



— CUFSD NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2023

HOME OF THE HAMBLETONIANS

Career Connections students gain practical experience

The Career Connections initiative is now in its second successful year providing opportunities for all students in the Chester Union Free School District – from pre-K to grade 12 – to build valuable bridges from classroom learning to real-world applications.

Teachers identify standards and skills where a career or trade is directly aligned with instruction. Representatives of different fields are either invited to work directly with students on-site or they are visiting an organization or business to see the relationship to their learning first hand.

“Students are forging valuable connections to career applications in their learning,” said Superintendent Catherine O’Hara. “We are excited to see the continued progress of this initiative and the collaborative efforts of our teachers and staff in providing creative, engaging learning experiences for our students.”

An extension of Career Connections is the Workplace Learning Internship Program, which began in 2017. Junior and senior students have the opportunity to explore career options with a specific company, organization or business through a formal internship.

Beyond learning whether a given career choice may be the right fit before graduation, students are able to learn the day-to-day operation or demands of a given field, not to mention the importance of professionalism, collaboration and communication in the workplace. “The Workplace Learning Internship Program equips students with the tools they need to make decisions about college and their future careers,” said Jennifer Burreto, the Internship Coordinator and School Counselor.



Whether through the Career Connections initiative or Workplace Learning Internship Program, our students have worked with bankers, graphic designers, Chester police officers, artists, medical professionals including doctors and physical therapists, Chester town council members, farmers, restaurateurs and chefs, engineers, chemists, military, musicians, actors, grant writers, data managers, software developers, research scientists, doctoral students, editors and writers, and video producers, among others.

Become a mentor or provide an internship!

If you are interested in sharing your expertise with our students either in one of our classrooms or in your workplace, please contact Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Communication Dayanara Garcia through email.

Chester Academy is always interested in internship opportunities for its Workplace Learning Internship Program. If your organization or company would like to participate, please contact Internship Coordinator Jennifer Burreto through email.

IMPORTANT DATES

November 21

- Board of Education / Maple Avenue Community Forum

November 22 -24

- Thanksgiving Recess

November 28

- Family Instructional Academy

December 4

- MS Winter Concert

December 5

- HS Winter Concert

December 6

- Board of Education

December 20

- Board of Education

December 25 - January 1

- Winter Recess

January 10

- Board of Education

January 11

- CES Winter Concert

January 15

- Martin Luther King Jr. Day - School Closed



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Parents create Special Education Parent Teacher Association

Parents, in collaboration with the Chester Union Free School District, created the Special Education Parent Teacher Association (SEPTSA) this year as a way to provide resources for families and students with special needs.

SEPTSA works on creating spaces for students with neurodiversity and is district-wide so students within elementary school, middle school and high school have access to the resources that SEPTSA provides. Any parent is welcome to join, not just families of students with special needs.

Currently, SEPTSA is working on getting unified sports for high school students and a sensory hallway at Chester Elementary School.

If you are interested in attending a SEPTSA meeting, the group meets regularly in the CES library and it also offers a virtual option.

[Look at the school calendar for meeting dates.](#)



Voice Ensemble headed to Radio City

Students in the Chester Academy Music Department will take a trip to Radio City Music Hall on December 11, 2023, to perform as the opening act for the Radio City Christmas Spectacular.

The Voice Ensemble class had its audition tape submitted by teacher Rachel Scali in June. The students were accepted to perform, were able to successfully fundraise for their trip and are looking forward to the performance in December. There are 14 students in Voice Ensemble, ranging from ninth through 12th grade.

"The students are practicing at a college level as they prepare for this performance," said Mrs. Scali, who has a background in opera and vocal performance and has been teaching in Chester for 19 years. "They only get about 5 minutes and I want them to be really prepared and be able to snap into focus once they are on stage."

Mrs. Scali is proud of her students and for this unique opportunity.

"I'm really excited for them," said Mrs. Scali, "I don't think they recognize how big this is yet. But they will."

CA graduate honored with teaching tenure

Amanda Almodovar, a kindergarten teacher at Chester Elementary School and 2015 graduate of Chester Academy, received tenure from the Chester Board of Education on November 8.

Ms. Almodovar, a graduate of Mount Saint Mary College, has been teaching kindergarten at CES since 2019. She has a Bachelor of Arts in English and has New York State certifications in Early Childhood Education, Childhood Education and Students with Disabilities.

"Ms. Almodovar continues to demonstrate excellence in education as a kindergarten teacher at Chester Elementary School," Principal Mary Kate Boesch said in her recommendation letter to the board.

"She clearly flourishes in this environment, quickly establishing positive relationships with her students and her families," she wrote. "Expectations are established, and the classroom culture is one of structure, understanding and flexibility. Ms. Almodovar values the benefits of classroom learning for her students and her lessons most often incorporate group activities."



Congratulations to our fall sports teams!

All four varsity teams (football, girls soccer, boys soccer and volleyball) had successful seasons as they all qualified for their respective playoffs.

- The boys soccer team defeated S.S. Seward in overtime to win their Section IX quarterfinal game before falling to Rhinebeck in the semifinals.
- Football played in the Section IX Finals, falling to James I. O'Neill 14-0.
- Girls soccer lost 3-2 to Onteroa in the Section IX Semifinals.
- Girls volleyball lost to Mount Academy, 3-0 in the Section IX Semifinals.
- Joey Grassi and Nina Melone were both selected to the Section IX Soccer All Star Team.

Senior night was also held for all varsity teams. Congratulations to all seniors!

The winter sports teams are just beginning their seasons. Good luck to all of our Hambos!



STEAM fun!

STEAM Night at Chester Elementary School in October was a night full of educational activities to learn and enjoy.



Thank you!
 School Board Recognition Week was October 16-20 and we thanked our dedicated Board of Education - Diane Arnett, President Sandy Nagler, Vice President Kim DiCurcio, Caroline Negersmith, and Dawn Guevara.

Advanced Foods delivers a variety of skills



Students learn about food and nutrition as well as making healthy meals in the Chester Academy Advanced Foods class. Students develop their communication and teamwork skills as they work on cooking different recipes.

Crisseda Besson often incorporates competition to add a fun element to her class. Students have competed in a Ginger Bread Contest, Wing Wars and Burger Wars so far.

Sometimes, other teachers judge the competitions.

"It is a different element that drives connection among the students," said Ms. Besson. Students have to develop recipes, a shopping list, budgeting and take into consideration the nutritional elements their meals contain.

Advanced Foods students prepared a charcuterie board for members of the Board of Education during an evening training to honor School Board Recognition Week in October. They also participated in a pumpkin carving contest.

CES Halloween Parade

Chester Elementary School hosted its annual Halloween Parade on October 31, 2023, where students showcased their creativity and school spirit as they showed off their Halloween costumes.



Maple Avenue Building meetings continue

There are two public meetings scheduled regarding the Maple Avenue Building, one to learn more about the community's thoughts and a second to gather further input from the community.

At the Chester Board of Education meeting at 7 p.m. on November 21, there will be a presentation of the results from the Maple Avenue Building Community Survey. Just over a week later, at 7 p.m. on November 29, there will be a presentation of options at a Community Forum that will include questions from the community. Both meetings will be held in the Chester Academy Auditorium.

The District has begun a community-involvement process toward a decision on the Maple Avenue building, which will be put before the community for a vote at a future date to be determined.

The building, previously Chester High School, was built in 1935 and 1965. The District will retain the gym building and the athletic fields, which are currently being used.

