



Tiger TRADITIONS

Inspiring Excellence and Leadership in All!

March/April 2018 - Volume 23 • Issue 8

MHS Announces Class of 2018

TOP 10 STUDENTS

Mexico High School Principal Ryan Lanigan has proudly announced Ashton Ariola and Angel Newcombe as the Mexico High School Class of 2018 valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively.

Lanigan said the top two students, along with the remaining eight who round out the top 10, not only have the highest weighted averages of their cohort, but they also embody the character, work ethic and commitment that the Mexico Academy & Central School District actively promotes for its students.

Several of the top students have achieved success in the high school's advanced course offerings, such as honors courses, Advanced Placement options and courses through Onondaga Community College, Cayuga Community College, SUNY Oswego and Rochester Institute of Technology's Project Lead the Way program.

The following students were recognized as being the remaining students in the top 10: Daniel Scully (3), Kaitlyn Belcher (4), Allyson Ruby (5), Christine Weber (6), Zachary Revette (7), Anthony Yost (8), Tyler Grasso (9) and Wyatt Jensen (10).



Mexico High School Assistant Principal James Busco, left, and Principal Ryan Lanigan, right, beam with pride as they stand alongside Ashton Ariola, the Class of 2018 valedictorian, and Angel Newcombe, the Class of 2018 salutatorian.

Mexico Schools To Utilize Computer-Based Testing For Some NYS Exams



The Mexico Academy & Central School District is one step ahead of future changes to the New York State Testing Program.

Next month, the district will begin the transition to computer-based testing when students in grades 3 through 6 take their New York State English language arts exams. Mary Beth Horn, MACS Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, said by

the year 2020, NYS will eliminate paper-based testing and require 3-8 ELA and math state exams to be given and submitted digitally.

MACS will utilize a combination of laptops and iPads for now, although the district may transition to a singular option in the future.

While students in 7th grade and 8th grade will complete their ELA exams on paper this year, Horn said limiting the computer-based option to students in grades 3 through 6 will help the district test the waters. Administration anticipates moving to full computer-based testing next school year.

Computer-based ELA testing will occur over several days. Those testing dates are: April 10 and 11 for grade 5, April 11 and 12 for grades 3 and 4, and April 16 and 17 for grade 6. Students in grades 7 and 8 will complete paper-based ELA exams on April 12 and 13.

Paper-based math tests will be given on May 1 and 2 for all students in grades 3 through 8.

Horn said the change in state testing dates also changed parent-teacher conference dates. Afternoon PTCs will take place on April 9 and 20, while evening conferences will also be offered on April 9.



A Message From the Superintendent



I hope this edition of our Tiger Traditions finds you and your family well!

As stated in my most recent Tiger Traditions article, our data generally shows that our students who do not participate in pre-kindergarten typically under-perform students who attend pre-kindergarten. For the 2018-19 school year, we are focused on how to successfully intervene so that all of our students reach their highest potentials and close any achievement gaps as soon as our children enter our schools.

I am pleased to announce that a task force has been formed and met several times. They have devised an "Early or Transitional Kindergarten" program for children who may not have attended pre-k and are not kindergarten ready. This program is designed to meet academic, social/emotional and other readiness skills required before entering kindergarten.

A plan will be presented to the Board of Education during its March 22 meeting, which will be held at 6 p.m. in the district office.

MACS Safety Update

The news out of Broward County, Florida is heartbreaking. Our thoughts are with the victims, their families, the first responders and the entire community.

It is often difficult to understand and process tragedies such as this, especially for our students. With the extensive media coverage following this tragic event, it is important to maintain open communication with children about what they have seen and heard and let them know they have support.

It is important to reiterate that the safety and security of our students, staff, and guests are the top priority. In addition to practicing safety and emergency drills in our schools to ensure students and staff are prepared in the event of an emergency, we continuously review our safety measures to make improvements where possible. We continually practice safety procedures for different situations throughout the school year in all of our buildings and on our busses. We provide annual staff training for emergency situations. Our comprehensive emergency plans are filed with and approved by the New York

State Education Department. They are also filed with Homeland Security and the New York State Police.

Additionally, we employ several levels of security measures, including 24/7 video-monitoring of our buildings and facilities. The doors of our buildings are locked and require a key or a district-issued scan card. Our locked school doors are checked to ensure they are secure throughout the school day by our custodial staff. To provide for optimal emergency response, we have issued scan cards for emergency personnel including members of the Mexico Fire Department and the New York State Police.

