



Connections

A report to the community from Michigan City Area Schools

MICHIGAN CITY NAMED AP SCHOOL OF THE YEAR

The University of Notre Dame has honored Michigan City High School with its top award for Advanced Placement programs: AP TIP-IN School of the Year.

AP courses provide students rigorous, college-level curricula; universities around the world recognize AP Exam scores for admission, credit, and placement.

The award recognized City's successes in AP since 2017, when the school entered a collaboration called the "Advanced Placement Teacher Investment Program for Indiana." The five-year partnership provides teacher training, Saturday seminars for students, student incentives, and other supports.

In the first year of the partnership, MCAS was one of only 19 school districts in Indiana named by the College Board to the AP Honor Roll. Districts on the Honor Roll have increased the number of students participating in AP



courses while also increasing the percentage of students earning AP exam scores of 3 or higher.

MCAS currently offers 18 AP courses, in Calculus, English

Thanks to AP and dual credit, many students will enter college as sophomores.

Literature, Biology, Economics, Geography, and more. The Class of 2019 completed an impressive 604 of these courses, up from 423 in 2018. Thanks to the resulting AP credits – and the more than 3,200 dual credits students also earned – many students will enter college as first- or second-semester sophomores, saving families thousands in tuition.

"Our AP teachers go above and beyond, and the students are putting in many hours of extra study," said Dr. Barbara Eason-Watkins, MCAS Superintendent. "We're thrilled with this recognition, and we're thrilled with our results."

COMPRESSED AIR ACADEMY LAUNCHED

Michigan City and LaPorte are at the forefront of the Compressed Air and Gas industry, employing over 2,000 people in our region. To ensure our area remains at the forefront of this fast-growing sector, MCAS has partnered with Sullair, Boss Industries, Dekker Vacuum Technologies, Sullivan-Palatek, and Vanair to establish the Compressed Air Academy at Michigan City High School.

The Academy prepares students for high-demand jobs in the industry. Curricula has been developed in conjunction with area companies, and thanks to a compressor donated by Sullair, students gain hands-on experience in the classroom. Field

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THIS CAFÉ IS CRUISIN'!

Have you ever seen a school bus this colorful? By next summer the new "Kids Crusin' Café" will be making the rounds to provide free meals to anyone age 18 and under.

The used school bus is being retrofitted by the MCAS Food Service Department, which participates in the U.S.D.A. Summer Food Service program. There will be coolers and serving equipment on board, and passenger seats are being replaced with dining tables and benches. "It'll be a fun place for children to eat breakfast and lunch," explains Cindy Licciardone, MCAS Food Service Director.

"At some locations where we serve free meals, there is no shelter. Now, kids can come out to see us, rain or shine."

Last summer, MCAS Food Service provided 39,940 meals at 22 sites. Visit <http://educateMC.net/summer> for a list of this year's locations.



FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

In August, we will welcome kindergartners who are the Class of 2032. What technologies and innovations will exist when they enter the workforce? How can we equip them for the careers of tomorrow?

Educators know that simply offering classes and preparing students to pass a test is not enough. The State of Indiana has adopted "Graduation Pathways" for this year's freshman class, re-imagining graduation requirements in light of students' unique goals. In addition to earning credits for a diploma, the new Pathways will require students to demonstrate "employability skills" and show they are ready for post-secondary training.

MCAS is more than ready for the change. We are a leader in our region for our Early College, STEM, and career-tech programs, just to name a few. (We so appreciate the higher education and business partnerships that are making this work possible!) Hands-on learning, community service, and Work Ethic certification are expectations for all.

In addition, our award-winning magnet and career-tech programs encourage students K-12 to create and problem-solve. Our 1:1 technology empowers and engages them, and our teachers and counselors challenge them to consider career fields in high-demand areas, right here in our community.

In August, MCAS will offer a new program at Elston to help more high school students connect the dots. Designed by a team of MCAS educators led by Associate Superintendent Wendel McCollum, the program will offer cooperative work experiences, career education, and added academic supports. Unlike the "alternative school" many may recall from years past, this program represents a non-traditional way to meet students' needs while thinking outside the box.

Whether our students will graduate next year or over a decade from now, one thing is certain. They are on the path for success!

— Dr. Barbara Eason-Watkins, Superintendent



LEARNING GOES ON

Despite one of the coldest and snowiest winters on record, Michigan City Area Schools students and teachers didn't miss a day of learning!

