

# North Tonawanda City Schools



## Mission



To provide an excellent education to all that encompasses developing confident, creative, competitive and caring students.

## Vision

To develop a nationally recognized school system focused on: A collaborative environment that fosters the academic, emotional and social growth of each student through quality and purposeful educational experiences. Students becoming independent, productive and globally competitive citizens. Instilling the belief that each student is invaluable.

## Core Beliefs

North Tonawanda Lumberjacks are:

- Lifelong learners
- Understanding
- Motivated
- Brave
- Empowered
- Respectful
- Just
- Academically sound
- Caring
- Knowledgeable
- Strong

## Superintendent's Message



It is amazing that it is November already. As we get set for a different looking holiday season with family, we are also doing several alternative plans for school.

First off, if we need to close a building for any amount of time or the state closes us, we have been working with administrators and staff and using parent input to develop a full remote plan as needed. The six-day cycle that we use in North Tonawanda will be followed for special classes and daily instruction under this model.

Second, enhancements to the current remote plan will be implemented after Thanksgiving. K-6 will have daily live support in ELA and Math going forward. These will be at designated times by building and grade level and a full schedule will be published as we get closer to that time.

Third is the district's ability to get more students back in seats. New York State has not lifted any precautions such as mask wearing or social distancing, so we must work within those guidelines. We all agree that returning to normal can't happen soon enough, but until then we will work to get as many students as possible back two days a week. We have adequate seating with social distancing in place in most classes for this, however the problem is that buses are close to capacity so transportation may become a hurdle to get over.

As I write this, North Tonawanda CSD has had five confirmed cases of students or staff testing positive for the COVID-19 virus. While one case would be too many, we are pleasantly surprised that we made it through the first two months of school with a single-digit positive number. Much of that success goes to the staff and families of North Tonawanda for taking the proper precautions as directed by the CDC and Department of Health. Thank you all for doing your part in keeping schools safe.

I will continue the Wednesday Facebook live sessions and add a monthly evening Facebook live on the third Wednesday of every month for those that may wish to ask questions but work during the day. I appreciate everyone watching, asking questions, and sharing the videos so we can stay informed.

I wish you all a safe and happy holiday season with your family and friends. Let's hope that 2021 brings us a return to normal as we know it. Stay Lumberjack strong.

Sincerely,  
Gregory J. Woytila  
Superintendent of North Tonawanda City Schools

## How About Those Apples?!

The kindergarten students in Mrs. Seguin and Mrs. Brady's class took a trip right outside their classroom to harvest apples.

At Ohio Elementary School there are two beautiful, fruiting apple trees. The students collected the apples in individual baskets and brought them inside to use for STEM and literacy activities. They used a hand lens to observe the inside parts of an apple, they made pumpkin prints with the apple halves, and they counted, sorted, and made comparisons about their collection.



# Grad is Army Strong

Congrats to William Ettinger, Class of 2019 for graduating US Army basic training!

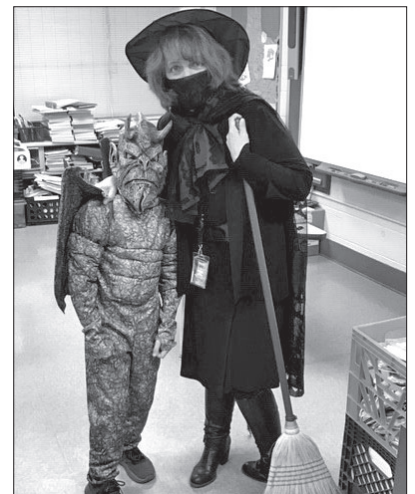
William attended Meadow and Ohio Elementary, NT Middle School and the High School. He will be attending school to become an Intelligence Analyst.

Thanks to his mother Kristina for sending us this photo from his graduation.



# Halloween Fun

Drake Elementary School got into the spirit with some cool Halloween costumes!



## Keeping in Touch Virtually

The kindergarten students of Mrs. DePrima and Mrs. Conjerti at Drake Elementary School have been enjoying live-streamed lessons with their friends at home.

Using the Smartboard, the teachers enable the students at home to meet and interact with the students at school, all while participating in reading and writing activities.





