



# info 12

winter 2023

SCHOOL DISTRICT 12  
**JOHNSBURG**  
INSPIRING OUR STUDENTS

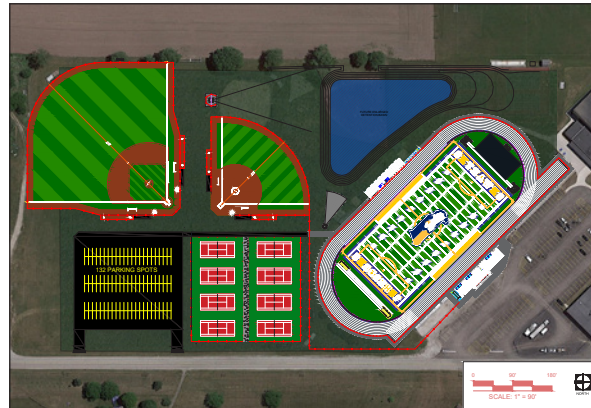
## JHS Outdoor Facility Improvements for 2024-25 School Year

District 12 is thrilled to announce that there will be substantial improvements to the outdoor facilities at Johnsborg High School beginning in January 2024. The district has partnered with Byrne & Jones, a sports construction company with more than 45 years of experience working to develop parks, recreational areas, and school outdoor facilities throughout Illinois and Missouri. Byrne & Jones will lead the construction project, but will also allow for us to work with local subcontractors in various capacities throughout the project. This will be the first time that the fields and facilities have been renovated since the originals were installed in 1978.

“Our new facilities will be up to date,” said Athletic Director Dick Knar. “They will provide not only our student-athletes, but all of our students, with opportunities we never had before.”

This project will include a turf football field, new bleachers, eight new tennis courts, track and field expansion, lighting, improved soccer, baseball and softball fields and a much-needed additional parking lot.

The district made the decision to proceed with turf on the football field as it is more cost effective when it comes to maintenance. The turf installation and improved facilities also allow for expanded access for our physical education classes and will allow for outdoor activities daily (weather permitting) without tearing up the fields. In addition, the improved facilities will result in fewer athletic events being canceled due to poor weather, an issue that comes up frequently in the spring mostly hindering the baseball and softball seasons. Finally, the installation of the new turf football field will allow for daily practices on the new field.



The football field portion of the project is scheduled to be completed by August 15th, allowing the football team to play on the new field for their 24-25 season. The other areas are scheduled to be completed in advance of the 2025 spring seasons as well. Mr. Knar has been working with surrounding areas to support our sports teams during the construction allowing spaces for practice and competition, as well as arranging transportation to the various locations. The boys tennis team will be using Four Lakes Athletic Club and the Village of Ringwood’s courts, softball and baseball will practice and compete at Hiller Park, boys and girls track will be practicing at Richmond Burton High School, and girls soccer will be able to continue using the soccer fields.

Knar said the project development has been really enjoyable. “The process of developing it has been very fun,” he said. “We have tried to keep in mind what we could create to enhance opportunities for all students.”

Careful consideration has also been given to scheduling graduation ceremonies for the 2024 graduates. The District with Johnsborg High School Principal, Kevin Shelton, and a volunteer high school student group to select an alternate outdoor location for the 2024 high school and junior high graduation ceremonies. Together they selected the JHS soccer field.

Lastly, it is important to note that these updates to the outdoor facilities come with no additional cost to District 12 residents due to sound fiscal management. The entire project is being funded with district operating funds.

**Board Members:** Tom Oeffling, President; Valerie Klos, Vice President; Meghan Michel, Secretary; Jim Barrett, Corrie Eastland, Margaret Germann, Cathy Neiss

**Administration:** Dr. Dan Johnson, Superintendent of Schools; Annie Mulvaney, Assistant Superintendent; Dawn Barrett, Curriculum Director; Fran Milewski, Student Services Director

# Ringwood students enjoy special learning opportunities



The fall was a busy time at Ringwood school. On November 21st, Brendan Baker with Dave DiNaso's Traveling World of Reptiles held a small group style, 30-minute presentation for Ringwood students. The kids learned about reptile habits, what they eat, and traits of reptiles. He even brought in a boa constrictor, tortoise, and large lizard

that students could pet if they wished. The students were excited about the unique experience.

