UNITED IN EXCELLENCE

NEW LONDON
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Student
OF THE MONTH

Employee
OF THE QUARTER

May 2026

united in excellence

Special Announcement!



Bennie Dover Jackson Multi-Magnet Middle School has been named the *"CT Middle School of the Year"* by the CT Association of Schools! Congratulations to the entire BDJ community on this amazing achievement!

CAS
CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS

UNITED IN EXCELLENCE
NEW LONDON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Special Recognition

Jim Avery Youth Sailing Scholarship Recipient!

Congratulations to **Jasmine Acosta**!!!

Thames Yacht Club Presenters:
Colin Redhead – Commodore
Jim Avery



Student OF THE MONTH

Bennie Dover Jackson Multi-Magnet Middle School Campus



MACKENZIE BUTLER

The Bennie Dover Jackson Multi-Magnet Middle School Campus Student of the month is Mackenzie Butler who is a truly deserving recipient of this recognition. As an 8th grade student, Mackenzie consistently demonstrates what it means to lead through character, dedication, and quiet strength. She is a hardworking and high-achieving student who takes pride in her academic success, consistently earning strong grades through effort, perseverance, and commitment to excellence. Kind, dependable, and thoughtful, Mackenzie is the kind of student who leads by example each and every day. Beyond the classroom, Mackenzie's impact on our school community is truly remarkable. She generously gives her time in service to others through the National Junior Honor Society, as a Peer Mediator, and as a Peer Mentor, demonstrating her commitment to supporting both her peers and the broader school community. She is a wonderful friend, a dedicated student, and a strong silent leader whose actions speak volumes. Mackenzie represents the very best of BDJ, and we are incredibly proud to celebrate her as our Student of the Month.

Employee OF THE QUARTER

Bennie Dover Jackson Multi-Magnet Middle School Campus

ARAYA MUNOZ

We are excited to recognize Araya Munoz as the Bennie Dover Jackson Multi-Magnet Middle School Campus Non-Certified Employee of the Quarter. Currently serving as a 7th grade science teacher, Ms. M is known for her kindness, professionalism, and genuine care for her students and colleagues. She is a conscientious and hardworking young educator who takes great pride in providing high-quality instruction and creating a positive learning environment where students can grow academically and personally. Ms. M consistently goes above and beyond in her role, always willing to put in the extra effort to support students and contribute to our school community. She is reflective in her practice, eager to learn, and openly welcomes feedback as a tool for growth and improvement. Her dedication to becoming the best educator she can be is evident in all that she does, and her plans to pursue certification speak to her commitment to the profession. We are proud to recognize Ms. M for her hard work, potential, and the positive impact she makes each day.



Employee OF THE QUARTER

Bennie Dover Jackson Multi-Magnet Middle School Campus

HILARY KEBLIS



We are thrilled to recognize Hilary Keblis as the Bennie Dover Jackson Multi-Magnet Middle School Campus Certified Employee of the Quarter. Mrs. Keblis has been a valued member of our school community for the past four years and truly exemplifies what it means to be a Whaler. As a reading support teacher, she works tirelessly to help students make meaningful academic progress, providing targeted instruction while building the confidence and skills of learners who need it most. Mrs. Keblis has a special gift for connecting with some of our most diverse learners, creating trusting relationships that help them feel safe, supported, and capable of success. Her impact reaches far beyond her instructional role. Mrs. Keblis also leads both our yearbook and student council, creating meaningful opportunities for students to develop leadership skills, build school pride, and create lasting memories. She is known throughout our building for her dependability, kindness, and unwavering willingness to help others. Mrs. Keblis brings humor, warmth, and positivity to every space she enters, lifting spirits and making those around her feel valued. She builds strong relationships with students, staff, and families alike, and her positive energy is truly contagious. Mrs. Keblis is an exceptional educator, leader, and teammate, and we are incredibly fortunate to have her as part of the BDJ family.

Student OF THE MONTH

Early Childhood Center at B.P. Mission



AZARIAH WILLIAMS

Azariah has shown tremendous growth in the classroom. She was very shy at the beginning of the school year but has persevered. She comes into school with confidence. She shows great participation in the classroom. She has built strong relationships and friendships. She has truly blossomed this year and I am very proud to announce Azariah Williams as the student of the month.

Employees OF THE QUARTER

Early Childhood Center at B.P. Mission

LORI LOOBY, JESSICA JARRETT, GIANNA VARELA



The Early Childhood Center at B.P. Mission is proud to recognize our Speech and Language team as our Staff of the Quarter. Speech-Language Pathologists Lori Looby and Jessica Jarrett, along with Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Gianna Varela, are a truly dynamic trio.