# How NT School District Stayed Ahead of the Curve for PPE

In March when the first wave of the COVID-19 outbreak hit the US and schools shut down, Anthony Montoro III, Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services, jumped into action. “We could see the writing on the wall and knew we better start getting bids on PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and getting it in house while supplies were still available.”

Along with the Director of Facilities, Jim Hart, “It became very important to us to acquire PPE and cleaning supplies, so I began in April reaching out to vendors so I could get a decent price and get the supplies in here before the school year started. Even once I had made deals with vendors, I made sure to have a list of backup vendors, a failsafe, in case we ran short on supplies.”

The District brought in masks, gowns and N95 masks for the nursing staff at all their schools. “We also installed acrylic shields at our front desks at the offices where the public comes in,” says Mr. Hart. “We are really focusing on disinfecting and safety protocols. At each entrance there is a temperature screening kiosk with an iPad to fill out a health questionnaire to help the office assess who should be allowed into the building. We are using Hillyard QT-3, Diversey Triad III, Oxivir and we are trying to duplicate them in case of supply shortages. One of the biggest struggles are the product shortages and logistics. When you go to place an order now, it can take three to four months.”



The District has also invested in having disinfection of high touch areas performed at the schools during the days that school is in session. Common spaces are a focus of deep cleaning along with thorough cleaning in the classrooms at night. The deep cleaning is not stopping in the schools. The District has outfitted the Transportation department with disinfecting wands that treat the interior of the buses. Ed Strasser, is the Transportation Supervisor at the District. “These disinfecting wands are great for our bus drivers because they can spray the buses several times a day and within three minutes it sanitizes the area and doesn’t need to be wiped down. It saves a lot of time and makes sure the interior is safe for students and staff. As far as I know, we are the only district in the area that sprays seven times a day.” Transportation Assistant Tammy Frye says the drivers are vigilant in making sure the buses are disinfected properly. “We spray the buses down after each run and from 10:00am to 1:30 pm we have a crew of two clean the buses again. It’s a challenge now that kids are coming back to four days from two, but we want to ensure the safety of our kids and all the drivers feel safer as well.” As far as people who are concerned about the bus runs, Ms. Frye just says, “Please be patient. It is our first pandemic too.”

Mr. Montoro also points to the success of the COVID testing event they held at the district and how well the district has communicated to the community. “We want everyone to know how serious we are taking this. That is the main reason we have been so successful with our reopening. We are fortunate to have been on top of securing supplies when we did and we were much earlier in the process than a lot of school districts. We were able to get a lot of cutting edge technology not only at the school, but we put in over 200 hotspots so our students could stay home and continue their studies remotely.” The district made sure that students had devices to work remotely, whether they were taking part in the hybrid model or staying home to learn. “It is another layer of protection for everyone too, if a student is not feeling well and needs to stay home.”

According to the School Superintendent Association, school districts across the country could spend up to \$25 billion on PPE and related cleaning supplies to deal with COVID-19. “We are working on getting reimbursed from FEMA for what we have had to pay to keep everyone safe,” says Mr. Montoro. He says he is proud of the way his staff and the administration have handled the protocols for the pandemic and how quickly they jumped into action. “We had very limited information to go on when we first got shut down and we had a lot of restrictions and challenges with getting supplies and materials to prepare for school reopening. We were fortunate that we started so early getting in what we needed as far as disinfectants and PPE, which we were able to get from a bid at Orleans/Niagara BOCES. We had a good outcome because of the tremendous effort to make sure we got everything in early.”



# Five Students Selected for Music All State Ensembles

The North Tonawanda Fine Arts family is very proud to announce that five of our students were selected to participate in All State Music Ensembles. These students were selected through a solo audition process where thousands of auditions were held across the state. Although the New York State School Music Association will not be able to host these students for rehearsal and performance at Eastman Theatre in Rochester this December, students will participate in a virtual format still making incredible music. Director of Fine Arts, Dean Vallas, was elated with this year's participants. "All of these musicians are hardworking and motivated students. They are also wonderful humans who are caring and creative. I could not be more proud of them, their families, and all the teachers who helped them grow to be All State kids."

