PAL-MAC PULSE

WINTER 2025



UNDEFEATED LEAGUE CHAMPS
(PG.10)

INSIDE:

- SALUTE TO VETERANS
- HOMECOMING RECAP
- ‘REVVING UP’ THE BAND

PAL-MAC PULSE

Pal-Mac Pulse
Winter 2025 Volume 33

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A LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Pal-Mac Neighbors:

As we close the final chapter of 2025, I hope you join me in feeling a sense of excitement as we move forward into the new year.

I continue to be amazed by the energy and innovation I see across our district. From the fantastic achievements in our classrooms and on our sports fields to the dazzling performances on our many stages, the spirit of Pal-Mac shines brightly. We're not just learning: we're growing, contributing, and building a brighter future together.

One of the most encouraging developments this year has been the implementation of our Distraction-Free Learning Policy. This initiative has helped refocus attention where it truly belongs: in the classroom, and on each other. Teachers are seeing stronger engagement, deeper conversations, and more meaningful collaboration. Students are reconnecting with their learning, their peers, and the moment they're in. It's been wonderful to witness the difference that focus can make.

These moments, big and small, remind us of what makes Pal-Mac special. It's the people who show up each day with curiosity, creativity, and care. It's the shared belief that every student deserves the chance to reach their full potential. And it's the collective commitment of our staff, families, and community to support that mission.

As we look ahead to the new year, I'm filled with optimism. The momentum we've built together in the first half of the school year gives us every reason to look forward with confidence and pride.

Let's continue to nurture that focus, celebrate one another's successes, and keep building on the incredible foundation we've created together.

Happy Holidays!

Bob Ike
Superintendent



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WANT TO SEE MORE CONTENT? CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!







PROCESS FOR WEATHER-RELATED SCHOOL CLOSURES

With winter underway, now is a great time to review how Palmyra-Macedon handles school closures and early dismissals due to inclement weather.

The safety of students and staff is a priority, and the decision to close or dismiss school early is based on a range of factors including road and weather conditions, snow and ice accumulation, temperature and wind chill, and reports from transportation staff, local highway departments, and law enforcement.

If weather conditions worsen during the day, early dismissal may be necessary to ensure students arrive home safely. The superintendent makes the final decision, and every effort is made to communicate closures or schedule changes as early as possible. Once announced, the decision is final.

Notifications will be sent through local media, ParentSquare, posted on district social media channels, and shared on the district website. Please ensure your contact information is up to date at palmaccsd.org/contactupdate.

During cold weather, please remember to dress appropriately with jackets, gloves, scarves, and boots for outdoor travel. Families needing assistance with winter clothing can contact their child's school Health Office.

The district understands that no weather-related decision is perfect. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to use their best judgment if they feel travel conditions are unsafe.

TUNE IN FOR ALERTS!

13WHAM TV
SPECTRUM NEWS 1 ROC
WROC TV (8)
WHEC-TV (10)

WHAM 1180 (AM)
WACK 1420 (AM)
WVOR 100.5 (FM)
WARM 101.3 (FM)

PARENTSQUARE
SOCIAL MEDIA

DATES TO REMEMBER (NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS)

MON. 1/19/26: MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY
MON. 2/16- FRI. 2/20: FEBRUARY BREAK
FRI. 3/13: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY
MON. 3/30- FRI. 4/3: SPRING BREAK
FRI. 5/22- MON. 5/25: MEMORIAL DAY, OBSERVED

END OF THE YEAR NOTES

THURS. 6/11/26: GRADUATION DAY

FILL-A-BUS



The Pal-Mac community stepped up to help local families in need right before the holiday season as part of the annual Fill-A-Bus Food Drive.

The drive, which formally kicked off at the beginning of November, collected non-perishable food as well as toiletries, all of which were donated to local food pantries in Macedon and Palmyra. This year, the drive brought in1388 total items across all four school buildings.

Members of the Pal-Mac Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) coordinated the drive, and picked up each building's haul. They were welcomed at each school by a group of students, who then helped out in filling up the bus.