At the preschool level, communication is often the primary area of developmental concern. Through Birth-to-Three, community-based, parent, and school-based referrals, this team supports a large percentage of students connected to NLPS preschool programming. They work side by side in their tiny, shared office, collaborating seamlessly, supporting one another, and maintaining exceptional organization.

Lori, Jessica, and Gianna consistently excel in managing the extensive documentation required for evaluations and therapy services. They are thoughtful problem-solvers who willingly support all students—whether or not they are on their caseloads. Their dedication extends beyond their primary roles, as they are always ready to lend a helping hand with a smile, whether assisting with arrival and dismissal, providing recess coverage, or creating visuals for classrooms and hallways.

We are incredibly grateful to have such a dedicated and exceptional team of professionals as part of our B.P. Mission team!

Student OF THE MONTH

Winthrop STEM Elementary Magnet School



JOSUE GUARDADO GUILLEN

We are proud to recognize Josue Guardado Guillen as our 5th Grade Student of the Month! Since the beginning of the school year, Josue has shown tremendous growth in both confidence and effort. Through hard work and determination, he has achieved wonderful success in the classroom.

As a bilingual learner, Josue has worked incredibly hard to learn and participate in English, even when it has been challenging. What stands out most is that he never gives up; he approaches each day with resilience, perseverance, and a willingness to keep trying, no matter how difficult something may seem.

Because of his positive attitude and strong work ethic, Josue has become much more confident as a learner. He is more willing to share his ideas, participate in class discussions, and take academic risks. It has been so rewarding to watch him realize that his hard work is truly paying off. Along with his academic growth, Josue also seems happier, more comfortable, and proud of himself, which has been wonderful to see.

Josue is also one of the kindest, most respectful, and funniest students in the class, always bringing smiles to those around him. Lately, it has been especially heartwarming to see him more relaxed and truly enjoying his success. Whether he is talking about soccer or working with classmates, his positive spirit shines through.

Josue should be extremely proud of how far he has come, and we have every confidence that he will continue to grow, succeed, and thrive in the years ahead.

Congratulations to Josue, our Winthrop STEM Elementary Magnet School Student of the Month!

Employee OF THE QUARTER

Winthrop STEM Elementary Magnet School

WILLIE CARTER

Winthrop is proud to recognize Willie Carter, Custodian, as our Non-Certified Employee of the Quarter!

Willie is an essential part of our school community and consistently goes above and beyond to support staff and students each day. He is always checking in on classrooms, especially throughout the first floor to ensure teachers have what they need, from paper towels and tissues to disinfectant wipes and printer paper. If something is needed, Willie is often the first to jump in and make it happen.

Willie takes incredible pride in his work, and it shows. Our classrooms and hallways are always clean, organized, and ready for learning because of his dedication. Staff often share how much they appreciate that Willie works quietly, efficiently, and always with a smile. He sets up and cleans up for school events without needing reminders and plays a key role in big moments, like making sure 5th grade promotion runs smoothly every year.

Beyond his hard work, Willie treats everyone with kindness and respect, helping create the positive environment that makes Winthrop such a special place. Whether he's lending a hand, checking in on staff, or simply making sure our building looks and smells great, Willie truly takes care of all of us.

Thank you, Willie, for your dedication, your reliability, and the care you put into everything you do. Winthrop is better because of you!



Employee OF THE QUARTER

Winthrop STEM Elementary Magnet School

JEANNE WILSON



Winthrop is proud to recognize Jeanne Wilson, our outstanding 2nd Grade Teacher, as our Certified Employee of the Quarter.

Jeanne is truly deserving of this recognition for her reliability, hard work, and many years of dedicated service to New London Public Schools. Throughout her career, she has made a lasting impact on countless students and families through her passion for teaching and unwavering commitment to education.

Jeanne has a special gift for connecting with students and earning their trust and respect. Her students are consistently encouraged to put forth their very best effort because they know they are supported, valued, and cared for in her classroom. She creates a learning environment that is upbeat, welcoming, and full of positivity, making students excited to come to school each day.

Over the years, Jeanne has been a beloved and familiar presence at Winthrop, teaching both Kindergarten and 2nd Grade with creativity, patience, and enthusiasm. One fun fact that makes Jeanne especially unique is that she once performed in the circus — and you can certainly see that creativity and energy shine through in the engaging experiences she brings to her classroom every day!

As Jeanne prepares to retire at the end of this school year, we celebrate not only her incredible career, but also the lasting memories and impact she has made on the Winthrop community. She will be greatly missed by students, families, and colleagues alike.

Congratulations, Jeanne, and thank you for your years of dedication, care, and inspiration!

