

North Tonawanda City Schools



Message from the Superintendent



Welcome to 2020 and a brand-new decade! As we start off 2020, the board is working on a few important items. First off is the 20-21 school budget, which is always a delicate process of balancing taxes and programs while keeping the tax rate low. The North Tonawanda City School District is in the top 5 when it comes to size and the number of employees in North Tonawanda. With just under 700 employees, it is no small feat to provide a quality education, transportation, custodial, grounds and sports services to the community. We encourage all of you to visit the webpage for budget updates over the next several months.

To contain costs, the district is embarking on a grant funded project to replace all lights with LED lighting and energy efficient heating devices. This will keep rising energy cost in check and will help the current board and future boards balance the budget. We are also continuing with safety measures that include new cameras, school resource officers, and door hardening. The board takes the safety and security of all very seriously and has made this an ongoing priority and goal.

Please take a moment to enjoy the newsletter and see all of the special things going on in NT schools. Each year we have students and staff that do amazing things. NT is not just about the learning and growing, it is about giving back to the community we live in. From special events we host, to visits and donations we make to local charities, we are one big NT family. We truly are "building the future today"!

As we speed into the second half of the 19-20 school year, we wish you all a safe and easy winter and look forward to an early spring.

Gregory J. Woytila
Superintendent of North Tonawanda Schools



NTI Dedicates Sensory Room

Thanks to a grant from the Remember Ryan Foundation, the Intermediate School now has a sensory room. A sensory room is a special room designed to develop a person's sense through special lighting, music and objects. It can be used as a therapy for children to help them calm and focus themselves so they can be better prepared for learning and interacting with others.

Ryan Bertini was a student at Ohio Elementary, who passed away at the age of eight years old after bravely dealing with several medical conditions since his birth. His family decided to keep his memory alive by setting up the foundation to give out grants towards visual and performing arts to schools in Erie and Niagara Counties. The room was dedicated to him on December 19th with Ryan's family attending.



UNCLE SAM & THE TONAWANDAS WANT YOU

TO TAKE THE 2020 CENSUS



- ★ Ensures public safety
- ★ Helps plan for new schools
- ★ Data is confidential
- ★ Fair Congressional representation
- ★ It's our civic duty!

For more information visit: 2020Census.gov

Happy Grinch Day!

Drake Elementary School recently hosted a school wide Grinch Day to celebrate the classic work of Dr. Seuss. In addition to reading *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, and writing stories with its characters, students and staff were encouraged to dress as a character from the book. They were treated with a surprise visit from the Grinch to top off the day!



First grader Brady Taggart and the Grinch.

Spruce Celebrates Thanksgiving

The smells of Thanksgiving was in the air at Spruce Elementary. Staff and students had a great time celebrating the holiday.



Mrs. Webb's first grade class enjoys a Thanksgiving meal together.

Nicole Evanisko Named NYS Master Teacher

Congratulations to Nicole Evanisko, who was one of 26 educators across Western New York to be inducted as one of the 2019 Master Teacher cohort members. Ms. Evanisko teaches high school Biology.

The New York State Master Teacher Program was created by Governor Cuomo in 2013 with a goal of expanding STEM initiatives across the state. Through rigorous professional development, a candidate's

knowledge of effective research based educational practices, application of STEM content, as well as intricate knowledge of community needs is blended to inspire students to pursue STEM career pathways. Successful candidates must participate in a year-long process in order to be considered a Master Teacher and continue to participate in year-long professional development experiences with fellow Master Teachers during evenings and weekends.

Nicole Evanisko earned her BA in Early Childhood and Childhood Education with a concentration in science and her MSEd in Differentiated Instruction and Gifted Education, both from Canisius College. She later returned to continue her education and earn a certification in 7-12 Biology. Ms. Evanisko has been teaching for 11 years, 6 of them in Queens, where she was awarded a Master Teacher Fellowship by Math for America and a Sustainability Grant by the NYC Department of Education. Now she teaches Regents Biology and Biology Lab at North Tonawanda High School where she advises the Garden Club and Earth Tomorrow Environmental Education and Leadership Program in conjunction with the Buffalo Niagara Waterkeepers and the National Wildlife Federation. She supports engagement in the stewardship of greenway projects by partnering with the Niagara River Greenway Commission to get students involved in helping to restore the shoreline and the NT Botanical Gardens. Ms. Evanisko loves exploring the world and has led students on educational and service-learning trips to the Galapagos Islands of Ecuador, Costa Rica, Iceland and Tanzania, Africa. As a NYS Master Teacher, Ms. Evanisko is excited to collaborate with enthusiastic and dedicated educators as part of the NYSSLS Living Environment Professional Learning Team and various STEM mini courses.