In addition to the donated goods, the Pal-Mac Middle School raised more than $1,900 to support the food pantries. The money was raised primarily through an in-house auction. Dave Koeberle of Reynolds Auctions generously volunteered his time to serve as auctioneer, helping turn the event Into a lively and memorable fundraiser. By the end of the auction, staff had raised an impressive $1,300 for the cause.



Students also played a major role in the schoolwide effort. The National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) hosted a Coin Wars competition, encouraging students and staff to donate spare change to support local families. Seventh graders took first place, and the event raised over $630.

These initiatives reflect the District's Core Values as it relates to building strong community relationships and promoting a sense of belonging among students and staff.



STAFF SPOTLIGHTS



OPENING DAY

The District celebrated faculty and staff at the annual Opening Day ceremony on Sep.2. This included several annual awards.

SCAN FOR FULL LIST OF RECOGNITIONS/AWARDS



BUS SAFETY

Members of our Transportation team spent a morning at PMP to teach students the importance of bus safety.



HOCO READY

Our amazing Facilities team got our football field ready for Homecoming! They painted and prepped the logo and field designs to reinforce that Pal-Mac pride!

HOMECOMING 2025

Students, families, alumni, and community members all came together for another spectacular Pal-Mac Homecoming.

There were pep rallies, food trucks, the annual parade, and of course, the games!

Our Varsity Football team kicked off the action with a big win that featured fireworks at halftime. Several Red Raider athletic teams then competed on a jam-packed Saturday to cap everything off.

Thank you to our many volunteers, as well as our amazing Facilities team for making this all possible!





























SCAN ME

MORE PHOTOS





THE ARTS

THEATRE

Both our Middle and High School Drama Clubs put on FANTASTIC shows in the Fall.

The High School started things off with a dramatic performance of the historic play "Radium Girls."

Next, our Middle School Drama Club presented its take on the classic "Lion King Jr."













MUSIC

Several students represented Pal-Mac on a regional stage as part of the Junior and Senior High Area All-State Music Festivals.

The festivals feature some of the best student musicians and singers from across the region. To be selected is considered a major honor because of the intense audition process, which starts months before the festival.

Five students represented at the Junior High Festival, while three represented at the Senior High Festival.

JR. HIGH



Nora Rowe (Trombone), Emma Jowly (Horn), Oscar Lofgren (Percussion), Addison Israel (Alto), Daniel Budziszewski (Tenor)

SR. HIGH



Elizabeth Jesse (Clarinet), Clifford Lofgren (Choir), and Isaiah Bransford (Clarinet)



A Colorful Collaboration

Pal-Mac releases first-ever coloring book for students, by students

Ms. Sami Dentel (left) holds up a copy of the new Pal-Mac Coloring Book.

A new colorful artistic effort is bringing some more brightness to the classroom. The District is proud to announce the release of the first-ever Pal-Mac Coloring Book.

The book features 31 pages of original Pal-Mac themed artwork from several students and staff members across all four school buildings. Many of the drawings include references to the District's Mission, Vision, and Core Values (MVCV), as well as other positive messages meant to promote encouragement.

The books will be available to every student in grades K-8, with copies also made available to students in grades 9-12.

Middle School Art Teacher Ms. Sami Dentel coordinated the entire effort, which started at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year, which was her first as a teacher. The 2020 Pal-Mac grad says Superintendent Dr. Bob Ike approached her with the idea, which at the time, provided a blank canvas of its own.

"I think initially, my idea was to curate all the pages myself," Dentel said. "And then as I got through my first year of teaching, I thought it was best to have the students involved because it's Pal-Mac and we like to have our students involved a lot."

To get students involved, Ms.Dentel turned the opportunity into a tiny competition. She reached out to the other art teachers in the District, who then each asked interested students to submit their work. Dentel and her fellow teachers then reviewed the submissions, but her work was far from over.

Dentel said she spent roughly a month over the 2025 summer break digitizing the chosen drawings. Using her iPad, Dentel traced over the original artwork in Canva and then created borders around the pieces.

