

North Tonawanda City Schools



Going Above and Beyond

A special shout-out goes to our outstanding maintenance staff! We recently received a glowing letter from the Christian Academy of Western New York thanking Jeff Barke, Tim Lemanski, Brian Swaidner and Mike Maziarz for helping out with building issues.

Principal Cynthia Lichtenberger wrote to Superintendent Mr. Woytila, "On Friday, October 20, 2017 half of our cafeteria was dark. Tim and Michael brought a tall ladder over and replaced the cafeteria lights, making our cafeteria once again a safe place with all the lights working. More importantly, Tim, Michael, Brian and Jeff are not only efficient, but they have a positive and friendly attitude in keeping the building in good working order. Thank you for providing a wonderful and competent maintenance staff. They provide excellent care to our school and NT district."



Mike Maziarz, Brian Swaidner, Tim Lemanski, Del Ambrosia (Director of Facilities) and Jeff Barke.

Message from Superintendent

It is hard to believe that we are sending out our winter edition for the 17-18 school year already. The school year is off and running with a number of exciting events and programs.

Our Spotlight Series of free informational classes started on November 29th. It was open to the community and, in addition to the presentation on bullying, there was food and prizes at this event. We hope to grow this series over the coming years. We will be asking for feedback on additional topics to be presented at each meeting. Planned for this year are: Bullying, Internet Safety and De-escalation. We will be sending a global call to the school community, as all are welcome to attend these Spotlight events.

One of the themes for this year is *Picture Yourself Making a Difference*. You will see that we have highlighted a few people who make a difference in our schools in this issue. It really does take a village to raise a child and our volunteers and staff do an outstanding job on a daily basis. Thank you to everyone who makes a difference in your children's lives here in North Tonawanda, from pick up to drop off every day!!

We are also working on our curriculum to enhance how children learn and reflect on their reading and writing. This is important because the state is making needed changes to the state tests and is listening to teachers, who are currently in the field to ensure that testing is fair yet rigorous. The state's testing for the years 2016, 2017, and 2018 have not and will not be linked to teacher evaluation. The test results that are being provided to students and parents are for diagnostic purposes only. It is important to keep state testing this way so that it can be used to drive instruction. Please keep in mind that these assessments are only one measurement tool. A full picture of your child's academic performance is using multiple measures and their report card. We encourage you to consider using all assessments available to help get a clear and multifaceted view of your child's academic progress.

I wish you all a peaceful winter season. Remember we all make a difference and by working together we can easily Picture Ourselves Making a Difference.

Sincerely,

Gregory J. Woytila
Superintendent of North Tonawanda City Schools



Red Ribbon Week Goes to the Dogs

In conjunction with Red Ribbon Week, Spruce Elementary was able to see a K-9 dog demonstration. The children were excited to see how the Police Department finds drugs with the help of their K-9, Hammer.

(LtoR) Back Row: Stephen Kelly, Harrison Roberts, Kaleigh Bartolomei and Meredith Roberts. (LtoR) Front Row: Amelia Kinney, Dennis Odeychuck, Officer Tim Sylvester, Hammer (K-9) and Officer Michael Roberts.



North Tonawanda Students Attend Summer Music Camp

Music was in the air this summer as honors band students from North Tonawanda, Starpoint, Lockport and Roy-Hart gathered together in a weeklong music camp. Its creation was the vision of mother and son music instructors April and Justin Carere. Mrs. Carere teaches at North Tonawanda City School District and Mr. Carere teaches at Reagan Intermediate School at Starpoint.

They designed the program for students in grades 4-9 as a way to provide motivated students an opportunity to continue their studies over the summer months. This year there were five separate bands including a 7-9th grade jazz ensemble. "We've grown in size and scope each year adding students and faculty to the operation. This summer we worked with nearly 400 students," says Mr. Carere. "We try to make camp fun by incorporating a lot of team building and group bonding activities that serve to allow students to make memories and meet new friends from other school districts." Mrs. Carere added, "The camp has exploded in popularity with many families planning their summer vacations around our dates."

