



Believe in Your Greatness

For the parents, students, staff, and community of Clay Middle School

CLAY NATION NEWS

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Clay Nation,

At Clay we work very hard to focus on school culture and build a culture that is centered around GREATNESS. During the month of February, we have been highlighting our GREATNESS in several ways.

How do we build the Clay culture?

By highlighting GREATNESS

February 5-9 -

National School Counseling Week

THANK YOU to our hard working and committed Student Services Team. It was awesome to recognize all of you do for our students and staff at Clay.

Elementary School Activity Nights at Clay

We had a great time over the last two months welcoming our 5th grade students and parents to Clay Middle School. We are very excited to begin helping them think about the transition to middle school from elementary school. Thank you again to all of our amazing families for attending our 5th Grade Parent Information Night. We look forward to seeing all of our 5th grade families back to our Clay Spring Open House in April.

ISSMA Competitions

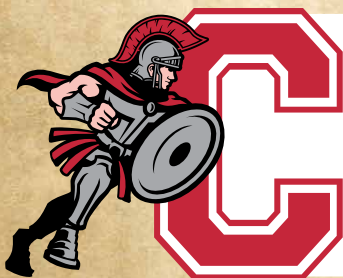
- ISSMA Solo and Ensemble: Wind/Percussion / String Competition
- ISSMA Solo Voice and Piano Competition
- ISSMA Solo & Ensemble Band Competition
- ISSMA Choir Competition

Our Clay performing arts students have been performing throughout this past month at an extremely high level in orchestra, band and choir, where they received many gold ratings for their outstanding performances. We are excited to be hosting both orchestra and band ISSMA competitions at Clay Middle School on Friday March 15th and Saturday March 16th. Our Clay Choir will be performing that same weekend at Carmel Middle School.

**GOOD LUCK TO EVERYONE AND
KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!**

Thank you to our winter student athletes – Thank you to all of our students that have been competing this winter and are currently finishing their seasons. Our Clay wrestling team and 7th and 8th grade girls' basketball teams will be going into their Hamilton County tournaments this coming Saturday 3-9-24. I have been

...continued on the next page



ADMINISTRATION

Todd Crosby, Principal

Catherine Gahl, Assistant Principal

Mark Smith, Assistant Principal

John Corcoran, Athletic/Activities Director

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE *continues...*

proud as the principal at Clay to see our athletes and teams competing in a very impressive manner. They have truly modeled **GREATNESS** in both times of victory and defeat, and I think I can speak for our staff when I say that we are all proud of them! **THE CLAY WAY!**

Spring Sports - right around the corner! Call out meetings for spring sports are starting to occur. Our spring sports options are Softball (7, 8), Baseball (7, 8), and Track and Field (6, 7, and 8). For more information, please feel free to contact our Activities / Athletic Director, Mr. John Corcoran at jcorcoran@ccs.k12.in.us OR visit our new website at <https://www.ccs.k12.in.us/clm/athletics>.

Special Recognition to our Clay Food Service Staff

We will be recognizing our Clay Food Service Staff during the week of March 11-15, for all the hard work, dedication and care that our amazing food service staff take to provide the best meals for both our student and staff each and every day. Thank you for our Clay Cafeteria Manager Mrs. Amy Glover for all she does for Clay. We appreciate all of you!!

National Library Week

We will be recognizing our Clay Medica Center staff during the week of April 8-12, for everything they do to provide a great media center atmosphere for our entire school where the love for learning and reading are promoted to all of our students daily. Thank you to our Clay Media Center Specialist Mrs. Stephanie Swartzendruber and our media center assistant Mrs. Carole Fitzgerald. Thank you both for being awesome!

Administrative Professionals Day

We will be recognizing our incredible administrative professionals on April 24th. A huge **THANK YOU** goes out to each of these ladies for everything they do in our Clay front office, our Clay Student Services Department and as our Clay school treasurer. Clay Middle School is fortunate to have each of you and please know how much we all appreciate you and all you do to make Clay Middle School as welcoming for our school community as possible.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Mrs. Jen Pletcher

Mrs. Celeste Rodriguez

Mrs. Holly Baker – Banninga

Mrs. Deanna Boyce

As always, your support for Clay Middle School never goes unnoticed and we truly appreciate our school community for everything. I challenge all Clay Trojans to Believe in Your Greatness and together we will take Clay Middle School to even greater heights. As principal, I believe it is my position to help provide vision, leadership, oversight, safety and the best instruction to every student that attends Clay Middle School. I truly realize success cannot be accomplished without an active school community to continue to take Clay Middle School in the direction of continuous success and excellence. I am happy to announce that the Clay Nation is alive and well.

