



MIDLAKES.ORG

MIDLAKES JOURNAL

PHELPS-CLIFTON SPRINGS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



VOLUME XXIX, ISSUE III
MAY 2024

INSIDE THIS EDITION

ANNUAL VOTE INFO. PAGES 1-5

SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS PAGES 6-7

WINTER ATHLETICS PAGE 8

MUSIC IN OUR SCHOOLS PAGE 9

UPCOMING EVENTS PAGE 10

GRADUATES OF DISTINCTION PAGE 11

VALEDICTORIAN/SALUTATORIAN .. PAGE 12

FIND MORE AT MIDLAKES.ORG



VIDEO: Midlakes Athletic Leadership Organization (M.A.L.O.) makes Superintendent Nick Ganster go blue after the school community surpasses his fundraising challenge during Midlakes Madness.



PHOTOS: The High School Band Room opens for use along with other areas of the capital project.

Annual VOTE

TUESDAY,
MAY 21

NOON - 9 P.M.
Midlakes Middle School Gymnasium

During its April 15 meeting, the Board of Education adopted an approximately \$46.1 million budget for the 2024-2025 school year that goes to a vote on Tuesday, May 21.

The proposal calls for a tax levy increase of approximately 2.43%, which is below the District's tax cap limit of 4.73% set by the state.

This year, voters will be asked to elect three candidates to the Board of Education, approve a proposition to purchase six buses and a transportation vehicle with funds from a Bus Purchase Reserve Fund, establish a Transportation Capital Reserve to fund future bus purchases and transportation-related infrastructure and approve a separate proposition to fund the community libraries. The District hosts the vote for the libraries, but the funding does not impact school property taxes.

Additional details on the annual vote can also be found on the District's website at Midlakes.org/AnnualVote.

2.43%
Proposed 2024-2025
tax levy increase

BUDGET HEARING
6 p.m., Wednesday,
May 8, BOE room,
Elementary school.



Scan the code with your device for budget materials and Board of Education meeting videos.

HIGHLIGHTS



BOARD APPROVES REPAIRS OF POOL

The Board of Education, based on the recommendation of district administration, declared a local emergency to address failing equipment and deteriorating conditions of the Midlakes Aquatics Center.

The declaration authorizes the District to spend up to \$2.5 million in current fund balance to pay for upgrades at the pool, which is almost 20 years old. The state would reimburse 87.7 percent of the project's cost to the District over the next 15 years, leaving the District to fund \$307,500 of the project.

There are three main areas needing attention:

- A large dehumidification unit has stopped working, leading to corrosion, rust, and decay.
- The filtration system is beyond its serviceable life. An upgrade to a more modern and efficient system would keep the center open in the event the original system fails.
- The floor in isolated areas of the pool has chipped and cracked and may pose a danger to those swimming or in the pool for other uses.

The District plans to address these issues before they become a greater concern. The center will remain open for use until the contractors, equipment, and materials can be purchased to complete the repairs. ■

2024-2025 SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET

BUDGETING FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Each year, we invest considerable time with the Board of Education to craft our annual budget, aiming to realign priorities for the upcoming school year to address student and program needs, cultivate a safe and inclusive campus environment, and deliver high-quality learning experiences to every student all while remaining mindful of our responsibility to local property taxpayers.



Much like last year, our school district continues to grapple with challenging inflationary trends, substantial hikes in healthcare, utility, and retirement costs, and uncertainty surrounding fully funded Foundation Aid from the state, which is pivotal in mitigating the local tax burden on our property owners.

Over the last several months, we made significant progress to ensure that we are presenting a responsible spending plan that bolsters academics, supports social-emotional learning, sustains extra-curricular activities, and maintains our facilities and staff.

We intend to achieve our goals with a spending plan that continues our trend of staying below the tax cap threshold of the district and current infla-

tionary figures while prudently managing the use of reserve funds to support the budget.

This year, voters will be presented with ballot propositions to continue the scheduled replacement of older buses, allocate funding to our community libraries (a measure that is separate from the school budget), and establish a Transportation Capital Reserve Fund.

This fund, supported by year-end budget surpluses, will facilitate future acquisition of electric school buses/vehicles, transportation infrastructure enhancements, and more.

Building a budget involves input from many different stakeholders. Those interested in sharing their thoughts on the budget may attend our annual Budget Hearing at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, May 8, in the Board of Education Room (room 103) at Midlakes Elementary School.

We also welcome everyone to learn more about our Annual Vote taking place on May 21, in the May edition of the Midlakes Journal, and on our website at Midlakes.org/AnnualVote. ■

— Nick Ganster, Superintendent

ANNUAL VOTE HIGHLIGHTS

Property Taxes

The District plans to meet its goals for the 2024-2025 school year with a tax levy increase of approximately 2.43%, which is below inflationary trends and the tax cap threshold of 4.73% set by the state.



