



KINGSLEY CONNECTION

"A COMMUNITY OF TRADITION AND EXCELLENCE" | February 2026 Edition

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Kingsley Elementary Beats the Odds in Reading Proficiency

Longtime Bus Driver Retiring after 30 Years on Route

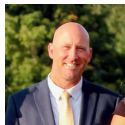


AD Middenburg Reflects on Best Sports Season in Kingsley History

Kindergarten and Preschool Applications Open



NJROTC Cadets Celebrate at Inaugural Ball



By Joshua T. Rothwell
Superintendent

jrothwell@kingsleyschools.org

I am proud to share an update highlighting the many accomplishments and positive momentum taking place across Kingsley Area Schools. Our students, staff, and families continue to demonstrate what can be achieved through hard work, commitment, and a shared belief in excellence.

This year has been especially memorable for our student-athletes. Our volleyball team captured a State Championship, bringing tremendous pride to our school and community. In addition, our football team advanced to the state finals, showcasing perseverance, teamwork, and sportsmanship at the highest level. These achievements reflect not only athletic talent, but also the dedication of our coaches and the support of our community.

Our music programs continue to excel: 14 musicians participated in Honors Band, and Lance Dubay was named Band Director of the Year for the region.

Our academic and leadership programs

are also thriving. The Kingsley JROTC program is growing and excelling, providing students with valuable leadership skills, with valuable leadership skills, discipline, and opportunities for service. We are also proud to celebrate a National Merit Scholar Semifinalist, an outstanding accomplishment that reflects academic excellence and strong preparation.

At the heart of all our success are our teachers and staff. We're fortunate to have high-quality educators who are deeply committed to students and continually work to strengthen instruction. Through rigorous academic programming and a focus on student growth, we are preparing learners for success in college, careers, and life.

Looking ahead, the future is bright. With strong community support, dedicated staff, and motivated students, we are well-positioned to continue building on our successes. Together, we will keep moving forward, ensuring that Kingsley remains a place where students are challenged, supported, and inspired to reach their full potential.

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Stag Snapshots



FIFTH GRADE TEAMED UP WITH 8TH GRADE SUSTAINABLE SCIENCE TO GROW AND EAT THEIR OWN LEAFY GREENS!



THANK YOU TO SCHMUCKAL OIL FOR DONATING BOOTS + WINTER GEAR TO OUR STUDENTS!



IAN MITCHELL, RYAN ROELOFS, ADAM WILCOXEN, BRADEN MARSH, AND AIDEN HUNT (NOT PICTURED) EARNED GRANTS FROM THE FLINT SCIENCE + ENGINEERING FAIR FOR THEIR PROJECTS!



SENIOR MARY BAUER EARNED A NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN CHAPTER OF THE MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA SCHOLARSHIP!



FOURTH GRADERS EARNED 500 STAG TAGS FOR GOOD BEHAVIOR AND WERE REWARDED WITH A MOVIE DAY!



SEÑORA ACOSTA'S SPANISH STUDENTS ENJOYED CUISINE FROM HISPANIC CULTURES



SNOW MUCH FUN!



KINGSLEY ELEMENTARY STAGS OF THE MONTH EARNED A LUNCH WITH SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER DEPUTY ROELOFS!



MRS. JANKIEWICZ'S STUDENTS STOPPED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING TO TEACH TRUSTEES MATH SKILLS!



THE TRAVERSE CITY ROTARY RECENTLY HOSTED THE KHS NJROTC TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE UNIT.



CONGRATULATIONS TO SENIOR WRESTLER ISAIAH COSGROVE WHO NOTCHED HIS 100TH CAREER WIN!



MRS. PETERSON HOSTS GUEST SPEAKERS TO HELP STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT DIFFERENT POST-HIGH SCHOOL PATHS. HER BROTHER, CAPTAIN DAN WARREN, COAST GUARD (RETIRED) STOPPED BY TO TALK ABOUT HIS TIME IN THE MILITARY AND ANSWER QUESTIONS.



MS. KUBESH'S MOM HAND-MADE CROWNS WITH ALL OF HER STUDENTS' INITIALS ON THEM! SO CUTE!