"The reptile assembly was so fun! The snake was long. I was terrified, but I got to pet it," said Kaelynn, a first grader.

Another school-wide activity was the November Reading Challenge that was organized by the Ringwood Learning Center. The challenge was beneficial in two great ways: first, it encouraged reading, and second, it was a food drive for the local FISH food pantry. Students were asked to read 10 books or bring in 10

non-perishable items for donation. Any combination of books read or items donated earned them a turkey feather. If the school was able to accumulate 300 turkey feathers, they would earn a school-wide reward. In this case it's a whole school dance party and the opportunity to 'decorate' principal Monica Furlong with Silly String. The students achieved the goal and earned their reward. School L.C. director Cindy Toussaint is proud of the program.

"It not only supports and encourages kids to read, but we also help our community and those in need. All items were donated to McHenry FISH food pantry and they were so grateful for our donations," Toussaint said.

Ringwood school teachers and administrators are always on the lookout for new, fun, and interesting learning experiences for students.



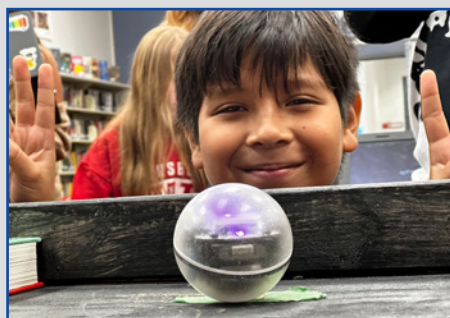
## JJHS Spheros Donation from JEPF

Students at JJHS enjoy the various activities in Mr. Flaxman's technology classroom, one of which are working with Spheros. The JEPF (Johnsburg Educational Partnership Foundation) was generous in helping purchase additional Sphero's to provide the opportunities for students to continue learning coding skills.

The Sphero's are used as an introduction to coding in 6th grade with codes written in an application on student Chromebooks that program the Spheros to move, change colors, or even make images on its LCD screen. Then students compete in a Sphero Mini-Golf challenge to demonstrate their coding skills and work together as

a team in a friendly competition. The 7th Graders are utilizing Sphero in a challenge project where they must complete a maze. The 8th graders continue to develop their abilities to compete in a triathlon of different engineering and coding events, within two different events.

Thank you to the Johnsburg community who have participated in the various JEPF events to help raise funds for our students so that they can have the opportunity to learn in these fun and exciting ways! More information regarding JEPF and their upcoming events can be located on their website [www.jepf.org](http://www.jepf.org).



# District 12 Hosts a Family Resource Fair

On the evening of November 9, 2023, the district welcomed families to its Family Expo held at JES/ JJHS, a collaborative effort involving Ringwood School, Johnsburg Elementary School, and Johnsburg Junior High School. From 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., the school's cafeteria and the main gym were transformed into a showcase of community resources, offering valuable support for families across the district.

Representatives from local and regional sports organizations engaged with families interested in fostering physical activity and teamwork. Health and wellness took a front seat, with booths providing information on both physical and mental health support, emphasizing the importance of a comprehensive approach to well-being within our community.

The spotlight also shone on before and after school programming, offering parents insights into enriching activities beyond the traditional school day. The diverse array of programs highlighted the district's commitment to delivering a well-rounded education that extends beyond the classroom.

Furthermore, local and county resources like the Johnsburg Public Library, Johnsburg Police Department, the McHenry County Department of Health, and McHenry County College met with families to promote their programs and departments. Our community learned about many opportunities that are available right around the corner.

Additionally, District 12 hosted several tables to share information about district offerings. The Tech Department shared valuable resources on protecting students while using the internet and social media. The Family Depot made sure families were aware of the additional support they could find right here in Johnsburg and Ringwood School promoted its preschool and early childhood programs.



