



NILES COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
DISTRICT
NEWSLETTER
February 2026



A MESSAGE FROM YOUR SUPERINTENDENT

As we close the books on the first half of the school year, it's a perfect time to pause and celebrate the momentum we've built together. From the classroom to the sidelines, our students have shown remarkable growth, resilience, and—let's be honest—enough energy to power a small city. We've seen exciting progress in literacy, creative and innovative learning in science, and a level of school spirit that makes our buildings feel brighter every day.

As we head into the second semester, we want to spotlight one of the most important pieces of student success: Parent-Teacher Conferences. Think of these meetings as our “halftime huddle.” They're not just about grades, they're about making sure we're aligned in supporting your child's unique journey. Conferences give families and teachers the chance to share insights that don't always show up on a report card, collaborate on strategies to work through challenges, and celebrate milestones that deserve a genuine high-five.

Semester two is where the magic really happens. It's where foundational skills turn into mastery, new goals take shape, and students hit their stride. We're excited for fresh learning units, spring performances, and the home stretch of another great year. Thank you for being such strong partners in education. Let's make this second half even better than the first!



Important Dates to Remember

Feb. 25th- Parent Teacher Conferences evening

Feb. 26th- Parent Teacher Conferences, afternoon/evenings

Feb. 27th- No School

March 27th- End of 3rd Marking Period, Half day

March 30th- Spring Break Begins

April 6th- School Resumes

(Please check your schools socials and website for more information)



Niles High School

Important Dates

Parent-Teacher Conferences Are Coming Soon

Mark your calendars for the upcoming conferences at NHS:

February 25th: 4:15 PM – 7:30 PM

February 26th: 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM & 4:45 PM – 7:15 PM.

Welcome Amy Archer as Principal's Secretary and Guidance Office Assistant! We are excited for what Mrs. Archer will bring to our students, staff and families. Need daily announcements? Email Amy at amy.archer@nilesschools.org



Viking Learners celebrated "National Kazoo Day" by serenading residents from Brentwood at Niles. Thank you Mr. Merusi and Ms. Kugle for sharing your students and their talents with our community.



Save
The
Date

Graduation is May 28 at 7:00 at Viking Stadium. It will be live streamed, as well. Stay tuned for more information to come.



Niles High School

We have been busy this year celebrating all of our students' success with "Good Standing" Fridays! What does "Good Standing" mean? Passing classes, good attendance and exceptional behavior. We are proud of all of our Vikings.



Vikings in the wild-National Technical Honor Society members volunteered at the Hunter Ice Festival.





NILES VIKING ATHLETICS

RESPECTFUL • RESILIENT • RESPONSIBLE



**VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR SCHEDULES
AND TICKET PURCHASES:**

<https://nilesvikings.org>



**CHECK OUT THE VIKING HUDDLE
PODCAST ON YOUTUBE:**

<https://www.youtube.com/@NHSNilesNews>



**FOLLOW US ON TWITTER
FOR UPDATES!**



Ring Lardner



Our students visited the library and voted for the team they believed would win the Super Bowl. By an overwhelming margin, they selected the Seattle Seahawks.



MSBOA District 6's Middle School Honor Band is scheduled to be hosted on March 23rd at Andrews University. We proudly have 10 students representing the Niles Middle School Bands from both 7th and 8th grades. Congratulations to these talented musicians on this outstanding accomplishment!



This year, our middle school band students were challenged to pass off all 12 Major Scales before leaving for high school. Our first student to complete the challenge was 8th grade percussionist, Jacob. In fact, he would have finished on day one had he been allowed to! Great work, Jacob!

Parent Teacher Conferences:

Wednesday, February 25

4-7:15 pm

and

Thursday, February 26,

12-4pm and 5-7:30pm





Ring Lardner

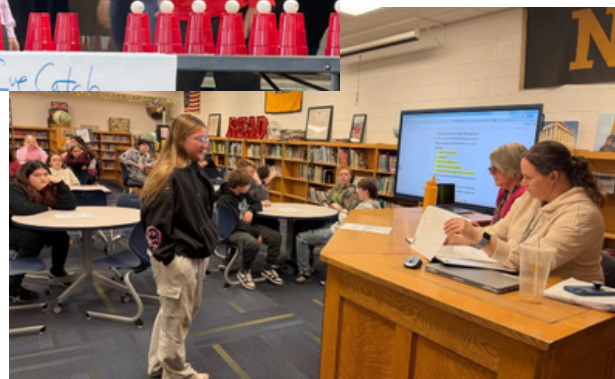
Our 8th grade students had the opportunity to visit booths highlighting the Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs available at the high school. We appreciated the CTE students who returned to Ring Lardner to share information and explain the many opportunities available. It was a valuable and informative experience for our students.