State Aid

State funding comprises \$28,743,542 or 62.3% of the revenue in the proposed school budget. This dollar amount is an increase of \$1,185,130 over the 2023-2024 school year.

Staff Positions

Current positions would remain intact while addressing upcoming needs with a part-time French teacher and moving a part-time clerical worker to full-time. Separate from the budget will be the addition of two Teachers on Special Assignment funded by the state to support teachers and at-risk students.



Use of Reserves

The increase in state aid offsets the reliance of the District to tap into reserve funds to balance the budget, which had increased during the pandemic. Proposed for 2024-2025 is a \$90,425 increase in the strategic use of reserves for a total of \$740,000.

Create a Transportation Reserve

A proposition that plants the seeds for future transportation-related purchases, construction and infrastructure with a new Transportation Capital Reserve of up to \$5 million to be paid for by future surplus fund balance.



New School Buses

A proposition to fund the purchase (\$1,073,880) of several vehicles to maintain the District's fleet. State aid will cover 90% of the cost of the purchase, bringing the District's net cost to \$107,388.



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Included are responses to some commonly asked questions regarding the Annual Vote.

For additional responses, visit Midlakes.org/AnnualVote.

What are the highlights of the budget?

The 2023-2024 school year was the first time since the creation of the Foundation Aid formula in 2007 that the Phelps-Clifton Springs Central School District received its full allocation of Foundation Aid. This amount along with a cost-of-living adjustment resulted in an increase of \$4,158,730 in State Aid. For the 2024-2025 school year, the District is projected to see an increase of \$1,185,130 in State Aid which is significantly less than the prior year. Fortunately, the District forecasted that once Federal stimulus funds expired, the State would start to tighten its budget due to declining revenue streams and planned for such a scenario. The 2024-2025 school budget of \$46,142,958 is an overall increase of approximately 3.76% from the previous year and with Federal stimulus funds set to expire in September 2024, this budget maintains much of the staffing and programming that was added in recent years.

What expenditures are increasing the most?

Nearly 40% of the budget represents salaries. Based on collective bargaining agreements, these salaries are increasing approximately 3.75% from last year. BOCES services for special education and occupational education programs have increased nearly 5% and health care in the Finger Lakes Area School Health Plan is expected to increase 9.5%. Despite these increases, the District has worked with building administrators and department directors to tighten the budget resulting in a budget-to-budget increase of \$1,670,314 for the 2024-2025 school year. This increase is significantly less than the budget-to-budget increase for the 2023-2024 school year of \$3,836,323.

How will the proposed budget affect property owners?

The \$46,142,958 budget proposal calls for a 2.43% (rounded to the nearest tenth of a percentage point throughout this issue) increase in the real property tax levy. Based on \$100,000 assessed value and overall assessments and equalization rates from the 2023-2024 school year, residents can expect to see an average increase of \$71.57 with no STAR exemption, \$53.42 more if they qualify for the STAR exemption, or \$22.48 more if they qualify for the enhanced STAR exemption. Keep in mind that the equalization rates and overall assessments across the seven municipalities have not yet been released for 2024.

How are reserve funds being used in the proposed budget? The District plans to use \$740,000 of its reserves to balance the budget. This amount

represents a \$90,425 annual increase from the 2023-2024 budget. The District will allocate \$325,000 from the Employees Retirement System Reserve and \$20,000 from the Teachers Retirement System Reserve to offset any contributions to the retirement systems. To offset certain contractual obligations for retirees in the coming school year, \$95,000 will be allocated from the Employee Benefits Accrued Liability Reserve. The District will also allocate \$300,000 from its Debt Service Fund to offset the local share of capital debt payments from previous capital projects.

What kind of buses is the District looking to purchase and why is the District not investing in electric buses?

To ensure the safety of students and staff the District is working towards a five-year rotation of school buses as it phases out aging models. To continue this cycle, the District will spend up to \$1,073,880 out of its Bus Purchase Reserve Fund to purchase six diesel buses and one utility vehicle. These buses are as follows: two 70-passenger, three 30-passenger, and one 30-passenger wheelchair-accessible. The state provides 90% aid reimbursement over five years for the purchase of buses resulting in a net cost to the District of \$107,388.

One of the key factors in the decision to purchase diesel over electric is that there are still many challenges with adopting electric buses namely, supply chain issues with electric buses and charging stations, demand on the power grid, new fire suppression systems, and increased costs of buses and insurance. Under New York State's Zero-Emission School Bus Mandate, all school district purchases of new vehicles must be zero-emission as of July 1, 2027. If this mandate holds, then school districts will need a significant amount of money to purchase electric buses and upgrade the infrastructure of their respective transportation departments. Currently, the average cost of a 70-passenger diesel bus is about \$170,000 whereas the electric version of the 70-passenger bus is closer to \$400,000. This does not include the cost of the charger, which can cost as much as \$50,000 depending on the power and speed of charging.

Why create a Transportation Reserve Fund?

