



BRIDGE TO SUCCESS

Hastings Public Schools

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February 25, 2026 Student Representative Reports

Aidan Suarez Garcia

Hastings High School

February is a very busy month for our Raiders, with activities such as FCA, trivia, arts, sports, and author visits. Firstly, FCA held a new kind of meeting this past week, where students joined together in song and worship. This was remarkable to watch students interact with others through this meeting. To me, what made it really interesting was that it was all student-led by Sebastian Strauss and Ryder Ashcraft. I interviewed Ryder, where he said, "I think it's critically important, 1) for students to find something to believe in and motivate them to become the best version of themselves, and 2) for them to be able to find a community of others following the same pursuit. This morning's purpose is to connect people on a common belief, and provide them a space to grow in community and devotion with one another."



Students this month, as a part of Hastings Reads, were visited by the author Anton Treuer, who wrote the book *Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians but Were Afraid to Ask*—encouraging understanding, critical thinking, and open conversation. Honestly, I think he did an amazing job at teaching students about other cultures that originate from Minnesota. Along with being very eager to answer the students' questions about Native culture.

[Video](#)

Our very own Sherlock Homies, the Knowledge Bowl team, have made it past Sub-Regions by claiming 4th place out of 28 other teams. This secured them a spot at Regions for a shot at State this Thursday. Our other teams, Team Douglas and Team Jedi Council finished top

half of the Metro, but unfortunately, they did not make it past Sub-Regions. However, they will show their support for the homies in their attempt for State.

Show Choir is in its final stretch of the season, but things are not slowing down; they are ramping up. This past weekend, Riverside and Dynamic Edition hosted their 2026 Swigin' on the River. It's a competition where we invite show choirs from all across the state and out of state to compete here at Hastings. The day was full of activities and a ton of student leadership. From students directing traffic to helping lost competitors, students really displayed some remarkable real-world skills that they have gained from their activities. I got to host Bemidji Vocalmotive, and they were great. These students were so respectful of our space, leaving no messes and treating others with respect throughout the entire day. In my opinion, Swigin' was a success. And tomorrow we leave for our last competition of the year.

Our school is currently in the height of section and state tournament season, with about half of our winter teams having completed their seasons and several still competing. Boys hockey will play in the section semifinals on Tuesday, February 24, while girls basketball begins section playoffs on Wednesday, February 25. The state wrestling tournament for the team and individual boys and girls competitors runs from Wednesday, February 25, through Saturday, February 28, and the state boys swim and dive meet takes place February 26–28. Boys basketball section play begins Tuesday, March 3, making this an especially busy time of year. Alpine and Nordic skiers performed well at state, and the dance team placed 4th out of 12 at sections. That's just two spots away from qualifying for state in only their second year. Looking ahead, spring sports registration is now open, with track and field and softball beginning March 9. In addition to athletics, the winter play was held February 13–15, and music ensembles have several performances scheduled in the coming weeks.

Currently our students are raising money for the Polar Plunge through our Best Buddies program. This supports students who participate in the Special Olympics. The plunge is a favorite among students because they get to see some of their well-respected teachers participate by dressing up in a costume and then walking the plank. This will all be taking place on March 13th as we work towards a goal of raising \$12,500.



