HARTSBURG-EMDEN CUSD NO. 21
SEPTEMBER 2026 NEWSLETTER

Principal's Desk

Ashley Rowden, GS Principal

We are off to a **great start to the 2026–2027 school year!** It has been wonderful to see our students back in the building, reconnecting with friends, meeting their teachers, and getting settled into their new routines. Our students are adjusting very well, and we are proud of the positive attitudes and excitement they have brought with them each day.

The beginning of a new school year is always filled with lots of learning—not only academics, but also classroom routines, school expectations, and what it means to be part of our school community. Thank you to our families for helping make the transition back to school a smooth and successful one. We are excited about all that this school year has in store!

Mark Your Calendar: Picture Day

Picture Day will be Thursday, September 3, 2026. Students will have their school pictures taken during the school day. Additional information, including ordering details and schedules, will be shared with families as we get closer to the date.

Labor Day – No School

A reminder that **Monday, September 7, 2026, is Labor Day**, and there will be **no school** for students or staff. We hope everyone enjoys the long weekend and has an opportunity to relax and spend time with family and friends.

We look forward to continuing a wonderful start to the school year and are grateful for the continued support of our families and community!

Guidance Department

Elizabeth Hilgert, Student Coordinator/Guidance Counselor

Every year brings opportunities for growth — academically, personally, and socially. I'm excited to see the progress you'll make and the goals you'll reach. To help you start strong, here are a few reminders to keep in mind.

Own Your Routine

Last month's newsletter talked about four things that make the biggest difference in a strong start: consistent sleep, a shared calendar, a dedicated study space, and regular check-ins. Those aren't just things your family sets up for you — they are habits worth owning yourself. A consistent bedtime keeps your focus sharp all day. Checking your own calendar (not just relying on a reminder from home) builds the kind of independence that matters more each year. A study space that's actually yours, even if it's just a corner of a desk, signals to your brain that it's time to focus.

Stay Consistent with Your Studies

It's far easier to keep up than to catch up. Set aside at least 30 minutes a day to review notes or assignments, even on light nights. Short, regular study sessions help your brain retain information much better than last-minute cramming — and they keep your study space from feeling optional.

Get Engaged

Attending school regularly matters, but real success comes from active participation. Challenge yourself to stay engaged in class, ask questions, and contribute to discussions. Take advantage of extracurricular activities and school events too — they strengthen friendships, build confidence, and add balance to your life.

Check In — With Yourself and With Us

Daily check-ins matter at home, but they matter here too. Do not hesitate to ask for support when challenges come up. Teachers are here to help, but we can only do that if we know what you're experiencing. Building these connections early creates a support system you can rely on all year. And do not forget to check in with yourself — get enough sleep, eat well, and make time for family, friends, and rest. Your mental health is just as important as your grades.

Set Goals and Track Your Progress

Start the year by setting a few realistic academic and personal goals. Write them down and keep them somewhere visible as a daily reminder of what you're working toward. Use the TeacherEase app to check your grades and assignments regularly, so you can stay on top of your work and celebrate your progress along the way.

This year is full of possibilities. Let's make it one where you challenge yourself academically, take care of your mental health, and discover new strengths along the way. Together, we can make this school year truly amazing!

IMPORTANT REMINDERS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

PSAT/NMSQT

The PSAT/NMSQT will be offered at HEHS on Thursday, October 15, 2026. If any 10th or 11th grade student is interested in participating in this assessment, please contact Mrs. Hilgert to register by Friday, September 11, 2026. While this is not a required assessment, it is a great practice opportunity

for the mandatory assessments in Spring 2027. In addition, juniors who complete the PSAT/NMSQT will have the opportunity to qualify for the National Merit Scholarship.

PLANNING AHEAD

The *2027-2028 Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA®) will be available on October 1, 2026. Please note that submitting the FAFSA (or completing an opt-out waiver) is a graduation requirement! It is recommended to submit this application as soon as possible to ensure the best access to financial assistance. We will be planning another FAFSA Completion Workshop on October 21st for all seniors. More detailed information will be sent out at the end of the month.

COLLEGE VISITS

As students begin thinking about life after high school, visiting colleges is one of the best ways to explore options and get a feel for what might be the right fit. A college visit allows students to see the campus, learn about programs, meet with admissions staff, and experience the college environment firsthand.

Juniors are allowed two college visits per year, while seniors are allowed three college visits per year. These are valuable opportunities, so students should use them wisely and plan ahead.

