

Volume 40, Issue 1 **August 2026**
Mr. William Doody, Principal **Mr. Michael Bertig, Assistant Principal**
Mrs. Pamela Distefano, Publisher **Ms. Melissa Nibert, Assistant Publisher**

Travel Abroad Opportunity for Students

In October 2027, Mrs. Geletka, German teacher, will be traveling to Europe with interested students. First priority for the trip will be given to students who are currently enrolled in a German class at IHS, but students outside of the German program will be able to apply.

Students will depart from Pittsburgh on October 11, 2027, and return on October 18, 2027. The group will spend eight days exploring Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria, and Germany. This is a great opportunity to experience other cultures firsthand and to expand upon what students learn in their IHS classrooms.

German language skills are not a requirement, but students must possess a love for culture and language as well as a desire to gain a wider understanding of the world.

Please email Mrs. Geletka at kgeletka@iasd.cc or stop by room 222 on back-to-school night for more information.

Photos from previous trip







Dates to Remember

August 25 *Welcome Day, 12:30-3:00*
For freshmen and new students
August 27 *First day of school*
September 1 *School Picture Day*
September 4 *Senior Portrait Make-up Day*

Inside this issue:

Message from the Principal	2
Message from the Assistant Principal	3
Student Attendance Policies	4
Senior Class Info	4-5
Yearbook Orders	6

A Message from Mr. William Doody, Principal

Dear IASHS Families:



It is a great honor for me to have been entrusted with the position of Principal at Indiana Area Senior High School. As a teacher in the district for the past 26 years, I have observed firsthand the dedication of our faculty and staff and the many opportunities our school provides for students. Our new leadership team, consisting of Assistant Principal Mr. Michael Bertig, Dean of Students Dr. Jen Rinkevich, and myself, will work together to support our students, faculty, staff, and the continued success of our school.

As we begin this transition, we thank Mr. Doug Johnson for his service as Operational Principal and wish him great success in his new role as principal of Eisenhower Elementary School. We also extend our gratitude to Mr. Wade McElheny for his 23 years of leadership as assistant principal and principal and wish him many blessings in his retirement.

At the heart of any successful school is a strong school community. We are fortunate at IASHS to have active and involved students, dedicated faculty and staff, and supportive families. One of our priorities will be maintaining strong, consistent communication between the school and families through platforms such as this newsletter and the new Apptegy app. If you have not already done so, we invite you to enroll in Apptegy so that you can stay informed about events, activities, and other happenings at the school. Thank you for your involvement and support.

The 2026-2027 school year will provide our students with many opportunities to grow as students and young people. Our academic, athletic, arts, activities, and advising programs provide meaningful experiences that prepare students for college, careers, and life. We encourage every student to become involved and to take advantage of the opportunities and resources available at IASHS.

The partnership between families and the school is an important part of student success, and we encourage you to remain engaged in your student's education. We appreciate the trust you place in us each day and look forward to working with you to support our students as learners and individuals.

As I begin my tenure as senior high principal, I am grateful for the opportunity to serve our community in this new role. I wish you and your students a successful and rewarding 2026-2027 school year.

Sincerely yours,

William E. Doody
Principal

A Message from Mr. Michael Bertig, Assistant Principal



Dear Indiana Area Community,

My name is Michael Bertig, and I am the new Assistant Principal of Indiana Area Senior High School. "New" might apply to my current position, but certainly does not apply to me as I have spent my entire 19-year career at Indiana. After graduating from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, I was fortunate enough to be hired as a social studies teacher at IHS in 2007. While teaching at Indiana, I completed graduate work at Duquesne, earning a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership in 2010.

In my 19 years of teaching, I have instructed many courses, including US and the World: 1900-Present, World History, American Government, Physical Geography, and World Religions. It is with my vast teaching experience that I am confident I can provide instructional leadership to our students each and every day.

Four years ago, in addition to my teaching responsibilities, I was named Dean of Students. In that role, the majority of my school day was dedicated to managing student behavior and discipline. My philosophy on discipline was to be firm, fair, and consistent.