The 2024 Transportation Reserve will have a 10-year lifespan with a maximum funding allocation of \$5 million. This will allow the District to grow this reserve and have the flexibility to use the funds for purchasing diesel buses and possibly electric buses if mandated, along with the necessary infrastructure upgrades. ■

HIGHLIGHTS



ANNUAL VOTE SUMMARY

BUDGET: \$46,142,958

TAX LEVY INCREASE:
2.43% over 2023-2024

STATE AID: \$28,743,542
(\$1,185,130 more than 2023-2024)

RESERVE SPENDING: \$740,000
(\$90,425 more than 2023-2024)

BUDGET HEARING: A budget hearing will be held in the Board of Education Meeting Room in Midlakes Elementary School at **6 p.m. on Monday, May 8.**

IN-PERSON VOTING: Noon to 9 p.m., Tuesday May 21, Middle School Gymnasium, 1554 State Route 488, Clifton Springs.

ABSENTEE BALLOTS: Absentee ballots must be received to the District Clerk by 5 p.m., May 21. Ballots may need to be hand-delivered if not sent to the Post Office in a timely manner.

BUDGET STATEMENT: A detailed budget statement may be obtained by any District resident from 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. during weekdays, excluding holidays, during the fourteen days immediately preceding the vote.

ELIGIBILITY: Residents qualify to participate in the annual vote, provided they are:

- A U.S. Citizen
- At least 18 years old
- A resident of the District for at least 30 days prior to the vote.

** No property requirement to vote. View website for other requirements.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Contact District Clerk Pam Mann at (315) 548-6420, email pmann@midlakes.org, or visit Midlakes.org/AnnualVote. ■

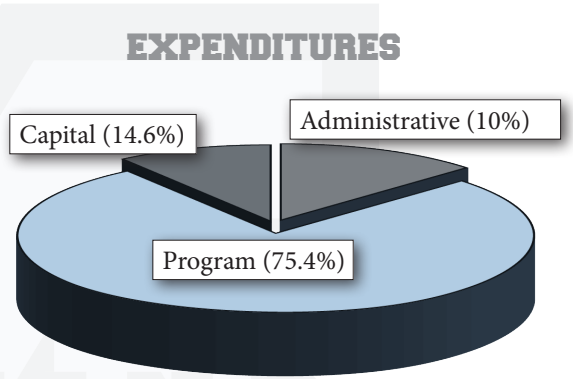
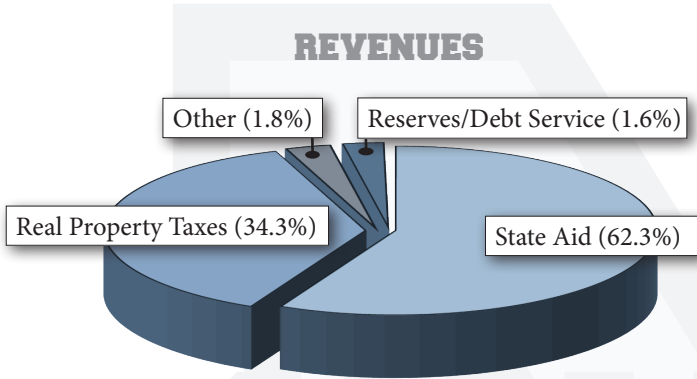
BUDGET PROPOSAL

The following charts and figures detail the sources of revenue and expenditures of the proposed budget.

Further information can be found on the District's website at Midlakes.org/AnnualVote.

PROJECTED REVENUE

CATEGORY	2023-2024	2024-2025	INCREASE (DECREASE)
State Aid	\$27,558,412	\$28,743,542	\$1,185,130
Real Property Taxes	\$15,468,237	\$15,844,115	\$375,878
Reserves/Debt Service	\$649,575	\$740,000	\$90,425
Other	\$796,420	\$815,301	\$18,881
TOTALS	\$44,472,644	\$46,142,958	\$1,670,314



Figures rounded. May not equal 100%

EXPENDITURES

ADMINISTRATIVE

CATEGORY	2023-2024	2024-2025	INCREASE (DECREASE)
Board of Education	\$96,972	\$102,475	\$5,503
Central Administration & Finance	\$834,586	\$868,945	\$34,359
Legal, Personnel, Public Information	\$231,240	\$243,488	\$12,248
Central Services & Special Items	\$918,203	\$987,436	\$69,233
Curriculum, Supervision, Research & Planning	\$1,296,342	\$1,335,656	\$39,314
Employee Benefits	\$1,067,743	\$1,102,126	\$34,383
TOTALS	\$4,445,086	\$4,640,126	\$195,040

PROGRAM

CATEGORY	2023-2024	2024-2025	INCREASE (DECREASE)
Staff Development & Training - Regular School	\$12,213,765	\$12,713,774	\$500,009
Programs for Students with Disabilities	\$7,866,271	\$7,967,961	\$101,690
Pupil Personnel, Guidance & Health Services	\$1,125,173	\$1,129,348	\$4,175
Athletics	\$621,690	\$698,228	\$76,538
Transportation	\$1,941,521	\$2,035,689	\$94,168
Employee Benefits	\$10,007,370	\$10,236,572	\$229,203
TOTALS	\$33,775,790	\$34,781,572	\$1,005,783