Reminder to follow us on *Twitter* @ClayTrojans #ClayGreatness

GO TROJANS!

Sincerely,
Todd A. Crosby, Principal

ILEARN TESTING IS COMING UP!



HELPFUL REMINDERS

As we look to ahead in preparation to the new ILEARN test, here are a few things that you can do to help your child be as successful as possible.

How can students get ready for ILEARN?

- **Be prepared** - Cramming for any test is never the best way to prepare. Keep up with your homework and ask your teachers for help when you need it.
- **Ask for help** - If you've had trouble with standardized testing in the past, ask a teacher, counselor or parent about extra help now.
- **Review** - Try to take it seriously when your teachers review important information that may help you feel more prepared.
- **Double-check your work** - Get in the habit now of double-checking your work and proofreading your answers on homework to be ready to find mistakes on test days.
- **Get plenty of sleep** - Go to bed a little earlier so you get a good night's sleep. Being well rested will give you an extra boost of energy.
- **Have a good breakfast** - Eating a healthy breakfast will help you perform better. Too much food can make you feel sleepy, so don't overdo it.
- **Take a break** - Get some exercise during your breaks or after school to keep your energy up.

What can parents do to help students prepare for ILEARN testing?

- **Stay connected** - The best preparation is to provide consistent support for your child throughout his or her education.
- **Know what's expected** - Read information available at Indiana Department of Education

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(<https://www.doe.in.gov/>) so you know what your child should know and be able to do, reinforce these expectations at home and stay connected to your child's academic performance throughout the year.

- **Check grades** - Your son or daughter may say things are "fine" at school but don't stop checking Canvas, progress reports or, if available, your child's online grades or class progress.
- **Check Canvas / Team Newsletters for updates** - Teachers know how hard students are working, the quality of their homework and what areas need improvement.
- **Stay involved** - Nothing will have a bigger impact on your student's success than your involvement in his or her education. If your child is not studying at home, ask why, and double-check with teachers. It's tough to hold the line, but making sure your child does get the proper amount of rest and eat properly is important for academic success as well.
- **Ask for help** - Students who are struggling in a particular class may need extra help after school or with a tutor. Find out from your school where you can go for help and make sure your student gets the help he or she needs. Catching a problem area now can make a big difference.

Please feel free to contact the school if you have any major questions or concerns on how to best support your child.

Sincerely,
Todd A. Crosby, Principal



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BLACK HISTORY MONTH POSTER CONTEST

Clay students participated in a poster contest for Black History Month this year! Over 70 students submitted a poster about a famous black American and their accomplishments. Winners will be announced next week.

MATHCOUNTS

Congratulations to all the mathletes that participated in the Mathcounts Chapter competition on Saturday, February 11th. 8th graders: Rodion Z, Jonathan Z, Colin P, Saket S, and Andrew L and 7th graders: Hrishabh B, Chris C, Kevin C, Minghan H, Angie L, Xavier T, and Luke Z.

We are proud of their hard work! Clay's team of Hrishabh B, Chris C, Jonathan Z, and Rodion Z placed 4th out of 12 schools and will be moving on to the State Competition on March 9th at Rose Hulman. In the individual competition, special congratulations to Hrishabh B who placed 2nd overall out of 120 competitors and 3rd place in the countdown round. Also placing in the top 25% of all individual competitors was Rodion Z, Saket S, Chris C, Andrew L, and Jonathon Z. Great job!

Just in: Congratulations to the following students who qualified for the 2024 Indiana State MATHCOUNTS Competition:

Hrishabh B, Chris C, Jonathon Z, Rodion Z, Saket S, and Andrew L

The competition will be held on Saturday, March 9, 2024 at the Rose Hulman Institute of Technology in Terre Haute.



