



Wildcat Connections

Wheatland-Chili Central School District

Winter 2024

Celebrating 100 Days of School!

February 12, 2024



HS Student Addresses Local Leaders

Delivering a speech to a room full of high-profile figures is a stressful undertaking, but a Wheatland-Chili High School student recently seized the opportunity and made the most of it.



Torrence Bansbach addressed politicians and school leaders during the Monroe County School Board Association (MCSBA) Legislative Breakfast in February.

The 10th grader was one of five students from districts across Monroe County selected to speak. Each student researched and presented a specific topic affecting local schools, such as mental health, free meals and diversity, equity and inclusion. Bansbach focused on electric buses. Gov. Kathy Hochul has mandated that all school buses purchased by 2027 must be zero-emission buses with districts' entire fleets transitioned to zero emission by 2035.



The annual Legislative Breakfast is an opportunity for school administrators and board members to meet with legislators to highlight issues impacting public school districts.

Wheatland-Chili to Co-Host ROC2Change

This spring, Wheatland-Chili High School students will help empower hundreds of their peers from across the region to be forces for change.

Members of Students Together Against Racism (STAR) are collaborating with students at East Irondequoit and Rochester Early College International high schools to organize and co-host the upcoming ROC2Change Student Summit on Race. The biannual event centered on combatting racism brings together students from Rochester-area high schools to engage in facilitated dialogue and to address topics such as privilege, implicit bias, racial equity and social justice.

The student organizers of this spring's summit have been meeting monthly to work on all aspects of planning, including logistics, programming and branding. They have announced that the day's theme will be "Unity Grows Communities" and that Wheatland-Chili Graduate of Excellence Matthew Cook will be a keynote speaker.

The summit is set for March 15 at Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES Educational Services Center.



Inside this issue:

- 2024-25 School Calendar
- Capital Project
- Art Exhibits
- Bus Safety Day
- Ski Club
- Alumni Spotlight

VOTE

Tuesday, May 21

7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

MS/HS Gym

Ongoing Capital Improvements Progress

The District is gearing up for its next round of capital improvements. Construction on the new Middle/High School cafeteria and kitchen is set to begin after April break. The project includes a new serving line, additional seating and a new senior lounge. Additional improvements also beginning this Spring include:

- MS/HS nurse's suite and front hallway renovations
- Repavement of bus and drop-off loops at both schools
- Installation of new classroom door locksets with secure key fob access at both schools

The work is part of the \$5.8 million capital project approved by voters in May 2022.



Next Capital Project Vote Set for May 21

The District is planning for its next capital project vote to coincide with the 2024-25 budget and board election vote on May 21.

If approved, the project will not raise taxes and will cover much needed updates. The scope of the work includes:

- Roof repairs
- Repavement of parking lots
- MS/HS pool upgrades
- MS/HS counseling suite renovation

The District will release additional information on the proposed capital project in the coming weeks.

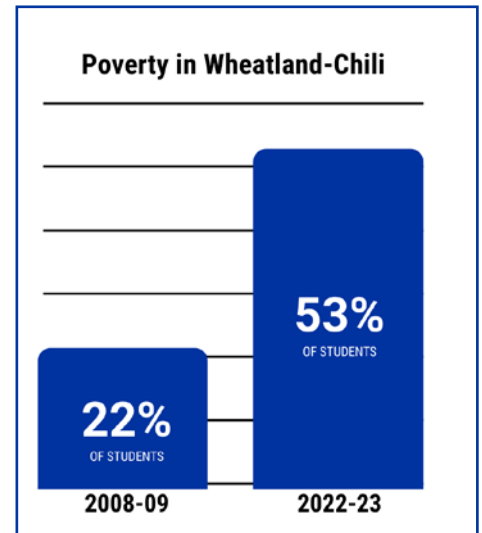
Wheatland-Chili Tackles Poverty Head-On

The District is bringing attention to poverty within the community and the steps it's taking to address the challenges facing families.

Last school year, 53% of Wheatland-Chili students experienced economic disadvantages — a 240% increase since the 2008-09 school year when only 22% of students were identified as living in poverty. Superintendent Lynda Quick presented data on the District's changing demographics during the Board of Education meeting on January 9, coinciding with Poverty Awareness Month.

