



School

Talk

www.nbbrncos.net

North Branch Area Schools

May 2024

NBHS Valedictorian & Salutatorian Announced

North Branch High School is proud to announce the Class of 2024 **Valedictorian Brenden Barkowska** as well as **Salutatorian Regan Healy**. "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.



BRENDAN BARKOWSKA, the son of William and Karen Barkowska, earned the top academic honors with a grade point average of 4.076. During each of his semesters in High School, Brendan made the Honor Roll and is a member of the North Branch Chapter of the National Honor Society. While in attending NBHS, Brendan participated in Student Council, Varsity Baseball, Varsity Basketball, E-Sports, Community Club, and Model UN. Brendan earned the National Rural

and Small Town Recognition award as well as the Isaiah David Rae Scholarship and the SVSU Founder's Scholarship. Brendan will be attending Saginaw Valley State University next fall where he will be majoring in Computer Sciences.



REGAN HEALY, the daughter of Tracey and Liam Healy, earned salutatorian honors with a grade point average of 4.029. During each of her semesters in High School, Regan made the Honor Roll and was a member of the National Honor Society. She was the founder of the NBHS Community Club and served as the President the NBHS Student Council. Regan earned the SVSU Founder's Scholarship and the Isaiah David Rae Scholarship. Regan has been accepted at

Saginaw Valley State University where she will be studying English Education.



NBHS Senior Events

SENIORS LAST DAY – Friday, May 17th

SENIOR WALK OUT – Seniors will meet in the Gymnasium at 2:00 pm, and release at 2:15 pm

BACCALAUREATE – Sunday, May 19th (7:00 pm)

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 – Wednesday, May 22nd (3:00 pm)

In order to participate in Commencement exercises, graduating seniors must report promptly by 3:00 pm on Wednesday, May 22nd to participate in graduation rehearsal. Seniors who have met all of the graduation requirements will receive their caps & gowns immediately after rehearsal.

SWING OUT – Wednesday, May 22nd (5:00 pm)

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 – Thursday, May 23rd (7:00 pm)

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 – Wednesday, May 29th (8:00 pm)

We are planning to hold commencement at Krepps field on Wednesday, May 29th 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 – Wednesday, May 29th (immediately following graduation)

Congratulations to the Class of 2024!



NORTH BRANCH SCHOOLS ARE ALL IN!

THE
OPPORTUNITIES
OF A
LARGE SCHOOL...



...IN A
SMALL TOWN
ENVIRONMENT

**Congratulations to our Board of Education,
staff, families, students, and community
for earning Local and National Recognition as a
BEST of the BEST School District!**

North Branch Area Schools adopted the motto of **"ALL IN"** to reflect the district's commitment for everyone involved to give 100 percent to make the district better for our students, our families and our community.

That commitment includes:

- ★ An extraordinarily dedicated staff that provides excellent learning opportunities for all students
- ★ Kind, caring support staff, including a school nurse
- ★ Safe and modern, air conditioned facilities including new HVAC system at high school
- ★ Technology rich 1:1 classrooms – every student has a learning device
- ★ F.A.B.S. – a before and after school program
- ★ Preschool for 3 and 4 year olds
- ★ Gifted & Accelerated Program
- ★ Space Camp Program at U.S. Space & Rocket Center, Huntsville, Alabama (5th-8th grade)
- ★ Tutoring opportunities
- ★ North Branch Early College
- ★ AP Classes
- ★ Dual Enrollment
- ★ Online Learning
- ★ STEM Academy
- ★ Award Winning Marching & Symphony Bands
- ★ Thriving Theatre Program
- ★ Business Professionals of America Chapter
- ★ High School Esports program
- ★ New STEM Labs in North Branch Elementary and Ruth Fox Middle School
- ★ State recognized alternative education program
- ★ Wide Variety of Extra Curriculum Offerings
- ★ Lapeer County Educational & Technology Center programs
- ★ No fee athletics program with free admission for all student to athletic events
- ★ Successful Athletic teams at local and state level
- ★ More than 60% of NBAS athletes annual received the Scholar Athlete Award
- ★ District commitment to school safety: Locks in all buildings, crisis alert emergency badges for all employees (only school in Michigan), all district employees ALICE trained (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate), full-time school resource officer



NORTH BRANCH AREA SCHOOLS...
A Learning Community Dedicated to Excellence!



PHOTO CREDIT:
Ben Gagnon | The County Press



Summer Food Service Program

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 below:

WHEN: Mondays – Thursdays • June 10, 2024 – June 27, 2024

MEAL TIMES: Breakfast 8:00am – 9:00am • Lunch 10:30am – 11:30am

WHERE:

**Ruth Fox
Middle School Cafeteria**
6570 Brush St.
North Branch, MI 48461

**North Branch
Elementary School Cafeteria**
4055 Elm Creek Rd.
North Branch, MI 48461

USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program

Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. MAIL: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. FAX: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. EMAIL: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider



Dear School Community,

We are rapidly coming to the close of yet another extraordinarily successful school year. The North Branch Area School District continues to receive local, state, and national recognition as an outstanding public school system:

LOCALLY: On page 2, we acknowledge the contributions of the North Branch Board of Education, staff, families, students and community as NBAS was once again selected Best of the Best by county residents. North Branch earned this honor in 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, and 2023. We are very proud of the opportunities we offer all students in a small town environment with small class sizes throughout the district.