IMPORTANT MARCH AND APRIL DATES

MARCH	
March 6, 2024	Late Start
March 11-15	Food Service Staff Week (National Nutrition Month)
March 13, 2024	Mid Year Band Concert-7th Concert Band and 6th Grade
March 15, 2024	3rd Quarter Ends
March 15, 2024	PTO Meeting
March 15, 2024	Orchestra ISSMA Organization Contest - Grades 6-8
March 16, 2024	Orchestra ISSMA Organization Contest - Grades 6-8
March 16, 2024	Choir ISSMA Organization Contest - All Grades
March 19, 2024	Choir Concert
March 20, 2024	Late Start
APRIL	
April 1-8	Spring Break
April 1-5	National Assistant Principals Week
April 8-12	National Library Week
April 9, 2024	Classes Resume
April 9, 2024	Spring Sports Begin
April 10, 2024	Late Start



FROM STUDENT SERVICES

Scheduling

Counselors met with students during the month of February to complete the course selection process for the 2024-2025 school year.

Final course requests are due to be entered in [PowerSchool](#) by March 1, 2024. If you have questions, please feel free to email your child's counselor directly.

- [Mrs Naas](#) - All 7th to 8th Grade Questions
- [Mrs. Janson](#) - All 6th to 7th Grade Questions
- [Carmel High School Freshman Counselors](#) - 8th to 9th Grade questions (*Your child's assigned freshman counselor can be found via the above link)

Withdrawals

If your student is planning to attend a school other than Clay Middle or Carmel High School for their 2024-2025 school year, you must complete our [withdrawal form](#).

This form can also be found on Clay Middle School's home webpage. Follow the link at the bottom of the page to 'Student Services' and then select 'Current Students' to fill out the [withdrawal form](#) and return to our office.



The 21st Century Scholars Program

provides income-eligible students the opportunity to earn a scholarship that covers up to four years of tuition and regularly assessed fees. 21st Century Scholars support eligible students and parents with the tools they need to prepare for college, graduate on time and begin a successful career.

Indiana's 7th and 8th grade students can apply for the 21st Century Scholars Program if their families meet the eligibility guidelines. All students must apply by June 30 of their 8th grade year. Please visit <http://scholars.in.gov/> to learn more and apply!

If you have any questions, please contact Michelle Janson at mjanson@ccs.k12.in.us.

Culture of Care Week
February 26th-March 1st

Monday Self Confidence: It's Cool to be me. Wear something to express your unique self.

Tuesday Growth Mindset: Wear bright colors to represent your bright future.

Wednesday Positivity: Wear white to white out negative thoughts.

Thursday Connection Caring: Wear school colors to connect with school.

Friday Service and Community: Wear blue/gold to support our Carmel community.

From February 26-March 1, Clay Middle School along with all of CCS and the Carmel community celebrated Culture of Care Week! With a focus on self-care and caring for others, students participated in spirit days and classroom, lunch, and school-wide activities!

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- **Winter Session 1** runs from November to January
- **Winter Session 2** runs from January to March

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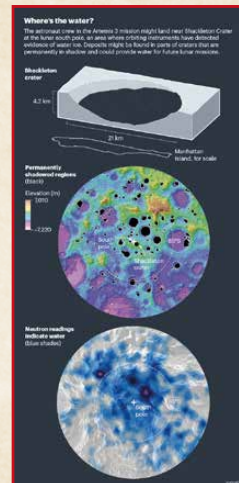
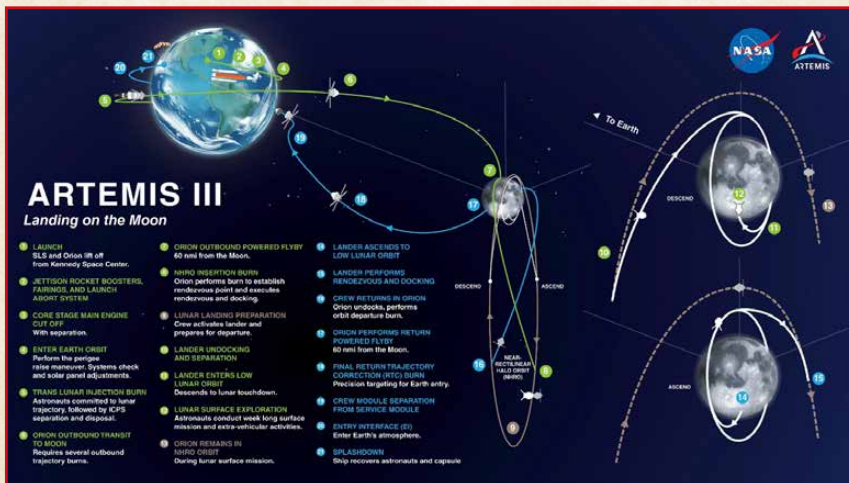
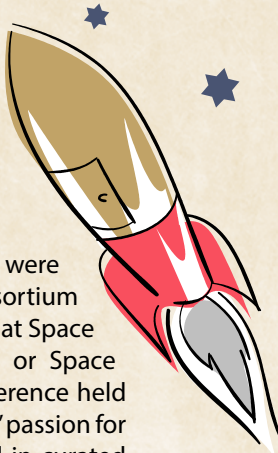
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FINDING THE POWER OF **OUR** OUR STUDENTS... OUR PARENTS... AND OUR COMMUNITY

