



How the north can return to Indiana high school football glory

SPORTS, 1B

South Bend Tribune

FRIDAY, AUGUST 22, 2025 | SOUTHBENDTRIBUNE.COM

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Back to school



Kindergartener Terrance Marsh Jr. high-fives Rolanda Thompson, assistant principal at Madison STEAM Academy, before the first day of the 2025-26 school year on Wednesday, Aug. 20, 2025, in South Bend.

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL CLUBB/SOUTH BEND TRIBUNE

SBCSC schools welcomes students on Aug. 20

Rayleigh Deaton

South Bend Tribune | USA TODAY NETWORK

SOUTH BEND — The South Bend Community School Corp. welcomed students back for the first day of the 2025-26 school year on Wednesday, Aug. 20, and administrators say they’re looking forward to taking on the excitement and challenge of a new year.

When The Tribune visited Madison STEAM Academy on Wednesday morning, students and parents were greeted by Principal Whitney Alexander and her team as they arrived. Teachers and school administrators were on the sidewalk outside the school building, welcoming students back with hugs and high fives, along with firefighters from the South Bend Fire Department.

Going into her second year as principal, Alexander said, she’s excited to get started and “let everyone in South Bend see why Madison is so great.”

“I feel like everyone is just happy, refreshed, renewed, ready for just a new year, a new start,” she said. “It’s just great to see all the smiling faces on the staff, as well as the students.”

Superintendent Mansour Eid said seeing the students walk into school on Wednesday morning, some for the first time as kindergarteners, made him excited for the year ahead.

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A crossing guard helps a family walk their student to the first day of the 2025-26 school year at Madison STEAM Academy on Aug. 20 in South Bend.



Sixth grader Cooper Fly poses for a photo with his sister, Laney Fry, on their first day of school at Horizon Elementary School in Granger on Aug. 20 for the start of the 2025-26 school year for the Penn-Harris-Madison School Corp. Laney is starting first grade this fall.

JESSICA VELEZ/SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

P-H-M kicks off under new superintendent

Rayleigh Deaton

South Bend Tribune | USA TODAY NETWORK

MISHAWAKA — The Penn-Harris-Madison School Corp. kicked off the 2025-26 school year on Wednesday, Aug. 20, under the leadership of a new superintendent.

The district’s 15 schools welcomed students back Wednesday, including Horizon Elementary School, where The Tribune visited. Principal Amy Fadsen, joined by teachers and school administrators, greeted students as they walked into the building to start the new school year.

This year is also the first that P-H-M is led by its new superintendent, Heather Short, whom the board approved in late May. Short succeeded long-time Superintendent Jerry Thacker, who officially retired from the superintendency in July after 19 years.

Following the May 28 P-H-M board meeting during which she was approved, Short said, “I am incredibly excited — this is an amazing district, I’ve been so fortunate to be part of it for my entire career.

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SOUTH BEND

Police stand by use of force on teen in viral video

Camille Sarabia

South Bend Tribune | USA TODAY NETWORK

Five days after a video showing a South Bend officer holding down a teen girl to the ground went viral on social media, the department says the officer acted according to policy.

A 36-second video, shared by Black Lives Matter - South Bend, shows an officer’s use of force on a 14-year-old girl.

In the body camera video released by police — with the faces of the individuals involved redacted — a police officer, identified as Sam Chaput, who’s been in the department since 2014, is seen holding the girl facedown, torso in the tree lawn and head out over the curb. The girl says she didn’t do anything and isn’t trying to run, then asks for the officer to call her mother. In the video, the officer says he will take her to her mother and commands her to put her hands behind her back.

Information in the 911 call

Police released a 3-minute 911 call that was placed at 12:58 p.m. — the caller was a McDonald’s employee — in which the employee described the situation as a juvenile inside the restaurant becoming loud and aggressive. The juvenile demanded the restaurant give them money for a meal they’ve already had, the caller said. The juvenile was threatening employees and using profanities, the caller said.

The caller described the juvenile as a boy around 11 or 12 years old, wearing a grayish-white sweater with a green backpack. The caller said the juvenile was still in the restaurant at the front counter, South Bend Police Director of Communications Ashley O’Chap said.

Chief of Police Scott Ruskowski later said this girl did not attend South Bend schools, which started the school year Aug. 20, after the incident. A McDonald’s employee reported the girl — who they believed was a boy — had been there for hours.

Chaput responded to the McDonald’s restaurant at 416 N. Michigan St. at 1:08 p.m., as shown by the footage released from his body camera.

The video included a timestamp to show the video was not edited, O’Chap said. She said the time taken to release the information included redacting the video by blurring the faces of the people involved and redacting phone numbers and addresses.

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South Bend Chief of Police Scott Ruskowski, center, and police Capt. David Herron, right, watch body camera footage from an incident that took place on Aug. 15 being played for members of the media at the department’s headquarters on Aug. 20 in South Bend.

MICHAEL CLUBB/SOUTH BEND TRIBUNE

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Volume 153 | No. 142
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