CAPITAL

CATEGORY	2023-2024	2024-2025	INCREASE (DECREASE)
Operation & Maintenance of Plant	\$2,483,068	\$2,647,978	\$164,910
Employee Benefits	\$687,287	\$738,801	\$51,513
Debt Service & Bus Purchases	\$3,081,413	\$3,334,481	\$253,068
TOTALS	\$6,251,768	\$6,721,260	\$469,491

TOTAL BUDGET

	2023-2024	2024-2025	INCREASE (DECREASE)
TOTALS	\$44,472,644	\$46,142,958	\$1,670,314

Expenditures rounded to the nearest whole dollar

BOARD OF EDUCATION CANDIDATES

Voters will elect three (3) individuals. Board members serve without pay and are listed in order of appearance on the ballot.



MATT GOODMAN

Family: Wife, Kerrie; children, Grace, Danny and Addy.

**Occupation/
Career:** Senior

Engineer at ThermoFisher Scientific, Owner of Matt Goodman Farms LLC.

Qualifications and Activities:

My current career in the Biomedical/ Genomic field has provided me with a unique skill of interpreting and solving complex issues while collaborating with colleagues nationally and globally. Growing up on a farm in Hopewell, my passion for agriculture led me to start a small farm eight years ago. I served on the Hopewell Town Board for nine years from 2013-2022. In total, these experiences have taught me to listen, investigate, and make decisions grounded in facts all while keeping a budget in mind.

Personal Statement:

As parents, we all want the very best education for our children, one that provides diverse opportunities for them to grow as individuals through as many avenues as possible. As residents, we deserve to know that our school district can do this while being fiscally responsible. This balance is very important so we, as a community, can be proud of our school and confident it's running efficiently. I am excited to have a chance to be part of this school board to listen, learn, and offer common-sense decisions to help move Midlakes forward. Thank you for your consideration and vote!



TRACY ALTMAN

Family: Husband, Travis; two sons.

**Occupation/
Career:** Health and Life coach.

Qualifications and Activities:

I have been a member of the Phelps-Clifton Springs Board of Education for the past 6 years (completing my second term), serving as President for the past two years. My

involvement in various committees while serving on the Board has provided me with the knowledge and experience needed to understand the "big picture" of our district. I also participated in the development of our strategic plan. I am a lifelong member of our community, alumni of Midlakes, and a parent of two current students. Additionally, I am a parent volunteer of the YMCA swim program, booster club member, and a former School Counselor (over 15 years).

Personal Statement:

I am passionate about supporting the work we have been doing to strengthen the quality of education that our school district provides to every student who enters our doors. Educating our students entails not only academic programs but also all of the extracurricular opportunities that we provide that are integral for developing students who have the skills to compete and thrive in a global society. In my experience, both as a parent and as a counselor, I recognize the ongoing need for adequate Mental Health services and Comprehensive School Counseling support to ensure the development of well-adjusted contributing members of our community and our society; I will continue to advocate both locally and at the state level for these needs. I would be honored to continue to be a member of the team that oversees the continued growth of our district while being fiscally responsible to my fellow community members.



ADAM ELDRIDGE

Family: Wife, Leah; two daughters and four sons.

**Occupation/
Career:** Business

owner.

Qualifications and Activities:

Co-owned and operated a business for 27 years in Phelps.

Personal Statement:

Grew up in the Midlakes school district. Looking to provide trust and FULL transparency to the taxpayer and FULL communication at the board meeting.



LYNN LEBRECHT

Family: Husband, Stephen; sons Charles, Stephen Jr. and Stavell; and daughter, Emmajay.

**Occupation/
Career:** Supervising Social Worker at Ontario County Mental Health.

Qualifications and Activities:

I have worked in the mental health and addiction field for 19 years. I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor. With this background I have knowledge of social emotional and developmental needs of youth. I also have experience in program development, management, budget planning, and bring knowledge of community resources. I have been a current member of the Board of Education since September of 2023. I am an active member of the Football Boosters. In the past, I have volunteered on the Midlakes Jr. Eagles Board and coached flag cheerleading.

Personal Statement:

I am a proud Midlakes alumni and believe it is important to give back to my community. I look forward to utilizing my experience and to continue creating collaborative relationships to ensure our children have access to the highest quality education and supportive services. ■

ABOUT THE BOARD

The Board of Education of the Phelps-Clifton Springs Central School District is made up of seven volunteers elected to serve three-year terms. Responsibilities include:

- Hiring and evaluating the Superintendent of Schools, who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the District and administration of Board policies.
- Establishing the direction of the District by developing a shared vision and goals.
- Setting policy and adopting a budget for voter approval.

