



# Tiger TRADITIONS

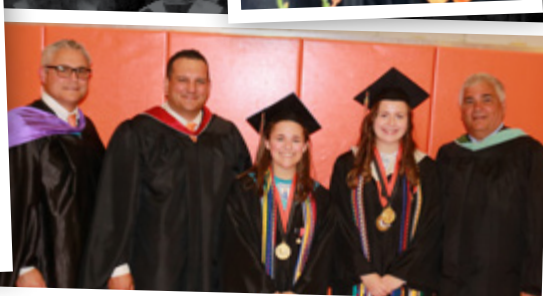
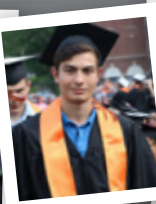
*Inspiring Excellence and Leadership in All!*

July/August 2019 Volume 25 • Issue 1



## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF

2019



**Mexico Middle School  
Val & Sal**

**Valedictorian: Colin O'Neill  
Salutatorian: Owen Marsden**

## PHOTOS FROM HS AWARDS, MS MOVING UP CEREMONY (PAGES 6-7)

For district information including a calendar of events, MACS Board of Education meeting dates and times, contact information and more, visit the district website at

[www.mexicocsd.org](http://www.mexicocsd.org)





# A Message from the Superintendent



I hope this Tiger Traditions edition finds you enjoying our wonderful summer weather! The 2018-2019 school year was another fantastic year at MACS! We have successes to celebrate and wonderful opportunities to look forward to in the coming school year!

First, I would again like to congratulate our 2019 MACS graduates! They are such a wonderful group of young adults. Some were the first babies born in the 21st century, and I am certain they all will have a profound and positive impact on our world!

I would also like to add that our graduates earned more than \$58,000 in scholarships and awards, including \$16,000 under the Dollars for Scholars umbrella. I thank all our incredibly supportive and generous benefactors and strongly encourage all our students to apply for scholarship money!

As you know, the use of technology in personal and professional arenas is becoming more prevalent with time. This use will continue to grow as our students transition out of our schools and into their post-graduate lives. To ensure that we are preparing our students for their futures, we have provided 1 to 1 technology devices for each student in our District. Our rollout was one of the smoothest any District has experienced. It is another reason why we have the best staff, students and families! I thank everyone for supporting what's best for our students, including our wonderful Board of Education members. I look forward to continuing the refinement of distribution, use and collection of these devices.

We continue to participate in collaborative professional development, which is county wide for the Oswego County Reading Initiative to improve reading achievement for all students. I thank everyone for their continued dedication, commitment and flexibility in participating in this professional development; it is resulting in increased student reading achievement.

I also want to let you know that we keep track of graduation rates for the students attending our high school. (Please note that the State Education Department

measures all our students, including those who are placed in programs outside of our District, which results in different numbers.) Our calculations have shown an increase in the measure of our graduation rate, from 82% in 2015 to 93% this year.

We are working on fixing the lack of rainwater drainage for our baseball and middle school fields. The maintenance drainage work is scheduled to be completed this fall and should result in the use of our fields for the spring of 2020.

You may have noticed that the retaining walls next to the dam at our high school are deteriorating. We are currently working on a plan to resolve the deterioration.

Finally, I wanted to let you know that since the expiration of the most recent FitzPatrick Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement, we were faced with another tax certiorari lawsuit over Fitzpatrick's full assessed value. In addition to preparing to defend this case, we also participated in trying to reach a fair PILOT agreement.

Please know that while I feel it is fair to all other taxpayers and our students for FitzPatrick to pay taxes on their full assessed value, the uncertainty of litigation outcomes and the extremely high costs of legally defending this type of lawsuit necessitates trying to conclude this issue with the most fair PILOT agreement possible. I am happy to report that after more than a year of negotiations, we have arrived at a 5-year PILOT agreement that is approximately \$2 million more per year than the previous agreement. Equally important, it stabilizes our revenue expectations for the next 5 years.

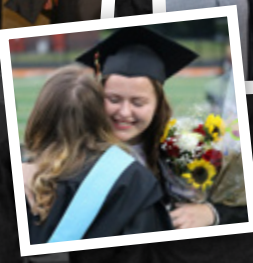
As always, please feel free to contact me anytime through my email: [sbruno@mexicocsd.org](mailto:sbruno@mexicocsd.org), my office phone: 315-963-8400, or my cell: 315-200-9542.

I wish you a wonderful, safe and enjoyable summer and look forward to the start of school!

Happy Summer!