"It's been really cool just to see the final product because I've seen it only with the students' submissions, in their own pencil drawings," Dentel said. "And then to see it, how I digitized it and then put it together is really cool. I just keep going through it."



For Dentel, the coloring book is just part of a continued effort to both share student artwork, and expand access to resources for every student. She previously led a t-shirt design and distribution campaign for the 2025 Homecoming weekend as part of the Middle School Art Club. In that effort, every student in the District received a specially-designed red Pal-Mac shirt.

Dentel hopes the coloring book can bring the same sense of unity as the t-shirts have, while also sharing excitement at seeing how the books are filled out among the different grades.

The coloring book rollout began at the beginning of December, with extra copies being made available at the District Office, as well. While it's still early, Dentel says she hopes to make the books a new tradition, but she also has other student-contributed project ideas on the horizon.

"I would love to make [a book] every year," Dentel said. "Who knows if that's a possibility. I just hope everyone enjoys coloring."

Dr. Ike said "Pal-Mac has many talented students and staff members and the coloring book was an opportunity to showcase those talents and provide a locally-produced and cost-effective mindfulness resource for students and families."



FOOTBALL CAPTURES LEAGUE TITLE, FINISHES UNDEFEATED

The Pal-Mac Red Raider Varsity Football team won its second Wayne-Finger Lakes Independent Football League title in three years following a 31-24 win over Lyons. The win also clinched an undefeated season.





VARSITY CHEER TAKES TOP SPOT AT "BATTLE OF THE BOWS"

The Varsity Cheerleading squad took home first place and achieved one of the highest overall scores of the entire day at Wayne Central's "Battle of the Bows" competition in October.





STUDENT-ATHLETES SIGN COLLEGIATE COMMITMENTS

Four Pal-Mac varsity student-athletes signed their National Letters of Intent (NLI) to compete at the next level.

SIGNEES INCLUDE: Breana Pentycofe (Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania, Division II), Teagan Hudak (Old Dominion, Division I), Brandon Dennie (D'Youville, Division II) Jacob Naugle (Roberts Wesleyan, Division II)

SOCCER MILESTONES

Both Varsity Boys and Girls Soccer programs had a lot to celebrate this season! Boys coach Chris Mahnke reached his 300th career victory on September 2 with a win over Midlakes. Girls coach Mike Karns retired following over two decades at the helm, with 300+ career wins, and multiple Section V Championships.





AMBASSADOR TO THE GAME

Senior Varsity Tennis team member Ella Eakins received the Finger Lakes League's Bill Coleman Award, which is given to a senior who is recognized as an ambassador of tennis.

Ella also earned a spot in the New York State Qualifiers this season.

SCHOLAR ATHLETE TEAMS

GIRLS SWIMMING (96.87)

GIRLS TENNIS (96.78)

BOYS SOCCER (95.54)

GIRLS SOCCER (94.20)

CHEERLEADING (94.30)

GIRLS VOLLEYBALL (93.75)

GOLF (93.20)

SCAN HERE TO VIEW THE FULL LIST OF INDIVIDUAL TEAM MEMBERS

Paving Pathways: Pal-Mac's New Courses Connect Learning With Real-World Skills



Agriculture teacher Ms.Camry Semans (right) observes an Animal Sciences student during a blood draw simulation

From the farmland to a server farm, a slate of new classes at Pal-Mac High School is paving the pathways for students like never before.

Starting this school year, the building introduced courses ranging from Agriculture and Computer Science to a new technology offering such as Construction and Small Engine Repair. Each is designed to help students explore their interests, develop practical skills, and continue to connect the classroom to the real-world.

High School Principal Andy Wahl said the expansion reflects a broader shift in how Pal-Mac approaches course design and student preparation.

"Pal-Mac has always focused on helping students meet graduation requirements," Wahl said. "That is important, but we also want to make sure the learning feels relevant to students and connected to their lives and goals."

Data-Driven

Wahl said the initiative grew from several years of analyzing student interest data through Xello, which is the District's college and career planning platform. Wahl says interest and matchmaker surveys consistently showed strong student demand for hands-on, technical, and agricultural learning.

