

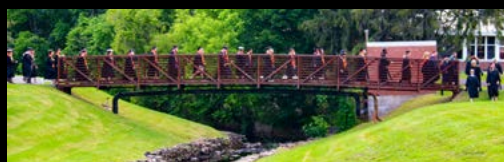
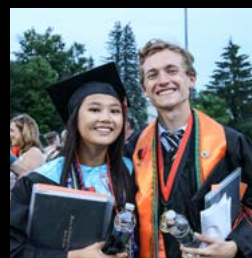


# Tiger TRADITIONS

*Inspiring Excellence and Leadership in All!*

July/August 2021 Volume 27 • Issue 4

## Congratulations CLASS OF 2021



**MORE GRADUATION PHOTOS ON PAGES 2 AND 8.**

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

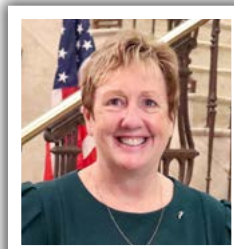
[www.Mexicocsd.org](http://www.Mexicocsd.org)





# A message from the Superintendent

**Dear MACS School Family and Community,**



What a challenging year at MACS! Due to the pandemic, we began school offering hybrid and virtual instruction for our scholars. Our school family and community united to support students in what has been a very difficult situation for all involved. Yet, our staff, students and family members strengthened relationships and managed to maintain continuity of learning. By the end of the

academic year, we were able to safely bring back students for in-person instruction four days per week. Loosened COVID restrictions allowed us to host many after-school activities, including fine arts performances, sports and extracurricular clubs. Our graduation ceremony was a fabulous "normal" activity where we were able to celebrate the achievements of the Class of 2021!

Summer programming has been robust, with many students able to participate in learning opportunities. Students in grades pre-K through eight received backpacks with journals, workbooks, fiction and non-fiction books and individual STEM kits to keep at home. I encourage you to have your children read as much as possible and enjoy the activities provided. We are able to offer free breakfast and lunch for children 18 and younger all summer! Call (315) 963-8400, ext. 5017 if you have any questions about how to participate.

I am happy to announce that we are partnering with ConnexCare for a second School-Based Health Center location at Mexico Elementary. The center will serve both the high school and the elementary school. We are putting in the finishing touches, so look for more information coming soon as we are preparing a grand opening!

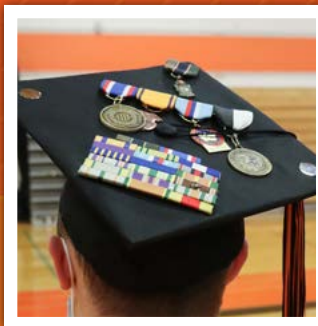
We are excited to be able to open school for 2021-2022 for the full five days of in-person instruction! As we get closer to our first day of school, Sept. 7, I will be able to share more details regarding COVID-19 mitigation protocols.

We are in the process of hiring a new high school principal and are grateful that Assistant Principal Mr. Jim Busco is filling that role as interim. His passion for students and support for staff is evident. I appreciate his leadership and willingness to serve in that capacity.

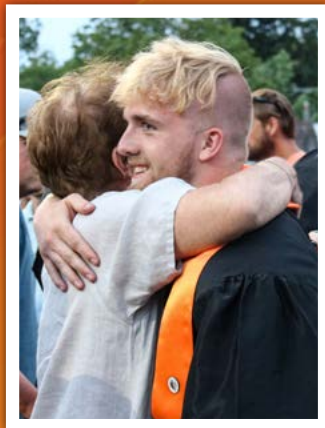
You can see that though the year was challenging, MACS came through with great success. That success is built upon the powerful relationships that we have as a community. Thank you for partnering with us to educate the young people of the district.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Donna Runner**  
Superintendent



## Congratulations CLASS OF 2021





## Yankee, Trimble earn top rankings in 'resilient' class of 2021

Hard work, dedication and an affinity for robotics are among many of the common ties for this year's Mexico High School Class of 2021 valedictorian and salutatorian.

