



Indian Knoll
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



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September 2026

A Message from the Principal 🏠👤

Our Timberwolves are off to a wonderful start to the 2026-2027 School Year!! I am extremely excited for another year of learning, growing, and achieving!!

This year we have started our new 5 year strategic plan, and with that, comes more rigorous goals for our building. Having high expectations of our students and staff is what sets us apart from other buildings. We successfully achieved both our building and strategic plan goals last school year and I have no doubt that we will do it again!



This year, our building goals are as follows:

- 📖 40% of our students will score at or above the 65th percentile on MAP reading.
- 📖 40% of students will score proficient or above proficient on IAR Reading.
- 🗣️ 14% of our English Language Learning students will exit the ACCESS test.
- ➕ 51% of our students will score at or above the 65th percentile on MAP math.
- 📖 32% of students will score proficient or above proficient on IAR Math.
- 📊 We will achieve a score of 68 on "Collaborative Teachers" on the 5Essentials Survey.

Our teachers are working extremely hard collaborating with one another, participating in coaching cycles, purposefully planning, and increasing the rigor to ensure students have the tools they need to meet and exceed these goals!

Your partnership is equally important to the success of your child. Please make sure students are on time and in school every day. Reach out to your child's teacher if you have questions or need ideas on how to support our children at home. Plan to attend our fall Parent/Teacher conferences in October. Your collaboration is the key to your child's success.

As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out!

Sincerely,
Mrs. Del Toro



Kindergarten

Hello Kindergarten Families!

Welcome to the 2026-2027 school year! We are excited to have your little ones in our classrooms. We are also excited to see how much our students will grow this year. We started the school year learning classroom routines, classroom expectations, and classroom behavior. Our students also took the MAP Reading and Math tests for the first time. We've begun to assess students following the KIDS guidelines and requirements.

Amplify Knowledge:

Students are working on Unit 1, Nursery Rhymes and Fables. They will learn about classic rhymes like "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star", "Jack and Jill", and "Hickory, Dickory, Dock" as well as characters, such as Humpty Dumpy and Little Miss Muffet. These traditional rhymes help students learn vocabulary and build phonemic awareness. It also helps students develop an awareness of language that will help them become better readers and writers.

UFLI:

Students are working on Phonemic Awareness, blending, letter formation, letter sounds, letter names, CVC words, VC words, vowels, short vowels and long vowels.

Eureka Math:

Students are working on Module 1. In this module, students will learn numbers to 10: the number names, number Identification, counting, and one to one correspondence.



1st Grade

Hello 1st Grade Families,

Welcome to the 2026-2027 school year! We are excited to have our students back and are looking forward to a great school year. During the first weeks we have reviewed our Indian Knoll Core Value Expectations and established our routines.

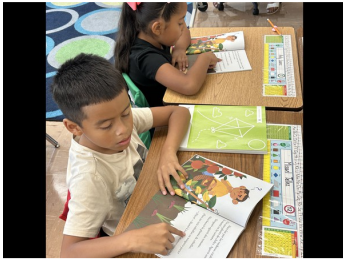
Math: We are working on Module 1 which focuses on sums and differences to 10. We are using multiple strategies such as:

counting on, composing and decomposing numbers. We are also implementing word problems in our daily lessons.

Amplify Knowledge: We are having fun learning about Fables and Folktales while incorporating the plot (beginning, middle and end), setting, characters and the moral of the story.

UFLI: We are working on blending and segmenting sounds. Along with practicing writing our sounds we are explicitly focusing on our vowels A, E, I, O, and U. In addition to our foundational skills we are also working on tricky words and nouns.

Once again, welcome to First Grade! We look forward to working together as a team to see our students grow.



2nd Grade

Welcome back to a new school year! We are so excited to have our students back and cannot wait to see how much they learn and grow throughout the year. We are looking forward to a wonderful year filled with learning, growth, and exciting new experiences! Here are a couple of things we are kicking off as we begin the new school year:

Math: In module 1, students will build confidence with addition and subtraction within 20. They will use strategies such as counting on, making a ten, and breaking numbers apart to solve problems. Students will also begin applying these strategies to add and subtract larger numbers, building strong place-value skills for future math learning.