Thanks to "e-Learning," students were able to log in from home to interact with teachers and complete assignments. Middle and high school students used school-issued Chromebooks for e-Learning, part of the district's 1:1 initiative, funded in part by the Michigan City Redevelopment Commission and the City of Michigan City. This fall, all students grades 4-12 will be provided with Chromebooks.

This school year, "e-Learning Days" will be used not just for snow days, but for staff professional development and on election days, to ensure the safety of students at schools serving as polling places.

For more on e-Learning, visit <http://educateMC.net/eLearning>.

FACILITY STUDY COMPLETED

Michigan City Area Schools has been a cornerstone of our community for generations. Many parents and grandparents went to school in the same buildings that today's students still attend. Aging facilities, however, present a unique challenge.

That's why MCAS enlisted Performance Services to conduct a complete assessment of all buildings. The results were sobering, indicating that an investment of \$107 million is needed to improve security and restore facilities to optimal condition.

The MCAS Board of Trustees directed Sodexo, the district's facility management partner, to prioritize and begin tackling the most pressing needs. First up: Fire alarm systems. "The previous system was no longer supported, so we contracted with Marquiss Electric to install equipment that features LED panels and state-of-the-art technology," says Sodexo Operations Manager Dave Williamson, shown here with a new alarm cabinet at Lake Hills. "It was a matter of student safety that we take care of this."

Other projects planned for the near future include roof replacements and repairs, new playground equipment at Springfield, and repairs to track, baseball, and softball fields at MCHS. Because older debts were paid off this year, MCAS was able to finance the projects through a \$4 million, tax-neutral bond.

To view the entire Facility Study, visit <http://educateMC.net/facilitystudy>.



DON'T FORGET TO REGISTER FOR SCHOOL!

Online registration for the 2019-20 school year (current students only) will begin July 15 at www.EducateMC.net.

New students, families with a new address, or anyone needing assistance can register in person on Tuesday, **July 30 (12-6pm)** and Wednesday, **July 31 (8am -1pm)** at all schools.

**FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL:
AUGUST 14, 2019**



MIDDLE SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

BARKER MIDDLE SCHOOL - STEM, Safety, and Service: As one of the only Indiana-certified STEM schools in the region (along with Lake Hills Elementary!) Barker continues its focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math).

Last year, the school was named a Distinguished School by **Project Lead the Way (PLTW)**, a nonprofit organization that offers hands-on curricula in computer science, engineering, and biomedical science. All Barker students



take courses in PLTW's Gateway to Technology track, which includes topics such as Design and Modeling, Automation and Robotics, the Science of Technology, Green Architecture, and Energy and the Environment. Many opt for additional coursework in a Problem-based Technology elective.

Next fall, students will use a new STEM gadget to bring lessons to life: **virtual reality headsets**. The devices, which sync with Chromebooks and tablets, will allow Science and Social studies teachers to take students on virtual field trips to such sites as the Acropolis, the Sistine Chapel, and even deep under the sea.

Many other activities at Barker incorporate elements of STEM, too. This spring, members of the Michigan City Fire Department assisted in presentations for students about the science of Lake Michigan and **pier and water safety**. As part of the sessions, every student practiced throwing life rings like those at Michigan City's Washington Park.

Barker's Student Council, led by teacher Mariah Pol, also used technology for a special **Korean War Legacy Project** this year. Students recorded video interviews with three local Korean War veterans, digitally archiving letters and photographs that the vets shared from their time in the service. The materials are being archived in a database used by teachers and students worldwide.



KRUEGER MIDDLE SCHOOL - Reaching Out:

Four lucky area organizations each benefited from ten or twenty additional pairs of hands on one Friday in March, as Krueger students spread across the community for a project called "**Krueger Reaches Out.**"

Students spent the morning volunteering at Fried's Cat Shelter, the Elston YMCA, the Washington Park Zoo, and the soup kitchen at Macedonian Missionary Baptist Church.



"With so many people helping, so much got done," said eighth-grader Maycie Jordan.

Sixty Krueger students were selected for the opportunity by a committee of Krueger teachers based on an application and essay. More than 100 applied.

"We chose students who had thought about why they wanted to serve these organizations, what they could contribute, and what

they could learn," said teacher Shirley Allen. "Next year we'll try to involve even more of our students and more organizations."

Krueger also had another award-winning year, receiving the **R.O.S.E. (Recognition of Service Excellence) "Green" Award** from the LaPorte County Convention & Visitors Bureau, in recognition of its environmental

education and recycling programs. Environmental Science teacher Daisy Lee was honored as the Soil and Water Conservation District Teacher of the Year and received the Jan Nona Environmental Steward Award. Two of Lee's projects included a massive school recycling effort of everything from cafeteria waste to shoes to magic markers, and **raising and releasing monarch butterflies** (below).