STATE: Many school districts have visited us this year to tour our new Smart Labs. We are one of the few districts in Michigan to implement this new technology for our BK-8 learners. All students attending our elementary and middle school are exposed to hands-on learning in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics. North Branch students are academically outperforming other districts with similar demographics, and we will continue to financially invest in opportunities to support our teachers and students in the classroom.

NATIONALLY: Also on page 2 is a photo recognizing North Branch Elementary as Best Elementary School, Ruth Fox Middle School as Best Middle School and North Branch High School as Best High School by U.S News & World Report for the 2024 school rankings. We are very proud of our staff and students for this amazing accomplishment. Also, an article in Business View Magazine

highlighting North Branch Area Schools will be published nationally next month entitled "Nurturing Excellence While Embracing Innovation and Progress." We hope to share the article on our website and social media. Finally, a national case study was completed on school safety and what North Branch Area Schools are doing to keep its students and staff safe. The article centers around the Centegix badges all district employees wear on a daily basis which allows any employee to immediately alert administrators and all employees in their building of any abnormal situation which will bring help in seconds and, if necessary, would place the building in lockdown in seconds.

Shifting gears, this will be a busy summer in the district as we are planning on expanding our elementary parking lot to provide close to 100 additional parking spaces for our growing elementary school. In addition, North Branch Area Schools is proud to announce the significant upgrade of its surveillance system and public address system. Recognizing the paramount importance of safety and effective communication within the educational environment, the district is looking to invest in state-of-the-art technology to enhance security measures and streamline information dissemination. The new surveillance system harnesses the power of advanced cameras and monitoring software, providing comprehensive coverage of the school premises to ensure a secure and protected environment for students, staff, and visitors. This cutting-edge system enables real-time monitoring, rapid response to potential threats, and the ability to review footage for investigative purposes. Additionally, the district has revamped its public address system, enabling clear and efficient communication throughout the school facilities. With improved audio quality and strategically placed speakers, important announcements, emergency notifications, and daily updates can

now be conveyed effectively to every corner of the campus. These upgrades demonstrate North Branch Area Schools' unwavering commitment to the safety and well-being of its school community, fostering an environment conducive to learning and growth.

I continually share with anyone who will listen how proud I am to live in the North Branch School District and work at North Branch Area Schools. We have a dedicated and committed Board of Education that prioritizes students and makes decisions that give them opportunities to be successful in and out of the classroom. We have beautiful facilities, the most updated technology, and a rigorous curriculum for our students. Our district is financially strong and the future is bright. Finally, we have an exceptionally talented team of administrators, teachers, and support staff that first and foremost care about the success of our students.

I would like to close by mentioning two of those individuals. You can read about Rhoda Lucia below. Rhoda's passing has left a huge void in our front office. She was one of the most genuine and kindest individuals I have ever had the pleasure to work with and she is missed every day. Lastly, you can read about Mark Hiltunen's amazing career on page 13. I had the privilege of working under his leadership for 17 years at the high school and the past 8 years in my current role to support what he does for our staff, students, parents, and community. He has ALWAYS prioritized the needs of his students and staff and he will forever bleed BRONCO BLUE! Happy retirement, Mark!

Best wishes to all for a restful and enjoyable summer break.

Jim Fish

North Branch Superintendent

Friend of Youth Jack & Carolyn Griffin



Jack and Carolyn Griffin contacted the Lapeer County Community Foundation and set up the Jack and Carolyn Griffin Scholarship Fund in 2010 on behalf of Walter and Fern Griffin. To date, the fund has awarded approximately 200 awards in the amount of \$221,000.00 in scholarships to students from North Branch High School.

In addition, the North Branch Community Hall of Fame was started in 2016 with a generous donation from Jack and Carolyn Griffin. North Branch has hosted 7 Induction

Dinners with a total of 9 teams and 35 individuals being inducted into the North Branch Community Hall of Fame.

After graduating from North Branch High School, Jack served his country as he spent 2 years in the United States Army. After completing his tour of duty, he received an entrance scholarship into Michigan State University which was based on Scholarship, Leadership, and Citizenship qualities. After earning his Bachelor's Degree from the University of Florida, Jack became a very successful businessman.

In Memory of Rhoda Lucia



We would like to honor and remember **Rhoda Lucia**, the district's Student Services Coordinator and Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, who passed away unexpectedly in December. Rhoda began her career at North Branch Area Schools, in February of 1999, as an assistant secretary at North Branch Junior High School. In July of 2014 she became the Superintendent's secretary and in July of 2019 she was promoted to the Student Services Coordinator and Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent which included all district enrollment.

Rhoda was a dedicated employee of North Branch Area Schools for 24 years. She was always cheerful and helpful to everyone. Anytime anyone would ask a favor of her, she would always answer "sure" with a smile on her face. She was a genuinely kind soul and her passing has left a huge void in the Bronco Family at North Branch Area Schools.



Summer School at NBAS

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. The online program, Imagine Learning (formerly E2020/Edgenuity), will be used for the credit recovery, with over 50 courses being offered. Orientation will be held approximately one and a half weeks after the last day of school. 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 the week of June 17th and will conclude the last week of July. 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@nbbrncos.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.

