

North Tonawanda City Schools



Mission

Empower students to reach their fullest potential by cultivating a community of lifelong learners who think critically about the world around them.

Vision

Students reach their academic and social emotional goals through an inclusive learning environment.

Core Beliefs

North Tonawanda Lumberjacks are:

- Lifelong learners
- Understanding
- Motivated
- Brave
- Empowered
- Respectful
- Just
- Academically sound
- Caring
- Knowledgeable
- Strong

Superintendent's Message

Dear Lumberjack Community,

Happy New Year and welcome to 2023! Even though the year has just started, the Board is already thinking about the 23-24 budget. Many items, from continued enhancements to school security as well as program offerings, are part of the conversation. We continue to look for ways to cut corners along the way to keep any increase to the budget at a minimum. Recent LED lighting projects and boiler updates continue to help us as utility costs continue to increase. New York State is looking to pass a new law requiring schools to go electric with their bus fleets to be entirely zero-emission by 2035. Planning for that is underway, but substantial infrastructure requirements will be needed to comply.

Students continue to learn and be exposed to STEAM lessons K-12. We have partnered with WOZ Education to enhance students' learning in science, technology, engineering, art, and math. Everything from 3D printers to drone flying and animation are part of the growth and lessons we have here in NT. Our K-6 buildings have created Discovery Dens and Innovation Stations to get the students' creative juices flowing. At the secondary level, we have met the needs of more learners with the continued development of the RISE and REACH programs. For more information on these programs please visit our webpage at www.ntschoools.org.

We look forward to finishing the 2022-2023 school year strong and look forward to an even brighter 2023-2024.

Sincerely,

Gregory J. Woytila
Superintendent of North Tonawanda City Schools



The Gift of Mittens

Students in Mrs. Seguin's kindergarten class, at Ohio Elementary School, were generously gifted a class set of mittens during the holiday season! North Tonawanda resident, Mrs. Jackie Robinson, knitted a beautiful, colorful pair of mittens for each student in her great granddaughter's class. Mrs. Robinson hand-delivered the gifts to the students, and after receiving the mittens, each student wrote Mrs. Robinson a thank-you note to show their appreciation for their special gift. We are all thankful and blessed to be part of such a caring community!



Spruce Elementary Students Send Cards to Damar Hamlin

The third graders at Spruce Elementary School were exhibiting their kindness, their Character Education word of the month, toward Damar Hamlin as they created get well wishes for the young Buffalo Bills Safety. After hearing of the incident that occurred during the football game watched by so many, even the students, the children wanted to talk about it. It was decided that they too could show Damar support by creating cards that encouraged him to feel better and to stay positive. The cards were dropped off to the local Totally Buffalo Store where there is a collection that will be delivered to Hamlin.



Pictured: (Top left) Alec Mackowski, Jameson Streicher, Dylan Fix, Reagan Getz, (Bottom left) Lauren Caccamise, Levi Vargas, Manuel Narvaez, and Madison Siuta.

North Tonawanda Students Inducted into National Technical Honor Society



Matthew and Savannah with NT High School Principal Bradley Rowles.

Congratulations to the North Tonawanda students from the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center who were recently inducted into the National Technical Honor Society. Out of all the high school students in the United States, the National Technical Honor Society students who receive this honor comprise 1.6 percent of that population. For staff at the Orleans/BOCES center, they represent the four pillars of the National Technical Honor Society: scholarship, leadership, service and character.

The students were honored in front of their teachers, families and school district representatives. The students had to maintain an 89.5 grade average in their career and technical education programs and an 84.5 average at their high schools, have superior attendance, exemplary behavior, be a member in good standing with SkillsUSA and have a recommendation from a faculty member.

Congratulations to: Matthew Cake in the Building Maintenance and Management Program and Savannah Shine in the Graphic Communications Program.