Furthermore, we employ a school resource officer at our high school, who is also available to and visits all of our buildings. We also enjoy great partnerships with local law enforcement who regularly patrol our buildings and are invited in to visit. We have a visitor management system to more thoroughly screen visitors and enhance our ability to track who is in our buildings during the day.

Our wonderful Board of Education members and I are very proud of our thoughtful and dedicated staff who continually go above and beyond in caring for our students. We have an abundance of opportunities for our students to feel connected to our schools. We are also very proud of our community who maintains such strong support and connection to our schools. It is our belief that one of the most important proactive approaches in school safety is maintaining these strong connections. We continue to ask that "if you see something, say something." If someone needs additional support, please contact your child's school or District office and we will reach out for additional support. We also ask that you please contact us if you have ideas that may increase the safety of our schools.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact your child's school if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your partnership in keeping our schools safe.

Thank you,

Sean C. Bruno

MACS Assembly Unites Students, Staff

Kindness matters! We are strength in numbers. We are PROUD TO BE MACS! Following several Mexico High School students' commitment in the fall to accept Rachel's Challenge of creating a chain reaction of kindness, students and staff members wrote kind/positive notes on colored paper this morning and linked the warming thoughts to create a large paper chain. Displayed in the gym, where a majority of MHS students came together to honor and remember the victims of Stoneman Douglas High School, that chain became a symbol of what MHS stands for: compassion and acceptance of others. Today, and everyday, we remember.



Proud to be MACS



January Proud to be MACS Honoree

Jeannie Grant

Mexico Elementary School kindergarten teacher Jeannie Grant was selected as the January 2018 Proud to be MACS honoree.

While she attended New Haven Elementary School, Mexico Middle School and through her 1979 graduation of Mexico

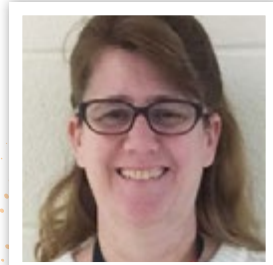
High School, Jeannie dreamed of becoming a school teacher. She achieved that goal by having obtained her elementary education teaching degree, with a minor in reading, at SUNY Oswego. Jeannie landed her first teaching job with the Pulaski Academy & Central School District before she took time off to raise a family. She then returned to the workforce in 1995 by teaching in the school district she loves the most- MACS.

She taught 4th grade until 2012 when she made the switch to kindergarten to broaden her teaching experience. Proud to be MACS nominator Kathy Butler said, "She teaches the foundational skills necessary for all of our students to meet the district's vision and mission and she does it in a way that makes students eager to come to school every day."

Jeannie said her favorite part of the job is greeting her students each morning, as they enter excitedly and ready to learn. Having supportive colleagues, she said, help make work wonderful. Kindergarten teammates Andrea Backus, Melissa Perlet and Laurel von Holtz have helped strengthen her teaching abilities, she said.

Throughout her years at MACS, she has experienced several shining moments, but the best of all have included being a member of the blended learning team and witnessing all of the student excitement surrounding technology. She also has enjoyed being a part of the school's Leader In Me program, which has promoted the school coming together as a family. Jeannie even visited Ohio to see firsthand a Lighthouse School for the LIM program.

When not engaging the minds of MACS youth, Jeannie spends much time with her husband, Ed, and keeps in close contact with out-of-town daughters Sarah and Rachel and son Andrew.



February Proud to be MACS Honoree

Kathy Yost

Kathy Yost, Mexico High School Athletic Department senior typist, was chosen as the February Proud to be MACS honoree. A graduate of Herkimer Community College, Yost worked for Mohawk Airlines before her husband, Tony, supported her in taking time off to care for her children: Meghan, Caprice and A.J.

Her journey in the MACS district began in 2005 when she became an AmeriCorp worker and then a teacher's aide. She transferred to the high school main office in 2012 before switching to her current duties in 2017.

Yost's involvement in the district far surpasses her MACS career. While she has been involved in her children's musical and athletic activities, it was her efforts with the Dollars for Scholars program that led Kate LaDuc to submit her Proud to be MACS nomination. She is now president of that organization. LaDuc said Yost has continued to go above and beyond to make Dollars for Scholars a success, giving countless hours outside of her workday to enrich students' lives.

