

WELCOME TO OUR
**February
Newsletter**



Dear Parents,

This is a friendly reminder to please call the office if your child will be absent.

Thank you for ensuring that all doctor's notes are turned in—we truly appreciate your cooperation and support.

Don't forget Count Day is February 11th!

Sincerely,

The School Office

Dear Lion Families,

What a winter we have had so far! It will be interesting to see how February plays out in that regard. Due to the many snow days our report cards were delayed by a week, but hopefully you saw those come home in your child's folder last week. If you have any questions you would like clarified about your child's progress at this mid-year point please contact your child's teacher. Winter MAP data has also been collected and helps paint another piece of the picture of your child's learning progress. Before you know it we'll be sharing more info with you at parent conferences on March 26th! Hopefully, this wicked winter will be past us by then!

Mr. Cox

Important Dates:

Feb 9 & 16 are late start Mon.
Feb 13 Valentine Parties
Feb 20 No School
Feb 23 No School

Office Notes:

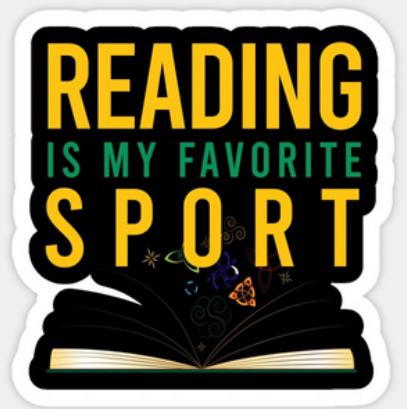
Doors Open: 8:05 am
School Starts: 8:11 am
Dismissal: 3:22 pm

Kids' Heart Challenge Kicks Off!

We've officially launched Kids Heart Challenge with the American Heart Association – let's rally to change lives and be heart heroes for kids! Through Finn's Mission, you'll learn the lifesaving skill of Hands-Only CPR and how to recognize a stroke. Here are the next steps to take today:

1. Sign Up for Kids Heart Challenge by downloading the free "AHA Schools" app for Apple or Android or by clicking [HERE](#).
2. Be a hero: Send 10 texts TODAY to help save lives.
3. Complete Finn's Mission: Learn Hands-Only CPR, earn your lifesavers cape and be entered to win two Super Bowl tickets!

By signing up and raising funds, you can help us earn gift certificates for physical activity and recess equipment to support the health & wellness of our school community. I can't wait to see our school create a community of lifesavers this year.



SAVE the DATE!! Literacy Night is coming Thursday, March 5th!



March will be here soon and the planning has begun for Reading Month. The theme this year is **March into Reading Madness** and our hallways will be filled with various decorations centering around sports. Be on the lookout for an invitation to the Family Literacy Night on March 5 and be sure to RSVP so our staff can plan accordingly. At the end of February we will be sending home our **Reading Calendar** with specific activities and special days that focus on ways to make reading fun! We love reading all year long but March is just a little reminder of how important it is every day.



“Growing” our Kids!

In chapter 4 of *The Anxious Generation*, Dr. Haidt explains how the natural process of growing up has been fundamentally disrupted in modern childhood, with important implications for our kids’ development.

The Adolescent Brain Is in a Unique Zone of Growth

Puberty isn’t just about physical changes — the brain undergoes massive rewiring. Through processes called pruning and myelination, the brain strengthens the neural pathways a teen uses most often. This means experiences in these years have a lasting impact on how young people think, feel, and relate to others.

But Two Big Barriers Have Blocked Healthy Development

Haidt identifies two major modern “experience blockers”:

Safetyism: Well-meaning efforts to keep kids physically and emotionally safe have reduced opportunities for unsupervised play, real-world challenges, and risk-taking that build resilience and confidence.

Smartphones and Screens: When phones and social media dominate teens’ time, they replace rich, face-to-face social interaction with shallow digital engagement. This limits the kinds of experiences that shape social skills, empathy, and emotional regulation — skills adolescents need for healthy adulthood.

What can we do?

Encourage age-appropriate independence.

- Look for everyday opportunities for your child to do things on their own. These experiences build confidence and decision-making skills.

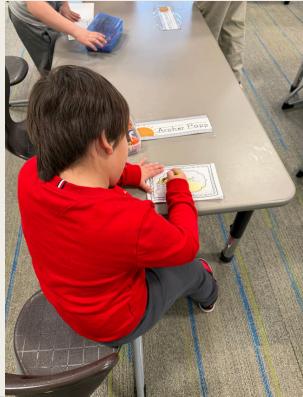
Allow manageable risks and challenges.