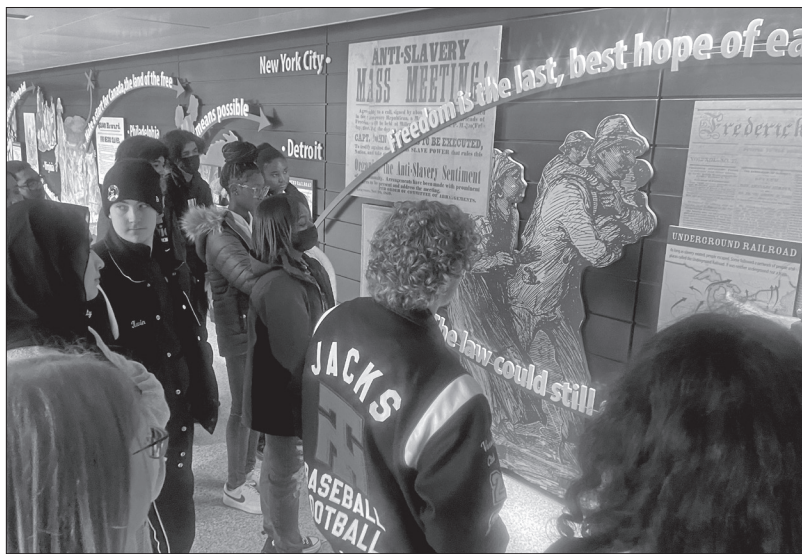
NT and Niagara Falls Students Get Lesson in Racism and Injustice

In response to an incident involving racial slurs directed at Niagara Falls High School students by North Tonawanda students, student representatives from both districts were invited to the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center.

The museum and administration and staff from both school districts hope that this gathering will promote empathy, new perspectives and education towards the history of racism and each other. NT Social Studies teacher R. Scott Gauld says that the students from NTHS were chosen because they showed an interest in human rights issues. “Some are members of my Model UN Club and have experience in seeing events from a broad perspective. Others are partner athletes in our Unified Sports program, so demonstrate a great deal of empathy and compassion. A couple were chosen because they set a great example of others. There was no rigid criteria, selection was based on observations and knowing the students well.”



The students spent the day touring the museum together with guides learning about real life experiences of freedom seekers and abolitionists in Niagara Falls. There were conversations about the intricacies of slavery and the pursuit of personal freedom in the present.



Niagara Falls CSD Superintendent, Mark Laurrie, said “One of the ways to go forward and look where we’re going is to try and build a bridge over our differences and similarities by getting together as often as we can.” NT student Sam Heim says, “Bringing the schools together, you can really feel what other people have to go through and how much it can affect you as a person. I will probably be thinking about this experience for weeks.” Classmate Paige Colegrove says she found it a very interesting experience. “It was fascinating to learn what happened in the past in our country’s history, our hometown’s history. It was nice to meet new people and to learn and experience this together.” Mr. Gauld says, “The students enjoyed getting to know some of the details that may not be told in history books. Our guide, Saladin, spoke on a very personal level and helped all the students understand the plight of freedom seekers along the Underground Railroad. History, geography and human rights were emphasized throughout our tour.”

Everyone felt very positive about the day together. “We concluded with an informal lunch and students mingled with each other,” says Gauld. “Many of the Niagara Falls students asked ‘When can we come to NT?’ All in all, a great day and program to help our schools understand one another even more!”

Middle School to Have Half Day on February 17th

The North Tonawanda Middle School will be having a ½ day on Friday, February 17th with students being dismissed at 10:30am.

There will be parent-teacher meetings in the morning and afternoon to make up for the day lost for the 12/23 snow day.

Drake Students Enjoy Museum Visit



Thanks to the generosity of the Friends of Drake, our third graders at Drake had a field trip to the Ralph C. Wilson Children's museum in Buffalo. A world-class children's museum that celebrates the power of child-led play, it has four floors of fun that our students enjoyed immensely!



We are Santa's Elves

Some of our staff had a great time at our Winter School Spirit week. Here are Mrs. Golach and Mr. Gauld during Christmas Character Day.