Outside of school, I enjoy spending time with my two young nephews and one niece. I am active in my community as a member of the Homer-Center School Board of Directors and the Armstrong-Indiana (ARIN) Intermediate Unit #28 Board of Directors. I am also a member of my church, Our Lady of the Assumption. I enjoy being a fan of Pittsburgh-based sports teams, and in particular, the Pittsburgh Penguins.

Regarding IHS, I make my attendance at events a priority. You will see me at many student sporting events and activities. There is nothing more important to me than supporting our students.

Sincerely,

Michael Bertig
Assistant Principal

STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Indiana Area School District is focusing on attendance for the 2026-27 school year. The most notable change to our policy is the following: ***When students are absent from school, their absence will be marked in PowerSchool as unexcused. On the morning of the fourth day after an absence from school, all previously unexcused absences will be changed to either Illegal or Excused. If an acceptable excuse was turned in, the absence will be changed to an Excused Absence. If an excuse was not received, the absence will be changed to an Illegal Absence.***

Upon returning to school from an absence, students will need to submit an excuse (for each absence) on or before the morning of the fourth day of their return. Students will submit their excuse directly to the main office. Students who do not submit a written excuse to the main office by the end of first period on the fourth day after their return will have their absence changed to an **illegal absence**. This applies to all students, including those who participate in dual enrollment, diversified occupations, and senior career seminar.

Please know that scanned copies and photos of signed parent/guardian excuses continue to be acceptable this school year. Please email electronic excuses to ihsattendance@iasd.cc.

A warning letter will be sent to students' parents/guardians after three (3) student absences. This letter will be sent to families to let them know that their student has missed three (3) days of school. No further action will be required at the time of the letter, but it is important for families to be aware of a student's attendance rate and how many days they have missed to avoid any truancy concerns.

Students can accumulate up to ten (10) excused absences each school year. Any absence(s) after the tenth absence will require an excuse from a doctor in order for the absence(s) to be considered excused. Shown below are the procedures that will be followed to notify students/families of student's attendance status. Here are some important attendance milestones to consider:

3rd Excused Absence: A letter is sent home to notify the family.
7th Excused Absence: A letter is sent home to notify the family.
10th Excused Absence: A letter is sent home to notify the family that the student has accumulated ten excused absences and that all future absences will require a doctor's excuse to prevent the absences from becoming unexcused absences.

3rd Unexcused Absence: A letter will be sent home to notify the family. All future unexcused absences will require intervention by the school.

Senior Class Information

Welcome to your student's senior year at Indiana Area Senior High. My name is Mrs. Traci Sexton, and I am the faculty advisor for the Class of 2027. To help keep you informed of upcoming events and activities of the Class of 2027, please reference my column in this monthly newsletter. I will do my best to ease some of the stress and anxiety that surrounds this important year in your life. If at any time I can be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me (at the high school) by phone at 724-463-8562 or by email at tsexton@iasd.cc . **Have a great year!**

Upcoming Events:

Sept. 4	Senior class meeting and senior class photo during Period 1 in the auditorium and on the football bleachers
Sept. 4	Senior portrait make-up day: Spellman Imaging will take individual photographs after the senior class group photo. Seniors are assigned specific times and will receive a pass from Mrs. Distefano.
Sept. 21	Personal fundraiser orders due
TBD	Senior class picnic/kickball tournament 6:00 -9:00 p.m.
Oct. 21	Personal fundraiser pick-up in upper commons 2:15-5:15 p.m.
Jan. 8	Senior class meeting/information on ordering graduation announcements and caps and gowns
Jan. 15	Orders for graduation announcements and caps and gowns are due
May TBD	Senior class trip location and date to be announced
May 30	Baccalaureate @ 3 p.m., location to be announced
June 3	Graduation Practice @ 9 a.m., location - KCAC
June 4	Graduation @ 7 p.m., location - KCAC

2027 Senior Class Google Classroom:

Either last year or at the start of this year, your son or daughter should have received an email asking them to join the 2027 Senior Class Google Classroom. This is my forum for posting information and forms that pertain to the senior class. Your senior will simply need to click the "join" button directly from the email, or on their Google Classroom dashboard, and they will be able to access copies of handouts, order forms, due date reminders, etc. It will be important for your senior to check their school email regularly for new posts. If your senior did not receive an automatic invitation, they can join the classroom using the code **u7ryfj4o**.