Her favorite part of the job is the interaction with the students. Yost's favorite memory thus far has been witnessing all of the satisfaction on senior awards night as she has distributed Dollars for Scholars scholarships.



March Proud to be MACS Honoree

James McKenna

James McKenna, Mexico High School social studies teacher, was chosen as the March Proud to be MACS honoree. After he received a master's degree in secondary education and social studies from Niagara University, he went on to obtain a

certification in special education from LeMoyne College.

He joined MACS in 2011 in a special education capacity and has since expanded to the social studies department. McKenna also is an instructor in the Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) elective program, which prepares students for success in college.

McKenna's commitment to students doesn't end there; he's also the boys' varsity soccer coach and assistant varsity baseball coach. It was in the capacity as soccer coach that Jim earned the nomination for Proud to be MACS. Nominator Dennis Shaw commended McKenna for using his personal time in the off seasons to help student athletes become better players and talks with them about the importance of sportsmanship.

His favorite part of the job is interaction with students both inside and outside of school, having taken pride in knowing his students as well as their families. McKenna said his MACS success may also be attributed, in part, to the collaborations with various high school staff members.

McKenna's favorite memory thus far was when the soccer team made it to sectionals for the first time in 10 years.



Mexico Middle School 6th grader Emily Burlingame proudly stands in front of her surrealist collage titled "Entering the Unknown," which has been on display at Beaver Lake Nature Center!

Palermo Elementary 4th Graders Show Off Music Talents, Life Skills

Lessons of commitment, responsibility and patience were music to the ears of parents of Palermo Elementary 4th grade students.

At the school, those life lessons have been intertwined with beginner band and shown off during the recent educational concert in the school cafeteria. Music teacher Glen Gagnier said the students' first concert served as an opportunity to show guests how much they have learned. Throughout the past few months, the students have learned the fundamentals of band, including notes, measures, counting beats and how to properly care for their instrument.

"Anything to send you on a good path is quality learning," Gagnier said.

That is where those lessons of commitment, responsibility and patience come into play, he said. Consistency with those in band not only help create beautiful sound but they also create life-long, healthy habits. Similar concerts were also held at New Haven and Mexico elementary schools.



Palermo Elementary School 4th graders recently hosted their first concert, under the direction of music teacher Glen Gagnier.

8th Graders Begin High School Transition

Mexico Middle School 8th graders have begun their transition to high school.

Upon entering Mexico High School for the 2018 electives presentations, students' nerves calmed as their teachers guided them through the school and they familiarized themselves with their future surroundings. Middle school counselor Paul McPherson said the annual event sought to ensure student comfortability and expand their interests. The students rotated among the high school's family and consumer science, technology, art, music, foreign language and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) classrooms. McPherson said he and Mexico High School principal Ryan Lanigan both agree that the more middle school students are in the high school, the more comfortable and prepared students will be for high school in the fall.



Mexico High School jazz band members, right, play a few tunes for Mexico Middle School 8th graders, left, during the annual electives presentation at the high school.

Mexico OCAY League Students Come in Third Place Testing Their Culinary Skills

Oswego County Academic Youth League students competed in a series of tests related to food on March 8, with the theme of "Chew on This."

To succeed, students relied on skills in culinary arts, nutrition, language, biology, art, math and more.



In the food as art category, teams created a two-dimensional interpretation of a famous pop culture celebrity following artistic elements of style, color and texture. In other challenges, students created their own salsa recipe as well as a marketing plan for it.

Mexico Academy & Central School District took third this round with members Ashton Ariola, Tyler Grasso, Kimberly Heagerty, Madeline Higby, Wyatt Jensen, Baxter Mason, Amber Moseuk, Derrick Mosher, Erika Pieropan and Joshua Washer.

OCAY League is coordinated through the Center for Instruction, Technology and Innovation's (CiTi) Gifted and Talented program.

Q and U Get Married at New Haven

New Haven Elementary School kindergartners served as special guests during the commitment ceremony of the letters Q and U.

Officiated by Principal Jennifer Granholm, Q and U became forever united as they pledged their teamwork and lives together in order to create words. Without that union, Granholm said, words such as quack, quiet and quintessential would forever be incomplete.

Kindergartners dressed to impress at the formal affair, which coincided with the their English language arts skills.



MACS True Beauty Day Inspires Alternative Outlook On Self-Worth

Beauty has no singular definition within the Mexico schools.

