



# KINGSLEY CONNECTION

"A COMMUNITY OF TRADITION AND EXCELLENCE"

JANUARY 2022 | ISSUE 4



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## Goodbye 2021, Hello 2022: Superintendent Reflects on Successes, Challenges of School Year

After a 2020-2021 school year marked by multiple school closures, online learning, pandemic lockdowns, and limited extra-curriculars, it seemed to Kingsley superintendent Dr. Keith Smith, that this year, things could only go up.

"It's been great getting back to 'normal', to be able to have full attendance at sporting events, to have our athletes practice without masks, to have Homecoming," said Dr. Smith. "The biggest part of this year is getting caught back up.."

So far, Kingsley has had a lot to celebrate. (continued on page 2)

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## Cover Story (continued)

### **Kingsley Test Scores Highest in the ISD**

Last year, Kingsley students earned impressive marks on the MStep standardized tests. While they weren't as high as pre-pandemic levels, the scores reflected a high quality of learning despite so many educational disruptions last year.

"Kingsley's test scores from last year were insane!" said Dr. Smith. "To finally overtake Glen Lake, Leland, Elk Rapids, and Frankfort...it was awesome to have the vindication of what we did."

### **District Enrollment Reaches Near Peak Numbers**

Kingsley Schools is now within eight students of its peak in the past 20 years.

"We provide an outstanding education, as evidenced by our test scores. The community still has small town values. People embrace coming here. We are big enough to offer opportunities for our kids, more so than a lot of our smaller neighbors, but not so big that you're lost. You're not a number. We're firing on all cylinders right now."

### **Kingsley Has Hiring Success Despite Nationwide Labor Shortages**

"Not only did we fill positions, we were able to get really high-quality people," said Dr. Smith.

"With our fund balance, we are able to pay for seniority and get teachers with great experience."

### **New Year, New Challenges**

Dr. Keith Smith says that so far, the school year has brought challenges, but not the ones he expected.

This summer, Dr. Smith was prepared to handle multiple pandemic-related closures. So far, the district has taken two days off to accommodate for circulating viruses, including COVID and the flu.

"This delta variant is hitting way harder than the other one," he said. "We got hit decently hard at the beginning of the year, so I'm impressed we've been able to do so well."



**"We're firing on all cylinders right now.**

**This community still has small-town values. We are big enough to offer opportunities for our kids...but not so big that you're lost. You're not a number."**

**- Dr. Keith Smith  
Kingsley Schools Superintendent**



## CLASS OF '22 STANDOUTS

**Erica McInnis:** The aspiring educator assists kindergarten classes through the CTC Teacher's Academy. She also participates in STAND, Track & Field, Yearbook, National Honor Society, and she's the Wrestling team manager.

**Joseph Weber:** He might be most known for being on the soccer team, but Joseph is full of other surprising talents and interests, like playing ukulele and making maple syrup with his family every spring!



## KMS LIFE SKILLS CLASS

Kingsley Middle School's Life Skills students used their earnings from their business, Coffee Cart, to buy groceries for the food pantry at Kingsley Methodist Church. Mrs. DeMoulied and Mrs. Goad helped their students write shopping lists, make a budget, find their groceries, and pay at the register. Every Friday, Life Skills students make Coffee Cart deliveries to teachers in the district to raise money for various projects, field trips, and community donations.



## MRS. PACK'S MUSIC CLASSES

Our Kingsley Elementary kindergarteners and first graders put on a Christmas Concert in December, which included dancing, choreography, and students sharing special holiday messages on the microphone with the crowd. Our Elementary music classes are led by Mrs. Vicky Pack. Bravo to all!



## STUDENT ATHLETES OF THE WEEK

11/29: **Kati Smith** is a junior on the varsity Stags volleyball team, a field commander for the Kingsley Marching Band, and excels in pole vault. She carries a 4.0 grade point, ranking 1st in her class.

12/ 6: Congrats to senior softball player **Katey Lyon**, who made a commitment to play softball at Bay College. Katey has a 3.8 GPA.

12/13: **Isaac Grahn** had an outstanding opening wrestling weekend at Manton, going 4 and 0 and winning the 135-pound weight class in the Ranger Invitational. Isaac maintains a 3.2 GPA.

