



# Tiger TRADITIONS

*Inspiring Excellence and Leadership in All!*

Fall Newsletter 2024 Volume 30 • Issue 1

## Tiger girls soccer reaches first-ever **Sectional Final**



The Mexico Tigers varsity girls soccer team became the first soccer team, boys or girls, to reach the Section III finals during a very successful fall 2024 campaign.

The team earned the third seed in the Class A playoffs, and defeated Homer in a home game before defeating Jamesville-DeWitt in the semifinals at a neutral site.

The Tigers ultimately fell in the Sectional final against top-seeded New Hartford, but coaches and officials praised the team's incredible run. The team is coached by Martin Charles, with Christopher Harter serving as assistant coach.



## Mexico BOE approves **SRO hires** at all three elementary schools



*Pictured in September are Mexico Middle School SRO Jamey Locastro and Mexico High School SRO Mike Martin. The district's Board of Education at a recent meeting approved the creation of SRO positions for all three elementary schools in the district.*

In a move to enhance safety across all levels, the Mexico Academy & Central School District Board of Education has approved hiring School Resource Officers (SROs) for its three elementary schools.

The search for SROs at Mexico, New Haven, and Palermo elementary schools has already begun, according to district administrators.

"We are excited to announce the creation of three additional School Resource Officer positions at our elementary schools," said MACS Superintendent Dr. Donna Runner. "Ensuring the safety and well-being of our students and staff is our top priority, and these new appointments will strengthen our efforts to maintain a secure and supportive learning environment."

This decision is part of MACS's broader initiative to enhance safety for all students and staff, officials noted.

The presence of SROs in elementary schools aims to address safety concerns proactively, ensuring that students and staff feel secure and supported. They will work closely with the school community to promote a culture of safety and respect, similar to how officers Mike Martin and Jamey Locastro already serve Mexico High School and Mexico Middle School.

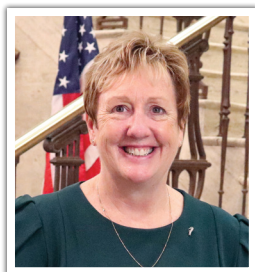
"Our dedicated SROs are vital in building positive relationships, offering guidance, and ensuring a safe environment for everyone," said Dr. Runner. "These new positions reinforce our commitment to creating a secure, nurturing, and inclusive atmosphere for all our students."

More updates will be provided as the district progresses with these important additions. The superintendent thanked the community for its continued support in making MACS a safe place for learning and growth.



## A message from the Superintendent

**Dear MACS School Family and Community,**



As we embrace the vibrant colors and crisp air of fall, I am pleased to share some important updates regarding our district's efforts to support our students and staff during some challenging times.

Over the past few years, our district has been proactive in seeking and securing funding through various emergency acts designed to

support schools. We successfully applied for and were approved for funding through the following programs:

- GEER (Governor's Emergency Education Relief)
- ESSER I, II, and III (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)
- ARP Homeless Children and Youth Part I and II (American Rescue Plan)

These funds were specifically allocated to help districts prepare for and respond to the coronavirus pandemic. Our primary focus has been on maintaining the health and safety of our students and staff while ensuring the continuity of learning.

Initially, the funds were used to implement necessary health and safety measures, such as enhanced cleaning protocols, personal protective equipment, and technology to support remote learning. As we moved forward, we recognized the need to address the gaps in learning that emerged due to the pandemic.

With this in mind, we have directed a large portion of the funds toward initiatives aimed at closing these gaps. This includes additional academic support, mental health resources, and programs designed to help our students catch up and thrive.

During the life of the grant, we were able to create several key positions, many of which we have successfully maintained even after the last of the funding ended in September of this year. Additionally, we used the funds to upgrade

our air handling units, replace gas lines and remediate lead issues in the district. We also purchased numerous student resources and made significant upgrades to our technological infrastructure.

For a more detailed understanding of these expenditures, you can view a presentation I shared with the Board of Education on our website. I am proud to say that we maintain a fiscally-sound financial program within the district and am grateful to everyone for their support.

On a more somber note, we have seen an uptick in the number of threatening social media posts in the district. We strictly follow our safety protocols and Code of Conduct, and we press any and all applicable charges through law enforcement. We will continue to support our students in handling emotional responses and using social media appropriately. I ask that you have conversations with your children about the anxiety that can be caused by these types of threats on social media and encourage anyone to share any concerning posts with an adult. The adage, "See something, say something," is more important than ever. Safety is a priority for our school family, and we will do everything we can to maintain that safe, nurturing environment for our scholars.

In closing, our mission to educate and motivate our students to be successful, responsible citizens remains at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to inspiring excellence and leadership in all our students, fostering an environment where they can thrive and achieve their fullest potential. Together, we will continue to build a community that values education, integrity, and the well-being of every individual. We appreciate your unwavering support and dedication to our shared vision.

