



Tiger TRADITIONS

Inspiring Excellence and Leadership in All!

Fall Newsletter 2023 Volume 29 • Issue 1

MEXICO ACADEMY & CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

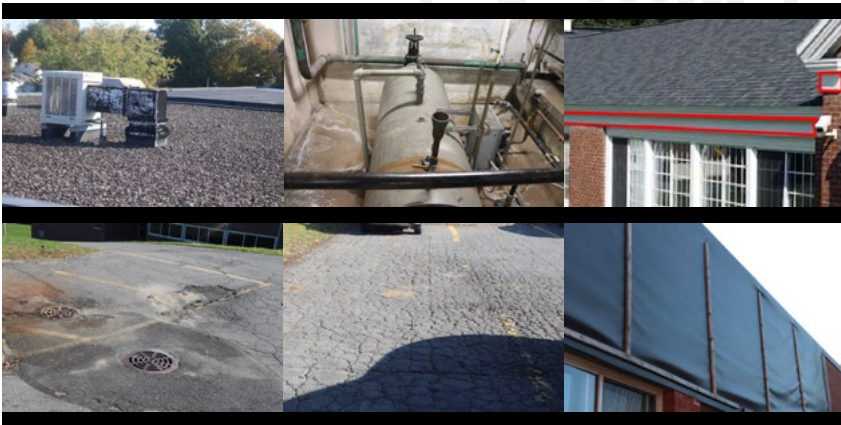
*“An investment in **our children’s future**”*

The Board of Education is committed to maintaining a safe, nurturing and bright learning environment for our children. To this end, most of the comprehensive capital project plan valued at \$18.2 million will be funded by available State Building Aid and Capital Reserves with no additional tax increase to our taxpayers. These updates will continue to promote safety throughout our district grounds, upgrade air handling infrastructure plus re-point and repair deteriorating bricks and windows at all buildings.

The items outlined in this newsletter were identified as high priority items that:

- Were needed maintenance upgrades
- Were necessary for the purposes of safety
- Positively impact our long-term planning

Read more about each building inside!



“The Board is committed to responsible stewardship of our resources, and we have carefully planned the funding of this project to minimize the impact on taxpayers.”

Dr. Donna Runner
Superintendent of Schools

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

PUBLIC VOTE:

Tuesday, Dec. 12, Noon to 9 p.m.

District elementary schools

View registration and absentee information in this newsletter or via our website at mexicocsd.org.

HAVE YOUR SAY!

Until Nov. 30, the district will be running a ThoughtExchange for the public to offer feedback about the project! We want to hear from you!

Please scan the QR code below



SCAN ME!

ALSO INSIDE

Read about what’s happening at MACS schools, including why U.S. Rep. Claudia Tenney honored one of our High School JROTC students

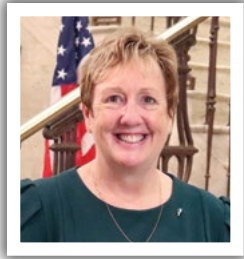
Two corrected calendar pages with updates to half-day schedules in January, June '24

Halloween photos



A message from the Superintendent

Dear MACS School Family and Community,



I am excited to share some essential developments within our district. The Board of Education is committed to providing a safe and conducive learning environment for our students, staff, and the entire school community.

To that end, we're pleased to announce a significant capital project of \$18.2 million that focuses on improving safety and infrastructure in our schools.

The project will focus on several key areas, including but not limited to the following:

WINDOWS: Replacement and upgrading of deteriorating windows to improve energy efficiency and overall building security

AIR HANDLERS: Installation of new air handling systems to enhance indoor air quality and ventilation to support a healthy and comfortable environment for all occupants

ELEVATOR: Upgrading and modernizing the existing elevator at the High School to ensure accessibility for all individuals, including those with mobility challenges

FAÇADE RESTORATION: Brick repointing and partial roof replacement at select buildings

SAFETY: Implementation of various safety measures and improvements that will include fire safety systems, security enhancements, and more.

This capital project is an investment in our children's future. A better infrastructure ensures that our schools remain an essential hub for our community and supports our scholars to thrive and reach their full potential.

The Board is committed to responsible stewardship of our resources, and we have carefully planned the funding of this project to minimize the impact on taxpayers.

We are pleased to inform you that there would be NO ADDITIONAL TAX INCREASE as a result of this project.

We will work diligently to maximize our investment in safety and infrastructure improvements.

We are excited about the positive changes that this capital project will bring to our school district and look forward to working together with the entire community to make our schools even better. We are hopeful you plan to vote Dec. 12!

Thank you for your continued support, and please feel free to contact us if you have any questions regarding this project.

Sincerely,

Donna Runner

Dr. Donna Runner
Superintendent

A message from the Board President



At our Oct. 5, 2023, Workshop Meeting, the MACS Board of Education approved an \$18,225,000 Capital Project Resolution to be voted on at a special election to be held Tuesday, Dec. 12, 2023.

This Capital Project resulted from the findings reported in an exhaustive Five-Year Plan required by and submitted to the New York State Education Department.