And last but not least, elementary children from across the district visited Krueger again this spring as students led **Field Days and Living History Tours**. Tours are conducted on trails located on the Krueger campus, engaging children in hands-on learning activities about birds, soil and water quality, trees, and Indiana history.





ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ROUND-UP

**A SNAPSHOT OF WHAT'S
HAPPENING IN OUR SCHOOLS!**

EDGEWOOD ELEMENTARY

Kindness Rules! Close to 50 students, ranging in age from kindergarten to grade 6, formed a new club at Edgewood this year: the Kindness Academy. The group meets every other Friday to discuss what kindness looks like at school, at home, and in the community.



Then, they put kindness into action. Kindness projects included care packages for service members through the organization Fill the Foxhole, a collection of pet food and supplies for the La Porte County Animal Shelter, Valentines for area nursing home residents, a warm clothing drive for Sand Castle shelter, and care packages for Edgewood staff. "Students focused on the idea that even though we are small and young, we can make the world a better place with small acts of kindness," says Principal Peggy Thomas, who retired in June.



KNAPP ELEMENTARY - Looks Like Books:

What's the key to student success? "Reading!" says Knapp Principal Holly Martinez. "We are *always* focused on reading, and helping kids develop a love for books."

The school celebrated National Reading Month (March) by dressing up as favorite book characters, and guest readers visited classrooms to share beloved picture books. This summer, Martinez is hosting Summer Story Time outside the school on the lawn. Watch the school's Facebook page for dates and times!



MARSH ELEMENTARY Fitness State Champs: "Blue"

(the official mascot of the Indianapolis Colts) stopped by Marsh Elementary School in April to present students with the "NFL Play 60" championship trophy. The award honored Marsh students, who logged the most minutes of any school in Indiana during the NFL Play 60 Challenge. The

nationwide contest encourages children to take part in at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day.

Last fall during a Colts' game halftime, Marsh physical education teacher Michelle Hamilton was honored for her role in coordinating the program. To top it all off, two Colts cheerleaders came to Marsh's end-of-year field days to sign autographs and interact with kids.

LAKE HILLS ELEMENTARY - Taking it Outside

Parents, students, staff, alumni, and community supporters turned out in large numbers on a sunny afternoon this spring to celebrate Lake Hills' 10th Anniversary. The outdoor event featured reading and science activities, exhibits, prizes, food and special guests — including R2D2, Darth Vader and several Stormtroopers!

A highlight of the celebration was the unveiling of a work in progress: the school's new Outdoor STEM Learning Lab. Teachers will take their classes to the lab, which is located behind the school, during each season of the year to conduct experiments, hands-on investigations, and research. The Construction Technology class from the A. K. Smith Career Center is helping to build the shelter, and Lake Hills students have been observing their progress, measuring, and recording data.

"This partnership with the Construction class is helping



our students see first-hand how the STEM skills they're learning are used," says principal Connie Bachmann. "We are grateful to them and to the many funders and in-kind donors who have contributed to this exciting project!"



Presenting... PINE ELEMENTARY! As an Arts magnet school, Pine infuses creativity into every aspect of learning. And the learning extends well beyond the school day: More than half of the K-6 student body participates in an extra-curricular arts-related activity. Options include Art, Dance, Theater, Pre-Band, Chorus, Piano, Violin, and more. "Students love these clubs," says principal Zach Huber. "They involve many hours of practice and they foster the same skills and values you might learn in a sport, including respect, teamwork, and hard work."

Public performance is also a key element. Fans of the Michigan City Concert Band and visitors to "First Friday" in the Uptown Arts District know that Pine students are often featured artists and performers!



JOY ELEMENTARY - Working Together: Joy Elementary School serves a diverse population of students, and this year some of those students joined forces to learn together. Teacher Denise Yackus' multiage gifted and talented classroom teamed up with students in Stephanie Rozinski's classroom for children with intensive disabilities. Each week, the partners worked together in gym class and in the classroom, comparing fractions, reading stories, practicing "sight words," conducting science experiments, playing math games, and more.

In March, the students collaborated on a project-based assignment that involved designing a zoo. Together, they designed animal exhibits, determining the perimeter and area of each enclosure and drawing maps of their zoos. They even created restaurant menus for the snack shops, designed advertisements promoting their zoos, and researched zoo designs online.

"The activities challenged all students," says principal Lisa Suter. "This also resulted in many new friendships."

