



khps.org

KNIGHTLY

News

VALUE. SUPPORT. EMPOWER. | WINTER 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



PERSONALIZED LEARNING

KENOWA HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: PERSONALIZED LEARNING AND RESEARCH-BASED INSTRUCTION IN ACTION

At Kenowa Hills Public Schools, the elementary teams are on a mission: to provide students with rigorous and personalized learning experiences that not only meet their individual needs but also prepare them for a successful future. Through targeted programs, professional development, and a commitment to research-based practices, the district is ensuring learners have the tools and support they need to thrive.

A COMMITMENT TO PERSONALIZED EDUCATION

By June 2025, Kenowa Hills aims to fully implement personalized education across its elementary schools. This vision is rooted in challenging each student academically while equipping them with critical knowledge and skills for higher education, careers, and citizenship. Central to this mission is meeting students where they are and tailoring instruction to help them grow.

(Continued on page 2.)



IMPORTANT DATES



MID-WINTER BREAK
February 14–18



SPRING BREAK
April 4–11

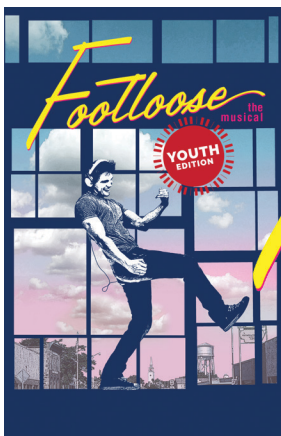


COMMENCEMENTS
Pathways: May 27
High School: May 28



LAST DAY OF SCHOOL
June 11

SPRING MUSICAL



Thursday, Friday, and Saturday

March 27–29 | 7:00 PM

Purchase tickets online at: khps.org/musical

Based on the smash-hit movie and bestselling Oscar-nominated score, Footloose celebrates the exhilaration of youth, the wisdom of listening to one another, and the power of forgiveness.

PERSONALIZED LEARNING (CONT.)

Brooke Johnston, principal of Zinser Elementary, emphasizes the strategic focus on small-group instruction and personalized interventions. “Our instructional coaches are spending a lot of time working with teachers to help them get small groups up and running in the classroom so students can learn right at their level,” Johnston explains. “This is happening in all our buildings and aligns directly with our strategic goals.”

To further support personalized learning, Kenowa Hills has implemented before- and after-school tutoring programs at all three elementary schools. Led by certified staff using research-based practices, these programs currently serve about 75 students needing extra support in reading. Fifth-grade students also benefit from one-on-one tutoring through Book Nook, an online platform that delivers individualized instruction using research-backed methods. “The Book Nook program has been a great addition, ensuring our fifth graders receive tailored support,” Johnston shares.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: ELEVATING EDUCATOR EXPERTISE

At the heart of Kenowa Hills’ approach is its investment in professional development for educators. The district has committed to training all elementary teachers and administrators in LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling). LETRS equips educators with a deep understanding of the Science of Reading, empowering them to apply research-based strategies in their classrooms.

“This two-year course requires a significant time commitment, but it’s worth every minute,” says Dr. Cherie Horner, principal of Central Elementary. “LETRS training ensures that our teachers and administrators not only understand the foundational principles of reading instruction but can also implement them effectively. It’s a game-changer for our district.”

Instructional coaches—Liz Greemann at Alpine, Erica Philo at Zinser, and Jamel Debri at Central—play a critical role in supporting teachers as they implement these strategies. These coaches provide personalized guidance, lead coaching cycles, and share best practices to ensure every educator feels confident and supported. “The work our instructional coaches do is invaluable,” Horner states. “They’re helping teachers refine their practices and stay current with the latest research.”

COLLABORATION THROUGH PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES (PLCS)

Collaboration is another cornerstone of Kenowa Hills’ approach. Grade-level teams meet twice a month in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to reflect on student progress and instructional practices. Guided by four key questions—What do we want students to know? How will we know they’ve learned it? What will we do if they didn’t learn it? What will we do if they did?—PLCs foster a culture of continuous improvement.

“Our staff truly work together to embrace all students as their own,” says Jason Snyder, principal at Alpine Elementary. “Students are not seen as just one teacher’s responsibility. Rather, we all invest what we can into each student’s needs.”

