KALKASKA Blazer Bulletin

SHOW UP | COMMIT | PERSIST

November 2026
Vol. VI| No. 2
#GoBlazers
HOME OF THE BLAZERS

AUTUMN WONDER

Blazers Bring the HEAT in 2026–2027

We are off and running at Kalkaska Public Schools for the 2026-2027 school year. Fall sports are winding down and winter sports are ramping up. This edition goes to press just as the leaves are falling and piling up. The weather has been wonderful — it's late October and 70°. It hasn't even rained much yet!

Students are working hard in their classrooms, learning new things every day! Our staff includes excellent administrators, teachers, and support staff. We believe our students deserve the best every single day. Go Blazers!













INSIDE THIS EDITION

BULLETIN
Kalkaska Public Schools
315 S. Coral St.
Kalkaska, Michigan 49646

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BOX HOLDER
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RCE Celebrates Harvest Days

Harvest Days is our first-quarter theme at Rapid City Elementary. Students and staff have brought that theme to life by caring for our campus, learning together, and sharing our work with families. Alongside these projects, students continue their daily work in reading, writing, and math across our multi-age classrooms.

Harvest Family Night

Rain changed our plans for Harvest Family Night, but thanks to a few 5th graders who filmed a virtual campus tour, families still got to see what is happening at RCE. Families also enjoyed a slideshow, apple desserts, and a discussion of RCE's future plans. We appreciated the families who came out and helped make the evening a success.

Stewardship Day: A New Start for the Garden

During Stewardship Day, students and staff worked side by side to clean up the garden and begin revitalizing it. Caring for this shared space is one way students take an active role at RCE. We're looking forward to continuing the work and building a garden our students can use, learn from, and take pride in.

A Path that Leads to Learning

Students and staff worked to clear about 200 yards of trail connecting our campus to the river and outdoor classroom. The trail gives us another way to get students outside and learning from the land around them. We're proud of the effort it took to open up this space for our school community.

A Student Orchard Takes Root

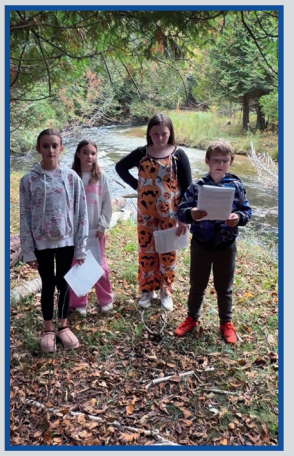
This fall, students and staff planted 18 fruit trees on campus: 15 apple trees and 3 pear trees. Planting the orchard took teamwork and care, and it gives students something to look after and learn from as it grows. We're excited to see this project become part of RCE for years to come.

Learning About Salmon At Rapid River

Mackenzie, a local fishing enthusiast, came to teach our students about salmon and then took them to the Rapid River to continue learning there. The visit gave students a chance to connect the lesson with the river environment. We appreciate Mackenzie sharing his time and knowledge with our students.













Welcome to November!!!

Can you believe it is already November? Crisp autumn air and falling leaves are here!

Our kindergarten, first, and second graders have had a fantastic fall learning routines, building friendships, going on field trips and diving deep into reading and math. This month, we will focus on thankfulness, kindness, and celebrating our community.

Thank you to all of our K–2 families for your continued support, reading at home, and helping our youngest learners shine every day!

Fall Weather & Recess Reminder

As temperatures drop, please make sure your child comes to school with a warm coat, hat, and gloves. Please write your child's first and last name on the inside tags of all jackets and sweaters so lost items can find their way back to classrooms.

If you need assistance with winter gear, contact the school office—we're here to help!