As part of the district's seventh annual True Beauty day, students and staff members within the middle and high schools showed their unwavering support for people glowing as a blank canvas. Rather than define beauty by looks and clothing or hiding under layers of make-up, people presented themselves organically as they defined beauty in remarkable words: confident, blessed, friend, nice, kind, silly, grateful, hilarious and determined, were among the favorites.

Shannon Bigelow, event organizer and Mexico High School English teacher, said the empowering movement has encouraged students to write those words on a white board as they were photographed to remember their natural beauty, both inside and outside of their bodies.

Middle school students also gravitated toward that positivity and support during their lunch periods when 8th grader Ayla Cowley spoke to her peers in grades 5 through 8 about True Beauty. Students were given bracelets and were encouraged to write a sweet note to someone on an "encourageMINT" with a candy attached to the small piece of paper.

Cowley said the project is near to her heart after an early life lesson from her father, in which he told her she didn't need to wear makeup because she was beautiful without it.



The seventh annual True Beauty day for the Mexico Academy & Central School District was supported by several students and staff members, including Mexico High School Principal Ryan Lanigan, center.



Mexico Middle School 8th grader Ayla Cowley shows off the #MMSTrueBeauty bracelet she helped distribute to her peers, as part of the seventh annual True Beauty Day.

Synergy Summit Offers Awards, Fun For Mexico Elementary Students

Defined as the interaction of elements that when combined produce a total effect that is greater than the sum of the individual elements, synergy occurs each day within pre-kindergarten through grade four classrooms at Mexico Elementary. While the combined elements of the classroom create large, positive effects of learning, key students have become shining examples of leaders.

Those students were recently named as award winners during the February Synergy Summit. For their efforts, the following recipients received a Certificate of Recognition and a medal: Evelyn Behling, Tiffany Canfield, Khloe Ladd, Jessica Bleskoski, Paisley Bryant, Charley Burlingame, Alex Eaton, Riley Van Campen, Elliot Isgar, Trevor Haynes, Holdyn McIntyre, Mason Bechtel, Ryan Drake, Colton Kapas, Annalise Hogan, Jaelyn Mykiety, James Law, Alessandra Magro, Dylan Hoey, Allie Poissant, Kadence Hogle, Kevin Perlet, Rachel Gagnier, Alan Trumble, Kacey Killam, Christopher Schults and Trey Eastman.

The celebration concluded with a "Minute-to-Win-It" challenge with both student and staff member participants. Principal Robert Briggs commended each Synergy Summit awardee for their extra efforts.



Mexico Elementary School 2nd grade teacher Kristine Speers, left, competes alongside 4th grader Jessica Hill, right, during the building's monthly "Minute-to-Win-It" challenge, as part of the Synergy Summit awards assembly.

MHS Students Perform "Footloose"

Mexico High School students shined during their "Footloose" musical performances. Here is a look at their talent.



Varsity Swimmers Head To States



Mexico High School has sent three varsity boys swimming and diving team members to states.

Junior Dylan Long and seniors John Ocker and Anthony Yost will travel to the Nassau County Aquatic Center on Long Island to compete in their individual meets after having qualified during a recent Section III, Class B competition.

During the Section III meet, Yost swam the 200-yard individual relay in 1:59:59, which broke a school record that had been in place for over 10 years. Long qualified for states when he achieved a 4:51:11 time for the 500-yard freestyle swim. In a previous home meet, Ocker smashed a school record as he swam the 100-yard breast stroke in 1:00:97.

All three swimmers said practicing for at least two hours per day helped improve their times, as did guidance from coach Shawn Parkhurst and assistant coach Dexter Hinman.

New Haven Elementary Science Night

New Haven Science Night was an overwhelming success according to students and family members in attendance. The hands-on activities and experiments presented a fun take on science experiments and ended in some amazing projects to take home and enjoy.

Stations were set up around the cafeteria area and in the hallway was an air powered rocket station where students colored and assembled their rockets that used a straw and the students own breath to "launch" their creations. Other fun stations included: galaxy jars, slime creation, harmonica building, mini magnifiers and chromatography butterfly artwork, and additional options.

New Haven Elementary Principal Jennifer Granholm was pleased with the turnout and credited the many parent volunteers for helping make the first Science Night at the school such a success.



New Haven Elementary Principal Jennifer Granholm, second from left assists Aurora and Kolton Pultorak with their harmonica assembly, during the school's science night. At left is Isabella Forbes, a volunteer at the event.