Amplify Knowledge: In literacy we started our first unit Fairy Tales and Tall tales. In this unit, students will explore classic fairy tales and tall tales while learning about the important lessons they teach. They will revisit key story elements and strengthen their listening and comprehension skills. Students will enjoy the memorable stories "The Fisherman and His Wife," "The Emperor's New Clothes," and "Beauty and the Beast." Through these tales, students will discuss characters, problems, solutions, and the lessons each story teaches.



3rd Grade

Hello 3rd grade families,

We are so excited to see our students back in our classrooms and ready to meet all kinds of goals!!

In literacy, we jumped right into our first Amplify unit which is Classic Tales. Students have been learning about characterization, finding text evidence and themes. The four main themes that we have discussed are friendship/loyalty, hospitality, responsibility and irresponsibility. We have learned this using the stories, The Wind in

the Willows, Aladdin and the Magic Lamp, and Alice in Wonderland. Students will also be writing an opinion paragraph as we start the writing process. As always, please ensure your child is reading at home to keep promoting positive literacy skills!

For Math, Module 1, we are working on different multiplication strategies. These range from skip counting, repeated addition, and pictures of groups and arrays. We are focusing on vocabulary terms: factors, product, quotient, commutative property, and distributive property. Please practice math facts with your child daily.



4th Grade

Hello 4th grade families and welcome to the 26/27 school year! We have already been off to a great start! We have been working hard on building a classroom family, building routines, procedures, and of course reviewing expectations at school aligned with our IK Core Values! Academics and curriculum has officially begun and we are so excited for all the learning and fun to come!

Amplify Knowledge:

We started our first Amplify/CKLA unit called Personal Narratives, which is so exciting and also rigorous! Students have been reading personal narratives in order to identify elements of narrative in reading, therefore they can apply these elements to writing their own personal narratives on a memory of their choosing! Students are so excited for this project! Throughout the unit, we have been reading our core text called *Small Steps: The Year I Got Polio* in order to build understanding of narrative structure: chronology, character traits, sensory details, dialogue, vivid verbs, and figurative language – this will encourage students to enrich their own stories when they write!

Eureka Math:

We started Module 1, which centers on place value in systems of Base 10. In 4th grade, we begin exploring concepts regarding place value within a million. We center on concepts like understanding numbers in various forms (standard, unit, word, and expanded) as it relates to place value, rounding, comparing numbers, Hello Kindergarten Families!

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5th Grade

Hello 5th Grade Families! We have had an amazing start to our new school year and cannot wait to see what your students will be able to do in the coming months. This month, we have practiced learning our classroom routines, reviewing our IK Core Values, and getting to know each other.

In Module 1 of math, students' understandings of the patterns in the base ten system are extended from Grade 4's work with place value to include decimals to the thousandths place. In Grade 5, students deepen their knowledge through a more generalized understanding of the relationships between and among adjacent places on the place value chart, e.g., 1 tenth times any digit on the place value chart moves the digit one place value to the right. Toward the module's end, students apply these new understandings as they reason about and perform decimal operations through the hundredths place

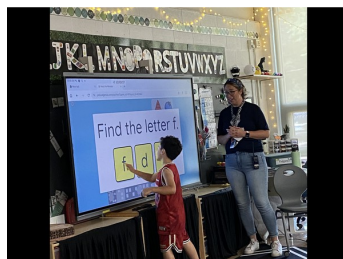
In amplify, students will build their knowledge of descriptive writing and will put that knowledge to use in their own writing. They will examine and use those features of personal narrative writing to compose works about their own lives and experiences. This unit will help students discover that they are capable of personal writing and that it can be a fun and creative way to share what they have to say about themselves. This unit provides a supportive environment for them to begin to identify themselves as writers.

In science, we are learning about the structure and properties of matter. Over the course of this module, students will have the opportunity to observe and test the magnetism, reflectivity, and other properties of various objects, explore how temperature affects how quickly a solid can dissolve in a liquid, observe whether mass is observed during a chemical reaction while making slime, investigate how some types of matter can change shape, and design the perfect pancake.



Mrs. McCaffry Cross-Cat

Hello Families! We have had a great time getting to know our new kinder students and helping them adjust to a new classroom, new routines, and



Ms. Spaniol's Cross-Cat

Welcome back to a new school year! We are so happy and excited to have our students back in the classroom! We started the year



Mrs. Rodriguez's Cross-Cat

We are so happy to see our students back in our brand new classroom!!

new transitions. We have spent the last few weeks learning what school looks like and the new expectations for kindergarten/first grade.

