



SchoolTalk

www.nbbrncos.net

North Branch Area Schools

May 2021

NBHS Announces *Valedictorian and Salutatorian*

North Branch High School is proud to announce the Class of 2021 Valedictorian, Chloe Caringi and Salutatorian, Alex Hunt.

"We are very proud of these academically gifted students who are very strong leaders among their peers both in and out of the classroom.

We know they have very bright futures," offered NBHS Principal Mark Hiltunen.



Chloe Caringi
NBHS 2021 Valedictorian

Chloe Caringi, the daughter of Joseph and Danielle Caringi, earned top academic honors with a grade point average of 4.083. During each of her semesters in High School, Chloe made the Honor Roll and is a member of the North Branch Chapter of the National Honor Society. She is also the treasurer of the Student Council and Maintained 4 years of Perfect Attendance.

Chloe has participated in Generation Arts-Pix Theatre and also participated in their community theatre group.

Chloe will be attending Oakland University next fall to pursue a degree in Biomedical Sciences and plans to later attend Medical School.



Alex Hunt
NBHS 2021 Salutatorian

Alex Hunt, the son of Jeffrey and Erica Hunt plans to attend the University of Michigan- Flint to pursue a degree in Computer Science.

While at North Branch High School, Alex earned salutatorian honors with a grade point average of 4.067. He also earned a University of Michigan - Flint Signature Merit Scholarship.

During each of his semesters in High School, Alex made the Honor Roll.

Congratulations Class of 2021!



Message from the Superintendent



Dear School Community,

As I write this communication for our May 2021 School Talk publication, we have 33.5 student days left in the 2020-2021 school year. It is an

understatement to say this year has been extremely challenging for everyone associated with North Branch Area Schools. I know how difficult it has been for our parents and students as well. Please allow me to express a heart-felt appreciation for the patience, understanding, and support all of our school employees have received from our parents, students, and community.

While this year has been challenging, I would like to finish the school year by focusing on a few reasons our school district continues to thrive in these uncertain times. While the facilities and technology in our school district is unmatched in the thumb, the #1 reason families choose North Branch Schools for their children is the quality and excellence of our teachers and support staff.

- North Branch Administration, Teachers, and Support Staff remain dedicated and committed to ensuring all students receive the very best education possible even during a Pandemic:
- North Branch Area School has provided some form of instruction for all students (with the exception of 3 days) since March 13, 2020. Our teachers and administration held daily meetings during Spring Break 2020 in order to provide virtual instruction and learning packets for all students on Monday, April 6, 2020 which was a full three weeks before we were state mandated to provide instruction.
- North Branch Area School has offered in-person instruction and virtual instruction since Monday, August 31, 2020 except when we were mandated to close the high school and we made the decision to pause in-person learning for 6 days at the elementary, 5 days at RFMS, and 5 days at the high school. There are several districts in our state who have not opened up their buildings for students since March of 2020.

- Our administrators, teachers, and support staff continue to demonstrate they are “All In” on a daily basis. Over the past 14 months, administrators have worked long hours behind the scenes to ensure our staff and students have all of the resources needed to be successful in the classroom. Our teachers have been extraordinarily dedicated to their students during the Pandemic. While they have been stressed and pushed to the limits on many occasions, they have always put the welfare of their students first and have demonstrated a professionalism that is unmatched. Our support staff has been nothing short of amazing. They have been extremely flexible and have contributed on a moment’s notice to serve students in all capacities, clean classrooms, and support administrators and teachers as needed.

- Thanks to the wisdom and leadership of a truly dedicated North Branch Board of Education, our school district is in a strong position financially to continue investing in improving our facilities, providing new technology, and taking care of curriculum needs for our teachers and students. The North Branch Board of Education approved new 5-year plans in Curriculum, Facility, and Technology purchases at the April 26th board of education meeting. This long-term approach to setting aside funds each year for larger purchases allowed the district to complete the installation of a new 8-lane track this past summer without having to go to the voters for additional funds. This summer, the high school and middle school gym floors will be sanded down and renovated. It is hard to believe the high school is almost 30 years old; thus, we are updating the HVAC equipment that typically has a 25 year life which will improve the air quality in that building. We have used ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) funds to purchase chromebooks making our district a 1-1 school for technology (1 electronic device for each student). The board of education adopted a 5-year cycle in purchasing curriculum resources for math, science, language arts, applied and fine arts, health and physical education, world language, and social studies. Our curriculum department has a very inten-

tional plan of curriculum review, purchase and implementation to ensure we have the best resources for our teachers and students.

