



Tiger TRADITIONS

Inspiring Excellence and Leadership in All!

October 2020 Volume 27 • Issue 2

Marking Periods

Quarter 1: Sept. 3 to Nov. 8

Quarter 2: Nov. 9 to Jan. 24

Quarter 3: Jan. 25 to April 1

Quarter 4: April 2 to June 26

Emergency Go Home Early Drills

Cohort B: Friday, Nov. 20

Cohort A: Tuesday, Nov. 24



The New York State School Boards Association has honored Mexico Elementary School as a Champion of Change for Kids after students read more than 22,000 books in total. Principal Lisa Voegler and Librarian Dianne Barnes challenged the students to read 10,000 books throughout the year, and if they reached that goal, Voegler would spend a work day outside. When the students shattered that goal and hit 13,000 by the halfway point in the 2019-20 school year, Voegler followed through and spent a day outside in central New York's brisk January weather. Pictured above is a group of Mexico Elementary students, teachers and staff along with NYSSBA's Barry Entwistle at a recent Board of Education meeting.

MACS senior Sheldon earns All-State recognition from NYSSMA



Pictured is MACS senior Libby Sheldon, who was recently named to NYSSMA Conference All-State. This is the first time an instrumental student at Mexico has earned this honor since the early 2000s.

Even in a community renowned for its musical prowess and support for the arts, Libby Sheldon has earned an accolade the Mexico Academy and Central School District hasn't seen in more than a decade and a half.

Sheldon, a senior at Mexico High School, learned recently her skill with the clarinet has earned her selection to New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) Conference All-State.

Brian Carnes, the Director of Mexico High School Bands, applauded Sheldon's "outstanding achievement" that was earned through hard work and noted her as Mexico's first instrumental student selected for All-State since the early 2000s.

"Libby's accomplishment is an incredible honor for her," Carnes said. "To anyone that's worked with her it will come as no surprise. It's a direct result of when talent intersects with dedication, hard work and singular focus. I have no doubt that this is just the beginning of what will be a long list of musical

accomplishments for her in college and beyond."

Sheldon, who has been playing clarinet for eight-plus years now, says she initially wanted to play the trumpet. However, because her sister already owned a clarinet, she took up the single-reed woodwind instrument instead and now she's among the top high schoolers in the state.

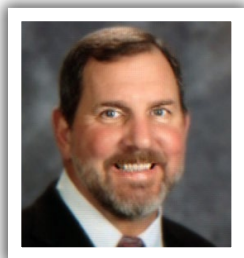
"I thought I was having an anxiety attack and couldn't calm down at first," Sheldon recalled of when she found out she'd earned All-State honors. "I was really happy. It's a tremendous honor."

Usually an All-State nod comes with an invitation to the large-scale NYSSMA Conference in Rochester where selected students come together for rehearsals and learn from top teachers for concerts later in the weekend. This year, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the organization will likely release a video concert while also doing some of the usual meeting and networking virtually.

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A Message from the Superintendent



Congratulations on making the first five weeks of school a huge success! Everyone is obviously working harder and smarter to do what is best for our students.

As challenging as it can be for our staff, students and parents under these COVID-19 guidelines and conditions, I would say it has been an extremely successful start to the school year. We all appreciate the patience of our students and parents while we navigate through these not-so-normal times. We will continue to work toward providing a quality social, emotional and intellectual educational experience for our students.

I am happy to report that there have been no positive COVID-19 cases in the district to date. If there were a positive case reported to us from the Oswego County Health Department (OCHD), I will be the individual who will inform all staff and the families of our students. I will also inform the staff and families if the building(s) will be closed, or not. It will all depend on the timing and severity of the situation. Almost daily, we have students or staff

who display symptoms. All individuals who display any symptoms of COVID-19 must have a negative COVID-19 test result AND symptom resolution to return to school. If they have a chronic medical condition that is on file with the school nurse via a doctor's note, and the symptoms are associated with that chronic condition, then they do not have to be tested. Our testing and contact tracing protocol is on the school's website. We will be referring all suspected cases to the Oswego County Health Department. The OCHD will be providing guidance to me throughout this process. The OCHD will also initiate and conduct all of the contact tracing. The OCHD has yet to conduct any contact tracing within our district currently. Please be aware, in some cases the OCHD may turn the contact tracing over to the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), if they are overburdened at the current time of our contact tracing. Also, please note, there are two local rapid testing sites in Oswego County. They are located at the Pulaski Urgent Care and the Oswego WellNow Urgent Care.

