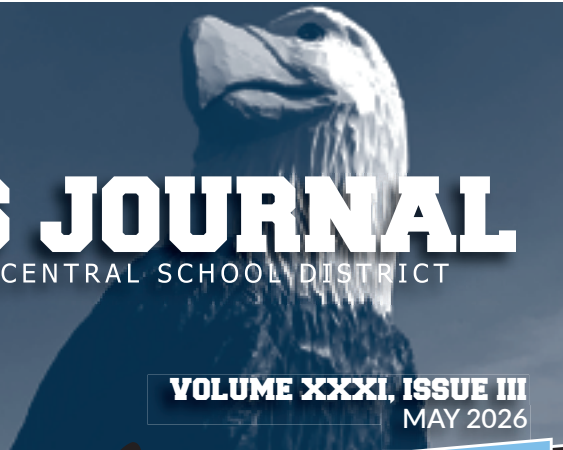




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MIDLAKES JOURNAL

PHELPS-CLIFTON SPRINGS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



VOLUME XXXI, ISSUE III
MAY 2026

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FIND MORE AT MIDLAKES.ORG



Midlakes Music has been recognized as one of 2026's "Best Communities in Music Education," given by the NAMM foundation.

The National Association of Music Merchants, founded in 1901, is a global not-for-profit trade association serving the music, sound, and event technology industry. NAMM also works to promote the benefits of making music, providing advocacy for music education. NAMM oversees the NAMM Foundation, the awarding foundation that advances active participation in music-making through research, philanthropy, and public service programs.

Midlakes celebrated Music in Our Schools in March; more coverage and an upcoming schedule on page 7.

TUESDAY,
May 19

Annual VOTE

NOON - 9 P.M.

Old Middle School Library



during its April 22 meeting, the Board of Education adopted an approximately \$48.9 million budget for the 2026-2027 school year that goes to a vote on Tuesday, May 19.

The proposal calls for a tax levy increase of approximately 2.23%, which is below the District's tax cap limit of 4.49%, set by the state.

This year, voters will also be asked to elect two candidates to the Board of Education, approve the purchase of four 70-passenger diesel school buses and one 60-passenger wheelchair accessible diesel school bus using the District's Transportation Capital Reserve Fund approved by voters in May 2024, approve the creation of a 10-year Capital Reserve that will not exceed \$10M, and approve a separate proposition to fund the community libraries. The District hosts the vote for the Phelps and Clifton Springs Libraries, but the funding does not impact school property taxes.

Additional details on the annual vote can also be found on the District's website at Midlakes.org/AnnualVote.

2.23%

Proposed 2026-2027 tax levy increase

Voters should note a **new voting procedure**, similar to when participating in State and National elections:

- Voters will sign in on a tablet/iPad.
- Voter rolls were loaded by Ontario, Seneca and Wayne County and BOLD Election Management.

CALENDAR CHANGES



CALENDAR REVISIONS FOR 2026-27 YEAR

The 2026-27 School Calendar will look a little different than in past years.

A Calendar Committee has helped the district reframe the academic calendar.

In keeping consistent with our early intervention strategies, the Elementary building will have two full parent-teacher conference days in December, ensuring all elementary teachers have time to strengthen critical connections with families.

March will feature a single half-day, dedicated to help our most at-risk students.

Second grade teacher Kelly Mayer is in favor of the revised parent-teacher conference schedule.

“Moving to two full days for parent-teacher conferences is a positive change for our school community,” she said. “This format allows us to be more present, focused, and intentional in our conversations. Ultimately, this shift helps us strengthen communication and better support our students and their families.”

The calendar will also feature six additional half-days through the year, scheduled for Nov. 18, Dec. 16, Jan. 29, Feb. 3, April 21 and May 19. These strategically scheduled half-days will be district wide, and will include time for professional development, professional collaboration, and timely data-driven planning for our students.

The elementary school will still have half-days on June 23-24. There will be a district-wide conference day on June 25.

The academic calendar meets both the 180-day and daily hours of education standards set by New York State. ■

2026-2027 SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT IS A SHARED EFFORT

Each year, district leadership works closely with the Board of Education to develop a thoughtful and balanced budget for the coming school year. Through this collaborative process, we reassess and align our priorities to meet student and program needs, foster a safe and inclusive school environment, and provide high-quality educational opportunities for every learner—while remaining attentive to our obligation to be fiscally responsible to local taxpayers.



support district operations.

Over the past several months, we have worked diligently to construct a prudent spending plan that strengthens academic programs, supports students’ social-emotional well-being, maintains extracurricular offerings, and ensures proper upkeep of our facilities. We continue to carefully review enrollment trends, special education needs, and anticipated retirements to ensure our spending matches our needs.

At the same time, the district continues to contend with ongoing financial pressures, including inflation, rising health insurance premiums, increasing utility and retirement costs, and uncertainty surrounding future Foundation Aid allocations from New York State. Each of these factors influences our ability to manage expenses and minimize the impact on property taxes. The proposed 2026-2027 budget continues our commitment to staying below the district’s tax cap threshold and accounting for current inflation, while responsibly utilizing reserve funds to

Budget development is a shared effort that benefits from community engagement. We encourage residents to learn more about the proposed budget and participate in the Annual Vote on May 19, to be held in the former Middle School Library. Community members are also invited to attend the annual budget hearing at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, May 11, in the Middle School Cafeteria.

— Nick Ganster, Superintendent

ANNUAL VOTE HIGHLIGHTS

Property Taxes

The District plans to meet its goals for the 2026-2027 school year with a tax levy increase of approximately 2.23%, which is below inflationary trends and the tax cap threshold of 4.49% set by the state.



State Aid

State funding comprises \$30,249,480 or 61.8% of the revenue in the proposed school budget. This dollar amount is an increase of \$1,091,585 over the 2025-2026 school year.

New School Buses

A proposition to fund the purchase (\$1,095,582) of four 70-seat diesel buses and a 60-seat wheelchair accessible diesel bus from the May 2024 Transportation Capital Reserve Fund. State aid will cover 90% of the cost of the purchase over five years.



Create a Capital Reserve

Approve a 10-year Capital Reserve of up to and not exceeding \$10 million, to be used for future capital projects.

What to expect when selecting

The Phelps-Clifton Springs Central School District is following the Flateau Voting & Elections Database of New York Act (effective 4/1/26). BOLD Election Management Systems electronically catalogued voter rolls through the Ontario, Seneca and Wayne County Boards of Elections. Voters will sign in on an iPad when arriving.



Use of Reserves

The increase in state aid offsets the reliance of the District to tap into reserve funds to balance the budget. Proposed for 2026-2027 is a \$105,213 increase in the strategic use of reserves for a total of \$915,000.



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Included are responses to some commonly asked questions regarding the Annual Vote.

For additional responses, visit Midlakes.org/AnnualVote.

What are some of the highlights of this year's budget? On January 21, 2026, the Governor's office released the School Aid data as part of the Executive Budget for the fiscal year 2026-27. The Governor proposed a Foundation Aid increase of \$779M, which reflects the "current law" calculation of the formula plus a 1% minimum guaranteed increase for all districts. Based on the Governor's proposal, the Phelps-Clifton Springs Central School District will receive a 1% increase in Foundation Aid or an additional \$211,320. While this number is significantly less than the Foundation Aid increases over the past several years or the increase in the Consumer Price Index of 2.63% (inflation), the District has been very deliberate in its spending and capital construction in order to increase its expense-based aid and boost the overall School Aid for the 2026-27 school year. This expense-based aid is in the form of BOCES Aid and Building Aid. As School Aid continues to shrink from one year to the next, the District has continued working with its departments and buildings to find efficiencies and close anticipated budget gaps as a result of increased expenditures in several areas of District operations.