**Cassie Diliberto** has been selected as a soprano chorus alternate based on her performance of "Your Daddy's Son" from the musical Ragtime. She is the daughter of Beth Freedman and Chuck Diliberto and is a senior at NTHS. Cassie never thought she'd get to All State and is grateful to be considered. When thinking about her time in our Fine Arts Department she says "I've always loved music more than anything but so much of what I've learned now didn't come easy or naturally. Challenging yourself and working through every sharp and flat and voice crack is where that growth happens even if you don't see it." She thanks Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Vallas for their encouragement.

As a second year All State Musician, **Joseph Kelly** feels validated to be chosen two years in a row. Joe is playing Oboe in the All State Symphonic Band and thanks his private instructor Anna Mattix. Without her I would have never been able to find my musicianship and really refine what I already knew about music along with new oboe techniques. Joe is the son of Julie Kelly and switched to oboe as a secondary instrument. "Ever since starting Tenor Sax in 8th grade I've always found my teachers encouraging me to do more with music, and they made me strive to want to be better. Without them I would have stuck with just playing Tenor Sax and I'd never grow the love for it like I do today."

**Megan Orange** is singing soprano in the All State Mixed Chorus and earned her All State honor by singing "Sure On This Shining Night" by Samuel Barber. The daughter of Susan and Paul Orange is incredibly honored to be selected for All State. "I have been dreaming about getting in since my freshman year, and now that I am accepted, it is truly an honor. Music has always been a big part of my life, and it is another step in my musical journey that I am proud to represent NTHS at All State this year." said Megan when asked about All State. Megan thanks her family for continuing to support her, especially her older brother Paul, because he motivated her to do more in music and was one of the reasons she was inspired to audition for All State. Megan also thanks her vocal teacher, Dr. Holly Bewlay, for training and helping her grow as a vocalist.

Singing in the All State Treble Chorus, Senior **Sophia Scime** is so excited and honored to be chosen for such an amazing opportunity. She is the daughter of Tara and Dan Scime and earned her All State spot by singing the Italian art song "Se tu Miami, se sospiri". When asked who encouraged her to reach for this State honor, Sophia said "I would like to thank my vocal coach, Karen D'angelo, for helping me grow vocally and musically, my Mom and Dad for their continuous support of the arts, music and me, and Mr. Vallas for making our chorus an accepting and loving place. Music has really influenced my growth to becoming a driven student, a more confident leader, and a better person. Through all of the great music programs available in the NT schools, I have been able to learn new things, meet new people, and make new experiences that I wouldn't have made without the constant support I have received from the NT music teachers."

**Joshua Trenchard** has been selected for two All State ensembles; Mixed Chorus as a Bass and also playing Trombone in the Symphonic Band. This is an extremely rare honor and NT schools is proud. Josh comes from a very musical family and is the son of Tennille and Jeffrey Trenchard. "I'm extremely glad to have made it. I put a lot of hard work in over the years and it feels good to have it pay off." "The directors at NT really care about your personal growth and will do anything in their power to make you the best you can be." He also thanks his parents for helping him practice and fostering his love for music.





# Congratulations to Eagle Scout Harrison Roberts!

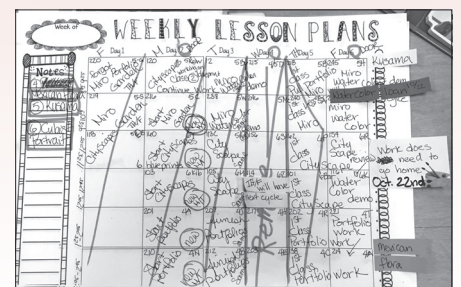
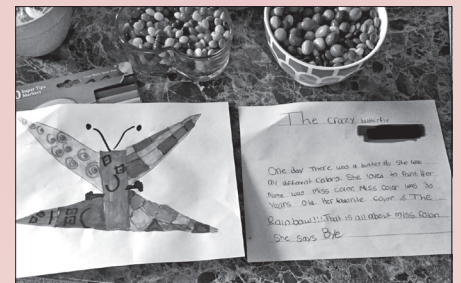
Harrison Roberts, a freshman at North Tonawanda High School, was awarded his Eagle Scout in Scouting on September 27, 2020, as part of Troop 824 in Sanborn. Harrison had completed 56 merit badges, 35 more than required when starting an Eagle Scout Project.