“PLCs are where the magic happens,” Johnston says. “These meetings give us the opportunity to dive deep into student data, share insights, and create actionable plans. It’s all about ensuring every student has the support they need to succeed.”

Horner echoes this sentiment, highlighting the collaborative spirit of these gatherings. “Our PLCs are a testament to the power

of teamwork,” she says. “When principals, coaches, teachers, and interventionists come together to answer these critical questions, we’re creating a pathway to success for every child.”

PARENTS AND PRINCIPALS: A UNIFIED PERSPECTIVE

As both parents in the district and principals, Johnston and Horner bring unique perspectives to these initiatives. Johnston reflects on the district’s collective efforts: “We’re working hard to meet our goal of personalized education. From before- and after-school tutoring to LETRS training and instructional coaching, there’s a lot happening behind the scenes to support our students. It’s something I’m incredibly proud of.”

Horner shares a similar sense of pride. “As a parent, it’s reassuring to know that my children are benefiting from such intentional, student-centered work,” she says. “And as a principal, I’m honored to be part of a team that goes above and beyond to support students. These aren’t just programs; they’re a testament to our district’s dedication to excellence.”



LOOKING AHEAD


Kenowa Hills Elementary Schools are paving the way for a brighter future through personalized instruction and research-based practices. Whether it’s the tailored support of after-school tutoring, the transformational impact of LETRS training, or the collaborative problem-solving of PLCs, these initiatives are making a difference in the lives of students every day.

“Our goal is to ensure that every student actively engages in rigorous and personalized learning experiences tailored to their needs and aspirations,” Johnston

says. “We’re not just preparing them for the next grade level—we’re preparing them for life.”

Horner adds, “This work is about more than just closing the achievement gap. It’s about empowering every child to reach their full potential. At Kenowa Hills, we’re committed to doing whatever it takes to make that happen.”

“We not only want students to grow academically, but we want them to grow socially and behaviorally as well,” says Snyder. “We want each student to feel they are connected to at least one adult and that there is someone at their school who believes in them.”

Through these collective efforts, Kenowa Hills Public Schools are setting a new standard for personalized education and instructional excellence—one student at a time. 



PROTECTING THE HEARTS OF OUR KNIGHTS

KHPS BUILDINGS ARE NAMED “MI HEART HEALTHY”

The district is proud to share that all six Kenowa Hills Public Schools’ buildings have been named MI HEARTSafe Schools, a designation that highlights our commitment to preventing sudden cardiac death in young people.

This recognition, awarded by the MI HEARTSafe School Program, reflects the district’s dedication to preparing for cardiac emergencies for students and young adults. Sudden cardiac death of the young (SCDY) affects more than 300 Michigan children and young adults annually. Schools earning the designation demonstrate they have the training, equipment, and emergency plans to respond effectively if someone suffers a cardiac arrest.

“We are honored to receive this designation for all six of our schools,” said Gerald Hopkins, Superintendent.


“It’s a reflection of the care and effort our staff and community put into ensuring our schools are safe for everyone who walks through our doors. We thank those who have helped us implement this life-saving program, because they are making a difference.”

TO EARN THE MI HEARTSAFE DESIGNATION, KHPS MET STRICT CRITERIA, INCLUDING:

- Having a cardiac emergency response plan and conducting annual drills.
- Training staff and coaches in CPR and the use of AEDs (automated external defibrillators).
- Ensuring AEDs are properly maintained, accessible, and ready to use in under five minutes.
- Screening student-athletes for heart conditions that could lead to cardiac arrest.



Out of 312 schools recognized this year, KHPS is proud to have all its schools meet the criteria, furthering its mission to keep students, staff, and visitors safe. This achievement reflects a commitment among all Michigan schools to prioritize cardiac safety, and Kenowa Hills’ designation demonstrates its dedication to protecting and supporting its community.

For more information about the MI HEARTSafe School Award Program and what it takes to earn this life-saving designation, visit migrc.org/patients-families/mi-heartsafe-schools. 



EARLY KNIGHTS



KINDERGARTEN AND K-KNIGHTS (YOUNG 5S)

Kindergarten and Young 5s (known as K-Knights) students at Kenowa Hills experience a culture and community that values, supports, and empowers learners. To enroll, your child must turn 5 between June 1 and December 1 of 2025. Kindergarten and K-Knights are offered at all three of our elementary buildings.

