



Volume XLVII Issue 3
February 2026

Mustang News

A PUBLICATION OF MONTABELLA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

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A Community of Careers

Our Montabella Elementary students traded their textbooks for tools and tales of the trade during Career Day! It was a day filled with curiosity, hands-on learning, and plenty of "When I grow up..." moments. Many of our students dressed up as nurses, doctors, farmers, military, construction workers, etc...to add to the fun!

From the lights and sirens of the fire trucks, to the intricate details of a bobcat mount, our students were treated to a front-row seat for the many paths their futures might take. We want to extend a huge **Thank You** to the local businesses and professionals who took time out of their busy schedules to invest in our kids. The weather was not ideal, but the kids were too busy exploring to notice!

We were honored to host a wonderful group of professionals who made the day truly special:

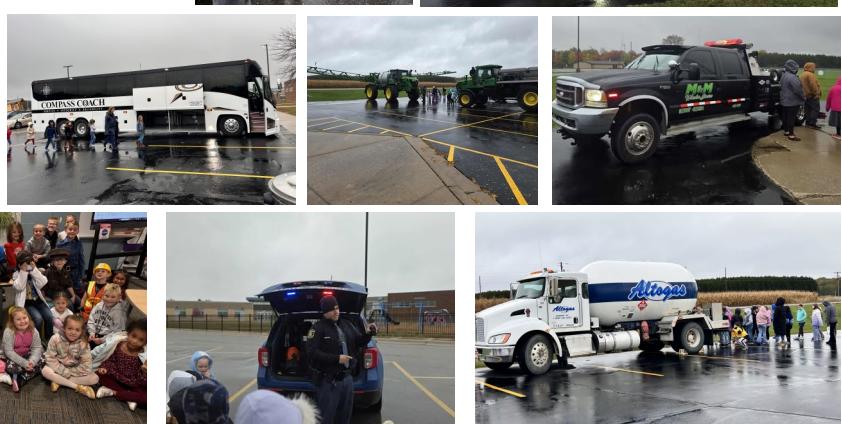
- Safety, Service, & Sacrifice:** Our **Military** shared lessons in leadership and duty while our local **Police Officers, EMTs, and Fire Fighters** also showed us what it takes to be a hometown hero.
- Braving the Elements:** Our students were captivated by the **Linemen** who work in every kind of weather to keep the lights on and our homes safe.
- Ag, Industry, & Energy In Motion:** Students learned about the roots of our community through **Agriculture** (seeing a tractor, sprayer, or floater on the road or in the field is fun, but stepping inside one—AMAZING!), the **Propane** drivers who keep us warm, and the unique craft of **Taxidermy**.
- Logistics in Motion:** Our students were intrigued by the "big rigs" and machinery, including the big **Road Commission Snow Plow/Salt Spreader, Charter & School Bus drivers, Shed Haulers, Tow Truck Drivers, and Hi-Lo Drivers**.
- Sports & Strategy:** We even went behind the scenes of the game with a **Referee**.

"You can't be what you can't see." Because of your generosity, our students didn't just hear about these jobs—they saw them in action. We are so proud to be part of a community that invests so much heart into the next generation.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- February 23 — NO School—Teacher PD
- February 12 — Elementary Science Night
- February 13 — Taco Night Fundraiser for Project Graduation
- March 13 — NHS Blood Drive 9-2:30 PM
- March 18 — Early Release—Student dismissal 12:15 PM
- March 19 — Early Release—Student dismissal 12:15 PM
- March 19 — Parent Teacher Conferences
- March 20 — NO School
- April 3—10—NO School—Spring Break
- May 5—Kindergarten Roundup





The Classroom and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Lately, you've likely heard a lot about Artificial Intelligence (AI). It sounds like science fiction, but in reality, it's becoming a standard tool in the workplace. Much like the transition from the slide rule to the calculator, or the typewriter to the laptop, AI is the next step in how we work and learn.

