

NEW STAFF ISSUE



THE RED AND WHITE

OCT/NOV 2017

VICKSBURGCMMUNITYSCHOOLS.ORG



FROM SUPERINTENDENT CHARLES GLAES

As I interviewed and chatted with the new staff members we hired this summer, it occurred to me that while we are filling an immediate need, what we are really doing is laying the groundwork for the future. We do not have a crystal ball to let us know how each new staff member will fulfill our expectations, so we hire the best talent possible, and then provide the training, coaching, professional development and support that they will need to reach their potential.

Some of the folks you will see in this edition may work for Vicksburg (or in education in general) for 30-45 years into the future. When you multiply that by the number of students and families they come into contact with, the potential for making a positive impact is staggering. If a staff member we hire today works until the year 2057, some of the young people that they work with will live well into the 22nd Century!

So, while other business and governmental services have to plan for the immediate future, what schools do is make plans that will impact the kind of community and society we will have many decades from now. That is why we take care to find staff who are not only versed in academics and educational technique, but those who relate well to other people, our children and families,

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so they can be impactful in ways that are not measured in test scores, but in the kinds of adults and learners those children become.

While we at VCS help mold the future of young people, it is the citizens of Vicksburg who determine our future as a system. In November you will consider renewing once again, as you have since 1994, a "Headlee Override" that will allow us to continue collecting 18 mills on non-homestead property. It is important to note that this will not affect your property taxes on your primary residence, as it only affects industrial and commercial properties, certain agricultural properties and second homes. If this renewal were to fail, it would result in loss to the district of approximately 1.8 million dollars in revenue, about 7% of our operating budget, which would most certainly impact our education programs and services for students.

Someone wise once said that the definition of leadership is to plant trees whose shade you will not be around to enjoy. Over the summer the leaders of our district selected and planted many new "trees", many you will read about in these pages. Enjoy reading about them and help us to make their impact as wide and deep as they can. They are part of our present and future!

The Community Education Department had major changes following retirements in January. Since then Alyssa Thompson has assumed the role of Community Education Director and Rachel Phelps as the Administrative Assistant to the department.



New VAB Staff: (Left to Right) David Whiting, Rachel Phelps, Alyssa Thompson

Alyssa Thompson was serving as a teacher for Bulldog Beginnings Preschool before her appointment in January. She has her bachelor's and master's degrees from WMU. Before she was in Vicksburg, she worked in schools in St. Joseph County and also in Benton Harbor. she enjoys travelling and spending time with her family.

Rachel Phelps and her husband Kurt have lived in the area for many years and have three children. She previously worked as an assistant at Schoolcraft Schools and at Dr. Sullivan's dental office. She is the person many folks will talk to when they call the administration building and is skilled at getting your questions and requests to the right person.

David Whiting is the VAB custodian. He and his wife recently adopted and rescued a dog. David spends much of his time working with a local church and plays the violin, viola and guitar.

VICKSBURG HIGH SCHOOL

Cody Caswell is coming back home. He graduated from VHS in 2002, and graduated from

Western Michigan University in 2009 with a physical education degree. He attended Calvin College and attained a degree in Health in 2015. He has been working at the Lawrence Jr./Sr. High School from 2010 - 2017. Cody teaches physical education and health in the high school and health in the middle school.

Cody's wife, Rachelle, is a local as well. Together they have four children; Caiden, Rennan, Ryker, Calla. His children range in age from 8 to 2. Cody is joining the football coaching staff and coaches his own children in their sports.

Kyle Roberts is the new Economics and Advanced Placement Economics teacher. He graduated from Gull Lake High School and studied Social Science at Michigan State University and Education at Spring Arbor University. He has held a position as a long-term substitute teacher at Gull Lake High School.

Kyle grew up in the Kalamazoo area. His mom is an elementary school librarian and his sister is a 5th grade teacher. Dogs are important in Kyle's life: his sister has a brown lab named Ellie and he has a yellow lab named Abby. Kyle has coached boys basketball at Gull Lake High School since 2014. He still plays basketball. On Saturdays Kyle loves to watch football and enjoys watching movies of all kinds.

Justin McDonald is the new business and computer science teacher. Justin comes to us a product of Ludington being the oldest of three boys. He holds a Bachelor's in Business Administration and a Master's Degree in Career Technical Education Business from WMU. He has taught at the LaSalle Academy in South Bend, Indiana for 6 years.

Justin and his wife, Misty, have two daughters, Lauren and Robin. He enjoys spending time with his family as well as fishing, hunting and playing sports.