During the summer, he led his troop in building two little free food pantries. These freestanding structures were constructed and placed at St. Mark Lutheran Church at 1135 Oliver Street and Redeemer Lutheran Church at 265 Falconer, both in North Tonawanda. Harrison recognized the need for these structures while noticing how quickly the nonperishable food was emptied by hungry citizens after he filled other little pantries. He also organized two food drives within our city to keep the pantries stocked but is welcoming the community to help one another by placing nonperishable food and toiletries at any locations. Harrison is also collecting monetary donations (Venmo to @Michael-Fenn-6) and is happy to shop for anyone wishing to help. Much thanks in advance!



# Hybrid Students Show Off At Home Artwork

Melinda Wright's students from the North Tonawanda Intermediate School have been tapping into their creativity while at home studying. Ms. Wright even shared her planner to show what a creative month it has been!





## Spruce Holds Boo Drive Thru



Spruce Principal Patti Adler and her staff didn't want their students to miss out on their annual Trunk or Treat. So thanks to the generosity of the Spruce Parent-Teacher Organization this year they held the Boo Drive Thru!

The event was held October 30th in the school's parking lot and encouraged Spruce families to drive through the parking lot in their cars and gather their goodie bags. There was even a prize for the best decorated cars.

Everyone had a lot of fun at this spooktacular event!



## School Resource Officer Makes Huge Impact at NT High School



The United States Department of Justice defines school resource officers (SROs) as "sworn law enforcement officers responsible for safety and crime prevention in schools". For North Tonawanda Police Officer John Snopkowski that role has turned into so much more than strengthening campus safety.

This is Officer Snopkowski's third year at the High School and he sees his role as a way to bridge the gap between the police department, the school and the community. He views the partnership as a way to build relationships with the students, help those who are at risk and educate about the role of the police in society. "Unfortunately with the negativity surrounding police throughout the country, I think it is more important now than ever to show them that we are human beings and we are here to help them. I want to have a positive impact on their lives and I really enjoy being a mentor and an informal counselor to many of the students here."

Students have gotten used to seeing Officer Snopkowski in the halls and enjoy interacting with him on a daily basis. He lets them know that he has an open door policy if they want to discuss anything with him. "I have talked to students about everything from careers in law enforcement, to bullying, to drug and alcohol use. I have had students come to me because they were worried about a friend or acquaintance harming themselves or to advise me of crimes that have been committed against them personally. Sometimes students come to me knowing that I am someone that they can confide in. Others are looking for information on what resources are available to them. I think in a lot of ways, I do more good here at the school than being on the road."

A Niagara Falls native and Air Force veteran who was stationed at the Niagara Falls Air Base, Officer Snopkowski is vested in the community and is proud of his connection to the North Tonawanda Police Department and the North Tonawanda City Schools. "I have really enjoyed being here at the high school and it is nice to be liked where you work. I feel like in my time here I have built many respectful relationships and been an active part in student successes while helping to maintain a safe learning environment. I really love what I do."