The Family Expo wasn't just about families; it provided an excellent platform for local organizations to connect with the community. We extend our thanks to the organizations that participated, demonstrating their commitment to supporting families, students, and the overall well-being of our community.



Excitingly, the Family Expo is set to become an annual tradition, strengthening our community bonds. If your group or organization wishes to join future events, administrators at your child's school are eager to hear from you.



# Honoring Heroes: Johnsburg Elementary's Veterans Day Program



Johnsburg Elementary School hosted its annual Veterans Day program on Friday, November 10, 2023. The event, designed to pay respect to the courageous men and women who have served our nation, showcased the school's appreciation for our veterans.

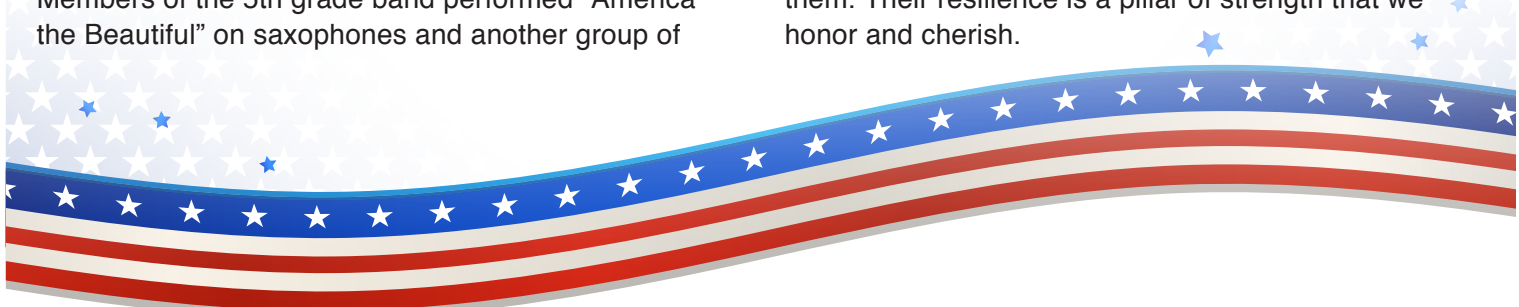
The program began with Girl Scout Troop 626 and Troop 26 carrying the U.S. and Illinois flags, followed by the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Principal Dr. Belcastro then welcomed the audience by highlighting personal connections to the legacy of service and the significance of Veterans Day. She also took a moment to acknowledge two staff members who are veterans. Fifth grade teacher Dan Perso is an Army veteran and an active member of the Army Reserves; and school nurse Lisa Aydin, is a veteran of the Air Force. Their dedication to both the school community and the nation is greatly appreciated.

The program continued with a tribute to each branch of the military through their respective songs. Veterans in attendance stood proudly as their branch's song played, creating a powerful moment of recognition and gratitude. All of our JES students sang the Star Spangled Banner, led by music teacher Lynn Mrazek. Members of the 5th grade band performed "America the Beautiful" on saxophones and another group of

students on clarinets and flutes performed "Yankee Doodle". Student speakers followed, expressing their gratitude and admiration for veterans through letters, poems, and other writings. Their readings were a tribute to the profound impact of veterans' service on future generations. At the end of the program, the entire student body sang "Veterans, We're So Proud of You."

In her closing, Dr. Belcastro emphasized the vital role veterans play in maintaining peace and security. She reminded those present of the importance of passing on to the next generation the lessons of service and the principles that make our nation great. Following the program, a reception in the cafeteria provided an opportunity for veterans and honored guests to connect with students.

In a world facing previously unseen challenges, the program served as a reminder of the fortitude of our military—a beacon of strength ready to protect and uphold the principles that make our nation great. The JES Veterans Day program was a poignant reminder of the enduring spirit that defines our nation. The staff and students at JES proudly thank our veterans for being the guardians of our freedom and the families who support them. Their resilience is a pillar of strength that we honor and cherish.