Many scientific studies have found a strong correlation between poverty and gaps in academic achievement. Despite the growing poverty rate, Wheatland-Chili's current four-year graduation rate is 93%. Quick credits strong instruction, dedicated staff and initiatives like free meals, equity-driven learning tools and systems of support and programs to create stronger partnerships with families.

The District will continue to explore new strategies and to push to remove barriers and bridge gaps, investing in students and families over the entire span of their educational experience to help them cross the finish line with a diploma prepared for college and careers.



Advocacy in Action: School Bus Safety Day Named in Honor of T. J. Connor Student

Next school year, T. J. Connor will celebrate the inaugural Coyle O’Shea School Bus Safety Day during National School Bus Safety Week.

The day to promote and educate students on school bus safety is named for third grader Coyle O’Shea in recognition of his advocacy for bus safety. O’Shea prepared and delivered an impassioned speech to the Board of Education on the importance of promoting bus safety. Soon after, Director of Transportation Sheryl Guidice announced that the District would expand its education efforts during School Bus Safety Week and devote Coyle O’Shea School Bus Safety Day to promoting the cause.

National School Bus Safety Week is set for October 21-25.



Coyle O’Shea and Director of Transportation Sheryl Guidice



Fraser Honored for Volunteer Work

Board of Education Vice President Shanna Fraser has been named a 2023 Volunteer of Distinction by the Wheatland Community Hall of Fame.

The award recognizes volunteers who make positive contributions in support of the Wheatland community by freely giving time, effort and talent to a community need, cause or organization.

Fraser, who has two children who attend school in the District, is marking 10 years on the Board of Education and nine years as Board Vice President and has been an active member of the Parent Teacher Association for even longer. She also works as the Recreation and Senior Center Coordinator for the Town of Wheatland.

Once a Wildcat, Always a Wildcat: Berl’s School Journey Comes Full Circle

Samantha Berl graduated from Wheatland-Chili High School in 2014 as salutatorian. Nearly a decade later, she is helping put the District’s youngest learners on the path to academic excellence as a first grade teacher at T. J. Connor.

Besides scoring top grades, Berl also scored on the field, court and course during her time as a Wheatland-Chili student, playing soccer, basketball, softball and golf. She also worked at Wheatland Recreation’s summer camps. Berl is now an assistant coach for Wheatland-Chili Girls Varsity Soccer and still helps with community summer and sports programs.

Berl went to college at SUNY Geneseo. While she started out majoring in business, she eventually switched her focus to education, realizing that what she has always really wanted to do is teach. After earning her bachelor’s degree at Geneseo and her master’s at the University at Buffalo, she started her career substituting at Wheatland-Chili before being

hired as a full-time kindergarten teacher at Elba Central School District.

When a permanent position became available at T. J. Connor three years later, Berl jumped at the chance and was hired for the 2022-23 school year. While she started out with kindergarten, she made the decision to move up with her class and is teaching first grade this year.

Berl’s connections to Wheatland-Chili run deep. She works with her mother, Nancy, at T. J. Connor, and her father, Greg, has served on the Board of Education for eight years. Her neighbor and fourth grade teacher Pamela Merrit was her mentor during her first year at T. J. Connor before Merrit retired at the end of the last school year.

As her journey comes full circle, Berl’s return to make a positive impact on the place that helped shape her own path is an inspiring example of the enduring ties that bind our school community together.



National Honor Society Inducts New Members

Congratulations to the National Honor Society's newest inductees:

Harmony Akins

River Brandes

Tahlib Clark

Padraig Crowley

Erin Hallock

Benjamin Hebrock

Camryn Limner

Sienna Mekker

Olivia Musson

James Montgomery

Dillon Nelson

Keith Nicolosi

Eli Orloff

Aiyanna Ortiz

Kathryn Tabor

Willow Taylor

Sandip Tiwari



HS Band Students perform with Hochstein Youth Wind Symphony

Wheatland-Chili High School trumpeter Freddie Woerner, a freshman, and clarinetist Dillon Nelson, a junior, recently performed with the Hochstein Youth Wind Symphony. The group rehearsed for six weeks leading up to a final concert at the Hochstein School in downtown Rochester in February.