There are some unique considerations for a school when it comes to AI. A lot of organizations, businesses and industries are starting to use AI regularly in the work force. The goal of all k-12 schools is to have students prepared for life after high school and that includes preparing them for the work force. The use of AI continues to grow and our students need to be prepared for the proper use of AI for that next step. On the other hand, we also want our students to be able to think critically and problem solve. If we have a computer to answer all our questions and problems, are we really preparing students to think? This is the unique crossroads that schools are at right now.

Montabella currently tries to keep as many AI sites as possible blocked for students. Everyone is well aware that assignments that are not completed in class have the possibility of being completed with the use of AI. We are introducing some AI tools to our staff so they become familiar with the capabilities. We have also started some conversations about what uses of AI for students could be acceptable and what would not be acceptable. We hope to engage some parents in the conversation as well. Our hope would be to find the right tool and the right way to introduce and allow AI for students. This will take some time as we research and pilot programs for their effectiveness.

AI will never replace the heart of our district; our teachers and the relationships that they can build with students. A computer can't cheer at a Friday night game, and it can't tell when a student is having a bad day. We are using these tools to enhance that human connection, not replace it.

We want our graduates to be "AI-competent," meaning they know how to use these tools ethically and effectively to solve problems. That is how we ensure our students have the same opportunities as others. We are treading forward with AI slowly and carefully since it is a complex issue.



Our Elementary students were able to taste test some homemade corn salad, prepared by our kitchen staff. By the smiles on their faces, they sure did like it. We love when the students try new food items! When they are well received items, we put them on our menu. Thank you to all that participated, we appreciate it. ~Ms. Hicks



All students are offered FREE breakfast and lunch for the 2025-26 school year.

Your Mustang Language Arts Team wrapped up the 2025-26 season with another strong performance in the poetry category topping the other seven teams in the third and final event. This resulted in a MSAC League Runner-up finish for the season.~Coach Lehman

Congratulations on another great year and for maintaining the standard of Montabella Language Arts.



Back-To-Back League Champions
Montabella Mustang Wrestling Team



The 2025 Montabella Mustang football season wasn't just a series of games; it was a historic journey that redefined what it means to be "Mustang Proud." From the first whistle, to the final snap, this team carried the spirit of the community on their shoulders, finishing with an incredible 11-2 record and the first State Finals appearance in school history.

Excellence on the Field and in the Classroom

The accolades earned this season speak volumes about the culture built within this program. Leading the charge was Head Coach Tim Webb, who was deservedly named the 2025 Division 1 8-Player Coach of the Year. Under his guidance, the Mustangs didn't just win; they dominated with heart, discipline, and a "never-quit" attitude that saw them through thrilling playoff comebacks.

More impressive than the trophies on the field was the dedication shown off it. The Mustangs proved that "student-athlete" puts the student first, earning a spot as an MHSFCA Football Academic All-State Top 4 Team in 8-Man Division 1!

A Community United

What made this season truly amazing was the way it brought us all together. We saw the entire community unite as one. From the navy and white at every game to the packed stands at the Yooper Dome, the "Mustang Family" was louder and stronger than ever before!

The players now understand what an impact they have as role models. For some of us, the most cherished moments of the season happened off the turf. The varsity players were excited to go into the elementary classrooms to read a book about their journey. They topped it off with an autograph session where they signed a Mustang Football coloring book. The school-wide pep assemblies with lights, a tunnel, fog, and excitement was an electric energy that bridged the gap between high school and elementary students that created a true sense of Montabella! Did you know our Mustang can ride a unicycle?

The scoreboard will show a historic season, but the memories will show a community that rallied together, a school that stood united, and a team that represented us with class every step of the way.

Thank you, Mustangs, for the ride of a lifetime!

MONTABELLA SCHOOLS INDOOR WALKING PROGRAM

LOCATION: JR/SR HIGH



TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS | 4:30 PM - 7:00 PM

JANUARY - MARCH

SAFETY FIRST: Please bring a separate pair of CLEAN, DRY shoes to change into for walking. Let's keep the floors safe!