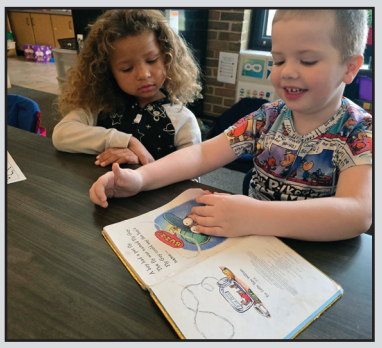
Seasonal Activity Ideas

- Pumpkin Dissection & Seed Counting: Cut open a mini pumpkin or gourd. Have your child guess how many seeds are inside (estimation), then scoop them out and group them in sets of 5s or 10s to practice skip counting.
- Nature Scavenger Hunt: Give your child a simple checklist: "Find an acorn, a rough leaf, a smooth stone, and something red." This boosts vocabulary, observation, and sensory language.

We wish all of our families a warm, joyful, and restful Thanksgiving season! Thank you for being such a wonderful partner in your child's education.

Events:

- Nov. 25 – Thanksgiving Break Begins
- November 30 – School Resumes
- December 21 – Christmas Break Begins
- January 5 – School Resumes
  - January 18 – No School
  - January 21 – ½–day for students
  - January 22 – ½–day for students
  - Jan. 22 — End of marking period

































Growing, Learning, and Giving Thanks

As the autumn leaves fall and the weather turns crisp, our hallways are buzzing with the energy of a great school year so far. Students are comfortable in their routines, enjoying time with friends, and being challenged in the classroom by their teachers every day. Thank you to everyone who joined us for October conferences and fall celebrations. It takes us right into November as a time for gratitude, reflection, and staying connected as a community.

Field Trip Recap

There is nothing quite like autumn in northern Michigan, and some of our students got a front row seat to the season! Our 4th graders headed to the Grass River Natural Area to search for local wildlife, inspect fascinating rocks and sediments up close, and wander the vibrant forest paths. Meanwhile, our 5th graders laced up their hiking boots for a return trip to the North Country National Scenic Trail, diving even deeper into the woods to explore more of America's longest scenic trail.

Cold Weather is coming

As the seasons change we want to remind parents and guardians our doors do not open until 7:30 a.m. — we do not have staff to supervise students until then. This is a safety concern for students to be outside unattended and in the soon to be bitter cold temperatures. With that comes the reminder of appropriate clothing for the upcoming weather —winter coats, hats, gloves, and boots are soon upon us!

Happy Halloween!

Our students enjoyed holiday festivities with movies, snacks, and a costume parade through the school. Staff and students had so much fun with the different costumes and friendly competition throughout the grades. Fun was had by all!

Dates to Remember:

- ★ November 16 – KUE Picture Retakes
- ★ Nov. 25— Thanksgiving Break Begins
- ★ November 30 – School Resumes
- ★ Dec. 9 – KUE Choir Concert, 7 p.m.
- ★ Dec. 14 – KUE Holiday Music Concert
- ★ December 21 – Winter Break Begins
- ★ January 5 – School Resumes













Sizzling Success for Monthly VIPs

Each month, the Communities In Schools (CIS) team coordinates a special VIP event to recognize outstanding students who set great examples across our school.

Hosted this month by our SEEDS program, Mr. Bontrager and Ms. Maddy treated our VIPs to a hands-on culinary activity where each student received ingredients to craft their own warm chicken and cheese quesadilla. To top off the celebration, students put their artistic skills to the test in a coloring competition, with the lucky winner taking home a fun dumpling squishy toy. Congratulations to all of our student VIPs for their hard work, and a huge thank you to the CIS team, Mr. Bontrager, and Ms. Maddy for hosting such a memorable event!