# Fall Review of Activities, Clubs, and Athletics from JJHS

The students and staff at Johnsburg Junior High School have been very busy the past couple of months from the band and choir concert, staff member coffee cart, Johnsburg Outdoors Club, and the successful volleyball and cross country seasons.

The JJHS band and choir concert was held on October 26th, in front of many of our families. The students spent the first couple months of the school year practicing, and it showed when it was put together. The mixture of instruments and vocals was great and enjoyed by all. We are eager to see their next concert in December.

New this school year, is the coffee cart that was started for the students in the ALPs program. The students deliver every other Tuesday to the teachers and staff at Johnsburg Junior High school. This allows the students who run the cart to build relationships with other staff in the building, learn how to handle money, hard work, communication skills and the feeling of accomplishing tasks that may be difficult to do. The coffee cart gives the students an opportunity to build skills that will benefit them in the future. This has been such an enjoyable experience and cannot wait to see the growth the cart has in the future.



Johnsburg Outdoor Club is a unique club that started in 1974. When students join the Outdoor Club, they have the opportunity to kayak or canoe in our local waterways. The Outdoor Club has the philosophy that young adults need to learn to appreciate their environment before they work towards preserving and conserving it!



There was a lot of success on the volleyball courts this year. The 6th grade team played well and hard throughout the season, and it was wonderful to watch them grow as a team and individuals.



The 7th grade girls' volleyball team went undefeated for the year, winning the conference during the regular season and the end of the year conference tournament. This team really gelled this year and their success was noticed by everyone at the conference. The 8th grade girls shared a similar success story this year. They were the regular season conference champions and had a strong showing in the conference tournament at the end of the season. It was nice to see the 8th grade girls grow together throughout their JJHS years, and we are excited to see what they will do at JHS. Congratulations to all our volleyball athletes this year.

The cross country team had a phenomenal year to say the least. Our Wildcat runners put on an amazing performance not only throughout the season, but at the state finals. Our girls team finished in 5th place overall, and our boys finished in 19th place overall. We are proud to say that we do have a state champion on our team, as 8th grader Grady Smith was 1st place in the boys division bringing home the title to the Junior High. Congratulations to all of our cross country athletes for doing their best and working hard.



We want to thank all of the teachers, club sponsors, and coaches for being leaders and mentors to our students both inside and outside of the classroom. We couldn't be more proud of our community and we cannot wait to see what the rest of the year brings to our wildcat family!



# First Golden Goat Games

Johnsburg H.S. recently held its first ever Golden Goat Games on Dec. 1. The games were planned and orchestrated by JHS's PBIS committee, made up of staff members Liz Behrens, Dan Slavicek, Erin Tassone, Samantha Maas, Jaclyn Mitchell, and Travis Vasseur.

Slavicek said this event was in the works for quite some time.

"We started the process of thinking about the games last year because we attended a national PBIS conference in Chicago and other schools had really positive outcomes from having similar assemblies," he said.

The committee started meeting over the summer to plan for the event. In all, hundreds of hours were spent script writing, brainstorming, gathering materials and general organization.

The Games took place at an assembly for grades 9-11 (seniors were in a different activity) and rewarded



participants based on how many PBIS tickets they had earned this semester. The freshmen, sophomores, and juniors competed as classes against each other in Tug o'War, Boat Races, Red Light, Green Light, and others.

PTO funds were used for game materials and prizes, for which the committee was very grateful. "If we didn't have the budget PTO allowed us, we would have had to nix several things," Slavicek said.

Freshman Charlie Eastland thought it was a fun and rewarding experience.

"It was pretty awesome," Eastland said. "It made me feel really connected to the school. It was really fun and I hope it continues next year."

Slavicek says their goal is to bring some student advisers onto the committee to plan for the next Golden Goat Games.



## Giving Tree: A Heartfelt Thank You to our Community for Bringing Christmas Cheer

In the spirit of Christmas, our community has once again shown its remarkable generosity and compassion. As we reflect on the holiday season, we are overwhelmed with gratitude for the incredible support we have received. Your collective efforts have brought joy to over 60 children who may have otherwise missed out on the magic of the holiday season.

