



khps.org

KNIGHTLY

News

VALUE. SUPPORT. EMPOWER. | FALL 2025

Kenowa Hills Administration
2325 Four Mile NW
Grand Rapids
616-784-2511

Kenowa Hills High School
3825 Hendershot NW
Grand Rapids
616-784-2400

Pathways High School
3950 Hendershot NW
Grand Rapids
616-785-3225

Kenowa Hills Middle School
3950 Hendershot NW
Grand Rapids
616-785-3225

Kenowa Hills Alpine Elementary
4730 Baumhoff NW
Comstock Park
616-784-0884

Kenowa Hills Central Elementary
4252 3 Mile Rd NW
Grand Rapids
616-453-6351

Kenowa Hills Zinser Elementary
3949 Leonard NW
Grand Rapids
616-453-2461

Kenowa Hills Early Childhood Center
3971 Richmond Ct. NW
Grand Rapids
616-647-0910



KENOWA HILLS MIDDLE SCHOOL EMBRACES GRADE-LEVEL TEAMING

Kenowa Hills Middle School is entering an exciting new chapter designed with the unique needs of middle schoolers in mind. Starting this fall, KHMS will introduce a new grade-level teaming model fostering a stronger sense of community among students, deeper connections between students and staff, and personalized support for every student.

In the past, the middle school followed a structure more closely aligned with high school. Students moved from class to class, often across different wings of the building, with limited continuity or connection. While this model offered efficiency, it did not fully reflect what middle schoolers need most. That's changing. Under the leadership of Principal Mike Dodge, the school is making a purposeful shift to better serve students during these pivotal years.

"Middle school shouldn't just be a bridge. It should be its own stage," Dodge said. "We're building something that meets students where they are developmentally, emotionally, and academically."

WHAT IS GRADE-LEVEL TEAMING?

The new model divides each grade level into two teaching teams of roughly 100-115 students. Each team shares four core teachers—math, science, English language arts, and social studies—who

work closely together and share the same group of students. That means students will see familiar faces throughout the day, and teachers will have more coordinated opportunities to support individual student needs.

"It's about relationships," Dodge emphasized. "When teachers share the same group of students, they can coordinate academic support, behavior strategies, and even celebrate student successes in a much more personalized way."

By creating smaller, more consistent groups of students and providing teachers with defined time during the school day to collaborate and provide personalized student support, KHMS aims to foster "a community within a community."

A MORE INTENTIONAL SCHOOL DAY

The teaming structure also extends beyond academics. Each day begins with a period called Connect: a home base where students meet with one of their core teachers in a smaller setting to focus on social-emotional learning, academic support, and enrichment opportunities. This structure allows staff to flexibly group students based on their needs. Whether that is extra help in a subject area, hands-on projects, or brain breaks like kickball and team-building games, Connect provides just that: connection.



Students will also benefit from learning in a more consistent space. Each grade-level team will be located in its own section of the building, which helps reduce hallway congestion and creates a more focused, familiar space for students to learn. This structure also helps students feel a greater sense of belonging and pride within their team community.

"We're really trying to build those peak moments and positive experiences as well," Dodge said. That includes creating more meaningful opportunities for students with each other, with staff, and with their school community through shared experiences both in and out of the classroom.

PHONE-FREE, BACKPACK-FREE, AND FOCUSED ON LEARNING

As part of the shift, the school will implement new policies designed to reduce distractions and prioritize student well-being. Every student will be assigned a locker and expected to store their phone and backpack

(continued on the next page)

COVER STORY (cont'd)

there throughout the day. While these changes may come with some adjustment, Dodge believes they'll help students focus and feel better.

"It's better for their backs, it's better for their safety, and it's better for their learning," he noted. "If a parent needs to reach their child, we have systems in place, just like we always have."



BUILT FROM EXPERIENCE AND COLLABORATION


This new structure didn't happen overnight. Dodge brings experience from leading a similar transformation at previous districts, but he also credits his staff and the broader KHMS community for helping shape the direction. Teachers participated in professional development visits to schools using the teaming model, and Dodge incorporated their feedback into the final plan.

"I've asked for input every step of the way," he said. "I really appreciate the insight that so many staff members have provided and am proud to see our collective efforts come to fruition in the fall."

BUILT ON BELONGING

"Middle school is a critical stage in a student's development. This transition to teaming isn't just about academics. It's about making sure every student feels known, supported, and empowered during a pivotal time in their lives," said Kenowa Hills Superintendent Gerald Hopkins. "I'm incredibly proud of the leadership Mr. Dodge has brought to this initiative. He's worked collaboratively with staff and listened thoughtfully to feedback to build a model that puts the needs of students at the forefront."