- I am grateful we are able to celebrate our 2021 senior class and provide them with as many senior experiences as possible. The following dates are subject to change and specific information has been sent home to senior parents:
 - Prom on May 8th
 - Baccalaureate on May 23rd
 - Swing-Out on May 26th
 - Senior Class Night on May 27th
 - Graduation on June 2nd on the football field with a rain-date of June 6th

In closing, I have been asked many questions about what our plans are for the 2021-2022 school year. Our intention is to offer in-person instruction for all students beginning Monday, August 23, 2021. A copy of the 2021-2022 school calendar is available on our district website, www.nbbrncos.net. While I do not know where our country, state, or county will be relative to the Covid-19 pandemic, I am 100% confident we will be prepared to serve the families and students of our NBAS community. Thank you for your unwavering support of our Board of Education, Administration, Teachers, and Support Staff. We will be in communication throughout the summer as we finalize plans for the next school year.

Best wishes for a healthy and restful summer break!

Jim Fish

North Branch Superintendent



CLASS OF 2021 Graduation Events

★ **LAST DAY FOR SENIORS**

Friday, May 21st

★ **BACCALUAREATE SERVICE**

May 23rd • 7:00pm in the High School Gymnasium. This is a non-denominational, inspirational service honoring the achievement and future for the graduates. This event is not a North Branch High School event, but is hosted in our facility. As with our Senior Convocation night, we may be able to host a live event in our gymnasium with limited capacity and a streaming service using our Pixellot camera system and Facebook page, but there is also a potential for this event to be presented virtually.

★ **GRADUATION REHEARSAL**

May 26th • 3:00pm In order to participate in Commencement exercises, graduating seniors must report promptly to Krepps Field (NBHS Football Field) by 3:00 pm on Wednesday, May 26th to participate in graduation rehearsal. Seniors who have met all of the graduation requirements will receive their caps & gowns immediately after rehearsal.

★ **SWING-OUT CAR PARADE**

May 26th • 5:00pm Students will line up at the front of the High School and will drive through town. The parade will end at the corner of Main street and Jefferson. *NOTE: If this event is canceled due to weather, it will not be rescheduled.*

★ **SENIOR CONVOCATION (Class Night)**

May 27th • 7:00pm We may be able to host a live event in our gymnasium with limited capacity and a streaming service using our Pixellot camera system and Facebook page, but there is a high likelihood this event may again be virtual. Students will be honored with local scholarships, awards, NHS stoles, athletic awards and honor cords, etc.

★ **GRADUATION**

June 2nd or June 6th We are planning to hold commencement at Krepps field on Wednesday, June 2nd at 8:00 pm or on Sunday, June 6th at 2:00 pm or 6:00 pm. The exact date and time will be determined by the weather. We hope this information allows for families to plan for an outdoor graduation, while leaving an open weekend evening for events like celebratory family dinners. Please know we will provide more information as we near June. Seating will be limited. Each Seniors will receive 4 tickets. It is our hope to have as many people experience this event as possible. Current restrictions limit the gathering to four spectators per participant. Again, with time, vaccinations, and warmer weather, we hope the number of allowed guests will increase.

★ **Project Graduation - Senior All Night Party**

Due to gathering limit restrictions, especially indoors, unfortunately, this event is cancelled.

SENIOR SCHOLARS

Each year, North Branch High School recognizes the top 25 students in the senior class, based on a combination of Grade Point Average and SAT test scores. These top academic students receive the title of Senior Scholar and will be recognized during Senior Class Night, and awarded a gold cord to wear with their graduation gowns on the night of commencement.

This year's Senior Scholars are:

David Weaver
Kaleb June
Alex Hunt
Summer Blackmer
Breann June
Emily Ludescher
Noah Manthei
Ethan Kaltz
Chloe Caringi
Treighton Lomerson
Mattea Swoish
Ethan McMillan
Drake Deshetsky
Henry Horton
Reese Fitch
Michael Cary
James Kreiner
Ian Liebler
Cloey Chene
Daniel Weaver
Erin Wadley
Kirsten Mulder
Trenton Ludwig
Wyatt Howe
Reagan Watkins

Celebrating the **Class of 2021**

We are excited that the events celebrating the Class of 2021 look more promising than last spring, but we also realize it falls short of the traditions we've come to expect.