NTHS is proud to be represented by Nicole Evanisko!



First Graders Having Fun with Phonics

Drake first graders have been doing some great phonics instruction extension activities during block time. Students were writing out their words on the word wall with shaving cream.

The students are loving all the fun way to learn with this Readers Workshop and Phonics program!



NT School Community Participates in Boxes of Hope

Many North Tonawanda students and staff showed their love for their community in the 5th annual Boxes of Hope campaign. The outreach, a partnership with the school district, local churches, civic organizations and businesses, gathers food, essential items, gift cards and holiday gifts for children in the city.

Local churches invite school social workers, psychologists and counselors who identify families with the highest levels of need. Those families are then encouraged to register, so assistance can be provided. At the schools, homeroom classes collected food items that were donated by students and faculty and were then distributed to over 200 families in the community. There was also a gift for each child in the household up to the age of 18 years old.

Basketball coach Ryan Mountain took a group of his players and delivered some of the boxes to the families. As a team we are always thinking of how we can lead the right way. This was a great way to invest in and unite our community. It was a good lesson for them to help out those who are less fortunate and get into the true spirit of the holiday.” The volunteer work made such an impact, that three of his players, Tim Osborne, Cameron



Cutter and Jordan Cutter, volunteered to make an extra run. “It was a blast,” said Tim. “It was a great experience. We visited six houses and the people were so genuinely happy to see us. It made us feel great, so we decided to go back and do it again. It is so important to give back.”



The Spirit of a Child is Huge Success!

The audience absolutely loved the “Spirit of a Child” Harvest Concert at the North Tonawanda Fine Arts Center. The show has become a tradition at North Tonawanda High School and is a beautiful evening of music and community caring presented yearly by emeritus Band Director, Norman Alexander.

Our Director Dean Vallas directed the “Jacks & Jills” and Rachel Diih directed the High School Chorale. What a beautiful show!



The Sweet Taste of Success

High School students had a great time showing off their baking prowess at the annual Cupcake Wars. Students presented their sweet treats and the assistant principals, Kristopher Clester, Bradley Rowles and Josh Janese, had a tough time deciding which one made the best.



Students Help to Beautify the Campus at NTI

Teacher Gene Genco proposed a tree planting initiative to further beautify the NTI (North Tonawanda Intermediate) school grounds. It helped to immerse students in the planting, care of, and tree identification process.

“We are very grateful to the Friends of NTI, who gifted the trees to the district and Mr. Genco along with students who planted them,” says Principal Katie Smith.



Learning About Armed Services

The High School held its Military Day in November at the Library Media Center. Students were able to gather information of what each military branch has to offer, such as career opportunities, scholarships, how to get your education paid for, job training, trade skills and more.



Let the Games Begin!

Middle School students had a blast spending a morning of game play before the holidays!



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FALL 2019-20 SCHOLAR-ATHLETES AND TEAM SCHOLAR-ATHLETES!

ALL-WESTERN NY SCHOLAR ATHLETES

The following senior student-athletes carried a 90% average or better for the past 6 semesters.

WINNER:

- Isabel DesChamps – Girls Tennis

HONORABLE MENTION:

- Emily Anastasi – Girls Volleyball
- Selena Couto – Girls Volleyball
- Kira Dewey – Girls Volleyball
- Jessa Krull – Girls Volleyball
- Bryan Toth – Boys Soccer
- Emily Barone – Girls Soccer
- Anthony Miskines – Boys Cross Country

FALL NYSPHSAA TEAM SCHOLAR-ATHLETE AWARDS:

To achieve team recognition with a certificate, the team's average GPA for 75 percent of the roster must be equal to or greater than 90%. Only students with a 90% or above will receive pins, even if a student with a lower GPA was used in the calculation.

