

The Ramblings

Paid for by McBain Rural Agricultural School

MCBAIN RURAL AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL

FALL 2026

RAMBLER WHEEL TALK

This fall, our Elementary students have taken on leadership opportunities through a new platform. Each month, student leaders will share that month's Friendly theme and interview students throughout the school to gather their perspectives as well. Rambler WHEEL Talk began in September, based on the theme 'We Are Better Together.' Students shared what that theme meant to them and how important it was to have a 'We Mindset' rather than a 'Me Mindset.' We are looking forward to seeing the ownership our students take in sharing the knowledge and skills they are learning in class with others. Each month's episode is shared with the entire school at our monthly assemblies.



COACH DICKERSON NAMED TO HALL OF HONOR



L to R: Bruce Koopman (boys varsity coach), Shaun Mulder (athletic director), Roy Dickerson, Tim O'Malley (girls varsity coach), Lars Fredin (MS coach)

Coach Roy Dickerson was inducted into the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan Hall of Honors in recognition of his 26+ years of dedication to McBain basketball. Beginning in 2000, Roy played key roles in the 2002 state championship and Final Four runs in 2009, 2011, and 2016. Since returning to the middle school level in 2014, he has led the boys' and girls' programs to more than 300 victories. Beyond wins, Roy's passion for developing players, teaching fundamentals, and fostering a love for the game has made a lasting impact. Coach Dickerson thanks his wife, Jeanette, fellow coaches Lars Fredin and Bruce Koopman, and the many student-athletes he has had the privilege of coaching.

Congratulations, Coach Roy Dickerson!

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

Main Line	231.825.2165
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High School	Opt. 3
Superintendent	Opt. 5

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Hello McBain!

It is hard to believe another school year is already underway! After a summer of construction, cleaning, painting, moving, planning—and plenty of dust—it's been wonderful to see our hallways filled again with students, staff, laughter, and excitement. If you stopped by McBain Schools this summer, there was a good chance something was being torn up, replaced, painted, moved, or improved!

One of the biggest improvements over the summer was the new flooring throughout the elementary school. This project included asbestos abatement in several areas before we could install the new flooring. The transformation has been incredible! A huge thank you goes to our maintenance and custodial staff, contractors, and elementary staff who worked around construction schedules and somehow managed to have everything ready for our students.

The district also purchased the former Meidema Auction Building on Grace Street and removed the house next to the bus garage, giving us additional opportunities as we plan for the district's future. We made these purchases through grant and district monies.

A new school year also means welcoming new members to the Rambler family. We are excited to welcome new staff to our district and the talents, experiences, and energy they bring to our schools. Buildings and facilities are important, but the heart of McBain Schools will always be the people inside them. Seeing students reconnect with friends, our youngest Ramblers walking through the doors with backpacks nearly as big as they are, and our classrooms and hallways coming back to life reminds us what this work is really about.

Looking ahead, we have also begun early planning for potential renovations to the original portion of our High School, much of which dates back to 1929. Our goal is to honor the history of McBain Schools while creating spaces that better serve today's students and future generations of Ramblers. We hope to start this multi-phase project in the summer of 2027.

Thank you to our staff for all of their hard work, our families for trusting us with their children, and our community for its continued support of McBain Schools.

We have a lot to be proud of and even more to look forward to as we continue our Good to Great Journey.

Wheels Up, Ramblers!

Mr. Scott Akom

scott.akom@mcbain.org

Sinking Fund Updates

The support of our community through the voter approved sinking fund has truly been a blessing for McBain Schools. Because of that support, we have been able to make several important improvements throughout the district that directly benefit our students, staff, and community.

Some of the major projects completed with sinking fund dollars include the new high school office and secure entries at the middle and elementary schools, helping improve both safety and accessibility for families and visitors. We also replaced the original 1959 middle school gym floor, creating a safer, more up-to-date space for students and community activities.