New this year was guest conductor Paul Ferington, retired conductor for the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. Maestro Ferington arranged a piece that the 5th grade band played at their concert performance at the conclusion of camp.



(LtoR) Emily Barick, Evan Clausen, Kaitlyn Samsel from North Tonawanda Middle School.



(LtoR) Lucas Matyevich, Madison Beattie, Joseph Kelly from the North Tonawanda Middle School.

Board of Education Adopts New Boundary Lines for K-3 Buildings

At the November 1 Board of Education meeting members adopted the new boundary lines for the K-3 buildings.

Next school year, the District's capital project will be completed and the district will now be home to three K-3 buildings, one 4-6 building and a new 7-12 campus in the Middle School and High School that will be connected by the alumni center.

With the change in grade level configuration, the boundary lines needed to be adjusted to reflect Meadow Elementary coming off line and becoming the new Middle School.

The District has tried to maintain as much as possible the current neighborhoods around Ohio, Drake and Spruce while absorbing the students in K-3 that would have been attending Meadow.



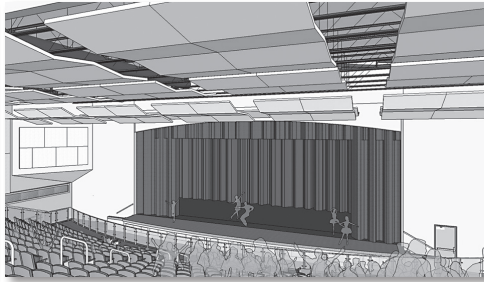
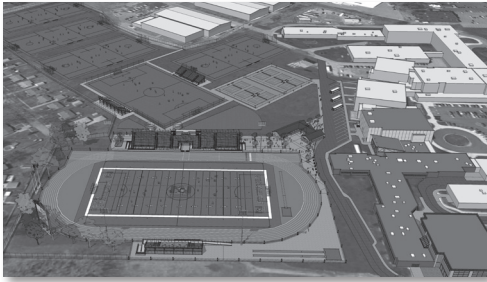
Wow! Look Who is Turning 55!

The North Tonawanda High School and Ohio Street School turned 55 this year! Both schools were open in 1962.

It took over two years for the high school to be built and on the first day of school there were 1,650 students enrolled. The structure of the original building began to change when in 1994 a science wing was added. The following year, the gym and the auditorium complex were added. In 2001, the pool and library/media center completed the additions for the building we know today.

As we look at the past, it is also time to look towards our future. Next year will see a brand-new state of the art auditorium that will be an amazing venue for our talented students! There will also be a new stadium and sports fields for our athletes, a revamp of the TV studio, and each classroom will be getting wireless internet ports. We will also be updating many of our safety features as well.

Ohio recently added a new playground to its property in anticipation of becoming a K-3 building next school year.



Spirit Week



North Tonawanda Has A Ball Putting On "Cinderella"

The North Tonawanda High School Drama Club recently presented Rodgers' and Hammerstein's "Cinderella", which was an awesome production by great students!



Cinderella Cast (ltoR) Paul Orrange, Julia Miskines, Samuel Fesmire, Jacob Thompson, Colin Krzystek, Isabella Fortunato, Elizabeth Roth.



Ohio Street Helps Out Worthy Cause

This year Ohio students rallied together to support Kids Escaping Drugs. During Red Ribbon Week, Mrs. Ninos' 4th Grade class proudly display their donations.

Author Kevin Kurtz Visits Drake Elementary

Students at Drake Elementary recently got to spend some time with childrens author Kevin Kurtz. Mr. Kurtz lives in Rochester, New York and was in town for the WNY Books Expo. He specializes in nonfiction books about science and nature and gladly accepted Principal Katie Smith's offer to come and visit with the students for the day.

He read one of his eight books to each of the grade levels and talked about the science behind them. He also talked about writing nonfiction and the process he goes through when writing a book. "I want to help the kids get a better handle on their own writing and answer any questions they have."



Genna Woodroe, Penni Jamulla, author Kevin Kurtz and Owen Olexenko.