Pathways at PMHS

Exploratory Studies
Builds skills in thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving.

Building and Design
Introduces students to construction, engineering, and design through hands-on, creative learning.

Human Services
It explores careers like nursing, therapy, medical research, biotechnology, and nutrition.

Creative Media and Communications Technology
Develops skills in graphic design, video production, photography, journalism, marketing, and web content creation.

Sustainable Futures: Agriculture and Food Innovation
Focuses on the future of farming, food systems, and environmental sustainability.

Discovering Health and Wellness
Provides students with a comprehensive introduction to the principles of health, wellness, and lifestyle management.

"It became clear that we needed to build programs that matched what students were telling us," Wahl said. "Pathways help students understand where their learning can take them. It gives them direction and choice."

Those results helped build the district's six Career Pathways, which are Exploratory Studies, Building and Design, Human Services,Creative Media and Communications Technology, Sustainable Futures: Agriculture and Food Innovation, and Discovering Health and Wellness. Each pathway groups courses, experiences, and sometimes certification opportunities around major fields of study.

To deepen those opportunities, Pal-Mac has also launched a "micro credentialing" initiative that allows students to earn recognition for specific, real-world skills, whether through digital tools, repairs, laboratory work, or project-based achievements.

"It is about making learning visible," Wahl said. "Students can show what they know and what they can do."

Agriculture Takes Root

Inside the agriculture classroom, teacher Camry Semans is leading one of the District's most rapidly growing programs. With courses in Introduction to Agriculture, Horticulture, Floriculture, and Small and Large Animal Science, the program drew interest from more than 100 students this year. "It has been amazing to see how excited they are to learn about where their food comes from and the science behind it," Semans said." Agriculture touches everything we do. Watching them find their place in that world is incredible."

Students explore multiple agriculture pathways and participate in Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAE), which can include shadowing veterinarians, volunteering at farms, or launching small business projects.

The classroom community includes Pal, the class rabbit. Students in the Small Animal Science class rotate through his care routine as part of their coursework.

"He just chills on tables during class," Semans said. "He is very calm, and the kids absolutely love him."

Another major addition to the program is the school's newly certified Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapter, which opens the door to leadership programs and competitions statewide. Semans said students have already taken initiative to plan fundraisers, community outreach ideas, and floral subscription projects through horticulture.

"It is so exciting to see them build something new from the ground up," Semans said.

Another significant milestone is happening outside the classroom. The District recently received greenhouse structures, and students in the Construction course are assisting with assembly.

"Every project brings a new challenge, and the hands-on work really motivates them." -John Burgess

Hands-On Tech

The aforementioned Construction and Small Engine Repair support both the Building and Design and Ag Tech pathways, both of which gives students additional hands-on opportunities.

The Construction course, which is offered every other year, introduces students to residential building concepts such as site layout, framing, wiring, and roofing. While the class covers foundational skills, students are also applying those concepts to a real project by helping build the new greenhouse structures for the agriculture program.

Alongside Construction, the Small Engine Repair course focuses on diagnosing and repairing Briggs and Stratton engines supplied through a partnership with American Technical Publishers (ATP). Students learn to disassemble and rebuild engines, sharpen mower blades, service equipment, and understand the components that keep common tools running.

"They take an engine that runs, take it apart, and then put it back together so it runs again," technology teacher John Burgess said. "Every project brings a new challenge, and the hands-on work really motivates them."

Burgess said the course also emphasizes lifelong skills, and connects students to an in-demand career field. "Most people will work with equipment that has a small engine at some point," Burgess said. "These are skills they will carry with them long after high school."



Logan (left) and Adam (right) pictured with a snowblower the students were repairing as part of the Small Engine class

We also spoke to two students, Adam and Logan, who told us they approached their counselors when they saw the opportunity for the courses. Both said they've had experience working with engines, which gives them some familiarity with the coursework, which is also giving them an opportunity to help some of their less experienced classmates.