What expenditures are increasing the most? There has been a significant increase to the administrative portion of the budget to account for the following BOCES services: upgrades to the District phone system, election management software to address the new Dr. John L. Flateau Voting and Elections Database of New York Act (effective April 1, 2026) and transition planning for a new Director of the Central Business Office at W-FL BOCES. Healthcare in the Finger Lakes Area School Health Plan is expected to increase 18.5%, and the District has budgeted an additional \$90,000 to account for increases in electricity bills.

How will the proposed budget affect property owners? The \$48,944,277 budget proposal calls for a 2.23% increase in the real property tax levy. Based on \$100,000 assessed value, overall assessments and equalization rates from the 2025-26 school year, residents can expect to see an average increase of the following amounts: \$50.33 with no STAR exemption, \$37.78 if they qualify for the STAR exemption, or \$11.94 if they qualify for the enhanced STAR exemption. Keep in mind equalization rates and overall assessments across the seven municipalities will not be released for the 2026 calendar year until this summer.

How is the District tax levy limit calculated? State law mandates that an eight-step formula be used to calculate the District's tax levy limit. This calculation accounts for growth in the local tax base, the rate of inflation, and provides the District with certain exemptions (capital expenditures, retirement contributions, court orders, and judgments). The District may also carry over the unused portion of

the tax levy limit from previous years. However, it can be no greater than 1.5% of the prior year's tax levy limit. The District has \$249,898 in carryover from 2025-26. This coupled with a 1.0092% tax base growth factor and a 2% levy growth factor results in a tax levy limit for the upcoming school year of \$16,887,183 for a 4.49% annual increase. For 2026-27, the District is proposing a school tax levy of \$16,521,716 representing a 2.23% increase over the previous year. The above increases are based on the 2025-26 tax levy of \$16,160,997.

How are reserve funds being used in the proposed budget? The District plans to use \$915,000 of its reserves to balance the budget. This amount represents a \$105,213 annual increase from the 2025-26 budget. The District will allocate \$500,000 from the Employees Retirement System Reserve and \$20,000 from the Teachers Retirement System Reserve to offset any contributions to the retirement systems. In order to offset certain contractual obligations for retirees in the coming school year, \$95,000 will be used from the Employee Benefits Accrued Liability Reserve. The District will also use \$300,000 from its Debt Service Fund to offset the local share of capital debt payments from previous capital projects.

What kind of buses is the District looking to purchase? Are there any updates with the electric bus mandate from New York State? To ensure the safety of students and staff the District is working towards a 5-year rotation of school buses as it phases out aging models. In order to achieve this cycle, the District is proposing to spend up to \$1,095,582 out of its 2024 Transportation Capital Reserve Fund to purchase five diesel buses. These buses are as follows: four 70-passenger and one 60-passenger wheelchair accessible bus. The state provides 90% aid reimbursement over five years for the purchase of buses resulting in a net cost to the District of \$109,558.

Why is funding for the libraries on the ballot? The District holds the annual appropriations vote for the local libraries in conjunction with the District annual budget vote for efficiency purposes. The funding for the libraries has no impact on the school budget or taxes. Taxes related to the library funding are levied separately from District taxes.

What happens if the budget isn't approved? The District has two options if the budget is defeated. It can propose a new budget or the same budget for a re-vote in June. If that budget proposal is defeated, then the District would be required to adopt a contingency budget. Since the District is proposing a 2.23% levy increase there would be a change to the tax levy in a contingency budget, specifically a reduction of \$360,719. Items such as non-essential equipment would be removed from the defeated budget along with public use of buildings. ■

HIGHLIGHTS



ANNUAL VOTE SUMMARY

BUDGET: \$48,944,277

TAX LEVY INCREASE:
2.23% from 2025-26

STATE AID: \$30,249,480
(\$1,091,585 more than 2025-2026)

RESERVE SPENDING: \$915,000
(\$105,213 more than 2025-2026)

BUDGET HEARING: A budget hearing will be held in the Midlakes Middle School Cafeteria at **6 p.m. on Monday, May 11.**

IN-PERSON VOTING: Noon to 9 p.m., Tuesday May 19, former Midlakes Middle School Library, 1554 State Route 488, Clifton Springs.

ABSENTEE BALLOTS: Absentee ballots must be received by the District Clerk by 5 p.m., May 19. Ballots may need to be hand-delivered if not sent to the Post Office in a timely manner.

BUDGET STATEMENT: A detailed budget statement may be obtained by any District resident from 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. during weekdays, excluding holidays, during the fourteen days immediately preceding the vote.

ELIGIBILITY: Residents qualify to participate in the annual vote, provided they are:

- A U.S. Citizen
- At least 18 years old
- A resident of the District for at least 30 days prior to the vote.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Contact District Clerk Pam Mann at (315) 548-6423, email pmann@midlakes.org, or visit Midlakes.org/AnnualVote. ■

Scan the code with your device for budget materials and Board of Education meeting videos.



BUDGET PROPOSAL

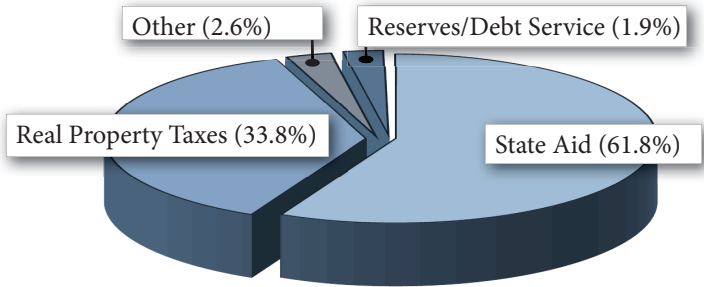
The following charts and figures detail the sources of revenue and expenditures of the proposed budget.

Further information can be found on the District's website at Midlakes.org/AnnualVote.

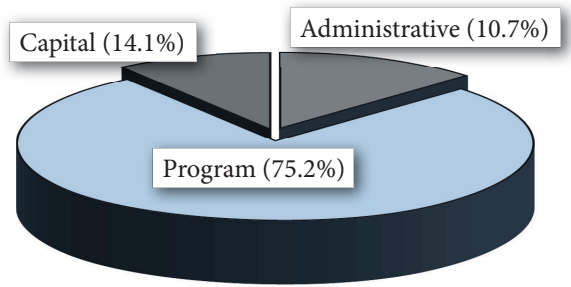
PROJECTED REVENUE

CATEGORY	2025-2026	2026-2027	INCREASE (DECREASE)
State Aid	\$29,157,895	\$30,249,480	\$1,091,585
Real Property Taxes	\$16,160,997	\$16,521,716	\$360,719
Reserves/Debt Service	\$809,787	\$915,000	\$105,213
Other	\$1,258,081	\$1,258,081	\$0
TOTALS	\$47,386,760	\$48,944,277	\$1,557,517

REVENUES



EXPENDITURES



Figures rounded. May not equal 100%

EXPENDITURES

ADMINISTRATIVE

CATEGORY	2025-2026	2026-2027	INCREASE (DECREASE)
Board of Education	\$106,870	\$121,800	\$14,930
Central Administration & Finance	\$902,765	\$1,012,257	\$109,492
Legal, Personnel, Public Information	\$202,000	\$213,000	\$11,000
Central Services & Special Items	\$1,034,936	\$1,146,393	\$111,457
Curriculum, Supervision, Research & Planning	\$1,305,568	\$1,402,910	\$97,342
Employee Benefits	\$1,174,950	\$1,311,175	\$136,225
TOTALS	\$4,727,089	\$5,207,535	\$480,446