2025-26 PARENT MEETINGS

This is a parent informational meeting. Your child will have an opportunity to meet the teachers and see the classrooms at a later date. Find more information as it's updated on khps.org/hub.

2025-26 PARENT MEETINGS		
Parent meeting times will be 6:00 - 7:00PM at each building. All meetings will be in-person.		
Alpine March 12	Central March 10	Zinser March 11
2025-26 SCREENING* DATES		
Alpine April 30 Call 616.784.0884 to make an appointment	Central May 1 Call 616.453.6351 to make an appointment	Zinser May 8 Call 616.453.2461 to make an appointment
*Please note: Students currently attending programs at the ECC will be evaluated during their regular school day so no appointment will be needed.		

For more information, visit khps.org/enrollment or call us at 784-2511 option 2.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

The ECC offers programming focused on all areas of development with a goal of kindergarten readiness. We house several programs including Community Education Preschool, Great Start Readiness Preschool, and Child Care through our Learning Center. For more information visit khps.org/early-childhood-center or call us at 616-647-0910.

The ECC is hiring! Visit khps.org/job-opportunities for more information or to apply.



PRESCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

KH Early Childhood Center
3971 Richmond Ct. NW, Grand Rapids
February 4, 2025 | 5:00-7:00PM

2025-26 PRESCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

Save the date! The ECC is holding an Open House for tuition-based preschool and GSRP families on February 4, from 5:00-7:00PM.

Look for more information to follow regarding programming, registration, screening*, and options for parents to tour the facility and meet staff. Watch khps.org/hub for new information and updates. 📞

KNIGHTHOOD AWAITS!

At Kenowa Hills, students are valued, supported, and empowered to create their own path to graduation. From age 6 weeks at our Early Childhood Center childcare, to year 13 through our Middle College program, there are a variety of opportunities where all students can not only succeed but thrive.

CONSIDERING ENROLLMENT FOR 2025-26?

Your journey starts here! Complete the 2025-26 Enrollment Interest Form at [khps.org/hub](https://www.khps.org/hub) and get on the list to be notified when enrollment opens.

READY TO ENROLL NOW?

Kenowa Hills Public Schools is still accepting students for the 2024-25 school year. To begin the process of enrollment, please visit [khps.org/enrollment](https://www.khps.org/enrollment).

HAVE QUESTIONS, WANT A SCHOOL TOUR, OR 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.

TODAY IS THE DAY TO BECOME A KNIGHT!

#KNIGHTCOMMUNITY

UNITED WAY UPDATE

KHPS exceeded its lofty goal of a \$10,000 donation through staff pledges, bake sales, and penny wars. As part of our continued efforts to enrich our Knight Community, the district raised \$11,151.55 for the Heart of West Michigan United Way!

