



SchoolTalk

www.nbbrncos.net

North Branch Area Schools

May 2022

NBHS Announces *Valedictorian and Salutatorian*

North Branch High School is proud to announce the Class of 2022 Co-Valedictorians Isabella Kaake and Daniel Hadden as well as Salutatorian Caiden June.

"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.



Isabella Kaake
NBHS 2022 Co-Valedictorian

Isabella Kaake, the daughter of Scott and Dawn Kaake, earned a share of the top academic honors with a grade point average of 4.057. During each of her semesters in High School, Isabella made the Honor Roll.

Isabella is a member of the NBHS Student Council as well as the editor of the NBHS Yearbook. Isabella will be attending Saginaw Valley State University next fall. She is considering studying either education or graphic design/marketing.



Daniel Hadden
NBHS 2022 Co-Valedictorian

Daniel Hadden, the son of Andrew and Jennifer Hadden, also earned a share of the top academic honors with a grade point average of 4.057.

During each of his semesters in High School, Daniel made the Honor Roll and was inducted into the NBHS National Honor Society as a sophomore. Daniel competed in three sports (Basketball, Cross-Country and Track & Field) during all four years of high school. Daniel earned the "Kettering Presidential Merit Scholarship and has been accepted into Kettering University's Honor Program where he will study Electrical Engineering.



Caiden June
NBHS 2022 Salutatorian

Caiden June, the son of Curt and Deana June, earned salutatorian honors with a grade point average of 4.051.

During each of his semesters in High School, Caiden made the Honor Roll and was a member of the NBHS National Honor Society. While at North Branch High School, he was also a member of the NBHS Student Council, and served as the Class Treasurer. Caiden played Basketball and Baseball during all four years of high school. Caiden will be attending the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor in the fall to study Mechanical Engineering.

Congratulations Class of 2022!



Food Service Announcement

Hello North Branch Area School Families! With the 2021/2022 school year winding down, I wanted to give an update on what you can expect for school meals this coming fall.

Beginning school year 2022/2023, we will be returning to the traditional National Breakfast and School Lunch Program.

- **What does this mean for you?** This means that meal charges are returning in the Fall. There will be an updated Food Service Policy, as well as our Household Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application, released to everyone prior to the school year starting.
- **What can you do?** If you haven't already, you can complete the 2021/2022 Household Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application. All eligible students will remain in the free/reduced price meal status 30 days from the start of school. Applications are located in each building office as well as online www.nbbrncos.net.

When the time comes, complete the 2022/2023 Household Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application. If your student is eligible, they will receive free or reduced-price meals for the new school year.

I GREATLY appreciate all of your patience and understanding as we continue to navigate through the ever-changing supply and demand of food service.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please contact North Branch Food Service Department at 810-688-2226.

Thank you, **Kierstyn Cooper**
Food Service Supervisor, North Branch Area Schools

Message from the Superintendent



Dear School Community,

We are rapidly coming to the close of another successful school year. The publication for this edition of School Talk is May 13 meaning our seniors have 5 days left of classes and all other students have 17.5 days left finishing on June 10. I am proud to be a part of North Branch Area Schools for many reasons, and the last two years of working through a Pandemic have reminded me of why NBAS is such a special school district. Since the Pandemic began in March of 2020,

North Branch K-12 students have been provided some form of instruction with the exception of four days. When school districts were mandated to close, all districts were required to provide some instruction by April 25, 2020. North Branch teachers were online with their students or providing instructional packets the day after spring break on Monday, April 6, 2020, meaning the students only missed 3 days of instruction. Even this year, it wasn't until January that many districts in our state returned for in-person classes. Our students have been in session all year and we have given parents the freedom to choose on many issues such as in-person vs. virtual instruction and the optional wearing of masks. We believe parents know what is best for their children and we partner with them to deliver the best learning experience possible including their academic, social, and emotional growth.

Recently, I read an article in EL Education by Ron Berger comparing what parents in the US and UK valued in education. He found there was overwhelming agreement on the following: "Parents want a school where their children feel safe physically and emotionally; where their children are known and valued; where academic standards are high and where the work is engaging and meaningful; where students of all abilities are given effective support; where the school culture builds positive character habits such as respect, responsibility, courage, and kindness; where there is a wide range of opportunities beyond the classroom in areas such as arts and athletics; where the physical facilities are ample and well-kept; and where their children will become confident, capable learners and good citizens."

I have a strong belief our school district is thriving because those values are the same values we prioritize at North Branch Area Schools:

- **Physical Safety:** The NBAS Safety Committee has met 4 times since January and has been instrumental in moving forward with the following safety measures:
 - NBAS now has a full-time School Resource Officer thanks to a partnership with the North Branch Village;
 - All staff will undergo ALICE training for the 22/23 school year;
 - The district has applied for a safety grant to purchase door locking devices, security film for door entrances, and the most updated safety alert system on the market. We will implement these safety measures even if we are unsuccessful in securing grant funds.
- **Emotional Safety:** The district hired an elementary counselor and continues to employ a school-based therapist to assist our youngest learners. The Ruth Fox Middle School held its first Wellness Day on March 23 for all students. The high school offers a plethora of extracurricular activities for all students. In addition, sometime in May NBHS will host Sheriff McKenna and our Youth Advisory Council members as they present youth survey information to our parents.
- **All children are known and valued:** We have almost 700 students whose families choose to send their children to North Branch Area Schools from other districts. As I have shared on multiple occasions, our district's greatest asset is our dedicated and committed school employees and specifically our teachers. Teaching is not just a job in our district but a passion for our educators. Our team of administrators, teachers, and support staff work extremely hard to maximize the learning potential of our 2,400 students.