KMS Celebrates Nat'l Inclusion Week

Students and staff from the middle school's Special Olympics Unified School program passed out pencils and positive messages in honor of National Inclusion Week! As a unified school member, special education and neurodivergent students in KMS' Peer to Peer program team up with their general ed classmates to learn and practice a sport together. They have chosen to play Bocce!

Going Viral!

Students in Ms. Tiffany Smith's middle school science class participated in a hands-on lab that modeled how an infectious disease can spread.

As students rotated through classroom stations, they unknowingly collected "exposures," which were later tested: if the liquid in their cup turned pink, it meant they were infected.



Wearing doctor coats, students stepped into the role of medical professionals while learning about disease transmission, prevention, and real-world scientific practices. The activity sparked strong engagement and thoughtful discussion. ***Thank you so much to the Phi Chapter of the Geraldine Pagel Grant program for funding the lab coats!***



Meet Your 2026 Cherry Festival Royalty

Bow down! First graders Briar Washburn and Tripper Guy have been selected as Kingsley Elementary's National Cherry Festival Prince and Princess. This summer, they will serve as junior cherry ambassadors and will sit on the throne of the school's float in the Community and Cherry Royale Parades during the Cherry Festival. 25 local elementary schools will be represented in the parades. "I feel very excited," said Briar. "I'm looking forward to the [float] contest. I'm excited to be on it!"



Stuff-a-Bus Success!

Over the holiday break, the Kingsley Transportation Department hosted a food drive at Northland Food Market and stuffed an entire bus with donations for neighbors in need!



VOLLEYBALL TEAM GIVES PRINCIPAL A MAKEOVER

You've got to see it to believe it. Earlier this year, Kingsley High School Principal Chris Rapes made an agreement with the volleyball team: if they won the State Championship, he'd let them cut and color his hair any way they'd like. After a record-breaking season culminating in a State Title, the girls buzzed Mr. R's head and got very creative with the hair dye. ***Head over to our Facebook and Instagram Reels to see the [hilarious] final result!***



KHS Musicians
Participate in
Honors Band



This winter, 14 Kingsley musicians participated in the MSBOA District 2 Honor Band. Just 70 northern Michigan students were accepted into the ensemble which was led by Dr. Christopher Chapman from Central Michigan University and hosted at Harbor Springs high school.

- Congratulations:
Izzy Scarbrough- flute
Lillian Fishman- clarinet
Maddison Robinson- clarinet
Payton Nelson- bassoon
Malachi Sterk- tenor sax
Eli Mitchell- bari sax
Levi Sterk- trumpet
Mary Bauer- trumpet
Laura Johnson- trumpet
Landon Kaleita- horn
Sid Holland- trombone
Jonny Gramza- trombone
Nat Crawford- euphonium
Morgan DeVries- percussion



Support KAS Choir!

The high school choir will be attending Choral Festival in Gaylord on February 23, and the middle school choir will be attending Choral Festival at Traverse City West High School on February 24. Email Choir Director Annabelle Rowbal at arowbal@kingsleyschools.org for more info or to learn more.

Preschool Application Now
Available for 2026-2027



4-year-olds will Apply for GSRP: Free State
Funded Preschool

To apply for a GSRP slot, parents will need to email Kristin Goethals at kgoethals@kingsleyschools.org or go to NMCAA.net to set up an appointment and indicate Kingsley Preschool Program as their first choice of schools. The appointments are done in collaboration with NMCAA for Kingsley GSRP and Hannah Headstart slots. The GSRP slots are for students who are four years old by September 1 st 2026. GSRP slots will first be offered to qualifying at-risk families based on a series of risk factors including low family income and then to other families. Families qualifying for GSRP after their appointment will be asked to designate a first choice and second choice of program locations. Students may also be offered a Hannah Headstart slot if they qualify. The state qualifies students through June and acceptance letters are mailed at that time. Hours of operation are 8:30-3:15 Monday through Thursday. ALL students who will be four need to complete this application due to the state language around universal preschool.