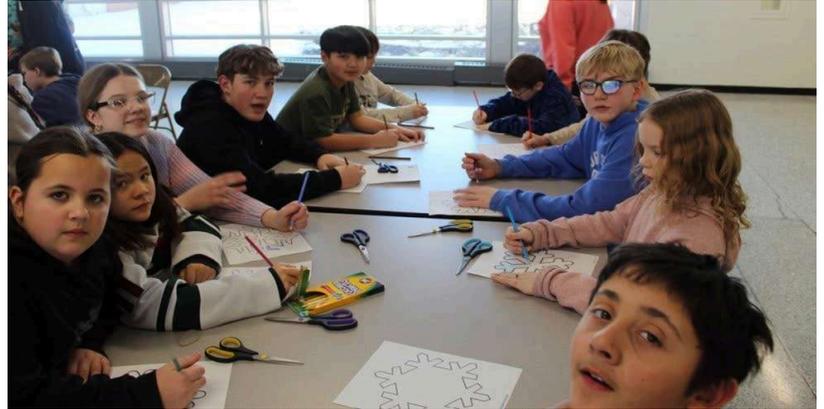
ALP

We are currently at the halfway point of Quarter 3 and are serving 51 full- and part-time ALP students. This quarter has included a strong focus on college and career exploration opportunities. Ms. Butler and Mr. Peterson recently took a group of students interested in cosmetology on a tour of Hastings Beauty School, with an additional cosmetology visit scheduled later this month at Nova Beauty School. We also have a guest speaker from Minnesota North College who will present on career pathways in forestry, water operations, and wildland law enforcement. In addition, outside guests will be speaking with students about practical life skills, including purchasing a used car and renting an apartment, as part of our continued effort to prepare students for adulthood. Meanwhile, Hastings Online Academy is currently serving over 120 students, 52 of whom are full-time. With the second semester well underway, enrollment numbers are expected to remain stable for the rest of the school year.

Jen Behnke

Hastings Middle School

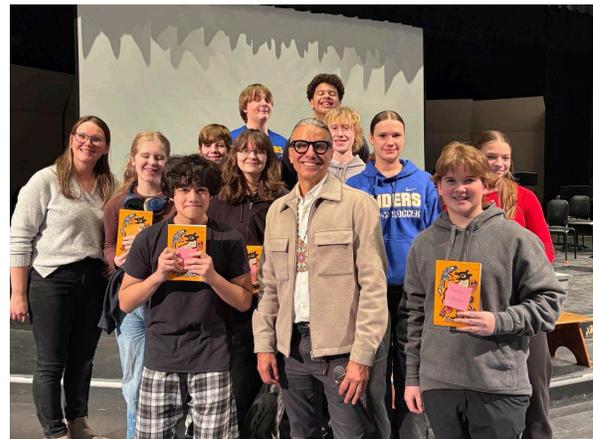
- In early February, the WEB program got together! WEB, or Where Everybody Belongs, is a program at the middle school where 5th graders are mentored by 7th and 8th graders. During their meeting, groups connected to create goals for this year! They also made snowflake artwork that was displayed around the 5th grade area.



- There was an orchestra concert on the 19th, and a choir concert yesterday!
- 8th grade students have been having fun watching the Olympics! This watching has led to meaningful conversations about how athletes have to train and find their passions. This watching has segued into students learning Newton's Laws of Motion!!



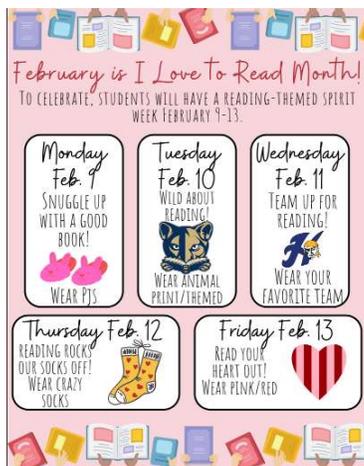
- Finally, students got to meet Ojibwe author Anton Treuer. He came to the middle school and shared engaging stories, mainly surrounding his novel *Where Wolves Don't Die*. He signed books for the students and highlighted ways Native people have shaped our world, especially here in Minnesota.



Shyla Henson

Kennedy Elementary

- I Love to Read Month!



- Spirit Week!!
 - Students showed school spirit by participating in dress up days



- Fourth Graders took a fun Trip to the Science Museum
 - Made possible by the Kennedy Cougar PTA and Parent Chaperones



- Third Graders paid a visit to the Bell Museum



- Carpenter Nature Center visit!
 - CNC taught students about the animals of the Mississippi



- Kindergarten had a very exciting visit from The New Art of Dentistry!
 - Kindergarteners learned about teeth health



- 100th day of school!!
 - Kindergartners dressed like they were 100 years old and participated in fun 100 themed activities



- STEM Winter Olympics
 - Students looked into the science behind figure skating



- Kids Heart Challenge
 - Students and families learned important skills about CPR and raised funds for physical activity recess equipment

American Heart Association
KIDS HEART CHALLENGE

Lifesaver League: Heroes of Health Week
February 9th—13th

1. Sign Up — <http://www2.heart.org/qoto/KennedyHasHeart>
2. Complete Finn's Mission
3. Follow the daily links to build heart-healthy habits as a family!

