



CUFSD NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2025

HOME OF THE HAMBLETONIANS

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FROM THE
SUPERINTENDENT

CATHERINE
O'HARA

November was an exciting month in the district! Thank you to everyone who joined us at our Parent and Community Advisory Panels, Forums, and Board of Education meetings to learn more about the proposed Athletics Facility Capital Project. You can use this link to review the information shared.

The Capital Project gives Chester the opportunity to bring our facilities in line with those across the region, enhancing athletics, music, physical education, wellness, student events, and community use. It creates a safe and secure space, strengthening the student experience and serving as a point of pride for the entire community. This investment positions Chester for the future by adding modern facilities that align with our innovative programs and personalized learning environment. This December 16 offers our community the opportunity to bring this vision to life.

In a month filled with progress and community pride, we also celebrated members of our team whose dedication reflects the very best of Chester. Ms. Cuomo, Mr. Lepre, and Ms. Loftus were recently recognized by the Mid-Hudson School Study Council for their outstanding contributions to education and leadership. This honor speaks to their exceptional commitment to our students, staff, and school community.

Finally, bravo to the Chester Academy Drama Club on their stellar performances of Matilda Jr. last week, which included our talented 4th and 5th grade students and showcased creativity and excellence across the district.

Thank you to everyone for your support, from joining our Capital Project sessions to filling the auditorium for outstanding performances. Chester pride is evident, community wide!

In this season of appreciation, wishing you and your families a restful and very happy Thanksgiving.

INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS FACILITY CAPITAL PROJECT VOTE SET FOR DEC. 16



PROPOSED INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC FACILITY | SCAN QR CODE

On Tuesday, December 16, the community will vote on the proposed \$26.9 million Interscholastic Athletics Facility Capital Project. The proposal strategically leverages \$6 million in Capital Reserve, with 25% of the total project cost offset by NYS Building Aid, reducing the overall taxpayer impact.

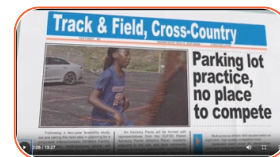
0% IMPACT ON 2026-2027 TAXES

Please [visit our Capital Project webpage](#) for the full project timeline, detailed information, and additional resources. This is an opportunity to invest in our students, strengthen our community and build Chester's future together.

Watch the video: Why This Project Matters

Our students, staff, and faculty share the "why" behind this project - what it means to them and how they believe it will strengthen our school and community. Their voices tell the story best!

[Click here to watch the video!](#)



Chester honorees recognized for excellence by Mid-Hudson School Study Council



Congratulations to the three outstanding Chester Union Free School District honorees who were recognized by the Mid-Hudson School Study Council (MHSSC) for their exceptional contributions to education during its recent Excellence in Education Awards ceremony. This year's recipients

are Jennifer Cuomo, Dennis Lepre, and Rachel Loftus.

[Read the full story here.](#)



IMPORTANT DATES

December 6
SAT

December 9
MS winter Concert

December 18
Family Inst. Academy

December 8
HS Winter Concert

December 16
Capital Project Vote

Dec. 22, 2025 - Jan. 2, 2026
Winter Recess, No School

WHEN:
DECEMBER 16
8 AM - 9 PM

WHERE:
CHESTER ACADEMY
BAND ROOM



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CHESTER ACADEMY



FROM THE
CA PRINCIPAL

JOHN
FLANAGAN

I don't think a principal could ask for a better month than the absolutely outstanding November we just enjoyed at Chester Academy. Our students achieved major successes in academics, athletics, and the arts, and Hambo spirit and pride were on display everywhere you turned. More on that in a moment.

First, let me say Happy Thanksgiving to all of our Academy families. Your support of our students, faculty, staff, and programs is invaluable. From helping your students at home to turning out in numbers for their sporting events and musicals, your participation helps us create an inclusive and supportive learning environment where Chester students thrive. You have my gratitude every day.

That support was evident at two shows of *Matilda Jr.*, put on by our Drama Club. Not only did the students knock it out of the park, the community sold out both performances! Be sure to check out the story about the musical and our arts department. We also had a nice turnout in the theater when we inducted the newest members of the National Junior Honor Society.

We had energetic send-offs in the school lobby for student-athletes headed to major competitions to wrap their fall seasons.

Finally, I want to remind families about the next SUNY Instant Decision Day, for SUNY Rockland on Dec. 2! Students will have the opportunity to meet admissions officers and get a decision on the spot.

National Junior Honor Society inductions

Congratulations to the newest members of the Chester Academy National Junior Honor Society, inducted on Thursday, November 6! During the ceremony, students took part in traditional NJHS candlelighting, which symbolizes the five pillars of NJHS: Scholarship, Service, Leadership, Character, and Citizenship.