Every child is important and valued in our district.

- **Academic Standards are high and the work is engaging and meaningful:** Amber White, North Branch Curriculum & Assessment Director, was recently honored state-wide by the Michigan Lottery as an Excellence in Education winner. Amber's work to support teachers and advocate for students has paved the way for all children to reach their academic potential. Our daily goal is to appropriately challenge all students at all levels of their academic journey. Congratulations, Amber.
- **Students of all abilities are given effective support:** The Compass Program (Gifted & Talented) continues to grow and those students are being challenged at their level. Our students who need support and assistance are also challenged at their level and our support staff does an amazing job of working with those students. We have programs, such as the Peer-to-Peer program at the high school, that pair students with each other and both students benefit from this experience.
- **School Culture builds positive character habits such as respect, responsibility, courage, and kindness:** While we are all human and fail on occasion, I believe our administrators, teachers, and support staff do an exemplary job of modeling these characteristics and they are part of the fabric that defines our school district. While it is vital we provide our students a rigorous education, it is just as important that students graduate as lifelong learners, caring people, and productive citizens. Teaching positive characteristics and addressing student-mental health is a priority for our district in each building. The North Branch Elementary utilizes a building-wide Core Essentials program for all K-4 students. In addition, we have added two key positions hiring a School Based Therapist and an Elementary Counselor. The Ruth Fox Middle school devoted a full day to Wellness for all students. Finally, the vast majority of our high school staff has been trained in Youth Mental Health and is educated on how to best serve those students who need some extra assistance.
- **Students have access to a wide range of opportunities beyond the classroom in the arts and athletics:** Our band and drama programs are wildly successful and respected throughout the area for their excellence. Our athletic programs regularly win league and district championships with several programs successful at the state level. NBAS sponsors several clubs and extracurricular activities for all students.
- **Facilities are modern and well-maintained:** Thanks to the support of our community, North Branch Area Schools has beautiful and technology-rich learning and athletic facilities.
- **Children become confident, capable learners, and good citizens:** We believe in developing the whole child. Yes, our primary mission is to provide an excellent education for all students. However, we also want our students to be part of something bigger than themselves. We live in a special community and more and more graduates are coming home to raise their families in North Branch. Welcome home and "Once a Bronco, Always a Bronco."

We have a special school district because we employ educators who dedicated their lives to teaching and serving children. One such educator is High School Principal, Mark Hiltunen. Mr. Hiltunen will retire at the end of this school year. He started at NBAS in 1987 and became the high school principal in 2002. After a stellar 35 year career with the last 20 as the leader of the high school, Mr. Hiltunen deserves our deepest appreciation for a job well done! I have never known him to seek the spotlight, rather he is content to remain in the shadows and do whatever he can to support his staff and students. Mr. Hiltunen, thank you for demonstrating on a daily basis what it means to serve others and to do it well! You are leaving a large shadow and will be greatly missed next year. On behalf of our community, board of education, faculty, and staff, we thank you for 35 years of selfless service.

Best wishes to all for an enjoyable summer,
Jim Fish, North Branch Superintendent

MEET UP and EAT UP

Healthy food
to fuel your
summer.

North Branch Area Schools announces the sponsorship of the Summer Food Service Program for children. Free meals will be made available to children 18 years of age and under or persons up to age 26 who are enrolled in an educational program for the mentally or physically disabled that is recognized by a State or local public educational agency. The meals will be provided without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability, and there will be no discrimination in the course of the meal service. Meals will be provided at the site(s) listed here:

Non-Discrimination Statement: In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; fax: (202) 690-7442; or email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

WHEN:

Monday-Thursday • June 13-30, 2022

MEAL TIMES:

Breakfast 8am-9am • Lunch 11am-12pm

WHERE:

- **Ruth Fox Middle School Cafeteria**
6570 Brush St., North Branch
- **North Branch Elementary School Cafeteria**
4055 Elm Creek Rd., North Branch



Exciting News from winter madness in the band world & more!

FEBRUARY EVENTS: On Saturday, February 12, MSBOA High School District Solo and Ensemble was held in Imlay City. All groups medaled, with excellent and superior ratings. The following students earned medals:

- **Bryan Holzinger**, Tenor Saxophone Solo, Division II/Excellent rating
- **Nick Caldwell**, Trumpet Solo, Division I/Superior rating
- **Clarinet Quintet:** **Lea DuBay**, **Kylie Hollenbeck**, **Lavender Holzinger**, **Emerson Klutts**, **Caitlyn Moore**, Division I/Superior rating

Congratulations to all who participated! The Division I/Superior ratings qualified for MSBOA Virtual State Solo and Ensemble in March.