We extend our sincere appreciation to all who participated in our Christmas gift donation drive; you have made a difference in the lives of those facing hardships and challenges. Through your contributions,

we were able to provide 20+ families with a sense of belonging and love, reminding everyone that they are part of our community and remembered during this special season of the year.

Whether it was through the donation of gifts, time, or resources, every act of kindness has contributed to creating a ripple of positivity that will undoubtedly resonate well beyond this holiday season. As we move forward into the new year, let us carry forward the spirit of kindness and compassion that defines us. Together, let us continue to create a positive impact and spread joy to those who need it most.

# NEWS FROM D12 MUSIC BOOSTERS

The Music Boosters are proud to announce that over \$4,200 was raised from music programs (general music, bands, choirs) for the 2022-23 school year! Thank you for your generosity and support of our musical students!

## ABOUT MUSIC BOOSTERS:

The D12 Music Boosters organization exists to support the district music programs. Please consider supporting our music students and programs by becoming involved with Music Boosters. Meetings are typically the 1st Monday of the month during the school year. Contact [MusicBoosters@johnsburg12.org](mailto:MusicBoosters@johnsburg12.org) for more information or follow us on facebook @jbmusicboosters

## CONGRATULATIONS!

Selection into (ILMEA) Illinois Music Educators Association Festival requires rigorous preparation, individual auditions, and hours of rehearsal. Congratulations to our participants from Johnsburg High School:



**Sarah Knutilla (Senior Band)**

**Cayla Wacaser (Senior Choir)**

**Konrad Zapal (Senior Jazz IV)**

## SAVE THE DATE!

### Grade Level Winter/Spring Concerts

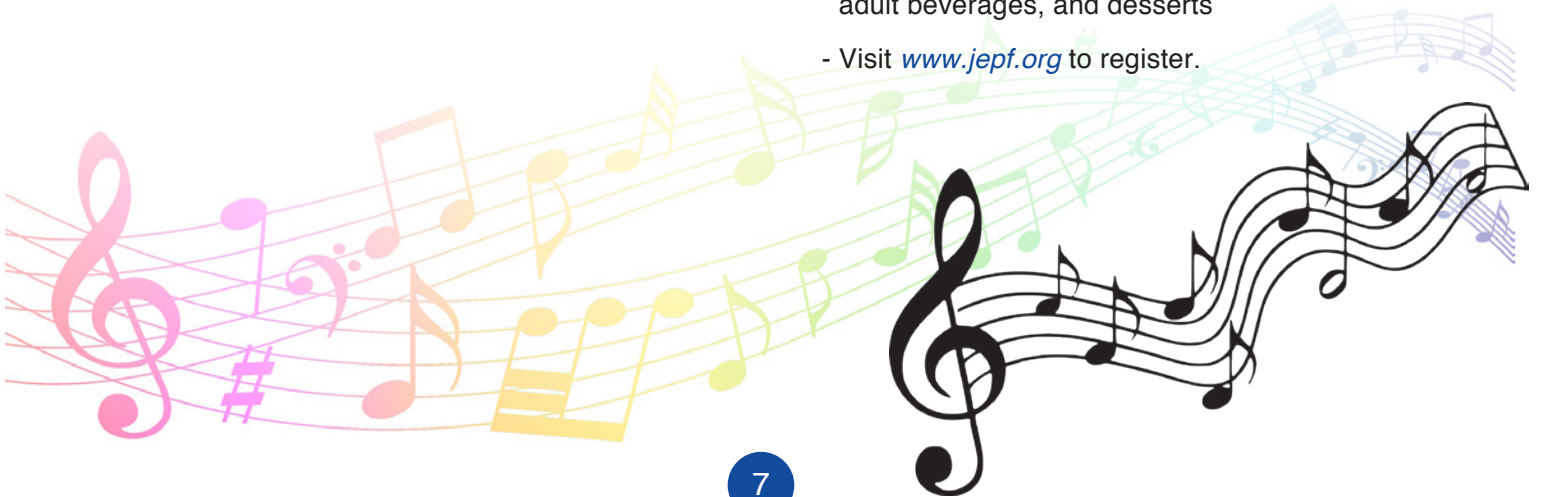
- Check each school's website calendar for more detailed information.
- Pre-concert flowers will be available for purchase.