Although they make look and feel a bit different, we will continue to work and plan for our annual events to occur in a safe manner.

We look forward to making memories this spring, celebrating the Class of 2021.



College Decision Day May 7

May 7th Is College Decision Day: Where Will North Branch Students Go After High School?

We are proud to announce that North Branch High School is a host site for Decision Day 2021 (#Mldecisionday). For the eighth year in a row, North Branch High School will be participating in both the State and National campaigns. All NBHS Seniors who have made a commitment to post-high school education/training, will be recognized at our Decision Day Ceremony which will take place during the school day on Friday, May 7th. The purpose of Decision Day is to recognize high school seniors for their post-secondary plans and encourage younger students and families to prepare early for post-secondary education.

Decision Day is held annually on or around May 1 in the State of Michigan. It is designed to coincide with the date that most seniors must inform a college of their plans to enroll. Additionally, we have been putting Senior Spotlights on social media highlighting students from the class of 2021 and their future decisions.



NORTH BRANCH EARLY COLLEGE

North Branch's early middle college program, formally known as the STEMM Academy, has a new name: the "North Branch Early College" (NBEC). Our Early College is no longer focused only on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. The program provides students with college courses in general education that can be transferred to any college belonging to the Michigan Transfer Agreement (the vast majority of colleges and universities in the state). The program is now partnered with Baker College, Mott Community College and Rochester University.

What is an Early College? Early college high schools enable students entering their junior year to simultaneously earn a high school diploma and either an associate's degree, the Michigan Early/Middle College Association (MEMCA) technical certification or up to 60 transferable college credits at the same time, tuition free. The NBEC has two different models in place:

Traditional Model: Students in their junior year would take 6 college courses at the Education and Technology Center in a two hour block. In their

senior year, students would take an additional 7 college courses at the Education and Technology Center in a three-hour block. In their 13 year, students would take a minimum of 12 college credits per semester at a Baker College Campus, a Mott Community College Campus or Rochester University Campus.

CTE Blend Model: Students in their junior year would take 1 college course at the Education and Technology Center in a one-hour block after their Ed-Tech program. In their senior year, they would take 3 college courses at the Education and Technology Center in a one-hour block after their Ed-Tech program. In their 13th year, students would take a minimum of 12 college credits per semester at a Baker College Campus or a Mott Community College Campus and receive additional college credit for their CTE successful completion.

The North Branch Early College is a unique and great way for your son or daughter to get a jump start on earning their college credentials, with little to no cost to their family.



***Don't Break the Bank paying for College!
Talk with our Counselors about NBHS's
Early College Option known as the North
Branch Early College.***



North Branch Area Schools will once again be offering a summer school program for students in grades 7-12th that need to recover lost credit. All summer school courses will be taken in person, with no virtual option. The online program, Edgenuity will be used for the credit recovery, with over 50 courses being offered. Additionally, those students taking math and english will get two hours each day of live instruction with Mr. Bechtel and Mrs. Howe respectively.

Orientation will tentatively be held June 21st from 5pm-8pm, or June 22nd from 9am-noon. Please check with your students' counselor or for a link to the application on the NBAS website in early June for definite dates and times for orientation.

Summer school classes will tentatively begin June 23rd and will conclude no later than the end of the first week of August. The fee per course is \$80.00. For more information please see your student's counselor or for specific questions, please contact the Summer School Coordinator, **Corey Rosser** at crosser@nbbronscos.net or by calling **810-688-7581, ext. 2820**.



The Quest graduation ceremony is scheduled to be held at 6pm on Thursday, June 3rd at the North Branch High School football field! Quest is known for their student centered ceremonies that feature 3-4 student testimonies about the changes they have made in their life! There may be some restrictions in place that will be posted on Quest's Facebook page as the date nears.

15th Annual Quest Merit Scholarship Winner



Quest is proud to congratulate **Ryver Kotzke** on being awarded \$1,500 as the 2021 Quest Merit Scholarship winner. The scholarship was created and has been fully funded by former North Branch community members Ron and Carolyn Bower since 2007.

Ryver is set to graduate with a 3.6 GPA, and has been accepted to Michigan State University, where she plans to study Veterinary Sciences.



NEW to Quest this school year – Faithful Auto & Truck Scholarship

After employing a former Quest graduate, last winter, owner Bill McKnight approached Quest to see what he could do to help “hands-on” students get a “hand up” in starting their post-secondary training. The scholarship is geared toward primarily students that are entering the automotive field, however, any Quest graduate can apply. This year's scholarship winner will be announced at graduation. Thanks to owners Bill and Wendy McKnight for supporting our graduates!