3-year-olds will Apply for Tuition Preschool

The tuition-based program is open to any family whose child is 30 months of age up to school age, and is potty trained, and will first be filled with three-year-olds. There are no income qualifiers to be accepted into the program, and the cost is \$36 per day (for the 2025-26 year, subject to change). The \$36 per day includes lunch, a morning snack, and an afternoon snack. Program options include Tuesday/Thursday, Monday/Wednesday/Friday, or Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday/Friday. Space is limited. If three-year-olds don't fill all the spaces we will fill in with four-year-olds. Filling out a pre-registration form does NOT guarantee enrollment. Letters will be mailed in May verifying acceptance. Hours of operation are 7:45 am to 3:45 pm.

Fill out and mail the below form to:
Kingsley Elementary School
Attn: Kristin Goethals
311 Clark St.
Kingsley, MI 49649

Scissors icon and dotted line for cutting.
Form fields:
• First Name _____ Middle Name _____ Last Name _____
• Child's Birth Date _____
• Parent's Names _____
• Street Address _____
• Mailing Address (if different) _____
• City, State, Zip Code _____
• Cell Phone # _____ Email Address: _____
• *Tuition Paperwork mailed in April. *GSRP: NMCAA.net, Early Childhood Tab, Application, Pre-Application
• Please note your preferred preschool method.
• ____ 3-year-old Tuition Schedule: _____ (days of week)
• ____ 4-year-old GSRP (State Funded Free Preschool) Circle One: M-F (limited) or Mon- Thurs.



Kingsley Elementary is “Beating the Odds” in Reading

A new report from The 74, an education-focused news outlet, analyzed more than 10,000 districts across the country to find the schools that are helping their students read and succeed.

Kingsley Elementary is a notable bright spot – with data showing that third grade reading scores are much higher than expected for a school with similar demographics.

Their analysis compared reading scores and income levels from more than 40,000 individual schools to examine their predicted versus actual literacy rate.

Based on national comparisons with demographically similar schools, Kingsley Elementary was only expected to have a 43% reading proficiency rate. In reality, 70% of our third graders are reading at their grade level!

“Our teachers and staff work tirelessly to push students to reach their potential and we are not satisfied until each student is making gains,” said Principal Goethals. We believe that regardless of where students come from, they have the ability. We just have to figure out how to tap into it.”

According to the report, Kingsley Elementary is in the top 5% of schools nationwide in terms of reading success.

Kingsley Elementary hosts several reading events throughout the year, including Literacy Night which encourages parents and guardians to learn new ways to engage their children at home.

In March, the entire school celebrates Reading Month with all-school assemblies, guest readers, reading challenges, and spirit days to get students excited about books and learning.

NJROTC Ball Celebrates Tradition and Achievement



By GySgt Barr
NJROTC Instructor
mbarr@kingsleyschools.org

The Kingsley NJROTC proudly hosted its inaugural Stag Ball, an evening of tradition, camaraderie, and celebration of the battalion’s achievements.

The event was made especially memorable with Rear Admiral Frost serving as our esteemed Guest of Honor, lending his presence and words of encouragement to our cadets.

The evening featured a formal program, including toasts, recognition of outstanding cadets, and the time-honored Grog Ceremony, which combined humor and tradition in true NJROTC fashion.

Cadets demonstrated their leadership, discipline, and esprit de corps throughout the evening, showcasing the values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment that define our program.

Rear Admiral Frost’s remarks highlighted the importance of leadership, service, and perseverance, inspiring cadets to continue striving for excellence both in NJROTC and beyond.

His engagement with the students, along with the support of families, staff, and fellow cadets, made the event a remarkable success.

The inaugural Stag Ball was not just a celebration, but a testament to the dedication and hard work of our cadets.

It set a high standard for future events and strengthened the bonds of the Kingsley NJROTC family.

We look forward to continuing this tradition and building on the success of this first historic evening.