PROGRAM

CATEGORY	2025-2026	2026-2027	INCREASE (DECREASE)
Staff Development & Training - Regular School	\$13,015,879	\$12,998,138	(\$17,741)
Programs for Students with Disabilities	\$7,877,273	\$8,615,397	\$738,124
Pupil Personnel, Guidance & Health Services	\$1,208,371	\$1,197,173	(\$11,198)
Athletics	\$727,359	\$749,359	\$22,000
Transportation	\$2,174,163	\$2,230,419	\$56,256
Employee Benefits	\$10,797,989	\$11,033,776	\$235,787
TOTALS	\$35,801,034	\$36,824,262	\$1,023,228

CAPITAL

CATEGORY	2025-2026	2026-2027	INCREASE (DECREASE)
Operation & Maintenance of Plant	\$2,744,127	\$2,870,747	\$126,620
Employee Benefits	\$780,029	\$874,083	\$94,054
Debt Service & Bus Purchases	\$3,334,481	\$3,167,650	(\$166,831)
TOTALS	\$6,858,637	\$6,912,480	\$53,843

TOTAL BUDGET

	2025-2026	2026-2027	INCREASE (DECREASE)
TOTALS	\$47,386,760	\$48,944,277	\$1,557,517

Expenditures rounded to the nearest whole dollar

BOARD OF EDUCATION CANDIDATES

Voters will elect two (2) individuals. Board members serve without pay and are listed in order of appearance on the ballot.

SHANNON PASSALACQUA

Family: Fiancé, Douglas; daughter, Gianna.

Occupation Career: Chiropractor and Program Director.

Qualifications and Activities:

For the past 8 years I have been practicing as a chiropractor at BodyKneads Wellness Spa serving the Phelps community. In addition to my practice, I work full time at Bryant & Stratton College as the Natural Science Program Director. In my role as program director, I bring a clear, firsthand understanding of the academic stamina, critical thinking, and foundational skills our students need. I understand how to evaluate district-wide curriculum proposals to ensure they are both rigorous and accessible. I believe that an empowered, well-supported teacher is the single greatest lever for student success. My professional background includes extensive faculty coaching, mentorship, and professional development. In my free time, I value experiencing live music, attending sporting events, and exploring the Finger Lakes region with my family.

Personal Statement: I am running for the Board of Education because I believe that demographics should not dictate destiny, and every student deserves a clear pathway to success. In my career overseeing collegiate natural science programs and coaching faculty, I see the 'finish line' of K-12 education every day. I know exactly what it takes for students to not just graduate high school, but to step onto a college campus or into a career with total confidence. As an educator, a mentor, and a parent, I am fully committed to building an educational environment where both our students and our teachers can thrive.

Board of Education Service:

Serving is voluntary. It requires flexibility in daily, evening and summer schedules. It can be rewarding and can help set the vision for education in the local community.



NATHAN DINGY

Family: Wife, Alexis; one daughter.

Occupation/ Career: Student Admissions Specialist at Finger Lakes Health College of Nursing & Health Sciences.

Qualifications and Activities:

A lifelong resident of the Midlakes district, I have a daughter who will be entering UPK this fall. In my role as the Student Admissions Specialist at Finger Lakes Health College of Nursing & Health Sciences, I work directly with prospective students and families as they navigate the admissions process. I also work diligently to engage with community members and businesses in this role. Community involvement has been an important part of my life, including participation in the Phelps-Clifton Springs Community Theatre and, more recently, service on the Phelps Arts Center Facilities Committee. I have also volunteered extensively at Cross Creek Church, supporting both Children's Ministry and Worship Arts/Production. Throughout these experiences, my work has consistently centered around supporting families and engaging with education-focused environments.

Personal Statement: As a parent preparing to send my daughter into the school system, this is deeply personal to me. I'm running to be a steady, accessible voice for our community, while also helping ensure the perspective of young families is represented as they begin their experience in the school system. I believe strong schools depend on clear communication and trust. Families should not have to dig to understand what is happening in the district, and providing timely, accessible updates must be a priority. Parents should feel heard and respected as partners, working alongside administrators, teachers, and board members to support our students. I also believe we can be responsible with taxpayer dollars while continuing to support a strong school system by focusing on efficiency and thoughtful decision-making. I value collaboration and look forward to working with fellow board members to serve our community.



DEB GALLIHER

Family: Husband, Jeremi; and son, Gavin.

Occupation/ Career: Regional Director at AJ Letizio Sales and Marketing.

Qualifications and Activities:

-Currently serving my first term; Phelps-Clifton Springs Board of Education
-Currently serving as a member at large on the Clifton Springs YMCA
-Currently serving as Committee Chair Clifton Springs Scout Troops 59/6059
-Currently serving as Treasurer on Midlakes Wrestling Boosters
-Coached Baseball/Softball for 15+ years in youth leagues.

Personal Statement: My commitment to our students and community is why I am seeking re-election to the Board of Education. I genuinely care about our students and am dedicated to advocating for them every step of the way. Over the past three years, I've gained valuable insights into the policies that shape our educational landscape and how we can work together as a Board to create the best possible outcomes for our students. We are just starting the groundwork for the next strategic plan that will guide our work over the next five years, and I am excited about the initiatives we can bring to life for our students! Supporting our students is my top priority, and I firmly believe in fostering an environment where children can thrive academically and personally, preparing them for a bright future. I would be honored to have your support as we continue this journey together, making a positive and lasting impact in our district.



Two of the seven Board of Education seats will be vacated on June 30.

Voters will elect two Board members to three-year terms at the School Election May 19.

TRICKEY, SANTY, FESLER EARN REGIONAL AWARDS



Three district students collected regional awards and were recognized during ceremonies this spring.

Annabelle Trickey, a Midlakes Junior was among the students in the 54th Senate District with the Youth Leadership Award.

Midlakes Senior Amelia Santy was joined by Finger Lakes Secondary School student Orion Fesler - a Midlakes District resident - in receiving the Superintendent's Award.

ANNABELLE TRICKEY

Selected among nominated Juniors at Midlakes, Trickey joined students from each school in the 54th Senate District, currently represented by Senator Pam Helming. A district's student nominee must demonstrate excellence in academics, athletics, extracurriculars, and community service for consideration.

"Annabelle is a model student who exemplifies the rare balance of high-level academic achievement, personal responsibility and community dedication," said Krystina Brooks, a Midlakes School Counselor who nominated Trickey for the award.

"I am honored to receive this award and hope to keep positively impacting my community while learning how to be a better leader," Trickey said.

Trickey currently ranks second in her class. She is the Vice President of the Class of 2027 and is active with Interact Club and Student Council. She is a Junior Board Member of the Mary Hicks Preston Foundation, volunteers as a tutor, and helps with a variety of school events and fundraisers.

She is also a member of the Varsity Volleyball Team.

"Annabelle manages a rigorous course load with a level of discipline that sets her apart. Her success is not merely a product of talent, but of an extraordinary work ethic. Annabelle is incredibly detail oriented. She consistently asks

clarifying questions and proactively checks her work for accuracy to ensure she meets her own high standards for excellence," Brooks said.

At Midlakes, we count kindness and empathy as strengths, Trickey demonstrates those traits as well. She is consistently polite to both faculty and her peers, making her an absolute pleasure to teach and a leader by example. Brooks described Trickey's impact on the school as significant.

Trickey has a year remaining at Midlakes as part of the Class of 2027 cohort. She is planning to continue her education, majoring in biochemistry on the pre-med or pre-podiatry track.

AMELIA SANTY

Santy was nominated by high school staff at the Phelps-Clifton Springs Central School District. Once nominated, the decision on the recipient was made by a committee at BOCES. She was then asked to write an essay outlining her candidacy with examples of leadership, citizenship and scholarship.