Phil Timko is a Vicksburg graduate who joined the staff last fall as a seminar and math lab aide. Phil is coming back home too, as he is a 2001 graduate of VHS. He also holds a degree in Zoology from Michigan State University in 2005 and a degree in Physics and Astrophysics from the University of Glasgow in 2014.

Phil has worked at S&J Laboratories (a microbiology lab) before coming to VHS. He enjoys cycling, climbing and reading in his spare time and spending time with his only brother. If you ask Phil a question, he might respond "Nae Problem." Welcome aboard, Phil!



Economics teacher, Kyle Roberts and Health and Physical Education teacher Cody Caswell



Math Lab Aide, Phil Timko and new Business and Computer Science teacher, Justin McDonald

VICKSBURG MIDDLE SCHOOL



Lauren Noyes-7th/8th Grade Math

Lauren joins the math department at VMS, teaching 7th and 8th grade math. She is the youngest and only girl of her family who lives in Canton, MI. Lauren studied math and elementary education at Grand Valley University and worked for Kentwood Public Schools as an academic/behavior specialist. Lauren's interests include rock climbing, reading, attending concerts, and mountain biking. When asked what she would like others to know about her, Lauren writes, "I love math!"

Jennifer Heeres-6th Grade Science

Vicksburg welcomes Jennifer to Vicksburg Middle School as a 6th grade science teacher. She graduated from Western Michigan University with a degree in elementary education focused in science and social studies, Jennifer's experience working as a preschool teacher in Kalamazoo may come in handy as she nurtures our youngest students at the middle school. In her free time, Jennifer enjoys crocheting, reading and spending time with her infant son and husband.

Kris DeVries-Library Paraprofessional

Kris is a familiar face in Vicksburg Schools having worked at

Sunset Lake Elementary as a paraprofessional in the BK class. This fall Kris is a welcome addition to the library staff at VMS. Kris graduated from Vicksburg Schools and attended KVCC as well as Colorado Community College. Kris has been married for 20 years and her three children Tyler (8th grade), Connor(6th grade), and Hannah(5th grade) are involved in various sports including baseball/softball, basketball, and soccer. Kris, herself, likes to play softball and soccer. She also enjoys capturing photos of her children to use in her scrapbooking hobby.

Saleem Ismail-Math Paraprofessional

Saleem joins the staff at the middle school to work with students in math classes as a Title 1 paraprofessional. He earned his bachelor's degree in film and television from Notre Dame and has worked in many jobs over the years, including working as a detention aide at Gull Lake Middle School and serving as an assistant chair for elections in Kalamazoo County. Saleem keeps busy on servant trips which have taken him to places like New Orleans, St. Louis and Detroit. He also lent his voice talent as the main announcer of a local regional Robotics competition in 2013. Welcome Saleem!



Left to Right: Jennifer Heeres, Kris Devries, Saleem Ismail.

INDIAN LAKE WELCOMES NEW STAFF

Sawyer Duncan fills the Physical Education position at Indian Lake, Sunset Lake (for one class) and Tobey. Sawyer comes from a line of Indian Lakers and Vicksburg Graduates. His parents are Indian Lake residents and his brother is also a VHS graduate.

Mr. Duncan graduated from Vicksburg in 2009 and went to KVCC and WMU to study Physical Education. In the meantime, he coached at Vicksburg and Lawrence. He was a Special Education Parapro at Portage Central Middle School and coached football and track at their High School. In his spare time, Sawyer enjoys playing and watching sports.

Jill Boudrie joins the teaching team as a 5th grade teacher. Jill lives in Vicksburg with her husband, Steven, and two children: Emma, who is in third grade at Indian Lake and Jarrad, who is a Junior at Siena Heights University. Jill earned a degree in elementary education at Spring Arbor University.

Mrs. Boudrie has many years experience teaching at Monroe Community Schools, Flat Rock Community Schools and Head Start in Jackson. Sports and family is what keeps Jill going. She also loves reading, being outdoors, playing volleyball and softball, and traveling to see her son play college football.

Amy Mclichechey is the new preschool lead teacher at Indian Lake. Amy and her husband have two boys; one is six years old and the other is one year old. They also have three dogs, three chickens and one horse.

Amy earned her bachelor's degree at WMU in Elementary Education. She had previously worked at Sunset Lake as a preschool teacher. Amy loves to garden and being outdoors with her husband. Being with her family is also a love of hers.

Bre Welling is the new School Psychologist at Indian Lake and Sunset Lake.

Bre and her husband, Spencer, have a very cute dog named Lily. Bre enjoys traveling and gardening and is currently training for her first half marathon. Her favorite hobby is playing tennis ball with her dog.