"Aladdin" Musical @ MMS

Mexico Middle School students put on a stellar performance of the musical "Aladdin" for their peers Jan. 31, followed by community performances on Feb. 1-Feb. 3.



Syracuse Silver Knights Inspire @ MMS

It takes more than skill to succeed in athletics.

That was the message members of the Syracuse Silver Knights professional indoor soccer team recently brought to the Mexico Middle School. President and general manager Tommy Tanner joined players Bo Jelovac, Liam Callahan and Nate Bordeau in teaching students the game plan for stellar performances: proper nutrition, daily exercise, teamwork and cooperation.

Taking care of oneself is the best way to ensure a top performance, Tanner said. He added that teamwork on the field is the same as teamwork off of the field, particularly in school settings. Mexico Middle School students in grades 5 through 8 then shared how they benefited from teamwork at school, such as with collaborative projects.



Mexico Middle School student and soccer player Adria Ariola, left, practices soccer techniques with Syracuse Silver Knights player Bo Jelovac, right, during a recent assembly.

MHS Wrestler Dean Shambo Won Section III Match, Competed at States

Dean Shambo, Mexico High School sophomore, placed first at the Section III, Class B championship varsity wrestling match in the 120-pound weight class. He competed with heart during the state matches, for which he went 1:2. A wrestler for 12 years, Shambo said the tough sport requires daily practice and determination.



I get bursts of creativity with bursts of physical activity.

~Payal Kadakia

Mexico, Palermo Elementary Schools Compete in Battle of the Books

Members of "Return of the Reading Rockstars" Battle of the Books team at Palermo Elementary School held on as champions after they successfully won the friendly competition for two consecutive years.

4th graders Jenna Ricker, Avery Willus and Makena Jewell were declared winners after a hard-fought book battle with several teams, including the second-place team, "Rocking Readers," whose members are: Kassondra Nuzzo, Sampson Gillespy and Alice Truax. Originally in a tie for first-place, both teams answered five tie-breaker questions before the Return of the Reading Rockstars was declared the winner. The two teams have advanced to the Mexico Academy & Central School District district-wide Battle of the Books.

There, the students competed against the "SJK Readers" from Mexico Elementary School. 4th graders Sammy Britton, Kevin Perlet and Jessica Hill offered fierce competition, as they earned 104 out of a possible 128 points during their building battle. The SJK Readers were successful, advanced to the Oswego County Battle of the Books and won the Level 1 competition.



Palermo Elementary School Battle of the Books participants show off their medals.



The SJK Readers were named top team at the Mexico Elementary School Battle of the Books competition. From left, 4th graders Sammy Britton, Kevin Perlet and Jessica Hill show off their medals, ribbons and trophies.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 22, 23 MHS variety show auditions

March 22 BOE workshop 6 p.m.

March 23, 24 HS all-county orchestra @Oswego

March 28 MS early dismissal 1:55 p.m.

March 30 NO SCHOOL

April *State testing dates- see story in T.T.

April 12 French HS inductions 6 p.m.

April 12 BOE mtg 6 p.m.

April 13 30-week marking period ends

April 13, 14 HS all-county chorus @ Phoenix

April 16-20 HS spirit week

April 18 MS Band concert, 7 p.m. MS auditorium

April 19 German NHS inductions 6:30 p.m.

April 19 BOE workshop 6 p.m.

April 20 report cards go home

April 23-27 NO SCHOOL spring recess

Fulton native Tim Conners Encourages MHS Freshmen To Radiate Positivity

You're a freshman in high school, wake up for the day and your vision is gone. What do you do?

That rhetorical situation for Mexico High School 9th graders was a reality for Fulton native Tim Conners who recently spoke with the students about having the choice to live life in the most positive way possible.

Now a college graduate and accomplished motivational speaker, Conners said he never imagined experiencing life-changing moments, such as battling cancer, losing his sight and rebuilding his life. The MHS freshmen intensely listened as Conners detailed his journey back to feeling on top of the world, which included his trek last May to the summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro in Africa.

A copy of his book, "It's Impossible until You Do It: Succeeding in the Face of Adversity" was purchased for each MHS freshmen to use during their Seminar class.



Tim Conners, accompanied by his guide dog Lang, readies to speak to Mexico High School freshmen about living through adversity with a positive attitude.