- Growth comes from overcoming obstacles. Let children try new things, struggle a little, and recover from mistakes rather than stepping in immediately to fix problems.

Set clear, consistent boundaries around phones and screens.

- Consider phone-free times or spaces (such as bedrooms at night or family meals) to ensure screens don’t replace real-world experiences during these critical developmental years.

team work



TAKE YOUR TIME



Roary's Resource Closet:

Newaygo Elementary has a resource closet for families in need.

Roary's closet is currently looking for donations of new or gently used clothing.

We are currently in need of the following items.....

Boy's XS Pants
Boy's Small Pants
Boy's Medium Pants

Girl's XS pants
Girl's Small Pants
Girl's M Pants

New (unopened) underwear boy's and girl's sizes XS, S and M

New (unopened) socks boy's and girl's

Out of the Darkness Community Walk

Walk with us to help prevent suicide

When: April 25, 2026 (9:00AM check in 10:00AM walk kick off)

Where: Newaygo High School

Newaygo Public Schools is hosting our very first **Out of the Darkness Community Walk** to support suicide prevention and mental health awareness. Our goal is to raise **\$10,000**, with donations made through walker pledges or directly to our Newaygo event page.

Our community—along with our students and families—has been impacted by suicide in many ways. This event is an opportunity to honor those affected, raise awareness, and bring vital support to our local area. Of the funds raised, **50% will support the national AFSP organization**, and **50% will support the AFSP Michigan Chapter**, allowing us to expand education, awareness, and prevention efforts within our schools and community.

Newaygo needs your support. Please consider:

- Walking and collecting pledges
- Volunteering on the day of the event
- Connecting us with individuals or organizations who may want to support this cause

We believe in this goal. We believe in this cause. Together, we can address the mental health crisis and help save lives.

To learn more or get involved, please contact [Jen Stephens](#) or [Alexis Mercer](#).



Finding the Joy in Reading

By Mrs. Hreha

Often the fast pace of life pushes us through the days, and we don't stop to find joy in the small moments. Winter months are the perfect time to cozy up and establish some fun reading habits that will also support your child's literacy development. With this frigid weather keeping us all inside, try one of the activities listed below!

- Create a Reading Nook: Dedicate a specific, comfortable spot with pillows and easy access to books.
- Active Read-Alouds: Use different voices for characters, make sound effects, and ask, "What do you think will happen next?".
- Interactive Engagement: Let children hold the book, turn pages, and point out letters or pictures.
- Character Voices & Dramatization: Use silly, high, or low voices for different characters to help children distinguish between them and understand the story's tone.
- Environmental Print: Read street signs, menus, and grocery lists to show that reading is everywhere. Make your own environmental print book.
- Make it Fun: Build a reading fort, read to pets or stuffed animals, or cook a recipe featured in a book.
- Predict and Retell: Ask questions before, during, and after reading to build comprehension and critical thinking.
- Keep it Consistent: Establish a routine, such as reading before bed, but keep it low-pressure to encourage a love for reading.
- Utilize Hometown Resources: Visit the Newaygo library and ask the librarian for book recommendations.



Help Combat Bullying

Working Together to Prevent Bullying

Bullying can affect a child's confidence, sense of safety, and overall well-being. The good news is that families and schools can work together to prevent bullying and help children feel supported, valued, and empowered. Here are five important ways parents and caregivers can help combat bullying at home and beyond.

Educate your children.

Talk with your child about what bullying is, what it can look like, and how it makes others feel. Use age-appropriate examples they can relate to, and encourage them to ask questions. Help them understand what to do if they are bullied or if they see someone else being treated unfairly.

Talk openly and frequently.

Create a safe and welcoming space for your child to share their experiences and emotions. Ask about their day, their friendships, and any concerns they may have. Let them know they can talk to you without fear of judgment and that you are always there to listen and support them.

Be a role model.

Children learn by watching the adults around them. Show kindness, patience, and respect in your daily interactions. Model healthy ways to handle conflict and strong communication skills, as these behaviors teach children how to treat others.

Help your child be a role model.

Encourage your child to include others, stand up for classmates, and show empathy. Small acts of kindness can make a big difference and help create a school culture where everyone feels accepted and safe.

Build your child's self-confidence.

Support your child's interests and celebrate their strengths. Praise their efforts and accomplishments, both big and small. When children feel confident and valued, they are better equipped to handle challenges and are less likely to engage in or tolerate bullying.

By working together and reinforcing these positive habits, we can help create a safe, respectful, and caring environment for all children.