Military Day

Military Day is a special event hosted by the Career Center and the High School Counselors, at NTHS.

Students were able to gather information of what opportunities each of the Military branches has to offer. Things such as career opportunities, scholarships, how to get your education paid for, job training, trade skills and more.



District's Facebook Page is a Great Source of News

Did you know the North Tonawanda City School District's Facebook page is a great way to show you what is going on at all our schools? We work hard to make sure our content is informative, entertaining, relevant and interesting. There are also some great podcasts from district representatives on topics of interest to our community. Make sure to Like us @ NTCitySchools

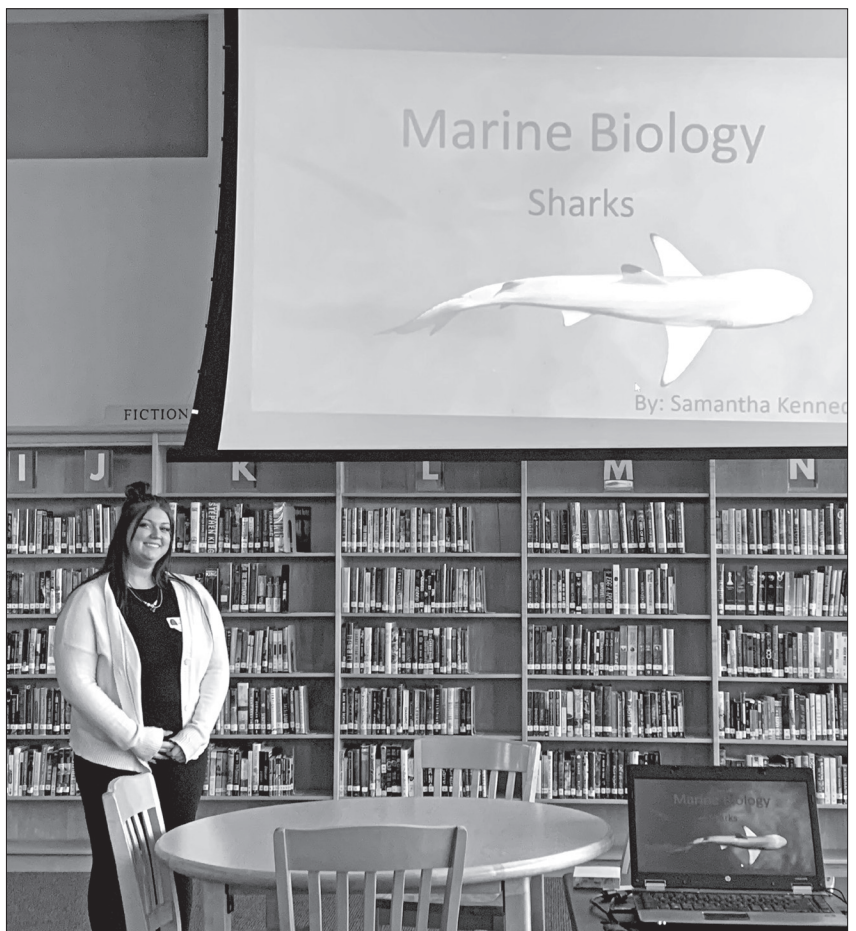
Navy Officer, Music Teachers and Marine Biologist Student Discuss Careers

The Career Center at NT High School presented several speakers to students to talk about their careers. This December, we had First Class Petty Officer AWS1 (NAC/AW) Christopher Fred from the United States Navy to talk about his career with the Freshman Experience classes on “Life in the Military.” He spoke on the many opportunities the students have choosing a military pathway after graduating, such as ROTC programs, paid job training, paid careers, paid education through the GI Bill, scholarships, traveling abroad and early retirement.

We also had 2019 graduate Samantha Kennedy, to speak about Marine Biology. Ms. Kennedy is attending Tampa University for Marine Biology and will be graduating this spring.