MARCH EVENTS: A transition into our bands' March Madness Month began with the 7th & 8th Grade and the High School Symphony Bands' Pre-Festival Concert Clinic with Mr. Kevin Czarnik on Thursday, February 24th. What an event it was! A ton of musical growth and fun learning ideas transpired from this event.

Both groups performed at the Michigan School Band and Orchestra District 3 District Band and Orchestra Festival

that was hosted here, at the high school. The 7th & 8th Grade Band received an Excellence Rating, Division II and the High School Symphony Band received a Superior Rating, Division II! Congratulations to both groups! Unfortunately, there will be no State Band and Orchestra Festival. However, the High School Symphony Band will be performing in an Exchange Concert with The Crosswell-Lexington High School Symphonic Band on the 21st of April at 5:00 pm.

MSBOA Virtual State Solo and Ensemble participants were all awarded ratings of Excellence, Division II. The students were **Nicholas Caldwell**, Trumpet and the Clarinet Quintet of **Lea DuBay**, **Kylie Hollenbeck**, **Lavender Holzinger**, **Emerson Klutts**, and **Caitlyn Moore**. Congratulations to all of the participants!

March 16th – 20th found the members of the High School Symphony Band on tour to Nashville, TN! The band toured the home of American Music, the recording industry of country music, and the foundation of the famous Studio B, which is still functioning to this day. The band was invited to perform before the Grand Ole Opry's

performance. They also performed at Country Music Hall of Fame, with a clinic at Vanderbilt College of Music, and enjoyed a performance of The Nashville Symphony's concert that was recorded live for future release. It was an AWESOME experience!

We also have 3 middle school and 3 high school students who have been nominated to the MSBOA District 3 Honors Bands. Their performance will be a virtual release in May. Middle school students are:

- **Jakob Larry**, Clarinet, 2nd chair
- **Matthew Marble**, Tenor Saxophone, 1st chair
- **John Ehardt**, Trombone, 1st chair

High school students are:

- **Emerson Klutts**, Clarinet, 1st chair 3rd part
- **Tony Adamic**, Baritone Saxophone, 1st chair
- **Nicholas Caldwell**, Trumpet, 2nd chair 2nd part

FINAL CONCERT:

- Monday, June 6th, 6:30pm RF Middle School Spring Fling Concert, outside the Middle School cafeteria
- Inclement weather the concert will be moved inside. Stay tuned.

SENIOR SCHOLARS



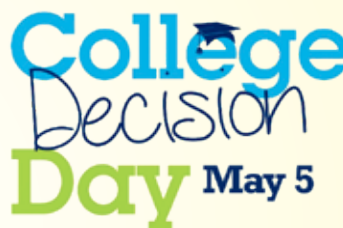
Each year, North Branch High School recognizes the top 25 students in the senior class, based on a combination of Grade Point Average and SAT test scores. These top academic students receive the title of Senior Scholar and will be recognized during Senior Class Night, and awarded a gold cord to wear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

This year's Senior Scholars are:

Arianna Allmon
Giovanni Altomare
Krista Arman
Gabriel Baksa
Melanie Bigger
Grant Clemens
Nevaeh Gardner
Allyson Gipson
Jasmin Girlish
Daniel Hadden
David Hadden
Gabriel Hutchins
Caiden June

Isabella Kaake
Abigail Knappen
Hollyn Laur
Aydan McIntyre
Darren McLeod
Mallory Mellish
Kiara Putnam
Grace Russell
Emma Senko
Ashlun Sylvester
Elise Volz
Kirk Worrell

May 5th 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 2022 (#Mldecisionday). For the ninth 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 Thursday, May 5th. 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 2022 and their future decisions.

NBHS Summer School Program



North Branch Area Schools will once again be offering a summer school program for students in grades 7-12 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.

Orientation will tentatively be held June 20th from 5pm-8pm, or June 21st 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 22nd 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@nbbrnconos.net or by calling (810) 688-7581, ext. 2820.

North Branch Early College

In partnership with:



Earn an Associate's Degree,
60 + Transferable College Credits,
or a program certificate while in
High School at NO COST to you!

See your NBHS Counselor for more information.



Class of 2022 NBHS Senior Events

SENIORS LAST DAY • Fri., May 20

BACCALAUREATE • Sun., May 22 (7pm)

The Baccalaureate ceremony will take place in the High School Auditorium. This is a non-denominational, inspirational service honoring the achievement and future for the graduates. Attendance is optional and admission is free. This event is not sponsored by the school.

GRADUATION PRACTICE • Wed., May 25 (3pm)

In order to participate in Commencement exercises, graduating seniors must report promptly by 3:00 pm on Wednesday, May 25th to participate in graduation rehearsal. Seniors who have met all of the graduation requirements will receive their caps & gowns immediately after rehearsal. If circumstances arise that will prevent a student from attending graduation rehearsal, he/she must see Mr. Hiltunen prior to May 25th.

SWING OUT • Wed., May 25 (5pm)

Students will line up at the front of the High School and will march 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 CLASS NIGHT • Thurs., May 26 (7pm)

Students should arrive at 6:30 p.m. Students should wear something a bit more dressy (no shorts, tank tops or flip flops). Students will be honored with local scholarships, awards, NHS stoles, athletic awards and honor cords, etc. Participation is not mandatory but it is nice to see all of the seniors celebrating their accomplishments together.

