

The Ramblings

Paid for by McBain Rural Agricultural School

MCBAIN RURAL AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL

WINTER 2025-2026

HEUKER SCORES HIS 1,000TH POINT

Congratulations to Clayton Heuker (Junior) on scoring his 1,000th point in his Varsity basketball career. On January 21st, after being fouled by a Traverse City St. Francis Gladiator, Clayton stepped to the free throw line in the third quarter and made his first of two shots from the charity stripe. A time out was called and he was celebrated on the court by his teammates, coaches, family and community.



ELEMENTARY STUDENTS SHOP WITH A HERO



On Thursday, December 11th, Ms. Huttenga and Mrs. Quist accompanied 14 students to Shop with a Hero at Walmart in Cadillac. They had a great morning Christmas shopping and picking out gifts for their families. Each family was also given a complete holiday meal to take home and enjoy.

STAY CONNECTED
STAY INVOLVED WWW.MCBAIN.ORG

McBain Schools
107 E. Maple St.
McBain, MI 49657

Main Line	231.825.2165
Elementary	Opt. 1
Middle School	Opt. 2
High School	Opt. 3
Superintendent	Opt. 5

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Hello McBain!!

We continue to make steady improvements across the district thanks to our sinking fund dollars. One of the major projects planned for this summer is new flooring in the elementary classrooms and hallways. Some of this flooring has been in place since 1998. While it has served us well over the years, it is definitely time for an update. We're excited to update these learning spaces and provide a clean, updated environment for our students and staff.

We are also in the early planning stages of a future remodeling project in the central part of our high school building, which is the original and oldest portion of McBain Schools. This area holds a great deal of history and tradition for our community, and many generations of Ramblers have walked those halls. As we look toward the future, our goal is to honor that history while updating the space to better support today's learning. Through this remodel, we hope to create new learning areas and more welcoming spaces that blend McBain's proud past with modern educational needs.

In addition, we worked on digitizing McBain's class composite pictures. These composites tell the story of our school and community over many decades. Digitizing them will allow us to preserve and back up these important pieces of history in case anything were to ever happen to the originals. It will also make them more accessible to the public, with the long-term goal of displaying them in a lobby area for students, families, alumni, and community members to enjoy.

We've also welcomed a couple of new faces to the Rambler Team since the start of the school year. Dallas Milligan has joined us as our middle school English Language Arts teacher, and we're excited to have him working with our students. Following the retirement of Terry Kennedy, Jaime Kirt has been hired as our new middle school administrative assistant. Please be sure to welcome Dallas and Jaime when you see them — we're grateful to have them as part of Rambler Nation.

We also want to recognize our staff and students for their hard work and flexibility throughout the year. Their dedication, positive attitude, and commitment to learning make McBain Schools a great place to be every day.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to being good stewards of our resources and making thoughtful decisions that benefit students today and in the future. Thank you for your continued support of McBain Schools.

Wheels Up, Ramblers! The Good to Great Journey Starts Here!

Blessed to be a Rambler,

Mr. Scott Akom

scott.akom@mcbain.org

Grinch-mas in Mrs. Westdorp's 3rd Grade Class

Mrs. Westdorp's 3rd grade class had a very busy December! Their focus was on kindness, so it was natural that this connected to their "Grinchmas" theme. The kids did Grinch-related activities throughout the month and a kindness elf brought them challenges each day to teach them how to spread kindness to others without expecting anything in return. All month, the kids worked on growing their hearts (like the Grinch did) while they completed their acts of kindness!



Cans for Christmas



In the weeks leading up to Christmas, Freshman Focus classes participated in a can-and-cash fundraising effort to support a family through the OASIS Center of Cadillac. Partnering with OASIS, the classes received anonymous information regarding the ages, sizes, and needs of a sponsored family. While the students never met the family, fundraising began in early November and continued through the second week of December.

This year, four Freshman Focus classes took part in the effort, tracking their progress as part of a friendly competition to see which class could raise the most funds. The winning class earned the opportunity to attend a field trip to purchase gifts for the family.