Middle School is a time of change for students, and KHMS is prioritizing what matters most: belonging, connection, and gradual growth. That means offering rigorous academics, but also space to explore strengths and passions, take healthy risks, and build trust with adults who know them well.

"This isn't just a new schedule, it's a new approach to middle school," Dodge said. "Next year, our students, staff, and parents are going to feel the difference." 

KNIGHTHOOD

AWAITS

THERE'S STILL TIME TO REGISTER

Kenowa Hills Public Schools is accepting students for the 2025-26 school year. To begin the process of enrollment, please visit khps.org/enrollment.

HAVE QUESTIONS, WANT A SCHOOL TOUR, WANT TO CHAT WITH A PRINCIPAL?

We understand choosing the best school for your child is one of the most important decisions you will make. The registration team at Kenowa Hills is available to set up school tours, meetings, or phone calls with principals, and answer any questions you might have about Kenowa Hills Public Schools.

Visit khps.org/school-tours or call 784-2511 option 2

to set up a tour or for enrollment information.



Your Back-to-School Hub
For everything back-to-school,
from the school calendar to supply
lists, visit khps.org/hub

KNIGHT HIGHLIGHTS

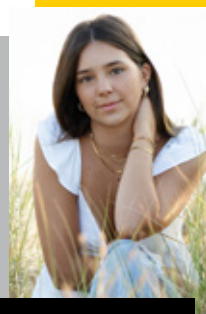


CONGRATS TO OUR KHHS 2025 TOP ELEVEN KNIGHTS



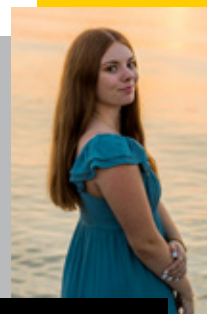
SARAH BUCKWALTER

(Valedictorian)



ADDISON HEINDRICHS

(Salutatorian)



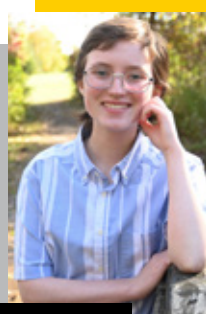
MADELINE HIGBEE



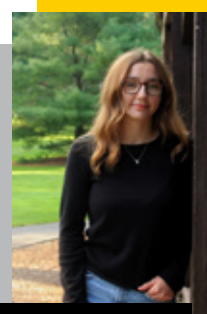
EMILY HALL



MADELINE DEYOUNG



LUCA KLATT



CHELSEY NICHOLSON



GABRIELLA HOWE



HENRY JASPER



**JOSSELINE
LANDAVERDE-GONZALEZ**



MAKENNA WESTMORELAND

ONCE A KNIGHT, ALWAYS A KNIGHT. CONGRATULATIONS, RETIREES!

The following Knights have wrapped up their careers at Kenowa Hills this year with grit and dedication. We wish you a long and happy retirement! Congratulations to all our retirees!

BECKY BRADLEY

REED BRETZ

CATHY CARLSON

CINDY CORDES

DAVE CURTIS

CHAR FALICKI

JOHN GILCHRIST

KELLI HUIZEN

PAM KELLER

STEPHEN LEEDY

KARLA MARKS

CINDY RUSCETT

SARA SPOSARO

JOY STEVENS

SAM WILTBEISS

SHEILA WOODMAN

KNIGHTLY RECOGNITION


Kenowa Hills is proud to announce that all three Elementary buildings have once again been recognized as National Showcase Schools for the implementation of the Capturing Kids' Hearts (CKH) program from the Flippen Group. This is Alpine's second year, Central's third year in a row, and Zinser's fifth consecutive year receiving the award!

The thorough award evaluation includes on-site consultations by Flippen Group experts, assessments of program implementation, and surveys gathering feedback from students, parents, staff, and principals. Each award recognizes the dedicated efforts of staff and administrators in all three buildings, emphasizing their commitment to fostering positive, nurturing relationships with students. According to Superintendent Gerald Hopkins, "the Capturing Kids' Hearts designations awarded to each of our elementary buildings are a testament to the safe and welcoming learning environment our educators work to create daily."

At the core of Capturing Kids' Hearts training lies the belief that gaining a child's heart opens their mind. This comprehensive program focuses on cultivating impactful relationships with students through expert coaching and a character-driven curriculum. These sessions



equip educators to implement transformative practices centered on social-emotional well-being, fostering a school culture built on relationships, trust, and enhancing student engagement.