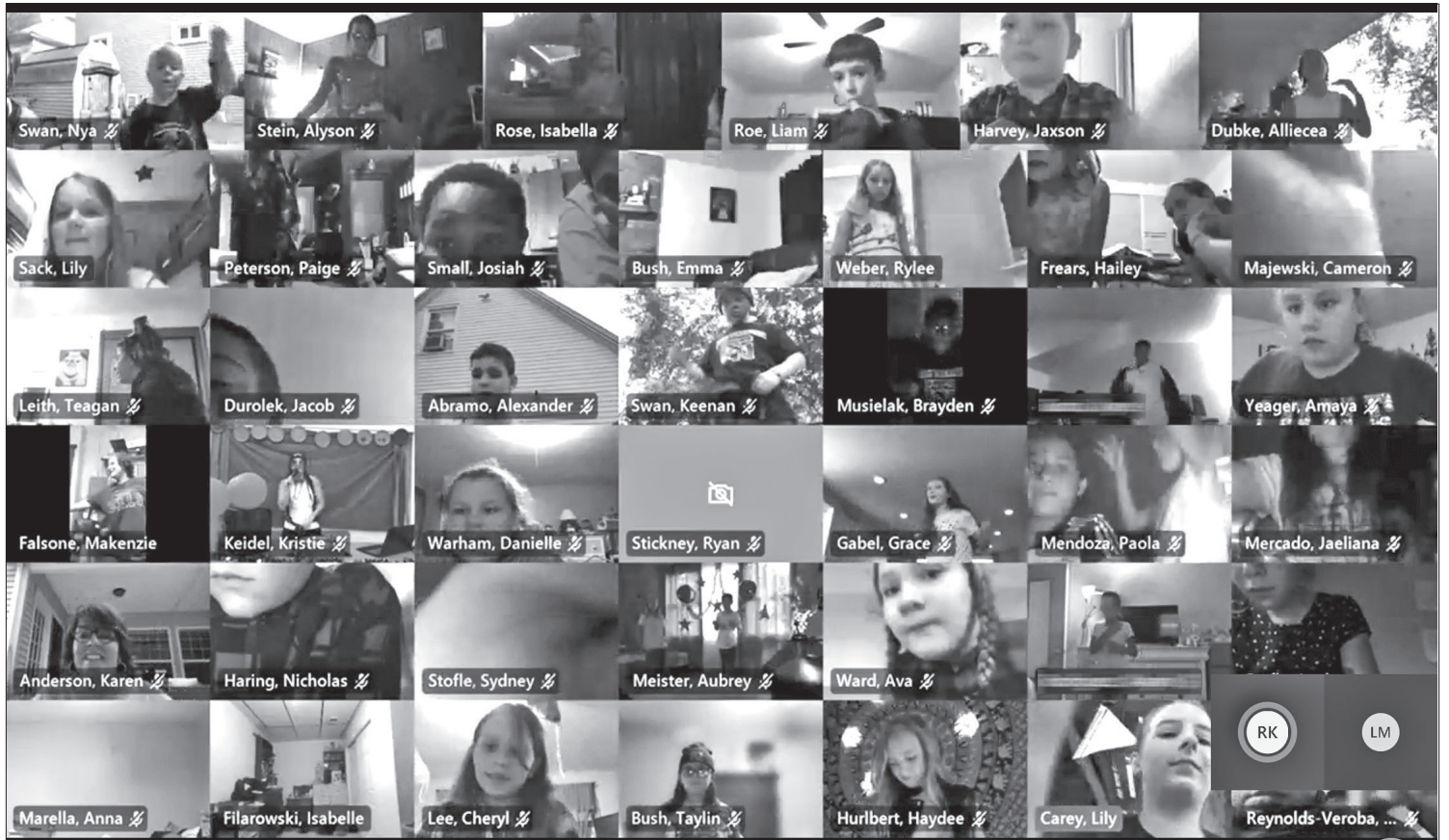
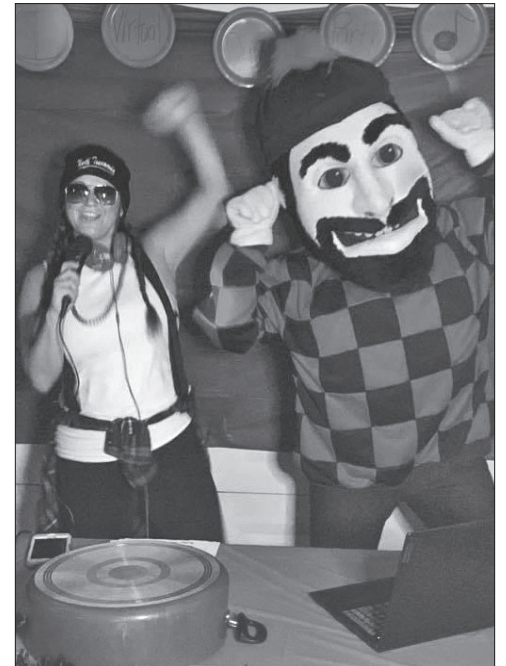


# Intermediate Students Show Off Dance Moves at Virtual Party

The Intermediate School's first school wide event was held on September 25th. Students and staff had a blast at a virtual dance party that was held after school hours.

During the event kids logged on to their "Teams" account and danced the night away to the music of DJ Keidel. Mrs. Keidel is a sixth grade teacher in the District who loves to put on virtual dance parties for our students. It definitely helps to create school spirit and unity! Students were asked to dress like a "Junior Jack" for a chance at winning a prize.