After six weeks of collecting and cashing in cans, the classes raised an impressive \$1,700, helping provide an extraordinary Christmas for the sponsored family. Following the purchase of gifts and gift cards, students were still able to donate more than \$400 worth of additional gifts to Project Christmas.

We would like to extend a special thank you to McNally's Party Store for their continued support in helping us cash in the cans. Their cooperation made this meaningful project possible.

A MESSAGE FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL



Hello McBain Families and Community Members,

As we reach the midpoint of the school year, I want to take a moment to say how thankful I am for a wonderful first semester with our students and staff and to say how much I am looking forward to a strong, successful second semester. Student engagement continues to be a priority in the high school, and it is evident in many ways. Students are actively participating in so many different ways, whether it be in our classrooms, at the Career Tech Center, in their on-line college classes, or in sports, clubs, or other school activities. The students always amaze me with their energy, enthusiasm, and commitment!

As we look ahead to the winter months, we have so many exciting things to look forward to. Our Homecoming week was January 26-30, with the dance on the 31st. Many of our choir students will be headed to New York mid-February, we are hosting another NHS Blood Drive, students continue to participate in the HERO program every Friday and of course we have our winter sports in full swing!

Our school's strength lies in the partnership between families, community members, and staff. Your ongoing support—whether through communication, involvement, or encouragement at home—plays a vital role in student success. We are grateful for the shared commitment to helping our students thrive.

Go Ramblers!

Mrs. Becky Rodenbaugh

becky.rodenbaugh@mcbain.org



New Math Boards

Mrs. Dani Utecht, Mathematics

Students in Mrs. Utecht's Geometry class are actively using the new whiteboards installed around the classroom. Research shows that working vertically increases student movement and engagement, and this practice supports that goal. Students work in small groups where all members can clearly see the problem, discuss strategies, and collaborate on solutions. They are also able to view other groups' work, which helps normalize multiple approaches to problem-solving and encourages mathematical discourse. Additionally, this setup allows for real-time formative assessment, as the teacher can monitor all groups simultaneously. When needed, misconceptions or errors can be addressed mid-problem, allowing students to adjust their thinking and continue working without losing valuable class time.



MRASF

McBain Rural Agricultural School Foundation

Building a Future for the Next Generation

Since 2003, the McBain Rural Agricultural School Foundation (MRASF) has supported Rambler graduates pursuing higher education through scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000. A key part of this effort is our annual auction, which has been held since 2015. In 2025, thanks to the generosity of our community, we raised \$31,563 to support graduating seniors.

We are reaching out to invite you to support our 2026 auction, which will be held on April 18, 2026, in the Elenbaas Performing Arts Auditorium. All funds raised go directly toward scholarships for McBain graduates.

We are seeking donations from individuals and local businesses for both our silent and live auctions. Items may include theme baskets, baked goods, tools, recreational and sporting items, artwork, services, gift certificates, or cash contributions.

If you are able to donate, please contact any MRASF Board Director, call Carolyn Flore at (231) 357-9513, or reach the Foundation at (231) 968-0644. More information is available at MRASF.org.

Thank you for your continued support of McBain seniors. We hope to see you at the auction on April 18.

Sincerely,

MRASF Board of Directors



MRASF

McBain Rural Agricultural School Foundation

Building a Future for the Next Generation

Supporting Students in Their Next Journey

Providing scholarships and educational opportunities that empower McBain Rural Agricultural School graduates to pursue continued education with ability, drive, and purpose.

Scholarships | Educational Programs | Community Investment

2024-2025 HIGH SCHOOL YEARBOOKS FOR SALE

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Please see
Mrs. Short
in the McBain High
School office or
email her at:
heather.short@mcbain.org



A MESSAGE FROM THE MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL



The Middle School continues to partner with community organizations. Eighty-four sets of pajamas were brought in to support Project Christmas and our local families. In February we are going to be partnering once again with the Love Your Neighbor Food Drive. This is a canned/boxed good collection to help with the close to 900 food pick ups that happen each month in Missaukee County. We will be competing as grade levels to bring the most food in. Last year we had over 1,000 items!!