Student OF THE MONTH

Nathan Hale Arts Magnet School

NATHAN HALE
Arts Magnet School



DAPHNE MACLEAN BARNER

Daphne is a model student who consistently demonstrates the core values of Nathan Hale each and every day. Not only does she always give her best effort on academic tasks, but she also actively seeks opportunities to challenge herself and grow as a learner. Her dedication to learning and willingness to push herself are truly admirable.

Daphne is also a natural leader who is always willing to help others and take initiative when solving problems. She brings kindness, empathy, and respectfulness into all that she does, helping create a positive and supportive environment for both her classmates and teachers.

We are incredibly proud of the example Daphne sets for others through her hard work, character, and leadership. Congratulations, Daphne, on being recognized as Nathan Hale's Student of the Month!

Employee OF THE QUARTER

Nathan Hale Arts Magnet School

NATHAN HALE
Arts Magnet School

MAMIE BAUDUCCIO-ROCK



At Pages Café, the artistic storytelling center and interactive library experience of the Nathan Hale Arts Magnet School in New London, Mamie has created a space where imagination, creativity, literacy, and community come together in meaningful and lasting ways.

For the past 10 years, Pages Café has inspired students to read and share stories, explore new ideas, create art, and develop a lasting love of reading and learning. Mamie's passion and dedication have helped shape Pages Café into a cornerstone of the Nathan Hale experience and a true extension of our school's commitment to the arts.

Mamie truly loves New London and loves Nathan Hale, and that pride shines through in everything she does. She consistently goes above and beyond for students, families, and staff, always finding ways to support others, strengthen connections, and make our school community feel special and welcoming. Whether she is rolling out the Pages Express, helping plant trees around campus, supporting families, or keeping us updated on our favorite family of eagles in California, Mamie brings joy, heart, and a sense of connection to everything she does.

Through her warmth, creativity, and endless care for others, Mamie helps make Nathan Hale a place where students feel safe, seen, supported, and inspired every single day.

Thank you, Mamie, for the incredible impact you have on our school and community.

Congratulations on being recognized as our Non-Certified Staff Member of the Quarter!

Employee OF THE QUARTER

Nathan Hale Arts Magnet School

NATHAN HALE
Arts Magnet School

SARA KESSLER KENNON



We are proud to recognize Sara Kessler Kennon as our Certified Staff Member of the Quarter, celebrating both her outstanding contributions to Nathan Hale and her 10th year in New London Public Schools. Over the past decade, Sara has made an extraordinary and lasting impact on our students, school, and community.

As our dance teacher, Sara brings creativity, passion, and joy into every space she enters, helping students discover confidence, expression, and connection through the arts.

Sara is not only an outstanding educator. She is the foundational architect of the K–12 dance program for our Visual & Performing Arts Magnet pathway. From the very beginning, she built a program where every child experiences dance while continuously raising the level of rigor and artistry as students grow in skill. She creates a classroom environment where students feel safe, seen, and supported, while also inspiring them to take risks, collaborate, and develop as both performers and individuals. Her ability to engage students of all backgrounds and abilities through movement and artistic expression reflects the very heart of our arts-integrated school community.

Beyond the classroom, Sara consistently goes above and beyond for students and staff alike. She plays a vital role in shaping the culture of Nathan Hale through her leadership of performances, schoolwide events, and celebrations. From coordinating productions and supporting competitions to organizing morning announcements and even helping load vans and equipment, Sara does whatever it takes to ensure students have meaningful, high-quality experiences.

We are incredibly grateful to have Sara as part of the Nathan Hale family and are proud to celebrate her as our Certified Staff Member of the Quarter. Congratulations, Sara, and thank you for all you do for our students and school community!

Student
OF THE MONTH

C.B. Jennings International Elementary Magnet School



KENDRICK MILLER

Kendrick Miller is a second grade student in Miss Carney's room at Jennings. His transformation this year is nothing less than amazing. Since the beginning of the year, he has been making positive incremental changes in his behavior and his academic work. He is contributing to class discussions, completing his work on time, and consistently being a positive force at Jennings. It has been a pleasure watching Kendrick blossom into such a great student, and seeing his smiling sweet face coming in the morning is enough to melt your heart every day. I am so proud of all that Kendrick has accomplished in this short time, and his jump in maturity this year is astounding. Congratulations, Kendrick!!