***Thank you for partnering with us to educate your child!***

Sincerely,

*Donna Runner*

**Dr. Donna Runner, Superintendent**

## Core memories: New Haven UPK takes class trip to apple orchard



The New Haven Elementary Universal Pre-Kindergarten program took a trip to Appledale Orchards in the village of Mexico during an early fall day.

Students learned about the business before they were able to take to the orchard themselves, picking apples and learning about the fruits along the way.

MACS offers a full-day pre-K program at all three of its elementary schools, and more information can be found on the MACS website, [mexicocsd.org](http://mexicocsd.org).





## MACS faculty, staff learn from AI expert Holly Clark

Just before the school year kicked off, Mexico Academy & Central School District welcomed back all staff during Opening Day, which was keynoted by Holly Clark. Clark is an expert in the field of Artificial Intelligence within the classroom setting and offered her thoughts and advice on the future of AI, along with how it is impacting now and what effects may be down the road.



## Children's author Stanley Tucker inspires students at Palermo Elementary

Palermo Elementary School recently welcomed back children's author, literacy advocate, children's show host and kindness ambassador, Stanley Tucker.

Known for his enthusiastic storytelling and uplifting messages, Tucker travels nationwide sharing his personal journey while spreading powerful lessons about kindness, character, and the importance of dreaming big.

With a message centered around his latest book, "The Impressions We Give," Tucker emphasized the significance of impressing others not through material possessions, but by how you treat people.

Tucker also introduced students to his "Share Your Story" writing program, which empowers young authors to write and publish their own books. The program guides children through the entire writing process, allowing them to express their creativity and tell their unique stories.



Author Stanley Tucker shows off some of his published books during a visit to Palermo Elementary.

## Mexico Elementary parades around town during beautiful Halloween Day

The weather was outstanding for the annual Mexico Elementary School parade, which wrapped around one village block and featured all the students in the school. Great costumes and creativity were on display, and then students returned to classrooms for Halloween parties.





## Tiger volleyball teams raise money to **Spike Out Cancer**

The Mexico Tigers volleyball program came together to Spike Out Cancer, raising money through a basket raffle and donation event during a recent game. The Tigers' opponent, Westhill, also raised funds for the occasion.

In total, the teams raised just less than \$2,000, which will go toward a breast cancer society, according to Coach Lindsay Rodas.

"The athletes wanted to do a 'Pink Out' game and raise awareness! It was fitting to go pink in October," said Rodas. "The girls from both Westhill and Mexico sold shirts as to raise awareness as well."



## Mexico Elementary students learn **Fire Safety**

Students throughout Mexico Elementary took part in annual fire safety awareness and training, with firefighters from the Mexico Volunteer Fire Department on hand.

Firefighters gave students important information on fire safety before showing one of the MVFD trucks and finally allowing students to climb through the firetruck themselves.



## Homecoming 2024 capped off with parade, Tiger football win

Mexico's annual fall Homecoming traditions came to a crescendo with a new parade route around Mexico Elementary and the high school.

High school classes were represented along with several sports teams and local youth programs, and the crowd was in spirited form lining the sidewalk.

The Tiger football team won its homecoming game that followed, 47-28, against Oswego.

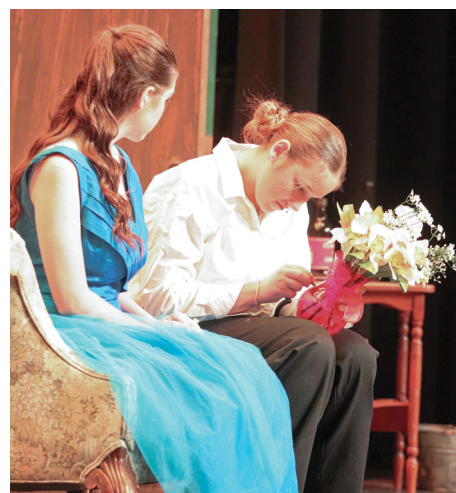




## 'The Play That Goes Wrong' gets audiences laughing at MHS

Mexico High School's Drama Club staged "The Play That Goes Wrong" two nights in November at the Avery Skinner Auditorium. The play was well-

attended and the comedic show left the audiences entertained and laughing both evenings.





## MACS District field restoration continues

The following are updates to the ongoing capital project work, specifically areas that impact our student-athletes and Mexico Tigers athletic programs. Stay tuned for further updates on additional areas.

### INFIELD RESTORATIONS COMPLETED

Officials are excited to announce the completion of infield restorations on Field #2 (High School Softball) and Field #7 (Varsity Baseball behind the Middle School). The restoration process involved:

- Shaving off the humps of clay that had built up over the years.
- Shooting elevations and installing 20 tons of new clay to ensure proper drainage.
- Installing sod to re-establish sharp baselines and seeding the disturbed areas.
- Rolling the fields to eliminate any humps or irregularities.

We aerated the fields to see if it will help with drainage in the spring. MACS also has left a small amount of clay on each field to fill any minor low spots that may appear after rain.