# District Bulletins



*Newly Approved Club!*

## Kingsley Clay Target Club

*Join us for an interest meeting this month.*

- Thursday, January 6, 2022 at Kingsley High School Commons, 6 - 7 p.m.

## Kingsley Band Notes

By Jena Van Wagner

**Solo & Ensemble** is a yearly opportunity for music students to perform a solo, duet, and/or a small ensemble piece and get feedback from a judge. Those receiving a 1 or a "Superior" rating, are invited to perform at State Solo & Ensemble in March. Kingsley will host this year's District 2 event on February 5, 2022 at the high school. Volunteers and donations of baked goods will be needed, information will come home with students.

**Band Festival** invites ensembles to perform a program of three pieces for adjudication, one of which must be from a required list. Each group is evaluated by three performance judges and one sight-reading judge. Ensembles that earn an overall 1 rating are qualified for State Band & Orchestra Festival which is held in late April or early May. Both the Kingsley High School and Middle School Bands will perform in Elk Rapids on February 25 or 26, 2022.

**Band Carnival** is scheduled for March 18, 2022. Mark your calendars for a huge community night of fun food and prizes! Students and the Band Boosters will have information about prize sponsorships, donations and volunteer participation.

**The MSBOA District 2 Honor Band weekend** has been postponed until March. The exact date is TBD.

There are still a few openings for the **band trip to Chicago** June 14-16. If your student hasn't signed up yet, make sure they save their seat soon!



The Kingsley High School Band and Choir performed their first concert together in December. Special thanks to audience members that joined in the singing of Silent Night, it was a special memory for all.

*Photo Credit: Pattersnap Photography, Kingsley MI*



## "This is more than just a job." Kingsley Hiring Bus Drivers

By Chloe Kiple

The Kingsley Transportation department is hiring bus drivers! Director Pam Clark is looking for eager, compassionate individuals to start immediately. The best part? No experience is required, and Kingsley will pay for all of your training, plus a \$1,500 signing bonus!

"This is a rewarding job. These kiddos turn into one of your own children. You're the first person to wish them good morning and ask how they are doing, and the last to tell them to have a wonderful night," said driver Renee Thon.

The district needs more full-time drivers to accommodate after-school activities and driver absences.

"This is a job where, if you want to be on your kiddo's schedule, this accommodates them because you drive bus," said Mrs. Clark. "You get the middle of the day open if you need to do something and you don't need to have a daycare. Parents and kids are on the same schedule, so if there's snow days, you won't need to find daycare because you're home. On all the breaks, you get to be home, so you're always on your kid's schedule."