"I was surprised. I did not know anything about the award or nomination until Mr. (Dan) McAlpin and Mr. (Nicholas) Ganster congratulated me on receiving it," Santy said.

To be considered, students must have achieved a GPA of 80 or higher by the end of their junior year. The committee considered candidates' consistent demonstration of qualities and characteristics that BOCES would want to see in someone that assumed a leadership role within the Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES organization. Those qualities include honesty, compassion, perseverance, responsibility, kindness, resiliency and industriousness.

Santy recently presented to the Phelps American Legion Riders, sharing what she and her classmates learned during the Girls State program last summer. She has been a member

of the Varsity Soccer, Swim and Girls Lacrosse teams.

Santy also met the standards of civic selflessness; the committee considered a candidate's consistency in placing the needs of others ahead of their own as exemplified by their service to school, family and community.

After graduating, Santy will attend State University of New York at Alfred, enrolling in their Dual Degree Nursing Program where she will finish with an Associate's in Applied Science and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing concurrently.

ORION FESLER

Similarly, Fesler went through the recommendation process and eventual selection, representing Finger Lakes Secondary School in Rushville. He lives in the Phelps-Clifton Springs School District.

"I was made aware that I was nominated by Mr. (Dan) Healy back in mid-February," said Fesler, referring to the nomination shared by FL Secondary Principal Dan Healy. "I was rather surprised. I was never aware of the Superintendent's Award being something I could achieve, nor the criteria, so this definitely just dropped in out of the blue."

His mother, Renee, was caught equally off-guard, saying, "I could not be more proud of him and so happy to see all his teachers; [everyone] telling me how much of a great kid he is. He's really come a long way since he was little, and I think he will do amazing with anything he does!"

Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES District interim Superintendent Dr. Cathleen Hauber presented the students with their respective awards, which makes the Midlakes student eligible for various scholarships.

Fesler intends to attend Finger Lakes Community College to study creative writing; his award will go toward FLCC tuition. ■



MUSIC IN OUR SCHOOLS CONCERT



Photos by Stevie Mitchelson (Class of 2025)



EXCELLENCE

MUSIC, PHYS. ED. TEAM FOR P.E. LESSONS

The Elementary physical education classes introduced a new collaborative lesson this spring, blurring the lines between music and gym class.

Alex Fisher, a 2023 Conesus University graduate who started at Midlakes in 2024, introduced Cardio Drumming - a series of lessons where students followed along with a lead beat before branching into more cardio-focused activity. Tools for the drumming activities were borrowed from Kathryn Kenyon in the Elementary Music Department.

As the beats per minute changed, students did jumping jacks, and used elevation changes to drum on an inflated ball, all while keeping in time with the leaders.

"This ties to lifetime fitness, even though it's not necessarily using a basketball, for example," Fisher said. He explained there is a population of students who simply do not like physical education because they have interests other than competitive sports.

"Anyone can do it, and it can help everyone get excited about PE class," Fisher added.

These lessons, while offered to kindergarten through second grade, can show them ways to stay active without playing common, competitive sports.

Feedback was strong, with the youngest students really enjoying the lessons. The hope is fourth graders - and eventually, high school students - will come back and lead the class, provided interest remains and the coursework is adopted into the curriculum. ■



UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

- Elementary School Band & Chorus: 7 p.m., May 14.
- Middle/High School Chorus: 7 p.m., May 20.
- Middle/High School Band: 7 p.m., May 27.
- Middle/High School Jazz Band: 6:30 p.m., June 11, United Church of Phelps.



ACTIVITIES



BREAKFAST SALE HELPS MALALA FUND

This spring, students were selling breakfast foods at arrival as part of a fundraising effort to support the Malala Fund. Students were advised by ENL Instructors Sara Reynolds and Wendy Sheffield.

This is the third year of the spring breakfast sale fundraisers. The students sold donuts and additional healthy-choice breakfast items during arrival. This year they were sold at both the elementary and secondary schools.

Past funds were donated to Water for South Sudan, and to the California wildfires relief efforts through the American Red Cross.

This year, the students selected the Malala Fund. The mission of the Malala Fund is to ensure all girls have access to 12 years of free, safe, and quality education. The organization advocates for policies and funding to support secondary education for girls, investing in local advocates to dismantle barriers like gender discrimination, poverty, and conflict around the globe.

Elementary students were on campus 90-minutes early to prepare for the sales. The students tapped into their math, customer service, business and cooperation skills.

The students were all-in on breakfast, offering healthy-choice options such as apples, yogurt and cheese sticks on top of the pastries.

Dunkin Donuts in Manchester donated donuts each day in support of the group, offering four dozen donuts per day (32 dozen total). Upstate Farms offered three dozen bottles of Intense Milk, and four dozen yogurts. Many of our local dairy farms ship to Upstate Farms. ■



FAMILY FUN AND ENGAGEMENT

Spring events bring families, educators together

The Elementary building was a hub of activity with several events welcoming families to the campus to take part in interactive events.

Most recently, there was a Family Game night in the Elementary Cafeteria, extended to the Elementary after school program which was scheduled at the end of March.

There, educators and building leaders planned games and extended an open invitation to all Elementary students and their families to share in the fun.

The after-school activities included reading and math games, and a reader's theatre. There, young learners showed off their budding acting skills.

In February, third grade shared in the nation-wide, annual "Love of Reading" event.

Students were encouraged to invite a loved one to come and read their favorite books, and share in cookies, lemonade and snacks. All third grade homerooms participated, bringing to a close National "I Love To Read" month.

February also featured the annual Culture Fair.

Students selected a country of their choice - because of their



personal connection or personal curiosity - researched the culture and shared what they learned with multiple homerooms visiting Mrs. Reynolds room.

Some students dressed in culturally accurate attire - such as a kimono, from Japan. Students shared ways of life, dances and games.

In the evening, families visited campus for the final presentations, joining in games and taking in the presentations. After the students were finished presenting, food and snacks from across the globe were served. Then, the students shared in breaking a pinata.

Secondary School Student Council hosted "Cocoa with the Popo" and "Lemonade with the Brigade," offering students a chance to speak with Midlakes School Resource Officers, Deputies Holland and Decker.

Rylan Potter and Riley Marion

led the committee in organizing this event. Students were able ask questions about the SRO responsibilities and their experiences as SROs and with the road patrol. Additional events like this are on the horizon, with the committee planning to reach out to additional agencies and first responders.

While fall open house events are important for both families and educators, the District collectively wanted an emphasis on the collaborative efforts among home and school.

A strong parent-school relationship is vital for student success, leading to higher academic achievement, better behavior, and enhanced social skills. When parents and teachers collaborate, they create a supportive environment that improves attendance, boosts student motivation, and fosters a positive view of education. ■



AGRICULTURE JOBS ALWAYS IN SEASON

FFA teaches students about Ag jobs, seasons

Midlakes FFA Chapter celebrated Ag Literacy Week in conjunction with National Ag Week by reading with primary school homerooms.

Midlakes FFA Members - including Vice-President Emma Mae White (Class of '29), Secretary Maryalice Busby (Class of '28) and Student Advisor Christopher Schuster (Class of '28) - met with over a dozen Midlakes Elementary classrooms across two days.

The students then held short question-and-answer sessions about the book, 'Seasons on the Farm.' The 30-minute sessions concluded with students making wheel spinners, coloring their favorite parts of each of the four seasons.

The Midlakes FFA members talked about the changing jobs on a farm, and what has to be done from planting to harvest.