Celebrating High School Seniors

The Lapeer County Press will once again run their "Celebrating High School Seniors" page to honor area graduates. The County Press will publish 40 senior photos, including name and high school, in our weekly Celebrating High School Seniors full page. The feature will run for a minimum of five weeks, May 5th – June 2nd. As they did last year, if they receive more than five weeks' worth of photos, The County Press will continue to publish the feature.

Parents are asked to mail a photo of your 2024 senior to ecaswell@mihomepaper.com to be included in an upcoming edition. Please include graduate's name and school. If you do not have a digital copy to send but shared one with the NBHS yearbook staff, please contact High School Principal, Mr. Hiltunen mhiltunen@nbbrncos.net and we will send one to the County Press for you.



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: Alexander Simpson, Brendan Barkowska, Marley Anderson, Te'aira Spittler, Bela Cline, Kylie Whitsett, Logan Pung, Dakota Kardell, Jackson Shamel, Ethan Dinanath, Whisper Shipp, Miaya Cypher, Alexandria Boots, Catherine Welch, Emerson Klutts, Amber Parvin, Sarah Munro, Alana Deshetsy, Kylie Hollenbeck, Lauryn Raymond, Matthew Schmitt, Klaire Worrell, Tanner Smith, Ethan Steakley, Regan Healy.



NBHS Band News

Solo & Ensembles

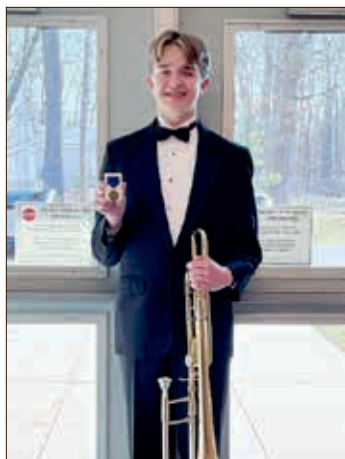


March 16th was a great day at MSBOA State Solo and Ensemble hosted by Port Huron Northern High School! North Branch High School band students represented our community so very well.

Assessments in the following categories are very stringent at the state level: Tone, Intonation, Rhythm, Technique, and Interpretation (*musicality nuances*). Each of the categories are graded and all five are weighted for an overall grade.

I (A-Superior) • II (B-Excellent) • III (C-Good) • IV (Fair) • V (D-Poor)

Congratulations to: Nick Caldwell, John Ehardt, Shawn Kidwell, Matthew Marble, Xander Waller, and Seth Wagner!
Practice and consistently working on details, pays off!



John Ehardt
Trombone Solo, Proficiency 1,
94 out of 100 possible points
Superior Rating



Seth Wagner
Trumpet Solo, Proficiency 1,
91 out of 100 points possible
Superior Rating



Nicholas Caldwell
Trumpet Solo, Proficiency 2,
94 out of 100 points possible
Superior Rating



**Nicholas Caldwell
& Seth Wagner**
Trumpet Duet
Superior Rating



Matthew Marble
Alto Saxophone Solo
Proficiency 1, 82 out of
100 points possible
Excellent Rating
Tenor Saxophone Solo
Proficiency 1, 83 out of
100 points possible
Excellent Rating

NBHS Symphonic Band Earn Top Honors

Once again, the NBHS Band earned a **"1" Rating** (*the highest possible rating*) at the MSBOA District Band and Orchestra Festival hosted by NBHS. **Congratulations Director Ehardt and musicians!**



**Nicholas Caldwell, Seth Wagner,
Xander Waller, John Ehardt,
& Shawn Caldwell**
Brass Quintet
Superior Rating



Quest Students Win Scholarships!

Congratulations to the 2024 Quest scholarship winners.

Paul Feola and Autum Sanchez

each won the Carolyn Bower Memorial Quest Merit Scholarship and the Faithful Truck and Auto Repair Scholarship.

Additionally, **Haley Anthony** won the Quest Merit Scholarship.

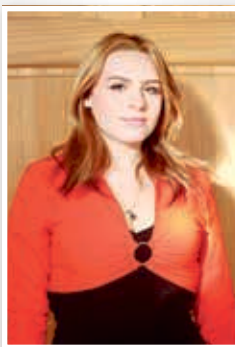
Thank you to the Bower family and Bill and Wendy McKnight for their contributions to our graduates!



Paul Feola



Autumn Sanchez



Haley Anthony

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**.

Quests Visits Holocaust Center

Quest students had the great privilege of traveling to the Holocaust Memorial Center in Bingham Farms. The museum is rated as the 3rd best of its kind, behind Washington DC and Los Angeles.

Students received the opportunity to hear from a NextGen speaker. A Nextgen speaker is a family member of a survivor who tells their story.



Masonic Lodge Recognized by MAEO



The North Branch Masonic Lodge made their annual donation to Quest High School. The \$1,500 donation, brings their total contributions to Quest to \$30,653 over 18 years.

Additionally, Shawn Lewis, the Michigan Alternative Education Organization Secretary, was on hand to recognize the Masonic Lodge as the Most Outstanding Advocate for an Alternative Education Program in the state of Michigan for 2023!

Quest Program Coordinator Corey Rosser had this to say, "We've been extremely fortunate to have so many great community members see our students' value and connect with them. The North Branch Masonic Lodge has been with us since the beginning, and there is no more deserving candidate for this award!"

Quest Travels to Flint Job Corp



Quest travelled to Flint Job Corp in another effort to make sure our students are career ready. Flint Job Corp offers free training, free housing, free food, etc.