### ONGOING WORK ON FIELD #6

Restoration work has begun on Field #6 (JV/Modified Baseball upper field behind the Middle School). Although this field required less work, it still

needed attention. The process includes:

- Shaving off the old clay humps.
- Ordering more sod to re-establish baselines.
- Reusing some of the old clay to level low spots.

Officials said they are hopeful that the weather will cooperate so work can be completed before the snow arrives, ensuring the field is ready for the coming spring.

### EXPECTATIONS FOR SPRING

- High School Softball Field: The field should be 100% ready in the spring, with new grass growth around the infield. Continuous maintenance will be required to address any low spots that develop with use.
- Middle School Varsity Field: The field will be in good shape, but an underground spring near third base may cause the area to remain softer than the rest of the infield. Despite having adequate pitch, the soil composition seems to be a factor. We plan to aerate the outfield before the snow arrives to improve drainage in the spring.

Administrators thanked the community for their patience and support through the ongoing field work and athletic upgrades and encouraged anyone to reach out via the District Office with questions or concerns.



## Families, community welcomed during Middle School Open House

Mexico Middle School held its traditional Open House early in the school year, with families and community members welcomed to explore the building and meet staff.

There was a strong turnout at the grades five through eight school, with a lot of parents meeting their students' teachers for the first time and learning about their classes, areas of study and schedules.





## Middle school students strut their stuff at annual Turkey Trot

Mexico Middle School's annual turkey trot drew hundreds of participants, with students taking off around the back fields during a cool autumn afternoon. The race is organized by longtime middle school health teacher Mr. Richard Lenahan.



## Off to see the wizard: Photos from Mexico MS's Wizard of Oz

The Mexico Middle School fall musical followed the yellow brick road to Oz, with three showings of Wizard of Oz: Junior Edition staged by the large cast of students Nov. 15 and 16. The show was directed and choreographed by Corinne Upcraft, with Rebecca Smith assistant directing and providing vocal direction.





## BOARD OF EDUCATION

James Emery, *President*  
Darlene Upcraft, *Vice President*  
Chad Bigelow  
Connie Douglas  
Merrilee Gorton  
Amy Shaw  
Susan Teifke  
Zoe Grzesik, *Student Representative*

## SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Dr. Donna Runner  
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## New Haven 4th graders learn water safety at HS pool

Students from New Haven Elementary's fourth grade recently bused to the high school for its turn in the pool for lessons on swimming, water safety and to enjoy the water. In addition to getting to show off their swimming abilities, students learned water techniques and skills which could assist in a real water emergency, and also learned how to be safe around water.



### MISSION:

Educate and motivate our students to be successful, responsible citizens.

### VISION:

Recognized as a school district that inspires excellence and leadership in all!

### CORE BELIEFS:

- We put students first.
- All students can learn.
- We provide a safe, secure environment for all.
- Collaboration among students, staff, families and the community is essential to our success.
- Our schools are the heart of the community.
- We value creativity and innovation.
- We lead with honesty and integrity.
- Our supportive and rigorous learning environment nurtures the whole child.
- All are treated with dignity, respect and compassion.

## Upcoming Events

Dec. 3: HS Parent/Teacher Conferences, 6 p.m.  
Dec. 5: BOE Workshop Meeting, DO Boardroom, 6 p.m.  
Dec. 6: PAL PTC Holiday Shop, 6 p.m.  
Dec. 10: HS Clubs and Groups Photos  
Dec. 10: NH PTC, 3:30 p.m.  
Dec. 10: MS 5th Grade Band/Chorus, 6 p.m.  
MS 6th Grade Band/Chorus, 7 p.m.  
Dec. 11: HS Holiday Concert, HS Aud., 6 p.m.  
Dec. 12: PAL Chorus Concert, MS Aud., 6 p.m.  
Dec. 13: 15-Week Marking Period Ends  
Dec. 14: All-County HS Chorus Auditions at Central Square  
Dec. 17: PAL PTC, 5 p.m.  
Dec. 17: ME/NH Chorus Concert, 6 p.m.  
Dec. 18: Monthly Virtual Town Hall w/ Dr. Runner, Zoom, 6 p.m.  
Dec. 18: 7/8 Band/Chorus Winter Concert, 7 p.m.  
Dec. 19: BOE Business Meeting, New Haven Elem., 6 p.m.  
Dec. 23-Jan. 3: **No School – Holiday Recess**  
Jan. 1, 2025: **Happy New Year!**  
Jan. 6: Modified Wrestling, Girls Basketball and Boys Swim start date  
Jan. 7: OCMEA Scholarship Auditions  
Jan. 9: BOE Workshop, DO Boardroom, 6 p.m.  
Jan. 10: PAL PTC Family Book Night, 6 p.m.  
Jan. 10-11: All-County Band at Oswego  
Jan. 20: **No School - Martin Luther King Jr. Day**  
Jan. 21-24: Winter Regents Examinations  
Jan. 27: Half Day, PK-8 Only - Records Day  
Jan. 29: **No School - Lunar New Year**