Middle School STEM Class (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics), under the leadership of Mrs. Bronkema has received the Great Lakes Energy Grant of \$2,000 to support teaching students about next generation technology skills. We are excited to see how Mrs. Bronkema continues to grow the STEM program for our students!

New Faces in the crowd!

Due to increase enrollment we are excited to welcome Dallas Milligan as an additional English teacher in the Middle School! Mr. Milligan has an extensive background in journalism, has previously worked for professional sports teams and his work as been used on several national news broadcasts. Mr. Milligan will be primarily focused on 6th grade English.

As we wish Ms. Kennedy a well deserved retirement, we welcome Jaime Kirt as the new Middle School Administrative Assistant. Mrs. Kirt has recently moved to the area and has several years of experience working for Northwest Education Services. Please stop in and welcome Mrs. Kirt to our Rambler family!

Mr. Troy Finstrom

troy.finstrom@mcbain.org

A Somber *Rambler* Farewell to



Ms. Terry Kennedy

On the last day before Christmas Break, Ms. Kennedy worked her final day in the Middle School Office. She is retiring and planning on spending time with her family and her three precious grandchildren. We will miss her smile, kindness and hugs.

A Warm *Rambler* Welcome to



Mrs. Jaime Kirt



Mr. Dallas Milligan

A MESSAGE FROM THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL



Hello Ramblers,

After a very busy December and holiday break, we are back at it in the elementary school. We continue to work on moving from good to great in our citizenship, behavior, and academics.

In December, we were able to do a new thing in our building. We hosted a Santa's Workshop! A company out of Grand Rapids provided us with a variety of presents for students so they could shop for their family members. We had most students use the workshop, and they had a lovely time. We hope to continue this in the years to come!

We also had our Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade concerts as well as our 5th grade band concerts in December. Congrats to Mr. Good and those grades for putting on wonderful performances. The sounds of the season filled the auditorium and brought us all so much joy.

Please be on the lookout for information regarding McBain Active Kids in February. Mrs. Sluiter and Mrs. Koetje are diligently planning that event, and we'd love for you to join us!

In addition, keep an eye out for information regarding Pastries with Parents in March. We look forward to hosting this annual breakfast with your kids and having you join us for a morning.

Make it a great day, Ramblers!

Mr. David Wissner

david.wissner@mcbain.org

JOHN'S MISSION

Many of us know John Vongphasouk as an amazing custodian at McBain Schools. He has worked in the district for over 40 years. As he does every year, he traveled to Vietnam and generously gave his time, money, and resources to help schools there with uniforms, supplies, sporting equipment and technology. Last year for his birthday, the elementary staff took up a collection and surprised him with extra funds to use on this trip. John has a servant's heart and does not do this for recognition, but we as a school would like to share his kind heart with the community. The photos to the right are of his most recent trip. John is pictured in the red shirt.



McBain's New Debate Team Competes at the State Debate Tournament

Mrs. Kelly Jeska, Debate Team Advisor & High School English Teacher

On December 13, 2025, our school's debate team took an exciting and meaningful step forward by attending the State Debate Tournament at Wayne State University. This marked our first time competing at the state level in many years, and it was a moment our students—and our school—can be incredibly proud of.

Throughout the day, our debate team members competed in Public Forum debates, an event that emphasizes teamwork, critical thinking, persuasive speaking, and the ability to respond thoughtfully under pressure. Students debated timely and complex topics, facing strong competition from schools across the state. Despite being newcomers to the state tournament scene, our students rose to the challenge with confidence, preparation, and professionalism.

Their hard work paid off in remarkable ways. Two of our debate team members, Senior Josselyn Ramsey and Sophomore Brendon Box, earned trophies as Top Speakers in the State, an outstanding individual achievement that reflects countless hours of practice, research, and dedication. In addition, our Novice Public Forum teams received a trophy and placed as Quarter Finalists overall in the state, an impressive accomplishment—especially considering this was many students' first year competing at this level.

