



TROJAN TODAY

YOUR SCHOOL TOWN OF HIGHLAND SOURCE FOR NEWS AND EVENTS | OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2023



LATINOS COUNT

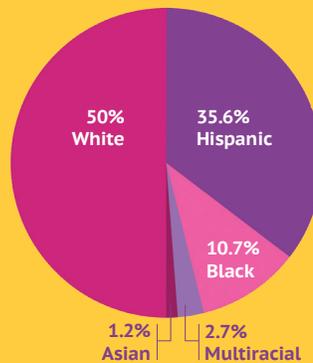
Nearly three dozen Highland High School juniors and seniors took advantage of the opportunity to listen to award-winning children's author/storyteller Angela Cervantes talk about the fundamentals of her life where she learned to "lead with her heart" while encouraging students to do the same.

This is the third year Asst. Principal Cristina Campos has chaperoned a contingent of Highland High School college-bound students to the Latinos Count Viva College! Scholarship Lunch at the Avalon Manor in Merrillville. The event helps students get a jump on learning what colleges look for in the all-important admission essays and how they can do it better.

High School Principal John Zack said, "We are honored to have the opportunity to take different groups of Hispanic students to events that are uniquely geared to providing tools to inspire and help them as they approach this next chapter in their lives."

BY THE NUMBERS

Hispanic students make up more than a third of the student population throughout the School Town of Highland, according to 2023 school data.



SOURCE: U.S. News & World Report



Senior Joe Stephan serves up a ball during a recent tennis match. [R.H. Walker photo]

Trojan tennis in high swing

Thirteen was the lucky number of players who turned the fates of Trojan tennis on its ear.

Under the direction of second-year Coach Dave Bedka, the team made huge strides, scoring its first point against arch-rival Munster in a dozen years and ending the regular season with 12 wins and five losses, up from 8 wins last year.

Even when they lost, Bedka said they took positives away from the match.

"The credit goes to these boys, who showed up for every workout, every match determined to do better than they had before," Bedka said. "What this team has learned is that tennis is a mental – as well as a physical – game. Learning how to frustrate your opponent while you're physically besting them is all part of being good at tennis."

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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 Education Foundation Fun Run



Support Our Schools! Join the Highland Education Foundation **Friday, October 10** for its annual Fun Run. The event will also feature a DJ and food trucks. Check in for the one-mile run-walk begins at 5:15 p.m. Race begins at 6:15 p.m. The race will start near the bike trail pavilion and end on the Highland High School football field track. Entry fee is \$10 when registering with your school or \$15 for individuals who sign up the day of the event at the HEF table. All participants will receive free admission with a wristband to the 7 p.m. football game that night, too! Come out and support Highland Schools. All proceeds benefit our schools. [photo provided]

How to Donate: The Highland Education Foundation needs your support. To make your tax-deductible donation and help support our mission to foster and facilitate excellence in teaching and to enhance the learning experience of School Town of Highland students, simply visit highlandef.org.

LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

“If there is no relief in utility rates or from the state, funding for Highland schools will continue to suffer”

I want to talk to you today about a serious situation that is already impacting school funding. Just as you have been hit with jaw-dropping increases in your monthly utility bills, so have all Indiana schools and units of government. The state allowed NIPSCO to implement a 20 percent increase this summer, the largest in recent memory. It isn't planned to be the last.

A year ago, my fellow superintendents from Lake, Porter and Jasper counties and I met with NIPSCO to explain the plight of the schools and asking for relief from this skyrocketing increase. They offered nothing in response. Our elected leaders provided more of the same. In fact, they proceeded to pass Senate Bill 1, which will further deplete school funding going forward. There is some talk in Indianapolis about retooling SB1, but nothing is in writing – yet.

We have already made cuts in order to pay this unsustainable utility increase.

School buses that were scheduled to be replaced next year will be kept in service at least one more year. We can make that work – for now.

If there is no relief in utility rates or from the Indiana General Assembly, we won't be able to replace the next group of buses scheduled for replacement the following year. This cannot go on indefinitely.

