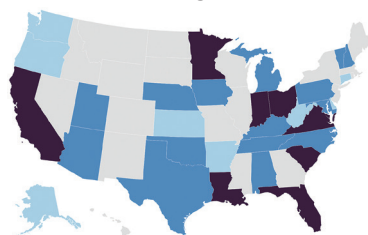
used inappropriately and allow students retrieve them at the end of the day," he said. "When I catch students using one of the big three – Snapchat, Instagram and TikTok – to take photos in the halls, I photobomb as many images as possible.

"We want our students to be respectful of their fellow students, who may not want their pictures taken at school. Our goal of school is to teach, not punish. I wish the learning would move more quickly," he said. "We're working on it."



SCHOOL CELL PHONE BAN OR RESTRICTIONS BY STATE

A growing number of states are implementing statewide bans on cell phones in schools to mitigate youth mental health concerns and distractions during instruction.



- Statewide ban or restriction
- Pilot program or policy recommendation
- Statewide legislation introduced

Indiana's ban prohibits students from using any portable wireless device (including cell phones, gaming devices, laptops and tablets) during instructional time.

Source: KFF



Superintendent Brian Smith (left), Legacy Foundation's Jodi Kateiva and High School Principal John Zack (right) congratulate Haylie Houchin (second from right) on becoming Highland's newest Lilly Scholar.

Highland senior named Lilly Scholar

Haylie Houchin has capped off a remarkable academic career as Highland's newest Lilly Scholar.

The scholarship guarantees her a full ride for four years at an Indiana university of choice.

The class president, three-sport standout in basketball, golf and track, student representative on the Highland Education Foundation Board, member of the Athletic Leadership Committee, a member of the first-ever Unified Bocce Ball team and enthusiastic

volunteer with Key Club is savoring her final moments of high school as she looks forward to the next chapter.

"I've always taken grades super seriously and eager to try something new," she said. "I strive to do the best I can and be part of everything. I tend to be the one to push me to do more."

The one-time engineering major has already been accepted to her top picks – Purdue and Butler universities – to study pharmacy.

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Kevin Beveridge
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Christina Davis
Warren Elementary Principal
cdavis@highland.k12.in.us

SCHOOL BOARD

Patrick Krull, President
Robert Kuva, Vice President
Erica Smith-Gomez, Secretary
Victor A. Garcia, member
Richard Alyea, 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 for the latest information, including meeting agendas, school policies, board mission, beliefs and values.

Highland Athletic Director elected to IHSAA Board of Directors

Congratulations to Highland Athletic Director Ryan Harrington, who has been elected to serve on the Indiana High School Athletic Association's Board of Directors through 2026.

It is a capstone achievement for the School Town of Highland's Athletic Director.

As a director on the 19-member IHSAA Board, Harrington will have the opportunity to discuss as well as vote on bylaws and rule changes.

The board meets monthly in Indianapolis and hosts a summer retreat where rule changes and prep sports advances are discussed and that the board believes are in the best interests of student athletes and prep sports.

"Just as much as I want to be active as a board member, I want to be out there advancing my goal of giving students statewide a voice in their sports lives," he said. "Students should have every opportunity to be participants in the advancement of sports in our state. Those experiences are important."

Harrington took a dozen Highland High School students to Indianapolis as part of an IHSAA-hosted student leadership



meeting where they toured the facility and met with the president of the Indianapolis 500.

"That event was one none of us will forget," he said. "I believe being a member of the IHSAA board will make me a better AD here at Highland and that being on this board will open some doors for students statewide."

LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

"E-learning provides continuity while keeping students safe"

I want to begin this letter with kudos to our students, teachers and staff, who seamlessly transition between in-school classes and e-learning days when circumstances call for it.

A few weeks ago, the region hunkered down to stay warm when an Arctic blast arrived. We all made the best of it: the call for an e-learning day was followed by completion of assignments by students who had access to their teachers while staying safe and warm.

Congratulations to:

... Our very own **Ryan Harrington**, one of the newest members of the 19-member IHSAA Board of Directors. Ryan made a huge impact in high school sports, advocating for positive change. He has been an advocate for girls wrestling and helped establish the first HHS Unified Bocce Ball Team. That's just for starters.

Ryan encourages every student athlete to have a voice in making things better.

... Senior **Haylie Houchin**, Highland's Lilly Scholar for 2024-2025. Blessed with boundless energy and enthusiasm, Hailie has her sights set on becoming a pharmacist. Her focus on engineering as a career changed after volunteering at Vito's Pharmacy and seeing the very important work they do up close.

... Junior **Aleks Bastaic** who will go down in history as the state champ at 145 pounds in the first-ever IHSAA-sanctioned Girls Wrestling State Tournament.

... Junior **Jordan Steele**, who logged her 1,000th point as a member of Highland's Varsity Girls Basketball team.