**Stay active & warm this winter!
All seniors welcome.**

A Message From Montabella Alumni Association

Calling all friends of Montabella:

Here is a chance to continue our legacy!

If you contribute to this scholarship fund, you can help a deserving graduate further their education.

You can contact the Mt. Pleasant Community Foundation directly by calling (989)773-7322 or writing to PO Box 1283, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48804. You can also contact the foundation through their website: www.mpacf.org for further information.

You can use the QR code listed below and contribute directly to the Montabella Alumni Association Scholarship Fund.



Be sure to tell other Montabella friends about this opportunity to help our fellow Mustangs!



Holiday assemblies always offer a lot of entertainment for our students. Mrs. Margo shocked everyone with her cookie eating skills, and the staff decorated Santa with a jolly red suit while protecting it from the Grinch!

Montabella Jr/Sr High School 2025-2026 1st Semester Honor Roll

Highest Honors: 3.78-4.00

12th Grade: Ashlyn Binge, Isabell Darling*, Annaliese Harris*, Hayden Helmer*, Kenzie Karcher*, Natalie Ludwig*, Enrico Sbardella, Gavin Simmons, Jaelyn Snyder, Leah Webb*, Landon Wymer

11th Grade: Ryann Ball*, Allison Cook, Lydia Eldred, Brayden Foster*, Braleigh Fulk, LJ Jordan, Gabriel Kauffman, Marly Lambert, Keith Miller, Emma Peterson*, Presley Storey-Dolan, Bryce Willis*

10th Grade: Joshua Arganbright*, Kirslyn Cummings*, Lewis Davidson*, Mason Davidson*, Lia Dood*, Gary Eckert, Tucker Evans, Sidney Jaquays*, Kain Karcher, Bailey Kauffman*, Cooper Kieff, Maxie Ludwig, Skyler Miller, James Rodriguez*, Leah Sissel*, Alivia Thompson*, Makaylynn Wood*

9th Grade: Makayla Helmer, Oakley Gatehouse, Ella Scherzer, Colton Eldred*, Matthew Gonzalez*

8th Grade: Callie Bandfield*, Ema Dood*, Jacoby Koehler, Marshall Preston, Lucas Rodriguez*

7th Grade: Noah Arganbright*, Saleen Bott*, Lily Deal*, Raylan Eldred*, Riley Eldred*, Jackson Evans, Ethan Foster, Alana Gonzalez, Justin Hanes, Madisyn Helmer*, Isabella Irwin, Malakhi Kauffman, Gianna Kent-El, Blaine Kieff, Lane McKinstry, Breanna Miller, Nemera Mills, Nicholas Pifer*, Lucas Snyder, Kaitlyn Taylor*, Lillian Wilkinson*

6th Grade: Kingleigh Bailey, Claire Baker*, Sylar Bauman*, Caylee Decker*, Easton Finney, Amelia Grandy, Kacen Hill*, Riley Hopp, Emma Kieff, Parker Koehler, Zoie Minnick, Eli Mount*, Audra Preston, Kamari Randall, Olivia Simon*, Sadie Simon*, Serenity Watters, Mackenzie Wilson

*Student Received a 4.00 for the 2nd semester

High Honors: 3.40-3.77

12th Grade: Conner Cluley, LeeAnn Duncan, Lillian Fuller, Stewart Houghton, Brady Kieff, Aubrey Pant, Ayden Perkins, Blake Snyder, Braydon Williamson

11th Grade: Grant Cook, Lexi Curliss, Bailey Kelsey, Lariyssa Markovich, Sierra Pranger, Brooklyn Rauch, Bryson Williamson

10th Grade: Marley Demmick, Kailyn Ely, Seth Jordan, Mia Lambert, Saralynn Shelley, Joseph Silverthorn, Bryton Strohl, Temperance Wilson

9th Grade: Ashlynn Bott, Joslyn Clay, Chole Decker, Tripp Eldred

8th Grade: Bailee Carlson, Lily Brewington, Eleanor Compton, Kadin Dalrymple, Annabelle Grandy, Evan Greene, Makenna Kirkpatrick, Danial McCarthy, Reese Pitts, Brooklyn Porter, Henry Sweet, Autumn Willis