In addition, the needed roofing projects have been completed, giving us new roofs that are now fully under warranty and helping protect our facilities for years to come. This summer, we continued improvements with elementary flooring replacement projects; some of this flooring was installed in 1998.

Sinking fund dollars have also allowed us to continue investing in instructional technology for classrooms and students, helping keep McBain on the cutting edge while making day-to-day learning run more smoothly. We also used sinking fund dollars, along with general fund support, to help offset the increased costs of the track replacement project.

Looking ahead, we are beginning plans to remodel and update the original 1929 section of the high school.

This will likely happen in phases over the next several years as we continue working to maintain and improve our facilities for future generations of Ramblers.

We are incredibly grateful to our community for supporting our schools and investing in the future of McBain students. Your support continues to make a tremendous difference. Wheels Up, Ramblers!

New Staff Introductions

Introducing the newest team members at McBain Schools this school year. We are excited to have them on our Good to Great Journey!



Leigh Sabo
ELM Special Education



Jennifer Logan
Elm. MS/HS Music & Band



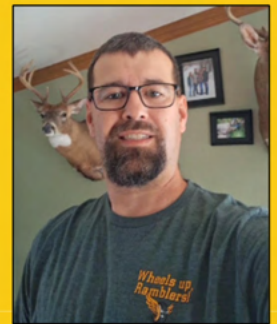
Jordan Fox
Student Activities Asst.



Tracey VanHaitma
Parapro



Jamie Baird
Parapro



Curtis Maggo
Custodian



Bailey Volkes
Custodian

A MESSAGE FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL



Welcome back everyone!

As we settle into the rhythm of a new school year and welcome the arrival of fall, I want to take a moment to thank our students, families, staff, and community for the wonderful start to the year.

October is an exciting time at the high school. Students have settled into their classes and activities and athletics are in full swing. We continue to focus on our WHEEL expectations as well as providing a rigorous and rich curriculum for our students. We welcomed 97 freshmen into the high school and have enjoyed getting to know them and we were so happy to see our upperclassmen again for another great year!

I am continually impressed by the accomplishments of our students and the commitment of our staff. Each day brings new opportunities for students to learn, grow, make positive choices, and contribute to our school community. There always seems to be something going on in the high school and we love to have our students, families and community involved! We have about 115 students participating in our fall sports, our National Honor Society had an induction ceremony and has already held our first Blood Drive, our band has been working on their marching music and performing at our home football games and our choirs performed an amazing fall choir concert on October 14! We have some really talented, hard working students in McBain and I am so proud of them! Thank you for coming out night after night and supporting them. It means so much!

Wishing everyone a wonderful fall season!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Becky Rodenbaugh

becky.rodenbaugh@mcbain.org



Helping Rambler Graduates Take Their Next Step

The McBain Rural Agricultural School Foundation (MRASF) was established in 1999 as a 501(c)(3) organization. Since then, the Foundation has been helping Rambler graduates continue their education after high school—whether that means college, community college, or a trade program.

SCHOLARSHIPS: \$1,000–\$5,000

Each year, MRASF scholarships are available to students who demonstrate strong character, a solid work ethic, and the drive to succeed. Scholarships are awarded at graduation and paid after students provide a program completion certification or complete their first year of school with a GPA of 2.5 or higher.

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES THESE SCHOLARSHIPS POSSIBLE

These scholarships are possible because of the generosity of McBain alumni and community members. New donations help us continue—and grow—our support for students as they take their next step after McBain.



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WATER BOTTLE ROCKET LAUNCH

by Mrs. Sara Gray HS STEM teacher

McBain High School has a new class this year, STEM. Students completed their first unit - Water Bottle Rockets. During this unit, students began by learning about rocket physics, rocket components, and what makes for a stable flight. A whole class lab activity explored rockets containing different amounts of water and established which amount was most effective to achieve the highest altitude.

Student groups were then tasked with building a rocket that would fly at least 10 feet off the ground. Their rockets were also required to contain a raw egg that would remain, hopefully, unbroken after landing. Students worked on designing rockets, testing rockets, making adjustments and working diligently through the scientific process to be ready for their final launch day.