KMS Shows Off Big Spirit for Homecoming Week

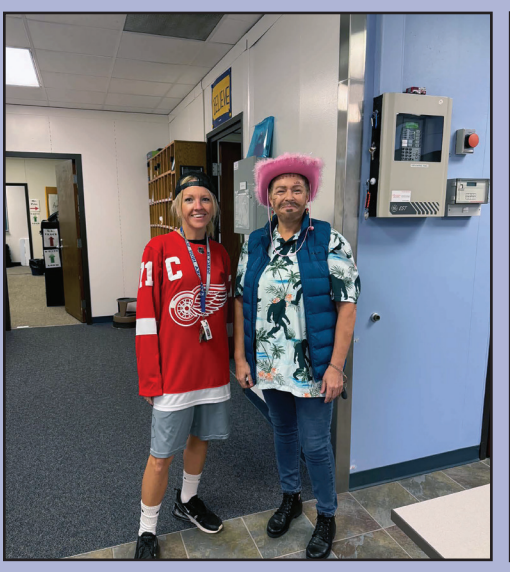
Homecoming week at KMS was packed with excitement as students and staff showed off their school pride through five unforgettable dress-up days. We kicked off the week with a cozy PJ Day on Monday, followed by red carpet looks for Dress Like a Celebrity Day on Tuesday. On Wednesday, students represented their favorite countries for Nations Day, while Thursday brought plenty of laughs with Meme Day. To finish off the week strong, everyone decked themselves out in blue and white on Friday for Blazer Day, bringing an amazing week of energy and creativity to a close.

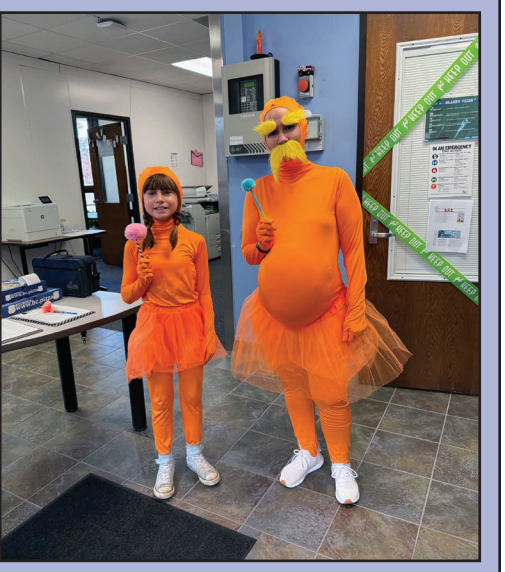
Blazers Stand Strong in Pink

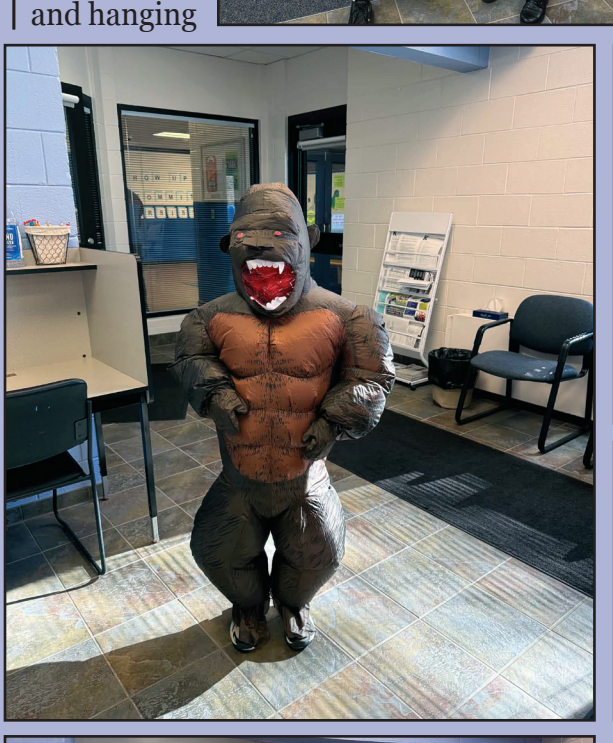
KMS went pink in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month as students and staff dressed from head to toe in pink. The schoolwide Pink Out brought everyone together in a powerful display of hope, unity, and support for fighters, survivors, and families impacted by breast cancer. Seeing the hallways filled with pink served as a meaningful reminder of what our school community can accomplish when standing together for an important cause.