Bre is a graduate of Vicksburg Schools who attended Kalamazoo College to study Psychology and French. Afterwards she attended Ball State where she earned her master's degree and educational doctorate in School Psychology. She interned at Van Buren ISD with Mattawan. She also recently worked for Gull Lake Community Schools.

Chelsey Jones is filling the position at Indian Lake of begindergarten Paraprofessional. Chelsey comes from family of three in a small town in northern Indiana. She says she came from a family of teachers and is glad to continue her career here at Vicksburg!

Miss Jones attended Manchester University in Indiana where she earned her degree in Health and Physical Education. She has worked in Winamac Schools as a Health and PE teacher. This summer she worked with the Vicksburg Summer Reading Program and summer school.

In her spare time she loves to be with family and friends. She leads an active life and loves being outdoors. Chelsey also enjoys arts and crafts and interior design.



Top left: Amy Mclichechey, Middle: Chelsey Jones, Top Right: Jill Boudrie, Bottom Left: Sawyer Duncan, Bottom Right: Bre Welling

SUNSET IS PLEASED TO WELCOME NEW STAFF TO THE BUILDING THIS YEAR.

Erin Clark is joining our amazing kindergarten team. She comes to us from Kalamazoo where she interned and taught for 6 years. She grew up in the Lansing area but moved to Kalamazoo to attend WMU. She studied elementary education and is currently working on her master's degree. She and her husband Travis married last summer and live in Kalamazoo with their cat, Milton.

Justin Lehman has moved into our beginning kindergarten class. He started his college career at MSU with a degree in psychology. Then he received a Language Arts and Elementary education degree from Spring Arbor University. He has taught in Arizona, internationally in the United Arab Emirates, Abu Dhabi, North Carolina, and Kalamazoo. Justin and his wife, Erin have one 5 year old daughter named Jaycie. He enjoys watching sports, reading, and spending time with his family.

Cindy Kessler has been added to our special education department. She has taught special education for 12 years in South Carolina, Missouri, Kentucky, and Michigan. She attended Bob Jones University and received her bachelor's degree in special education. Then she attended the University of Louisville and earned her masters in moderate and severe disabilities in special education. Her husband, Lloyd is a pilot for Atlas Airlines. They have been married for 12 years and have 2 children, Kameron (3rd grade at Sunset) and Kaylee (Kindergarten at Sunset). They also live with Sugar (the dog), Lakey (the turtle), and Atlas (the guinea pig). With her family, Cindy loves to do lots of activities outside; bike riding, taking Sugar for walks, swimming, waterskiing, and playing in the snow.

Samantha Schwehofer is our new literacy interventionist and playground supervisor. Samantha attended Arizona State and studied anthropology. She has previously worked in Florida. She is the youngest of three children and the only girl. In her spare time, Samantha likes to bake, read, and listen to music.



Brenda Peters, Samantha Schwehofer, Marcia Heath, Catherine Tiller



Justin Lehman, Cindy Kessler, Erin Clark

Marcia Heath and Catherine Tiller are new playground/lunchroom supervisors this year. Marcia is from Mendon where she previously provided day care out of her home. She is married with two children and four grandchildren. Catherine studied public relations and business in Milwaukee, but has been in Portage for the last few years. Catherine has four children; Duane, Cassie, Olivia (5th grade at Sunset, and Devun (4th grade at Sunset). She loves to travel and find adventure.

Brenda Peters will be our new cashier/office helper. She attended Penn State University and studied human development and family studies. Brenda is married to Steve. She previously stayed home with her two children, Matthew (at Sunset) and Maya (at VMS). In her spare time, she loves to read.

TOBEY ELEMENTARY

Julie Sorenson joins the Tobey Elementary and Indian Lake Elementary staffs as the new school counselor. She attended Western Michigan University for both her undergraduate work and graduate degree in school counseling. She is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Marriage and Family Therapy degree from Northcentral University, specializing in work with children and adolescents.

Julie's talents with people come from her variety of experiences with students and patients of all ages. As Julie says, "I have worn a variety of other hats." Her roles have included teacher at a charter school, screener at a hospital, outpatient therapist at an alternative high school, and a behavior interventionist at an elementary school.

She is married with three children. She has also hosted a student from Alaska who traveled to Michigan to play hockey, as well as a foreign exchange student from Spain. Julie and her family spend time on the water kayaking, boating, fishing, and floating.

Tammy Jensen joined the Tobey Elementary staff as a library aide part-way through last school year. She was a sought-after classroom volunteer for many years before working at Tobey. She also studied Early Childhood Education at Muskegon Community College. The Tobey staff enjoyed working with Tammy last year and are so thankful for her return this school year.