7th Grade: Emirah Amble, D'Leh Beaupieu, Ella Blanz, Brooklin Crandell, Elizabeth Decker, Forrest Guild, Connor Moore, Addison Nielsen, Lawson Willis, Jase Wood

6th Grade: Johnathan Barber, Isabelle Davis, Ryder Eldred, Amelianna Fidler, Winter Forquer, Xavier Foust, Avah Jackson, Kaylee Preston, Wyatt Scherzer, Eden Snyder, Jaydin Warner

Honors: 3.00-3.39

12th Grade: Bryce DeLong, James Hancock, Malachi Houghton, Abbigail McCarthy, Haden McCarthy, Zaidan Myers, Tuff Rood, Jareth Shappee

11th Grade: Emily Allen, Raelynn Baez, Mason Bogart, Noah Carlson, Dakarai Ely, Wade Hanshue, Kaitlyn Kade, Sullivan Mills, Kaden Schut, Brayden Snyder, Leah Stratton, Ellie Zeien

10th Grade: Gavin Aldrich, Gabriella Argujo, Lesley Burggren, Kenneth Graham, Alana Hill, Owen Maybee, Carson Mayer, Logan McElhaney, Olivia Piercy, Katelyn Pifer

9th Grade: Noah Barber, Bowdie Blanz, Callen Eldred, Amelia Felan, Jackson Hansen, Preston Hines, Brooklyn Kieff, Olivia Lau, Koltton Mayer, Phoenix Mills, Ashlyn Newcombe, Elizabeth Nielsen, Patyn Recker, Shawn Walker

8th Grade: Emma Bartlett, Chad Burke, Aiden Fletcher, Liam Harvell, Alyssa Helmer, Madison Keeler, Riley Pitts, Brooklyn Race, Abygail Rummel, Landyn Visser, Landon Willis

7th Grade: Colten Miller, Harley Corwin, Kathryn Graham, Skylar Kolenda, Defusha McCan, Raelynn Perkins, Aleigha Ryers, Brantlee Seath

6th Grade: Sofia Argujo, Nash Bartlett, Brennan Beadle, Ascher Bolton, Tres Burke, Sebastian Gerrity, Korbin Loomis, Ciara Munger, Thomas Ryers, Thomas Spencer, Mila VanBuskirk, Jasper Wittig

Find Us



www.montabella.com



www.montbellamustangs.com (Athletics)



Montabella Community Schools &

Montabella Elementary

Mpride_stampede (Mr. Riley)

Be Responsible

Be Respectful

Be Safe



Kobe
Burnell



Raygn
Herzog



Raylan
Wells



Kaycie
Irani



Alaric
Quimby



Easton
Withey



Jorgie
Andersen



Serenity
Sadler



Finnley
Rolston



Caselynn
Lake



Robert
Rolston



Ava
Brown



Tristan
Phillips



Charlee
Gilman



Emersyn
Withey



Molly
Randall



Hoyt
Dittenber



Liam
Daley



Lizzie
Criss



Oakley
Stainbrook



Kate
Wilson



Harlow
Forman



Gentry
Gatehouse



Greg
Mills



Aaron
Munger



McKuiper
Garner



Lilly
Ritz



Ella
Beaulieu



Braxton
Roberson



Ava
Spaeth



Bentley
Hitsman



Gage
Preston



Creedynce
Painter



Breslynn
Seath



Brant
Kalis



Gavin
Nielsen



Henry
Bupp



Marcel
Elliott



Freya
Mortensen



Jaymes
Warner



Candice
Decker



Jasper
VanBlaricum



Jayce
Waboose



Lydia
Hansen



Leland
Raymond



Norah
Reichert



Ryleigh
Irani



Anna
Post



Eleana
Peterson



Keagon
Miller



Hudzyn
Painter



Colten
Sleight



Bonnie
Row



Brodie
Polovino



Lane
Foster



Brayden
Peterson



Holly
Snyder



Chance
Wheat



Rachelle
Shappee

November, December, & January

Spotlight Students

JR/SR Student of the Month Recipients



November

Kinleigh Bailey (6)
Alex Geer (7)
Callie Bandfield (8)
Ashlynn Bott (9)
Lewis Davidson (10)
Allison Cook (11)
James Hancock (12)