### Restaurant Fundraiser Nights:

- Chipotle - Monday, 12/18/23 (4:00-8:00 pm) - McHenry
- Panera - Tuesday, 2/13/24 (all day) - McHenry

### 2024 Winter Tasting Fundraiser (co-host with JEPF)

- Saturday, 02/10/24 (6:30-9:00 pm) - Johnsburg Community Club
- Fantastic tasting selections of various: appetizers, adult beverages, and desserts
- Visit [www.jepf.org](http://www.jepf.org) to register.



# Understanding Dual Credit

## What is Dual Credit?

Dual credit refers to a program that allows high school students to enroll in college-level courses and simultaneously earn credits that count towards both their high school diploma and a college degree. These programs are a collaboration between high schools and colleges (including community colleges), providing students with a head start on their college education.

## Benefits of Dual Credit Programs:

- **Cost Savings:**  
By earning college credits while still in high school, students and their families can significantly reduce the overall cost of a college education. This is particularly advantageous as the expense of higher education continues to rise.  
  
Courses offered at JHS will cost \$25 per course.
- **Smooth Transition to College:**
  - Students who participate in dual credit programs often experience a smoother transition to college life. They become familiar with the expectations of college-level work, the pace of classes, and the overall academic environment.

## Considerations for Parents:

- **Balancing Workload:**  
While the benefits of dual credit programs are substantial, parents and students should carefully consider the workload. It's essential to strike a balance that allows students to excel academically without feeling overwhelmed.
- **Transferability of Credits:**  
Parents should inquire about the transferability of dual credit courses to various colleges and universities. Some institutions may have specific criteria for accepting these credits, and understanding their policies is important.

## Courses to be offered next year at JHS:

- DC College Composition I (MCC's ENG 151)
- DC College Composition II (MCC's ENG 152)
- DC Music Appreciation (MCC's MUS 151)
- DC US History (MCC's HIS 170 and 172)
- DC Strength and Conditioning Principles (TBD)

Dual credit programs offer a unique opportunity for students to enhance their academic experience and pave the way for a smoother transition to higher education. By staying informed and actively participating in the decision-making process, parents can support their children in making the most of these valuable educational opportunities.

# District 12 Bond Refunding

In March of 2014, the Johnsburg School District community passed a referendum to issue bonds to improve the district's facility infrastructure. Those bonds allowed the district to complete major renovations to address maintenance needs, to replace outdated equipment and as a result close and sell one aging building. At this time, the District has two outstanding bonds from the referendum which will be fully paid in 2035.

The two outstanding bonds are municipal bonds which have an optional redemption date or "call date" approximately 10 years from the date of issuance. The optional redemption provision allows governmental entities to refinance outstanding bonds. Bond refinancing or "refunding" is used to achieve debt service savings. When enough time passes and the call date approaches, an issuer can assess current market rates, and if current market rates are below the interest rates on the outstanding bonds, the entity can issue refunding bonds at a lower interest rate and realize debt service savings, which results in savings to taxpayers.

The opportunity allows for the district to maintain the tax-exempt status of the current bonds and maintain the same final maturity of the bonds, but reduce the overall payment funded by taxpayer dollars, resulting in a savings to taxpayers.

This opportunity was discussed in depth during the February 14, 2023 D12 Board of Education Meeting as the call date for the district's outstanding bonds was approaching. At the March 21, 2023 Board of Education meeting, the School Board approved the refunding of the 2014A General Obligation Bonds and the refunding bonds were placed for bid. Upon the recent October 16, 2023 closing, it has been determined that the refunding generated a total savings to taxpayers of just under \$2.0 million.

As the call date for the 2015 bonds will also be approaching soon, the Board will be considering this process again soon. The district will continue to be diligent in saving taxpayer dollars while exploring this further.

