



CUFSD NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2025

HOME OF THE HAMBLETONIANS

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FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

CATHERINE O'HARA

December brings much to celebrate across our schools and community. The dedication of our teachers and staff, together with community support for the Interscholastic Athletics Facility Capital Project, underscores our united efforts to advance future-focused opportunities for our students, schools, and community.

On behalf of the Board of Education, we extend our gratitude to the many individuals whose efforts contributed to this outcome, including our administration, teachers and staff, students, parents, and community members. The thoughtful engagement and collaboration throughout this process reflect the pride that defines Chester.

Looking ahead, our focus remains on continuous improvement in support of student opportunity and educational excellence. Our new digital entrance signs have been installed, and construction of designated visitor entryways will extend into the winter break. The community is invited to join us at the January 21 Board of Education meeting for a mid-year update on 2025-2026 district goals and objectives.

Best wishes to our students, staff and families for a joyful holiday season and a happy, healthy New Year!

Chester voters approve proposed interscholastic athletics facility

The Chester Union Free School District is excited to announce that voters approved the Interscholastic Athletic Facility Capital Project on December 16, 2025. The project was approved by a vote of 415-154. This approval marks an historic milestone for the district and community.

The next steps are to begin tree felling, which will take place from January through March 2026. Final project design will be submitted to NYSED with expected bidding scheduled for the fall of 2026.

Following a comprehensive two-year feasibility study and extensive community engagement through forums and presentations, the community voted to move forward with this transformative project that will serve students, families, and the broader Chester community for generations to come.

This project directly supports the Chester Union Free School District's 2025-2026 Goals & Objectives in three critical areas:

1. It advances student learning and opportunity by expanding physical education instruction district-wide and offering career-connected learning opportunities in athletic training, sports management, event operations, and media production.
2. It strengthens communication and collaboration by creating a welcoming, inclusive space where all students can engage as players, performers, or spectators, while serving as a venue for school-wide and community gatherings that reinforce Chester pride and unity.
3. It enhances facilities for safety, efficiency, and student success. The project creates a secure single point of entry and brings existing sports programs to a new on-site facility, eliminating the need for off-campus locations and reducing transportation and rental costs.

We are investing in our students, strengthening our community, and building Chester's future together.

Anticipated Milestone Schedule*



IMPORTANT DATES

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

January 7
 Board of Ed Meeting

January 19
 Schools closed

January 20-23
 Regents exams

January 16
 Half day for students
 PD for faculty & staff

January 21
 Board of Ed Meeting

January 29
 CES Winter Concert

CHESTER ACADEMY



FROM THE
CA PRINCIPAL

JOHN
FLANAGAN

With winter break upon us, I just want to share how incredible it has been to have Chester Academy filled with seasonal music and cheer by our many performing ensembles. The middle school band and chorus, along with the high school band, chorus, voice ensemble, and jazz band, delivered outstanding performances at our annual Winter Concerts.

Their hard work, dedication, and musical growth were on full display, and we are incredibly proud of our students. We are also grateful to our music staff for their continued commitment to excellence.

As a reminder, the end of the five-week progress reporting period was Friday, December 12. I encourage parents to take a moment and review your child's progress. You can reach out to teachers with any questions or concerns.

In the days leading up to the break, Hambo and Holiday Spirit were on full display as we celebrated Winter Spirit Week! Monday was a holiday pajamas day, followed by ugly sweater day on Tuesday, then holiday headgear on Wednesday. On Thursday, students could coordinate matching outfits and take a "Family Photo" with our yearbook photographers. On Friday, it was a "Snow Out," with everyone donning white.

We wish all of our students, families, and staff a restful break and a very happy New Year!

Workplace Learning program brings local entrepreneurs to campus for info session

Chester Academy welcomed five local entrepreneurs this month to share their experiences and insights about starting a business and being their own bosses! Juniors and seniors gathered in the library for the session, which included a fantastic Q&A exchange. The visit was organized by our Workplace Learning Coordinator Jennifer Burreto.