Sean C. Bruno

## MORE GRADUATION PHOTOS



## Proud to be MACS



### April Proud to be MACS Honoree

**Donna Handley**, a teacher at Mexico Elementary School, was selected as the April 2019 Proud to be MACS honoree.

A graduate of Oswego High School, Handley earned her bachelor's degree with a major in education and psychology from SUNY Potsdam before returning to Oswego County for her master's degree from SUNY Oswego with a concentration focusing on the learning

disabled and gifted.

After starting her career with the Oswego City School District as a reading intern, Handley moved to what she would eventually call her "home away from home," at Mexico Elementary teaching third grade in 1987. Throughout her years, she has taught students in the first through fifth grade.

When asked about her favorite part of the job, Donna responded that it was working with the wonderful students and staff of Mexico Elementary. Another great source of pride occurred this year when three of her students were crowned Oswego County Battle of the Books champions. Nominator and fellow teacher Kate LaDuc mentioned that Donna often gave up her lunch time to work with the students to prepare them for this competition.

"She is a terrific teacher who truly cares for her students," LaDuc added. "She is committed to her students and wants them to believe she cares and understands. She goes above and beyond to help boost students' self-esteem and confidence."

Shannon Bigelow, another of Donna's nominators who now teaches at Mexico High School, recalled fondly her time as a member of Handley's third-grade class dozens of years ago.

"I was going through some things that were big to me, and Mrs. Handley was kind, understanding and compassionate," said Bigelow. "She gave me space to grow into myself and spoke encouragement into my life. I still remember that. Our district is better because she has been part of it."

Along the way to becoming such a revered teacher, Handley married Tom, the owner of Burke's Lumber in Oswego and had two children, Zachary and Senna.

Handley was recognized at June's Board of Education meeting as a retiree for her many dedicated years of service to MACS.



### May Proud to be MACS Honoree

**Linda Daly**, a longtime teacher at Mexico Elementary, was honored at a recent Board of Education meeting as the May 2019 Proud to be MACS honoree.

After growing up in the village of Mexico, Daly graduated from Mexico High School in 1982 and decided to continue her education locally by earning her undergraduate and master's degrees from SUNY Oswego.

Daly was hired in 1986 for a first-grade teaching position at Mexico Elementary. She would teach first grade for seven years. Ironically enough, Linda's daughter Catherine is teaching in the same classroom her mother began teaching in decades ago.

Though Daly started in first grade, the bulk of her career has been spent teaching fourth-graders. Fellow fourth-grade teacher and nominator Kate LaDuc said it was plain to see how much Daly cares about her students.

"She goes above and beyond to show she loves her students," LaDuc said. "She works to make sure all their needs are met and puts in many extra hours for the well-being of her students."

LaDuc added that many former students would return to Daly's classroom after moving to higher grades or graduating to seek advice.

According to Daly, her favorite part of the job is the sense of family that exists at Mexico Elementary. She said she truly believes every single staff member is there for all students.

Daly noted that she views her work not as a job, but a vacation. When asked for her favorite memory, Daly responded that she has too many memories to single out just one.

"Teaching at Mexico has provided me with a lifetime of memories!" she declared.

In June, Daly was recognized by the Board of Education as a 2019 retiree from MACS.

### June Proud to be MACS Honoree



### Jamie Battles,

a longtime mathematics teacher at Mexico High School, has been chosen as the June 2019 Proud to be MACS recipient.

Growing up in North Scriba, Battles attended MACS and graduated from the High School in 1982 before earning her undergraduate and master's degrees locally at SUNY Oswego.

In 1986, Battles returned to her alma mater as an algebra teacher at Mexico High School.

Today, in addition to her classroom responsibilities, Battles serves as advisor for the Math Honor Society, an advisor for the Class of 2020 and is part of the dynamic team that stages the annual Top 100 dinner. Battles also spends some of her free time tutoring and assisting students.

"Jamie is always available for any MACS student for whatever circumstance, whether they are assigned to her class or not," said nominator Darlene Upcraft. "Jamie has, over the years, tutored high-performing students as well as the not-so-high-performing students on her own time."

Battles said her favorite part of the job is working with students and seeing their eyes light up when a concept is finally achieved and understood.

"Jamie is always able to relate math concepts to her students," said Upcraft. "Often you hear people say 'My kid couldn't understand a math issue and they

went to see Jamie after school and got it."

Along the way, Battles married her husband Tom and raised two children, Matthew and Margaret, who also graduated from MACS.

When asked about her favorite memory, Battles responded, "Every day is a memory."