Before scheduling a visit, students should research the college and think about what they want to learn. Consider visiting schools that offer programs or career paths you are interested in, and try to schedule visits when you can attend a campus tour, meet with an admissions representative, or learn more about your intended area of study.

College visits require some planning. Talk with your parents/guardians and the school counselor. Check the school calendar, and communicate with your teachers before scheduling a visit. Students are responsible for making arrangements to complete any missed classwork or assessments.

Don't wait until the last minute to use your visits. Start exploring colleges now so you can make informed decisions about your future.

A Great Opportunity Is Coming Up!

There is an exciting opportunity coming up for any student interested in Eureka College. If you are considering Eureka College or simply want to learn more about what it has to offer, this is a great chance to explore the college and ask questions. See the insert included in this newsletter for more information and to sign up!

Whether you already have a college in mind or are just beginning to explore your options, take advantage of these opportunities. **Your future starts with exploring your possibilities!**

HEARTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE AG/CTE IMMERSION DAY

Be sure to ask your high school student if they have signed up for Heartland Community College's AG/CTE Immersion Day! This is an exciting opportunity for our high school students to explore career pathways, gain hands-on experience, and learn more about opportunities that are available.

On Friday, September 11, our high school students will have an exciting opportunity to visit Heartland Community College for its AG/CTE Immersion Day. This event is designed to introduce students to the many career and educational opportunities available through Heartland's Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs.

During the day, students will have the opportunity to explore areas including:

- Agriculture through Heartland's Agriculture Complex
- Advanced Manufacturing at the Advanced Manufacturing Center
- Electric Vehicle Technology at the State Farm Electric Vehicle Lab
- Other career and technical education programs and opportunities available at Heartland

Students will participate in six different hands-on activities based on their area of interest. Throughout the day, they will also tour the Heartland campus, meet current students and faculty, and connect with departments across campus that are dedicated to helping students succeed.

Why Should Students Participate?

CTE programs provide students with opportunities to explore careers, develop hands-on skills, and learn about education and training options after high school. Students do not need to have their future completely figured out to participate. In fact, opportunities like this can help students discover interests and career paths they may not have previously considered.

Parents, take a moment to ask your high school student: "Have you signed up for Heartland's AG/CTE Immersion Day?"

HARTEM HEARD: MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT, STRAIGHT TO YOUR PHONE

We all know that one of the best ways to reach teens is through their phones. That's why the Logan County Youth Mental Health Coalition is bringing mental health information, local resources, and a little fun directly to high school students through a free text messaging program.

The program began in 2024 through conversations and collaboration with Lincoln Community High School. Together, we created a text program designed specifically for students—connecting them with local mental health resources, helpful information, encouragement, and even a few fun giveaways along the way.

But we don't just *tell* students what we think they want to hear. **We ask them**. Each year, the program holds at least one student focus group to learn what teens are interested in, what they want to know more about, and what types of messages actually catch their attention.

After meeting with Hartsburg-Emden students in focus groups last spring, we're excited to bring **Hartem Heard** to your high school.

The program officially launched for Hartem high school students on August 13, and we're looking forward to what's ahead this school year. Messages will be tailored to Hartem and the local community, with content designed to be relevant, useful, and something students can look forward to receiving.

And students aren't the only ones who can subscribe. Teachers, staff, parents, and caregivers are welcome to sign up, too, so you can see the same messages students are receiving.

Want to hear what Hartem Heard has to say?
Text **STAGS** to **737-306-1002** to subscribe.

Hartem Athletic Department

Ron Spencer, Athletic Director

Junior High Softball

The Junior High softball team has three regular-season home games remaining in September, with two of those games taking place at home:

- Thursday, September 3 – at Luther Field in Emden, with 8th Grade Night
- Saturday, September 5 – 10:00 a.m. – Home game

Regionals are scheduled to begin Monday, September 7, and will be hosted in LeRoy.

Junior High Baseball

The Junior High baseball season has been significantly impacted by the recent rain, resulting in several postponed and canceled games.

8th Grade Night has been moved to Tuesday, September 9, at 4:30 p.m. vs. Greenview.

We have also rescheduled the home game against WLB, which will now be played on Wednesday, September 9, at 4:30 p.m.

Come out and support our Junior High baseball team!

High School Volleyball

High school volleyball practice began on August 10, and the team is ready to get the season underway!