## START A NEW CAREER IN 2022.

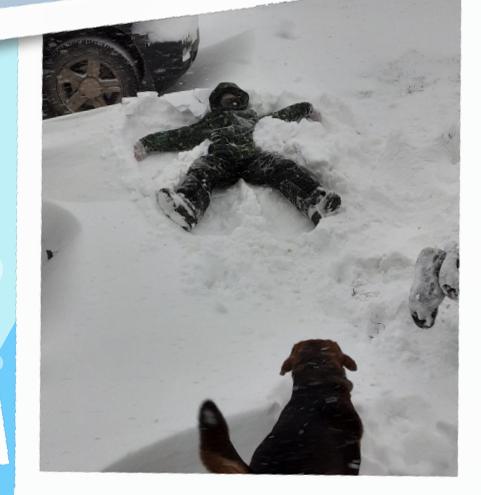
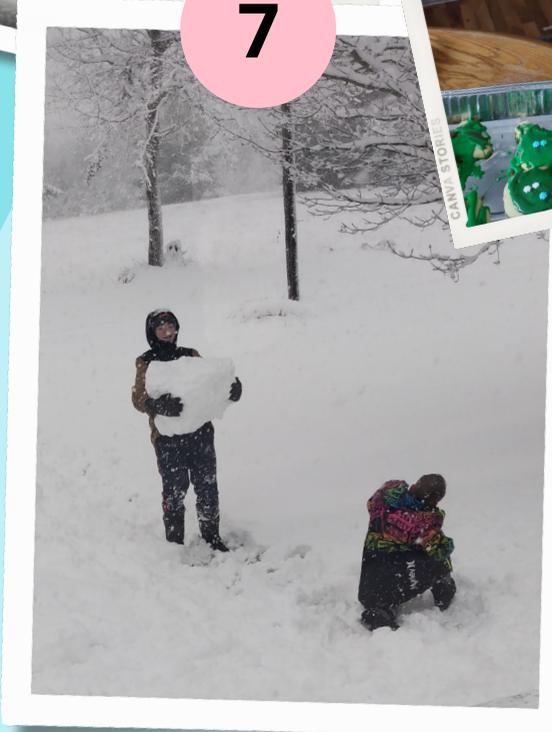
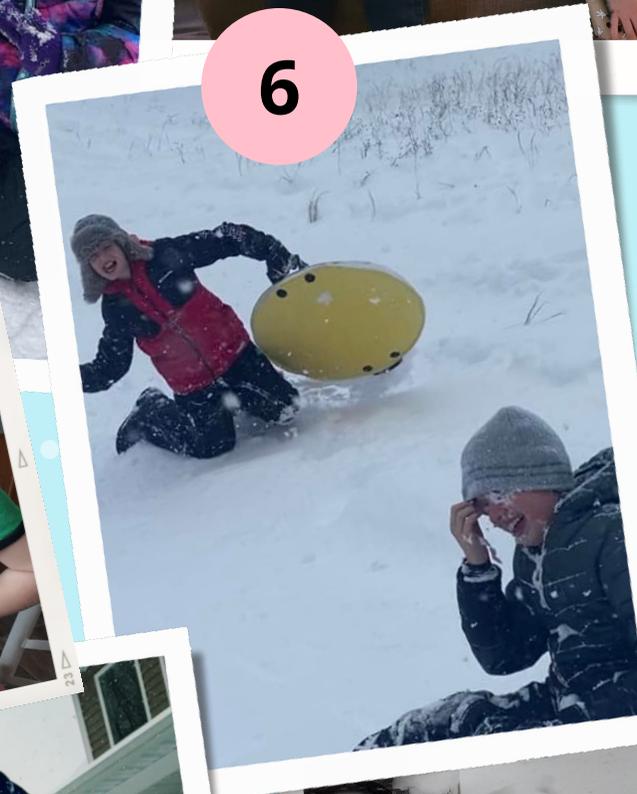
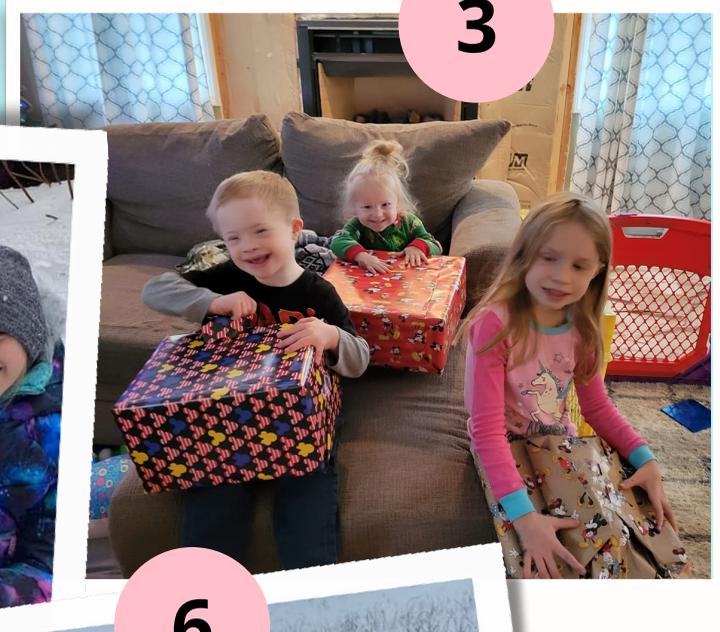
Help your children, school, and community. No experience required! Become a bus driver today.

-  Starting wage is \$15.34 an hour  
**PLUS a \$1,500 signing bonus**
-  Morning and afternoon hours  
Holidays and Weekends off
-  Paid training, CDL, and physical
-  Get on the same schedule as your kids!