This month, we have practiced rotating learning centers in preparation for starting our new curriculum at the end of the month. TeachTown Curriculum will start with the story of Peter Rabbit. It will include exploring a book, vocabulary, sight words, and listening skills.

In Math, we are starting the year by building number sense and practicing counting skills. For daily skills and social studies we are learning about community workers and the weather.

I look forward to seeing just how much your young learner thrives and grows this year!

by focusing on classroom routines, school expectations, and getting back into the swing of learning.

This month, we also began our new TeachTown curriculum!

Our first story is Jack and the Beanstalk. We have been working on vocabulary, sight words, and rhyming. Next, we will focus on comprehension and sequencing the events in the story. After Jack and the Beanstalk, we will move on to a nonfiction book about plants. In Math, we are starting the year by building number sense and practicing counting skills. In Science, we are learning all about plants, which connects perfectly with our upcoming ELA unit.

We are off to a great start and are looking forward to a wonderful year of learning and growing together!

We have started the year strong by reviewing our expected behaviors, learning our new Teach Town curriculum and following our schedule.

Our unit of study for ELA is Peter Pan. We dissected the story for about two weeks. We have talked about who the characters are and what events have happened in the story. We focused on the sight words "were", "fly" and "then", we are also working on sounding out words related to the story. In Math we are working on number bonds. In science we are working on our solar system and each student will pick a planet to present through Google Classroom. For daily skills and social studies we read about events happening around the world such as, Red Panda Day, Video game Day and Hispanic Heritage month.

I am looking forward to an amazing year!!



Art

Welcome back to another wonderful year at Indian Knoll's art studio! We are starting off the year with a lot of passion and creativity in art.

In kindergarten, we quickly learned our routine and classroom expectations. We are learning about how artists can use nature to create art. We explored our nature centers such as rock drawing, rock patterns, seashell hunt, and more! We are finishing up our nature art unit with a small model magic project. Students will be creating a nature ornament using model magic, paint, beads, and pipecleaners.

In first grade, we are having a lot of fun learning about our new centers. We have been busy learning new skills, routines, and having more responsibility. Students learned how to use chalk and oil pastels. They have also learned how to use their collage center and using fun tools such as silly scissors, shape punchers, scrapbook

paper, and elmer's glue. Students are also learning about their new painting choices in our painting center. They explored watercolors, dot paints, tempera cakes, and tempera sticks. I am so proud of our little artists learning our routines and new responsibilities quickly! They are doing a phenomenal job. Their skills have thrived with their new choices!

In 2nd grade, we are opening back up our centers by completing skillbuilders! Students have opened their centers such as building, collage, drawing, origami, and painting. Currently, students are learning new painting skills such as crayon resists and using watercolor pencils. They will also learn how to use liquid tempera and mixing their secondary colors.

In 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade, students are completing small, creative tasks to open all their centers such as building, collage, drawing, fiber arts, origami, and painting. In these creative tasks, students will be asked to use specific skills or materials in each center. These skills may include creating a painting using pointillism, using observational drawing skills, or creating a small weaving project. Students know our classroom routines and expectations and have shown how responsible they are! They have been successfully demonstrating their art knowledge and skills.

I can't wait to see what students will be creating soon once they complete opening back up their centers!

Additionally, I will be sponsoring Art Club (through Impact Kids) again this year. Art Club will start on September 22nd for 3rd-5th grade and September 24th for 1st-2nd grade. Both clubs will be after school. I am so excited to begin!



Music

Welcome to another wonderful year of music-making at Indian Knoll! We have had such wonderful musical experiences so far this year singing, moving to music and playing instruments. This is possible when all students are RESPECTFUL and PARTICIPATE to the best of their ability. Music class is a team and it is always better when all students are working together towards a common goal. This year we have discussed expectations, reviewed emergency drill information (Grades 1-5) and have reviewed known rhythms and steady beat.

Kindergarten will discuss emergency drill information after they get into a music routine. Please talk with your child about fire safety and tornado preparedness at home so it's not scary to hear about it at school. In class we have learned Hello Everybody, Clap your Hands, and have sung Hickety Pickety Bumblebee to our bee friend (puppet). Each child has sung a solo and we are learning about our 4 voices -SING, SPEAK, WHISPER and SHOUT. We will explore using

our voices and you can ask your child about Three Little Muffins. It has been a pleasure meeting all of your children!