The senior group, consisting of Landon Kirt, Kendyn Meyering, and Ben Thompson, had the highest rocket launch at an altitude of 70 feet; unfortunately, their egg did not survive. Two groups tied for second place with altitudes of 43.2 feet; Group 1 - Marshall Beebe, Aiden DeVerney, and Logan Welch and Group 2 - Brooklyn Eisenga, CieLita Gallardo Rodriguez, and Jeremiah Smith. Two groups were able to land rockets with their eggs unbroken, Kalyx Austin and Dakota Kline with an altitude of 25.2 feet and Jaxon Miller, Tristan Quist, and Tyson Rohring with an altitude of 21.6 feet.



Ben, Landon & Kendyn



Dakota Kline

McBain's Annual Craft Market

McBain School is once again hosting our Holiday Craft Show on November 28. We are asking for donations of the following items to help offset the expenses for the luncheon.

- Name brand cans of pop
- Cases of water (16.9 oz)
- Name brand snack size bags of chips

If you can contribute this, please contact Mrs. Huttenga @ 231.825-2021 x 1515 or mcbainpto@mcbain.org

Cash donations accepted and appreciated for perishable items.

Donations may be dropped at any school office or sent with your child anytime before Friday, November 20. Thank you for supporting McBain Schools!



A MESSAGE FROM THE MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL



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

We're off to a fantastic start to the school year!

We're thrilled to welcome Ms. Logan, our new middle and high school band and elementary music teacher.

We're also expanding real-world learning through Agriculture Career Days, continued collaboration with MSU Extension 4-H, and partnerships with local airports. An upcoming aviation unit will even give students the chance to learn with a state of the art flight simulator!

We will continue our work with Community Hope Food Pantries and the Salvation Army Project Christmas to help students have opportunities to give back to their community.

In math, we're expanding options for students ready to advance while providing extra support for those who need a boost to succeed.

Students continue to earn prizes and recognition for demonstrating our WHEEL expectations:

Welcome – Honest – Engaging – Empathetic – Leaders

We're proud of our Ramblers and excited for the opportunities ahead.

Mr. Troy Finstrom

troy.finstrom@mcbain.org

SUMMER BASKETBALL CAMP RECAP - *Mr. Bruce Koopman - Varsity Boys Head Coach*

Summer basketball camp 2026 was a big success! Nearly 100 young McBain Ramblers participated for three days this summer learning the fundamentals of basketball. Players worked through stations that were taught by current and former JV and Varsity basketball players learning skills like passing, shooting, rebounding, defense, pivoting and ballhandling. There also was the opportunity for players to scrimmage against other campers in 5 on 5 games. To keep camp fun and competitive players also participated in competitive games like Elimination and Dribble Knockout for prizes. Each day coaches and counselors selected a boy and girl for Camper of the Day recognizing them for their great attitude, work ethic, and coachability. As I was watching all these young Ramblers work through camp I'm convinced that McBain Basketball has a very strong future! A big thank you to Lisa Bronkema for her assistance with camp organization! Camp co-directors were Erin Koetje (JV Boys head coach), Tim O'Malley (Girls Varsity coach) and Danielle Loeks (JV girls basketball coach). Below are pictures of the campers, high school players and directors.



A MESSAGE FROM THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL



Welcome back!

We have had a fantastic start to the school year, and we are so glad to have this year as another opportunity to educate your children. The teachers are eager to get to know their classes and develop relationships with their students.

We are continuing with our social/emotional curriculum called Friendly. Through this, our school focuses on one theme a month to help build community and develop skills like grit, determination, friendship, and conflict-resolution. September's theme was "Better Together."

Please keep an eye on the school website and Facebook page for important events, updates, and information. If you have a child enrolled in the district, I will also share information through Parent Square at various times this year.

If you have any questions about anything, then please reach out through our website or by calling the elementary office. We are here to make sure the school year is one of our best yet!