The first home match is:

Tuesday, September 1 at 6:00 p.m.
Hartsburg-Emden vs. Delavan

Important Reminder for Parents

As we kick off the indoor sports season, we kindly ask parents to help us keep grade school age children seated with them during games. Students will no longer be permitted to gather on the north or south ends of the stage during games unattended. Thank you for your understanding and for helping us provide a safe, positive, and enjoyable environment for everyone.

Athletic Schedules

Athletic pocket schedules will be available at home volleyball and basketball games. You can also stop by the high school office to pick one up.

We also encourage families to download the new Snap Mobile App to stay up to date on athletic schedules.

After downloading the app, follow the sign-up instructions. When adding your school, select "Find Organization" and search for Hartsburg-Emden.

Thank you for supporting Hartsburg-Emden athletics! Go Stags!

If you want notifications - make sure you turn those on when signing up.

VOLLEYBALL HOMECOMING MATCH

"Pack the Place"

The 2026 Volleyball Homecoming Match will be
THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 17th
vs Routt Catholic

The SEMI-FORMAL DANCE will be held at the high school on
Saturday, September 19th, 7:00-9:00

Parent/Teacher Conferences
Parent/Teacher Conferences will be held on Wednesday, October 7th, and Thursday, October 8th**.**

Parents and guardians may begin calling on **Monday, September 14th** to schedule an appointment with the appropriate school building.

Grade School:
Please contact **Angie Zinser** at **217-376-3151**.

Jr. High/High School:
Please contact **Lauren DeJarnette** at **217-642-5244**.

There will be NO SCHOOL on Friday, October 9th, and Monday, October 12th, in observance of Columbus Day weekend.

We look forward to meeting with parents and guardians to discuss your student's progress and success!

CLASS OF 2028 GOLF OUTING

Elizabeth Hilgert, Class Sponsor

Mark your calendars and start putting your foursome together! **The Hartsburg-Emden Class of 2028** will be hosting a golf outing on **Saturday, May 1, 2027, at North Greens Golf Course in Atlanta, Illinois.** The event will be a **4-person scramble**, and we invite families, community members, alumni, friends, and local businesses to join us for a fun day of golf while supporting our students.

The cost will be $80 per player or $320 per four-person team. Registration includes 18 holes of golf with a cart, lunch, non-alcoholic beverages on the course, player giveaways, and prizes.

There will also be plenty of opportunities to have some fun and add to the excitement throughout the day, including a **50/50 raffle, poker run, mulligans, and closest-to-the-pin contests for both men and women**.

All proceeds from the golf outing will benefit the **Hartsburg-Emden Class of 2028 Junior Prom and Senior Trip**. We are excited to bring our community together for a great day on the course while helping our students create special memories during their junior and senior years.

Saturday, May 1, 2027
North Greens Golf Course – Atlanta, Illinois

Registration and the official golf outing flyer with additional details will be available in next month's newsletter. Start thinking about who you want on your team, and be sure to **save the date** for a great day of golf supporting the Class of 2028!

Trivia Night

John Robinson, Class of 2030 Co-Sponsor

The Class of 2030 will have a Trivia Night on Saturday, October 24th at 6:30 pm at the Emden Community House. Kids will be allowed to attend and play. No alcohol will be allowed at the event. The cost is $100 for a table, with up to 10 people allowed per table. If interested, please contact any Hartem freshman, Jennifer Hayes, or John Robinson.

Yearbook

Eric Gardiner, HS English Teacher

Exciting news for parents, students, and staff! If you would like to submit pictures you take at events, which could possibly be featured in the 26-27 yearbook, you are now able to do so. Follow the direction below to download the "Yearbook Snap" app to send us pictures of: Games, community events, student trips, camps– anything involving our school community.

To download the app and send us pictures:

1. Download the "Yearbook Snap" app in the app or google play store
2. Click on find school
3. Type in Hartsburg-Emden Junior Senior High School
4. Type in the access code 1357

5. Click select photos (note permissions to access photos must be selected)
6. Select category: choose other photos (we would like to sort them)
7. Select photos you wish to submit from your photos (you can send 5 at a time).
8. Tap the up arrow button
9. You will receive confirmation in the app as well as an email.

2025/2026 Yearbooks

Eric Gardiner, HS English Teacher

The 2025/2026 Yearbook has finally arrived. Students that ordered one will receive them in their Advisory period the week of August 17th. If you are a parent of a 7th grade-12grade, or a graduate of the 2026 graduating class, and would like a copy please reach out to Mr. Gardiner at: egardiner@hartem.org to reserve and pick up a copy.