GRADUATION • Wed., June 1 (8pm)

We are planning to hold commencement at Krepps field on Wednesday, June 1st at 8:00 pm. Seniors "MUST" arrive in CAPS & GOWNS by 7:30 p.m. to line up outside of the Fitness Center. If there are severe storms, graduation will be in the HS Gymnasium.

PROJECT GRADUATION: This fun filled, action packed, alcohol-free lock-in has been a tradition in the North Branch community for over 40 years. The celebration will begin immediately following commencement on Wednesday, June 1st and will conclude early Thursday morning, June 2nd. All students attending are eligible for door prizes but they must be present to win. Only students participating in commencement will be allowed to attend the post grad celebration. WE ARE LOOKING FOR PARENTS TO BECOME PART OF THE PROJECT GRADUATION PLANNING COMMITTEE. Interested parents should contact Ms. Lonergan at dlonergan@nbbrnccos.net. A Senior Class meeting will be held after Spring Break to discuss Project Graduation information.

BWAC Academic All-Conference Team

On Thursday, April 21st, a luncheon was served at the Greystone Golf Club & Banquet Center to recognize the BWAC Academic All-Conference Team.

Each conference school selected their top five academic nominees (based on GPA and SAT scores) and the top male and female academic athletes from the Senior Class.

Congratulations go out to the NBHS Seniors pictured below for earning a spot on the BWAC Academic All-Conference Team.



Pictured L-R: Mr. Hiltunen, Haileigh Bissett, Daren McLeod, Isabella Kaake, Gabriel Hutchins, Caiden June, Daniel Hadden, Mr. Margrif

Future Teachers Visit Oakland University

On Monday, April 11th, NBHS English teacher Ms. Lonergan and NBHS College Advisor, Ms. Jessie, accompanied NBHS students on a tour of Oakland University's campus with a focus on their Education majors in Pawley Hall. Oakland University provided lunch from their excellent Pioneer Food Court and OU Admissions Representative Katrina Adrian, popped in to answer any lingering questions our students may have had. Our tour guide, Undergraduate Admissions Ambassador Brooke, did an excellent job of promoting her school and giving detailed information on what the university has to offer!

Thank you Oakland University! And thank you North Branch High School for the opportunity to serve your students and community!



Kayla's Kindness Challenges

North Branch Community member Kayla Kraus recently started "Kayla's Kindness Challenges" to improve school culture. Quest students have embraced the challenge! Challenges range from acts of kindness toward fellow classmates, teachers, and public servants.



Quest students again achieved highly in their **Ed-Tech programs**, with over 50% of Quest students earning a B- or better, and 100% of Quest students earning credit!



Quest has resumed having 3-4 students volunteer at the **North Branch Thrift Shop** for an hour each week. Thank you to transportation employee Jami Archer for volunteering her free time to supervise this valuable opportunity.



Quest Bowlers Roll to Win!

After a two year hiatus due to the pandemic, Quest traveled to Cass City for the TASL Bowling Championship. Both the boys and girls rollers fared well, each winning their tournament.

Individually, Ethan Clute placed first, Colin Ronne third, and Cam Guerrero fourth. Other contributing scores to the team score were Marco McLaughlin and Jacob Henning.

The girls continued their success, winning the championship for the third time in the past four bowling events. Melissa Ptaszniak paced the Lady Owls with a first place overall individual finish. Laina Rathburg placed third, and Ashley Hunt fifth overall. Hannah Hunt and Jordan Brock had contributing scores to the team total.



Remembering the Holocaust

On "Holocaust Remembrance Day" in January, Quest students had the great privilege of attending a field trip to the Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills. They were given a two-hour guided tour of the museum, followed by the honor of hearing a Holocaust survivor tell his story of his plight out of Germany. He eventually came to the United States, and earned his PHD despite not knowing any prior English!



Thanks to a grant from L and L Products of Romeo obtained by Mrs. White, Quest received CO2 dragster cars for Mr. Scalp's Physics class!

Carolyn Bower Memorial Quest Merit Scholarship Winners

Congratulations to **Kaylyn Jamroz** and **Charlene Schumacher** on earning the Carolyn Bower Memorial Quest Merit Scholarships! Thank you to Ron Bower for his continued support of Quest High. Both plan to attend Delta College and major in education. Each young lady will receive \$1,500 toward their college expenses.



Quest H.S. Welcomes Guest Speakers



Our Jobs for Michigan Graduates Coordinator Ashley Fanson brought in guest speakers Maricela and Annalisa from the Lapeer GST MiWorks office. They came to discuss the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA).

WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.

Let's See How Far We've Come



Congratulations to **Stephanie (Walker) McClary!** Stephanie is a 2009 graduate of Quest High School, and more recently a 2021 graduate from Eastern Gateway Community College! Stephanie graduated with a 3.7 GPA while earning her Associates Degree in Business Management. Stephanie worked a full-time job with

plenty of overtime, while raising 4 kids, and graduating with an excellent academic record!

We are so proud and happy for you! We can't wait to celebrate all that she will do next!