Mr. David Wissner

david.wissner@mcbain.org

MCBAIN AREA BACKPACK PROGRAM BEGINS 14TH YEAR

McBain School is excited to begin its 14th year partnering with the McBain Area Backpack Program (MABP)! We share a deep commitment to the children in our community and are proud to support the program's mission to **help feed hungry kids.**

The McBain Area Backpack Program provides nutritious food to children who may have limited or no access to meals over the weekend. Each Friday afternoon, students in kindergarten through fifth grade receive a bag containing six meal items and six snacks to help meet their nutritional needs on Saturdays and Sundays until they return to school on Monday.

Would you like to learn more about the program or find out how you can make a difference in the lives of local children? Please contact Judy Meekhof, Director of the McBain Area Backpack Program, by phone, text, or private message through the McBain Area Backpack Program Inc. Facebook page. She would be happy to share more information about the program and ways you can help!

Judy Meekhof

Director, McBain Area Backpack Program Inc.

Phone: 231-878-5875



Rambler Legacy Award

Celebrating Those Who Have Made a Lasting Impact

McBain Rural Agricultural Schools is excited to introduce the **Rambler Legacy Award**, a new tradition created to recognize alumni and distinguished staff members whose lives, service, and accomplishments have made a lasting impact on our school district, community, and beyond.

The Rambler Legacy Award provides an opportunity to celebrate those who have helped shape who we are while inspiring current and future generations of Ramblers. Who is eligible?

Alumni nominees must have graduated from McBain Rural Agricultural Schools at least 10 years ago. Nominees should demonstrate excellence in their chosen career or field, have a positive impact on their community through service or leadership, reflect the values of McBain Schools, and serve as a positive role model for current and future Ramblers.

Distinguished staff nominees must have served McBain Rural Agricultural Schools for at least 10 years and have been separated from district employment for at least five years. Nominees should demonstrate exceptional commitment to students and the school community, leadership and professionalism, and a lasting positive impact on the district. Posthumous nominations may also be considered.

Most importantly, the Rambler Legacy Award is about recognizing individuals whose character, leadership, service, and accomplishments reflect the values and traditions of McBain Rural Agricultural Schools.

We know there are many deserving Ramblers whose stories should be celebrated, and we need your help identifying them!

Nominations will open **January 4** and are due **March 1**. Applications and additional information about the nomination and selection process will be available beginning January 4.

We look forward to recognizing those who have made a difference, left a lasting legacy, and shown what it truly means to be a Rambler.

Once a Rambler, Always a Rambler!

Breakfast Outreach Information

Did you know that every school day, our school serves a healthy, delicious breakfast?

Studies show that students who eat breakfast do better on tests, have fewer absences, and stay focused in class.

What's served: Every meal includes whole grains, fresh fruit or vegetables, and milk.

Cost: Breakfast is free and available for all students.

Where: Elementary is Breakfast in the Classroom and MS/HS is Grab & Go in the Lobby and in the MS Hallway by the Tech Dech.

Menu: Visit Mcbain.org to access our menus.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



LITTLE WHEELS



We were so excited to meet our new preschool friends this year! With this being our 6th year, the beginning of the year is one of our most loved times of the year. We have been slowly getting used to our new classroom routine. What does the beginning of the school year look like for preschool? It's all about learning what a classroom family looks like, how to be safe in the classroom, how to become a good friend, and learning expectations. We are so excited to see what this new year will bring for us, as well as our new friends!

MCBAIN COMMUNITY LIBRARY UPDATE

The McBain Community Library had a fantastic summer, with the Summer Reading Program bringing lots of young readers through our doors! Now that school is back in session, Preschool Storytime has returned, new books are ready to explore, and additional STEM kits are available for checkout thanks to a grant from the Library of Michigan.

We're also excited to welcome Jayna Baas to our library team! Jayna works Fridays and during community hours throughout the week.