Tammy has been married to husband Jason for fourteen years. Their two children, Conner (6th grade) and Kate (4th grade), attend Vicksburg Community Schools. In her free time, Tammy enjoys scrapbooking, reading, camping, and spending time with family and friends.



Tammy Jensen (L) and Julie Sorenson (R)

SUPPORT SERVICES

Our schools do not operate without the work of support staff. Here are the new additions.

TRANSPORTATION

The transportation department welcomes two new bus drivers. Robin Elliot was a bus driver for eight years in Alabama before moving back to Michigan where she was raised. She has two adult children who live in Colorado and Alabama. While she likes driving buses, she also likes riding horses and is excited to be back in Michigan. Norm Mills has lived in the area all his life and retired from working for Pepsi and Gull Lake Schools. He is married with two daughters and two grandchildren, and enjoys golfing and motorcycles.

Rick Emery and Cheri Craig (not pictured) are substitute drivers who students may often see on routes. Rick is the oldest of seven siblings. He attended River Valley High School and then went on to earn a business degree. He has worked for PNC bank and Kalamazoo Schools. Cheri says she is a "transplant from Indiana". She has lived in Vicksburg for three years and enjoys camping and the outdoors.



Left to Right : Robin Elliot and Norm Mills

MAINTENANCE

Byron Booher and James Baker were brought onto the maintenance staff last spring. Byron had previously worked in hotel maintenance and currently lives in the Portage area. Byron's big hobby is geocaching. James lives in the Marcellus/Howardsville area on farmland owned by his family for many years. He has recently worked for the Portage Schools Maintenance department. James is a former pilot who has a big interest in music, as he plays the sax and drums and has been in local bands.



Left: Byron Booher, Right : James Baker



ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL TAILGATE CELEBRATION

We hope you enjoyed the pictures of the tailgate celebration on the front cover. The tailgate celebration was made possible with the funding support of:

Chapman Memorial Church, Denney Veterinary Clinic, Distant Whistle, Frederick Construction, Fred's Pharmacy, International Experience USA, Main St Pub, PT One, Vicksburg Family Dentistry, VCS Foundation, Vicksburg Lions Club, Vicksburg Rotary Club

PAC FALL LINEUP ANNOUNCED!

Musical and comedy productions are now in place to fill out the Fall lineup at the Performing Arts Center! For more information and showdates, visit the PAC page on the VCS website, or by calling 269-321-1193.

SCHOOL FUNDING OVERVIEW

Districts receive most of their funding on a per-pupil basis. The amount received per student is called the:

FOUNDATION ALLOWANCE

- Accounts for approximately 76% of our total general fund revenue.
- Vicksburg's 2017-2018 foundation allowance is the state's minimum, \$7,631.
- The foundation allowance consists of two sources:

LOCAL & STATE

Collected through the 18 mill operating millage

The remainder is paid for by the State of Michigan

- The State of Michigan does not replace the revenue lost if the local district does not collect the operating millage, which would result in a loss of approximately \$1,800,000 in district funding.

KEY POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND

- This is not a new tax, it is a renewal of a tax that has been in effect for over 20 years.
- The tax is necessary to collect our full foundation allowance, which we need in order to maintain educational programs and services for our students.
- The tax will have **NO IMPACT** on homeowners property tax bills. It is paid only by owners of non-homestead property.

OPERATING MILLAGE RENEWAL

The millage has been in effect since the passage of Proposal A in 1994, and is necessary in order to collect our full per-pupil foundation allowance.

MILLAGE RATE = 18 mills
Non-homestead property ONLY.

- Homeowners do not pay the tax on their primary residence. The tax only applies to industrial and commercial properties, certain agricultural properties, and second homes.

ABOUT THE MILLAGE

- The millage accounts for approximately \$675 of our \$7,631 / pupil foundation allowance.
- Estimated revenue, \$1,800,000; or about 7% of our total operating budget.
- We are asking for a 5-year renewal.
- We are asking for 0.5 mill of "Headlee Override," which will only be levied to the extent our tax rate is reduced by the constitutionally required "Headlee Rollback" in order to maintain a stable non-homestead millage rate.
- Under no circumstance will the rate exceed 18.0 mills.

ELECTION DAY: TUESDAY, NOV. 7



REGISTER NOW FOR COMMUNITY EDUCATION CLASSES!

Registration is going on now for Busy Bodies, Karate, Dance and Tumbling, and Young Rembrandts Art class.