And our music teachers, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Bleiler talked with Director of Fine Arts Dean Vallas about careers in music education.

Our students love hearing about different careers!



Gabel Sisters Perform at Radio City Music Hall



Our very own Gabel sisters made their Broadway debut when they opened for The Rockettes at Radio City Music Hall this winter.

Ashlyn, Grace, Macy and Piper were featured in the Christmas Spectacular along with a hand-selected 24 other performers, including Emily Hoder and Benjamin Pajak from Broadway's *The Music Man* and the Rockettes on December 12th in New York City.

The sisters began to get attention for their talents in the summer of 2020 when the pandemic made it hard to participate in singing at school. They started increasing their music lessons at Matt's Music because they were looking for something to occupy their time and keep them from being bored. They began posting music videos of them as a quartet on social media. A video of them singing Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah" in four part harmony, which they performed for their mother's birthday, caught the ear of Tony Award winning singer and actress Laura Benanti. She signed them for her concert "Sunshine Songs" in July of 2020.

Since then, the Gabels have done multiple regional productions and were even cast in the supernatural film series *Paranormal Activity* as Amish sisters singing in German. Grace is also featured in the film *Cabrini* that was filmed in Buffalo last summer. They have also been busy on local stages. Since the theaters started opening up again, the girls returned to the Academy of Theater Arts and began working in school productions. All four of the sisters recently performed at the Lockport Palace Theater in "Mathilda the Musical".

There have been a lot of doors opening for the sisters and their parents Tara and Matt, both teachers, have been making sure to keep a healthy school and performance balance. "We really want them to just have fun with these experiences," says Mrs. Gabel. "We are very grateful to the many talented music teachers in NT and to their teachers at Matt's Music Zach Carr and Kimberly Potfora. They had a lot to do with how well prepared they are for something like this."



The Gift of Song

Second graders at Drake Elementary School entertained the residents at Bishop Gibbons before the holidays. The students sang some holiday favorites much to the delight of everyone at the facility.



Learning About Career and Tech Ed

On December 20th and 21st, the 8th grade class had the opportunity to attend a field trip to the Orleans/Niagara BOCES' Niagara Career and Technical Education Center, where they observed high school seniors learning and working collaboratively in 14 different programs.

Both teachers and students explained their respective programs, class requirements and job outlooks with NTMS students. They also learned about Work Based Learning (WBL) opportunities and heard about SkillsUSA competitions.

This was a great experience for students to get them thinking about their future and learn about the opportunities available to them in the coming years.



Pastor Chad Gives Thanks for Boxes of Hope

“The response to our call to our community to come alongside of helping us to provide groceries and gifts to families in North Tonawanda overwhelms me every year,” says Chad Rieselman, Pastor of Lumber City Church in North Tonawanda. “To know that families will have ways to celebrate, and a little bit of food on the shelf for the winter break fills my heart. We are really changing the world together! Close to \$25,000 worth of groceries and gifts were delivered through this year’s outreach event to close to 200 families. It is true that it is more blessed to give than to receive. A blessing like this is returned to the giver! My prayer is that blessing continues to reverberate in the hearts of our great neighbors and the NT Police and Fire Departments throughout the year and as it continues to bless us, it also prompts us to continue to love our neighbors beyond these Box of Hope, outreach events!”



Tree Lighting and Auction Spreads Holiday Cheer

The tree-lighting ceremony and silent tree auction at the North Tonawanda High School is a wonderful way to celebrate the holiday spirit with all our staff, students and our families. December 8th attendees had a great time enjoying the music from our band, pizza from Wurlitzer, ice cream from Jamie's, apple cider, crafts, story time in the library and a visit from St. Nick!





Cultural Awareness Fridays

By NTMS Newspaper Staff



The Middle School morning announcement crew and our English Language Learners are joining forces on Fridays. Every Friday a different culture is highlighted on the announcements. The speakers share facts, greetings, and cultural traditions to help our school community be more inclusive.