Kindergarten Students Learn About Columbus Day

Mrs. Dexheimer's kindergarten class at Spruce Elementary were busy learning why they had the day off on October 9th, Columbus Day!

The students listened to books, had a puppet show and made Columbus' three ships, the Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Maria.



(Front from left to right) Keithan Pimer and Aliyah Smith. (Back from left to right) John Fortner and Julianna Cress with their puppets.

Andy Parker and the Weather Machine Visit Drake Elementary School

The students at Drake Elementary School had a surprise guest. WKBW's Andy Parker was introduced by Principal Katie Smith and told thanks to the school's 300,000 votes that he was there to show them the Weather Machine!

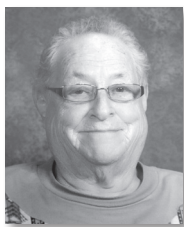
The students were over the moon with the exciting news!



Andy Parker congratulates Drake Elementary Students

Volunteers Make a Difference at Meadow

It is amazing how people who give their time can make a difference in the lives of so many. At Meadow Elementary two women who have given over a decade of their time have made an impact on so many children.



"Grandma" Helen Mott, is a HANCI grandma who has helped first grade teacher Jill Webb for over 20 years. "I would be lost without her," says Mrs. Webb about the 80 year old Mrs. Mott. "She works five days a week, six hours a day. She acts as a grandparent for a lot of the kids in class. She helps with so many aspects of our day. When the kids finish their work, they come to Grandma to check it. She organizes our poetry books, which is a huge task because we do a poem a day. The kids illustrate them and she puts them all in plastic sleeves and in their three ring binders. That is just one of the many things she does for us. Even though she is with HANCI she works with all the children in class."

Mrs. Mott is currently out recovering from knee surgery. "We certainly hope she is able to come back because it is so nice for the kids to have that grandparent figure. She is a treasure," says Mrs. Webb. We wish her a speedy recovery!



Michelle Gampp is a longtime MHSA President and school volunteer. Mrs. Gampp says she has always enjoyed volunteering. "It makes me feel like part of the community and also allows me to see my kids and see what they are doing in school. It's fun for me." She says it is so important for people to volunteer. "There are not enough people who volunteer here at the school. We have a small group of five people. I know a lot of people work, but there are night activities. I have been running the singing competition, Meadow Idol, for ten years. The kids get so excited when they see you. It's just great."

Ohio Elementary Welcomes "Reader's Workshop"

This year, the North Tonawanda City School District launched Reader's Workshop in many classrooms across the district. The Reading Workshop is a teaching method in which the goal is to teach students strategies for reading and comprehension. The workshop model allows teachers to differentiate and meet the needs of all their students. Reading Workshop helps to foster a love of reading and gives students chances to practice reading strategies independently and with guidance. This workshop model is similar to the Writing Workshop model.

Independent Reading is the heart of the Reading Workshop. This is the time when students practice strategies modeled in the mini-lesson or practice reading. Students can read alone, in pairs, or in small response groups. Teachers have the opportunity to confer with students, teach guided reading lessons or have a small-group lesson on a specific strategy or skill. Teachers can also do various assessments such as running records, retellings, or keeping anecdotal notes on children's progress.

Mrs. Montaldi's Kindergarten classroom celebrated the completion of their first Reader's Workshop unit with a "Reading Parade." In culmination of learning how to select "just right" books and grow their independent reading stamina, as well as developing several reading strategies, Kindergarten students read a book of choice to a peer in Miss Mauro's 3rd grade classroom. Congratulations to our readers as they begin their exciting reading journey.





Drake Says There is No "I" in Team!

The 5th and 6th graders at Drake Elementary School have united in this year's theme of Learning is Our Super Power which is all about team building. This year students had to kick it off by writing what it means to be a super hero. They have been participating in team building, communication and trust activities and forming positive relationships with each other.