STUDENT SERVICES

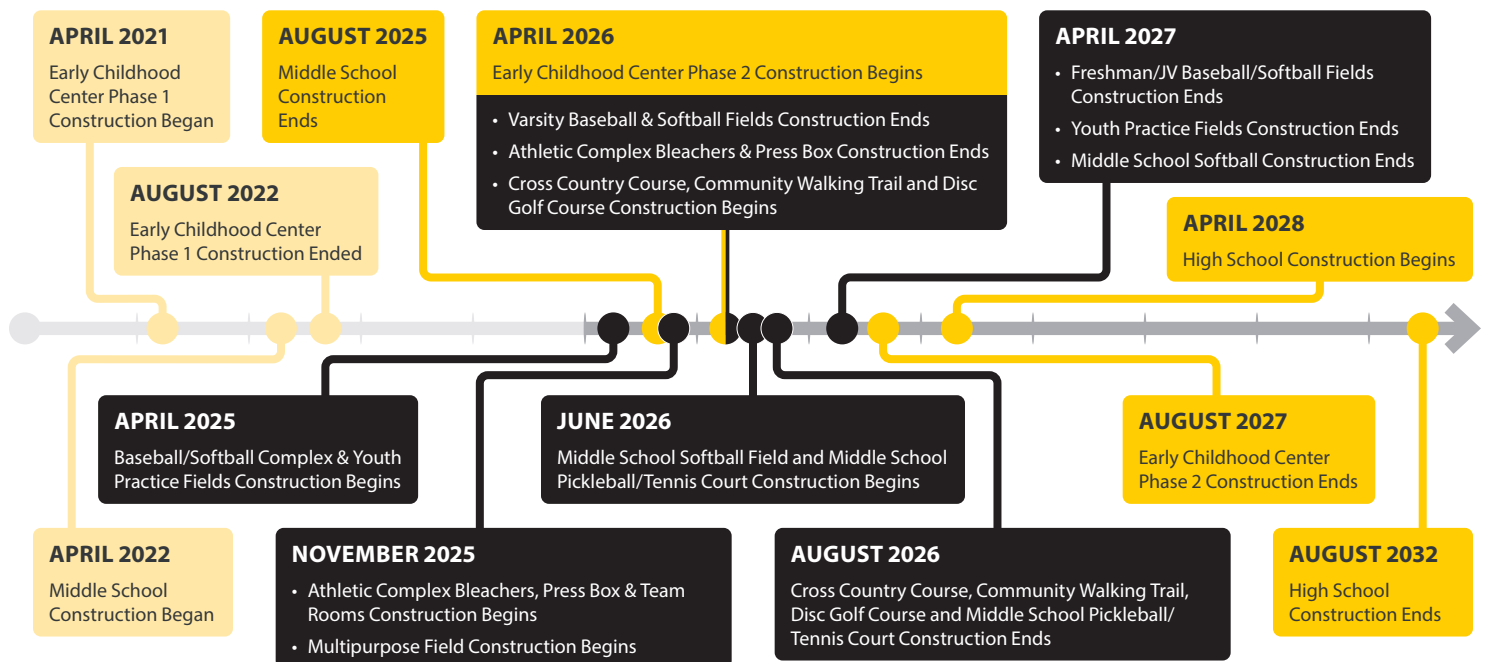
KHHS STUDENT SERVICES ON THE WEB!

Navigating high school, graduation, and what comes next can be overwhelming for students. Our KHHS Student Services team has created a hub on our website with endless resources and information geared toward our high school students. Whether you're a freshman plotting your academic course load or a senior planning to pay for college, we have the resources you need to make informed decisions about your future! Visit [khps.org/student-services](https://www.khps.org/student-services) for staff contact information, financial aid resources, NCAA information and so much more!

BOND(S) UPDATE

ANTICIPATED CONSTRUCTION TIMELINE

2020 BOND 2024 BOND



KNIGHT ATHLETICS

ATHLETIC BOOSTERS

ANNUAL KOZMINSKI FUNDRAISER GAME
Saturday, February 1

KH ATHLETIC BOOSTERS KNIGHT OUT
Saturday, February 22, 2025
5th Street Hall
701 5th St NW, Grand Rapids
Featuring the Brena Band! More details to come!

GRAND RAPIDS GUS MACKER
September 13-14, 2025
Kenowa Hills High School
macker.com/local/grand-rapids-mi

LOOKING FOR A WAY TO GET INVOLVED?

Kenowa Hills Athletic Boosters is always looking for volunteers and donations. Use the QR code to sign up today or for more information!



KENOWA HILLS ATHLETIC BOOSTERS

KENOWA HILLS ATHLETIC BOOSTERS WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR BANNER SPONSORS FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF OUR ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

YOUTH SPORTS

Youth sports programs and camps continue all year at Kenowa Hills!

WANT TO STAY INFORMED?

Follow "Kenowa Hills Youth Sports" on social media or contact Adam Galindo at youthsports@khps.org for questions and more information.

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

Kenowa Hills students can attend any home athletic contest at no cost when wearing Kenowa Hills logo wear. PreK-8th grade students must also 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.

For all other admission to Knight Athletics, you can purchase tickets using GoFan.



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FALL ALL-CONFERENCE ATHLETES!

Back Row: Grayson Fellows, Lundon Hampton, Locke Acker, Will Fussman, Collin Ratajczak.
Middle Row: Madeline DeYoung, Alberto Delgado, Ty Cooke, Logan Fyvie, Payton Taylor, Raina Glanzman. **Front Row:** Parker Roerig, Hannah Bush, Ella Thayer, Eve Thayer, Trace Delcarmen. *Not Pictured: Chastyn Cole, Landon Breen*

SCAN ME



CALLING KH MUSIC/THEATER ALUMNI!