Looking ahead to the 2025-26 school year, each elementary school will continue to build upon the recognized achievements of its award-winning CKH programs. Their steadfast dedication to creating a safe, respectful, and nurturing learning environment reflects KHPS's ongoing commitment to valuing, supporting, and empowering every learner to achieve their full potential. 

MANILOW MUSIC AWARD-WINNER: MR. MORRISSON

Kenowa Hills Band Director, Mr. Brent Morriison, was recognized as the recipient of the Manilow Music Award during the Barry Manilow concert in Grand Rapids on June 4th, and awarded \$10,000. Mr. Morriison, his family, and Mr. Bookie also had a chance to meet Barry Manilow backstage. Congratulations, Mr. Morriison!



BOND UPDATE

MIDDLE SCHOOL COMPLETION AND ATHLETIC IMPROVEMENTS BEGIN

At the Middle School, we're completing the final phases of construction projects. Aesthetic upgrades have given the building a fresh, contemporary look, replacing the original design from when the school was first built. A few highlights of the Middle School transformation include:

- A new addition for band and orchestra, and new hallway lockers
- A remodeled and enlarged cafeteria and kitchen
- Complete replacement of the mechanical systems
- A new secure entry, classroom windows and other classroom updates were made to the Pathways High School wing
- A remodeled STEM Academy, serving the middle and high school

Work has begun on the construction that will be completed under the 2024 bond proposal that was passed by the

community. This work focuses on the outdoor learning spaces as well as the practice and competition fields surrounding the middle and high school. Phase 1 highlights currently under construction include:

- A new baseball/softball complex with artificial turf on the varsity fields
- New youth practice fields for football, lacrosse, and soccer

Phase 2 construction will begin at the Athletic Complex following the fall athletic season and include:

- Expanded home team room to include a varsity locker room
- New away team room with bathrooms for visitors
- New ADA accessible visitor bleachers

Bond construction progress can be followed at kenowahillsbond.com.



CHEER ON YOUR KNIGHTS

Get a **season pass** to the sport of your choice and cheer on your favorite Knights!

One Season Pass - Family	\$80
One Season Pass - Adult	\$45

Are you a Knights super-fan? Don't miss a game with our **annual pass**, good for all home sporting events!

Annual Family Pass	\$160
Annual Adult Pass	\$80

Online payment options available through e-Funds, via **khps.org**.

STUDENT ADMISSION

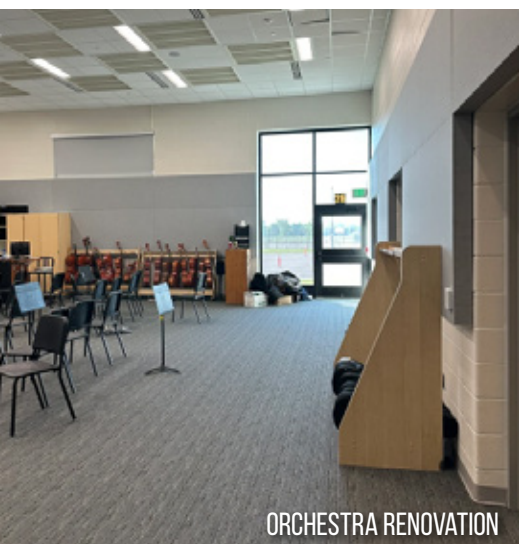
During the 2025-26 school year, all Kenowa Hills students can attend any home athletic contest at no cost if wearing Kenowa Hills logo wear. PreK-8th grade students must be accompanied by a paid adult.

GOLDEN PASS

Any resident age 60+ can pick up a Golden Pass at the District Office with picture ID. A Golden Pass grants you free admittance to any athletic contest at participating schools, including Kenowa Hills.

HAVE A STUDENT-ATHLETE?

For information on participation fees and physical form requirements, visit **khps.org/athletics**.



ORCHESTRA RENOVATION

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

FOOD SERVICE

As we head into the 2025-26 school year, we are hopeful that once again both breakfast and lunch will be provided to our students at no cost by the State of Michigan. This decision will be finalized soon and signed by the Governor at which time we will provide more information and the appropriate meal application forms on our website at **khps.org/food-services**. Questions regarding food service can be directed to Megan Johnson, Director of Food and Nutrition Services, at (616) 965-4290.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation information, including bus number, pick-up and drop-off times, and estimated arrival time, will be available via the My Ride K-12 app prior to school beginning. My Ride K-12, can be downloaded now in the Apple and Android app stores. You will need to download the app to access updated transportation information for your student(s). To get started, scan the QR code or visit **khps.org/transportation** for more information.