Parents/Guardians of the Class of 2027:

Please check that your email in Powerschool is accurate and update it if needed. Since parents/guardians cannot be added to Google Classrooms directly, I send emails out to parents/guardians each time I update the Class of 2027 Google Classroom with information and forms. Each year I have about 30 emails kicked back to me because they are inaccurate. Please don't let this happen to you! You can email me at tsexton@iasd.cc if you need directions on how to update your email address in PowerSchool. If you cannot log into PowerSchool, please contact your student's school counselor for help.

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

Senior Class Fundraisers:

The senior class is sponsoring a fundraiser this fall selling various holiday and food products. Each senior will earn credits equal to approximately 30 percent of the total cost of the orders that they solicit. These credits can be used to pay for the following senior class expenses: class trip (approximate cost is $120), cap and gown (approximate cost is $30), and/or yearbook (approximate cost is $95). If your senior sells around $800 worth of merchandise, then their yearbook, cap and gown, and class trip will be paid out of their credits. Your senior may also use their credits to purchase graduation announcements (if your senior has enough credits for a graduation announcement package.) Any credits left in a senior's class account at the end of the year go into the general senior class fund. Credits can **only** be used to defray the cost of the class trip, cap and gown, yearbook, and graduation announcements. **All personal fundraiser orders are due by Monday, September 21**. *As a thank you for participating, each senior who participates in the senior class fundraiser will also receive a free senior class photo. Details will be distributed on September 4 at our senior class meeting.*

Senior Class Picnic:

Be on the lookout for an email regarding the senior class picnic. Although the date is still to be determined, the picnic is expected to be held from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the high school's upper commons. The cost is $10. Good food will be provided, and seniors will have the opportunity to compete in the Battle of the Elementary Schools Kickball Tournament. This is an event that your senior will not want to miss!

Senior Class T-Shirts, Photographs, and Lanyards:

Each year a committee of seniors designs a t-shirt and other merchandise for their class. The price of a senior class t-shirt will be between $12 and $20. Senior class photos will be $10. Order forms for these items will be posted in the Class of 2027 Google Classroom in early October. **Please note that your senior will receive a class photo if they participate in the senior class fundraiser.**



**See Mrs. Distefano, Yearbook Adviser,
in Room 234
to schedule a sitting time.**

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SCHOOL CALENDAR 2026-2027

August 2026

M	T	W	TH	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

September 2026

M	T	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

October 2026

M	T	W	TH	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

November 2026

M	T	W	TH	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30				

December 2026

M	T	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

January 2027

M	T	W	TH	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

February 2027

M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26

March 2027

M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

April 2027

M	T	W	TH	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

May 2027

M	T	W	TH	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

June 2027

M	T	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

SNOW DAYS
- Feb 8
- March 25
- March 30
- April 16

- Snow Days
- In-service
- Data Days
- First & Last Student Days
- No School
- Parent/Teacher Confer-
- End of Marking Period

PSSA TESTING DATES
- April 26-30 (ELA)
- May 3-May 7 (Math/Sci)

KEYSTONE TESTING
- January 4-15(Winter)
- May 17-28(Spring)

INSERVICE
- August 24
- August 25
- August 26
- October 12
- November 2
- November 25
- January 18
- March 15
- March 24
- June 7 (.5)

BACK TO SCHOOL
- Junior High
- Senior High
- BF & HM
- EP & Eis

END OF MARKING
- QUARTER 1 - 10/29/26
- QUARTER 2 - 1/19/27
- QUARTER 3 - 3/31/27
- QUARTER 4 - 6/4/27

PARENT ENGAGEMENT
- Grades K-3 - TBD
- Grades 4-5 - TBD
- Junior High - TBD
- Senior High - TBD

- Data Days
- Oct 9 / Feb 15 / May 7

Welcome back!