

# CUFSD NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2025

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FROM THE  
SUPERINTENDENT

CATHERINE  
O'HARA

Our CUFSD Newsletter offers a window into the many opportunities available to students districtwide through strategic investments in learning, growth, and success. Each month, we highlight the engaging experiences that define our schools and reflect our ongoing commitment to excellence.

In this edition, we're proud to spotlight the success of our recent Let's Get Physical: Family Fitness event. This collaborative effort, led by our Family Instructional Academy and Physical Education Department, brought families together to celebrate health, wellness, and the important connection between physical and academic well-being. It was a great display of Chester Pride in action!

As we move through budget season in preparation for the May 20 vote, we continue to align our priorities with our district's focus areas: Strategic Investments in Education Programs and Staffing, Strengthening Community Engagement, and Advancing Safety, Security, and Infrastructure. At our April 9 Board of Education meeting, representatives from Orange-Ulster BOCES will present on BOCES Administrative Services, as well as key areas of the budget related to central services and shared programs.

These investments represent more than just numbers, they reflect our commitment to ensuring every student in Chester is supported with innovative programs, strong partnerships, and a safe environment in which to grow and succeed.

We are grateful for your continued partnership as we work together to create a future focused on student opportunity, academic achievement, and a collaborative school community.

## Family Instructional Academy Hosts Let's Get Physical Family Fitness Fun Night



The Family Instructional Academy's March 20 event, "Let's Get Physical: Family Fitness Night," was a success, carried out in collaboration with our physical education department of Jon Marsilio, Patricia Ganz and Jennifer Daly.

The fun began with a performance by the Chester Academy Step Club, which set the tone for a high energy evening, followed by an overview of NYS physical education requirements and Chester's course offerings by Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Communication, Dayanara Garcia. The phys. ed. team also emphasized the importance of staying active in school and at home.

Ms. Daly led a yoga warm-up and families got a behind-the-scenes tour of the locker room and weight room with Mr. Marsilio and Ms. Ganz.

The Chester Academy Drumline then delivered an electrifying performance, which really got families moving for exciting games of Nitroball, badminton, and more. The night wrapped up with Ms. Daly leading an energetic dance party, followed by an awards ceremony recognizing students and their families for team spirit and participation by Ms. Garcia and Assistant Principal Rolando Aguilar.

Check the [CUFSD Facebook Page](#) for more photos and video from the event!

## 2025-2026 Budget Presentations Continue

As we develop the 2025-26 budget, our focus remains on aligning financial resources with key district priorities. Through a transparent, data-driven approach, we balance fiscal responsibility with the needs of our students, staff, and community.

We encourage you to stay informed and engaged by attending upcoming Board of Education meetings. Our March 19 budget presentation covered instructional programs, student support services and technology. Our March 26 presentation covered facilities, transportation and athletics.

Join us on April 9, for a budget presentation that will cover undistributed expenses, central services and BOCES Admin services. All 2025-2026 budget presentations are outlined on the [2025-26 Budget Development Calendar](#).

**Budget Vote: Tuesday, May 20**

## IMPORTANT DATES

**April 8**  
Pre-K Lottery Drawing

**April 11**  
End of 3rd Quarter

**April 24**  
BOE Meeting

**April 29**  
Family Instructional Academy

**April 9**  
BOE Meeting

**April 14 - 21**  
Schools Closed, Spring Break

**April 25 & 26**  
Spring Musical



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FROM THE  
CA PRINCIPAL

JOHN  
FLANAGAN

Excitement is in the air as our seniors prepare for their much-anticipated trip to Orlando! From staying at Universal's Cabana Bay Resort to exploring Universal Studios, Disney's Hollywood Studios, and the Magic Kingdom, this adventure promises to be a memorable celebration of their final year at Chester Academy.

On March 13, we had the privilege of welcoming motivational speaker Rohan Murphy to our school. Rohan's powerful message emphasized that anything is achievable through hard work, accountability, and refusing to make excuses. His inspiring words resonated deeply with our students, leaving a lasting impact on our school community.

As we approach Spring Break, we want to remind everyone that school will be closed from April 14 to April 21. We hope our students, staff, and families enjoy a well-deserved break and come back feeling refreshed and ready to finish the school year strong.

Looking ahead, be sure to mark your calendars for Mean Girls: The Musical on April 25 and 26 at 7 PM. We encourage everyone in the Chester community to join us for this hilarious and entertaining performance. Come out and show your support for our talented Drama Club students!

CHESTER ACADEMY DRAMA CLUB PRESENTS...

**MEAN  
GIRLS**

APRIL 25 & 26 @ 7:00 PM

## Hambo All-Stars triumph over Harlem Wizards

A basketball team made up of Chester faculty took on the trick-shooting, high-flying Harlem Wizards on March 10th. The game was a fundraiser for the Class of '26.