Community members may learn more on the District's website at Midlakes.org under the Board of Education tab. ■

WE ARE MID

Secondary students explore opportunities in career and technical education with an eye towards a wide range of high-wage and high-demand careers.

AGRICULTURE

Midlakes' Agriculture Club (future FFA) provides hands-on experiences to explore the agriculture industry, plant and food sciences, and more while giving students leadership opportunities.

For example, students held an Ag Fest to give elementary students a taste of fresh cider using an apple press donated by the Cornell AgriTech (New York State Agricultural Experiment Station) in Geneva. The older students also led crafts, seed plantings, readings, and cookie decorating stations. Midlakes facilities staff pitched in to give tractor rides.

The club, along with Midlakes' Career and Business Development class, has already toured several farms and local businesses to learn more on how products make their way from farms and into local stores. ■



AQUACULTURE

Aquaculture is an upper-level course exploring the future of farming. Earlier this year, students grew fresh lettuce using a vertical farming system and gave the produce to the Midlakes Food Services Department for use in roughly 25 salads and 35 wraps, which all sold out on Valentine's Day.

The class explores hydroponic farming, agricultural science, and the latest technologies in a non-traditional way that culminates with a capstone project that includes designing and constructing a facility capable of supporting both fish and plants. ■



CLOTHING/SEWING

Students interested in fashion and sewing can receive a background in the history of clothing and textiles, explore personal clothing design, and the construction of various garments, and dive into related career opportunities. Most of their class time is spent sewing student-selected projects, which included using school sewing machines to make comfortable pillows. ■

CULINARY ARTS

Students can take courses in International Foods, Baking and Pastries, and Food for Today to gain basic cooking skills or to start

on a path into careers as chefs, cooks, or food-preparation workers through advanced instruction.

At Midlakes, students learn to work in teams to apply classroom theory in an industrial kitchen while preparing and cooking foods using proper food handling and sanitation procedures.

Earlier in the year, students in International Foods made a variety of dishes representing different areas of the United States, including biscuits and sausage gravy from North Carolina; peach cobbler with homemade whipped cream from Georgia; chicken and waffles from Virginia; and beignets from New Orleans. ■



E-COMMERCE

E-commerce exposes students to online business and marketing with coursework on the buying and selling of goods, entrepreneurship, laws, regulations, and online advertising.

Over the winter, students in E-Commerce

MIDLAKES!

technical education
-demand careers.



picked celebrities and a product matching their celebrity's target audience while researching the different aspects involved in making their product. ■

FACS

Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) lays a foundation for postsecondary careers and education while providing students with opportunities for individual growth and life readiness, nutrition, wellness, food

production, and more.

Earlier this year, seventh graders worked to make chewy pizza bread, a simple but delicious snack, and then followed it up by making sugar cookies.

FLORICULTURE

Floriculture students stationed a Valentine's Day Flower Bar during lunch that allowed students to pick a red or pink carnation and a handmade Valentine's heart to spread love and kindness through school.

Separately, the class traveled to Sandy's Floral Gallery on Main Street in Clifton Springs to learn about entrepreneurship, floral design, and how to properly care for various flowers. Students also made their own floral arrangements.

They also visited VanHooft Wreaths in Clifton Springs earlier in the school year to learn about the art of making holiday wreaths, the types of greens used to make holiday arrangements, and more. ■

SMALL ANIMAL SCIENCE

Midlakes' Small Animal Science class took care of "Winnie the Bunny" for about three months, working to care, clean, feed, train, and help her become the most adoptable bunny around!

Students looked after Winnie after she was rescued by Cracker Box Palace in North Rose and placed at Midlakes. She now has a new "fur-ever" home thanks to the Gruschow family, who adopted the animal over winter. ■

TECHNOLOGY

World of Technology, Drafting — Architectural, CAD Design & Software, and Principles of Engineering teach students the skills to communicate designs and ideas graphically using the latest software to draw and build a table, a home, and more. While earning math and science credits, students can also explore advanced levels of design and problem-solving to get a jump start in engineering and other post-secondary education/careers. ■

WOOD PROCESSING/ PRODUCTION

Wood Processing/Production is a hands-on approach to studying the underlying theory, methods, and materials used to create useful products, including wooden catapults capable of tossing plastic balls into a recycling bin placed a few feet away.

Students made adjustable catapults with rubber bands while working to understand how firing angles and velocity affect their ability to hit a target. Students also got to use woodworking equipment and various power tools while learning how to safely operate different pieces of equipment used in the construction process. ■

HIGHLIGHTS



SUPERINTENDENT AWARD RECIPIENT

Senior Kaylee Williams was among 25 students from the Wayne-Finger Lakes region honored in March with a Superintendent Award during a celebration at Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES in Newark.