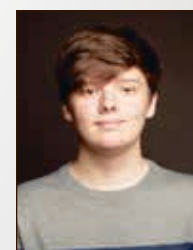
Enroll Today at Award Winning Quest High School!

Visit our Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/NBQuesthighschool/
Contact Program Coordinator Corey Rosser:
crosser@nbbrncos.net • 810-688-7581



Faithful Auto & Truck Scholarship Winners

Congratulations to **Dustin Vaughan** and **Jada Kennedy** for earning the Faithful Auto & Truck Scholarship for the class of 2022! Thank you to Bill and Wendy McKnight of Faithful Auto for your continued dedication to Quest High School and the North Branch Community!



Dustin Vaughan

While the scholarship is primarily geared toward students that are entering the automotive field, any Quest graduate can apply. Dustin plans to pursue a career in photography. Jada plans a career in the healthcare industry.



Jada Kennedy



Ruth Fox M.S. Artists

Several students from Ruth Fox Middle School had artwork on display, during the month of March, at Gallery 194 in downtown Lapeer. Every year the gallery hosts the K8ART Show which includes artwork from schools throughout Lapeer County. It is always difficult to choose artwork for the show, as there are so many amazing pieces created by the Ruth Fox Middle School students each year. It is preferred to have all grade levels represented, as well as a variety of different projects. Around 150 students create each project done in the middle school art classes, and there are approximately 8 projects per grade level at this point in the year. That means there are about 1,200 artworks to choose from. Ruth Fox Middle School was invited to contribute 15 total. Although only 15 pieces could be chosen, there were many equally good pieces of art created this year.

The following students had work on display: Ellanore LaLonde (5th), Ava Scigel (5th), Jack Distelrath (5th), Eliza Damaska (5th), Alexis Kelly (5th), Dawson June (6th), Haley Friend

(6th), Taea Stockwell (7th), Hannah Griswold (7th), Rachel Link (7th), Rayne Willis (7th), Ella Carrier (7th), Kinsey Cook (7th), Lily Basman (8th), Josie Greschaw (8th), and Hannah Thomas (8th). Many of these students attended a special

“Meet the Artist Reception”, hosted by Gallery 194. Student artists brought family and friends to the gallery to view the exhibit and enjoy refreshments. Congratulations to these students on a job well done!



Focusing on Commitment

This year Ruth Fox Middle School has focused on Core Values, through a program called **Reconnect (Re:Co)**. The value for May is Commitment, “making a plan and putting it into practice”. Throughout this month, there will be reminders about Commitment through the morning announcements, in classroom lessons, and through the building. Parents also get parenting tips for supporting our value of Commitment. As an incentive, students can get “Bronco Busted” by demonstrating Commitment this month, and be entered into our weekly drawing.



7th Grade Authors

On Tuesday, April 5, Ms. Fish took a group of 7th grade students down to the Elementary to read the digital books they created to students in Mrs. James' 3rd grade classroom.

15 students spent four weeks in an MTSS rotation, each creating their own digital book to share with a 3rd grade student. Each story was original, featured images or illustrations, and included a lesson to teach the students.

All the students had a great time!





5th Grade Visit to Chatfield

Ruth Fox Middle School in Fifth Graders had the privilege of attending their first field trip to Chatfield for two consecutive days this past March. Students experienced six different classes including percussion, fire starting, wood cutting, maple syrup making, using an adle-adle, and orienteering. They gained a wealth of information through hands-on learning! It was a very positive adventure!



Spelling Bee Top Finishers!

Two Ruth Fox students finished in the top three of the Lapeer County Spelling Bee. Out of over 20 county finalists, Luke LaValley (8th Grade) placed 1st and Owen Smielewski (6th Grade) placed 3rd. Great job in representing North Branch well!!

Luke will be going on to represent Lapeer County at the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington DC. Good luck Luke!



Ruth Fox Wellness Event

On March 24th, all Ruth Fox students and staff participated in a building wide Wellness Event, which reminded them of the importance of taking care of one's self – physically and mentally. Students chose from a list of sessions to help encourage one another to reconnect with others, find their place to recharge, or work up a little sweat. Each session was led by an adult who shared how the activity helps in their own wellness, and shared with students how they can learn more about the activity. Students had fun doing activities such as: exercise, cooking, yoga, reading, drawing, basketball, hiking, and more. It was a great event that was enjoyed by all!



ADVANCED COURSE OPTIONS

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

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March is Reading Month

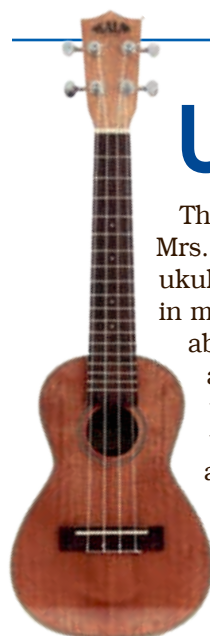
March Is Reading Month was a huge success and tons of fun at NBE! Our theme was ***"Get into the Game of Reading!"*** To get kids excited, each hallway in our building chose a game and decorated the entire hallway as well as lockers with that theme. The halls were decorated with CandyLand, Scrabble Jr., Hungry Hungry Hippos, Clue, and Monopoly. We also displayed board games in various showcases, and a March Madness Book Battle also took place. The students listened to two books and voted for their

favorites. Each week the winner was posted on a bulletin board in the cafeteria.