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<p>Dream Big with Zee!</p> <p>Pajama day or comfy clothes!</p> <p>Zee says sleep is the secret to feeling awesome! Get 8—10 hours of sleep each night to help your body recharge and stay healthy!</p> <p>Get your ZZZs... but don't hit snooze! Click HERE to sign up!</p> <p>Click HERE for a fill in the blank activity on sleep!</p>	<p>Fuel up & join the hydration nation!</p> <p>Wear animal print/ theme!</p> <p>Beet loves color! He adds fruits and veggies to every meal for a boost of flavor, energy and fun!</p> <p>River reminds us to choose water! It helps your body move, think, and feel great!</p> <p>Click HERE to sign up and get healthy with our Lifesaver League!</p> <p>Click HERE to play Beet's Super Fuel Bingo!</p>	<p>Turbo Boost Day!</p> <p>Wear your favorite team's gear or athletic wear!</p> <p>Turbo says get moving! Being active every day helps you feel happier, sleep better, and gives you a turbo boost of energy!</p> <p>If you haven't already click HERE to sign up and participate in the NFL Play 60 Family Challenge!</p>	<p>Rescue Day!</p> <p>Wear Crazy Socks!</p> <p>Rescue says "Be ready to jump to the rescue, and join our Lifesaver League, by learning Hands-Only CPR today!"</p> <p>Click HERE to sign up and learn Hands-Only CPR and the Warning Signs of a Stroke.</p> <p>Click HERE to learn more about CPR!</p>	<p>School Spirit Day</p> <p>Wear Pink/Red</p> <p>Parter power day where kindness leads the way! Parter loves to show kindness to everyone! Being kind helps others feel good, and it makes your heart feel good too!</p> <p>Victor leads by example with healthy habits! Join Victor and move more, eat smart, drink water, sleep well, and be kind all year long!</p> <p>Click HERE to celebrate what makes you uniquely YOU!</p>

Tilden

- Preschool Registration opens February 23rd!

Avery Durfee

McAuliffe Elementary

- **Feb 2nd** - Schoolwide "I Love to Read Reading Challenge" Starts
- **Feb 2nd** - Staff has Wit & Wisdom Coaching Day
- **Feb 4th, 5th, 10th & 11th** - Pleasant Hills Library Visiting Librarian Presentation in Classrooms (each class gets one time slot during those 4 days)
- **Feb 5th** - 4th Grade Orchestra Hall and History Center Field Trip
- **Feb 6th** - Staff has Catalyst Coaching
- **Feb 12th** - 4th Graders took an exciting trip to Carpenters Nature Center to participate in a wilderness survival course, later using their new survival skills knowledge to build a shelter and a fire, much like in the book they are reading, Hatchet by Gary Paulsen



- **Feb 15th** - Schoolwide "I Love to Read' Reading Challenge" Ends
- **Feb 20th** - Schoolwide Sledding Day
- **Feb 25th - 27th** - Spring Conferences

Pinecrest Elementary

- **February 2nd - February 6th** - I Love to Read Spirit Week. Students and staff dressed up and decorated hallways with a reading theme.
- **February 5th** - 4th-grade field trip to the Science Museum
- **February 12th** - American Heart Association - Health Week - all-school Kickoff Assembly. Students learned how to care for their hearts and brains while gaining lifesaving skills, such as Hands-Only CPR and recognizing stroke warning signs.
- **February 13th** - Kindergarten Valentines Parties
- **February 18th** - Bus Driver Appreciation Day - students made cards for the bus drivers
- **February 19th** - 2nd Grade field trip to MN Science Museum
- **February 25th - 27th** - Teachers Conferences