Due to Covid, Quest could not take our annual college visit to Mott in Flint. Instead, Mott brought the tour to our students. Students had the opportunity to hear from heads of several different departments to learn about career paths.

Quest Teachers Receive Grants from State Farm Insurance



Quest received 2 grants from State Farm Insurance, both for \$2,500.

The first grant is to expand the current Quest Disc Golf course to 18 holes. Grant money will go toward 6 additional baskets, some new signs, and the purchase of a mentorship curriculum. Mr. Rosser had this to say, “Quest built the disc golf course 5 years ago, it was always our goal to eventually expand, and to start a disc golf club. This grant will help us accomplish both of those goals.”

The second grant will be used to further the goals of the “All SET” program. All SET stands for Service, Employment, and Training. Quest teacher David Scalf commented, “What you do in your years of high school is important. The most important thing is setting up for your future. All SET is about having a plan for after graduation day.” Quest currently partners with the Lapeer Family Literacy Center for the Jobs for Michigan Graduates Program. The partnership began at the start of last school year, and the benefits are already being realized in seeing 2020 graduates well on their way to a rewarding career.

Let's See How Far We've Come



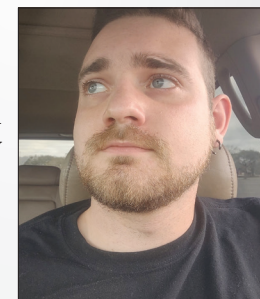
We are catching up with 2011 Quest graduate **Miranda Baer!**

After graduation Miranda worked in various customer service jobs, before moving to Louisiana in 2014. In 2017 Miranda completed her training as a Registered Behavior Technician to work in a pediatric clinic that helps children with Autism. Her experience serving autistic children motivated her to enroll at Bossier Community College. She chose to apply for the Occupational Assistant Program, a program so rigorous that it accepts less than half of those that apply. Miranda commented, “They only accepted 20 candidates... being accepted was one of my greatest achievements!”

At Bossier, Miranda studied for two years and recently earned her an Associate's Degree as an Occupational Therapy Assistant. She plans to use her degree in a pediatric setting to continue to help kids with autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, and other developmental delays. Miranda's goal is to obtain her Master's degree in Occupational Therapy.

2016 Quest graduate **William Morley**

recently graduated from South Louisiana Community College with a perfect 4.0 grade point average! He graduated with a certificate in Structural Welding.



Enroll Today at Award Winning Quest High School!

Students interested in enrolling at Quest High School or obtaining more information about the programs offered at Quest can learn more about us on our facebook page at:

www.facebook.com/NBQuesthighschool/

To enroll at Quest contact Program Coordinator Corey Rosser by email at crosser@nbbrncos.net or by phone at 810-688-7581.



Follow Quest High School on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/NBQuesthighschool/>





Girls STEM Conference Representatives



Ruth Fox Middle School was excited to have six girls selected to represent North Branch at the Lapeer ISD Girls STEM Conference. During this after-school virtual event girls were able to learn about STEM careers, do experiments, make crafts, and talk with women in the STEM field. The girls really enjoyed the experience and memories created.



ADVANCED COURSE OPTIONS

- COMPASS Gifted and Accelerated Classes
- Pre-Algebra
- Algebra
- Spanish
- Advanced English



Follow RFMS
@ruthfoxmiddle

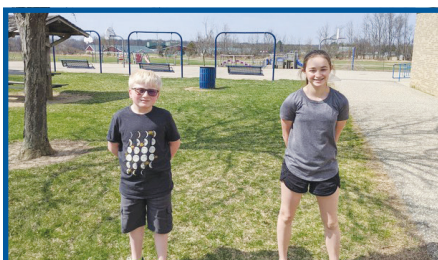
America & Me Essay Contest Local Students Named Essay Contest Winners



Three students from Ruth Fox Middle School have been named local winners in the 52nd annual America & Me Essay Contest, sponsored by Farm Bureau Insurance.

The award winners are: **Bryan Holzinger (3rd), Josie Smith (2nd), and Tracy Ludescher (1st)**. All three received award certificates and a monetary prize at an informal in-school celebration. As the first place winner, Tracy's name will be engraved and added to a plaque, with the names of many previous winners, which is on permanent display at the school. Her essay now advances to the state level competition from which the top ten essays in Michigan will be selected.

