



# TROJAN TODAY

YOUR SCHOOL TOWN OF HIGHLAND SOURCE FOR NEWS AND EVENTS | DECEMBER 2020

**2019-nCoV**  
coronavirus

SCHOOL TOWN OF HIGHLAND SPECIAL REPORT

## Please remain vigilant and help stop the spread

As we prepare for the upcoming holidays, I am asking everyone to think small, plan on enjoying the festivities with your immediate family and follow all of the rules the Indiana State Department has requested of us. We have seen the spread of COVID-19 in Highland — not through the schools — but throughout the community.

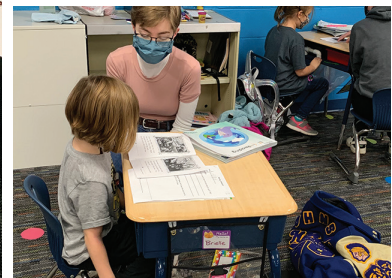
Our masking, handwashing, social distancing and cleaning regiments were working, bucking the trend of infection in the community.

Sadly, that hasn't been the case throughout Highland. Some of the same individuals upset when we returned to the classroom because they believed it would have a detrimental impact on our students' health have posted social media photos of themselves in large crowds and wearing no masks.

These behaviors have forced the closure of eating establishments and government buildings as a spike in cases has pushed Lake County numbers into the red zone.

Ultimately, it will be the behaviors of our community that determine the looming infection trend, especially with the holidays and colder days ahead.

We want to get our students back into the classroom as soon as possible. I appreciate all the work our staff, students and commu-



**TUTORING SUCCESS!** A group of 19 high school student volunteers got a great start helping Highland elementary school students regain skills lost during e-learning and eliminating the COVID learning gap in October and November. That initiative was paused when students reverted to distance learning before Thanksgiving. Tutoring coordinator Brenda Richardson said volunteers are eager to get back to the classroom and the twice weekly after-school sessions that are planned to continue through May. [Brenda Richardson photos]

nity members have done up to this point, working with us as we navigate these uncertain times.

We ask for continued vigilance and adherence to the known ways to help curb this pandemic as we await the availability of the vaccine.

We truly are all in this together. By all accounts, we are on

the cusp of moving beyond this pandemic. Please do all you can to help our students.

The blessing of the holidays to you and your family.



**Brian Smith**  
Superintendent  
School Town of Highland

## HIGH SCHOOL ADVISORY PERIOD

As the high school moved to block scheduling to reduce movement between classes in order to stop the spread of COVID-19, Principal John Zack has found positives among the chaos, including the return of the advisory period.



“In normal times it is important we have connections with our students on a personal level,” Zack said. “We want them to know they are heard, understood and valued. In these uncertain times, it has become crucial that we maintain awareness

and maintenance of our students’ – and staff’s – mental well-being through those connections.”

Advisory-period students are assigned randomly to teachers, who are designed to be one-step removed from any curricular overview in the classroom. That eliminates the possibility a student would feel pressured to please the teacher since there is no grade assigned to their participation.

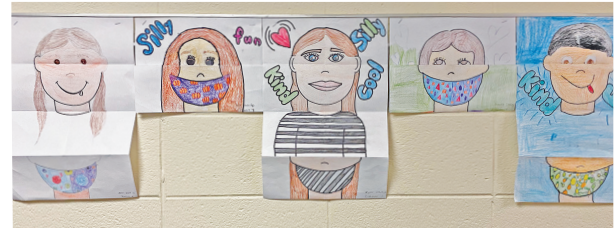
Instead, Zack said, the high school program focuses on teaching and learning about the community, how to help one another and become better people.

“I am proud of our Highland High School students and how they are performing in their advisory periods. Their projects – most recently sending cards to the troops – should be celebrated, and they are,” he said. “The truest form of pride I feel towards these students is how they allow their personal light to shine through these activities. They don’t succumb to the teenage stereotype.”

Without malaise, complaints or gruff, Zack said the students are participating wholeheartedly.

“We are living in a time where that kind of love, caring and joy are so desperately needed to be shared. They are there to help out, participate and learn. I would like to thank the families and community as a whole for what they are giving – from the heart.”

## THE ART OF MASKS



The latest art project at Johnston Elementary has 3rd-, 4th- and 5th-graders proudly drawing portraits of themselves – with and without a mask – during the pandemic. “Our students have been doing an amazing job wearing masks and helping to keep themselves and each other safe,” Johnston Elementary Principal Amy Harrington said.

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## A CHRISTMAS CAROL - A RADIO PLAY

The Highland Theatre Company will present Charles Dickens’ A Christmas Carol – A Radio Play live via web stream for a virtual experience at **7 p.m. Saturday, December 12** and a matinee at **2 p.m. Sunday, December 13.**

**Tickets:** Stream passes are \$5 and may be purchased online at [HTC.BookTix.com](http://HTC.BookTix.com).

**Information:** Visit [HighlandTheatreCompany.org](http://HighlandTheatreCompany.org) for the latest updates or email Matt Domasica at [mdomasica@highland.k12.in.us](mailto:mdomasica@highland.k12.in.us).

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## SPORTS UPDATE

With the Lake County Health Department limiting high school sports meets, matches and games to players, coaches, parents, guardians and siblings as long as Lake County remains in the red zone, Athletic Director Ryan Harrington said students are helping forge new pathways to those who want to watch Highland prep sports.

“The [nfhsnetwork.com](http://nfhsnetwork.com), which is a subscription network, was the only option we knew of when we first learned that spectator numbers would be so limited,” Harrington said. “Soon, we started hearing of YouTube channels popping up thanks to Highland students and parents.”