

# BRONCHO PRESS

Official Newsletter of Holly Area Schools

Fall/Winter 2023



FALL/  
WINTER  
2023  
EDITION

#BRONCHOPRIDE



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Superintendent Scott Roper

**Welcome to the Fall/Winter 2023 edition of the Broncho Press!**

With the start of the 2023-2024 school year underway, we have many things to be excited and proud about. I'm looking forward to sharing the latest news about our amazing Broncho students, teachers, staff and families with you in this edition of our newsletter.

First, I'd like to acknowledge how our Holly High School family came together to support one another following the tragic loss of senior Deegan Walton and longtime teacher Tony Coggins in October. Both Deegan and Mr. Coggins left indelible marks on our Broncho community, and their passing has left us all heartbroken. As part of the continuing grieving process and to commemorate their legacies, we have included tributes to both Deegan and Mr. Coggins in this edition. I'd like to personally thank our district crisis response team for coordinating grief support and neighboring districts for providing additional counseling, social worker and therapy dog services during this difficult and sad time.

Both of these tragedies devastated our community, and we continue to comfort one another.

In this edition of the Broncho Press, you'll also learn about several new districtwide initiatives and programs, each focused on providing world-class educational opportunities that prepare our Bronchos for the real world and success.

I'm particularly excited to highlight the new Holly Middle School and Construction Trades Center that broke ground this fall. Our middle school project is years in the making, and will help us provide a modern, safe and fulfilling educational experience for our students. Our Construction Trades Center is central to our mission to provide opportunities for students in the skilled trades.

You'll receive an update on additional construction projects made possible by the voter-approved 2022 bond. Our bond projects are helping us prepare Bronchos for success now and into the future, and it's all thanks to the generosity of our community.

As always, it is an honor serving as your superintendent.

#BronchosUnited!

Sincerely,

Scott M. Roper, Superintendent



Schematic of new Construction Trades Center at the groundbreaking event.



Holly Area Schools construction trades students take their turn at the shovel at the Construction Trades Center groundbreaking.



Holly Area Schools Superintendent Scott Roper speaks at the groundbreaking of the state-of-the-art Construction Trades Center.

## District breaks ground on new Holly Middle School, Construction Trades Center

Holly Area Schools broke ground on the much-anticipated new Holly Middle School and state-of-the-art, 6,500-square-foot Construction Trades Center on Sept. 14. Both projects were made possible by the 2022 voter-approved bond and are part of the district's continued commitment to preparing all Bronchos for success and careers.

The new middle school, replacing the Sherman Campus Middle School, will be built on the site of the current Karl Richter Campus and is slated to open in fall 2025.

"A high-quality education begins with creating the best possible learning environment for our Bronchos, and middle school provides the building blocks for student achievement," said **Eric Curl**, Holly Middle School principal. "On behalf of the entire Holly Middle School team, I'd like to thank our community for this opportunity to help our students chart their own personal paths toward bright futures."

The Construction Trades Center is scheduled to open in spring 2024 and is designed to help prepare students for in-demand, high-wage careers in the skilled trades, including achieving certifications before graduation.

"This innovative project is part of our commitment at Holly Area Schools to prepare all Bronchos for the jobs of the future, including in-demand careers in the skilled trades," **Scott Roper**, Holly Area Schools superintendent, said

at the groundbreaking event outside Holly High School. "Our Construction Trades Center is made possible by the generosity of our Broncho community, and is further proof that it's a great time to be a Broncho."



Holly Area Schools administrators, staff and school board members at the groundbreaking of the state-of-the-art Construction Trades Center.



Holly Middle School Principal Eric Curl, center, stands as students cheer the groundbreaking of the new Holly Middle School.

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- > [hask12.org](http://hask12.org)
- [fb.me/hollyschools12](https://fb.me/hollyschools12)
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## BRONCHOS IN THE NEWS



**"Holly begins constructing new middle school, trades center from \$97M bond"**  
(MLive, Sept. 19)

**"Crews break ground on new Holly Middle School"**  
(ABC 12, Sept. 14)

**"Holly Police Department welcomes new officer"**  
(Tri-County Times, June 16)

Stay up to date on all the latest exciting Broncho news at [hask12.org/district/news-superintendent/press-releases](http://hask12.org/district/news-superintendent/press-releases).

## New director of curriculum joins Broncho family

Holly Area Schools is proud to announce a new member of the district's curriculum and instruction team and our growing Broncho family.