TRANSITIONAL HOUSING/ MCKINNEY VENTO HOMELESS SERVICES

If you find your family in transitional housing due to economic reasons (living in a shelter, hotel/motel, or doubled up with another family), your children may qualify for assistance with their educational needs including school supplies, transportation, and food service (free lunch and breakfast).

Please contact your building secretary if you believe you may qualify for services. You may also contact our district Homeless Liaison, **Stephanie Primo, at 616-784-2511, or email sprimo@khps.org** if you are unable to reach your building secretary.

TITLE I INFORMATION

Kenowa Hills Public Schools receives federal funds under Title I. This requires us to notify all parents that you may request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's teacher, including:

- Whether the teacher has met state qualifications and licensing criteria for the level(s) and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.
- The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- Whether your child is provided services by Title I paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

Those requesting information may do so by contacting:

Mr. Bill Dinkelmann
Assistant Superintendent
Kenowa Hills Public Schools, 2325
Four Mile Road NW, Grand Rapids, MI
49544. 616-784-2511 ext 8202.

ANNUAL NOTICES

Please visit our web site at **khps.org/annual-notices** for information on required annual notices. These notices include important information about:

- Asbestos Management Plan
- Environmental Safety
- Integrated Pest Management Program
- US Department of Agriculture
- Water Quality

If you do not have internet access or would like a printed copy of any or all of these notices, please contact Kenowa Hills Public Schools at 616-784-2511.

IMPORTANT DATES 2025/26

High School Athletics Begin
AUGUST 11

Athletic Kick-Off Event
AUGUST 12

First Day of School
AUGUST 25

Community Knight
SEPTEMBER 5

Gus Macker
SEPTEMBER 13-14

Homecoming
SEPTEMBER 19

Hall of Fame Ceremony
OCTOBER 3

Knight Time Classic
OCTOBER 11

Fall Break
OCTOBER 10-14

Fall Athletics Senior Night
OCTOBER 17

KHHS Fall Play
NOVEMBER 13-15

Thanksgiving Break
NOVEMBER 24-28

Holiday Break
DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 2

Midwinter Break
FEBRUARY 13-17

KHHS Spring Musical
MARCH 26-28

Spring Break
APRIL 3-10

Memorial Day
MAY 25

KH Pathways 2026 Commencement
MAY 26

KHHS 2026 Commencement
MAY 27

Last Day of 2026
JUNE 5



Community Happenings

WALKER PUMPKIN BASH

OCTOBER 4

Walker City Hall Campus

WALKER WINTERFEST

DECEMBER 4

Walker Ice & Fitness Center

Visit www.walker.city for more info.



STAY CONNECTED

Stay Connected to Kenowa Hills Happenings! **January 2026 & April 2026 issues of the Knightly News will be ELECTRONIC ONLY** in an effort to reduce costs.

Please scan the QR code and enter your email to be added to the mailing list and receive future KHPS Newsletters. Parents/Guardians do not need to enter their email address. The electronic issues will be emailed to all parents and guardians using the email addresses we have on file.



KHPS BOARD OF EDUCATION

Board

Erin LaBotz, President
Jeff Gustinis, Vice President
Corey Turner, Treasurer
Danielle Roberts, Secretary

Trustees

Melissa Courtade
Tracey Hart
Mark Robinson

Meetings

August 11 – Administration Building
(Committee of the Whole Workshop)

August 25 – Administration Building

September 8 – Administration Building
(Committee of the Whole Workshop)

September 22 – Middle School

October 13 – Administration Building
(Committee of the Whole Workshop)

October 27 – High School

November 10 – Administration Building
(Committee of the Whole Workshop)

November 24 – Pathways High School

December 15 – Zinser Elementary

Community members are welcome to join in the Board dialogue regarding agenda items. Board of Education meetings are meetings of the Board held in public, not public meetings. For more information, visit khps.org/board-of-education.