For any parent that would like more information for their student, please email Mr. Rosser at: **crosser@nbbrncos.net**



Follow Quest High School on Facebook

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



JMG Official Launch Party!



Quest has partnered with the **Jobs for Michigan Graduates** program through the Lapeer Family Literacy Center for the past 5 years. The Jobs for Michigan Graduates program connects our students to future careers, and offers them the tools to find a successful, meaningful career beyond graduation.

A big thank you to JMG, Nicole and Meredith for everything you do for Quest students!



Congratulations North Branch Esports Team

We are very proud of all the teams that competed in our Fall 23 and Spring 24 Esports season! It has been a wonderful experience for both the students and myself.

Our Esports lab offers a ton of common and specific values to our players. Here are just a few:

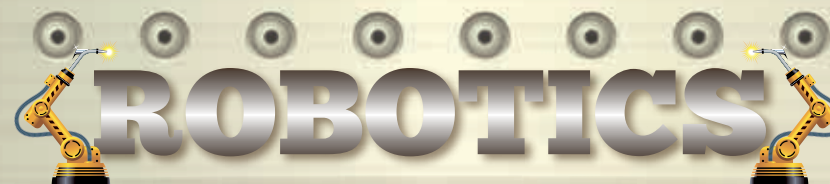
- **Inclusivity:** High school esports aim to create an inclusive environment where students from diverse backgrounds feel welcome and valued. They promote equal opportunity and strive to involve students of all genders, ethnicities, and abilities.
- **Sportsmanship:** High school esports emphasize the importance of sportsmanship and fair play. Students are encouraged to compete with integrity, respect their opponents, and display good sportsmanlike behavior both in victory and defeat.
- **Teamwork and Collaboration:** High school esports programs value teamwork and collaboration, as they are essential in any successful competitive gaming endeavor. Students learn how to work together, communicate effectively, and support each other to achieve common goals.

And many other values!

We competed in our first in person tournament in March, taking home the Big Thumb Showcase Win & Trophy! Three of our teams had the privilege of attending the playoffs on April 15th. The results are:

- **Ballistic Broncos:** Finished their playoff season with 5 wins 3 losses in the # 21 standing
- **North Branch RL 1:** Finished their playoff season with 6 wins and 4 losses in the #14 standing.
- **The Troglodytes:** Finished their playoff season off with 7 wins and 3 losses in the #6 standing.

Congratulations to Michael Jones, Overwatch 2, for being selected as a 2024 All-State Team Member! He has earned this special recognition for being a top player in Michigan through outstanding performance, exceptional skill and advanced strategy during the MHSEL's spring 2024 season.



We offer a robotics program that presents a unique challenge to students through a cooperative competition model. While the competition remains competitive, teams also collaborate and support each other. In one match, a team could be your ally, and in the next match, they could become your opponent.

This program not only teaches students how to work effectively as team members but also equips them with the skills to design and build a robot using mechanics, electronics, and programming. At the beginning of each match, the robot operates autonomously based on pre-programmed commands, like Tesla's self-driving technology. In the second part of the match, students take control of the robot, operating it like a remote-controlled car.

Every year, we thoroughly review the competition rules as they vary in terms of game pieces and gameplay.

We engage in many discussions regarding the construction and purpose of the robot. Our innovative thinking has earned us multiple awards.

Despite the potential stereotype of being a "nerd" program, we choose to assess and develop the unique skills of each student. Tasks like creating social media content (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube), sewing bumpers for the High School Robot, and designing the robot in CAD are examples of activities that extend beyond the traditional scope of building the robot.

In North Branch, we successfully held the middle school qualification competition for the second consecutive year. If you were unable to attend the event last year, stay tuned for information regarding the competition, which will be available by November of the next school year. The High School team plays a crucial role in supporting the middle school team by actively participating in the organization and management of the competition.

We encourage students to explore our website (<https://northbranchrobotics.org/>) and think about joining our team as we work towards the upcoming year. Furthermore, we will be participating in the July 4th parade once more and extend a warm invitation to students and parents of all age groups to connect with us at Quest after the parade.



High School Robot, Version 2



High School Team with award



Sewing Bumpers for High School Robot



Middle School Planning Session



Middle School competition ready



Middle School Team with award



+ POSITIVE + Office Referrals!



Ruth Fox Students and Staff
may be recognized for going above and beyond by getting a POSITIVE office referral!

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.

Challenger Learning Center

Sixth graders at Ruth Fox Middle School visited the Challenger Learning Center, located on the St. Clair County Community College campus. The Challenger Learning Center is a fully immersive, space-themed STEM experience.

This field trip had students participate in a simulated mission to the moon. They were able to experience various jobs in both a simulated space shuttle and in the command center.

Our students had a blast!



Ruth Fox Artists



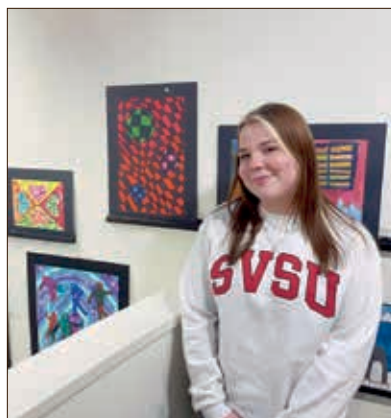
Several students from Ruth Fox Middle School had artwork on display, from February 6th through March 6th, at Gallery 194 in downtown Lapeer. Every year the gallery hosts the Lapeer County Schools' K-12 Art Show which includes artwork from schools throughout Lapeer County.