On our website, under the "Reopening" tab is an updated NYSDOH COVID-19 Toolkit. We will begin following these procedures and protocols, effective immediately. The good news is that the guidance

provides clear flowcharts for when a student or employee can and cannot return to school. It also makes clear that COVID-19 tests are not required if a student or employee receives an alternate reason (acute illness) for symptoms. I will also point out that the flowchart asks if there are, "new or worsening symptoms," which indicates that an employee or student with a chronic condition would not screen out of school unless his/her symptoms worsened (because they would not be "new.")

All staff and students should be prepared to work remotely in the event of a building being closed for any period of time. There may be times when students are told to stay home and work remotely, but staff may come in and work from their classrooms or buildings. Let us continue to practice and model the appropriate COVID-19 safe behaviors in school and out-of-school.

Thank you for being an essential part of our school community!

Sincerely,

Michael Schiedo
Interim Superintendent of Schools

MACS senior Sheldon earns All-State recognition from NYSSMA

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Being part of the MACS band programs throughout the years really helped Sheldon form friendships and earn an appreciation for music while also learning to have fun with it, she said. Many Mexico Middle School students enroll in the band program, where Sheldon said she made a big circle of friends to practice and learn with.

The repetition and practice schedule throughout the years has been ingrained in Sheldon, and she says it has helped her become better at budgeting time and planning overall.

"It's definitely shown me a lot of time management and discipline," said Sheldon. "I'm at the point if I don't practice, I have to, it's just part of my routine. I feel like if I didn't have band and music, I wouldn't be as strong academically as I am now."

In her freshman year of high school, Sheldon decided to take up private lessons with area clarinetist Liza Grethel to more intensely focus on playing. Last year, that drive and determination earned Sheldon a spot in Area All-State, and that made her to push even harder to make All-State this year, she said.

The music program at MACS once again in 2020 earned the distinction as one of the Best Communities for Music Education from the NAMM Foundation, an

honor bestowed upon just 754 districts around the nation. Sheldon says she can see why the district has earned the award many years running, including every year she's been in high school.

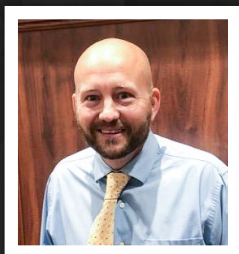
"I really feel like this district values music and the arts more than other public schools," said Sheldon. "I think the best part of the program is the teachers, if they weren't here to give direction and keep us moving forward, it wouldn't be the same."

Sheldon is drum major for the high school's marching band and also featured in the Jazz Ensemble, Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Band. She is a member of a number of honor societies and clubs, and played soccer, basketball, volleyball and lacrosse at different times while at MACS.

She thanked her parents, Craig and Barbara Sheldon, along with her sisters Hannah and Alisha, and boyfriend Brian and her studio teacher, Grethel, for all their support throughout the years.

After graduation, Sheldon said she plans to major in music education at college and has a few schools in mind she will apply for. Someday, she hopes to open a studio and would like to teach music in public schools.

Proud to be MACS



Mark Brescia, March 2020

The MACS Board of Education has honored Mark Brescia, a physical education instructor at Mexico Middle School, as its March 2020 Proud to be MACS recipient.

Mark grew up in Syracuse, although, he did briefly move to Arizona, before returning to Syracuse where he graduated from Westhill

High School in 1999. He graduated with a health and wellness degree from SUNY Oswego and got his master's from Canisius College.