Brian Smith
Superintendent
School Town of Highland



Food Service Center offers access to registered dietitians

Food Services Director Britni Luster said she is working with a pair of registered dietitians to create spring menus tailored to the appetites and caloric needs of students at each school.

The service is contracted as part of the School Town's partnership with the Northwest Indiana Education Service Center, one of nine centers in Indiana created to help school corporations save money while expanding education and services that benefit students, teachers and administrators.

"We welcome these registered dietitians with open arms," Luster said. "They are crucial to ensuring that each one of our six school menus meet all of the requirements mandated by the state."

"Dietitians work with menu ideas from our kitchen managers, who understand the students' favorites, to ensure menu choices include foods our students will eat," she said.

In the near future, menus will include an online version available to parents and school nurses, who monitor calories, proteins, carbohydrates, dairy and nutrition in foods provided to students with special needs, such as those with diabetes.

"We work every day to create nutritional balance while providing foods our students will eat," Luster said. "Our successes come when we see our students eagerly eating what has been prepared for them. Nutrition is the fuel to help them learn."

HOW OUR PARTNERSHIPS ARE PAYING OFF ...



Public and private schools share bus maintenance, fuel resources

Some residents are surprised when they see Highland Christian School buses filling up at the bus barn just north of the high school.

Superintendent Brian Smith said being good neighbors with the town's two private schools has become the norm. Highland Christian school pay the same bulk rate the School Town of Highland buses pay for diesel.

"They have a code they use to log their fill-ups that is charged back to

them. We try to be good neighbors with the private schools," Smith said.

"Our mechanic works on Highland Christian buses after hours and charges them a rate that is a discount from what they were paying. We work with Our Lady of Grace, too. We let them rent Highland gymnasiums at a discounted rate. It's a system that is working well. It's good for the community."



TRIVIA

Behind the Scenes

FOUNDATION WORKS YEAR-ROUND TO CREATE ULTIMATE FUNDRAISER

The Highland Education Foundation and its annual Trivia Night fundraiser have the luxury of a full roster of 29 teams with eight members each – and a waiting list if any team drops out – months ahead of the event.

Elizabeth Harwood, a third grade teacher at Southridge Elementary and a member of the foundation, is working with fellow board members Jane Kuva, Stephanie Turner and Stephanie Waldron coordinating their biggest fundraiser of the year.

“This is a great event that continues to attract a good group who return because they have fun competing against each other for bragging rights and the rights to the traveling trophy for the next year,” she said.

“The proceeds from the event last year raised \$12,000 that was used to fund grants for our teachers that benefit Highland students.”

Harwood was quick to credit Waldron, who serves as the trivia coordinator and emcee of the event.

Stephanie works throughout the year creating a subtle theme for the night and develops trivia that works with that theme,” Harwood said.

“She’s developed Google slides as part of the evening. It can get a little noisy. The presentation makes it so everyone can read the clues. If you’ve always wanted to be part of Trivia Night, make sure you sign up early for next year’s event. It’s going to be our 10th anniversary.”

DONATE The Highland Education Foundation’s February 25 Trivia Night is sold out, but they’re always looking for sponsors as well as silent auction and raffle items. If you would like to support Highland teachers and students, please consider donating. All proceeds go to innovative educational teacher grants to enhance learning and achievement. For more information, please call (219) 741-5014.

Elementary school counselors

Did you know that each of Highland’s elementary schools has a full-time school counselor on-site who helps students with academic, social, emotional and career goals? They also are responsible for conducting individual counseling, group counseling and classroom guidance lessons.

The counselors support all students and their families. They assist students with school- or home-related concerns such as friendships, anxiety, decision making, emotional regulation and more! Throughout the school year, the counselors teach lessons related to topics such as body safety, diversity, inclusion and bullying prevention. They provide families with varying resources that might be needed. The school counselors also work with teachers and administrators to meet the varying needs of all students.

You can contact your child’s school counselor at their school:

- ♦ **Johnston:** Rachel Jennings
rjennings@highland.k12.in.us
- ♦ **Merkley:** Kristen Verhoeve
kverhoeve@highland.k12.in.us
- ♦ **Southridge:** Deanna Shapiro
dshapiro@highland.k12.in.us
- ♦ **Warren:** Kris Pilewski
kpilewsk@highland.k12.in.us

Mattress sale

Feeling like the Princess – or the Pea? It may be time for a new mattress. Our students are hosting a mattress sale to raise funds for the music department.

The fundraiser offers everything a mattress store has to offer except high prices. Not only can you save up to 50 percent off retail prices, but roughly \$100-\$150 goes to the school for every mattress sold.

Mattresses – available in all sizes – include brands like Purple, Beautyrest and Therapedic. You’ll also find luxury pillows, mattress protectors, premium sheets and adjustable bases. Layaway, delivery and credit are also available.

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. **March 15**
WHERE: Highland High School