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. There are around 130 students in each of the four grades that have art each year. There are approximately 6 projects per grade level at this point in the year. That means there are about 3,000 artworks to choose from. Ruth Fox Middle School was invited to contribute 20 total. Although only 20 pieces could be chosen, there were many equally good pieces of art created this year.

The following students had work on display:

**Rylee Green • Em Flowers • Madison Hipes • Jenna Leach • Sarah Doherty
Melaina Byers • Stavros DeAngelis • Ava Scigel • Andrew Bradshaw
Jaeden Keely • Annabell Stone • Conner Healy • Brayley Saltzman
Madalyn Ross • Alexis Kelly • Alayna Reed • Jacob Hemingway • Julie Wood**



Follow us at: RFMS@ruthfoxmiddle





AMERICA & ME Essay Contest

Local Students Named Essay Contest Winners

Four students from Ruth Fox Middle School have been named local winners in the **55th Annual America & Me Essay Contest**, sponsored by Farm Bureau Insurance.

Congratulations to our 2024 America and Me Essay Contest winners! Each year, our 8th grade students are invited to enter this contest sponsored by Farm Bureau Insurance of Michigan. Their essays were written about their personal Michigan heroes. What a fabulous way to honor those who are special in their lives! This year's winners are:

1st Place: Grant Caswell • 2nd Place: Kaydence Bolender
3rd Place: Trenton Wierzbicki • 4th Place: Gretchen Yens

As the first place winner, Grant's name will be engraved and added to a school plaque, with the names of many previous winners, which is on permanent display at RFMS. His essay now advances to the state level competition from which the top ten essays in Michigan will be selected. Best of luck Grant, and congratulations again to our four winners!

Along with the formal contest, the winners are selected to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery, on the Washington DC trip. Three of the four will be accepting this honor, along with Payton Tuttle the 5th place alternate.



Ruth Fox Receives Best Middle School Recognition



We are proud to announce that Ruth Fox Middle School was selected as a BEST MIDDLE SCHOOL in Michigan by the US News and World Report. This recognition is a culmination of the hard work of all staff and students throughout the past few years at Ruth Fox Middle School.

School rankings are determined by overall student performance on Math and Reading, as well being compared to peers of similar demographics. More information on the selection methodology can be found through the US News and World Report.

Michigan School Band & Orchestra Association's District 3 Honors Band Participants

On Saturday, January 20th District 3 held their annual Honors Band day at Holly High School, featuring a total of 75 middle school students and 78 high school students. Membership in Honors Band was determined by area band directors based on student participation in District Solo and Ensemble performances.

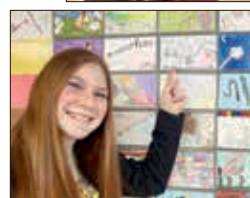
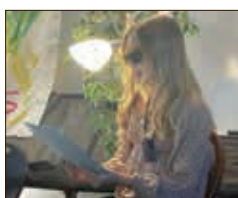
Middle School Honors Band Members:
Lukas Degler (Trumpet)
Sarah Dorety (Baritone Saxophone)



RFMS Student Spotlight

Thank you to all the families and students who came out to the Ruth Fox Middle School 2nd Annual Student Spotlight night. Over 275 families took advantage of the evening's events. It was a great opportunity for students to showcase their learning throughout the year. Showcased events included:

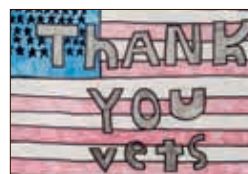
- Student works displayed in their classrooms, posted on their lockers, and all throughout the hallways and building
- Poetry performances
- Band performances
- Concessions by our Cool Kids Cafe (Peer to Peer Group)
- Art galleries
- Archery Club demonstrations
- STEAM Lab demonstrations



RFMS Celebrates Local Veterans

On April 18th, the Ruth Fox Middle School continued its annual service project by recognizing our local Veterans. This year the 5th and 6th grade students put on a Coffee and Conversation social, where students were able to spend quality time with a local Veteran. Over 240 veterans were invited. Students created posters thanking veterans, as well as conversational placemats and unique table settings, to take home and enjoy. Visiting Veterans were able to take many mementos to share with their Veteran colleagues that could not attend.

The attending Veterans appreciated the recognition, and especially enjoyed the singing of "God Bless America" by the 5th and 6th grade student body. In addition to the Veterans recognition, the Middle School also raises money for the local American Legion through its in-school veterans bingo days and activity nights. Additionally, the 5th and 6th grade students send postcards to the local Veterans throughout the year. If you are a local Veteran, and are not on the Ruth Fox MS recognition list, please contact the Ruth Fox office at 810-688-3284, as we would like to honor you.



Ruth Fox Cool Kids Café



Mrs. Hiroskey and Mrs. Schaaf's Peer-to-Peer class used the money they raised selling concessions with their Cool Kids Café, to set up a reptile show with **Muxlow's Exotics**. The students were proud that they were able to purchase this through their hard work, and loved the experience.

Spelling Bee Top Finishers!

Two Ruth Fox students finished in the top five at the Lapeer County Spelling Bee.

Out of over 20 county finalists, **Frank Campagne** finished 2nd and **Owen Smielewski** finished 5th. Great job in representing North Branch well!