WINNERS:

- Boys Volleyball – 94.08 (10 students achieving an average of 90% or greater)
- Girls Volleyball – 97.16 (14 students achieving an average of 90% or greater)
- Boys Soccer – 90.22 (6 students achieving an average of 90% or greater)
- Girls Soccer – 94.07 (14 students achieving an average of 90% or greater)
- Cheerleading (Fall) – 94.24 (8 students achieving an average of 90% or greater)
- Girls Swimming/Diving – 95.17 (17 students achieving an average of 90% or greater)
- Boys Cross Country – 93.76 (4 students achieving an average of 90% or greater)
- Boys Golf – 93.13 (6 students achieving an average of 90% or greater)
- Girls Tennis – 93.30 (12 students achieving an average of 90% or greater)

When a team does not meet the Scholar-Athlete Team criteria, the individuals on that team with a GPA of 90% or above are still eligible to receive a pin and will be considered an Individual Scholar Athlete.

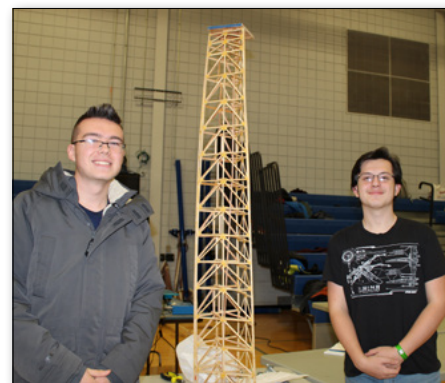
TEAMS NOT ACHIEVING 90% BUT HAD INDIVIDUALS WITH AT LEAST A 90% AVERAGE:

- Football – 88.49 (12 students achieving an average of 90% or greater)
- Girls Cross Country – 89.0 (1 student achieving an average of 90% or greater)

Tech Wars

Teacher Chris Cook and several students from North Tonawanda High School took part in the Niagara County Community College (NCCC) Tech Wars on January 8th. Over 25 Western New York teams faced off in an exciting competition where students used what they learned in class and put it to real-world application.

The events consist of robotic competitions, seismic building design, bridge design, parametric modeling and architectural design as part of the competitions.



Students Scott Gerber and Tony Agueci with their 3rd place Tower Design.

Ten North Tonawanda Students Inducted into National Technical Honor Society

Congratulations to the 10 North Tonawanda students from the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center who were recently inducted into the National Technical Honor Society.

David Dashnaw (Security and Law Enforcement), Miranda Hakes (Security and Law Enforcement), Evan Harvey (Auto Body), Nora Klipfel (Early Childhood Education), Peter Magee (Security and Law Enforcement), Jenna Manganello (Security and Law Enforcement), Garrett McDonald (Security and Law Enforcement), Emily Russell (Emergency Medical Services), Zackery Szymczyk (Culinary Arts) and Gage Thompson (Automotive Technology) were recognized for their achievement.



Out of all the high school students in the United States, the National Technical Honor Society students who receive this honor comprise 1.6 percent of that population. For staff at the Orleans/Niagara BOCES center, they represent the four pillars of the National Technical Honor Society: Scholarship, leadership, service and character.

The students were honored at the Orleans/Niagara BOCES technical education center in front of their teachers, families and school district representatives. The students had to maintain an 89.5 grade average in their career and technical education programs and an 84.5 average at their high schools, have superior attendance, exemplary behavior, be a member in good standing with SkillsUSA and have a recommendation from a faculty member.

Ending the Year on a High Note



North Tonawanda Intermediate staff and students wrapped up 2019 with a fabulous concert. The choir and band put on a great show of holiday favorites!

Spruce Sing-A-Long



Spruce students went a caroling in the auditorium! Everyone had a great time wearing their winter pj's and singing some holiday music!

Sports Broadcaster Visits North Tonawanda High School



Students at the high school were thrilled to meet WGR550 Sports Radio announcer Sal Capaccio at a recent career center event.