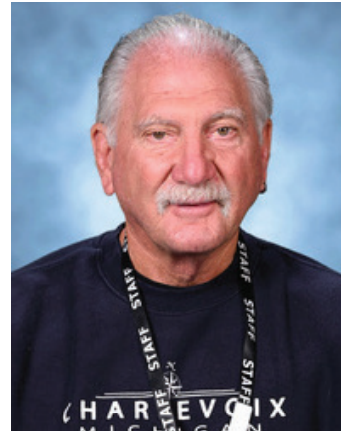




8th Grade Visits USCG

Eighth graders recently got a behind-the-scenes tour of Traverse City's US Coast Guard Air Station, where they explored the base's hangar, went inside a rescue helicopter, and learned about rescue operations and how "Coasties" keep the Great Lakes region safe.

Kingsley Bus Driver Retiring After 30 Years in District



Jim Ames has been the man behind the wheel of bus 18A on the giraffe route for 30 years, safely transporting thousands of students to and from school. At 80 years old, he's ready for his next adventure: retirement and a road trip to Alaska with his wife. Congratulations, Jim!

KHS RPG Club Brings Together Game Lovers



The RPG club unites game enthusiasts. Every week, they gather in Mr. Sias' room to play. Students are currently in the middle of a Dungeons and Dragons campaign.

Speed Training Keeps Stags in Shape Through Winter



There is no off-season for Coach Jason Morrow and his athletes! He is hosting Winter Speed Training for more than 100 elementary, middle school, and high school athletes leading up to their spring sports seasons. The free, afterschool training focuses on stride mechanics, power, and mobility.

"We want to be the fastest school in Michigan. The only way to do that is to run as fast as you can, multiple times per week," said Coach Morrow.

Speed training is free and open to everyone. High school sessions are after school Tuesdays and Thursdays. Email jmorrow@kingsleyschools.org for more info.

Life Sciences Earns Grant



Ms. Tiffany Smith's classroom has brand new models to integrate into their new life sciences curriculum thanks to a generous grant from Great Lakes Energy! We are so thankful for community support of our schools.

STAGS RIDE THE HIGH AFTER GREATEST ATHLETIC SEASON IN RECENT MEMORY

2025 was a thrilling year to be a Stag fan: last fall, the Kingsley football and volleyball teams advanced to State Finals, with the Lady Stags securing the school's first ever state title, and the boys becoming State runner ups.



Sophomore cross country runner Tristan Hernandez earned first-team honors after becoming a D3 All-State finisher with a time of 16:15 at the MHSA State Finals.

Female rugby players from Kingsley helped lead the Traverse City Alliance team to a State Championship matchup.

"The fall sports season was arguably the most successful season, certainly since I've been here, and probably in school history," said Athletic Director Mitch Miggenburg.



Another impressive accomplishment was made on the soccer pitch. The varsity boys team had their most successful season in recent memory.

"That story was unfortunately in the background because of our two other sports competing in state finals," said Mr. Miggenburg. "As recently as four years ago, they were 0-17, this year, they turned it around to win a playoff game and finish in the top half of our conference."

"John Vermilya joined as the new head coach this year and was able to turn things around quickly in a competitive league,"

He also acknowledged the contributions of previous coaches.

Through all the action, the Kingsley community and beyond stepped up to cheer on the Stags.

"We have unbelievable support anyways, regardless of if we're successful or not. But we see it on a bigger scale when we're on a run. People are taking notice not just in our community but in the surrounding areas. It's amazing to see the support."



Top to bottom: Stag fans cheer on the football team at Ford Field during the State Final game against Lumen Christi (credit to JG Photography); Tristan Hernandez competes in the regular season; the football team punches their ticket to Ford Field and celebrates their semifinal win versus Kent City; Kingsley's rugby players on the TC Alliance team.

➔ Football Coaches Awarded



After a stunning season and becoming Division 6 State runner ups, assistant coach Mike Art, left, was awarded Special Assistant Coach of the Year and Jason Morrow and Tim Wooer (below) were awarded Region 1 Coaches of the Year from the Michigan High School Football Coaches Association.