Literacy Specialist Lauren Miranto says, "We ended up with five winners who stepped up to the challenge! First place was Jaxson Harvey, second place was Keenan Swan and third place was a tie with Nick Haring and Emma Bush winning. DJ Keidel had a special award for "Best Virtual Party Dance Props" and that was won by Aubrey Meister." Winners received some NT gear to continue to show their school spirit! They even had a special guest who danced along with our students- the NT Lumberjack mascot!





# Intermediate Students Show Off Creativity

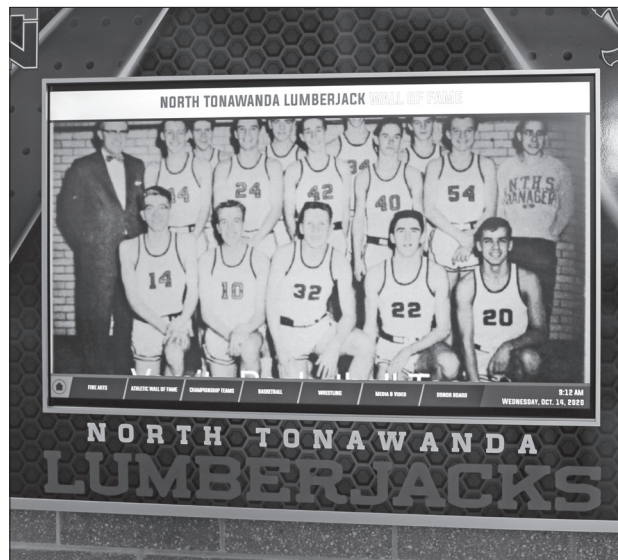
Fifth graders in Melinda Wright's Art class showed off some impressive drawings in their studio at school.



# Walls of Fame Get Makeovers

If you get a chance to visit the High School, make sure to check out the new Walls of Fame for the Fine Arts and Athletic wings.

The windows in the hallways have become canvases for alumni photos and it looks amazing! There is also an electronic board that scrolls Athletic photos with information on it. This is the end of Phase One of the rejuvenation project and soon there will be other things to look forward to in Phase Two. So be on the lookout for those details!





# Ohio School Engineers

Students in Mrs. Carley Hromowyk's second grade class at Ohio Elementary put on their engineering thinking caps to plan, design and construct their very own catapults.

Using simple materials like Popsicle sticks, masking tape, spoons and rubber bands, students were able to investigate the workings of a catapult. The students used their catapult creation to participate in three STEM challenges where they were able to launch candy pumpkins in class!

Students calculated, measured and recorded their pumpkin launches during each trial.



*Emmalyn Heaps and Robert Boubar participating in the "Tower Topple."*



*Kendall Stauffer learning the importance of fulcrum while designing her catapult.*



*Charlotte Burns participating in the "Shoot a Bucket" challenge.*

## Ryan Carney Named National Merit Scholarship

North Tonawanda High School Principal James Fisher announced that Ryan J. Carney has been named a Commended Student in the 2021 National Merit Scholarship Program.



A Letter of Commendation from the school and National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC), which conducts the program, was presented by Mr. Fisher to this scholastically talented senior.

About 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation are being recognized for their exceptional academic promise. Although they will not continue in the 2021 competition for National Merit Scholarship awards, Commended Students placed among the top 50,000 scorers of more than 1.5 million students who entered the 2021 competition by taking the 2019 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT).

"Those being named Commended Students demonstrated outstanding potential for academic success," commented a spokesperson for NMSC. "These students represent a valuable national resource; recognizing their accomplishments, as well as the key role their school plays in their academic development, is vital to the advancement of educational excellence in our nation. We hope that this recognition will help broaden their educational opportunities and encourage them as they continue their pursuit of academic success."



# Chicken BBQ Huge Success

Friends of North Tonawanda Intermediate (NTI) School hosted their first school fundraiser on September 26th. Over 280 chicken dinners were sold and all proceeds will go towards their mission of building a brand new pavilion on NTI school grounds.

Master's BBQ cooked up delicious meals and parent and teacher volunteers served to customers in the contact-free drive thru event. Friends of NTI is looking forward to more fundraisers to get them closer to their goal for the pavilion!



## New Technology Helps Students Stay in Touch

Brooklyn Meisenberg, a second grader at Drake Elementary, is learning how to use her iPad to access Seesaw. Seesaw is a popular classroom app with student driven digital portfolios that help students to create, reflect and demonstrate learning. It gives parents a real-time glimpse into their child's school day.