COOLSPRING ELEMENTARY

Learning and Chillin':

Ask any adult: life can be stressful! Teaching kids to manage emotions, practice self-control, and maintain a positive mental attitude can put them on the path to academic success.

That's why Coolspring has instituted a Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) program. K-4 students participate in the lessons, which are led by Art teacher Rita Cochran, Music teacher Liz Gast, and PE teacher Holly Zborowski, during their prep time. Each lesson has a different theme, starting with exercises that teach self-control through stillness. Lessons progress to include communication, etiquette, and relations with others.

Thanks to grants from DonorsChoose.org, the school has purchased yoga mats and Beanie Baby "compassion buddies" that are part of the program. After learning about empathy and compassion, the students adopt the compassion buddies to practice self-calming, breathing exercises, and to read to as a quiet companion.

"You can almost feel the negative energy leaving the students after the SEL activity," says principal Kim Palmer. "We are seeing improved behavior, a more caring environment, and kids who are more focused on learning."

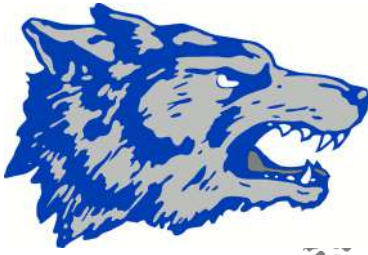
SPRINGFIELD ELEMENTARY - Putting the

Neigh in Neighborhood! This summer, Springfield Elementary had a special surprise for children at Lakeland Estates: horseback rides, right in their neighborhood! The event was part of a 10-week summer Reading Club that meets at Lakeland. "We've partnered with Lakeland Estates for the past couple of years," says Principal Lisa Emshwiller. "This summer, we decided it would be fun for our staff to stop by to read to our students, and to have some activity time with them."

Counselor Deb Carpenter kicked things off with story time, reading *The Girl Who Loved Horses* by Paul Goble. Afterward, students worked with Springfield staff members to make picture frames for photos of them riding. The horses, along with the craft materials, were provided by Transitions Equestrian Center.

The Reading Club is open to all Springfield students and will continue on Mondays at 1:00pm through August 5. (In August, the Club will have an ice cream social at a location TBA.) Each week concludes with children choosing a free book.





CITY PRIDE: GIVING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY



CITY CELEBRATES A CHAMPIONSHIP YEAR

Make room in the trophy case: Michigan City High School has more hardware to display! The Wolves brought home three Sectional Championship trophies in one historic fall season, in Football, Volleyball, and Girls Golf.

For both Volleyball and Football, it's the second year in a row that the Wolves reigned as Sectional Champs. In Football, the team also won Regionals, reaching Indiana's Final Four at Semi-State for the second time. The Girls Golf trophy is the Wolves' first since the consolidation of Rogers and Elston High Schools.

On the heels of this success, the Boys Bowling Team also won its sectional, which was held in January. And individual athletes also shined for City. MCHS was represented at State Finals in Swimming, Diving, Track and Field, Golf, and Bowling. By June, 13 MCHS seniors had committed to play sports in college, five of them at the Division I level.

Cheering them all on this year was a new "Wolfie" mascot (pictured at right with his alter ego, Early College student Lyric Johnson.) Wolfie was unveiled at a January 25 basketball game, to the delight of a packed Wolves Den gymnasium. The costume was funded through a campaign spearheaded by Katie Eaton, a MCHS alum who is the President of the Michigan City Chamber of Commerce. Michigan City Rotary Club members, the Unity Foundation, and the IHSAA Foundation also assisted in replacing the school's aging mascot.



BEFORE THE FIRE

Michigan City High School's History Club was among the last groups to tour Paris' Notre-Dame Cathedral before the devastating fire that took place there on April 15. The students visited the historic site 11 days earlier, during their Spring Break trip to France and Italy in early April.

"Our students had an amazing, life-changing experience," said teacher Rebecca Shaman, who chaperoned the group, along with fellow History teacher Ben Gillman. "It was wonderful to see them immerse themselves in these cultures for the week!"

On the trip, the Club also visited the Roman Colosseum, Pompeii, the Louvre, and Versailles, and took a cruise on the Seine.

Search for "MCHS History Club's Spring Break Adventure" on Facebook to view photos!



TEAMING UP FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Michigan City High School's Wolves Environmental Restoration Team received another accolade this year: the Dorothy Buell Youth Award, presented by Save the Dunes. The award, named in honor of the organization's founder, recognizes youth ages 13-24 who have shown outstanding stewardship toward habitats and environments within the Lake Michigan Watershed.