The Youth Wind Symphony is made up of outstanding high school woodwind, percussion and brass players from across Greater Rochester.



HS Students Featured in Art Exhibits

Two Wheatland-Chili High School students were recently featured in an art exhibit at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT).

Artwork by Sienna Mekker and Kasey Tabor was selected for Start Here, an invitational exhibit featuring art by middle and high school students from the Greater Rochester and Finger Lakes regions.

Mekker was also selected for the Shared Spaces high school teacher/student art exhibit at Nazareth University. Her charcoal drawing titled "Three Figures" and a mixed media piece by high school art teacher Valerie Savage will be on display at the university's Arts Center Gallery through March 10.

Savage will also participate in the New York State Art Teachers Association (NYSATA) exhibit in March and several of her photography students will be featured in the upcoming Through the Student Lens exhibit at Image City Photography Gallery.



Sienna Mekker



Kasey Tabor

'Phantom of the Music Room' Mesmerizes Audiences

The Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Grade Drama Club set out to solve a musical mystery with its production of "Phantom of the Music Room."

A parody of the iconic musical "The Phantom of the Opera," the show by Janet Gardner tells the story of a group of student sleuths who work to unravel the secret of the shadowy figure who plays the piano in the school music room after dark and features six songs set to classics by Chopin, Sousa and more.

"Phantom" included a cast and crew of more than 40 students and was produced and directed by Beth McDougall, who also served as stage manager, Nicholas Roche, who also served as accompanist, and Alexis Waite, who also served as choreographer.



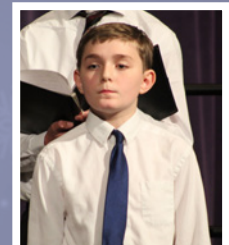
Friday, March 22
7 p.m.

Saturday, March 23
1 p.m. • 7 p.m.

MS/HS
Auditorium

Get tickets at
wheatlandchili.org

Winter Concerts



T. J. Connor Ice Capades

T. J. Connor students glided into an icy adventure. Instead of chilling at school, third, fourth and fifth graders put on their helmets, laced up their skates and hit the ice at Scottsville Ice Arena for gym class. It was a lesson in balance, coordination and teamwork, but the elementary ice enthusiasts embraced the frosty challenge and earned their skating stripes!



Ski Club Returns to the Slopes

Despite the mostly mild winter weather, the Middle/High School Ski Club is out in full force.

The club hits Swain Mountain every week and recently took a special all-day trip to Holiday Valley in Ellicottville.

Ski Club is the District's most popular after-school activity. More than 80 student skiers and snowboarders are participating this year — one of the largest memberships in club history!



Winter Sports Senior Nights

Celebrating our athletes in the Class of 2024!



Boys Varsity Basketball

Seniors (L to R) Benjamin Allen, Gianluca D'angi, Loudon Thrush and Javier Ellington



Girls Varsity Basketball

Seniors (L to R): Elizabeth Vandervoort, Chylene Whitcomb and Emily Parker



Boys Varsity Swimming & Diving

Senior Kyle Otto

2024-25 Year At-a-Glance

LEGEND

- No School for PreK-12 Students
- New Employee Orientation (1/2 Day)
- Conference Day; No School for PreK-12 Students
- First Day of School for PreK-12 Students
- Early Dismissal: Elem. (11:20 a.m.); Grade 6 (10:40 a.m.)
- School Reopens, Full Day Session - All Students
- Regents & Local Exams; School in Session PreK-12
- Regents & Local Exams; School in Session PreK-6
- Last Day of School for Students
- Regents Rating Day; No School for PreK-12 Students

August

Aug. 26 (Mon) New Employee Orientation
 Aug. 28 (Wed) Conference Day*
 Aug. 29 (Thur) Conference Day*

September

Sept. 2 (Mon) Labor Day
 Sept. 3 (Tues) Faculty & Staff Opening Day
 Sept. 4 (Wed) School Opens, Full Day Session