December

Ryver Herzog (6)
Breanna Miller (7)
Evan Greene (8)
Ella Scherzer (9)
Tony Race (10)
Ryann Ball (11)
Haden McCarthy (12)



January

Serenity Watters (6)
Harley Corwin (7)
Julius Hudson (8)
Tripp Eldred (9)
Sidney Jaquays (10)
Baleigh Fulk (11)
Kenzie Karcher (12)

Other Nominations

Enrico Sbardella
Lexi Curtiss
Korbin Loomis
Tres Burke
Olivia Simon
Eden Snyder
Alana Gonzalez
Marly Lumbert
Saleen Bott
Elizabeth Decker
Emma Bartlett

Aiden Fletcher
Lucas Rodriguez
Shawn Walker
Preston Hines
Gavyn Aldred
Lia Dood
Matthew Gotwalt
Emily Allen
Hunter Amon
Austin Schuberg
Tristan Knapp

Hayden Helmer
Jaelyn Snyder
Isabelle Davis
Joslyn Bishop
Kamari Randall
Reese Pitts
Brooklyn
Porter
Alyssa Helmer
Ema Dood
Emmett Knapp

Oakley Gatehouse
James Rodriguez
Joeseph Silverthorn
Autumn Byrne
Jason Lawe



NHS PINNING

NHS recently pinned 14 new members. Congratulations to all!

Pictured from L to R
1st picture: Bryce Willis, Bryce Willis, Bryce Willis, Bryce Willis, Bryce Willis, Bryce Willis
2nd picture: Montabella's very own Superheroes—Ms. Millis (Wonder Woman) and Mr. Riley (Superman)

Spirit Week Fun



Meetings held Third Monday of the Month
JR/SR High School Cafeteria
1390 North County Line Rd. Blanchard, MI 49310
989-427-5148 (p) 989-427-3828 (f)

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Eylie Foster President
Scott Parks Vice President
Ivan Renne Secretary
Erica Vincent Treasurer
Tim Eldred Trustee
Jeramee Gilman Trustee
Steve Sweet Trustee



As always, we thank the Sons of the American Legion Post 240, from Blanchard, for making sure we have flags to fly at the Central Office, Jr/Sr High and our Elementary.

School Closing Information

In the event that school is closed or delayed due to inclement weather, the information will be broadcast to the following television and radio stations.

TV Stations

WOOD TV8 Grand Rapids
WWWTW 9&10 Cadillac
WJRT TV12 Flint
WZZM TV13 Grand Rapids

Radio Station

WCFX 95.3FM Mt. Pleasant
WGJM 106.3FM Greenville
WCUZ 1230AM/105.7FM Grand Rapids
WCZY 104.3FM Mt. Pleasant

BUS NEWS

SCHOOL BUS LIGHTS



YELLOW FLASHING LIGHTS
THE BUS IS PREPARING TO STOP



RED FLASHING LIGHTS AND EXTENDED STOP ARMS
DRIVERS MUST STOP AND WAIT THE RED LIGHTS STOP



CAMP KINDERGARTEN ROUNDUP



S'more Fun In Kindergarten

Tuesday, May 5, 2026

Anytime between 3:30-6:00 PM

Step 1: Schedule Appointment by scanning QR code (click on EITHER link to look for availability—click on “Look for appointment slots further ahead” until you reach May 5th.) or call (989) 427-5414 ext. 606.



Step 2: Complete enrollment forms found at Montabella.com—click on “Enroll” create an account if you do not already have a student enrolled at Montabella

Child must be 5 years of age by September 1, 2026 or approved waiver

Campers of 2039