Tyler Yankee and Lyle Trimble, the valedictorian and salutatorian respectively, offered kind words, heartfelt encouragement and spoke highly of their fellow classmates whom they have persevered through so much together.

"As we all leave this high school and go our separate ways, we should never forget this tight-knit community who supported us to get us where we are," said Yankee. "When confronted with a problem in life, try to look for a new perspective, a new way of thinking about it or doing it. And finally, work hard! If this year has taught us anything, it's perseverance."

"You all have value. You all have power," Trimble added. "Your smile and presence are needed more than you know."

Former Mexico High School Principal Ryan Lanigan spoke highly of the two gentlemen, noting them as positive influences on not only the entire school but local community as well.

"With valedictorian and salutatorian, you expect them to be students who thrive in the classroom, but for as great as they are academically, they are even better people," said Lanigan, who departed MACS after five years for a job at his alma mater. "Congratulations to you both on this well-earned accomplishment and we can't wait to follow your futures."

Yankee and Trimble, who will both attend Clarkson University in the fall, addressed the graduating class at commencement and offered closing thoughts on their long road together.

The son of Patty and Jeff Yankee, Tyler's activities and accolades in school include the Seal of Biliteracy and outstanding senior in French, varsity soccer, robotics, National, Math, English and French honor societies, OCAY League captain, the Clarkson Ignite Presidential Fellows Scholarship, the CNY STEM Scholarship through SRC, Student Senate and he was the student Board of Education representative.

While at Clarkson, Tyler plans to major in computer science with the ultimate goal of becoming a software developer or data scientist.

Lyle is the son of John and Julie Trimble, and while at MACS he was part of the T.O.R.Q. Robotics Club, STREAM Club, varsity golf team, OCAY League and the jazz, pit and pep band as a drummer and percussionist. He plans to major in chemical engineering at Clarkson.



## Top 100 students honored at HS

Mexico High School celebrated its Top 100 students during four separate ceremonies in the school's gymnasium. The top 25 students from the freshman, sophomore, junior and senior classes were called forward and honored by Principal Ryan Lanigan and Superintendent Dr. Donna Runner.

Also honored were the many seniors who were part of the Class of 2021's Top 25 throughout all four years of high school.

"After last year forced so many of our traditions to go virtual, we were happy to be able to honor our scholars for all their hard work," said Dr. Runner of the ceremony. "They should be incredibly proud of themselves."



**CLASS OF 2021**



**CLASS OF 2022**



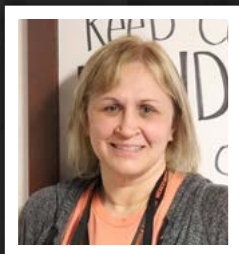
**CLASS OF 2023**



**CLASS OF 2024**



## Proud to be MACS



### Tina Majerus, April 2021

The Board of Education honored Tina Majerus, a teaching assistant at Mexico Middle School, as its Proud to be MACS recipient for April 2021.

Tina grew up in nearby Mannsville and graduated from the South Jefferson school district before working at the Stature Electric Company in Watertown.

Moving in 1993 because of her husband's job, Tina said she chose the Mexico area due to the district's excellent reputation. Her children, Jessica ('05) and Ronnie ('08) both graduated from MACS.

Tina worked at Oswego County BOCES (now the Center for Instruction, Technology & Innovation) before moving to Mexico High School as a monitor in 2002. From there, she served as a classroom aide in various buildings of the district before becoming a teaching assistant in 2017.

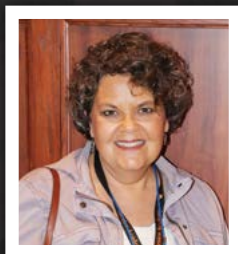
In addition to the normal school year, Tina has worked the special education summer school program for 10-plus years when the district brought the program back from CITI.

Because of her experience with family members with disabilities and her loving nature, Tina found her niche working with our special needs students and has done so for some 15 years.