In its current form, SB 1 will necessitate even deeper cuts. Our local school superintendents will continue fighting for the education and welfare of our children. Please join us.



Brian Smith
Superintendent
School Town of Highland



Highland homecoming parade returns with Trojan pride

One year after the High School Student Council spearheaded an effort to bring the Homecoming Week Pep Rally back to the student body, student government added another cherished tradition to the highly-charged week.

For the first time since 2018, the high school held a Homecoming Parade down Highway Avenue with plans already in the works for a repeat in 2026.

It was 45 minutes of high energy fun that brought out the football team, 18 clubs and more than 120 students.

Student Council Advisor Laura Powers credited senior Payton Bailey, who was elected student council president in May, with having the motivation and drive to make it happen.

“This was a huge undertaking. Payton worked tirelessly to make it happen, from approvals here at the school to getting the authorization from the Highland Town Council and Police Department,” Powers said. “On top of it all, Homecoming came early this year. It took everyone pulling together to coordinate the many moving parts over the summer and make the parade happen just one month after classes were back in session.

For Bailey, it was everything she had hoped – and more.

“You could feel the energy from those participating and those who were watching from the street. It was like the homecoming parades I remember from elementary school,” she said. “I wanted this to bring us all together.”

“I am calling on students and the downtown business community to take this turnout and participation and help it grow into something even bigger and better next year.” – HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR PAYTON BAILEY



MARCHING BAND

[photos provided]



PEP BAND



JAZZ BAND



ORCHESTRA

Hitting a High Note

More and more Highland students finding their groove in band, orchestra

Whether it's marching band or mariachi music, participation in any one of the seven instrumental disciplines offered at Highland is growing exponentially.

Last year's 26-strong marching band has nearly doubled to 47 including the reinstatement of the color guard. It's the same with the mariachi ensemble that started with 12 musicians last year and has grown to 25 this year.

Amelia Thurman – director of marching, pep, jazz and concert bands – along with Benjamin Leonard-White – director of mariachi, guitar and orchestras – work together to create a new student-driven sound.

Asked to pinpoint what is leading more students to pursue music, Thurman says she sees the kids finding their possibilities in making music and having fun. "Enjoying what you do is contagious – and our kids are loving what they do," she said.

Leonard-White credited the school with allowing the programs to grow based on student demand.

"It used to be that students had to be able to afford instruments in order to participate. That isn't the case anymore," he said. "We have instruments students can use at no cost. We want them to be able to pursue their passion without worrying about how to pay for it."

Upcoming Concerts

Join us for these free, family-friendly performances by our very talented performing arts students.

October 14 | 6:30 p.m.
Choir Concert

December 4 | 6:30 p.m.
Southridge Elementary Program

December 8 | 6:30 p.m.
Orchestra Concert

December 9 | 6:30 p.m.
Band Concert

December 11 | 6:30 p.m.
Choir Concert

December 16 | 6:30 p.m.
Merkley Elementary Program

Where: Monbeck Auditorium, Highland High School, 9135 Erie St.

Fall Theater Shows

Highland Theatre Company is proud to present Neil Simon's **Fools**, a whimsical and witty comedy that brings laughter, love and a touch of foolishness to the stage. Set in a tiny Ukrainian village in the late 19th century, **Fools** follows the story of an enthusiastic young schoolteacher who arrives to begin his new post. What he doesn't know is that the town has been under a 200-year curse that makes every resident—well, less than brilliant. He must break the curse within 24 hours, or he too will fall victim.

When: 7 p.m. **November 20-21** and 2 p.m. **November 22-23**

Where: Monbeck Auditorium, Highland High School, 9135 Erie St.

Tickets: Purchase online at HighlandTheatreCompany.org

Craft & Vendor Fair

This annual fundraising event offers you the opportunity to help Grades 6-12 bands by showing up to shop local from the many outstanding crafters, artisans and vendors that offer unique holiday decor and gifts.

When: 9 a.m.-3 p.m. **November 22**

Where: Highland Middle School

Vendors: Request an application through November 18 by emailing highlandbandindianacraftfair@gmail.com.