Biographies

Miss Liford's and Mrs. Ferdon's 4th grade students recently finished up their biography research projects. The students created Google Slide presentations about a famous person. They dressed in character for their presentations to share what they learned with their classmates.



Friendship

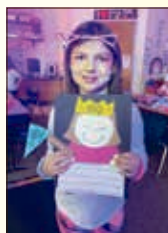
Ms. Brandt's Kindergarteners focused on Friendship. Students randomly picked a friend's name out of a hat. They interviewed the friend and created a bracelet, especially for that friend!

100TH GLOW DAY!

Camp MAC marked the 100th Day of School with a **100 Days Brighter Glow Day!** Our 2nd graders and teachers loved this day. It was a time to celebrate our students and their achievements in learning.

Our **GLOW DAY** was a special theme day that radiated through our classrooms with all things that glowed in the dark! Our students used highlighters throughout the day to complete their reading, writing, math and science lessons, they dressed in bright neon colors, searched for 100 Hershey Kisses, 100 Days Poetry, and completed glow in the dark math, reading, and science activities.

We are so proud to say that our students are now **"100 Days Brighter!"**



'80s DAY

4th-grade students celebrated the 80th day of school in 80's style!

Mrs. Scigel's class researched famous people, events, and pop culture from the decade. They also enjoyed music, student presentations, and looking at relics that were brought in for the blast to the past!

It was Totally Rad!



100TH DAY!

Students are now 100 days smarter!

To celebrate the 100th day of school, students in Ms. Fitzpatrick's room did 100 exercises throughout the day! They also tried to use 100 cups to build the tallest tower, wrote numbers to 100, and made groups of 10 to make 100.



DANCE!

Mrs. Halleck's class enjoyed our first **Drop Everything and Dance** event in celebration of our healthy hearts. February was Heart Awareness month and the students will did various activities throughout the month to help keep their hearts healthy. Throughout the month, students also learned about how to care for their hearts and the importance our hearts play in our overall health and well-being.



Beanstalks!

Students in Miss Berridge's third grade classroom have enjoyed creating and measuring beanstalks in small groups. Each group designed their own beanstalk and measured the height of their beanstalk and the width of their 20 leaves to the nearest 1/4 inch. After gathering the leaf data, students worked in small groups to create their own line plots to present their data to their classmates.



All of our BK/K students got to start their savings accounts this month with their

LEAF PIGGY BANKS!

These LEAF accounts will follow our Broncos for their entire K-12 career and they will be able to use the money to help build strong futures!



An 'EGG-MAZING' EXPERIENCE!



Each year, North Branch Elementary teachers Jodi Conley and Sarah Sieradzki, work together with our local Lapeer County Farm Bureau to provide an 'egg-mazing' 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.



BYCL

The BYCL team used our new magnetic fraction pieces to play "Race to one whole." We rolled the dice to add fraction pieces and also worked to trade pieces for equivalent fractions.





3RD ANNUAL
NBE Fine Arts Night
MAY 17, 5:30-7:30PM

PERFORMANCES BY:
UKULELE CLUBS,
HULA CLUB & HS BAND

ELEMENTARY ART ON DISPLAY

INSTRUMENT MAKING, KARAOKE
SAND ART, BOOMWHACKERS,
ART STATIONS & MORE

BBQ GUYS & KONA ICE!!!!



TEAM

Our 4th-grade students had their first presentation with the Michigan State Police TEAM trained troopers. The curriculum focuses primarily on a proactive effort to make schools and communities safer, promote responsible citizenship, and build positive character traits among students. TEAM curriculum replaces the DARE Program for grade-appropriate content. MSP troopers were impressed with our 4th graders high level of engagement and thoughtful questions.





Our NBE Garden Club is busy at work preparing for the spring planting season.

The students had a visit from Kierstyn Cooper, our district Food Service Supervisor. Thanks to Kierstyn applying for grants last year, the club was able to purchase two greenhouses this past summer. We met with Kierstyn to discuss what fruits and vegetables would be best for our school cafeteria.



Check out our grow station in the library and ask the students about the seed germination process.



Hearts Around the USA!

Mrs. Sieradzki's class participated in a large project called "Hearts Around the USA"! Students collected Valentine's cards from all over the US as a part of their Geography lessons! This project turned out more successful than ever imagined! They received cards from 46 states and 21 different countries! They didn't just receive cards, they got books, stickers, treats, Mardi Gras necklaces and masks, magnets, and so much more! It was so fun opening the cards each day and seeing what they got! All together they received well over 300+ Valentines cards from all over the world!



The students also chose a state to research and learn more about! They learned their states capital, symbols, and fun places to visit! They created posters and presented their research to the class!

This "Hearts Around the USA" was an amazing project, and the students learned so much during this time!



UKULELE CLUB

Ukulele Club is comprised of 46 3rd and 4th grade students who meet after school on Wednesdays with Mrs. Ehardt to rehearse.

They will be performing on May 17 during Fine Arts Night.

THANK YOU!

NBE would like to extend our deepest gratitude to every member of our school community for their contributions, which have led to our recent recognition by US News.