Williams was chosen to receive the award by the Phelps-Clifton Springs Central School District. Recipients must demonstrate leadership, citizenship, and outstanding scholarship by achieving a GPA of 80 or higher by the end of their junior year. W-FL BOCES District Superintendent Lynne Rutnik presented Williams with the award, which makes the Midlakes student eligible for various scholarships. ■



LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT

Junior Matt Cannan was among 24 high school juniors from four counties recognized in March with a Youth Leadership Recognition Award for demonstrating exceptional leadership and achievement in academics, music, arts, and community service.

Cannan is an accomplished musician and participates in multiple extracurricular activities in and out of school. School counselor Krystina Brooks nominated Cannan for the award, which was presented by state Senator Pam Helming. ■

STATE CHAMP

Sophomore Aiden Bryant won two state titles during the 2024 New York State Indoor Track & Field Championships on March 3 at Ocean Breeze Athletic Complex in Staten Island.

Bryant set a personal best of 49 feet and one half-inch in winning the triple jump by nearly three feet, following jumps of 46-3, 46-10, and 48-6.

His winning jump also reset the sophomore state record, which Bryant had set a week earlier to break a 35-year-old record.

He then went on to win the long jump title with a high mark of 23 feet, 5.75 inches. He also landed jumps of 23-2.5, 23-5.25 and 22-7.5. ■



Photo courtesy of David Haygood Jr. Fine Photography, Gallery One Fine Arts 2575 East Henrietta Road.

SCHOLAR SQUADS

Five athletic teams and 53 varsity student-athletes have been recognized by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association for outstanding academic achievements during the Winter season. Individual student-athletes must earn at least a 90 GPA to be recognized. A team needs at least 75 percent of its roster to earn an overall GPA of at least 90 percent to be recognized.

SCHOLAR TEAMS

GIRLS BASKETBALL

95.1
GPA

GIRLS INDOOR TRACK

93.2
GPA

GIRLS BOWLING

92
GPA

BOYS INDOOR TRACK

90.2
GPA

BOYS BOWLING

90
GPA



GIRLS INDOOR TRACK: SECTIONAL CHAMPS

Sienna Lowe, Kenzie Turner, Alyssa Crance, Josephine Rogers, Hailey Barber, Donavynne Hansen, Ava Hobbs, Hayden Wells, Claire Givens, Elizabeth Elling, Lillian Hargather, Rain Newton, Emily Meath, Karen Heffron, Kianna Naval, Laura Rugerio-Altez, Makenzie Davis, and Olivia St. Pierre. ■



COMPETITIVE CHEER: W-FL LEAGUE CHAMPS

Alexis Bailey, Brianna Barrios, Kendell Boughton, Candiz Contreras, Jemma Darling, Olivia Davis, Madisyn Elliott, Morgan Frisbee, Alexis Kopetchny, California Osterhout, Libby Pane, and Ava Schrader. ■

Haygood Jr. Fine Photography



Scan the QR Code to meet the individual Scholar-Athletes.

STUDENTS SELECTED TO ALL-COUNTY

Several students from Midlakes were selected this year for All-County for outstanding musicianship in band, orchestra, or chorus.

Students were selected to perform at an All-County Festival based on teacher recommendations and New York State School Music Association solo festival scores, which placed the students among the best in the county.

SENIOR HIGH CHORUS

- Anthony Cooper
- Trip Dean
- Mara Deisering
- Kyra Guest
- Justin Herman
- Gavin Ruggles

SENIOR HIGH ORCHESTRA

- Tuba: Kyle Bell
- Euphonium: Matthew Cannan
- French horn: Nicole Szalay
- Percussion: Ian Gonzalez

JUNIOR HIGH BAND

- Trumpet: Duke Van Savage
- Percussion: Alessandra Gallagher
- French horn: Brian Cannan
- Trumpet: Carter Gruschow
- Clarinet: Sydney Rodriguez

ELEMENTARY BAND

- Clarinet: Ellen Lincoln, Carson Weaver, and Aubrey Rodriguez
- Alto saxophone: Eleanor Foster and Emma Kirsch
- Tenor saxophone: Vaughan Tornow-Coffee and Violet Tornow-Coffee
- Trumpet: Aiden Curran and Lily Tidd
- Trombone: Caleb Congilosi
- Tuba: James Stratton and Samuel Bishop
- Percussion: Connor Gage

ELEMENTARY CHORUS (5th & 6th GRADE)

- Logan McGuire
- Alivia Sinack
- Reese Haynes
- Audi Malone
- Alecia Bultron
- Alexandria Bultron
- Ellie Marvin
- Hailey Kimber
- Catherine Worden
- Amelia Young
- Aubrey Lincoln
- David McConnon



MUSIC IN OUR SCHOOLS CONCERT

Senior Nicole Szalay leads the crowd singing "The Star-Spangled Banner" and Pledge of Allegiance during the celebration featuring students in grades 4-12.



UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

- Elementary School Band & Chorus: 7 p.m., May 16.
- Middle/High School Chorus: 7 p.m., May 22.
- Middle/High School Band: 7 p.m., May 30.
- Middle/High School Jazz Band: 6:30 p.m., June 20, United Church of Phelps.