FFA SHINES AT COBLESKILL CDES

Midlakes FFA Participated in the NY FFA State Career Development Events held at SUNY



Cobleskill. At the State CDEs, members compete in Agricultural Mechanics, Meat Evaluation, and Milk Quality & Products.

Milk Quality teams identified cheeses, performed CMT tests, identified off-flavors, and practiced real-world quality control techniques. One of the Midlakes FFA teams ranked in the top three overall. Catherine Worden placed in the top 10 individually. The final placings for the Milk Quality team and Catherine Worden's official individual ranking will be revealed next month at the State FFA Convention.

In Ag Mechanics, students showed their skills in electrical wiring, machinery systems, surveying, welding, and problem solving.

In Meat Evaluation, members completed a written test, identified retail cuts, placed classes, and worked through a team activity. This was the Midlakes FFA first team in the Meat Evaluation CDE. The team placed 24th.

NYS FFA CONVENTION IN BUFFALO MAY 16

Midlakes FFA will be participating in the New York State FFA Convention, scheduled May 14-16 in Buffalo.

FFA AG STATION AGAIN PART OF JUNE FUN DAY

Midlakes FFA will again host their agriculture station with animals at the Elementary Summer Fun Day, scheduled for the end of June. ■



ACTIVITIES

FFA SHARES CONTEST RESULTS

Midlakes FFA hosted a coloring contest for Elementary School Students during the annual National Ag Week.

National Ag Week overlapped Ag Literacy Week this year.

The artwork and finished coloring projects from several Elementary aged students were prominently featured on the display board near the Elementary Cafeterias.

Top artists from each participating grade level are:

Kindergarten:

1. Alaina Worden
2. Aliyah Barse
3. Garret Kordziel

1st Grade

1. Madelyn Merkley
2. Annora Hamelinck-Young
3. Charlie Dutcher

2nd Grade

1. Brody Caster
2. Emma Kommer
3. Annabel Haberek

3rd Grade

1. Mina Durso
2. Connor Buisch
3. Bennett Kornbau

4th Grade

1. Hailey Bellis
2. Jacklynn Spence
- T-3. Thea Ford and Caleb Gregory

5th Grade

1. Graydon Burnisky
2. Callum Middlebrook
3. Danny Goodman

6th Grade

1. Sophia Schultz
2. Jase White



HOW YOU CAN HELP!

Businesses and community members interested in connecting with Midlakes FFA should contact the secondary school's main office to reach Marina Bartolotta-O'Brien or Jessica Spence

SCHOLARATHLETES

WINTER SCHOLAR SQUADS

Seven athletic teams and 49 varsity student-athletes from Midlakes have been recognized by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association for outstanding achievements in the classroom during the 2025-26 winter sports season.

Individual scholar-athletes (by sport) are recognized with a certificate. Individual student-athletes must earn at least a 90 GPA to be recognized. A team needs at least 75 percent of its roster to earn an overall GPA of at least 90 percent to be recognized.

SCHOLAR TEAMS

GIRLS BASKETBALL

94.86
GPA

GIRLS INDOOR TRACK

94.3
GPA

GIRLS BOWLING

92.13
GPA

BOYS INDOOR TRACK & FIELD

91.66
GPA

BOYS BOWLING

91.41
GPA

BOYS SWIMMING

90.74
GPA

BOYS BASKETBALL

90.51
GPA

STELLAR

Aiden Bryant crouched over, hands on his knees, staring at the manually operated scoreboard near the long jump pit at the Ocean Breeze Athletic Complex on Staten Island.

Only two long jumpers remained; two rivals standing between him and yet another New York State Public High School Athletic Association Championship.

His massive 24 foot, 7 1/4-inch leap on his final attempt surged his ranking from fourth to first.

Runner-up Carlos Eliezer (North Rockland, Section I) delivered a 24-1 on his final jump. Bryant heaved a sigh of relief. A final jumper remained - Jah-Sir Boyd (Watervliet, Section II). Boyd was the leader following the re-seed for the round of eight.

An official dialed up the first two numbers after Boyd landed, and that was all Bryant needed to see: A two, then another; 22-feet. Boyd's leap of 22-9 did not better his best effort of 23-11 1/2. Bryant won the crown by just over six inches.

Bryant uncoiled like a spring; he bounced high into the air in celebration, capping another long and triple jump sweep at the State level.

This anchored Bryant's Prime-Time585 Indoor Track Athlete of the Year award, his sixth time winning their top athlete award.

He was named All-Greater Rochester Indoor Track Athlete of the year - for the third time.

With the 2026 indoor long jump and triple jump State and Federation Championships, Bryant brings his career State Championship count to 12: eight State Titles, four Federation crowns.

"Man, you just never know," Bryant said, hands on his head in disbelief. He may have been the only person in the Ocean Breeze Athletic Center who had questions about his ability to sweep.

Bryant cited a technique adjustment on his final jump that helped pave the way to the long jump win. In a game of long-distance charades, instructions came



from coaches Aidan Cort and Mike Quagliata to power through his hip on take-off. Coaches are not allowed on the floor during the NYSPHAA State Championships; the coaching pair were in the absolute top row and shared hand signals for approach and leap adjustments.

"Once he pushed through his hip correctly, that little bit of a change, he went from 22s to 24-plus," Quagliata said, noting Bryant could be flirting with 25-foot or more this spring.

There was not as much theatre with the triple jump competition, where Bryant won by nine inches with a leap of 49-feet, 5 inches. He did not push the 52-foot mark as he hoped; he set a New York State Indoor Triple Jump Record of 51-10 at the State Qualifier meet a week earlier at Nazareth University.

The old record of 51-6 had stood for 10 years.

Historically, Bryant stands as one of the most decorated athletes in New York State history. He won the outdoor long and triple jump State Championships each of the last two years, with his senior outdoor campaign now

in full swing. He won the indoor State Championships in long and triple as a sophomore, and now again as a senior. His sophomore and senior year indoor championships came with Federation Championships, helping bring the career count to an even dozen.

Bryant did not jump at the NYSPHAA Indoor Championships as a Midlakes junior last winter, nursing a nagging leg injury. Bryant also jumped in this season's New Balance Nationals in Boston and Nike Nationals in New York City.

His 51-10 triple jump ranks ninth all-time in the Nation. Bryant is ranked No. 2 in National High School Triple Jump rankings.

In those nationally-recognized meets - hosted on the same weekend in March - he again used the competition to find the resolve to rise. Bryant finished third overall in NYC, posting a 49-11 1/4 and earning Nike All-American Honors. A new National High School Record was set during the Nike Nationals, with the winner leaping over 53 feet.

At New Balance, Bryant triple jumped 50-8, taking second and earning New Balance All-American Honors.

PETZOLD PERFORMANCES

Bryant has his eyes on a final, resounding sweep of the outdoor long and triple jump competitions. Midlakes Varsity Track and Field will host their lone home outdoor meet at 5 pm May 12. The Wayne-Finger Lakes Divisionals are scheduled for May 19, with the W-FL Championships to follow on May 23. Section V Class C Championship Meet is scheduled for May 29. Webster-Schroeder is hosting the NYSPHAA Championships June 13-14.

Looking ahead, Bryant has committed to Princeton University where he will major in Aerospace Engineering.

INDOOR TRACK AND FIELD

Elizabeth Elling, Mackenzie Davis and Jesse Bennett each went to State Qualifiers for Track and Field. Elling won a Sectional Championship in pole vault (8-feet, 3-in) and 1500m racewalk (8:33.34). Elling also broke her own racewalk school record this year. Ciera Carnright set a new weight throw record during indoor season with a mark of 36-feet 1/2-inches. The 4x200 relay (Bryant, Bennett, Fernando Resendiz and Gavin Jones) set a new school record.