Mark has always enjoyed fitness and has always wanted to make a difference, eventually leading to his start with the district in 2007 as a teaching assistant at the Mexico Middle School and at Mexico Elementary. In 2009, Mark became a part-time physical education instructor, which eventually became a full-time position at the MS.

First and foremost, he does not consider his job as work though there certainly are "bumps in the road." He tries to handle these bumps with communication, creativity and lots of patience. He loves it when a student accomplishes a skill that they did not think that they could accomplish.

He also enjoys his colleagues and enjoys coaching modified football and track. Along the way, Mark would marry Andrea and they would be blessed with daughters Kelsey, Kalie and Kendall.



MACS staff, April 2020

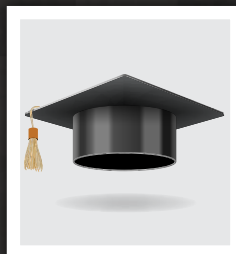
Based on the extraordinary efforts to keep our students engaged, fed and cared for, the Board recognized the entire staff of MACS for their compassion and dedication shown to our students during this unprecedented health crisis as our Proud to be MACS recipients for April 2020.



MACS students, May 2020

Though technology, remote learning and distance learning have been tools of the district for a number of years, those tools have never been utilized to the degree as they have been utilized.

Based on the efforts of our students (and their families) to embrace the differences and changes in these most difficult of times, the Board gratefully recognizes the students as our Proud to be MACS recipients for May 2020.



Class of 2020, June 2020

Classes have been graduating from the Mexico Academy and Central School District since 1826 but this year has been one for the ages.

Other classes endured events like the Civil War, WWI, the Spanish flu pandemic, the Great Depression, WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and numerous economic downturns but,

as challenging as those events were, the resilience of year's senior class dealing with the fall-out from COVID-19 is commendable and will never be forgotten.

Remote learning, cancellation of concerts, sports, Senior Dinner Dance, Senior Trip, Senior Awards Ceremony, Senior Palooza Day, final goodbyes to friends and staff, and a graduation ceremony unlike no other have all combined to impact this senior class to a degree that has never been felt by any of the previous 193 senior classes.

So, to show our admiration of their spirit; gratitude for their patience and perseverance; but, most importantly, sympathy for their loss of memories that should have been an exclamation point to their years at MACS, it is an honor to recognize the Class of 2020 as our Proud to be MACS recipients for June.



Ryan Lanigan, September 2020

High School Principal Ryan Lanigan has been named as the Proud to be MACS honoree for September 2020.

Ryan grew up in nearby Oswego and graduated from its district before going on to earn a bachelor's degree at SUNY Brockport and a master's degree in education from SUNY at

Potsdam as well as a master's degree in educational leadership from the University of Cincinnati.

Before joining MACS as the high school principal in 2016, Ryan worked in the Indian River and Fulton districts, including five years as principal at Fulton Junior High School.

Ryan's anonymous nominator notes him as an excellent listener, always looking out for "what's best for the kids" at the forefront of his mind.

As for his favorite memory, he recalled a story concerning a student who was in serious danger of dropping out. The staff, who Ryan applauds for truly caring for students with a student-first approach, and Ryan designed an alternate schedule for the student. The student ended up graduating, is working and doing well. Ryan said that it is the greatest feeling to know that you can truly make a difference.

Along the way, he was blessed with two children - Braeden and Abigail.

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SCHOOL BOARD APPRECIATION WEEK

LEADERSHIP IS *Action*, NOT *Position*

We appreciate our Board of Education members who give so generously their time and efforts to make Mexico Academy and Central Schools a better place for all. The New York State School Boards Association celebrates School Board Recognition Week in October each year, with this year's celebration coming Oct. 19-23.

To our Board: Chad Bigelow, Dennis Brooks, Connie Douglas, James Emery, Amy Shaw, Sue Teifke, Darlene Upcraft and Tyler Yankee (student rep.), thank you for everything you do!



Welcome Back!