Jennifer Stanton, the director of pupil services, said Tina's presence is "bigger than life," and that she is very a passionate, positive person who always advocated for her students. Stanton added that no challenge is too big for Tina and she's willing to do anything in a positive manner.

When asked the favorite part of her job, Tina said she loves working with the special needs students, especially when they accomplish a task most students may take for granted. She said the look in their eyes is priceless.

"Any time anyone in Tina's work-family needs anything, she immediately steps in to do whatever she can to help. Her co-workers and students are like family to her," nominator Denise Hemingway wrote.



### Lynn Sheldon, May 2021

The Proud to be MACS honoree for May 2021 was longtime middle school special education teacher Lynn Sheldon.

"She is the person I want with me if ever I am trapped on a deserted island or caught in a storm on the boat," Middle School Principal Kim Holiday said to describe the aptly calm, cool personality of Lynn.

Lynn grew up in Norwich, Vermont but because her school district crossed state lines, she graduated from Hanover High School in New Hampshire.

From there Lynn went on to graduate from Syracuse University where she earned a bachelor's degree in special education and then a master's degree in reading education at SUNY Oswego.

Hired by longtime MACS administrator Cathy Clark, Lynn started with MACS in 1986 out of college and spent four years at New Haven Elementary working for Principal Ann Pia in small group resource classes.

In 1990, Lynn married her husband Jeff and they had two sons named Cooper and Emery who both went on to graduate from Mexico.

Also in 1990, Lynn moved to the Mexico middle school as a Resource teacher for grades five through eight. Though Lynn has remained at the Middle School since 1990, she did note that the role of resource teacher evolved into the classroom where the general education teacher and special education teacher work together.

Beth Holden, one of her co-teachers, wrote "I have had the pleasure of co-teaching with Lynn Sheldon for nine years. Her creativity, willingness and knowledge of technology have helped support the MACS vision as we created a blended learning classroom to better be able to reach all learners and learning styles using technology."

When asked about her favorite part of her job, Lynn replied that she enjoys working with the staff at the different grade levels and compliments them by saying that they are all student-driven. Additionally, she added that she was blessed by working with some outstanding educators like John Ruf, Bill Kamalsky, Jim Sheldon and Sandy Scott. She stated that they represented the cornerstones of the profession.

Lynn retired in June after 25 years of service.

### Class of 2021, June 2021



Last June, the board recognized the Class of 2020 as its Proud to be MACS recipient. That class saw its final three months totally disrupted with many last-chance memories lost.

This year was a little better for the senior class in that some activities were allowed and in-school learning, for those who opted for it, resumed even if it was only for two days per week for most of the

year. Because their year was one of challenge, inconvenience, disruption and loss, the board thought it only fitting to recognize this year's senior class as its Proud to be MACS recipient for June 2021.

Nominator and co-class advisor Shannon Bigelow shared some thoughts on the mountain this class has overcome.

"Experiencing one's senior year in the midst of a pandemic is something that most of us can say we haven't had to do," Bigelow wrote. "These students have not gotten to have a traditional prom, senior Homecoming and Powderpuff game, athletics, extracurriculars, award ceremonies, class events and many other opportunities that are part of a typical high school experience. Their SATs were canceled at the end of their junior year, as well as many of their college visits. Even being with their friends in a traditional way has not been possible.

"Yet the class has persevered. They keep showing up and doing what they need to do in the midst of ever-changing restrictions and demands. It has been a privilege to advise them for four years. They will continue to do great things."

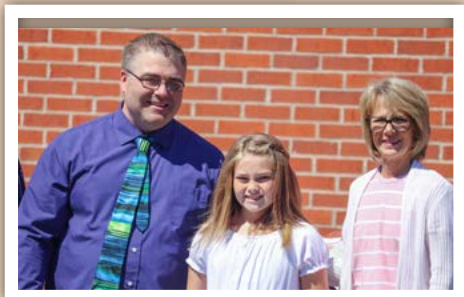


## Grades 5-8 band, chorus perform in concert



## Class of '29 graduates from New Haven Elementary

The future Class of 2029 was celebrated for its achievements at New Haven Elementary in late June. Administrators and teachers wished them all the best as they move to the middle school in the fall. As students were called up, they were congratulated by Board of Education members Darlene Upcraft and Sue Teifke.