Beyond the trophies and placements, the tournament offered something just as valuable: experience. Students had the opportunity to observe high-level debates, connect with peers from other schools, and represent our school with integrity and pride on a large stage. The energy and excitement of competing at Wayne State University left our team motivated and eager to continue growing.

As debate advisor, I am incredibly proud of our students for their perseverance, teamwork, and willingness to step outside their comfort zones. This tournament was not just a return to state competition—it was the beginning of a new chapter for our debate program. We look forward to building on this success in the years to come and continuing to make our school proud.



Left:
Brendon Box
and Josselyn
Ramsey with
their top speaker
trophy.

Right:
The McBain
Debate Team
with Mrs. Jeska.



School Composite Photos

On a recent snow day, a small group of us spent the morning at McBain High School working on a special project to preserve our school's history. We carefully cleaned, photographed, and rehung 79 class composites, some dating back to 1929. With additional digitized composites, we now have 98 years of McBain class history preserved—nearly a century of students, families, and memories, with the Class of 2026 marking 99 years.

A big thank you to Judy Gilde and her photography expertise! As many composites have been affected by age and environmental factors, which made it clear how important it is to preserve them now. The next step is to restore and digitize these photos so future generations can enjoy them.

Thank you to Kristin Huttenga, Jenny Eisenga, Jen & McKenna Gilde and Courtney Agema for volunteering their time and care. McBain's story is very special, and we're proud to help preserve it for our community and future Ramblers.



Little Wheels Always Learning & Having Fun!

Little Wheels Preschool is in full swing!! We have been doing so many great things in our little building. We celebrated our annual family night where we welcomed 37 families to participate in our camping theme night with pizza, games, and prizes! It was a great time was had by all.

We have had to get creative when it comes to inside recess with the cold temps, but we are making the most of it! The students love learning through play, which is what we are all about. You can expect our school days to consist of play-based learning, along with structured learning and assessment. Not to mention, our program includes daily meals and snacks. We currently have two open slots for our free program! Come join us!!



McBain High School Athletic Hall of Fame

McBain High School recently started a school Hall of Fame, and on December 19, 2025, the very first inductees were honored.

The inaugural Hall of Fame recipients are Bruce Brumels, Harvey Lucas, and Jim Racignol—three individuals whose commitment and contributions have had a lasting impact on McBain High School.

Bruce Brumels was inducted posthumously. His wife, Doris, and their three children accepted the award in his honor. Harvey Lucas and Jim Racignol were both able to be present to receive their awards, surrounded by family.

What a meaningful way to begin this Hall of Fame—celebrating three people who truly helped shape McBain High School and its community.



Mr. Bruce Brummels' Family

Photo Credit: Judy K. Gilde



Mr. James Racignol and Family



Mr. Harvey Lucas & wife Ev

8th Grade 3D Printed Boat Contest

Students in the 8th grade STEM class took part in a hands-on design challenge to create the most stable and buoyant boat. After studying buoyancy and researching various boat designs, students used a 3D CAD program to design their boats based on class-defined criteria and constraints. The competition showcased many successful designs, with the winning boat holding an impressive 81 marbles. Congratulations to Brinley, Nevaeh, and Ansley for winning the Fall Semester Boat Float Competition with their design, WRP: Water Rainbow Pegasus! A close runner-up—and recipient of the Most Creative Design award—was the team of Sadie and Grace for their boat, Agent P.



McBAIN HIGH SCHOOL HOMECOMING 2026

Photo credit: Judy Gilde Photography

Freshman
Claire Agema,
Kruz Ferrel

Sophomores
Lilian Wetzig
Jacob Brunink

Juniors
Clara Krick
Charlie Schonert

Seniors
Laila Wetzig
Kasen Pollington
Yamileth Hernandez-Mendoza
Thomas Maloney
Aubrie Kamphouse
Wyatt Zuiderveen

Prince & Princess
Scottlyn Powers
Julian VanderVelde

Outgoing Royalty
Gwyneth VerBerkmoes
Benjamin McNally Rodenbaugh





We Are McBain!

Rambler Fans at Homecoming



If you would like to be added or removed from this mailing list, please call or text 313-509-7028.



McBain Rural Agricultural School
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