HIGHLIGHTS

ANTICIPATED CHANGE TO DISTRICT CALENDAR*

The Phelps-Clifton Springs Central School District is notifying the school community of an anticipated school closure for students and staff on Friday, May 24.

The Board of Education approved a resolution during its April meeting for this additional closure, if the district does not close for any emergency reason by Wednesday, May 15.

While not used in several years, primarily out of the need for snow days over winter, the Phelps-Clifton Springs Central School District and several other districts in the region plan to extend the Memorial Day Weekend holiday for this reason.

The school district plans to make a final determination by May 15 on extending the Memorial Day break. Families with questions should contact their school's Main Office for more information. ■

GIRL HOOPSTERS GIVE BACK

The junior varsity and varsity girls basketball teams at Midlakes High School recently donated \$775 to Embrace Your Sisters, a nonprofit organization providing emergency funding to women diagnosed with breast cancer.

Midlakes' student-athletes raised donations by selling "Pink Out" t-shirts during a home game in January. ■

LOOKING AHEAD

DISTRICT CALENDAR

The Board of Education approved at its March meeting the District Calendar for the 2024-2025 academic year. Below are a few highlights:

First Day of School: Students to report on Wednesday, Sept. 4.

Superintendent Conference Days: Staff only on Thursday, Aug. 29, Tuesday, Sept. 3; Friday, Oct. 11, and Friday, March 14.

Thanksgiving Break: No school on November 27-29.

Winter Break: No school on Monday, Dec. 23 - Friday, Jan 1. School reopens Monday, Jan. 6.

February Break: No school from Monday, Feb. 17 - Friday, Feb. 21. School reopens Monday, Feb. 24.

Spring Break: No school from Monday, April 14 - Friday, April 18. School reopens Monday, April 21.

Holidays (No School): Columbus/Indigenous People's Day, Oct. 14; Veterans Day, Nov. 11; Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Jan. 20; Lunar New Year, Jan. 29; Memorial Day, May 27; Juneteenth, June 19.

Elementary school half days: December 3-5, March 11-13, June 24-26.

Graduation: Saturday, June 28.

All school events and dates are subject to change. Contact your child's school for additional information. View district calendars and sports schedules at Midlakes.org/calendars. ■

CAN'T MISS EVENTS



MEMORIAL DAY TRIBUTE

First-graders at Midlakes Elementary School will once again present a tribute honoring local servicemen and women who protected our country. Contact school for more information.

DATE: Thursday, May 23. ■

COMMENCEMENT

Show your pride in all that the Class of 2024 has accomplished during Midlakes High School's annual Commencement Ceremony, where students will walk the stage to receive their diplomas. Additional details to be released. Contact Midlakes High School for more information as it becomes available.



DATE: The ceremony is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m., Saturday, June 29. ■

THIS MONTH & NEXT

MAY

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ROLLER SKATING

May 7: Grades K-2
May 8: Grades 3-4
May 9: Grades 5-6

BUDGET HEARING

6 p.m., May 8
(Regular BOE meeting follows)

GRADUATES OF DISTINCTION CEREMONY

May 10 (All day)

ELEMENTARY BAND & CHORUS CONCERT

7 p.m., May 16

ANNUAL VOTE

Noon - 9 p.m., May 21

MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL CHORUS CONCERT

7 p.m., May 22

BOARD MEETING

6:30 p.m., May 22
(Only if budget is defeated)

MEMORIAL DAY TRIBUTE

May 23

NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY INDUCTION CEREMONY

6:30 p.m., May 23

MEMORIAL DAY*

(NO SCHOOL - SEE NOTE AT LEFT) May 27

MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL BAND CONCERT

7 p.m., May 30

JUNE

BOARD MEETING

6:30 p.m., June 17

JUNETEENTH

June 19 (NO SCHOOL)

ELEMENTARY HALF DAYS

June 24-26

COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

7 p.m., June 29

Events subject to change. Find school calendars, sports schedules and more under the "Community" tab at Midlakes.org.

GRADUATES OF DISTINCTION

An airline pilot, a Midlakes educator, a local entrepreneur, and a leader in the regional agricultural industry have all been named Graduates of Distinction of Midlakes High School.

The program, established in 2016, recognizes successful alumni of Midlakes High School for various civic and professional accomplishments while serving as role models to current Midlakes students.

The Class of 2024 includes Clifford "Casey" Kunes III, operations manager at Hemdale Farms and local agriculture leader; Peter Cheney of Cheney Funeral Home and Smokin' Tails Distillery; Julie Bellomo, a long-time elementary school teacher at Midlakes; and Vanessa Carlson, a commercial airline pilot.