## Palermo Elementary kindergartners set for first grade

Students from Palermo Elementary are setting sail for first grade in the fall after they completed kindergarten. A ceremony was held outside of the school in front of families where each student was honored by their teacher and then the children told everyone what their future career aspirations are.



## Three students first-ever to earn Seal of Biliteracy at MACS



Mexico Academy and Central School Districts celebrated its first students ever to complete the state Seal of Biliteracy during the Senior Award ceremony in June. Students receiving the Seal of Biliteracy are, from left, Juliana Hernandez (Spanish), Alli Kerr (Spanish) and Tyler Yankee (French) alongside district Coordinator of the Seal of Biliteracy, Diane Bush.

Three Mexico school district graduates spent countless hours learning and becoming proficient in a foreign language and have become the first students to earn their Seal of Biliteracy from the Oswego County consortium and district.

Juliana Hernandez and Alli Kerr earned their distinction in Spanish, while Tyler Yankee received his seal for French. The trio was honored at the Mexico High School Senior Awards and recently graduated from the Mexico Academy and Central School District.

To earn a Seal of Biliteracy from New York state, students must earn a Regents diploma and complete a certain number of criteria in both English and their second language of choice.

Diane Bush, a longtime Spanish teacher in the Foreign Language Department who is the Coordinator of the Seal of Biliteracy for the district, said the three students worked hard every step of the way and earned this "high achievement."

"I am very proud of our three students Juliana Hernandez, Alli Kerr and Tyler Yankee for trailblazing the way and demonstrating how hard work and true grit yields big returns in the end," Bush added. "Their world language learning and appreciation for culture will serve them well in their future endeavors and open doors to a more rewarding life."

Hernandez has studied Spanish for five years and was inducted into the Spanish and National honor societies and before the pandemic was captain of the Mock Trial team, secretary of the Rocket Club and vice president of the Composting Club. Her parents are Julio and Jamie Hernandez.

"Spanish has always been a part of my life as I am first generation Mexican American," Juliana said. "However, I feel as though in these last few years and especially in these last few weeks with the Seal of Biliteracy, I have been able to really see what I'm capable of as a speaker."

Kerr has studied Spanish six years and was in the Spanish Honor Society and Spanish Club, serving as president of the club for two years. She said she was "very proud" of earning her distinction and encouraged others learning to not give up, saying "it's OK if it doesn't come easy" and "it is truly worth it if you're invested."

In the fall, Kerr plans to major in Spanish at Siena College. Her parents are Morgan Fazio, Bill Kerr, Thomas Fazio and Jessica Kerr.

Yankee has spent six years studying French and has been in French Honor Society for three years, serving as secretary junior year and president his senior year. He thanked his French teachers Mr. Smith, Mrs. Kimberley Harter and Mrs. Alyshia Cottet.

"Learning a second language opens up many opportunities for college, careers and travel, and more broadly enables you to see the world through a different cultural lens," said Yankee, whose parents are Patty and Jeff Yankee.

Bush mentored Kerr and Hernandez, while Harter, a now-retired longtime French teacher at Mexico, was the program mentor for Yankee.

Mexico High School is part of the Seal of Biliteracy Oswego County Consortium. This is a group of some Oswego County schools which partner together to pool resources and ideas.

They serve as panelists and evaluators of each other's students presenting their World Language Seal projects. Panelists from Central Square and Oswego schools helped to evaluate the Mexico students this year.

Students in level 4 or 5, Checkpoint C, are eligible to start the process of earning their seal. The seal is granted at the end of their senior year, once all requirements are met in both English and the world language. Each interested student fills out an application and upon acceptance is then assigned a mentor who will guide them through the process.