**If this sounds interesting to you, please apply online at:**  
**[www.applitrack.com/kingsley/onlineapp](http://www.applitrack.com/kingsley/onlineapp)**

# Snow much fun!

*Kingsley students enjoyed a long weekend and snow day on December 6 after Mother Nature dropped 8 inches of snow!*



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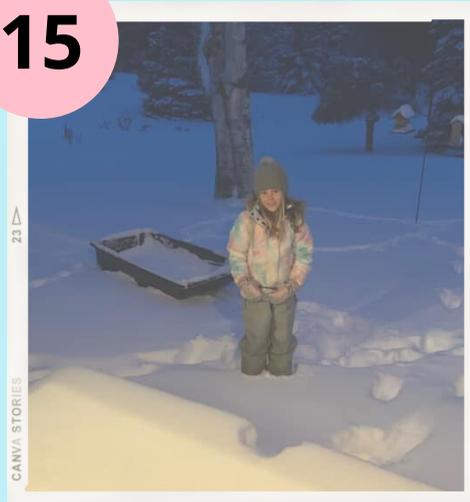
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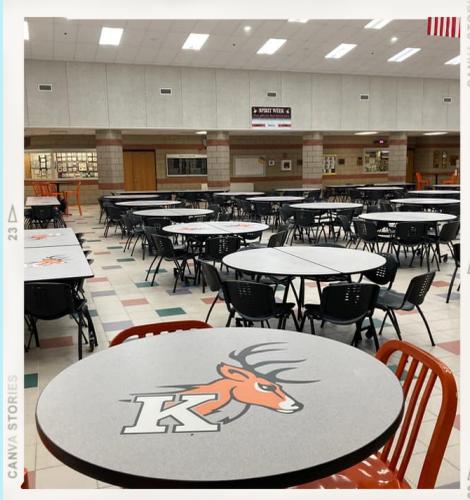
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**Special Shoutout to  
Howard Patterson and  
the entire Kingsley  
custodial staff who  
spent the snow day  
doing extra cleaning  
and disinfecting!**

1 Photo by Dani Malcuit

2 Emerson Haines, 3rd grade

3 Audesey Family: Alana, 8, Joseph, 6, & Sophia, 2

4 Jacob Yost, 3rd grade

5 Hunter Bowman, Kindergarten

6 Reece Ockert & Luke Acre, 5th grade

7 Ensley & Austin Kids

8 Anna Bauer, 8th grade. Photo by Mary Bauer

9 Beau Manville, 2nd grade

10 Jaxson Hacker, 5th grade

11 Boone Haines, Kindergarten

12 Alex Martinez-Gilliam, 5th grade

13 Reed Wilson, 1st grade, & Joel Guy

14 Maddox Baker, 1st grade

15 Emery Robinson, 3rd grade

16 Molly Schichtel, 6th grade

# MENTAL HEALTH MUSINGS

*with Elementary counselor Emily Ruby*

***"The pandemic is affecting all of our lives, and it's probably affecting your kids in ways that they can't articulate."***

This year, Kingsley teachers have noticed gaps in academic and emotional learning. The pandemic has caused disruptions across the board, and anxiety has become an increasingly common issue, according to Kingsley Elementary counselor Emily Ruby.

"I feel like in the last year, we saw a lot more behavior issues," said Mrs. Ruby. "So, I guess one piece of advice for students and their families is to work on identifying and articulating feelings,"

Mrs. Ruby hopes to help lay the foundation for emotional education at school. She teaches two lessons on emotions to elementary students every month.

There, students learn about identifying emotions and how to regulate them, as well as coping and problem-solving skills.

"We talk about things like identifying emotions. 'When I'm angry, this is what I can do, when I'm anxious, this is what I can do,'" she said.

Mrs. Ruby also provides a safe space for her students who need an extra minute to process their emotions or things going on at home.

"Do they need a hug? Do they want to talk about it? My job is really focused on 'how we can be successful during the school day?'" she said.

Mrs. Ruby is also a member on Kingsley's Mental Health and Wellness Committee. The board helps proactively address students' issues and support those who may be struggling.

"In the past, we've done parent nights and child education about mental health. And so we are just trying to figure out how to get the word out to everybody."

She's excited to see society putting more of an emphasis on mental health and wellness, and she's happy to be able to support students in a variety of ways.

"When I think of what I want my kids to be, I want them to be smart, but I also want them to be able to regulate themselves, function in society, and be kind and empathetic to other people."

"So I think there is some kind of awakening, the understanding that we can't keep going without acknowledging that mental health is really important."

By Chloe Kiple



*Mrs. Ruby is also the coordinator for several programs that support under-resourced students, like Boots for Kids.*