Employee OF THE QUARTER

C.B. Jennings International Elementary Magnet School

CATHY RODGERS



Cathy Rodgers was nominated as our Support Staff of the Quarter because she is the unofficial Queen of our Paraprofessional team at Jennings. Cathy is never out, and she takes pride in taking the new, younger paraprofessionals under her wing and teaching them the expectations of what it means to be a paraprofessional for New London Public Schools. She is in charge of two students in the second grade class she works in, but she takes care of all of the kids in that class. She is devoted to the district of New London and its students. She has important duties in our school; she makes sure all the tardy students get to class every morning and makes sure the students who are picked up late in the afternoons have someone to care for them until their parents get here. She will be the first one to gather support for things she knows are right, and the first to call out things she knows are wrong, and we love her for that. Right now, Cathy is extremely ill, and while she has been honored before in the past, it is the right time again to recognize the positive forces Ms. Rodgers puts out into the universe. Thank you, Cathy, for all that you do!

Employee OF THE QUARTER

C.B. Jennings International Elementary Magnet School

MEEGAN BUNCH



Ms. Bunch is an extremely caring teacher who works so hard to make sure that she provides fun and engaging assignments to her students every day. Ms. Bunch not only helps other staff but helps students who love her and are not in her class! She frequently will take dysregulated Kindergarten students and let them calm down in her room, as well as engage her class in civil service projects to instill respect for our school and community. She is always upbeat, always positive, and always willing to help her students and other staff members whenever they need it. She's what I think of when I picture a caring first grade teacher and we are so lucky to have her here at Jennings.

Student OF THE MONTH

New London High School Multi-Magnet Campus



JULIO MIRANDA

The NLHSMMC Humanities Department has selected Julio Miranda as Student of the Month. Julio describes himself as silly, curious, and hungry to learn—and in the classroom, these traits take the form of intellectual curiosity, a willingness to ask questions, and a steady determination to push himself academically. He has challenged himself with a rigorous course load that includes several AP courses (AP U.S. History, AP Literature and Composition, and AP Government), as well as college-level courses such as Psychology of Well-Being and Financial Literacy. Julio is eager to challenge himself and is looking forward to graduation and attending Avery Point in the fall.

Employee OF THE QUARTER

New London High School Multi-Magnet Campus

SARAH FAVALORA

New London High School Multi-Magnet Campus is proud to announce Sarah Favalora as our Employee of the Quarter! While Sarah's official title is Secretary to the Principal, her impact spans far beyond the main office. Described by her colleagues as the "glue that holds our school together," Sarah's unwavering commitment and dedication ensure that NLHS thrives in every aspect. She is deeply appreciated by staff and students alike for her hard work, kindness, and boundless support. Thank you, Sarah, for everything you do!



Employee OF THE QUARTER

New London High School Multi-Magnet Campus

LURA HEPLER



New London High School Multi-Magnet Campus is proud to announceLura Hepler as our Employee of the Quarter! Teaching everything from Acting 1 and Honors Advanced Acting to Technical Theatre to Honors Musical Theatre and Directing/Producing for Stage Theatre, Ms. Hepler is a true cornerstone of our creative community. She also proudly runs our school's Thespian Honor Society.

During our recent Teacher Appreciation Week, the community made it clear just how vital she is. Students and families flooded her with recognition for taking the helm of our two massive productions this year, "It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play" and the musical "Hadestown." As she does every single year, she dedicated countless, selfless hours of planning and organization to these shows. As a direct result of her hard work, many of our talented students are currently being considered for Halo Awards!

Beyond her engaging classes and spectacular productions, Ms. Hepler has built a reputation for creating a safe, welcoming space where students feel free to be themselves. Her deeply rooted relationships are the reason many students look forward to coming to school each day. Thank you, Ms. Hepler, for putting your all into everything you do and for loving what you do right here at NLHS!

Student OF THE MONTH

New London Adult & Continuing Education

New London Adult & Continuing Education



DARWIN ANDRADE

It is my pleasure to recognize Darwin Andrade as our New London Adult Education ESL Student of the Month for May 2026. Darwin is a hardworking, respectful, and humble student who consistently goes out of his way to support others, making him a true role model within our classroom community.

He is deeply committed to learning English, dedicating time and effort both in and outside of the classroom to improve his skills. Darwin is always engaged, actively participates in class, and maintains outstanding attendance.

Three years ago, Darwin moved to the United States from Ecuador, first settling in The Bronx before relocating to Connecticut, where friends helped him begin building a new life. Since then, he has demonstrated remarkable perseverance, dedication, and kindness in all that he does, including recently starting a small landscaping business.

We are incredibly proud of Darwin and all he has accomplished, and we look forward to seeing all he will continue to achieve in the future.

Employee OF THE QUARTER

Central Office

CHRIS VON GLAHN

In the world of technology, true success means creating a seamless, worry-free experience for everyone else. Systems stay running, issues are resolved, and people can do their jobs because of the effort happening quietly in the background.

Chris' professionalism, humility, and steady support make a real difference to our staff and students every single day. Thank you for your dedication and all that you do behind the scenes to keep our community moving forward.