Several thousand 8th graders from nearly 200 Michigan schools participated in the 2020-2021 contest, each writing a tribute to his/her Personal Michigan Hero. Tracy honored her sister with a heartfelt essay, and should be very proud to advance to the state competition. Best of luck Tracy!



Spelling Bee Top Finishers!

Two Ruth Fox students finished in the top three of the Lapeer County Spelling Bee. Out of 16 county finalists,

Addison Cobb (7th Grade) placed 2nd and Owen Smielewski (5th Grade) placed 3rd.

Great job in representing North Branch well!!



Cereal Drive

In recognition of National Ag Week Lapeer County Farm Bureau, North Branch Elementary, and North Branch Parent Teacher Committee (PTC) held a “seed to spoon” cereal project, which was an overwhelming success!

Lapeer Co Farm Bureau provided a “Seed to Spoon” classroom educational box to all 36 classes at NB Elementary. These boxes held agriculture accurate books, teachers guides, lesson plans, activities and supplies and some fun too. Each box focused on age appropriate agriculture education of grains and where our food comes from.

NB PTC held a boxed cereal drive for NB Elementary students, which netted 1484 boxes of cereal. The cereal was donated to local food pantries. Students could bring in boxes of cereal, or money, that the PTC used to then purchase cereal at a local grocery store.

Lapeer Co Farm Bureau matched the cereal donations with a \$1000 cash donation to North Branch Thrift Shop and Food Pantry. Local Farm Bureau Insurance agents Dustin Jones and Brent Kilgore stepped up to the plate as well. Dustin Jones paid off all outstanding student lunch balances at NB Elementary, while Brent Kilgore is providing a pizza party to two classrooms that brought in the most donations. Sunrise Convenience Stores donated gift certificates for students in the classroom of each grade that brought in the most donations. All cash donations totaled more than \$1250 and cereal donations totaled approximately 1855 pounds!

Special thanks to:

- North Branch PTC
- Sunrise Convenience Store
- Bryan's Market
- Michelle Peel, Farm Bureau Insurance
- Kip Siegler, Farm Bureau Insurance
- Dustin Jones Farm Bureau Insurance
- Brent Kilgore, Farm Bureau Insurance
- Lapeer Co Farm Bureau Promotion and Education Committee



Community Outreach



Part of being a Bronco is helping others, and part of our mission at NBE is to instill the importance of helping those around you and community care into our students. This year we carried on the tradition of the ‘Kids Helping Kids’ food drive in the fall. Headed up and organized by 2nd grade staff and students, this drive brings in hundreds of pounds of food to help families in our own community. This is a long-standing community project that students look forward to each year.

New this year, our 3rd grade staff and students started a community Public Service Announcement (PSA) project to communicate with the public about how common pests such as spiders and moles can be helpful to the environment. You may see some of their PSA work out and about in the community. The HoWDY Team also initiated a community project to provide some Free Little Libraries throughout the community. These libraries offer a free place for students to grab a book to read, and they can simply return it when they are done. Free Little Libraries are located at NBE, The North Branch Bar and Grill, and at the township park.

Also new this year, though we are hoping that it will be an annual event, was our Paw Prints for Paradise community outreach project. Lead by 1st grade teachers and students, we worked hard for two weeks to bring in money and treats to help support the local animals at Paradise Animal Rescue in Lapeer. Students raised over a thousand dollars to donate to the shelter, in addition to numerous boxes of treats. The classroom who brought in the most donations got to name one of the new kittens at the shelter.

With the foundational belief that you are never too small to help others, our NBE family has pulled together many times throughout the year to help others. Special thanks to those we have partnered with, as well as our staff, students, and families for always supporting us and helping each of our community outreach projects be a success!

FAMILY FUN!



NBE READING DRILL

WHAT'S A READING DRILL? WHERE ALL OF NBE STOPS, DROPS, AND READS!