**Michelle Szczechowicz** joined our Broncho family as our new Director of Curriculum in October. Mrs. Szczechowicz has served as a building principal with Saline Area Schools at both the middle and elementary school levels.

"Michelle is committed to bringing out the best in our students in the classroom and beyond, and I'd like to personally welcome her to our Broncho family," said **Scott Roper**, Holly Area Schools superintendent.



Michelle Szczechowicz

## Bond projects continue taking shape

Ongoing voter-approved 2022 bond projects include enhanced learning environments, building and site improvements, and critical safety upgrades to help keep our students, staff and families safe.

### Recently completed projects include:

- Site and surface preparation, fence installation, drainage and signage at the new tennis courts at Karl Richter Campus
- Septic tank replacement at Davisburg Elementary and completion of the septic tank field at Rose Pioneer Elementary
- West side parking lot re-pavement at Holly High School
- Translucent panel replacements at Holly High School

### Active projects include:

- Ongoing surface and site preparation, and installation of the wind screen and hitting wall at the new tennis courts at Karl Richter campus
- Septic tank installation at Rose Pioneer Elementary
- Construction of the new Holly Middle School and Construction Trades Center, which broke ground in September

"Our bond projects are all made possible by the generosity of our community, and help us continue to provide our Bronchos with new and diverse learning opportunities," said **Scott Roper**, Holly Area Schools superintendent. "These essential improvements are helping enhance our ongoing efforts to prepare all Bronchos for the jobs of tomorrow."



Holly Tennis Courts sidewalks



Davisburg Elementary septic tank installation



Holly High School site restoration



Holly Tennis Courts fence installation

## Broncho community mourns tragic death of beloved student

The entire Broncho community is grieving and heartbroken by the tragic death of Holly High School senior **Deegan Walton** in October.



Deegan Walton



Deegan was an honor student at HHS, and loved racing cars, motorcycles, dirt bikes, jet skis — anything with a motor. He was known by family and friends as someone with a big heart and a special gift to make others laugh and smile.

"Deegan was a one-of-a kind person," said **Aaron Crain**, one of Deegan's best friends. "What made Deegan special is he was an amazing person to all and wanted everyone to have the best time ever. Whenever you were with him, you couldn't help but have a smile on your face."

In hopes of saving other parents, families and friends the trauma of suffering such a tragedy, the Walton family has acknowledged that Deegan took his own life.

"Their wishes are that those suffering from depression understand that it's OK to say, 'I'm not OK,'" said **Scott Roper**, Holly Area Schools superintendent. "It is also their wishes that those who have concerns about someone they feel may be at risk of suicide understand the immediate importance of voicing those concerns to someone who may be able to intervene."

To support this effort, Superintendent Roper has taken feedback from students and the Walton family. Next steps include a mental health and suicide prevention speaker for our students and families. In addition, Superintendent Roper has discussed with students an advocacy movement known as an "Out of the Darkness Walk." Students are continuing to research this type of event with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

Trained school counselors have been available following the tragedy to support students and staff grieving and struggling with emotions. In addition, the Holly Area Schools crisis team coordinated grief group services for students which began in late October and continue to be available to those seeking support. Additional support resources include:

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 24/7, confidential support for people in distress. Call 1-800-273-8255.

**988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:** 24/7, national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support. Call, text or chat 988.

**Common Ground crisis center:** Visit [commongroundhelps.org](https://commongroundhelps.org)

**Michigan Crisis and Access Line:** Visit <https://mcal.my.site.com/mical/s>

## Holly community honors 'Voice of the Bronchos'

The entire Holly community is mourning the passing of **Tony Coggins**, a longtime and treasured Holly High School teacher, coach and mentor who died unexpectedly in October. Mr. Coggins was also known as the "Voice of the Bronchos," calling Broncho athletic events for many years.



Tony Coggins

He taught social studies and English Language Arts at the high school for more than 23 years, and was a middle school swim coach and public address announcer for Holly football, basketball, volleyball and swim events. A talented singer, Mr. Coggins often performed the national anthem at home athletic events.



Coggins also served as public address announcer for numerous Michigan High School Athletic Association state finals and semi-finals in



football, basketball, baseball, volleyball and softball. He was also a substitute public address announcer for Central Michigan University volleyball

and women's basketball, and University of Michigan volleyball, field hockey and softball.