Greetings from KHHS! We are looking for KH Music/Theater alumni from 1991-2023 who would be interested in singing for Mr. Bretz final Choir Concert. After 34 years, he will be retiring at the end of this school year. The date will be Monday, May 12, 2025 at 7:00 PM. Rehearsals, etc. will be shared after holiday break via Google Classroom. Scan the QR code to register, or send an email to: rbretz@khps.org. Thank you in advance!

KHPS BOARD OF EDUCATION

- Melissa Courtade
- Jeff Gustinis
- Tracey Hart
- Erin LaBotz
- Danielle Roberts
- Mark Robinson
- Corey Turner


Meetings

The 2025 Organizational meeting is scheduled for **Monday, January 13, 2025**. During this meeting, the Board will set the 2025-26 meeting schedule and elect officers.

Every agenda includes time for public comment. Board of Education meetings are meetings of the Board held in public, not public meetings.


Visit [khps.org/board-of-education](https://www.khps.org/board-of-education) for details.


January is School Board Appreciation Month!

We would like to take this opportunity to give our Board of Education a sincere thank you for their dedication to the students at Kenowa Hills Public Schools. Our community is fortunate to have a Board with a strong drive to establish our vision, design a structure to achieve that vision, ensure we are accountable to the community, and strongly advocate for continuous improvement. 

KENOWA HILLS EDUCATION FOUNDATION (KHEF)

Approved grants align with the KHPS Vision & Mission to Value, Support, and Empower students and we're excited for the staff and students who will have access to new programs and equipment. THANK YOU to all who submitted applications. Congratulations to our 2024-25 Grant Award Recipients below.

NAME, BUILDING	GRANT TITLE	DONATE
Michele Dykstra, Zinser	STEM Blocks	
Melissa Gates, Alpine	Flexible Spaces and Minds	
Kelsey Graham, Central	Doodle Jamz	
Brooke Johnston, Zinser	Soft Space	
Brooke Johnston, Zinser	Engage and Explore	
Jane Robrahn, Pathways	Advisory Activities	
Jamie Williams, Alpine, Central, Zinser	Hallway Sensory Breaks For All	

The Kenowa Hills Education Foundation is a 501c3 non-profit founded in 1986 and is a separate entity from the Kenowa Hills Public Schools and the Board of Education. Since its inception, over \$200,000 have been awarded. With your support, we can continue the work that was started in 1986. The need still exists, and each dollar contributed is an investment in the future of Kenowa Hills Public Schools and its students. Please use the QR code to donate to the KHEF online safely and securely. 



Kenowa Hills Public Schools

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

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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



This newsletter provides another opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to our entire community for your overwhelming support of our recent bond proposals. Your affirmative votes reflect a shared commitment to the future of our students, schools, and community.

I am excited to update you on the progress of our bond-funded construction projects. See page 5 of this newsletter for the tentative construction timeline of work that is planned to be completed. We are in the final stages of completing the middle school construction, a project that began in April 2022 and has proceeded without interruption. The renovation includes updates to every classroom, an expanded cafeteria and kitchen, and newly constructed band and orchestra rooms. Completion is expected in August 2025.

With the middle school project nearing completion, we have shifted our focus to the planning of phase 2 construction at the Early Childhood Center. This phase will include the renovation of the gymnasium and the few classrooms that have not been renovated as well as the construction of a new addition that will include classrooms to support the growing demand for childcare. When this planning is complete, our attention will turn to the high school where major upgrades will include a new auxiliary gym and an expanded fine arts wing.

Looking ahead, construction of the new baseball and softball complex will begin in spring 2025. The varsity baseball and softball fields will feature artificial turf and will be ready for play in spring 2026. The remaining fields – baseball, softball and practice fields for youth football, lacrosse and soccer



– will be natural grass, requiring more time for the grass to establish before they will be ready for use.

We have also begun planning improvements at the Athletic Complex. This phase includes new home and away bleachers, a new press box, and expanded team rooms. Additional enhancements will feature a natural grass multipurpose field for lacrosse and soccer, a new middle school softball field, pickleball and tennis courts, a community walking trail, a cross-country course, and a disc golf course. Work on this phase is expected to start in November 2025.

None of this progress would be possible without your belief in our schools and students. Thank you for making a lasting impact that will benefit generations to come. Together, we are building a brighter future for all.

With heartfelt appreciation and immense #KnightPride.

Gerald Hopkins – Superintendent
@khpssuper