Hartem Jr. High Chess Team

Kent Hieronymus, HS Chess Coach

Jr. High Chess has started. We will practice in the High School/Jr. High cafeteria. All Hartem students in grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 are invited to participate in the Hartem Jr. High Chess Team for the 2026-2027 school year. We encourage new players to give chess a try. It will not interfere with any other activities in which the student wishes to participate. The coaches accommodate the students' busy schedules. The head Hartem Jr. High Chess coach is Austin Hayes. We will start practice at the beginning of next school year. Give chess a try! If you do not know how to play, we will teach you! You may also contact coach Hieronymus for details. His email is khieronymus@hartem.org

Hartem Lincoln Chess Team

Kent Hieronymus, HS Chess Coach

High School Chess practice began on August 20. Listen for chess announcements and check your Hartem email. If you have any questions you may ask Mr. Hieronymus at this email address: khieronymus@hartem.org

Hartsburg Emden and Lincoln have a combined chess team co-op. We have been very successful in our co-op. Our Chess Team has made the IHSA State Chess Tournament the last two years in a row! We won the Mid Central Illinois Chess League Championship. Several players won individual medals during the year from different tournaments. This year's team will feature some strong players from Hartem. Kamden Pointer, Isaac Doolin, and Jacinth Kong will most likely be starters on the Varsity team.

Spanish 1

Kent Hieronymus, Spanish Teacher

Spanish 1 is off to a great start. All the students have excellent pronunciation in Spanish. We are learning the basics to get started. For example: the Spanish alphabet, greetings, numbers, time, etc. The class is doing a calendar project. Each student picks a month and labels everything in Spanish correctly. This includes months, days, and numbers.

Spanish 2

Kent Hieronymus, Spanish Teacher

Spanish 2 is also starting off very well. The class pronunciation is very good. At the moment we are reviewing verb tenses from last year. The students are writing sentences about their daily routine that requires Reflexive verbs and pronouns in Spanish.

Spanish 3 and 4

Kent Hieronymus, Spanish Teacher

Spanish 3 is reviewing grammar from last year. They just completed a small project where they had to make a travel brochure advertising a vacation destination. The brochure had to have at least 125 correct Spanish sentences.

SEPTEMBER 2026

Sun	*Mon*	*Tue*	*Wed*	*Thu*	*Fri*	*Sat*
Breakfast Menu		**1** **Pancakes** **Sausage patty** **Fruit** **Juice**	**2** **Sausage/egg/cheese on biscuit** **Fruit** **Juice**	**3** **Breakfast cookie** **Fruit** **Juice**	**4** **Breakfast pizza bagel** **Fruit** **Juice**	**5**
6	**7** **No School** **LABOR DAY**	**8** **Poptarts** **Fruit** **Juice**	**9** **Assorted muffins** **Fruit** **Juice**	**10** **Bagel w/cream cheese** **Fruit** **Juice**	**11** **French toast sticks** **Sausage links** **Fruit** **Juice**	**12**
13	**14** **Pancake/sausage on a stick** **Fruit** **Juice**	**15** **Biscuits w/sausage gravy** **Fruit** **Juice**	**16** **Waffles** **Sausage patty** **Fruit** **Juice**	**17** **Blueberry cake donut** **Fruit** **Juice**	**18** **Cinnamon brown sugar oatmeal** **Toast** **Fruit** **Juice**	**19**
20	**21** **Frittata omelet** **Toast** **Fruit** **Juice**	**22** **Scramble egg bowl** **Fruit** **Juice**	**23** **Coffee cake** **Fruit** **Juice**	**24** **English muffins** **Fruit** **Juice**	**25** **Donuts** **Fruit** **Juice**	**26**
27	**28** **Egg bites** **Toast** **Fruit** **Juice**	**29** **Fruit frudel** **Fruit** **Juice**	**30** **Assorted cereal** **Toast** **Fruit** **Juice**			

A variety of milk is available every day. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