Fifth grade teacher Becky Simpson says one of the fun activities involved pasta, yarn and marshmallows. "Each of the students were given 20 pieces of pasta, one yard of yarn and one large marshmallow. The students worked in teams and had to build the tallest structure that they could with the marshmallow on top. The students mixed from both classes for the challenge and it was a great way to start the year."



Kindergarten Says Howdy on Western Grandparent Day

Students in Mrs. Dexheimer's Kindergarten class at Spruce Elementary recently had the privilege of having their grandparents attend class. The special guests arrived in western attire and all the students had their cowboy/cowgirl hats on.

The class showed off some of their daily routine activities along with having a singalong which they encouraged the grandparents to join in on. One of their favorites with the Western theme was "She'll Be Coming Around the Mountain".

Working together with their guests, the children were reinforcing number sequence, graphing, fine motor skills, reading and making cactuses while incorporating science and art. Treats were enjoyed by all.



(LtoR) Ariana Sanford, Gavin Bugyi and Onalee Pisarek.

And the Cat Went Splat

The kindergarten students from Spruce Elementary School were excited to read *Splat the Cat* by Rob Scotton.

Being the children's first day of class, they could empathize with poor Splat and his worries. Fortunately, all turned out well.



(LtoR): Ella Sirdevan, Gavin Steves and Brynn Frank.

Curling Up with a Good Story and a Cup of Tea

Students in Jennifer Follendorf's class at Meadow Elementary just wrapped up the Personal Narrative Unit of their Writer's Workshop. "We have been helping to build up their writing stamina and gain skills," says Ms. Follendorf. "After finishing our Personal Narrative Unit, we chose one of our favorite stories to publish and invited Principal Janet Matyevich and Assistant Principal Rachel Wagner in for a cup of tea and to hear the students present their stories."



Kindergartners Learn About Fire Safety

Mrs. Dexheimer's kindergarten class at Spruce Elementary are busy reading and learning about the rules of fire safety during Fire Prevention Month.

"In their 'Weekly Reader' magazine, they are reading about the different types of equipment that the fire truck has along with the different ways of transportation that some firemen use. They have learned that it is important to have a plan and meeting place in case of a fire breaking out, to stop, drop and roll if their clothes start on fire, have smoke detectors, not to play with fire and to stay low if there is smoke," says Mrs. Dexheimer.



(LtoR): Daniel Jenneve, Liam Scott, Amelia Kinney & Aliyah Smith.

College Fair is Huge Success

The guidance and career counselors at the North Tonawanda High School recently had a Northeast College Fair. It is the 24th year that the fair has run and about 75-100 schools attended.

Juniors and seniors gathered in the gymnasium to explore what colleges are available to them. "It is a great opportunity for the kids to come down and one stop shop and be able to ask questions and explore what colleges can offer them as far as scholarships and programs that they may be interested in," says Lori Graves, High School Career Center Mentor. "It allows them to explore what is out there, not just what is in Western New York and what schools can fit their needs."



(LtoR) Patrick Holesko (Executive Director of Educational Services), Michael Tambroni (Director of Student Services), Robert Derrett (School Counselor), Lynn Wright (School Counselor) and Jennifer John (School Counselor).



(LtoR) Julia Miskines, Jacob Thompson, Gregory McDole and Bailey Walter.

Spruce Elementary Holds Open House for Kindergarten and First Grade

As everyone knows the first day at school can be a little stressful for young children, especially for kindergartners and first graders.

That is why North Tonawanda's Spruce Elementary School Principal Patricia Adler recently held an open house before school started so that the students and parents could meet with the teachers and explore the classroom and schools. The parents and children met in the cafeteria so they could be introduced to all the teachers in that grade level and Mrs. Adler. Mrs. Adler went over what is expected of the students once they enter the doors of the schools and went over the rules with the parents.

The students then lined up behind their assigned teacher and followed them to the classroom where the teachers got a chance to interact with them and their families. "It is an exciting time for these children," says kindergarten teacher Debbie Dexheimer. "I want them to feel comfortable like they would at home. It's a great start to the school year."