BASKETBALL

Seniors Mackenzie Davis and Lily Roth represented Midlakes at the Senior game. On the boys side, Nathan Lathrop earned a nomination to play in the Finger Lakes Senior Game.

Both the boys and girls programs earned wins in the Sectional Tournaments this season.

BOWLING

Alivia Miller (Class of 2027) again qualified to the New York State Public High School Athletic Association Tournament. Her final rank was 23rd in New York. She was named a first team FLHSA East Division All-Star. In the Sectional Tournament, Gabrielle Delpriore rolled a 266, ranking as the top single game. Midlakes has posted the top single game in each of the last three seasons, and Midlakes Bowlers hold three of the top six best single games recorded in New York State. Delpriore ranks sixth (266), behind Alivia Miller (267) from last year and Emma Monagle scored 268 in 2024. The girls team combined to set a new school record in total pinfall in a single game this season, and earned 2026 All-Greater Rochester Team of the Year hon-

ors. Coach Scott Monagle earned Coach of the Year.

CHEER

Alivia DeJohn and Deliah Howcroft earned FLHSA First Team All-Star nods.

SWIMMING

Connor Carter won a League Championship in the 100 free. He earned a FLHSA First Team All-Star nomination.

WRESTLING

Sophomore **Spencer Fox** picked up an individual Section V Championship at 190-lbs and was fourth at SuperSectionals. He scored the league title, as well. Jorge Garcia scored his 100th win this season, taking second at Sectionals. Girls varsity finished an undefeated season en route to the Finger Lakes League Championship; Abigail Hargarther celebrated her 100th career win. Elizabeth Boughton was second at Sectionals, and Clara Bond was third.

In all, 8 of 13 wrestlers placed in the Girls Section V Tournament. Gabrielle Baylard-Maggi won a League Championship, along with Bond, Boughton and Hargarther. Bond, Boughton and Hargarther earned first-team All Star Nominations in Wayne-Finger Lakes. ■



TYLER TOURS BOSTON

High School English teacher Marisa Tyler qualified to run the Boston Marathon.

Tyler qualified in the 35-39 female age group, making the qualifying cut of 3 hrs, 30-min with her 3:14.22 in the 2024 Chicago Marathon

Boston can accept 30,000-35,000 racers, with around 10,000 allotted to charity runners.

Racing on April 20, Tyler finished in 3:04.7, roughly averaging 7:24 per mile over the 26.2-mile distance.

She qualified the Boston Marathon in 2019 (3:26), and in 2020, but the race was called off due to the COVID-19 pandemic. ■

HALL OF FAME INVITES NOMINATIONS

The Midlakes Athletic Hall of Fame will welcome Clay Hemminger as the lone inductee for the Class of 2026.

The Class of 2025 includes volleyball stars Joe Petzoldt, Dan Mowery, and EJ Wells-Spicer. Induction ceremonies for both the Hall of Fame Class of 2025 and 2026 will be scheduled for the Homecoming Weekend, September 2026.

To nominate a team, player or coach, scan the code and fill out the online form. Nominations are due before November 1. ■



2026 SPRING SPORT MILESTONES



Zoe
OVERSLAUGH

100

Goals



Nate
LATHROP

100

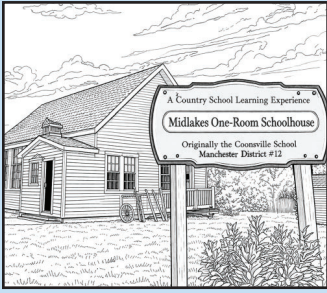
Goals



Kerry
TURNER

300

Strikeouts



ONE ROOM SCHOOL HOUSE WELCOMING SPRING GUESTS

The One Room School House Committee is announcing a series of guests and events scheduled for this spring.

The biggest news is Charles Burrall, a Maryland-based expert in one-room schools, will visit our One Room School House at the end of June.

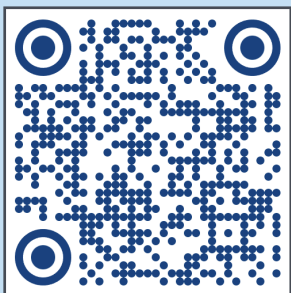
Burrall will be in the Finger Lakes June 21-23 for the annual Country Schools Association of America (CSAA) Conference, which will be hosted at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva. He has added Midlakes to his list of stops.

During Spring Fest, set for May 22, the Genesee Country Village will bring one of their mobile museums to setup outside the school house. The Spring Fest displays will feature agricultural artifacts and will tie into the spring event hosted by Midlakes FFA

The schoolhouse will be open for tours on budget vote day, May 19.

This spring, several Elementary homerooms made short trips to see what learning was like in the past. Ashton Place and Vienna Gardens also visited the school house this spring.

To learn more, scan the QR code to visit the Midlakes One Room School House Social Media page. To learn more about the CSAA, visit country-schoolassociation.org.



GRADUATES



DEPORTER, KNARR, & VALERIO INDUCTED

A decorated Marine, a community pillar and former educator, and an Ontario County Deputy have been named to the Midlakes High School Graduates of Distinction Class of 2026. They were selected by a committee of school staff, students, and community members.

The program, established in 2016, recognizes successful graduates of Midlakes High School for outstanding civic and professional accomplishments, and for serving as role models to current students.

The Class of 2026 includes SgtMaj. Dominick Valerio, a decorated Marine who has earned a Purple Heart and Bronze Star with Distinguished Combat Service 'V' for heroism and valor; Mary DePorter, a dedicated community member who is retired from Midlakes Schools; and James Knarr Jr., a Navy enlistee who ultimately became the first School Resource Officer in Ontario County.

Here is a closer look at this

year's inductees:

DOMINICK VALERIO

SgtMaj Dominick Valerio graduated Midlakes in the class of 2005. He is currently stationed in Frederick, MD where he is the Senior Enlisted Leader of the First Marine Corps District's Eastern Recruiting Region.

Valerio is one of the most decorated and celebrated members of the Armed Forces to graduate from Midlakes, earning the rank of Sergeant Major. His personal accolades include three deployments during Operation Enduring Freedom, the Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Commendation Medal, two Navy and Marine Commendation Medals, the Joint Achievement Medal, a Purple Heart and the remarkable Bronze Star with Distinguished Combat Service 'V,' awarded for heroism or valor during direct, ground-level combat with an armed enemy.

After serving as the Senior Enlisted Leader of Company I at the School of Infantry East

with the Marine Combat Training Battalion, he was ordered in 2024 to his current position in Frederick, MD. There, he serves as the Senior Enlisted Leader of the First Marine Corps District's Eastern Recruiting Region.

Valerio enlisted in the Marine Corps, attending Recruit Training at MCRD Parris Island in South Carolina before Infantry Training at Camp Geiger in North Carolina. He quickly earned Military Occupational Specialty honors as an Infantry Rifleman and Marine Security Force.

His efforts while deployed to the Philippines and Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom resulted in him being hand-selected to serve as the Operations Chief of the White House Communications Agency, supporting foreign travel missions for the President, Vice President and National Security Council.

He has served as a combat instructor and was an infantry liaison training the Department of Defense in unmanned aircraft

OF DISTINCTION

systems, and improvised explosive devices. He recruited and selected Marines to serve in the Presidential Support Program and was the Senior Enlisted Leader of the Guard Company before receiving orders to the School of Infantry East's Combat Training Battalion before being ordered to his current post.

MARY DePORTER

Mary DePorter graduated Midlakes in 1980, and retired from Midlakes Schools as the UPK-2nd Grade Librarian in 2024. Mary served with the Clifton Springs Rotary, Midlakes Schools, the Phelps Community Center, Clifton Springs YMCA, and the Village of Phelps.