# Johnsburg H.S. Celebrates 20 years of Madrigals Singers



Johnsburg High School's Madrigals chorus celebrated its 20th year of holiday performance this year. The choir has put on a special Christmas concert and meal since its start in 2003. Madrigal parent volunteer Margie Cherwin remembers the work that went into the first performance.

"We would get to the school Friday night, around 3:30, and stay until everything was done, sometimes 8 maybe 9 p.m., probably more like 10 p.m. knowing us," Cherwin recalls. "The goal was so when we came back for the show on Saturday, all we had to worry about was the kitchen and getting everything, especially the wassail heated and ready for the servers."

Cherwin's son, Max Cherwin, was one of the original Madrigals performers, the jester, and now teaches English at Johnsburg H.S. Her other three children all participated in the Madrigals performances in some shape or form.

The Madrigals are now directed by Samantha Thielen-Pak, who is enthusiastic about carrying on this important traditional entertainment.

"It is truly an honor to be a part of this long running tradition here in Johnsburg. Knowing that it is our 20th Anniversary, it adds a slight amount of pressure to make the past generations of JHS Madrigal Singers proud," she said.

In honor of the 20th anniversary performances, the Singers implemented a new tradition in which previous members of the Royal Court (any JHS Madrigal Alumni) were welcomed up to the stage to perform the time honored songs "Wassail" and "Toast" with the current singers.

The 2023 Madrigals Singers included: Gunner Kimball, Alicia Hurley, Anna Wiginton, Josephine Barrett, Carmen Sierra, Catt Utley, Charlie Heuer, Micayla Wacaser, Lance Grueneich, Kendall Berg, Sam Hilliard, Jenna Tavlarides, and Abigail Schmidt.

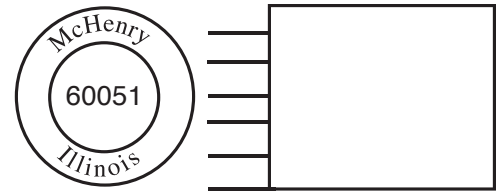
## Join Our D12 Team for the 2023-2024 School Year!

If you are interested in joining our team for the 2023-2024 school year, we encourage you to apply today! Together we can create an exceptional learning experience for our students and build a stronger community. We currently have openings for bus drivers, paraprofessionals, and substitute teachers.

To learn more about available positions and the application process please visit our website: <https://www.johnsburg12.org/page/employment-opportunities>



**Johnsburg Community Unit School District 12**  
2222 West Church Street  
Johnsburg, IL 60051



Postal Customer  
McHenry, IL 60051

## 2023-2024 School Calendar Upcoming Dates to Remember

**Monday, December 25, 2023 - Friday, January 5, 2024 - No School** (*Winter Break*)

**Monday, January 8, 2024 - School Resumes**

**Friday, January 12, 2024 – No School**  
(*Teacher Institute Day*)

**Monday, January 15, 2024 – No School**  
(*Martin Luther King's Birthday*)

**Thursday, February 15, 2024 – No School**  
(*Parent Teacher Conferences*)

**Friday, February 16, 2024 – No School**  
(*School Not In Session*)

**Monday, February 19, 2024 – No School**  
(*Presidents' Day*)

**Monday, March 25, 2024- Monday, April 1, 2024 - No School** (*Spring Break*)

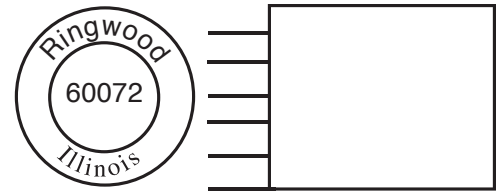
**Tuesday, April 2, 2024 - School Resumes**

**Friday, May 2, 2024– ½ Day School**  
(*School Improvement Day*)

**Monday, May 27, 2024 – No School**  
(*Memorial Day*)

**Thursday, May 30, 2024 - Last Day of School**  
(*If No Emergency Days Used*)

**Johnsburg Community Unit School District 12**  
2222 West Church Street  
Johnsburg, IL 60051



Postal Customer  
Ringwood, IL 60072

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