



Wildcat Connections

Wheatland-Chili Central School District

Fall 2025

Wheatland-Chili kicks off 2025-26



Mentorship Program



Inside this issue:

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- Red Ribbon Week

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Superintendent’s Message



Dear Wheatland-Chili Community, I hope this message finds you well and fully immersed in the 2025–26 school year. As your Superintendent, it is my privilege to present the Fall 2025 edition of *Wildcat Connections*. This publication celebrates the vibrant learning community we share and provides important updates and highlights from the diverse, student-centered programs that define our district.

As you read each story, you will discover many points of pride and accomplishments from the fall season. We are thrilled to showcase the achievements and contributions of our faculty, staff, and students.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the families, faculty, and staff whose commitment continues to strengthen our district.

Throughout *Wildcat Connections*, you will see our revised mission statement brought to life. It captures our purpose and defines our “why”:

Wheatland-Chili Central School District Mission Statement

The Wheatland-Chili Central School District, in partnership with our community, will provide a safe and inclusive learning environment where every student can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally to reach their fullest potential.

As we prepare to enter the winter season, I wish you and your families a joyful and peaceful holiday season. Together, we will inspire excellence and ensure every student reaches their fullest potential. Thank you for your continued partnership and support.

Sincerely,

Stephen J. Kenny, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Wheatland-Chili Central School District

Kindergarten Teacher Wins Golden Apple

Wheatland-Chili teacher Samantha Berl was recently honored with WROC News 8’s Golden Apple Award, a recognition that celebrates educators who go above and beyond for their students. The award highlights her commitment to creating a fun and positive classroom environment. Colleagues and families describe her as a teacher who consistently puts students first and brings genuine enthusiasm to everything she does.

Berl is known throughout the district for her ability to make learning meaningful and engaging. Whether she’s finding new ways to connect with students or offering extra help after school, she approaches each day with dedication and heart.

The Golden Apple Award shines a spotlight on the impact Berl has made at Wheatland-Chili, both inside and outside the classroom. Her recognition reflects the gratitude of the community, as well as the positive relationships she has built with students, staff, and families. For the Wheatland-Chili Central School District, her achievement is a proud reminder of the exceptional educators who strengthen the school community every day.

“She is young, but so energetic and so knowledgeable, and so capable, and brings that energy to staff who have been teaching for a long time, like me, and brings new life and really just reminds us all of why we are here.”

-Shared by Rachel Ashby, the teacher who recommended her for the award.

Welcome New Staff Members:

Ellen Harradine
Social Worker

Samantha Mickley
Special Education Teacher

Lauren Missell
ENL Teacher

Arlene Cooper
Building Sub

Kathryn White
Teacher Aide

Chelsea Phelps
Teacher Aide

Peggy Rossiter
Kitchen Staff

Linda Jaimes
MS/HS Counselor

Danielle Bailey
Special Education Teacher

Sydney Hayward
English Teacher

Elyssa Mountain
Spanish Teacher

Patricia Preston
Literacy Teacher

Janine Rich
Health Teacher

Evan Mikoll
Communications

William Marlowe
Treasurer

James Sachs
Transportation

Nora Yogis
MS/HS Secretary



T. J. Connor Students Find Their “Identity”

T. J. Connor Elementary students recently took part in the Identity Project, an activity designed to help them explore who they are and what matters most to them. Through guided discussions and creative prompts, students reflected on their backgrounds, interests, and values, learning how these pieces come together to shape their sense of self. The project encouraged them to share their stories, celebrate what makes them unique, and appreciate the diverse experiences of their classmates.

The project was organized by Mrs. Mikoll, who introduced it to T. J. Connor after seeing its positive impact during her time with the Rochester City School District. Drawing from her previous experience, she adapted the activities to fit the school’s community while keeping the core goal the same—helping students develop confidence in who they are. Her leadership and familiarity with the program helped create a comfortable environment where students felt supported and excited to participate.