SCIENCE / STEM TEACHERS: MR. STURGIS & MR. DIAL GO TO NASA'S JOHNSON SPACE CENTER!

Clay Middle School teachers Mr. Sturgis and Mr. Dial were awarded a scholarship from Indiana's Space Grant Consortium to attend the 2024 SEEC conference in Houston Texas at Space Center Houston and Johnson Space Center! SEEC, or Space Exploration Educators Conference, is an annual conference held by NASA personnel and its goal is to "ignite" educators' passion for space exploration education. Attendees participated in curated sessions from educators and NASA experts while interacting with other teachers to learn and grow together.

This year's conference was aligned with the on-going Artemis missions currently underway at NASA. With Artemis, NASA is leading the next steps to return humans to the Moon. Mr. Dial and Mr. Sturgis were able to learn about the Artemis missions and NASA's plan to put humans back on the moon in 2026! In addition to meeting current NASA astronauts, engineers, and administrators, Mr. Dial and Mr. Sturgis were also provided an opportunity to learn from teachers from around the world. Sturgis and Dial returned home with materials and lesson plans which will be shared with students and fellow science and technology teachers at Clay.



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THE GREEN SCENE

This year's Earth Hour will be celebrated on March 23rd from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Millions of people across the planet will come together to turn off lights and electrical equipment for one hour. The event symbolizes that by working together, each of us can make a positive impact in addressing climate change, conserving energy and protecting the planet.

In celebration of Earth Hour, Team Atlas Green Team students entered an art contest sponsored by the Carmel Green Initiative. This year's theme was how to preserve and protect our natural resources.

Congratulations to our top 20 entries. They will be moving on to the next phase of judging! *Stay tuned for the results!*

Jenna B	Claire K	Claire M	Kara J	Charlie E
James M	Ian M	Adeline K	Zaylee J	Lamar A
Lita P	Grayson B	Leah X	Julia S	Charlotte L
Kate K	Olivia T	Ada A	Liana S	Bridge M



DONATE LIFE INDIANA

On February 20 and 21, Lynn Gagel from Donate Life Indiana visited Clay to educate 8th grade science students about organ donations and transplants. Students learned about eligibility for donating and receiving, which organs can be transplanted, how lives of recipients are changed and many other impacts of organ donation. Volunteers participated in activities to experience what limitations might be like for people on organ transplant waiting lists and heard testimonials from recipients as well as family members of donors.

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CARMEL UNIFIED CHEER CALLOUT MEETING



Hi! As we gear up for the upcoming Football season, we are excited to announce a call out meeting for all those interested in joining the Unified Cheer team. This is a great opportunity to get involved, and we can't wait to see you **March 27th!** The meeting will be held in the **Community Room, we will start promptly at 4:45.** We strongly encourage all parents to attend this meeting. Your presence and support will be greatly appreciated. We will discuss our plans for the upcoming season, answer any questions you may have, and get to know each other better!

Team Building Workshops will be on April 15th and 16th in P152 from 4:45-6:00.

Tryouts will be April 19th 4:45-6:00 (P152) and April 20th 10:00-12:00 (Freshman Gym).