Join us in celebrating these outstanding students for their hard work, dedication, and the positive example they set for all! [See a gallery of photos from the ceremony here,](#)



Drama Club packs the house twice for Matilda Jr.

Chester Academy Drama Club, featuring a cast of dozens of students under the direction of CA choral/music teacher Rachel Scali, recently put on two sold-out shows of their fall musical, *Matilda Jr.* The spotlight was on the incredible talent of Chester students and the vital role the performing arts play in fostering community spirit.

We talked with three stars of the play – juniors Jolie Ordaz, who played Miss Honey, and Jake D'Onofrio, who played Michael, and sophomore Joseph Veltri, who played the Escapologist – about their roles, the production, and their thoughts on the unifying power of the arts in Chester.



[Read the story here!](#)

[See a show gallery here!](#)



Congrats to the Hambos who headed to states

Due to the hard work and skills of our Hambo athletes and coaches, we have celebrated some outstanding athletic achievements this November, and gotten to share some truly exciting moments of Hambo spirit and pride!

Congratulations to these Hambos on their fantastic fall seasons: Siel Johnson, who qualified for the NYSPHAA Girls Swimming Championships; Zoe Arnett, who qualified for the NYSPHAA Cross-Country Championships; and the varsity football team, who advanced all the way to the NYSPHAA Class C quarterfinals.

The district and community are proud of you all. Go, Hambos!



@chester_ufsd



@Chester UFSD

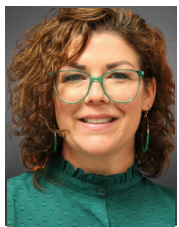


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CHESTER ELEMENTARY



FROM THE
CES PRINCIPAL

MARY KATE
BOESCH

November was a month filled with learning, gratitude, and community at CES. We were honored to welcome members of the Women's Auxiliary, who visited our third grade classrooms to speak about Veterans Day and the importance of honoring those who have served. Students also created heartfelt cards to be shared with local veterans.

The weekend of November 15th showcased incredible talent as more than fifty 4th and 5th grade students performed in the CUFSD production of *Matilda Jr.* as the "Revolting Children." Their hard work truly shined on stage. Congratulations to all district students who participated, and to Mrs. Scali for directing an outstanding production.

CES also celebrated Fall/Gratitude Spirit Week beginning November 17th.

Throughout the week, students wrote letters of gratitude, donated items for an animal shelter and local food and clothing pantries, and dressed as community helpers to show appreciation for those who serve our community every day.

Our 2nd and 3rd graders kept a beloved tradition alive by designing Thanksgiving Day Parade balloons in the Makerspace and hosting a joyful parade through the school. We closed the month with parent-teacher conferences, reinforcing our commitment to strong communication and family partnerships.

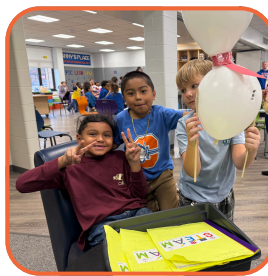
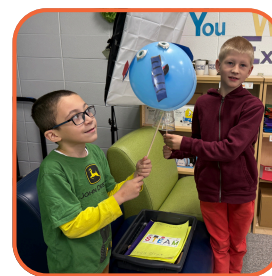
Happy Thanksgiving to the entire Chester Community!

Annual CES Thanksgiving Balloon Parade

On the Friday before Thanksgiving, second- and fifth-grade students at Chester Elementary School delighted their classmates by staging the annual Chester Elementary School Balloon Parade, a CES tradition inspired by another beloved seasonal tradition: the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade! And, as students learn every year, there's a lot of learning that comes with the fun of staging the yearly march through the halls; the parade is the culmination of classroom learning that combines everything STEAM!

In the school's makerspace—an area filled with tools and materials designed to inspire experimentation and problem-solving—students worked with CES STEM and robotics teacher Jennifer Rende to channel their inspiration and creativity into colorful inventions.

[Read about the STEAM lesson and WATCH the parade here! Pics too!](#)



Literacy lights up with Flashlight Fridays

Why are third grade students so eagerly awaiting Friday afternoons? It's not because it's the end of the week, it's because of Flashlight Fridays!

It's simple: students grab a flashlight and a book, find a cozy spot, and settle in with the lights off to read for 20 minutes. Flashlight Friday is more than just reading in the dark, it's an opportunity for students to create a strong passion for reading by diving into a world of literature.

"You get to relax around the room and read," said third grader Toni Chambers, whose favorite book series is *Dog Man* by David Pilkey.

[Read more about the program and literacy activity here!](#)