Ms. DePorter embodies Phelps and Midlakes. She encompasses what it is to make learning fun, and to dedicate one's service to improve the lives of others.

Her dedication to the Phelps community resulted in October 8th being declared 'Mary DePorter Day,' by NYS Assemblymen David DiPietro and Jeff Gallahan.

Coaching and teaching Physical Education at Mynderse Academy after finishing her Masters Work at Wittenberg University, DePorter moved back to Phelps and began working at Midlakes as a teaching assistant before retiring as a primary school librarian. She advised Student Council at the Elementary Building, creating community support projects through the student government, including Christmas in a Box, writing letters from home to those serving overseas and the infirmed, collecting undergarments for those in need, collecting donations for pet shelters and annually cleaning up John Brown Park. She also coached the girls modified basketball team for six years.

DePorter served the Village of Phelps for 22 years, primarily working as the Director of Youth, Parks and Recreation. She managed a group of eight employees in the Summer Rec program with 200 registered students. She sits on the board of the Phelps Art Center. In her time working with the Rotary, she was elected President twice, serving one-year terms. She received the Paul Harris Fellowship award, the highest honor bestowed on a Rotarian.

Ms. DePorter is also an officiant, performing more than 250 wedding ceremonies.

Ms. DePorter retired in 2024, opening the Pizza Coop in downtown Phelps. She continues to give back to the community, overseeing events such as the Easter Eggstravaganza, Harvest Fest, Hometown Christmas and the Phelps Phenomenal Race.

JAMES KNARR, JR.

James Knarr Jr. checks each conceivable box, serving his country, county, community and Midlakes schools.

Graduating from Midlakes in 1983, Mr. Knarr entered the United States Navy and served for seven years. In that time, he was recognized as Sailor of the Month on the USS Abraham Lincoln (1989). When he returned home, he joined the Ontario County Sheriff's Office, working as a Road Patrol Deputy and a DWI Enforcement Officer. He was successful across several law-enforcement disciplines; he was a SWAT team member, child passenger technician and instructor, and earned dozens of commendations before being named the 1998 Deputy of the Year. He later became the first School Resource Officer in Ontario County, serving Victor High.

Mr. Knarr also became a Certified NYS Master Police Instructor through the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services. He created the annual law enforcement basketball tournament, raising money for local charities; the first iteration was played at Midlakes.

His duty to the community was not exclusive to law enforcement. Mr. Knarr earned a Doctorate in Theology through the Institute of Worship in Jacksonville, Fla. From there, he was the founding Pastor at Wellspring Church, and a two-time Professor of the Year at Wave Leadership College. His community service includes a long-time position with the Clifton Springs Rotary.

He purchased and helped renovate the Teft Avenue Building, establishing the building as a hub for Hearts of Gold food pantry. He has served as leader and chaplain of the Phelps American Legion Riders, and was an on-site chaplain during the World Trade Center Rescue Efforts after 9/11.

Mr. Knarr is a regular substitute teacher at Midlakes. He continues as a virtual professor at Seapointe College in Norfolk, VA. He is active with the dissertation staff at Asbury Theological Seminary in Kentucky. He enjoys growing hot peppers, and hosts a taste-test challenge for staff at Midlakes to close out the school year.

The Graduates of Distinction toured the school campus with Zoey Overslaugh and Jonathan Capozzi, and were recognized during a mid-day event at the HS Auditorium. That night, the honorees were recognized at Warfield's Restaurant and Bakery.

To nominate someone, complete the online nomination form at [Midlakes.org/graduatesofdistinction](https://midlakes.org/graduatesofdistinction).

UPGRADES

BOARD APPROVES ELEMENTARY ROOF REPAIRS

The Board of Education, based on the recommendation of district administration, declared a local emergency to address failing and deteriorating conditions of the Midlakes Elementary roof.

There are two main areas of concern:

- Roofing membrane became unglued and delaminated from the substructure.
- The loose shell is now susceptible to wind. A high wind event could potentially tear the outer membrane from the substructure.
- Currently, the outer membrane is anchored down. The repair is safe, but temporary.

The emergency declaration authorizes the District to spend up to \$4M in current fund balance to pay for a new roof. The approved bid was \$1.9M.

As a result of the Board of Education declaring the roof project as a local emergency, the state will reimburse the district at the rate of 87.6% over 15 years.

That will amount to an estimated reimbursement of \$1.65M over 15 years. The district will pay roughly \$231,000.

The roof replacement was already planned as part of the Capital Improvement Project 2024. This will move the new roof project ahead on the schedule.

The repairs will include anchoring the existing outer layer in place and then installing a new layer of insulation, a new substructure and laminate, then the final outer layer.

There will also be new drainage and ventilation hardware installed during the repairs. The Elementary roof was included in the initial CIP24 plans. ■

TO NOMINATE A GRADUATE FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION, SCAN THE QR CODE AND COMPLETE THE ONLINE FORM



LOOKING AHEAD

SUMMER EDUCATION PROGRAMS AT MIDLAKES

The Phelps-Clifton Springs Central School District has finalized plans for the academic offerings over the summer recess:

REGIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL

Midlakes Middle/High School will be participating in the Regional Summer School program again this year. Midlakes will be the host site for the Ontario County Regional Cooperative. Classes will run from 7:45 am to 12:15 pm, starting July 13 and ending August 19. Students will be required to provide their own transportation to Midlakes MS/HS. Breakfast will be available for students enrolled in the Regional Summer School program. Regional Summer School will also offer a two-week AIS program that is dedicated to August Regents prep.

SUMMER SKILLS

Summer Skills dates for the Elementary K-6 cohort are scheduled from 9 am to noon, Monday through Thursday; classes will open July 13 and continue through August 13.

Each class will receive one hour of ELA instruction, one hour of math instruction, and 30 minutes of SEL Instruction. Breakfast will be provided for all students. Midlakes will not be able to offer busing, so K-6 Summer Skills will be parent transport only.

EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR

The Extended School Year program offered to recommended K-12 Special Education students will open July 9th and continue through August 19th. Program will run from 9 am to noon, Monday through Friday. Students that are recommended will be provided breakfast and transportation each day. ■

Important Dates:
Regional Summer School
Secondary Students
July 13-Aug. 19
 7:45am -12:15 pm, M-F.

Summer Skills K-6
July 14-Aug. 14
 9am-12 pm M-Th.
Drop off and pick up only

Extended School Year (ESY) for K-12 (if recommended):
July 9-Aug 19: 9am-12 pm
 M-F, with Transportation.

ELEMENTARY STUDENTS HELP BOOST AUTISM AWARENESS

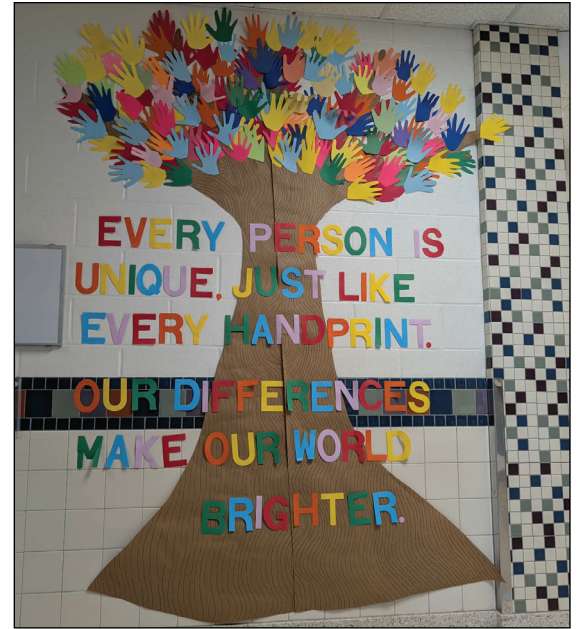


Multiple Elementary Clubs worked together on a project recognizing Autism Awareness through April. The Midlakes Greenhouse Club created flags and placed them in plants that were then offered to staff after being grown in the Elementary Greenhouse. The Student Council traced their hands and helped with the construction of the paper tree near the sixth-grade hallway.