2025-26 PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER AT KENOWA HILLS

Community Education Preschool | Child Care and Learning Center | Great Start Readiness Program

3 YEAR OLD PRESCHOOL	4 YEAR OLD PRESCHOOL	CHILD CARE
<p>3 DAYS PER WEEK Monday/Wednesday/Friday 9:00 AM – 11:30 AM</p> <p>2 DAYS PER WEEK Tuesday/Thursday 9:00 AM – 11:30 AM</p>	<p>4 DAYS PER WEEK Monday–Thursday 8:45 AM – 11:15 AM</p> <p>Monday–Thursday 12:15 PM – 2:45 PM*</p> <p>*4 Year Old Afternoon Session is subject to enrollment interest.</p>	

Kenowa Hills Learning Center has a wait list for some childcare classrooms. To be placed on the wait list or for more information please contact KHLC at 616-647-0910 or visit khps.org/child-care.

To enroll or learn more about preschool programming, contact the Registrar at 784-2511 option 2 or visit khps.org/preschool-programs. 

REGISTRATION/OPEN HOUSES

	ALPINE	CENTRAL	ZINSER	KHMS (6-8)	KHHS (9-12)	
KINDERGARTEN & K-KNIGHTS SCREENING	<p>TUESDAY, AUG 12 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM</p> <p><i>Call 616.784.0884 to make an appointment</i></p>	<p>WEDNESDAY, AUG 13 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM</p> <p><i>Call 616.453.6351 to make an appointment</i></p>	<p>MONDAY, AUG 11 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM</p> <p><i>Call 616.453.2461 to make an appointment</i></p>	<p>WEDNESDAY, AUG 13</p> <p>8th Grade 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM</p> <p>7th Grade 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM</p> <p>6th Grade 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM</p> <p>Makeups</p> <p>THURSDAY, AUG 14 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM & 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM</p>	<p>Freshman</p> <p>TUESDAY, AUG 12 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM & 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM <i>(As assigned by last name, more info to come)</i></p> <hr/> <p>Grades 10-12</p> <p>WEDNESDAY, AUG 13 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM & 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM</p> <p>THURSDAY, AUG 14 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM</p>	FALL REGISTRATION
	OPEN HOUSE INFORMATION	<p>WEDNESDAY, AUG 20 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM</p>	<p>WEDNESDAY, AUG 20</p> <p>Kindergarten & K-Knights 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM</p> <p>1st-2nd 5:30 PM – 6:30 PM</p> <p>3rd-5th 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM</p>	<p>TUESDAY, AUG 19 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM</p>	<p>WEDNESDAY, AUG 20 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM</p>	

KCTC Start Date: Monday, Aug 18 | **GRCC Start Date:** Monday, Aug 25

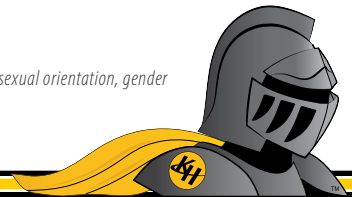


Kenowa Hills Public Schools

**2325 Four Mile Road NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49544**

NON-PROFIT ORG.
CAR-RT PRESORT
US POSTAGE PAID
GRAND RAPIDS, MI
PERMIT NO. 362

The Kenowa Hills Knightly News is published three times per year. KHPS is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination of all its programs in relation to race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, age, national origin, disability and genetic information.



SUPER NOTES

Dear Community Members,

As we turn the calendar to August, excitement is building across Kenowa Hills Public Schools. There is a renewed energy in the air, and with so much happening across the district, there is also much to look forward to.

We are especially excited to welcome students back to Kenowa Hills Middle School, where the final phase of 2020 bond-funded improvements will be complete. Along with updated spaces and enhancements to the building, this fall marks the launch of our new teaming model, a structure designed to strengthen student connections and better support academic and social growth. You can read more about this exciting shift in this issue of the Knightly News.

Across the district, the 2024 bond projects are also moving forward. These upgrades are enhancing safety, expanding outdoor learning opportunities, and improving spaces for athletics, youth programs, and the Marching Knights, all to support the future of Kenowa Hills. We are incredibly grateful to our community for its continued investment in our students and schools.

Of course, the progress we are making extends beyond construction. All three of our elementary schools were recently recognized as Capturing Kids' Hearts Showcase Schools - a reflection of the positive, relationship-driven culture being built every day in our classrooms. At KHHS, we continue to celebrate the many paths available to our students. Whether they're earning college credit through AP or Middle College, building career-ready skills, diving into STEM through hands-on, inquiry-driven projects and real-world problem solving, or finding success through Pathways High School, our Knights are pursuing futures as unique and promising as they are.



This year is shaping up to be one of momentum and pride, from the first day of school to every milestone along the way. Thank you for being an essential part of our journey.

Let's make it a great year!

Jerry

#KnightPride

Gerald Hopkins – Superintendent
@khpssuper