Teachers also noted that the project supported important social-emotional learning skills, giving students space to practice empathy, communication, and self-expression. By listening to one another’s perspectives, students strengthened their connections and gained a deeper appreciation for the variety of identities represented within their school. The Identity Project ultimately offered a meaningful way for T. J. Connor students to better understand themselves and each other, creating a more inclusive and supportive classroom community.



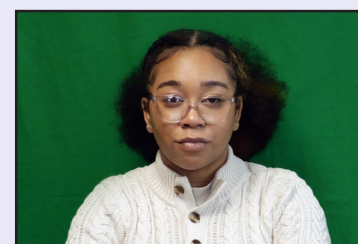
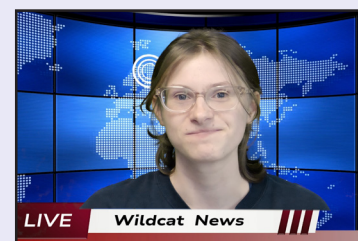
Lights, Camera, Action!

High School Students Get Hands on Experience in New Media Class

High school students in the new media class dive into a mix of creative and technical skills that shape them into confident digital storytellers. They explore photography, video production, journalism, and audio editing, using professional tools to turn their ideas into polished pieces. As they practice interviewing, writing, filming, and composing shots, they begin to understand how thoughtful reporting and planning bring stories to life.

Collaboration is central to the class culture. Students regularly share ideas, offer feedback, and work together to strengthen their storytelling. Through this teamwork, they develop confidence in both their technical abilities and their journalistic voices. By the end of the course, they discover new ways to capture and share stories that matter to them and their school community.

The class is led by Mrs. Vogt, who saw an opportunity to give students a space to tell meaningful stories about their school community and the need for digital literacy moving forward. After noticing how often students engaged with digital media and how much of an impact it has on their daily lives, the school recognized this as an area of opportunity to help students learn how to navigate a digital world. The ultimate goal is to help students build confidence, discover their creative strengths, and gain experience using tools that are becoming essential in today’s media landscape.



Wheatland-Chili Symphony Lights up Monroe County

The Wheatland-Chili High School Symphony added a festive touch to Monroe County’s annual Tree Lighting Ceremony on December 2, filling the event with warm holiday music. Students performed a selection of seasonal favorites that welcomed families, community members, and local officials as they gathered to celebrate the start of the holiday season. Their performance helped set the tone for the evening, creating an atmosphere full of joy and anticipation.

For the student musicians, participating in the countywide celebration was both an honor and an exciting opportunity to showcase their hard work. Under the guidance of their director, Steven Zimmerman, they played with confidence, enthusiasm, and a dose of holiday spirit. The experience not only highlighted their musical talent but also strengthened the district’s connection with Monroe County.



Fall Performances

Students at both the Middle School/High School and T. J. Connor participated in their Fall plays this past November. For the MS/HS Drama Club, they produced the harrowing tale of “Yellow Wallpaper,” based on the short story by Charlotte Perkins Gilman which dives into the effects of mental health, depression, hysterical emotions, intense isolation, and self-expression.



The T. J. Connor Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Grade Drama Club then provided audiences with some surf and good vibes with their production of “Hawaiian Beach Party!” This play featured students bringing energy, music, and humor to the stage, and allowed all to participate in a little tropical getaway.



WC Band Members Perform with Hochstein Junior Wind Symphony

Wheatland-Chili had the honor of sending six students to perform with the prestigious Hochstein Junior Wind Symphony this past October.

The symphony consists of Middle School students from throughout the region who were selected based on performance scores from last year’s Solo Festival.



L to R Isaac Dumrese (Bassoon), Morgan Green (Clarinet), Annaliese Schoenthal (Flute), Evelyn McDougall (Oboe), Addison Reynolds (Flute), Rylee Crawford (French Horn)

Students Honored at Area All-State Music Performances

Music and traditions run deep at Wheatland-Chili, and the district that was named as one of the Best Communities for Music Education in 2025 by the NAMM Foundation has continued that tradition by having two musicians named to their respective Area All State Bands. Eighth Grader Evelyn McDougall (Oboe) was named to the Middle School Band and Junior Freddie Woerner (Trumpet) the High School Band. Each musician was chosen out of a field of the best students in an eight county region.