"It is a pretty big-time commitment and a very big learning curve both in the responsibility of the student and the language level requirements, so we are hoping to start the process right out the gate in September," said Bush. "Although it's a rigorous process, our students reported that it was a truly rewarding experience."

For the foreign language portion, students engage in scholarly research and produce artifacts in the language to showcase their proficiency in speaking, reading, listening and writing. As a culminating project, they share their research findings with the panelists in an eight- to 15-minute presentation and then respond to several follow-up questions in the language.

### 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.



## Mexico Elementary celebrates successful year at Synergy Summit

In June, Mexico Elementary met as a school at the athletic complex to host a Synergy Summit that helped build comradery and bring together the students after a long year. Students took part in a Minute to Win It challenge, sang together, learned about the Pledge of Allegiance from the student leadership team and saw Mrs. Barnes the librarian pied in the face as the result of a reading challenge.

"It was awesome, we had a lot of fun and just seeing everyone together again definitely raises your spirits," said Principal Lisa Voegler. "I'm so glad we got out there with everyone."



## Richardson is 'Mexico Idol' after great competition

Mexico Idol had a picturesque backdrop this year as the event took place in front of Mexico High School. Students sang to dozens who were in attendance on the front lawn and the top three were Carter Richardson, pictured, followed by Anna Pluff and Emalee Herrington.



## KIDS EAT Free THIS SUMMER

**FREE Breakfast and Lunch for Kids 18 and Under**

**MEXICO HIGH SCHOOL  
TUESDAY JULY 6 – FRIDAY AUGUST 13, 2021**

### BREAKFAST 8:15-9:15AM

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Poptart Juice or Fruit Milk	Cereal Bar Juice or Fruit Milk	Muffin Top Juice or Fruit Milk	Cinnamon Roll Juice or Fruit Milk	Asst Breakfast Items Milk

*We must comply with all Summer Feeding Child Nutrition Guidelines. Children must take at least 3 of the 4 components offered. The 4 components are protein, grain, fruit and milk.*

### LUNCH 11:00-12:30PM

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Hamburger a Bun Baked Beans Assorted Fruit Milk	Tacos Tortilla Shells Steamed Corn Applesauce Milk	BBQ Chicken Nachos Steamed Carrots Diced Peas Milk	Chicken Patty on a Bun Steamed Broccoli Diced Peaches Milk	Pizza Green Beans Mixed Fruit Milk

*Daily choice of the menu entrée or Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich. Menu subject to change.*

*Adults may purchase a complete meal for \$4.50*

*We must comply with all Summer Feeding Child Nutrition guidelines. Children must take at least 3 of the 5 components. The 5 components are protein, grain, fruit, veg and milk.*

**CALL (315)963-8400 EXT. 5071 IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS.**

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## BOE's Upcraft honored in ceremony as Member of Achievement



*Congratulations to our Board of Education Vice President Darlene Upcraft, pictured above with her son Kevin, who was in June recognized as the Oswego County School Boards Association Board Member of Achievement honoree for 2019-20. Mrs. Upcraft has served on the Board since 1996 and is a 1974 alumna of Mexico Academy and Central School District.*

## **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

James Emery - *President*  
Darlene Upcraft - *Vice President*  
Chad Bigelow  
Dennis Brooks  
Connie Douglas  
Amy Shaw  
Susan Teifke  
Kendall Cuyler - *Student Representative*



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**Box Holder**

**Local Postal Patron**



The Mexico Academy and Central School District Board of Education, pictured, held its reorganizational meeting and first business meeting of the 2021-22 school year on Thursday, July 1 at Mexico Middle School. Chad Bigelow and Amy Shaw, both re-elected by voters in May were sworn in to begin three-year terms on the board. James Emery and Darlene Upcraft were both re-elected by the Board as president and vice president, respectively. From left are Dennis Brooks, Connie Douglas, Sue Teifke, Vice President Upcraft, President Emery, Shaw, Bigelow and student board member Kendall Cuyler.

# *Congratulations* **CLASS OF 2021**