Athletics Update

Our wrestlers were finally back in action and competed in their meet. We were proud of their hard work and dedication.

Our 6th and 7th grade students celebrated their successes with a Bingo party. Several rounds were played, and many prizes were awarded. It was a fun and exciting event for all who participated. Our 8th grade students held their own celebration earlier in January.

We were also able to successfully host our Spelling Bee. The event was exciting and competitive, with all participants demonstrating exceptional spelling skills. After several rounds, three winners were named and will compete at the Regional Spelling Bee in February. Congratulations, and best of luck at Regionals!





Eastside Connections

SERVICE LEARNING AT ECS: ECS 7th and 8th grade students explored the connection between art and community outreach. The project challenged students to master a mixed-media technique: using puffy paint to create guides for decorative embroidery. Beyond the technical skill required, the true focus was empathy. These finished pieces are being donated to a local assisted living facility to brighten residents' rooms and provide a sensory-rich art experience for the community.



ECS 2nd graders at the YMCA for swimming lessons. Safety around our lakes and pools is a priority for Niles Community Schools and our partnership with the YMCA ensures all 2nd graders receive swimming lessons.



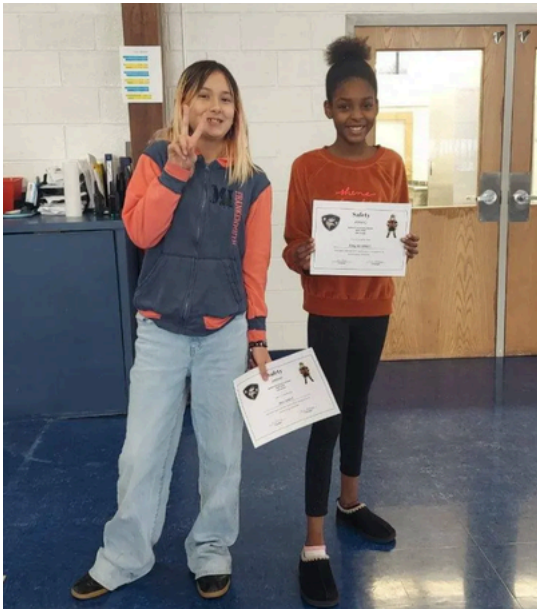
Save THE Date

The Eastside drama club has been working hard as they rehearse for the upcoming musical **Aladdin Jr.** Save the dates! March 21st and 22nd.





Ballard Elementary



Ballard partners with B100 to raise money for St. Jude Children's Hospital. Over the past 5 years we have raised over \$8000 to help the children and families of St. Jude Hospital.

The Ballard Ball is a yearly traditional sponsored by our PTO. On Friday, Jan 30th the halls of Ballard were filled joy and laughter and the gym was filled with music and dancing.





Ballard Elementary

No Tech / Low Tech Tuesdays

Beginning soon, Tuesdays will be designated as No Tech / Low Tech Days. On these days, students will have little to no Chromebook use and will instead focus on hands-on learning, collaboration, discussion, and creative activities.

Why are we implementing this?

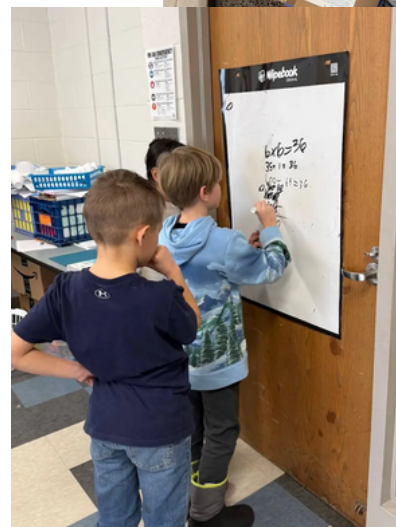
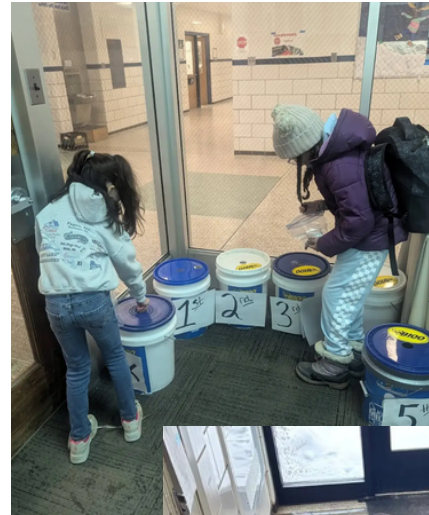
While technology is an important educational tool, intentional breaks from screens provide meaningful benefits. Reducing device use allows students to:

- Engage more deeply with hands-on materials and real-world problem solving
- Strengthen face-to-face communication and interpersonal skills
- Improve focus, stamina, and attention span
- Enhance creativity through writing, building, designing, and creating
- Develop critical thinking skills without relying on digital shortcuts

Research supports balanced technology use as a way to promote healthier learning habits and stronger classroom engagement.