The academy gymnasium was packed with students and neighbors there to cheer on the Hambo All-Stars. It was a close one, but in the end the home team pulled off an 85-82 victory in the final moments.



[View the full story here!](#) [And click here to view photos from the game!](#)

## AP Biology students model DNA replication

Students took a collaborative, hands-on approach to learning about DNA replication during a recent DNA modeling lab activity!

Each student work group took on the role of key enzyme (helicase, primase, DNA polymerase, ligase, and nuclease) to replicate the process in real time. By unzipping, priming, and building complementary strands, they

visualized the intricate steps of DNA synthesis. This interactive activity reinforced how our genetic code is faithfully copied—a crucial process for life itself.



## 25 students receive Sojourner Truth Awards



25 Chester Academy students received Sojourner Truth Awards from SUNY Orange during a ceremony on March 7.

The program is named for Isabella Baumfree, aka Sojourner Truth, who lived in the Hudson Valley after escaping from slavery. The awards recognize academic excellence and additional achievements in the arts, athletics, citizenship, and other areas, and encourage college enrollment by traditionally underrepresented student groups. [See the list of recipients here!](#)

## Rohan Murphy inspires students

Always choose greatness and kindness! That was the message from former D-1 Penn State wrestler and acclaimed motivational speaker Rohan Murphy, who was on campus to visit with Chester Academy students on March 13.



At just four years old, Mr. Murphy lost his legs to amputation due to a birth defect. Chester students were rapt by Mr. Murphy's story of perseverance, and walked away from the assembly inspired by his determination. [Read more about Mr. Murphy's visit here!](#)



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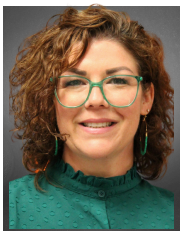


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FROM THE  
CES PRINCIPAL

MARY KATE  
BOESCH

March was another great month at Chester Elementary School!

Our Primary and Division 1 Odyssey of the Mind teams competed at the Region 5 tournament. We are thrilled to share that the Division 1 team earned a 2nd place trophy. They are moving on to compete at the state competition in Syracuse on April 5th.

Congratulations to all of our talented Odyssey students and coaches!

March is *Music in Our Schools Month*, and our CES rock band performed an original song for the Board of Education, showcasing their creativity and passion for music.

We also enjoyed the CES 5th grade musical performance of *Nemo Kids* on March 27th, with an in-school performance that morning. The students brought the story to life and impressed us all with their hard work and talent.

In celebration of *National Reading Month*, we welcomed author Laurence Pringle to CES on March 6th. Mr. Pringle gave engaging presentations about his writing career, inspiring students by sharing his favorite books from over 50 years as an author.

With spring upon us, we are excited for the many upcoming events and opportunities that the 4th quarter at CES will bring! One important reminder is about our Pre-K lottery drawing, which will take place at CES (and will stream online) on April 8th!

Thank you for your continued support in making our school a vibrant learning community!

## CES places at Odyssey of the Mind

Congratulations to our CES students who participated in the NYS Region 5 Odyssey of the Mind competition!

Our youngest Omers, the Primary Team, put on an amazing performance as they traveled back in time to visit ancient wonders of the world.

Our Division 1 and 3 teams both earned podium spots. We are so proud of all our students, who used creativity, teamwork, and problem-solving skills to tackle complex challenges and bring their innovative ideas to life!

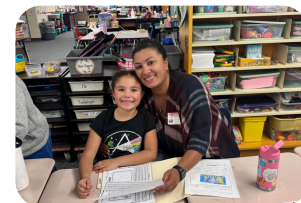


## Students share their creativity during publishing party

Ms. Pskowski's 1st-grade class hosted a Publishing Party, where our young writers proudly showcased their own original stories!

Learning writing at a young age not only fosters language skills, but also enhances critical thinking and helps children learn to express themselves and communicate ideas effectively. All are essential skills for future academic success, as well as lifelong learning.

Students read their pieces, showing the creativity and careful crafting that went into each page. Thank you to the parents who joined us for the event, to celebrate their students' hard work.



## Celebrating Read Across America

March is about celebrating your love of reading! To celebrate, CES students took part in *Read Across America Day*, with a visit from award-winning children's author Laurence Pringle!

Thanks to the teamwork of Amy Carola and our PTA, students from all grades had the opportunity to meet Mr. Pringle, to learn about his journey as an author, and dive into his stories!

We even had the chance to enjoy an exclusive author's luncheon with Mr. Pringle. What an unforgettable experience!

And did you know... *Read Across America Day* is held annually to coincide with the birthday of Dr. Seuss!



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