Register online at www.vicksburgcommunityschools.org, click on Parents and Students, then Community Education, and scroll down to View Class Offerings. Make checks payable to Vicksburg Schools. **BY MAIL** or **IN PERSON** - Vicksburg Community Education, 301 South Kalamazoo Avenue, Vicksburg, MI 49097. **DROP BOX** at Vicksburg Administration Building, south entrance, or **CALL 269-321-1022** to register by phone.

DOWNTOWN CHICAGO BUS TRIP

WHO: Vicksburg Community Schools Foundation is proud to sponsor a bus trip to Chicago!

WHEN: Saturday, November 11, 2017
Leave Sunset Lake Elementary at 7:00 A.M.
Return to Sunset Lake Elementary around 10:30 P.M.

WHERE: Drop off location is by Water Tower Place. Pick up at corner of State and Superior at 7:00 P.M. (Michigan time)

COST: \$50 per person (non-refundable) Make checks payable to: **THE VICKSBURG COMMUNITY SCHOOLS FOUNDATION**

CONTACT: Kathy Forsythe, kforsythe@vicksburgschools.org or Amy Manchester, amanchester@vicksburgschools.org or call Amy (VCSF OFFICE @ 321-1006) to make your reservation.

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY THE VICKSBURG COMMUNITY SCHOOLS FOUNDATION



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

10/3	Parent Digital Citizenship Meeting	6-8 pm	MS Library
10/4	HS Parent/Teacher Conferences	5-8 pm	HS Gym
10/4	IL PTSO Meeting	6-7 pm	IL Library
10/5	SL Picture Day		
10/6	MS Walking the Dogs Walk-a-thon	1-2:30 pm	Stadium
10/7	Big Red Machine Bulldog Marching Band Inv	8 am-10 pm	Stadium
10/9	Board of Education Meeting	7-9 pm	SL Elem
10/10	Parent Digital Citizenship Meeting	6-8 pm	HS Library
10/11	Financial Aid Workshop	6:30-7:30 pm	PAC East Lecture Hall
10/12	Parent Digital Citizenship Meeting	6-8 pm	SL Library
10/18	HS School Picture Retake Day		
10/18	VCS Choir Concert	7-8:30 pm	PAC
10/26	Red Machine Spectacular	7-8:30 pm	HS Gym
10/27	Tobey Halloween Parade	2:45-3:35 pm	
10/27-28	Junior Musical - Bye Bye Birdie	7 PM	PAC
10/29	Junior Musical - Bye Bye Birdie	2 PM	PAC
11/1	VCS Foundation Meeting	6-8 pm	VAB
11/3	No Students- Teacher Records Day		
11/7	MS Parent/Teacher Conferences	4-7 pm	MS Gym
11/7	IL PTSO Meeting	6-7 pm	IL Library
11/7	MS All-Star Band	7-8 pm	PAC
11/9	MS Parent/Teacher Conferences	4-7 pm	MS Gym
11/9	SL Parent/Teacher Conferences	4:30-7:30 pm	SL Elem
11/9	MS ATYP Parent Meeting	7-8 pm	MS Cafe
11/13	Board of Education Meeting	7-9 pm	TY Elem
11/14	SL Picture Retake Day		
11/14	Tobey Parent/Teacher Conferences	4:30-7:30 pm	TY Elem
11/16	SL Parent/Teacher Conferences	4:30-7:30 pm	
11/16	Tobey Parent/Teacher Conferences	4:30-7:30 pm	
11/17-18	HS Play - Complete Works of Shakespeare	7PM	PAC
11/19	HS Play - Complete Works of Shakespeare	2 PM	PAC
11/20	Sports Awards	7 PM	PAC
11/22-24	No Students- Thanksgiving Break		
12/2	HS Semi-Formal Dance		HS
12/6	IL PTSO Meeting	6-7 pm	IL Library
12/6	VCS Foundation Meeting	6-8 pm	VAB
12/7	Tobey Program	7 PM	PAC
12/11	Board of Education Meeting	7 PM	VAB
12/13	HS Parent/Teacher Conferences	5-8 pm	HS Gym
12/19	VMS Band	7 PM	PAC
12/20	VMS Choir Concert	7 PM	PAC
12/21	HS Holiday Concert	7 PM	PAC
12/25-1/5	Winter Break		

**HS - High School • MS - Middle School • SL - Sunset Lake
IL - Indian Lake • TY - Tobey PAC - Performing Arts Center
VAB- Vicksburg Administration Building**

Vicksburg Community Schools
301 S. Kalamazoo Ave. • P.O. Box 158
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