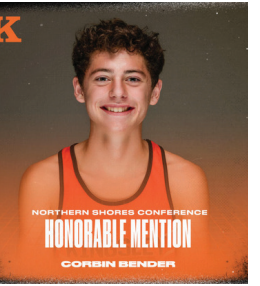
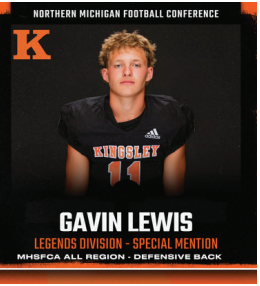
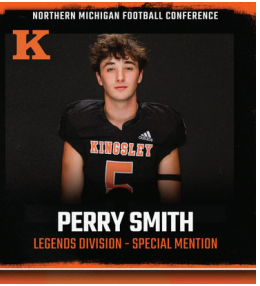
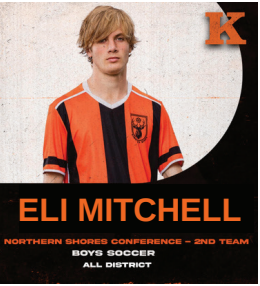
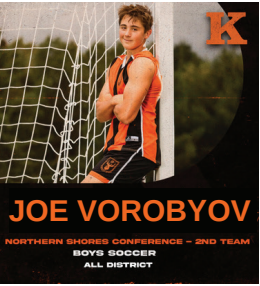
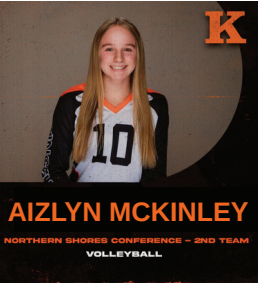
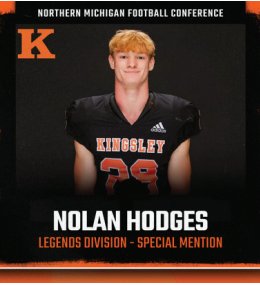
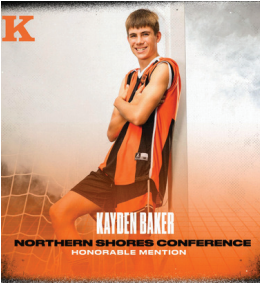
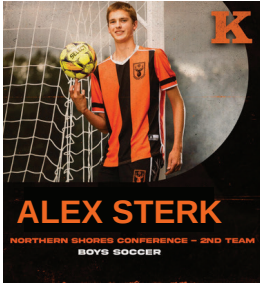
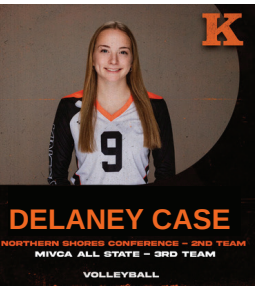
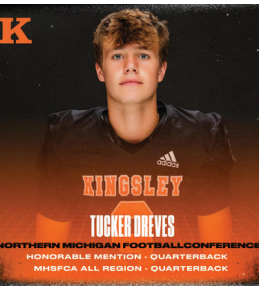


➔ Student Athletes of the Week



Congratulations to our A. Papano's Student Athletes of the Week: **Brody Wolf** (top left): Brody scored 16 points and had seven rebounds versus Bellaire; **Ryan Roelofs** (top right): Ryan played a crucial part in the Stags' offensive line that led them to the State Championship matchup; **Jenna Middleton** (bottom left): Jenna led the volleyball team to their first ever state championship and was selected as the Prep Dig D3 player of the year among other honors. **AdeLynn Town** (bottom right): AdeLynn is a senior on the varsity softball team and signed her letter of intent to play softball at Mid Michigan Community College.

FALL ATHLETIC HONORS



REGISTER FOR KINDERGARTEN!

If you have a child that will be five years of age on or before September 1, 2026, and you plan to enroll your child in Kindergarten for the 2026-2027 school year, please complete the form below and return it to:

Kingsley Elementary School
Attn: Erin Lefler
311 Clark Street
Kingsley, MI 49649

Kindergarten Roundup will be June 16&17 from 8:30AM-2:30PM. You will receive a reminder postcard about this in May.

First Name _____ Middle Name _____ Last Name _____

Child's Birth Date _____

Parent's Names _____

Street Address _____

Mailing Address (if different) _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Home Phone # _____ Work/Cell Phone # _____



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