In addition to the amazing decorations, we also held several prize drawings throughout the month. All students received a game board/bingo board with reading tasks to complete, every student who completed his/her board received a free book!!!! We gave out over three hundred books! Students who sent in pictures of themselves reading at home were also entered

into weekly drawings for bookmarks, Texas Roadhouse free meal vouchers, and other fun prizes. At the end of the month, each of the featured games in our hallways were raffled off to students along with a few cozy blanket games.

As a final celebration of March is Reading month, all students received a finger flashlight and enjoyed a Read-In in the dark in the gym. Fun and lots of reading were had by all!



Ukulele Club

The development of Ukulele Club grew out of a brainstorm of Mrs. Ehardt, music teacher at North Branch Elementary. Since the ukulele has been a favorite of the many instruments students play in music class, she wanted to find time for those most passionate about playing to be able to come together and learn more chords and more tunes. Ukulele Club meets every Tuesday after school until 4:45pm. Students have a snack, socialize, and then get to work! They have learned a new warm-up, a new chord, and are working on a new, Hawaiian-inspired, challenging tune, "My Ohana, My Hoaloha," by Karl Hitzemann. Students will also be learning pop tunes, such as "Iko, Iko," by Justin Wellington.

They are working toward having a few tunes ready to perform at Fine Arts Night on May 20th at 6:00 pm. Mrs. Ehardt's vision of having several students meeting weekly after school to play ukulele has grown to nearly forty students in attendance!





FINE ARTS NIGHT

North Branch Elementary will be hosting its first annual Fine Arts Night at the school on May 20 at 6pm. It will be an indoor and outdoor event as long as the weather cooperates. All NBE families are invited! The night will start with a performance from Mrs. Ehardt's Ukulele Club, followed by a performance from Mrs. Waldeck's and Mrs. Campbell's Hula Club. Mrs. Opperman will have each student's artwork on display as well! Other musical performances include members of the North Branch High School Band and Drama Club. Families can also participate in an assortment of stations: Karaoke, Keyboarding, Boomwhacking, Instrument Making, Circle Drumming, Pollock Community Art, God's Eye Weavings, Printmaking with Shaving Cream, and Necklace-Making. Kona Ice and a snack station will be there as well as Ms. Skittles, who will be face painting! It is sure to be a fun, relaxing, enjoyable evening!



HULA CLUB

Aloha! My name is Mrs. Waldeck, and I am the Creative Movement Teacher in the elementary school. I recently went on a family vacation to Hawaii and the week prior to my trip the students were introduced to hula dancing. The idea of bringing hula dancing into our school was inspired by our students. A couple weeks before the trip one of my students eagerly asked, "Would you please take me with you to Hawaii?" and I told her, "I couldn't fit 1,000 students in my suitcase." We laughed and then another student said, "Well if we can't go with you, then can you bring Hawaii to us?" The students were enthralled with Hawaiian history and culture, even the geography. It was a lot of fun for students of all ages. They were amazed to learn that it was men who started the tradition of hula dancing in the 1800s.

When I returned from my trip several students wanted to continue with hula dancing. With the interest of the students and the help of my mother, Ms. Francie, we currently have an after-school Hula Dancing Club. Ms. Francie is our hula dance instructor, and her history of dance goes back many years. She studied tap, jazz, ballet, and Tahitian dance. Ms. Francie states, "Although it has been many years, I am truly enjoying my time with the students in North Branch Elementary." The club participants will perform at our Fine Arts Night on Friday, May 20th. We hope to see you there!

Mahalo!



SEL

With the stress and relative isolation caused by the pandemic, the loss and ensuing grief associated with it, and recent school tragedies, mental health has become a priority in schools across the nation and here in Michigan. Counselors have seen a rise in anxiety, a need for interventions in the areas of emotional and relational regulation, and the need for grief counseling. Fortunately, money that has been generously donated by Ray and Robie Wagester to North Branch Elementary School is helping to address these issues and has already gone a long way towards doing so. Consideration of specific books and supplies that have come from this donation demonstrates both the value of giving and the relevance and vital importance of mental health.

CBT 123 is a game including a deck of cards which helps children engage with one another in a small group setting. It requires kids to select cards that offer instructions, often about sharing a concerning thought or emotion, but in a fun or goofy way (i.e., while patting one's head). It often helps put children at ease while sharing in a group setting and has lent itself to a lot of laughter and giggles. Similarly, a series of books that includes Angry Ninja, Sad Ninja, and Anxious Ninja (all three of which have been read several times already), as well as the corresponding "Ninja Conversation Cards," has empowered students by making their emotions understandable and relatable, with the added bonus of bringing literacy into counseling sessions. It has become evident that these types of books and supplies have helped our elementary school students to navigate the unprecedented challenges that they have had to face.

Cereal Drive

NBE student, staff, and community did a fantastic job with our 2nd annual Seed to Spoon Cereal Drive sponsored by Lapeer County Farm Bureau and the NBE PTC. Thank you to everyone who helped make this a success!