SEPTEMBER 2026

Sun	*Mon*	*Tue*	*Wed*	*Thu*	*Fri*	*Sat*
Lunch Menu		**1** **Salisbury steak** **Mash potatoes w/gravy** **Corn** **Dinner roll** **Peaches**	**2** **Rice bowl** **Popcorn chicken** **Mixed veggies** **Different sauces** **Egg rolls** **Mandarin oranges**	**3** **JH/HS-Chili mac** **Corn bread** **GS- Spaghetti** **Breadsticks** **Green beans** **Pineapple** **Jello**	**4** **JH/HS-Assorted sandwiches** **GS-Mini corn dogs** **Fresh veggies** **Chips** **Mix fruit** **Cookies**	**5**
6	**7** **No School** **LABOR DAY**	**8** **Bosco sticks** **Marinara sauce** **Side salad** **Peaches** **Pudding w/vanilla waffers**	**9** **Chicken alfredo** **Peas** **Side salad** **Breadstick** **Pineapple**	**10** **Hamburger on bun** **French fries** **Cottage cheese** **Applesauce** **Rice krispy treats**	**11** **Chicken fajita** **Lettuce/cheese** **Rice** **Refried beans** **Sour cream/salsa** **Mandarin oranges**	**12**
13	**14** **Chicken patty on bun** **French fries** **Pears**	**15** **JH/HS-BBQ pulled pork on bun** **Cole slaw** **GS-Pulled pork w/nacho chips** **Potato salad** **Bake beans** **Cornbread** **Applesauce**	**16** **Loaded tater tots** **Chicken/beef/pork** **Peas** **Cheese sauce/sour cream/salsa** **Pineapple**	**17** **JH/HS-Open face turkey** **Mashed potatoes w/gravy** **Corn** **Mix fruit** **GS-Breakfast for Lunch** **Mini Pancakes** **Tri-tater** **Sausage links** **Yogurt** **Bananas**	**18** **Hot ham and cheese on bun** **Potato smiles** **Carrots** **Mandarin oranges** **Orange fluff**	**19**
20	**21** **Corndog** **Soft pretzels w/cheese sauce** **Peas** **Pears**	**22** **Cheese tortellini w/pasta sauce** **Green beans** **Side salad** **Breadstick** **Mix fruit**	**23** **JH/HS-Ponyshoe** **Ham/hamburger** **Cheese sauce** **GS-Rib sandwich on bun** **Fries w/cheese** **Carrots** **Mandarin oranges** **Jello**	**24** **Chicken bacon wrap** **Lettuce/cheese** **Ranch/BBQ** **Chips** **Peaches**	**25** **Quesadilla pizza** **Side salad** **Sour cream/salsa** **Pineapple** **Brownies**	**26**
27	**28** **Pork tenderloin** **Tater tots** **Cottage cheese** **Applesauce**	**29** **Popcorn chicken** **Mashed potatoes w/gravy** **Corn** **Pears**	**30** **Crispitos w/cheese sauce** **Rice** **Mixed veggies** **Refried beans** **Sour cream/salsa** **Cake w/strawberries**			

A variety of milk is available every day. Chef salad and side salads are available every day at the high school. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

SEPTEMBER 2026

Sun	*Mon*	*Tue*	*Wed*	*Thu*	*Fri*	*Sat*
		1 **JHSB @ IC 4:30** **JHBB vs Greenview 4:30 *8th Grade Night*** **HSVB vs Delavan 6:00**	**2**	**3** ***Picture Day!*** **JHSB vs Delavan 4:30 *8th Grade Night*** **JHBB @ Lo. Co. Tourn TBA** **HSVB vs W'ville 6:00**	**4** **JHBB @ WLB 4:30 (B game only)**	**5** **JHSB vs W-L 10:00am** **JHBB @ Lo. Co. Tourn. TBA**
6	**7** **No School** **JHSB Reg. TBA**	**8** **HSVB @ Lewistown 6:00**	**9** **JHSB Reg. TBA** **JHBB vs WLB 4:30**	**10** **JHSB Reg. TBA** **JHBB @ Athens 4:30**	**11** **HSVB @ W'ville Tourn. TBA**	**12** **JHSB Reg. TBA** **HSVB @ W'ville Tourn. TBA**
13	**14** **JHBB @ IC 4:30**	**15** **JHSB Sect. TBA** **HSVB @ Athens 6:00**	**16** **School Board Meeting 7:00**	**17** **JHBB Reg. TBA** **HSVB vs Routt 6:00 *Homecoming Game***	**18** **JHSB State TBA**	**19** ***HS Homecoming Dance 7:00pm-9:00pm*** **JHSB State TBA** **JHBB Reg. TBA**
20	**21** **HSVB @ W-L 6:00**	**22** **JH Cheer Parent Meeting @ HS Café 5:00**	**23** **JHBB Reg. TBA**	**24** **HSVB vs Tremont 6:00**	**25** **Picture Re-take Day!**	**26** **JHBB Sect. TBA**
27	**28** **HSVB vs IC 6:00**	**29** **Senior Beta Induction @ HS Café 5:30**	**30** **HSVB @ MP 6:00**			

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