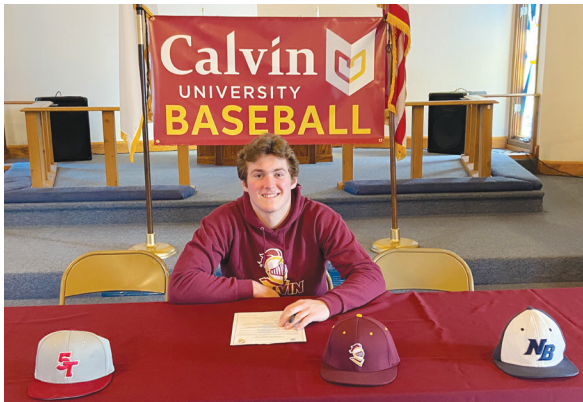
Our Spring at NBE has focused on getting our families engaged and our students excited. In March, we hosted a variety of reading centered activities for students to do at home with their families. We kicked off **March is Reading Month** with a week's worth of literature centered around being kind to others and showing empathy. Throughout the month of March students earned free books, participated in some Reading Drills, engaged in reading at home, and even had a zoom call with featured author Maria Dismondy. Students enjoyed an entire month of reading themed activities and prizes.

In April, we focused on the theme of math – ‘**Arithmetic in April**’. During this month students brought home math games to play with their family every Monday. These games supported what students were working on in math and were a fun way to allow our students to bring math home and share it. In addition to games, we featured guessing boxes, choice boards, math challenges, and so much more. The grand finale of the month included drawings for a variety of math games.

In May we will focus on **Fun Family Fitness** event(s). We will be featuring activities to be done as a family, prize drawings, challenges and a variety of other fitness related features!



Breann June signing her letter of intent to play volleyball at Concordia University.



Dominic Schierlinger signing his letter of intent to play baseball at Calvin College.



Drake Deshetsky signing his letter of intent to play football at Grand Valley State University.



Ryan Ruhlman signing his letter of intent to play baseball at Spring Arbor University.

FALL ATHLETIC HONORS

VOLLEYBALL BWAC

1ST TEAM:

Breann June, Sr – MVP
Hannah Farnsworth, Sr
Alana Deshetsky, Fr
Hailey Green, Fr

HONORABLE MENTION:

Natasha Bickel, So
Kaela Chingwa, Fr
Adrienne Greschaw, Fr

ALL REGION & MORE:

Breann June, Sr + 3rd Team
 All-State
Hannah Farnsworth, Sr
Alana Deshetsky, Fr + Honorable
 Mention All-State
Hailey Green, Fr + Honorable
 Mention All-State

TEAM = ACADEMIC ALL-STATE

INDIVIDUAL ACADEMIC

ALL-STATE:

Breann June
Hannah Farnsworth

FOOTBALL BWAC

1ST TEAM:

William Damaska, So
Drake Deshetsky, Sr
Wyatt Howe, Sr
Brandon Martin, Sr
Drew Ragatz, Sr
Jacob Ranney, Sr

HONORABLE MENTION:

Colton Law, Sr
Jackson Schultz, Sr

ALL REGION & MORE:

Drake Deshetsky – MHSFCA
 All Region & 1st Team Linebacker,
 AP 1st Team Linebacker
Wyatt Howe – MHSFCA All Region
 Lineman, AP Honorable Mention
 Lineman
Brandon Martin – MHSFCA
 All Region & 1st Team Running Back,
 AP 1st Team Running Back
Drew Ragatz – MHSFCA All Region
 Lineman, AP Honorable Mention
 Lineman

SOCCER BWAC

1ST TEAM:

Ian Liebler, Sr
Landen Swoish, So
 Honorable Mention
Keegan Herron, So
Ethan Kaltz, Sr

CROSS COUNTRY BWAC

1ST TEAM:

Haileigh, Bissett, Jr
Gabriel Hutchins, Jr
Karlie Schlaud, So
Kyle Schoch, Jr

HONORABLE MENTION:

Alyssa Bussure, Jr
Savannah Dodds, Jr
David Hadden, Jr
Evan Schapman, Jr

STATE QUALIFERS:

Haileigh Bissett
Evan Schapman
Karlie Schlaud

WINTER ATHLETIC HONORS

WRESTLING

ALL REGION & MORE:

Darren McLeod, Jr. – Regional
 Champion, State Qualifier

BOWLING BWAC

1ST TEAM:

Traver Montgomery, So
Michael Cary, Sr – League MVP

STATE QUALIFIER:

Traver Montgomery

BOYS BASKETBALL BWAC

2ND TEAM:

Drake Deshetsky, Sr & 1st Team
 Defense

HONORABLE MENTION:

William Damaska, So
Griffin Mabery, So

GIRLS BASKETBALL District Champions BWAC

1ST TEAM:

Bailey Gormley, So

2ND TEAM:

Erin Wadley, Sr & 1st Team
 Defense

HONORABLE MENTION:

Breann June, Sr
Emily Ludescher