**"CREATIVITY IS  
INTELLIGENCE  
HAVING FUN."**

—Albert Einstein



## HS robotics team wins at states, competes at world competition

It was a strong and successful first year for Mexico High School's VEX Robotics team, earning a state title and competing at the world competition in Louisville in its debut season.

After qualifying for the state competition by winning an event in Liverpool, Team T.O.R.Q. (Tigers Operating Robots Questionably) captured the New York state title in early March. The victory qualified Mexico for the world competition.

In a field against hundreds of other teams, Mexico finished 58th overall. Students were tasked with coding and designing their own robot to compete in a pre-selected game. Mr. Galen Fellows advises the group.

The MACS Board of Education honored the team for its tremendous first season at its May business meeting, pictured above. The group has been working throughout the summer, already preparing for next season's competitions.



## Emergency responders visit summer Learn to Swim program during Safety Day



*Miranda Shafer, an emergency responder pictured at left, recently visited Mexico's Learn to Swim program on Safety Day to share safety tips with the class. Shafer graduated from Mexico in 2016.*

A pair of Mexico graduates who work as emergency responders recently returned to Mexico High School to share safety tips and details with youths in the summer Learn to Swim program.

During the program's safety day, Mexico alumni Miranda Shafer and Michael Guzman spent a portion of the time talking about what to do in an emergency, when to call 911 and what information they should know ahead of time.

Shafer, who graduated from MACS in 2016, is a member of North Oswego County Ambulance and New Haven Volunteer Fire Department. Guzman, a 2017 Mexico graduate, is a responder with McFee and Menter ambulance services in addition to New Haven VFD.

Lindsay Rodas, the coordinator of Mexico's Learn to Swim program, thanked both Shafer and Guzman for coming out and speaking with the classes. Learn to Swim is offered every summer for kids ages 6 months and older for all ability levels. More information can be found at [mexicocsd.org](http://mexicocsd.org).

## Mexico Elementary students learn water safety

Late in the school year, students from Mexico Elementary, pictured, visited the High School pool for water safety instruction from physical education teacher Shawn Parkhurst. The other elementary schools also visited on different days to learn about floats, kicks and water safety.



## Palermo UPK graduation honors hard work



Palermo Elementary School Universal pre-Kindergarten students perform during the program's graduation ceremony, which signified the students' readiness to move onto kindergarten within the Mexico Academy & Central School District.



# Mexico joining Harvard center to help study and improve rural education

The Mexico Academy and Central School District recently joined 50 rural schools as a part of the National Center for Rural Education Research Networks (NCRERN), an initiative of the Center for Education Policy Research (CEPR) at Harvard University.

Funded by the Institute of Education Sciences at the U.S. Department of Education, the district will have the opportunity to apply the Proving Ground model of evidence-based improvement to address chronic absenteeism, college readiness and college enrollment.

"We are incredibly proud MACS was chosen as a partner in leading this important work," Mexico Superintendent Sean Bruno said. "Our selection is another recognition of the extraordinary efforts that our students and staff put forth every day as well as the tremendous support from our Board of Education. As part of the National Center for Rural Education Research Networks, we look forward to developing and sharing innovative practices to support increased student successes."

NCRERN will produce tools for identifying students most at risk for absenteeism and being unprepared for college as well as change management resources designed to guide rural schools in addressing chronic absenteeism, college readiness



and college enrollment. Throughout the five years, the center's member districts will collaborate on shared challenges, learning from one another to guide future work on school improvement.

"The network brings together our expertise in strategic management and analytics and our partners' expertise in supporting rural students," said Bi Vuong, Proving Ground director and NCRERN interim director. "We are excited to have the opportunity to collaborate with districts committed to learning with us and sharing their expertise with each other."

Applicants were chosen based on alignment between the district's strategic goals and the work of the center, capacity to utilize data for decision-making, commitment to continuous improvement

practices and geographic distribution.

"The districts selected to be part of the National Center for Rural Education Research Network deserve congratulations," said Capital Region BOCES District Superintendent Anita Murphy. "Their selection represents a uniquely valuable opportunity for them to bring the power of evidence and the Proving Ground improvement model to bear on some of the most pressing issues facing rural districts including chronic absenteeism and college readiness and enrollment. I look forward to learning alongside our districts as they work to improve student outcomes together."

**Funding:** The Institute of Education Sciences is awarding \$10 million to support the National Center for Rural Education Research Networks; it is being

cost shared by IES (91%) and the CEPR at Harvard University and its partners, New York and Ohio (9%).