From the dedicated paraprofessionals and coaches who provide crucial support in the classrooms to the many aides, coaches, ancillary and office staff who keep our operations running smoothly.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes to the teachers whose passion for education inspires our students daily. We recognize the hard work of the kitchen staff who ensure our students are nourished, the custodians who maintain a clean and safe environment, the nurse who helps keep students healthy, and the bus drivers who transport our students with the utmost care. We acknowledge the commitment of the Board of Education and Central Administration for their support and guidance. We also thank the grounds and maintenance staff for maintaining our beautiful campus. Special thanks to our parents, whose support and encouragement have been the foundation of our success.

Finally, thank you to our dedicated students, whose hard work and commitment have propelled us to this achievement. Together, as a community, we celebrate our recognition by US News and World Report, a testament to everyone's dedication and hard work.



Congratulations Retirees! **Thank You for Your Service**



Mark Hiltunen has been part of North Branch Area Schools for 37 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 22 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 37 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 37 years of exemplary service to the North Branch Area School District and its youth with two simple words:

Nice Bike!



After 17 years of dedicated service, **Connie Anderson**, educator of North Branch High School, bids farewell to her cherished role as a teacher, adviser, and mentor. Throughout her tenure, Mrs. Anderson has served in many educational roles that have left a mark on the hearts and minds of North Branch students. At the end of the 2023/24 school year, she will embark on another chapter of her life: retirement. We celebrate her invaluable contributions and her impact on the North Branch community.

Mrs. Anderson's journey at North Branch High School began 17 years ago when she stepped into the classroom as a Business and Accounting teacher. With her passion for teaching and commitment to student success, Connie quickly became an asset with the additional elective courses she offered that became a part of the school's academic fabric.

Beyond her role in the classroom, Connie took on various leadership positions that further enriched the student experience. For four years, she served as a class advisor, guiding the class of 2013 through their high school years and steering them through their high school experience to the momentous graduation occasion. As the Business Professionals of America (BPA) Adviser for six years, Connie mentored aspiring young professionals, imparting invaluable skills and knowledge that would shape their future careers.

In addition to her roles as a teacher and advisor, Connie lent her talents to various other activities that added interest to the high school experience. For four years, she dedicated her time and expertise as the Yearbook Adviser, capturing cherished memories and preserving the legacy of each graduating class. As the NB Highlights adviser for three years, Connie showcased students' diverse talents, fostering a sense of community and pride within the school through a digital magazine. And let's not forget her pioneering spirit as the mastermind behind the Bronco Brew, a hub of social interaction and caffeine-fueled creativity that brought students together.

Mrs. Anderson was known for her helping hand and listening ear. Her positive attitude, energy, and dedication to excellence set the standard for her 17 years of exceptional service and unwavering educational commitment.

Well done, Connie Anderson. May your retirement be filled with joy, laughter, and countless new adventures.



Nannette Butterfield devoted 28 years to North Branch Area Schools. During her time here, she worked amongst several departments with the majority of her years served in the Food Service Department as a cook. Nan was a very hard worker with the most positive attitude. She took pride in her work and always put the students first. Feeding them was a joy and she was rewarded with their kindness and thankfulness.

Nan has retired into her new chapter in life with family and friends. We miss her presence and smiling face in the kitchens, but are so happy for her and to have had these wonderful 28 years with her!



Prior to the beginning of the 23-24 School Year, **Mrs. Val Bader** chose open a new chapter of her life in retirement. Mrs. Bader had 24 years of experience teaching in NBAS, both at North Branch Elementary and Ruth Fox Middle School. Not only was she teacher, but she led and served others. Even in retirement she is serving others by tutoring and spending time with her family. We wish Mrs. Bader the best in retirement.



Tamela Clements devoted 27 years to North Branch Area Schools. During her time with us, she worked in several departments. The majority of her years were spent as a cook in the Food Service Department.

Tammy worked hard and made sure that students received the best meals they could. She was reliable, hardworking, dedicated and knowledgeable. She was always a fantastic resource for staff and students when questions arose.

Although she is missed amongst our kitchen staff, Tammy has been able to enjoy her retirement with friends and family in the great outdoors at her cabin on the river. We wish her nothing but many happy years of retirement!

COLLEGE SIGNINGS

***Congratulations to our athletes!
Best of luck in your college careers!***

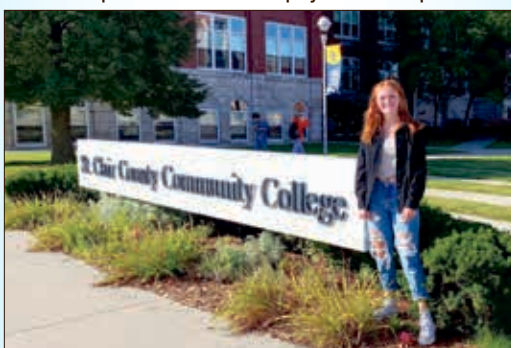
Grace Clemens

signed with Tennessee Wesleyan to run Track & Field. She plans to study Nursing.



Lily Osborne

signed with SC4 to play Softball. She plans to become a physical therapist.



Maci Kaake

signed with Spring Arbor University for Basketball. She is planning to major in Elementary and Special Education.



Athletic Boosters Reverse Raffle

Our Annual Athletic Boosters Reverse Raffle was a huge success!

Thank you to everyone who donated, and to those who attended. Together as a community, we raised **\$22,600** for our Bronco athletes!



Varsity Wrestling Champs!

We are proud of our Varsity Wrestling Team! They became Team District Champions for the first time in almost 20 years! We closed out our season at Team Regionals in Goodrich after winning our first match, then falling to Lake Fenton in the regional finals. Thank you Bronco Wrestling for a great season!