Garden Club at NB Elementary

In May, a garden club is beginning at North Branch Elementary. School gardens engage students by providing a powerful environment to observe, discover, experiment, nurture, and learn. They are living laboratories where lessons are drawn from real life experiences, encouraging students to become active participants in the learning process. They have been shown to increase self-esteem, help students develop a sense of ownership and responsibility, and promote healthy lifestyle choices including increased fruit and vegetable consumption.

Thirty, third grade students will have the opportunity to participate in cultivating four raised bed gardens located on the grounds of the elementary school. Led by teachers, Lauren Clinton(2nd Grade), Sara Hyde(STEM), & Sarah Opperman(Art), club members will maintain the gardens during the summer. At harvest time, students will be able to enjoy strawberries, homemade salsa, and other fresh vegetables.



Cosmic Bowling Comes to PE

Over the last month of school, students have been working on a bowling unit at North Branch Elementary. The upper grades worked on underhand rolling a ball with control, their approach, aiming/targeting, and follow through. The lower grades focused on rolling the ball down the lane, pointing at the target pins, and exploring bowling with soccer balls/bowling balls. Students had fun bowling their way through various games of Bingo bowling, dice bowling, and the grand finale of Cosmic Bowling! With the lights turned down, the gym was a-glow with bowling fun!

Thank you to Bowling 101 for lending their equipment to make this an exciting end to our unit.

Embryology in the Classroom

Each year, North Branch Elementary teachers Jodi Conley and Sarah Sieradzki, work together with our local Lapeer County Farm Bureau to provide an 'egg-mazng' experience for children. Through this project, students are introduced and immersed in learning about not only agriculture and where their food comes from, but rich connections to regular content and standards are made as well. For example, instead of just reading about animal life cycles, students are watching a portion of an animal's life cycle and connecting the life cycle of a chicken to the life cycles of all living things. Students from years prior and current students have also contributed to this project by providing extra eggs to fill the classroom incubators as well. At the conclusion of the project, students wishing to continue to care for the birds at home, take them home and provide regular updates back to their classmates.



F.A.B.S. (Fun After & Before School)



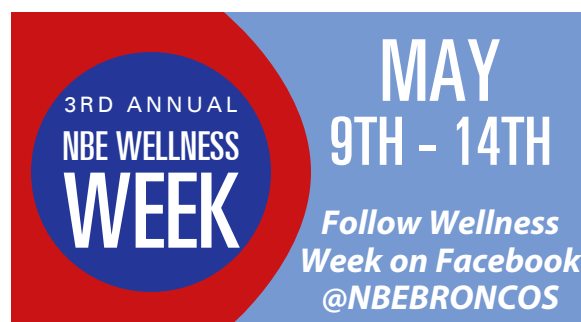
The F.A.B.S. (Fun After & Before School) Child Care Program was blessed with a generous donation from Rick and Fran VanHaaften through Lapeer County Community Foundation. Fran was instrumental in starting the FABS program at North Branch Elementary School in 1994. She was the program director for several years and has been a continued supporter of the program.

FABS provides child care in the elementary building before, during and after school for 100+ students per day. We were able to purchase a new refrigerator and we are also looking for a new sofa for our program.

2nd Annual Paw Prints for Paradise

Paw Prints for Paradise is a community outreach project hosted by first-graders at NBE to support Paradise Animal Rescue in Lapeer. Paw Prints for Paradise is a project that gets the children involved in something that encourages them to think of others and to help the animals that can't help themselves.

Every paper paw print represents each dog treat donation or every \$1 donated. All of the paw prints lined the hallways with a trail of paw prints from Paws the dog around the school to his dog house. The goal of the fundraiser was for the entire school to purchase enough paw prints to get Paws to his doghouse. This year was a success! The NBE community raised \$1,040.61 and succeeded in getting Paws to his doghouse. In addition to reaching the school-wide goal, the top two classrooms with the most pawprints get the privilege of naming the newest kittens at Paradise Animal Rescue. There will be 8 kittens and 2 momma cats receiving names from 2 lucky classrooms. The 2nd annual Paw Prints for Paradise ran from April 4-14, and the North Branch community and students have demonstrated, once again, the true heart of selfless giving.



Congratulations

The HS Girls Track & Field team has qualified for the MITCA Team State Meet, Division 2 to be held Friday, May 27 at Fowlerville High School! Varsity Baseball Coach Chuck Jacobson received his 250th career win at Caro on Friday, April 22!



GRACIE HYDE, Volleyball
Mott Community College • Business & Entrepreneurship
2021 MHSAA Volleyball Runner-up



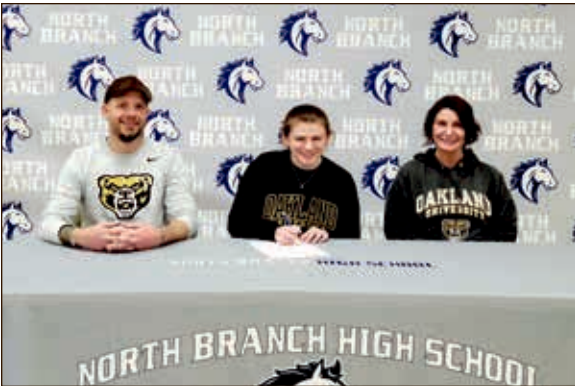
ELISE VOLZ, Dance Team
Alma College • IPHS
(Integrative Physiology & Health Sciences)