## About the CEPR at Harvard University:

The Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University seeks to transform education through quality research and evidence. CEPR and its partners believe all students will learn and thrive when education leaders make decisions using facts and findings, rather than untested assumptions. More at [cepr.harvard.edu](http://cepr.harvard.edu).

## About Proving Ground: Proving Ground,

a CEPR initiative, works to make evidence-gathering and evidence-use an intuitive part of how education agencies conduct their daily work. Proving Ground utilizes a continuous improvement framework to help agencies rapidly identify and test solutions to specific challenges. Learn more at [provingground.cepr.harvard.edu](http://provingground.cepr.harvard.edu).

## About the Institute of Education

**Sciences:** The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) is the independent and non-partisan statistics, research, and evaluation arm of the U.S. Department of Education. Their mission is to provide scientific evidence on which to ground education practice and policy and to share this information in formats that are useful and accessible to educators, parents, policymakers, researchers, and the public. Learn more at <https://ies.ed.gov>.

## MACS salutes retirees for years of service



At the June 2019 Board of Education meeting, Mexico Academy and Central Schools recognized more than a dozen staff members and wished them a happy retirement. Pictured are retirees who attended the ceremony. In alphabetical order, this year's retirees included Karen Allen, Pam Bronson, Linda Daly, Lisa Dull, Donna Handley, Jacqueline Havener, Penny Howard, Rita Jardin, Angela LaBoda, Valerie Lewis, Karen Metcalf, Kenneth Ouderkirk, Dian Roberts, Steve Roux, LeAnn Skotniski, Cindy Sprole and Bruce Thompson.

## Donuts with dad attracts dozens to New Haven Elementary



Love, appreciation and doughnuts recently filled the New Haven Elementary School cafeteria as students in grades pre-Kindergarten through four honored positive male role models during the annual Donuts with Dad event.

Sponsored by the school and its parent-teacher club, the event offered a fresh doughnut, milk and juice to each attendee,

as a way to promote family engagement and healthy relationships to help students grow.





GALLERY: Mexico music program holds summer Band Camp at Mexico Middle School





## Middle School holds first Moving Up Ceremony to celebrate 8th-graders' successes



The Class of 2023, which is entering the high school this fall, held the Middle School's first ever "Moving Up" Day ceremony on the last day of school.

Planned by 2018-19 MS Student Council President Sage Clement and Vice President Avery Mack, the day served as a celebration of years of hard work at the middle school for the eighth-graders.

"We wanted to have this ceremony because we experienced so much in so many ways during our middle school years, so I felt we should be recognized, congratulated and proud of it," said Clement.

Held in front of families and friends in the Middle School Auditorium, Principal Kimberly Holliday gave welcoming remarks and words of wisdom to the students headed for the high school.

"Work hard and ask for help when you need it," she said. "Don't wait for your life to begin, it's already happening. Some of your greatest lifelong memories may come from your high school experience. Make them good ones, moments to cherish and

moments you will always be proud of."

The ceremony featured a presentation from Mr. Zach Gilbert and Mrs. Alisha LaRosa, who will advise the Class of 2023 throughout high school. Speeches were then given by Clement, class Valedictorian Colin O'Neill and class Salutatorian Owen Marsden.

Lastly, students were called up on stage to receive their certificates and cross the stage for the last time as Middle School students.

Mack, who is entering eighth grade in the fall, said she hoped to continue this new tradition each year and keep students involved in managing the event.

"The planning process helped us develop skills we'll need in high school and beyond like planning and communication," said Mack. "We want to thank everyone who helped make the program possible."

The program and certificates were designed by Clement and Mack. Delaney Richer and Emily Bennett also volunteered on the project as members of student council.



**Marilyn Hilton Award** 6th grade: Zachary Fox, Timothy Gorman & Cosette Laffan

**Jillian C. Brooks Award** 6th grade: Samuel Warchol – Math | Giana Cutuli – Science

**VFW Award** 7th grade: Williams Mills & Avery Mack

**VFW Award** 8th grade: Cordelia Humiston & Hunter Lasinski

**Metcalf-Pryor Family of Educators Scholarship** 8th Grade: Emma Haney & Avery Mack

**Attorney General's Triple C Award** (*Character, Courage and Commitment*) 8th Grade: Tucker Donath & Lilly Duschen

**Society of Mayflower Descendants in the State of New York** 8th Grade: Kayla Bunce & Thomas Chmielewski

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

James Emery – President  
Darlene Upcraft – Vice President  
Chad Bigelow  
Dennis Brooks  
Connie Douglas  
Amy Shaw  
Susan Teifke  
Samantha Seeburger – Student Representative

## SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Sean Bruno  
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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Aug. 20** MACSFA Stuff-A-Bus School Supply Giveaway, MS Gym 8am
- Aug. 22** Board of Education Meeting, 6pm
- Aug. 22** Kindergarten Screening @ NH Elementary
- Aug. 27** Palermo Kindergarten Orientation, 6pm
- Aug. 28** New Haven Kindergarten Orientation, 6pm
- Aug. 29** Mexico Elem. Kindergarten Orientation, 6pm
- Aug. 29** High School Freshman Orientation, 6pm
- Sept. 4** First Day for Students
- Sept. 5-6** Pre-K Screening
- Sept. 9** Pre-K Bus Run
- Sept. 10** First Day for Pre-K
- Sept. 12** Board of Education Meeting, 6pm
- Sept. 12-13** New Haven Grandparents Luncheon
- Sept. 18** High School Open House, 6pm
- Sept. 19** Mexico Elem. Open House
- Sept. 23-27** High School Spirit Week
- Sept. 23** HS Picture Day
- Sept. 26** Board of Education Workshop, 6pm
- Sept. 26** HS Pep Rally and Powder Puff Game
- Sept. 27** HS Homecoming Parade, Football Game and Dance
- Sept. 28** Pop Warner Day
- Sept. 30** Mexico Elem. Picture Day
- Sept. 30** After School Academic Program (ASAP) Begins
- Sept. 30** 4th Gr. Beginning Band Night, MS Aud. 6pm

## Block 'M' Awards touts successful sports season

The annual Block M Athletic Awards celebrated athletes and teams for hard work on and off the field this season.

The reception, held June 5 in Mexico High School's gym, saw a trio of Mexico alumni inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame and several scholarships awarded.

Senior Brionna Emery and junior William "Buddy" Ruby were honored as the Laurence "Sparky" Rector Athletes of the Year, the final award given out at the end of the night.

The three inductees into this year's Athletic Hall of Fame class were Russell Daniels ('02), William Dumas ('56) and Blaine Wills ('90).

After special awards and scholarships were given out, coaches took the stage to speak about their team's triumphs this season and name an MVP.

Listed at right are the winners of special awards and team MVPs for the 2018-19 school year:

### Special Awards

**Laurence 'Sparky' Rector Athlete of the Year:** William Ruby and Brionna Emery. **Fan of the Year:** Forrest Meeks. **Section 3 Cheer Scholarship:** Sheila Wallis. **Linda Beyer-Shoults/Dollars for Scholars Memorial Award:** Jolie Pelow. **Edward E. Albright Memorial Award:** Dylan Long and Rachel Rose. **Brian Ariola Award:** Rachel Rose. **Charles Giovo II Award:** Destiny Teachout and Logan Craig. **Wally Sutliff Memorial Most Improved Award:** Jolie Pelow and Jared Perkins. **Charles Giovo Sr. Sportsmanship Award:** Aliza Deasy and Connor Spurling.

### Team MVPs

**Baseball:** Thomas Gessner; **Softball:** Kendall Cuyler and Brianna Urquhart; **Boys Basketball:** Connor Spurling and Buddy Ruby; **Girls Basketball:** Brynn Wills; **Boys Diving:** Kian Long; **Boys Swimming:** Dylan Long; **Girls Swimming:** Alexa von Holtz; **Fall Cheerleading:** Sheila Wallis and Molly Blasier; **Winter Cheerleading:** Kierra Webster; **Boys Cross Country:** Evan Ladd; **Girls Cross Country:** Shannon Michaelis; **Football:** Marcus Turo and Isiah Turo; **Girls Indoor Track:** Anna Bigelow (track) and Reatha von Holtz (field); **Boys Indoor Track:** Daniel Gowans (track) and Morgan Derby (field); **Girls Lacrosse:** Brionna Emery; **Girls Outdoor Track:** Adria Ariola and Carolyn Zedack (track); Reatha von Holtz (field); **Boys Outdoor Track:** Daniel Gowans (track) and Morgan Derby (field); **Boys Soccer:** Connor Spurling; **Girls Soccer:** Brionna Emery; **Boys Tennis:** Joe Ocker and Neil Deloch; **Girls Tennis:** Kimberly Heagerty; **Boys Golf:** Connor Revette; **Girls Volleyball:** Aliza Deasy; **Weight Training:** Jonathan Rasbeck and Tim Dullen; **Wrestling:** Dean Shambo; **Hockey:** Ryan Mosher.