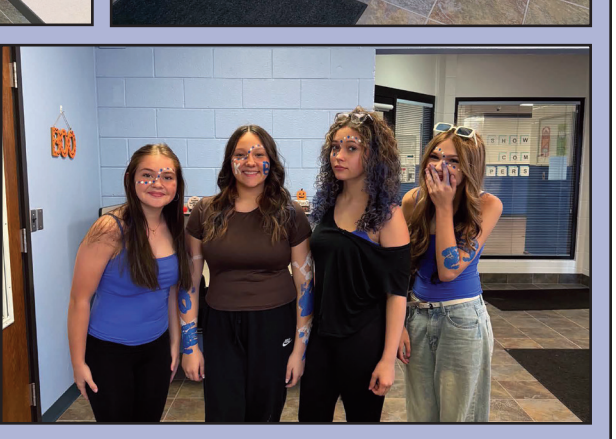
Haunted Halls & Halloween Beats

Halloween spirit was in full force at KMS as students and staff celebrated with a week of exciting festivities. The halls came alive with energy during our annual school dance, where everyone enjoyed music, dancing, and hanging out with friends. Brave students tested their courage by stepping through a spooky haunted house created right here at school. To top it all off, creative outfits were on full display during the costume contest, showcasing incredible talent and humor across every grade level. It was a memorable celebration filled with festive fun for the entire school.

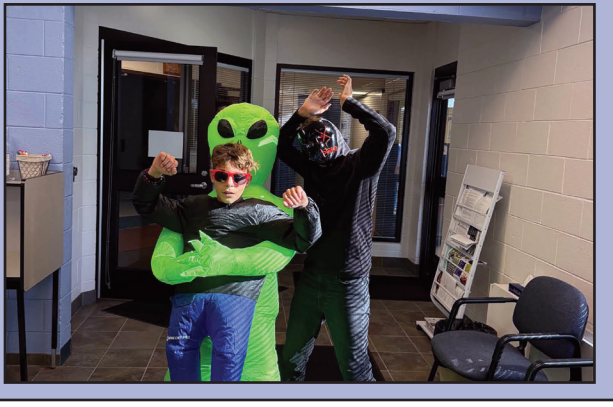














KALKASKA IN FALL

BY ABBY BEDRICK

Trick or Treat!

October is recognized by one specific event: Halloween! This holiday is a large spectacle in Kalkaska, as many churches, businesses, and subdivisions hand out hundreds of pieces of candy every year.



Falling For Colors

In northern Michigan, the fall colors are a defining, unique characteristic most states don't ever get to see. The mixes of reds, oranges, yellows, and even browns draw the attention of locals and tourists alike. Many families and photographers make use of these stunning sights to take pictures, making it a bona fide local tradition that can be counted on never to disappoint..

Market Finds

The local Cherry Street Market is thriving with the colorful fall aesthetic as they decorate and set out pumpkins. Seasonal items like apple cider and as many kinds of apples you could imagine fill every space in the market!





Take a Hike

The cool-tone colors and the light breeze make for great walking weather. The Kalkaska High School forest is brimming with a new, fall -coded look, perfect for a midday stroll. Its private status makes it a special place to call your own!

This page produced by the KHS journalism class under the leadership of Ms. Gina Dellate.

The Kalkaska Area Educational Foundation

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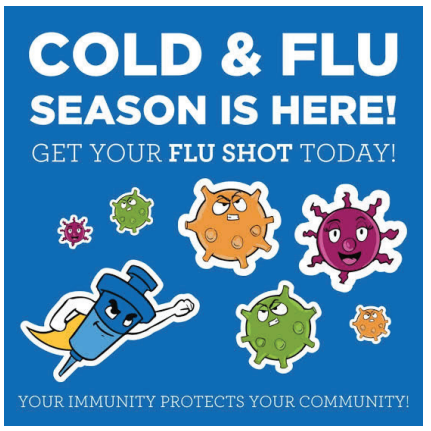
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Behavior Health services ONLY
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1700 West Kalkaska St, Kalkaska

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Three convenient locations



Medicaid enrollment assistance available onsite.