Mr. Capaccio has been in media for many years and has worked as radio show host, television host and a play-by-play announcer. He grew up in Western New York as a huge Buffalo Bills and Buffalo Sabres fan. He always dreamed of being a sports broadcaster like his idols Rick Jeanneret, Ted Darling and Van Miller. He now covers the Bills for the radio station and also serves as a sideline reporter for the game broadcasts.

Robotic Balls Teach Student to Code



Technical skills were combined with creativity when the students in Mrs. Kendt's fifth and sixth grade class learned coding by programming Sphero Balls.

The Sphero SPRK is a robotic ball that connects to an app, and is used as a way to teach children the basics of coding. The ball has the ability to roll, change speeds, turn, change color, and make noises, all through the directions in which it is given. The students program these directions using block coding on a program on their iPads. Each block placed in a sequence gives the ball a specific direction, so the students had to do precise calculations to determine what directions to program, and the sequence in which to do them.

Problem solving, collaboration, persistence, and higher-level thinking skills were used when the students were challenged to create an obstacle course, and program their ball to run through it. Some students chose to have their balls make sounds or change colors at certain points of their course. The students enjoyed sharing their obstacle courses with one another, and celebrating their successes together.

Annie Wows Audience!

The Middle School put on an amazing performance of "Annie Jr" for their musical this year. The irrepressible comic strip heroine, Orphan Annie, played by Alanna Banas was joined by orphans, a dog named Sandy (Bradley Prosser) and cruel Miss Hannigan (Kallista Bertini) and of course Grace (Aestarea Truesdale) and Daddy Warbucks (Jack Orrange)!



Tree of Hope Lighting

The North Tonawanda United Teachers, along with the North Tonawanda City School District and the City of North Tonawanda, held its annual Lighting of the Tree of Hope on December 5th at the High School.

Events included games, cookie decorating, over 65 decorated trees, carolers, the pep band and of course Santa and Mrs. Claus!



Zack Niemiec, Gregory Woytila, Ann Lentsch, Third Ward Alderman Eric Zadzilka, City Clerk-Treasurer Matthew Parish, Second Ward Alderwoman Donna Braun, and Robert Schmigel.

Holiday Helpers

Once again students in Jennifer Kendt's class, at the North Tonawanda Intermediate School, lent a hand to the Knights of Columbus (KOC). The NT Holiday Helpers assisted KOC with the meals they distribute to needy families over the holidays. The students decorated the boxes and made jars with positive sayings and got the boxes ready to be distributed. What a great way to make the holidays special for everyone!



Donations Help Ohio Students Take On Puzzle Challenge

Ohio Street third grade teachers, Mrs. Short and Mrs. Manning, wrote a Donors Choose project for puzzles. Donors Choose is a website that asks for donations to support classrooms.

Thanks to contributors' generosity, their project was fully funded within a month. The students were overjoyed when the puzzles arrived. They have been practicing their puzzle making skills and are challenging themselves to complete them faster each time they attempt them. The children are already brainstorming what the next joint class Donors Choose project should be.



Middle School Students Spent Fall Days Curling Up with a Good Book

North Tonawanda Middle School students embraced their love of reading throughout the month of October by participating in Teentober, a national celebration of teen reading.

Students had the opportunity to participate in many activities including creating bookmarks, taking “shelfies” with their books, whole building DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) time and a “Caught You Reading” day where students who were caught reading by the NTMS Reading Squad, received a little treat.

Congratulations to the following students who found the “Golden Ticket” books in the library. By checking out these special books, the following students received a prize: Mia Bond, Caitlyn Brumley, James Campas, Jonas Giambra, Kayla Hochadel, Alexis Jackson, Paul Jeras, Jaryen McCoy, Michael McKinney, Nevaeh McNamara and Elliot Zeis. These reading initiatives help encourage the love of reading throughout NTMS.

Principal Greg Burgess tells students, “Keep your eye out for the “Color Your World” reading wall by the Café and continued DEAR time throughout the year! You never know what the Reading Squad has up their sleeves!”



Back on Patrol!

Drake Elementary School recently resurrected its Safety Patrol program. Although 6th graders historically manned the posts, third graders were given a chance to join now that the sixth graders are at North Tonawanda Intermediate.