Marylou Bryant, who accompanied her granddaughter Josie to meet her first grade teacher Mrs. Kiedrowski, says it is a great idea. "She is very nervous because she just moved here. She is still unpacking and this made it so much easier to come in early and see where she is going to school. It went well and it will make her first day so much nicer."

The students also got to take a ride on a school bus so that they would be comfortable and learn the rules of being a good passenger.



Kelly McGee with her daughter Isabella Utech, teacher Carol Kiedrowski, classroom grandma Olga Ciovacco.



Jennifer Crowe with her daughter Josie and Josie's grandmother Marylou Bryant.



(LtoR) Mrs. Nyitrai, Mrs. Adler, Mrs. Dexheimer and Mrs. Olewnik.

Meadow Elementary Holds Drive for Kids Escaping Drugs

Meadow Elementary Principal Janet Matyevich says she, her staff and the students were busy collecting items to donate to the Kids Escaping Drugs programs. It's all part of Red Ribbon Week, which is a nationwide drug prevention celebration. In 1985, Enrique Camarena, a Federal Drug Enforcement Agent, was killed by drug traffickers in Mexico. In response to his death, parents across the country began wearing red ribbons to symbolize their commitment toward the creation of a drug free America.

The Kids Escaping Drugs organization helps families in Western New York who are suffering from alcohol and drug dependency and addiction. Kids Escaping Drugs was founded in 1987. There are three residences where children reside on campus where they continue their education through traditional schooling, equivalency preparation, college preparation and vocational education.

Mrs. Matyevich asked each grade level to bring in and donate certain items for the Renaissance Campus. Items donated were shampoo, conditioner, soap, body wash, deodorant, body lotion, hand lotion, hand sanitizer, toothpaste, toothbrushes, combs, brushes, socks and water bottles. The response was overwhelming.

Thanks for all your generosity!



5th Graders with the DARE donations - Aidin Harrigan, Kayla Selak, Sophia Scott and William Allard.



Claire Stutz, Nicholas Wozniak, Teagan Leith.

Doing Swimmingly!

The North Tonawanda Lady Jacks JV and Varsity Swimming and Diving Team are looking good!



Magician Makes Positive Decisions Appear at Drake Elementary

Local magician Mike Seege recently reached out to Drake Elementary School Principal, Katie Smith, to see if the school would be interested in him performing for the students. "We were looking for a way to kick off our character education program to bring the school community together to start the year and he offered us a great program called Say No to Bullying".

Mr. Seege says he has been doing magic for a living for a long time, but has been performing his anti-bullying act in schools for about ten years. "I have been partnered with Doodle Bugs for about five years now. They sponsor the show and they are a fantastic group. "I just love working with the kids. They are awesome. Every single show is different because children are so unique, even though the tricks and the routines I do are the same. I have a little guy and I remember how nervous my wife and I were when he started school because kids can be mean. My show is an awesome way to have fun and spread the word about something positive in the school community."

Mrs. Smith says her hope is that it will show the students the importance of making good decisions on their own to stand up for each other and give help when it is needed, and being an advocate for not only themselves, but for others.



Hunter Knoell with Mike Seege.



Eliza Yager with Mike Seege.



NORTH TONAWANDA CITY SCHOOLS

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Vision Statement

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.

NORTH TONAWANDA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

“Together is Better” at Ohio Elementary

This year staff showed their team spirit, wearing their “NT: Together is Better” shirts each Friday. In an effort to support the many district instructional initiatives and prepare students to meet the diverse demands of the 21st century, Ohio staff aim to grow professional connections within and across grade levels.

With key shifts in New York State Standards within ELA, Math, Social Studies and Science, Ohio Elementary participates in a series of “teacher rounds.” This professional practice has staff, teachers and administrators alike, planning and delivering instruction for the purposes of studying student learning. This professional practice allows critical discussions on where students are in relation to key instructional themes and standards.

This practice simultaneously grows each professional’s capacity to meet each students’ diverse needs. In the realm of literacy, teachers from all four elementary buildings push into Mrs. Davignon’s first grade classroom at Ohio Elementary to study student growth in relation to their reading skills, habits, and strategies.



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