October

Oct. 11 (Fri) Conference Day
 Oct. 14 (Mon) Columbus Day/Indigenous People's Day

November

Nov. 11 (Mon) Veterans Day (Observed)
 Nov. 25-26 (Mon-Tues) . . Elem. Parent/Teacher Conferences
 Nov. 27-29 (Wed-Fri) Thanksgiving Recess

December

Dec. 6 (Fri) Elem. Parent/Teacher Conferences
 Dec. 23-31 (Mon-Tues) Holiday Recess

January

Jan. 1-3 (Wed-Fri) Holiday Recess
 Jan. 6 (Mon) School Reopens
 Jan. 20 (Mon) Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
 Jan. 21-24 (Tues-Fri) NYS Regents & Local Exams
 Jan. 29 (Wed) Lunar New Year

February

Feb. 17 (Mon) President's Day
 Feb. 18-21 (Tues-Fri) Mid-Winter Recess

March

March 21 (Fri) Conference Day

April

April 14-18 (Mon-Fri) Spring Recess

May

May 23 (Fri) Elem. Parent/Teacher Conferences
 May 26 (Mon) Memorial Day Recess

June

June 4 (Wed) NYS Regents Exams
 June 10 (Tues) NYS Regents Exams
 June 17-18 (Tues-Fri) NYS Regents Exams
 June 19 (Thur) Juneteenth
 June 20-25 (Fri-Wed) NYS Regents Exams
 June 24-26 (Tues-Thur) Early Dismissal: Elem., Grade 6
 June 26 (Thur) Last Day of School for Students
 June 27 (Fri) Regents Rating Day

JULY 2024							AUGUST 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	31

SEPTEMBER 2024							OCTOBER 2024						
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8	9	10	11	12	13	14	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
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29	30						27	28	29	30	31		

NOVEMBER 2024							DECEMBER 2024						
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3	4	5	6	7	8	9	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	29	30	31				

JANUARY 2025							FEBRUARY 2025						
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			1	2	3	4							1
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	

MARCH 2025							APRIL 2025						
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30			
30	31												

MAY 2025							JUNE 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30					

Wheatland-Chili Central School District

13 Beckwith Avenue
Scottsville, NY 14546
585.889.6247

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Henrietta, N.Y.
Permit No. 7

Board of Education (2022-2023)

James Musshafen, *President*
Shanna Fraser, *Vice President*
Gregory Berl
Cindy Dawson
Keith Nicolosi
Courtney Panek
Kim Snyder

Superintendent

Lynda Quick, Esq.

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Upcoming Events

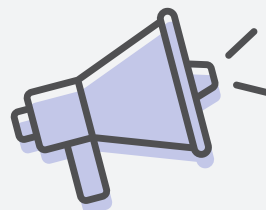
March

1	MS Ski Trip	8 a.m.
3	International Club Pancake Breakfast	9 a.m.
7	District Concert	7 p.m.
8	MS/HS Progress Reports Mailed	
8-9	MCSMA Senior High All-County Festival	
11	BOE Meeting	7 p.m.
14	Kindergarten Screening	
14	PTA Meeting	6:30 p.m.
15-16	MCSMA Junior High All-County Festival	7 p.m.
19	Spring Musical Teaser for TJC	
21	Spring Musical Senior Citizen Reception and Show	4 p.m.
22	TJC Report Cards Mailed	
22	BOE Visitation Day	
22	Spring Musical	7 p.m.
22-23	MCSMA Elementary All-County Festival	
23	Spring Musical	7 p.m.
25	Audit Committee Meeting	6 p.m.
25	BOE Meeting	7 p.m.
27	Budget Outreach Meeting	7 p.m.
29-April 8	Spring Recess	

April

11	PTA Meeting	6:30 p.m.
12	MS/HS Report Cards Mailed	
15-18	NYS Grades 3-8 ELA Assessments	
22	Communications and Engagement Committee Meeting	6 p.m.
22	BOE Meeting	7 p.m.
26	Conference Day — No School for Students	6 p.m.

WE'RE HIRING!



OPEN POSITIONS:

Bus Attendant
Special Education Teacher
Substitute Bus driver
Substitute Secretary/
Office Clerk
Substitute School Nurse
Teacher Aide
And more

Apply today at wheatlandchili.org