Evelyn McDougall



Freddie Woerner

Record-Setting Performances

2025 was a record season for the Girls Modified Soccer team, as they achieved a perfect season for this first time in school history. In addition to the perfect season, they also had another record-breaking performance for the ultimate season, as the team only allowed one goal all year.



Varsity Girls Soccer Shines

The Varsity Wildcat Girls Soccer team had another strong showing in 2025, going 11-4-1 during the regular season (12-5-1 overall). The team scored 43 goals while only allowing 18 against, as Junior Vanessa Guerrero led the way with 19 goals and Freshman Alexa Nicolosi added 12. As a result of their on the field success, the team was recognized by having four players named as all stars for the Genesee Region: Guerrero, midfielder Jaeda Mekker, and defender Olivia Wantke and goalkeeper Keira Nash.

Other team recognition includes:
Bella Mekker (All Star Team Honorable Mention)

Alexa Nicolosi (All Star Team Honorable Mention, 2025 Section V All Tournament Team)



Red Ribbon Week

Red Ribbon Week gave Wheatland-Chili students a chance to come together and celebrate healthy, drug-free lifestyles. Throughout the week, classrooms and hallways were filled with reminders about making positive choices, standing up to peer pressure, and looking out for one another.

Students also took part in themed spirit days, hands-on activities, and schoolwide challenges that promoted awareness. Many classes created posters or worked on projects that highlighted the meaning behind the week. To learn more about Red Ribbon Week, visit redribbon.org



Spirit Week



T. J. Connor Salutes Veterans

On November 10, students from T. J. Connor invited veterans in their lives to the school for a special Veterans Day assembly. The event included recognition and appreciation of all attendees, speeches and songs from the students, and was capped off by a fist-bump/handshake line. Wheatland-Chili would like to express thanks and gratitude to all who have served.



Wheatland-Chili Welcomes New NHS and NTHS Members

Congratulations to our newest National Honor Society and National Technical Honor Society Inductees!

NHS

Austin Allen, Audrey Cullum, John Dettmer II, Shane Drexler, Carrington Edwards, Elizabeth Fugle, Vanessa Guerrero, Griffin Hitchings, Jaeda Mekker, Keira Nash, Madison Pope, Madeline Russell, Aubreigh Swift, Jack Tassone, Constantine Valle, Paige Vandervoort, Olivia Wantke, Freddie Woerner

NTHS

Prashila Chuhan, Megan Fraser, Destinee Lofton, Si'Anna Miller



Wheatland-Chili Central School District

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Board of Education

James Musshafen, *President*
Shanna Fraser, *Vice President*
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Heather Woerner

Superintendent

Stephen Kenny, Ed.D.

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Upcoming Events

December

11	MS Winter Concert	7 p.m.
16	HS Winter Concert	7 p.m.
18	Elementary Winter Concert	7 p.m.
19	MS/HS Progress Reports Mailed	
22-January 3	Holiday Recess — No School	

January

8	PTA Meeting	6:30 p.m.
12	BOE Meeting	7 p.m.
19	Martin Luther King Jr. Day — No School	
20-23	Regents and Local Exams — School in Session	
26	BOE Meeting	7 p.m.
26-30	PreK and Kindergarten Registration Week	
30	MS/HS Report Cards Mailed	

February

9	BOE Meeting	7 p.m.
12	PTA Meeting	7 p.m.
16-20	Winter Recess — No School	
23	BOE Meeting	7 p.m.
27	MS/Senior Ski Trip	7 p.m.

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WE ARE HIRING

- BUS DRIVERS
- LONG-TERM SUBSTITUTES
- PARAPROFESSIONALS
- CUSTODIANS
- CLEANERS
- AND MORE!

VISIT WHEATLANDCHILI.ORG TO APPLY