[Read the full story here.](#)

Upperclassmen guide younger students in peer learning STEAM lesson

Seventh graders in Deborah Hyseni's general music class took part in a hands-on lesson, not from their teacher, but from their peers in Jeff Rodman's SUNY Oswego CAD class!

Students gathered in the Academy makerspace to create pan flutes using AutoCAD, a software system used for creating precise drawings and models.

Prior to the lesson, students learned about different types of pan flutes from around the world in music class, and how different cultures utilize the instrument.

Then, they created flutes of their own in class using pipes and clay to bring their ideas to life.

[Read the whole story here!](#)



Students celebrate college acceptance at SUNY Orange Instant Decision Day

'Tis the season for college acceptances! Chester Academy's recent SUNY Orange Instant Decision Day marks the beginning of the next chapter for some seniors!

Chester Academy helps its seniors and their families with the college application process in a variety of ways as they apply to colleges and across the country.

At the SUNY Orange Instant Decision Day, seniors had the opportunity to meet Admissions Officers, explore what the university offers, and be accepted on the spot!

[Read the whole story here.](#)



CHESTER ELEMENTARY



FROM THE
CES PRINCIPAL

MARY KATE
BOESCH

November was a month filled with learning, gratitude, and community and December has been a festive and joyful month of celebrating all things winter!

Our Spirit Week brought excitement and creativity to our halls each day. Students kicked off the week by wearing hats, scarves, and gloves and sharing a favorite book with a reading buddy. Another day, they showed off their holiday shirts, sweaters, and socks. On "6-7 Day," students joined in fun activities and brought board and card games to enjoy with friends.

Later in the week, everyone dressed to celebrate their favorite holiday of the year, and we wrapped things up with a cozy pajama day before winter break.

On December 16th, CES students proudly participated in an ugly sweater parade at the Academy during halftime of the basketball games and warmed up afterward with hot cocoa among friends. That evening, students also had the chance to cast their vote for our next Spirit Day, scheduled for January 23.

Ballots will be counted after the break... stay tuned!

To close out the month, our CES Broadcast Team released their first episode of the 2025-2026 school year. Be sure to check it out—they did an amazing job!

Wishing all CES students, families, and staff a warm and happy holiday season!

First quarter Honor Roll & Hard Work Hero awards announced

On December 8, Chester Elementary posted its honor roll list for the first quarter, as well as the names of those honored with the Hard Work Hero award. And it's no small feat to achieve either of these!

Honor Roll Criteria

Students must receive all threes and fours on their report cards, in all academic and specials areas to be named to the Honor Roll.

Hard Work Hero Award Criteria

Recognizes students who are always giving their best effort academically.

Congratulations, everyone, on your commitment to excellence, strong work habits, and dedication to learning.



[Read the full list of honorees here.](#)

Third graders Zoom with Ukrainian students

For the second year in a row, Lori Bonito's third grade class had a special opportunity to connect with fellow third graders from Ukraine. This initiative came to be with the help of a program called Class2Class, which helps classrooms across the globe connect with one another.

For this year's visit, the two classes focused on teaching each other about holidays from their respective countries. Chester students touched upon the many cultural holidays that happen throughout the winter, including Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, New Year's, and Lunar New Year.

Ukrainian students spoke about their holidays and traditions, such as St. Nicholas Day, where children leave letters asking for small gifts from the saint to be placed under their pillows.

[Read the full story here!](#)



Hambo Claus leads cheers for PBIS honorees



The last PBIS assembly before winter break definitely brought a strong holiday cheer vibe! The festive fun was off the charts as everyone gathered in the cafeteria to celebrate their peers for all the positive behaviors they've been exhibiting around school.

One very lucky student won the ultimate prize: Principal's Chair for a Day! Ms. Boesch even rolled him back to class!

And with an appearance by Hambo Claus, the celebration was a seasonal blend of positive behaviors, school spirit, and the joy of the season!

[See a very merry gallery here.](#)



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