1st grade-We have reviewed moving to steady beat and are discovering quarter notes/rests.

2nd grade-We have reviewed quarter note/rests, paired 8th notes and are discovering half note/rests through movement, listening, singing and reading.

3rd grade-We have reviewed known rhythms and are discovering 16th notes through singing, movement and playing instruments.

4th grade-We have reviewed known rhythms and are discovering 16th 8th patterns (ti tika and tika ti-like the rhythm to the words "blueberry" and "coconut.") Fourth grade students will be attending a Symphonic Band Concert at Wheaton College on Tuesday, October 6, 2026. We will review audience etiquette in class as well as reviewing the instruments of the orchestra we will get to experience live at the performance. Please return the gold permission slip to your child's teacher ASAP.

5th grade-We have reviewed known rhythms and are discovering syncopation (8th quarter 8th) through singing and folk dancing. I am so impressed with the singing and dancing of our 5th graders so far this year!

I will plan to direct chorus again this year for students in grades 3-5. We will meet at 7:30 AM on Friday mornings starting after we return from Winter Break and will continue through mid-May. We will have a concert in May at Indian Knoll. I am so excited!



PE

In Physical Education class this month students will be playing team building games and fitness games. 3rd-5th graders will do their pre-test for Fitness gram and be running the 400meter, 800meter and 1600meter(1mile) runs.

At the end of the month all students will start soccer skills and play soccer games working on those skills.

As the weather begins to change please make sure students have their GYM shoes in their backpack everyday so they do not forget them for P.E. class.

I am looking forward to a fun filled and active P.E. class this year!

Library

The library is ready for another wonderful year of reading, learning, and exploring! I was excited to welcome our students back and help them discover new books, revisit old favorites, and find stories that spark their imaginations.

We started the year talking about library expectations and reviewing bookcare. We have started discussing the importance of choosing "Just Right Books", why that is important and how to choose a book that is just right for you.



We are kicking off the Bluestem Reader's Choice Award reading incentive program by introducing the 20 books that are on the 26/27 nominee list. This is a reading incentive program for 3-5 grades. First and second graders are being introduced to some Just Right Books by participating in a Book Tasting.

We're looking forward to a year filled with adventures—one page at a time!

Here's to a fantastic year of reading! 📖❤️

SEL/Health

Indian Knoll is ready for a happy, healthy, fun year yet again! I am excited to begin this school year and support our students through the roller coaster journey of Social Emotional Learning.

Kindergarten - We are learning about the importance of listening and being heard and how this helps us to build friendships.

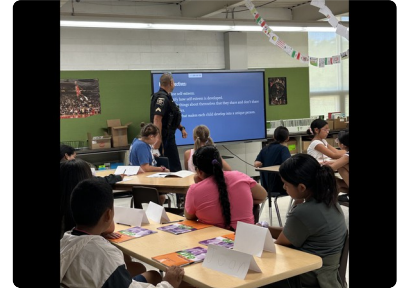
1st Grade - We are learning about why and how to follow rules and make good choices within our school.

2nd Grade - We are learning about how our behavior can affect the people around us in positive and negative ways.

3rd Grade - We are discussing different sized problems and how we can safely and appropriately handle these situations.

4th Grade - We are using our Botvin workbooks to learn about various life skills with the help of Dupage County Sheriff Deputy Corporal Mrkvicka.

5th Grade - We are using our Botvin workbooks to learn about various life skills with the help of Dupage County Sheriff Deputy Corporal Mrkvicka.



Upcoming Events

- **September 29th-** BTAGG Kickoff Event
- **September 30th-** D33 Parent Academy #1
- **October 1st-** BOE Meeting at 7:00
- **October 6th-** 4th Grade Field Trip to Wheaton College Concert
- **October 5th-9th-** SAEBRS Screening
- **October 5th-9th-** Career Week
- **October 8th-** PTO Meeting (5:30-Virtual)
- **October 12th-** NO SCHOOL- Indigenous Peoples' Day
- **October 13th-16th-** 5th Grade CogAT Test
- **October 14th-** Fall Picture Day
- **October 22nd-** NO SCHOOL Parent/Teacher Conferences
- **October 23rd-** NO SCHOOL- SIP Day
- **October 30th-** Halloween Parade (10:00-10:30)
- **October 31st-** IK Trunk or Treat (11:00-1:00)





Whitnie Del Toro

Principal, Indian Knoll Elementary School

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