Many students knew Coggins in a variety of other roles, including Student Council advisor, National Honor Society advisor, and Rho Kappa Social Studies Honor Society advisor. Others knew him for keeping the beat going as a DJ for many school dances and weddings for former students and colleagues.

"Our hearts and prayers go out to Tony's family and, as we grieve with them, we will not forget Tony's incredible dedication to our students, staff and community," said **Scott Roper**, Holly Area Schools superintendent.

## Holly elementary schools kick off year with **teacher Meet and Greets**

During the first week of school, elementary staff and school leaders welcomed students and families back with enthusiasm for an exciting year ahead. Creating a Culture of Joy is a focus this year for Holly Area Schools, and the elementary schools showed this in a big way.

**Rose Pioneer** welcomed their community back with a big “We Missed You.” There were many smiles and happy faces as students gathered and enjoyed Popsicles with the Principal. At **Patterson Elementary**, students and parents met staff and learned about programs such as the LEGO Robotics League.

At **Davisburg Elementary**, students arrived on the first day to the excitement of staff greeting them. Students surprised parents with student-led tours of the building, special notes and projects.

**Holly Elementary** geared up for a new year of learning, fun and friendship — the school’s new theme. Everyone received a friendship bracelet and spent



the evening mixing and mingling with teachers and peers and learning about upcoming learning opportunities and special events. “Bringing our teachers, students and families together in one place for a fun and engaging evening was the perfect way to set the tone for the new school year,” said **Monica Turner**, Holly Elementary principal. “We look forward to emphasizing our learning, fun and friendship theme in everything we do in the weeks and months ahead.”

## Fun for all at 9<sup>th</sup> annual family fun night

An inflatable slide, obstacle course and snow cones, oh my! Thanks to local sponsors, more than 200 youth and families enjoyed the 9th annual **Family Fun Night** at the Aug. 31 Holly High School home football game against Ferndale. Other activities included sack races, disc golf, tattoos, tug-o-war, visits from Holly first responders and more.

The Holly High School band serenaded the event and marched through the fun on their way to the football stadium.

“Family fun night has become a tradition we all look forward to each fall because it’s a great way to bring our families and community together to support our Bronchos,” said **Scott Roper**, Holly Area Schools superintendent. “I would like to personally thank our sponsors, students, families and community members who made this year’s Family Fun Night one to remember.”



## 7<sup>th</sup> annual Health and Enrollment Fair breaks attendance record

In its seventh year, the **Holly Area Schools Health and Enrollment Fair** drew 715 students and parents — a new event record. The popular annual event allows families to enroll their children in school for the upcoming academic year, complete sports physicals, conduct the annual online verification process, and connect with community partners and resources.

School officials filled 410 backpacks with school supplies for students in need, and district Food Services served approximately 550 lunches at the event.

“At Holly Area Schools, we are committed to helping all students have an outstanding start to each new school year,” said **Scott Roper**, HAS superintendent. “In addition to enrollment, that includes ensuring all students have access to essential health screenings, school supplies and more needed to succeed in our hallways and beyond.”



## Participation in Broncho fall athletics on the rise

Participation in fall Broncho athletics continues to rise, with more students at Holly High School and Holly Middle School experiencing the thrill of competition, teamwork and comradery each year.

Increased participation in fall athletics since 2022 includes:

- Middle school girls basketball: 21% increase
- Middle school girls cross country: 18% increase
- High school football: 32% increase
- High school girls swim and dive: 41% increase
- High school girls cross country: 100% increase
- High school boys cross country: 17% increase
- High school boys soccer: 14% increase

“It has been exciting to see more of our Bronchos participating in school athletics, which play a critical role in a well-rounded education that prepares students for the real world and jobs,” said **Casey Lombard**, Holly Area Schools athletic director.



## Recognizing Difference Makers at Holly Middle School

At Holly Area Schools, we strive to inspire learners to shape tomorrow’s world. **Holly Middle School Difference Makers** are students who make an impact, rally or encourage others to improve themselves — and bring about change in the process. Each month, the school’s five staff teams nominate a Difference Maker who is recognized during Difference Maker Week. This nomination can come from students, teachers or support staff.



Each day during Difference Maker Week, a different team’s winner is featured on the school’s social media platforms and in announcements.

“Our Difference Makers use their unique skills and talents to make a positive impact on those around them,” said **Eric Curl**, Holly Middle School principal. “These outstanding students also set an example for their classmates to help make our Broncho community a better place.”



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