"Honestly, I learn new stuff here, too," Adam said. "It's a fun experience here in class. It's kind of like a young construction crew."

Computer Science Connections

For students interested in coding or IT careers, Pal-Mac introduced AP Computer Science Principles, taught by math teacher Pat Brown.

The course is an extension of Project Lead the Way (PTLW), a program Pal-Mac has used since the late 1990s.

Brown says he approached Mr.Wahl about bringing the course to Pal-Mac because he felt getting interested students exposed to computer science skills earlier would set them up for longer-term success. "My parents both worked in computer science, so it has always been part of my life," Brown said. Using Python and the national Project Lead the Way curriculum, students are building interactive graphics, games, and data-driven programs. Many entered the class with some background, and Brown said the structured environment helps them connect concepts and deepen their skills.

The course also supports the district's International Baccalaureate (IB) Career-related Programme, which pairs challenging academic coursework with technical and career-based study. "It has been exciting to have that support," Brown said. "Students are proud of what they create, and I am proud of the doors this can open for them."

Brown says he hopes to expand the program down the road.

Looking Ahead

With all new programs off to a strong start, Wahl said the District will continue refining offerings based on student feedback and enrollment patterns.

This year's Level Up Day will again give students the chance to explore courses, hear from teachers, and map their next steps within the Career Pathways model.

"This is about helping students learn, grow, and contribute," Wahl said. "When students see the real-world impact of what they are learning, that is when education truly comes alive."

FUTURE READY

At Pal-Mac, we strive for our students to be positive contributors who have the skills necessary to be citizens, participate in the economy, and make a difference in the world around them. This includes providing opportunities to pursue future-ready programs.





"REVVING UP THE BAND" A SUCCESS

Senior Jonas Henley coordinated the "Revving Up the Band" event in October. The event blended a car show with a concert that featured food trucks, a 50/50 raffle, and other vendors.

The event doubled as a fundraiser for the Pal-Mac High School Band, which Jonas is a member of. The entire effort was a part of his Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS) project, which is a function of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme.

The purpose of the project is for students to show initiative, craft their collaboration and problem-solving skills, and take part in some form of community service.

The event also took in donations for the annual Fill-A-Bus Food Drive.









"LENS LEADERS" TAKE OFF AT PMP

We have some future photographers in action at PMP!! A group of second grade "Lens Leaders" started working with Mr. Peck to practice taking pictures, and learning more about what makes up a camera!

Mr. Peck started the group this year as a way to spark student interest in photography, and to help them learn more about the events happening in their building!

Look for more great pictures from Jenny, Ella, Emmy, and Kolden coming soon!







STUDENT INSPIRES FIRST-EVER "HISTORY FAIR" AT PMI

Nov.20 was a night for the Pal-Mac Intermediate School history books, as the school held its first-ever History Fair!

The historic Macedon Academy hosted the event, which featured research projects from 17 students across grades 3-5, with each setup covering a different historical topics. Mrs. Thomas coordinated the fair, but she owes it all to a special former student of hers: Lucille, a sixth grader. Lucille loved the annual Science Fair, and wondered if there could be one for history.

"It makes me really happy that Mrs. Thomas started it, and it was a success," Lucille said. "I thought it would be really fun, so I was wondering if we could do it."

Pal-Mac Salutes Veterans













GONE CLEANIN'

Primary School students pitch in with Dollars for Scholars for annual clean up.

Helping hands make a big difference!

Our Young Fives joined forces with Pal-Mac Dollars for Scholars in October to clean up a portion of the Erie Canal path in Palmyra!

Led by Phil "Nature Phil" Opdycke, the students pointed out litter along the trail, and then learned about the importance of keeping our community clean!



REMINDER:
2026 DFS PHONE-A-THON MARCH, 22-24 2026





NO COST MEALS*

Scan Me!

*UP TO ONE REGULAR SCHOOL BREAKFAST AND ONE REGULAR SCHOOL LUNCH PER DAY AT NO COST TO YOUR HOUSEHOLD. NO APPLICATION REQUIRED.

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