With many new students arriving, and trying to fit in to our school, it was important that we also acknowledged the unique and interesting things about their cultures! Lexi Pytlik stated, "Spreading awareness about other cultures helps everyone feel comfortable and celebrated." Our English Language Learners are hoping that this positively impacts our students and faculty and creates opportunities for conversation. They hope it will help eliminate biases and discrimination and people feel more open minded and appreciative. The students are looking forward to many more Cultural Awareness Fridays to come, and excited to learn about all the diversity in NTMS.



Career and Tech Ed Exploration

On December 16th, school counselors organized a field trip for sophomores to visit Orleans/Niagara BOCES' Niagara Career and Technical Education Center to explore the career technical programs.



You Aren't Such a Mean One Mr. Grinch

Drake Elementary students helped the Grinch's heart grow as they displayed acts of kindness towards one another. The students had a great time hanging with the Grinch also known as Leah Manth (Social Worker intern) and her therapy dog Dasher who got into the act by playing Max.



NCMEA All-County Band

By: Brandon Burgess – 6th Grade Band Director at NTI

North Tonawanda Intermediate is thrilled to send 29 students to participate in the 2023 NCMEA (Niagara County Music Educators Association) All-County Band Festival.

The students were selected through a competitive audition where they had to perform a solo, 3-7 scales, and a short sight-reading example. From there, the students received a score out of 100, and the top scores of the day made the All-County Band. The students that were selected to participate will travel to NCCC (Niagara County Community College) in Sanborn on February 10th and 11th to play with the top musicians in 4th, 5th, and 6th grade from across Niagara County. The musicians will perform a concert to showcase their hard work on February 11th at NCCC.

The students worked incredibly hard, and we are so excited for them!



Front Row: Parker Koziol, Lily Day, Sophie Stimson, Gianna Kingsley, Robert Bohnstadt, Katie Steele, Jacob Price, Allyson Royer, Alaina Dickey, Emalynn Robinson, Logan McQuiggin, Brandon Musilowski.

Back Row: Kaleb Clarke, Natalie Valint, Taylin Bush, Piper Haskell, Nash Geartz, Roman Meyer, Jayce Anderson, Ashlyn Gabel, Grace Gabel, Andrew Santo, Peyton Garver, Lily Sack, Jennifer Young, Destiny Veiders, Matthew Pawlak, Stone Kozlowski.

Not Pictured: Henry Stevens

Spruce Students Recognized for Their Character

Spruce Elementary is thrilled to bring back in-person school-wide Character Education assemblies to recognize their outstanding students. The students and faculty at Spruce are happy to be together once again as a whole school in their auditorium.

Every other month, a student from each classroom is recognized and presented with a Character or Principal's Award. School Counselor Chris Zon says the Character Trait changes every other month, and each classroom receives a lesson from him or School Social Worker Liz Aures on that topic. This year for the Respect Lesson, Mr. Zon and Ms. Aures had each student talk about a time they were respectful and draw or write it on a paper hand which was then used to create an awesome mural project. After that, teachers select who represents this trait in their classroom. The Principal's Award recognizes students who have made progress in the classroom academically.

At a recent Respect Assembly, students were honored on stage as leaders at Spruce for either being extra respectful or earning the Principal's Award. "We look forward to the rest of our school wide assemblies to honor those who represent Kindness, Honest, and Responsibility as well as those who continue to grow academically," says Mr. Zon.



Respect Award Winners.



Principal's Award Winners.



NORTH TONAWANDA
CITY SCHOOLS
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Scholarship Winners

We are so proud of our scholarship winners! Congratulations go to Paige Colegrove. She was accepted to SUNY Brockport and received the Gold Scholarship and the Residential Scholars Award. Benjamin Cabontog received \$12,500 a year from Daemen University and will major in Physical Therapy and Skyla Behrens received \$21,000 a year from Niagara University where she will major in Nursing



Benjamin and Skyla with School Counselor Lynn Wright.



Paige with School Counselor Lynn Wright.