Looking ahead, registration for Battle of the Books begins in December for students in grades 4–6 who love to read. The program kicks off January 9, and information will be sent home with students. Questions? Call 231-825-2197.

A big thank-you to the DDA-TIFA Board for funding our new, updated digital sign! We appreciate their support and are excited about this great addition to the library.

Stay connected by visiting www.mcbain.michlibrary.org or following us on Facebook. We look forward to seeing you at the library!

Fourth Grade Safety Around Water Program

Every year, the YMCA offers their SAW program. SAW stands for: Safety Around Water. This is a program specifically for 4th grade students, and it is offered to McBain as well as the surrounding school communities. For eight weeks, our students attend an hour class at the Y to learn about water safety, basic swimming skills, and ways to help themselves or others if they are in danger in the water. It is fun to watch students learn about the water and grow in their ability to swim and move in the water. The students enjoy the opportunity, and we're thankful that we can partner with the YMCA for this program.



Fourth Graders Travel Back in Time at Buckley Education Days

On September 24, McBain fourth graders enjoyed a free, hands-on educational field trip to the Northwest Michigan Engine and Threshers Club, home of the Buckley Old Engine Show in Buckley, Michigan.

Each year, the Club welcomes fourth-grade students from area schools for a unique opportunity to experience life in the good old days. Students stepped back in time as they rode a 1918 steam train and explored Front Street, featuring a historic train depot, print shop, harness shop, blacksmith shop, barber shop, and other buildings showcasing life in the late 1800s. They also visited Mayfield Town Hall, built in 1886.

Throughout the day, students enjoyed live demonstrations and interactive activities highlighting historic machinery, farming, and traditional trades. Experiences included wheat threshing, a steam-powered sawmill, antique gas engines, woodworking, a foundry, a shingle mill, corn shelling, and a grist mill. Students also learned about historic tractors, explored the Yesterday's Home exhibit, visited the post office, and participated in hands-on farm chores.

The annual Education Days experience gives students a memorable opportunity to connect with local history and discover how people lived, worked, and farmed in generations past.



Ramblers Abroad Summer 2026 Trip to Portugal and Spain

by Mrs. Pam Angell - HS History Teacher and Ramblers Abroad Coordinator

Our 12-day adventure through Portugal and Spain was filled with history, culture, and unforgettable experiences. One of the highlights was visiting Gibraltar, where we looked across the Strait of Gibraltar toward the Atlas Mountains of Morocco, with the coast of Spain just to our right. As a teacher who frequently teaches about this important waterway, experiencing this unique meeting point of Europe and Africa with my students was truly surreal.

Seven students, four parents, Mrs. Utecht, her husband Dean, and I explored historic landmarks, experienced local traditions, and enjoyed the beauty of both countries. We toured Gibraltar's historic military tunnels and caves, visited a family living in a traditional cave home in Purullena, biked along Barcelona's beaches, and watched an exciting Flamenco performance. We also visited the mountain monastery of Montserrat, explored the famous Alhambra palace and fortress complex, swam in the Mediterranean Sea, and admired Portugal's dramatic cliffs overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. Along the way, we sampled new foods, experienced cultural differences, and shared plenty of laughs.

As the saying goes, "Travel is the only thing you can buy that makes you richer." Our 2026 Ramblers Abroad returned home with lasting memories, new perspectives, and experiences that will stay with us for years to come.

Interested in joining a future trip? There is still time to sign up for the Summer 2027 trip to Italy and Greece! An interest meeting will also be held for the 2028 trip to New Zealand and Australia. I would love for you and your student to join me on these exciting opportunities to explore the world!



Clockwise:

1. Triston, Landen Molly, Bella, Brooklyn, Adi and Briella in Spain.
2. The group in Lisbon, Portugal.
3. Ramblers in Purullena, Spain at the cave house of a man and his family.
4. At the Southwestern most tip of Portugal, Sagreos, overlooking the Mediterranean.





We Are McBain!

Elementary *FUN TO BE FIT!*



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



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