Using Seesaw, students as young as kindergarten, can access their academic activities on the days they learn from home. It has proven to be a great remote learning tool and allows teacher to prioritize assignments and lets students see which assignments are done.





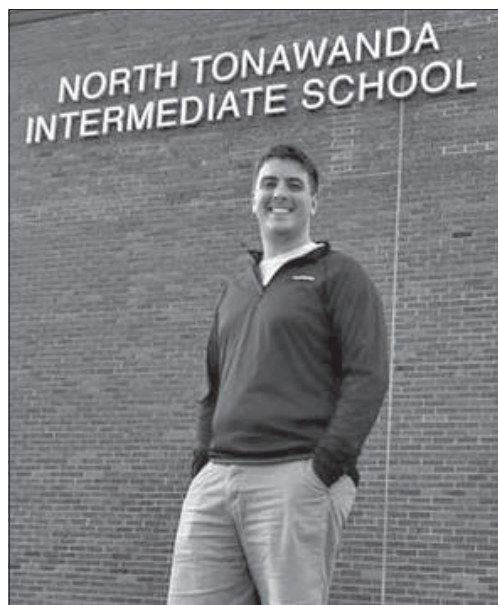
# Fine Arts Welcomes Two New Faculty Members

The Fine Arts Department started the new year with two new faculty members. After a rigorous selection process, Sarah Roberts and Brandon Burgess joined the prestigious music program. Director of Fine Arts, Dean Vallas, said “even during our COVID building closure we conducted a remote hiring process that gave us two amazing teachers. We couldn’t be happier with our new Fine Arts Family members!”

Mrs. Roberts is entering her 16th year of teaching and is a 2001 graduate of NTHS. During the summer of 2000 she was selected from High School Students all over NYS to participate in American Music Abroad, a touring band and choir that performed all over Europe. She continued to the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam to receive a degree in Music Education. During her time at Crane, Mrs. Roberts participated in Wind Ensemble, Symphony Orchestra, Concert Choir, Brass Ensemble, and various small chamber groups. Her most memorable Crane Performances were at the very beginning and the very end of her time at Potsdam. The first was the North Country September 11th Tribute Concert performed in the fall of 2001 and the last being the Crane Symphony Orchestra’s performance at Carnegie Hall in NYC. Upon graduation, Mrs. Roberts spent two years at the William Street School in Lancaster. After those two years, she spent the rest of her career at Eden Jr/Sr High School. While teaching she received her Masters of Music in Music Education from SUNY Fredonia. Mrs. Roberts lives in North Tonawanda with her husband and two boys Nathan and Alexander. She loves musical theater, swimming and crafting, and is very excited to be a Lumberjack again.



Brandon Burgess graduated from Royalton-Hartland High School and went on to receive a Bachelor’s Degree in Music Education at the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam. While he was there, Brandon also received a Performance Certificate in clarinet. With many performing opportunities in the top ensembles at Crane, Brandon had the opportunity to perform at the California Theater in San Jose, California, Leamy Concert Hall at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut, and also performed with the Crane Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall in May of 2016 – which will forever be the highlight of his performing career. Brandon went back to Crane for his Master’s Degree in Clarinet Performance. While there, his a’cappella group, The Potsdam Pitches, competed and advanced to the finals of the ICCA, and had the opportunity to compete against the top 10 international groups at the Beacon Theater on Broadway in New York City. Brandon performs in many local pit orchestras as a woodwind player and percussionist, and regularly performs with the American Legion Band of the Tonawandas.





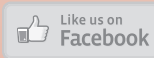


NORTH TONAWANDA  
CITY SCHOOLS  
176 Walck Road  
North Tonawanda, NY 14120

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## Furry Friend Brightens Kindergarteners' Day

Lily, a Paws for Love Therapy Dog, visited a class of Spruce Elementary kindergarten students recently. Lily made herself at home and enjoyed all the attention she got from the students.

The students enjoyed getting to know her, giving her a treat and getting their photo taken with her. The Paws for Love program is a part of the SPCA that serves Erie County. Lily's owner/handler is Mrs. Heidi Himes, a Spruce kindergarten teacher.