The tree represents growth, community and the branching nature of the autism spectrum. The tree serves as a visual symbol, reminding students and staff alike that we are community where everyone learns together and is fully accepted.

Elementary Reading Interventionist Liz Fratto talked with the Elementary Student Council during a monthly meeting, discussing her experiences with students learning with autism as well as her own son, James, who was diagnosed at the age of 2 years old and is now a 4th grader.

She expressed her gratitude "for the opportunity



to join the Midlakes Elementary Student Council and the Midlakes Greenhouse Club in a shared mission that truly matters. Together, we work to foster a culture of acceptance for autism while encouraging kindness, understanding, and inclusion throughout our school community."

She added, "It is moments like these that remind us how powerful young voices can be in creating a more compassionate and accepting world!" ■

THREE ADVANCE IN RBTL'S STARS OF TOMORROW



Justin Herman Jr. (Class of 2026), Ellie Dorr, (Class of 2027) and Brian Cannan (Class of 2028) were chosen to represent Midlakes in the annual Stars of Tomorrow NYC Bound competition hosted by the Rochester Broadway Theatre League.

They were each selected for the next round after their portrayals of Sir Harry, Lady Larken and Prince Dauntless in Midlakes Theatre Experiences' production of 'Once Upon A Mattress.'

Performers are judged individually for their work in lead roles on stage and separately from their schools full production. Next, the final 40 performers will compete at West Herr Auditorium Theatre on May 21, with hopes of earning a spot in the National High School Musical Theatre Awards (or the Jimmy's) in New York City at the end of June.

More than 40 high school productions were judged by a select panel from the RBTL, which provided students and directors with feedback and scores. ■

Justin Herman walks with Ellie Dorr, as Sir Harry and Lady Larken, during a performance of 'Once Upon A Mattress.' Inset: Brian Cannan as Prince Dauntless.

LOOKING AHEAD

DISTRICT CALENDAR

The Board of Education approved at its March meeting the District Calendar for the 2026-2027 academic year. Below are a few highlights:

First Day of School: Students to report on Wednesday, Sept. 9.

Superintendent Conference Days: Staff only on Thursday, Sept. 3 and Tuesday, Sept. 8; Friday, Oct. 9, and Friday, March 12.

District-wide Professional Development Half-Days: Nov. 18, Dec. 16, Jan. 29, Feb. 3, April 21, May 19.

Elementary Parent-Teacher Conferences: Dec. 3-4 (Full Day), March 11 (Half-Day).

Elementary school half days: March 11; June 23-24.

Winter Break: No school on Thurs., Dec. 24- Friday, Jan 1. School reopens Monday, Jan. 4.

February Break: No school from Monday, Feb. 15 - Friday, Feb. 19. School reopens Monday, Feb. 22.

Spring Break: No school from Monday, March 22 - Friday, March 26. School reopens Monday, March 29.

Holidays (No School): Columbus/Indigenous People's Day, Oct. 12; Veterans Day, Nov. 11; Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Jan. 18; Memorial Day, May 31; Juneteenth, June 18.

Graduation: Saturday, June 26.

All school events and dates are subject to change. Contact your child's school for additional information. View district calendars and sports schedules at Midlakes.org/calendars. ■

MEMORIAL DAY TRIBUTE

First-graders at Midlakes Elementary School will once again present a tribute honoring local servicemen and women who protected our country. Contact school for more information.

DATE: Thursday, May 21. ■



COMMENCEMENT

Show your pride in all that the Class of 2026 has accomplished during Midlakes High School's annual Commencement Ceremony, where students will walk the stage to receive their diplomas. Additional details to be released. Contact Midlakes High School for more information as it becomes available.

DATE: The ceremony is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m., Saturday, June 27. ■

THIS MONTH & NEXT

MAY

BUDGET HEARING

6 p.m., May 11
Middle School Cafeteria
(Regular BOE meeting follows)

ELEMENTARY BAND & CHORUS CONCERT

7 p.m., May 14

ANNUAL VOTE

Noon - 9 p.m., May 19

BOARD MEETING

6:30 p.m., May 20
(Only if budget is defeated)

MEMORIAL DAY TRIBUTE

May 21

MEMORIAL DAY

May 25 (NO SCHOOL)

MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL BAND CONCERT

7 p.m., May 27

HONOR SOCIETY INDUCTIONS

6 p.m., May 28

JUNE

SECONDARY ACADEMIC AND ATHLETIC AWARDS

6 p.m., June 12

SENIOR BALL

6:30 p.m., June 12

UPK-GRADE 6 END OF TRIMESTER

June 12

ELEMENTARY AWARDS

6 p.m., June 12

BOARD MEETING

6:30 p.m., June 15

JUNETEENTH

June 19 (NO SCHOOL)

ELEMENTARY HALF DAYS

June 23-25

COMMENCEMENT

7 p.m., June 28

Events subject to change. Find school calendars, sports schedules and more under the "Community" tab at Midlakes.org.

CAREER CORNER

WE ARE HIRING

JOIN OUR TEAM



JOIN OUR TEAM!

The Phelps-Clifton Springs CSD is a positive and rewarding place to work. School employees enjoy many benefits, including competitive pay, paid holidays and training, sick and vacation time, flexible hours for some positions, health and retirement benefits, leadership and mentorship opportunities, support from a great team, and much more. For a list of openings and the District job board, visit www.midlakes.org/jobs.

OPENINGS

- **BUS DRIVERS** are needed with multiple openings. Competitive salary and paid training. There are driver, trainee and substitute driver positions open.

- **SPEECH PATHOLOGIST / THERAPIST** probationary listings, with two openings.

- **TEACHING POSITIONS** probationary listing: (1) Earth Science, Grades 7-12. Part-Time 1:1 Special Education. (3) Probationary Teaching Assistant positions.

- **PROBATIONARY CLEANER** Two positions open, working on-campus.

- **TEACHER AIDE** probationary listings, with two openings.

- **SUBSTITUTES** Subs positions are open throughout the district. ■

HIGH SCHOOL RECOGNITION

VALEDICTORIAN
JONATHAN
CAPOZZI

JONATHAN CAPOZZI plans to attend Canisius University to study forensic accounting and cybersecurity.

Activities and achievements: Jonathan excelled academically at Midlakes. He played four years of varsity baseball, and was the defensive captain for 2025-26. He played travel baseball for Team PAC. He served as the 2026 Co-President and was the first Ex Officio Student representative on the Board of Education. He is active with National Honor Society, Graduates of Distinction Committee and has filled several community leadership roles. He has an interest in politics, with experience in local and congressional campaigns. He plans to continue civic engagement while completing his coursework at Canisius. ■



SALUTATORIAN
MAYA
STEVENSON

MAYA STEVENSON plans to attend Nazareth University to continue her education in physical therapy and dance studies.

Activities and achievements: Maya has been committed to her passion for dance throughout her high school career and participated in varsity cheerleading while simultaneously prioritizing her academics.

Outside of athletics, she has been an active member in NHS, serves as the senior class co-vice president, tutors middle school students, and enjoys giving back to the community. ■



PHELPS-CLIFTON SPRINGS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Send tips and suggestions to: Newsletter, 1490 State Route 488, Clifton Springs, NY 14432



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