The Restoration team, comprised of around 30 students in grades 9-12, partners with the Michigan City Parks Department in the removal of invasive plants and restoration of native species. Their main area of focus has been Hansen Park, behind Blue Chip Casino, where students remove Japanese knotweed, purple loosestrife, and other invasives and have planted trees and a pollinator garden. Plant roots now filter stormwater runoff from the street, before it enters Trail Creek.

Team members also participate in camping trips with Wilderness Inquiry and canoe on Trail Creek. Grants from the NEA Foundation, Lake Michigan Coastal Program, Lowe's, and NIPSCO fund the work.

In 2017, the group received the Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence, the highest honor of its kind in Indiana.



JROTC: BACK TO NATIONALS

This spring, the MCHS Marine Corps JROTC was once again selected to compete at the National Marine Drill Team Championships. Events were held in Chantilly, VA, giving cadets an opportunity to tour nearby Washington, DC. MCHS was one of only 16 schools that qualified for the championship drill meet, from among 268 Marine schools nationally.

This summer, JROTC students are busy performing community service, marching in parades, and attending camps centering on leadership, STEM, and cyber security.



SOLID GOLD PERFORMERS

In November, 46 MCHS choral students were part of something rare even for professional musicians: They sang the world premier of a symphony.

The students joined with 150 other vocalists and the Valparaiso and Windiana Bands to sing in the premiere of Dutch composer Johan de Meij's Symphony No.5, under the direction of de Meij himself. The symphony, based on the Lord of the Rings, debuted before a standing-room-only audience at Valparaiso University.

"It was a once-in-a-lifetime



opportunity for our students to perform in a concert of this magnitude," says Choral Director Michelle Howisen.

Both choral



and instrumental music students from MCHS earned high marks at Indiana State School Music Association (ISSMA) festivals this year, as individuals and in ensembles.

At the district solo and ensemble contest, 12 choral students and two band students received "Gold" ratings in Division I, with music of the highest difficulty level. As a result, they qualified for the State contest in Indianapolis, where almost all again earned Gold. At ISSMA Organizational Concert Festivals in April, the MCHS Choirs and Bands all earned top ratings, as well.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Wolf Pack Marching Band has started a fundraising campaign to replace their uniforms, which are now 25 years old.

The new look will be more modern and sleek, similar to this sketch but with more blue and gray. Visit <http://educateMC.net/banduniforms> to help!



AIR COMPRESSOR

Continued from page 1

trips give students an opportunity to see compressed air systems in action.

The Compressed Air Academy is a one- or two-year program; students who complete Year 1 earn certifications preparing them for entry-level positions. Students completing Year 2 and other course work are prepared to move into intermediate positions and apprenticeships.

For more information visit <http://educateMC.net/CompressedAir>



LA PORTE COUNTY **CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION**
A.K. SMITH CAREER CENTER

NEVER TOO EARLY

Middle school students from Michigan City and across LaPorte County tried out several career and technical programs offered at the A. K. Smith Career Center during summer "Career Camps."

The camps were funded by a grant in partnership with the "Skill Up 3" initiative, and included Culinary, Automotive, Welding, Manufacturing, Construction, and Electronics & Energy. Students participated in hands-on activities and created projects, in some cases

compiling portfolios of their work. Students also toured area manufacturing facilities.



When the students reach high school, they and their peers will be able to take classes in any of the 12 program tracks offered at A. K. Smith, earning certifications and college credit.

Each year, CTE students attend a "Career Expo" to meet with colleges and technical schools, and participate in mock interviews conducted by hundreds of area professionals. They also take part in a CTE "signing ceremony," spotlighting seniors accepting apprenticeships and job offers after graduation.

For info visit <http://educateMC.net/careertech>.





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*****ECRWSSDDM****

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Postal Customer



Photo: Hirsch Studio



CLASS OF 2019: BY THE NUMBERS

4,000+
Hours of Community Service
55 Students Earning
Work Ethic Certificates

Academic & Technical Honors Diplomas: **95**
3,256 COLLEGE CREDITS EARNED
604 AP COURSES COMPLETED



Division I Athletes: **5**

14 Athletes Named
All-Duneland Conference

48

number of graduates with
4.1 OR HIGHER GPA
(pictured above)

10

number of graduates with
4.525 OR HIGHER GPA
(pictured above)

75 **EARLY COLLEGE**
program graduates



\$4 MILLION
scholarships accepted
(not including the Promise Scholarship)

Follow us on:



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#ONECITYONEPACK

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