About Unified Cheer

Unified Cheer is a fantastic way to get involved in community, enjoy the thrill of joining an inclusive sport (*gender inclusive as well!*), and make lasting friendships. Our team is a mix of experienced cheerleaders and beginners, and we welcome anyone who is interested in cheering, regardless of their previous experience, skill level, or gender. We are looking for **LOUD AND PROUD HOUNDS!**

Why You Should Join

Joining the Unified Cheer is not just about cheering for the team. It's about being part of a community, learning new skills, and having fun. You'll get to support our unified flag football team, participate on an inclusive team, and make a difference in our school and community. We look forward to seeing you at the call out meeting and sharing more about the exciting season ahead. Don't miss this opportunity to be part of a fantastic team and make the football season even more memorable!

Looking forward to seeing you all!
Cheerfully,
Coach Lo



CLAY ATHLETICS

For more information, please go to: <https://www.ccs.k12.in.us/clm/athletics>



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CHESS CLUB

Clay Middle School proudly presents its chess club, a vibrant hub of strategic thinking and friendly competition. Led by Ms. Ericson in Room 815, the club convenes (about) every other Wednesday after school, providing a stimulating environment for students to enhance their cognitive skills while having fun.

Whether your student is a complete novice eager to learn the ropes or a seasoned grandmaster looking for fresh challenges, all skill levels are welcome to join us on this thrilling chess journey. Encourage your student be a part of our dynamic chess community and unlock your full potential on the checkered battlefield!

Chess Club Dates!

January 31
February 14
March 27
April 10
April 24
May 8
May 22

(essentially every other Wednesday)

If you have your own chess board, please bring it!

We will meet after school on each one of these dates until 4:20. Please make sure you have a ride here to pick you up at 4:20-4:25.
Sponsored by Ms. Ericson - Room 815

STAATSKONGRESS 2024




On February 10th, middle and high school German students throughout Indiana met at the annual Staatskongress, held at Ball State University. The day was filled with competitions and, of course, speaking German. Students were able to participate in cultural experiences including games, dances, art, food and more. The student designed posters, games, t-shirts and artwork were amazing. 27 Carmel, Clay and Creekside middle school students attended and brought home 3 first place ribbons, 2 second place ribbons and 1 third place ribbon. Carmel High School won the trophy for the third year in a row.



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REFLECTIONS

Seventh and Eighth grade students have been offered the opportunity to reflect on the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and to honor his legacy.

Students were given the following quote by the Indiana Association of School Principals (IASP) and asked to create an essay addressing Dr. King's words:

Huge shout out to ALL STUDENTS who wrote essays and entered their essays. We appreciate you time and effort to honor Dr. King! Congratulations to the classroom and team winners listed below!



Clay field trip to celebrate
Black History Month



Additional congratulations to the five highlighted names who were selected as Clay Middle School's TOP FIVE ESSAYISTS! These five winners will move on and represent Clay Middle School for the essay contest. The following students were selected as team winners and finalists:

Team 7-1 (Mr. Snyder) - Karis L, Henry V, **Destyni D**, and Elli S

Team 7-1 (Mr. Wasemann) - Rachel M & Sophia S

Team 7-2 (Mr. Stewart) - Fernanda Mariana C-L & James M

Team 7-3 (Mr. Patane) - **Pavithra V** & Abby S

Team 8-1 (Miss Olejnik/Mrs. Gaffken) - Madison B & Jervai C

Team 8-2 (Mr. Carr) - **Dharini S**

Team 8-3 (Mrs. Giles/Miss Higgins) - Rodion Z, **Azariah T**, and **Jonathan Z**

MLK Essay Winners



Destyni, Azariah, Pavritha, Ellie,
and (not pictured) Jonathon

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(Local Area Leaders Focus) with Dr. Shabazz

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The Clay Classic News now has an online presence! Check out the new website that features articles, the latest episodes of our CCN broadcast, and links to our radio broadcast stories. All content is created by Mr. Williams' journalism students!

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and celebrate
THIS year!

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FROM THE PTO

Save the Date for 8th grade celebration!

Attention 8th Grade Families: **SAVE THE DATE**

8th Grade Celebration

May 21, 2024

6:00-8:30 PM at Clay Middle School

Join your fellow Trojans to celebrate the end of middle school with food, games, prizes, and a live DJ! More information available soon!

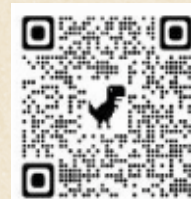
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[MLL Speaker Interest Form](#)

**Link for
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2023-24](#)

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