Each inductee will be recognized during a celebration that includes a tour of Midlakes schools, visits with staff and students, and a reception at Warfield's Restaurant in Clifton Springs. ■



**CLIFFORD "CASEY"
KUNES III**
CLASS OF 1977



PETER CHENEY
CLASS OF 1985



JULIE BELLOMO
CLASS OF 1987



YANESSA CARLSON
CLASS OF 2004



SCAN THE CODE

Scan the QR code with your device or go to Midlakes.org/GradsOfDistinction for more information, including tickets to a public reception on Friday, May 10, to submit a nomination, and learn more about this year's inductees.

ELEMENTARY STUDENTS COLLECT DONATIONS

Several students at Midlakes Elementary School took the hardships faced by those thousands of miles from school to heart, deciding to raise funds for a clean water project in South Sudan.

The students — all English as a New Language Learners — sold doughnuts, collected recyclable bottles and cans, and took in cash donations for Water for South Sudan.

Overall, students surpassed their \$600 goal and were still collecting contributions from staff and families after completing their doughnut sales. Several boxes of doughnuts were donated by Dunkin' Donuts in Manchester.

Students participating in the project were Allison

Rojas Aguilar, Leo Gonzalez Rojas, Billy Perez-Gonzalez, Edziel Trejo, Yowee Castillo Camilo, Jandel Negron, Isabella Trejo, Natasha Delgado Guzman, Anthony Tapia, and Thomas Amador Mendieta. English as a New Language teacher Sara Reynolds helped with the project.

The group jumped into action after learning of the dangerous water conditions in South Sudan described in "Nya's Long Walk," a book by Linda Sue Park chronicling the journey two sisters take to fetch clean water for their family.

Students also learned about Salva Dut, who fled Sudan and later started a not-for-profit organization to help provide access to clean water in the African country. ■

HIGHLIGHTS



NJHS INDUCTS 31 STUDENTS

Midlakes' chapter of the National Junior Honor Society inducted 31 students for excelling in the areas of service, character, leadership, citizenship, and scholarship during a ceremony on April 24 with school staff, families, and friends.

Students must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 88 percent to be eligible for induction. A faculty panel reviews each candidate for induction.

Those inducted into the National Junior Honor Society were Madison Alcock, Oliver Altman, Nikki Bastian, Ella Busby, Alejandro Caraballo, Julionna Carrasquel, Sophie Caves, Liam Crudele, Liesl Dorr, Nick Egburton, Evan Everson, Christopher Finewood, Lane Frost, Giuliana Gallagher, Emmanuel Galliher, Brenna Knapp, Riley Kuhn, Hayden Lawson, Rylan Potter, Sophia Schutt, Alexandra Shipley, Grayson Taylor, Brayden Trickey, Troy Trzeciak, Emma Mae White, Liberty Wickings, Ella Conrad, Alaina Davies, Alexis Schuiling, Gavin Vanderwall, and Madailein Wise.

Jocelyn McConnon and Denise Kelly are co-advisers of Midlakes' National Junior Honor Society. ■

HIGH SCHOOL RECOGNITION

**VALEDICTORIAN
PAUL LEE**

PAUL LEE, the son of Norma and Christopher Lee, is undecided on schools but is leaning towards the honors program at University at Buffalo for Biology (Pre-Med or Nursing) in the field of anesthesia.

Activities and achievements include: Paul has participated in soccer, track and field, National Honor Society, the Environmental Club, band, and the Graduates of Distinction Committee.

He also enjoys giving back to the community through invasive species removal, providing food through his church's ministry, In His Name, and tutoring other students. Paul's most cherished experience is participating in the New Vision Medical Careers Program at Geneva General Hospital. His exposure to real-life clinicians, patients, and most importantly, teacher Mrs. Van Niel, has accel-



erated and reinforced his desire to go into the healthcare industry. On top of more than 150 clinical hours, the program has facilitated his certification in the New York State Department of Health Registered Opioid Prevention program, the America Heart Association Basic Life Support training, and offers 12 college credits. ■

**SALUTATORIAN
MARI SPOONER**

MARI SPOONER, the daughter of Julie and Timothy Spooner, plans to attend college and pursue chemical engineering. While currently undecided on a school, she is leaning toward the University at Buffalo or SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse.

Activities and achievements include: Throughout her years at Midlakes, Mari has been involved in many different school activities. For sports specifically, she participated in the Varsity Soccer Team, and both the Indoor and Outdoor Track and Field teams, where she has won both individual and team Sectional titles.

Outside of athletics, Mari has been a member of the National Honor Society, Student Government as senior class secretary,



and a member of environmental club.

Mari has also enjoyed giving back to her community through various forms of volunteer work. ■



PHELPS-CLIFTON SPRINGS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Send tips and suggestions to: Newsletter, 1490 State Route 488, Clifton Springs, NY 14432



**PHELPS-CLIFTON SPRINGS
CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**
1490 STATE ROUTE 488
CLIFTON SPRINGS, NY 14432

**NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID**

NEWARK, NY 14513
PERMIT NO. 71

POSTAL PATRON