Students had to fill out an application which required parent permission. Each applicant had to explain why he or she would do a good job for the school. Jobs include bus line helper, hall patrol and early morning hall duty. Principal Janet Matyevich says, “The patrol members have been doing an incredible job and carry out their duties in a responsible and enthusiastic manner! They have been a true support to Drake School.”



Shown here helping some kindergarten students are Taylin Bush, Lily Day, kindergarten student Kelsey Routhier, Alexis Doak-Wilkins, Hunter Knoell, and kindergarten student Ella Wolter.

Art Students Help to Decorate Oliver and Webster Streets

Over the holidays you may have noticed some beautiful Christmas trees decorating the area. The Art Department was approached by the North Tonawanda Merchant Society to help enhance the Oliver and Webster Streets for the holiday.

“We had students from North Tonawanda Intermediate, North Tonawanda Middle School, and the High School decorate the four and five foot trees which were on display,” says Dean Vallas, Director of Fine Arts of NTCSD. “The Fine Arts Department did 50 in all. We are proud of our students for sharing their work with their community and putting NT in the holiday spirit through Art.”



Volleyball Program Highlights Girl Power

Once again, the North Tonawanda Intermediate School (NTI) is fortunate to partner with Professor Gail Tylec and The Niagara County Community College Foundation in the expansion of the successful Girl Power Volleyball pilot this year. The program is sponsored by the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation.

The program facilitates developmentally appropriate volleyball training to 4th and 5th grade girls from NTI, as well as develops and promotes physical fitness and sport participation as a lifetime activity. “Our girls build friendships and strengthen collaboration and sportsmanship skills,” says Principal Katie Smith. “Forty 4th and 5th grade girls participated this past fall and played in a Friendship Tournament along with students from Niagara Falls in December. The enthusiasm and excitement that the girls demonstrated was clearly visible. The program provides a wonderful after school activity, develops a deeper understanding

of lifetime fitness, and fosters teamwork and positive morale. We are appreciative of the partnership with Ms. Tylec and the Foundation.”





**NORTH TONAWANDA
CITY SCHOOLS**

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Intermediate School Learns Dangers of Vaping

The dangers of vaping have been in the news a lot over the last several months. Vaping works through e-cigarettes which heat liquid to produce an aerosol that users inhale into their lungs. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that one in five high school students use e-cigarettes, an increase of 78% in the last two years.

The North Tonawanda Intermediate School Prevention Task Force and staff is working to educate students and start a conversation about the dangers of vaping before they even start thinking about trying it. "This is one in a series of topics we will be bringing to students throughout the year," explains Principal Katie Smith. "Knowledge is powerful and we want to give them access to as much information as we can so they can make good, healthy decisions for themselves. I actually had one student say that his brother told him it was just water. It is frightening how unaware they are of the dangers associated with it." School Social Worker Jacqueline Rose adds, "This talk is very timely because if you look at the news, kids are in intensive care, kids are dying over vaping. I think our young kids still think it is cool and they think it is safe."

Guest speakers Chelsea Zogaria of Northpointe Council, whose mission is based on person-centered prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery to those affected by substance use, and Lyndsay Stover of CHANT (Community Health Alliance of North Tonawanda) spent the day at the school talking to students about vaping and its short term and long term effects. "We are talking about vaping and its chemicals and how dangerous these products are with the students," says Ms. Stover. "They don't understand the ramifications of these products and how the tobacco industry is marketing to them to get them addicted to nicotine."

Ms. Rose says the presentation definitely started the students thinking about vaping's dangers. "We got a lot of feedback from teachers that the students talked a lot about the presentation and the information when they got back to class. It was definitely the conversation we wanted them to have." "We are very grateful for these community partnerships we have," says Mrs. Smith. "Especially the Northpointe Council and CHANT and all that they bring to the table with this preventive talk to our students. We are hoping to catch them before they head into the middle school and high school years."



(LtoR) Katie Smith (Principal of North Tonawanda Intermediate School), Chelsea Zogaria (Northpointe Council), Lindsay Stover (CHANT) Jacqueline Rose (School Social Worker) and Lexi Cretacci (School Social Worker).