Join us at home!

We encourage families to participate in Tech-Free Tuesdays as well. Consider limiting or eliminating recreational screen time on Tuesday evenings. Instead, try reading together, playing board games, spending time outdoors, completing art projects, or simply enjoying family conversation.



Stay in touch with



School Messenger is integrated with our PowerSchool Parent Portal and allows you to receive phone, email and text notifications from your child's school.

Log into the PowerSchool Parent Portal. Click on the Info Center Link to access notification preferences.

or

Download the School Messenger App on your mobile Device

or

To receive text messages
Simply text Y or YES to 67587
(standard messaging & data rates apply)





Howard-Ellis Elementary

December was filled with fun and meaningful learning!

Our 4th and 5th grade students did a fantastic job performing in their Holiday Concert, showcasing the skills they've developed in music class. The HO-EL PTO Cookies & Canvas event was a well-attended evening of creativity and family fun.

Staff members joined in the holiday spirit by participating in an ugly sweater contest for a great cause.

Our 4th graders received hands-on CPR training from our high school HOSA students, and our 5th graders explored entrepreneurship and business development through engaging lessons taught by Mrs. Buchanan, our Junior Achievement volunteer.





Niles Cedar Lane

Second quarter flew by, and the Cedar Lane staff and students had a great time celebrating the holidays together. For our Cedar Lane Gives Back for December, some of our students went to read to younger students at Howard-Ellis and gave out books for Christmas!

We'd also like to celebrate our second quarter Three Pillars award recipients; these are the students who have successfully represented the qualities of Cedar Lane's Three Pillars: Attendance, Academics, and Attendance.

Please congratulate Vivien A., Laura C., Pamela C., Skylee D., Brandon F., Diego G., Jocelyn G., Dantae G., Jennica H., Jai'ana H., Jenna P., Ethan S., Hunter S., Noah S., and Journey W.





KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

FOR THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR

Kindergarten Eligibility Checklist

Age: 5 years old by September 1, 2026

(or by December 1, 2026, with an enrollment application)

- ✓ **Birth Certificate:** Official copy required
- ✓ **Screenings:** Vision, dental, and hearing
- ✓ **Immunizations:** Up-to-date records needed
- ✓ **Proof of Residency:** Documentation of district residence
- ✓ **Photo Identification:** Driver's License or other state ID

Enroll Online:
nilesschools.org



Enroll at the following buildings:

Howard-Ellis Elementary: 2788 Mannix Street

Ballard Elementary: 1601 West Chicago Road

Eastside Connections: 315 N. 14th Street

Niles Administration Center: 1 Tyler Street



(269) 683-0736



SouthSide School



Alec

Southside School is proud to recognize our freshman student who has truly redefined his trajectory this year. While many know him for his impressive technical talents and hands-on skills, it is his personal evolution that has made the greatest impact on our campus community. Compared to last year, this student has shown a remarkable commitment to showing up and leaning into his education. He has transitioned into a reliable and punctual presence in the classroom, demonstrating a level of dedication that serves as an inspiration to his peers. Beyond his work ethic, his consistent respect toward staff and fellow students alike has not gone unnoticed. We are thrilled to have him as an active, engaged member of the Southside family and look forward to seeing all he will continue to achieve!



At Southside, we stand tall and strong, united by the values that define us. Through the daily practice of Respect, Responsibility, Resilience, and Safety, we create an environment where every student can thrive. We take immense pride in our school, our achievements, and the community we build together every single day.



**Ms. Samantha Brousseau
Pre-Vocational Teacher**

With an unwavering positive spirit and a heart for every student, Sam embodies resilience in our school. She believes that education starts with a genuine connection, dedicating herself to truly knowing the person behind the pupil. By fostering unconditional bonds and meeting every challenge with a smile, she has created a classroom where every student feels seen, valued, and safe to grow.

**STRONG START,
STRONGER FINISH—
THE VIKING WAY!**



**RESPECTFUL • RESILIENT
RESPONSIBLE**