RAY STRYZNSKI, Baseball
Olivet College • Sports Management & Coaching



TABATHA MUNTZ, Soccer
St. Clair County Community College • Graphic Design



HAILEIGH BISSETT, Cross Country & Track
Oakland University • Environmental Science



GRANT CLEMENS, Track & Field
Adrian College • Criminal Justice



DARREN McLEOD, Wrestling
Olivet College • Business Administration



DARREN McLEOD
All State Wrestler, MHSAA 140# • 5th place



TRAVER MONTGOMERY, JR.
All State Bowler, MHSAA Division 2 • 5th place



**Mildred Bozek**

has been with NBAS for 26 years, starting with Food Service. Mrs. Bozek loved to help students. During the majority of her tenure, she served as a Special Education and Classroom Paraprofessional. Mrs. Bozek was beloved by the students who she supported on a daily basis.

**Joanne Bular**

has been with NBAS for 25 years. She has served in many roles to support students in all buildings of the district, including Jefferson Elementary. Mrs. Bular finished her service as the Ruth Fox Media Center Paraprofessional. During her time in the Media Center, she imparted her love of reading to all Ruth Fox students.

**Curt June**

graduated from North Branch High School in 1992. When the opportunity presented itself, he returned to his alma mater in the fall of 1998 to teach industrial arts after a one-year teaching assignment at West Ottawa High School. Today, we come to express our thanks to him for his vast contributions

to all students who graced the halls of NBHS. During the 25 years that Curt taught at NBHS, he was actively involved as a coach in the girls' volleyball program, chairperson of the Applied and Fine Arts department, and was a class sponsor. In addition, he implemented many after school programs, like archery for students in grades 5-12 and a boys' volleyball club that competed with other schools across the state.

The most talented teachers are those who teach not by words, but by examples. Mr. June is such a teacher. Thank you, Curt, for being you, and all you have done for North Branch High School and our community. Congratulations to a good teacher, a great person and the newest addition to retired life!

**Mark Hiltunen**

has been part of North Branch Area Schools for 35 years. He graduated from Michigan Tech University and started as a biology and chemistry teacher in 1987. During his first 14 years in the district, he also taught physical science and anatomy as well as physiology. Mark also started the first Advanced

Placement class at North Branch High School. He was also involved in extracurricular activities serving as an assistant football coach, varsity track coach, and class sponsor. In 2000, Mark was promoted to Assistant Principal and has served the last 20 years as the North Branch High School Principal.

Mark has achieved a great deal at NBAS, but two major accomplishments stand out. He was the driving force behind starting Quest High School and is its most ardent supporter. He understands the importance of meeting the academic needs of all students and Quest High School has been instrumental in helping our at-risk students graduate from high school with college and career readiness opportunities. He also initiated the North Branch Early College program enabling students to graduate with up to 60-plus credits at no expense to them or their families.

The staff at North Branch High School is used to getting positive communications from their principal. He likes to conclude his letter, email, or text with the following saying, "Nice Bike."

"Mark has positively impacted so many lives during his 35 years in the district," said Superintendent Jim Fish. "He is passionate about North Branch Area Schools and cares deeply about his staff and students. On behalf of the North Branch Board of Education, teachers, staff, and students, we wish Mark a happy and healthy retirement. It has been an honor and a privilege to work alongside him as he is a true professional."

As you have the opportunity to interact with Mark at a year-end school activity such as class night or commencement, please gratefully acknowledge his amazing 35 years of exemplary service to the North Branch Area School District and its youth with two simple words:

Nice Bike!

**THANK YOU ALL
for your service and
commitment to NBAS!**

**Jill Laur**

retired this fall after 25 years at North Branch Area Schools. Through the years she worked in each building and her most recent position was in the CI Room at the High School. Jill loved working with all students; however, she was drawn to working with students with special needs. Jill worked

with Special Olympics track and field as well as basketball and bowling. We could always count on Jill anytime and anywhere help was needed. Her work ethic and ability to spot what needed to be done without being told made her a valuable team member. Jill's energy, smile, and kindness were contagious and she is missed by all. Happy retirement, Jill!

**Mr. Sippell**

has been with North Branch Area Schools for 21 years and has been in education for more than 40. He served as a History and PE teacher while in North Branch and has coached a number of sports at the High School and Junior High level. He has been the Head Varsity Golf coach for each of his

21 years. He said he will miss mingling with the kids who have been a lot of fun and that he's loved and will miss all of the great people he's worked with. He's also going to miss some of the rivalries amongst the staff and students, especially Michigan/MSU football games. In retirement, Mr. Sippell will be a ranger on a golf course and travel with his wife Robin to visit his daughters.

**Kelly Buhl**

became part of the North Branch Area Schools family on November 22, 1999 when she was hired as the district's delivery/transporter. Kelly worked district wide in addition to playing key role to the success of the food service operations. Kelly always had a smile and was

always willing to go above and beyond wherever needed. Thank you for your 23 years of service. Congratulations on your retirement, Kelly! You will be missed!

Congratulations Retirees!