- Wash your hands often with soap and water
- Stay home if you feel ill
- Get plenty of rest, 8-10 hours
- Eat foods rich in nutrients
- Exercise regularly
- Stay hydrated, 8 glasses of water/day

Call to schedule your flu shot today!

MORE READING, Better Sleep!

Here's one easy change that will help our little Blazers with sounder sleep, brighter moods, and more reading, all at once: **keep phones, tablets, and laptops out of bedrooms at night!**

A large national study published in *Pediatrics* looked at more than 10,000 children. **At age 12, kids who owned a smartphone had about 60% higher odds of not getting enough sleep than kids who didn't. They also had higher rates of depression and obesity.**

The study shows links, not proof of cause, but its findings match what many caregivers see at home: glowing screens at bedtime, rather than books.

A bedroom without devices is a bedroom where books have a fighting chance. It's also a place where kids can rest without notifications, group chats, or just one more video.

This month's one ask: set up a family charging spot in the kitchen or living room, and have every device, grown-ups' too, "go to bed" there each night. Put books and a reading lamp by your child's bed instead.

THE CHILDREN'S LIBRARY IS LOCATED AT:
316 S. CHERRY STREET

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(231) 258 – 9411
info@kalkaskalibrary.org

Let's do less screen time together *~ from your friendly neighborhood library*

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BLAZERS

Blazer Bulletin

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Superintendent: Rick Heitmeyer

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ONCE A BLAZER ALWAYS A BLAZER

Falling Back on a Great Fall Season

A Salute to Our Blazer Coaches

The leaves are down, the clocks are about to fall back, and just like that, another fall sports season is in the books. It's hard to believe we're already here! This season had everything: big wins, tough lessons, nail-biters, and best of all, not a single snowflake at any of our events. (We'll take it, Northern Michigan.) None of it happens without the coaches who show up every day for our student-athletes. Here's a look back at the people who made this fall special.






New Faces Leading the Way

We welcomed two first-year varsity head coaches, and both hit the ground running.

On the links, Coach Matt Olds led girls golf to three regional qualifiers, and every one of our golfers represented the Blazers well at each event.

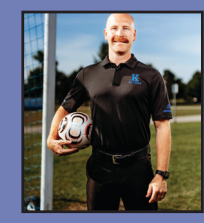
Under the Friday night lights, Coach Darren Conklin brought a wealth of football knowledge to the program and built a strong staff around him. JV coaches Josh England and Carter England and varsity assistants Marlin Starkey and Steve Porter brought knowledge, energy, and optimism to every practice and every game.

Middle school coaches Dean Amos and Gavin Cartmell lead the middle school football team to season wins both on the road and at home.











Making History on the Pitch

Boys soccer put together a winning season at 7-6-2, and they didn't take the easy road to get there, facing potential state champion Elk Rapids three times. The highlight? An 8-0 district win over Boyne City, something that hasn't happened in more than a decade. Now that's how you make a statement.

Cross Country: Times Dropping Faster Than the Temperature

Cross Country found success at both the high school and middle school levels. Varsity head coach Doug Brown had his runners dropping time meet after meet, with several All-Conference runners on both the boys and girls sides.

Not to be outdone, middle school coach Amy Doehring had her runners following right in the high schoolers' footsteps, dropping times like they were hot. Coach Doehring also helped develop a boys conference champion and regional champion in the same season. Watch out for this group in the years ahead!

Volleyball: Bringing the Energy

Volleyball was an energetic, fun season for everyone involved. From varsity head coach Autumn Kirkland all the way to middle school coaches Britney Burke and Natalee Haver, our Blazers grew as players and as teammates, and they know what it takes to be successful on the court.

Thank You, Coaches!

To all of our fall coaches: thank you for investing your time, energy, and hearts into our student-athletes. The season can feel long, with early mornings, late bus rides, and weekends at meets and tournaments. But the difference you make in these kids' lives can't be measured on a scoreboard. KHS and KMS are lucky to have you guiding and leading our programs.