Our Bronco wrestling team had two athletes qualify for the State Individual Wrestling Tournament that was held at Ford Field. **Cruz Rodriguez** and **Mason Knight**. Cruz finished out the tournament with a 1-2 record while Mason Knight reached All-State Status and State Placing 8th in his weight division.



Bowling

Senior Alana Deshetsky qualified for the State Individual Bowling tournament this year. This multi-sport athlete decided to try her hand at a new sport, and managed to secure a spot at states!



Hockey

This year we joined forces with the Legion Co-Op hockey team! It was great to have some Bronco's back on the ice. North Branch had 4 athletes represent us on the team.

Senior:
Matthew Schmitt

Freshmen:
Jayden Collins,
Stosh Bertovich,
and Nicklas Wood

LEGION EST. 2018 HOCKEY		
1	STOSH BERTOVICH	27
3	COLE LENHARD	25
4	PEYTON BOWERMAN	26
5	MATTHEW SCHMITT	24
6	IAN MCKAY	26
11	ETHAN EUGSTER	25
13	NICKLAS WOOD	27
15	CHASE ERNEST	26
16	ZACK SCRIBNER	25
20	GABE VANDERLIP	24
22	SCOTT YOUNG	26
23	LOGAN TREPkowski	25
24	LAUREN EAGER	24
27	JACKSON ANTHONY	26
28	JAYDEN COLLINS	27
51	DYLAN BARRIGAR	26
55	CHASE TALASKI	26
77	COLTON HOOPER	24
81	MATTHEW CUMMINGS	26
97	ELI ODLE	24
99	MAJOR BARWIG	27
HEAD COACH BOB BEAGLE		
ASSISTANT COACHES		
MATT SCHENKEL		
PAUL LAMM		
BRANDON BLANK		
Donated by: Nick & Andrea Brown		

BWAC League Awards

BOWLING:

- Second Team – Cate Welch
- Honorable Mention – Alana Deshetsky, Leyton Hutchins, Dakota Kardell

BOYS BASKETBALL:

- Second Team – Logan Doherty
- All Defensive – Braydon Robinson
- Honorable Mention – Keagan Schierlinger

GIRLS BASKETBALL:

- Second Team – Maci Kaake, Tracy Ludescher
- Honorable Mention – Miaya Cypher, Ella Swoish
- Defensive Team – Maci Kaake

COMPETITIVE CHEER:

- 1st Team – Ariannah Henderson
- Honorable Mention – Taylor Knox, Ashlynn Pasternak

WRESTLING:

- Honorable Mention – Eli Bickel, Tucker Feltz-Stepka, Alex Ramseyer, Cruz Rodriguez
- Wildcard Pick – Ian Leach

NBHS SCHOLAR ATHLETE:

- 76 of our 122 Winter HS Athletes (62%) maintained a GPA of 3.2 or higher
- One team had 100% of their team earn NBHS Scholar-Athlete Award: Girls Basketball – all 12 athletes qualifying for NBHS Scholar Athlete Award

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MENS, WOMENS, YOUTH SIZES.

SHIPS DIRECT

HEADLINES SPORTSWEAR – OFFICIAL SPONSOR OF THE NORTH BRANCH ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

HOLDS SPORTSWEAR



North Branch Broncos
has an officially
licensed gear store!

Scan the QR Code
to shop for items to show
your Bronco Pride!

DATE	EVENT	(BOE APPROVED 12/11/2023)
August 19, 2024	1st Day of School	
August 23, 2024	No School	
August 30, 2024	No School	
September 2, 2024	No School – Labor Day	
October 2, 2024	Count Day	
October 18, 2024	No School	
October 25, 2024	End of 1st Marking Period	
October 28, 2024	2nd Marking Period Begins	
November 11-14, 2024	Parent/Teacher Conferences	
November 15, 2024	No School	
November 27-30, 2024	Thanksgiving Break	
December 2, 2024	School Resumes	
December 23-31, 2024	Winter Break	
January 1-3, 2025	Winter Break	
January 6, 2025	School Resumes	
January 17, 2025	Half Day for Students	
January 17, 2025	End of 1st Semester	
January 20, 2025	No School	
January 21, 2025	3rd Marking Period Begins	
February 12, 2025	Count Day	
February 14, 2025	No School	
February 17, 2025	No School (Potential Snow Day Make-Up)	
March 10-13, 2025	Parent/Teacher Conferences	
March 27, 2025	End of 3rd Marking Period	
March 28-31, 2025	Spring Break	
April 1-4, 2025	Spring Break	
April 7, 2025	School Resumes	
April 7, 2025	4th Marking Period Begins	
April 18, 2025	No School – Good Friday	
May 23, 2025	No School (Potential Snow Day Make-Up)	
May 26, 2025	No School – Memorial Day	
June 6, 2025	Last Day of School – ½ Day for Students	

AUGUST 2024						
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FEBRUARY 2025						
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SEPTEMBER 2024						
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MARCH 2025						
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OCTOBER 2024						
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APRIL 2025						
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NOVEMBER 2024						
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MAY 2025						
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DECEMBER 2024						
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JUNE 2025						
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JANUARY 2025						
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JULY 2025						
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Green Dates = School Days Red Dates = No School Yellow Dates = Potential Snow Make-up Days