After several meetings with project architects, the board selected from the Five-Year Plan certain high priority needs across the district. These needs include replacing the 1937 air handler units at the Mexico High School and an upgrade to its elevator; selective roof and window replacement at various district buildings; paving and masonry repair at various district buildings; replacement of a 58-year-old water line at the Mexico Middle School; and fire safety and security enhancements at various district buildings.

Several of these needs, like the air handler units and the water line, are crucial to those affected buildings' ability to hold classes.

The scope of the project was also examined and validated by the project's construction manager.

Important to note is that work will occur at all District facilities including the Transportation Center and will not result in any additional tax increase as the Capital Project cost will be covered by State Building Aid, use of our Capital Reserve, and Retiring Debt Service.

As noted in our postcard sent in late October, we've held several sessions for shareholders to address concerns and ask questions, but we are more than happy to take additional questions and feedback at any time during our public session or by emailing directly.

I encourage everyone to ask questions you may have and exercise your right to vote Tuesday, Dec. 12, 2023, from noon to 9 p.m. at your designated polling site at the Mexico, New Haven or Palermo elementary schools. A link to voting sites by address is available on our website homepage.

Thank you for your consideration,

James F. Emery

James F. Emery
President

Mexico Academy and Central School Board of Education

CAPITAL PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Listed below are the major upgrades being proposed as part of the \$18.2 million capital project improvement proposal:

MEXICO HIGH SCHOOL

- Deteriorated window replacement
- Attic air handler replacement
- Elevator upgrade and modernization
- Select masonry restoration
- Select roof replacement
- Safety and security enhancements, including Blue Light system



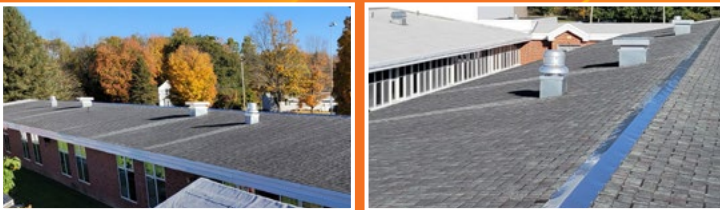
MEXICO MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Select pavement replacement
- Deteriorated window replacement
- Select masonry restoration
- Water main replacement
- Safety and security enhancements



MEXICO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- Select roof replacement
- Deteriorated window replacement
- Select masonry restoration
- Safety and security enhancements



NEW HAVEN ELEMENTARY

- Fascia replacement
- Deteriorated window replacement
- Select masonry restoration
- Safety and security enhancements



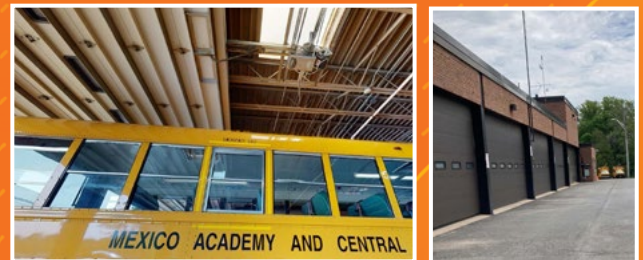
PALERMO ELEMENTARY

- Select masonry restoration
- Deteriorated window replacement
- Safety and security enhancements



BUS GARAGE

- Deteriorated overhead door and opener replacement
- Safety and security enhancements



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

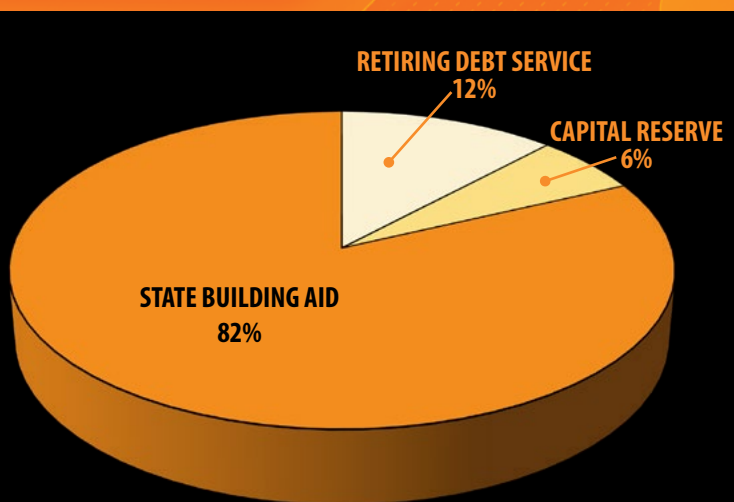
HOW WILL THIS BE PAID FOR AND WHAT ARE THE TAX IMPLICATIONS?

The total referendum authorization for the 2023 Capital Improvement project is \$18,225,000. The majority of the project will be paid for using available State Building Aid funding. The remaining local share will be paid for through the District's Capital Reserve Fund, which is designated to be used specifically for capital improvements, and the replacement of debt service from prior projects that are retiring. The project referendum amount includes all costs to design, renovate, construct and furnish facilities as necessary. As a result of careful planning and budget implementation, the proposed project will have **NO ADDITIONAL TAX INCREASE** for the district residents and businesses. The capital reserve was set up and approved by voters with the intent of offsetting future local taxpayer costs associated with capital improvements. The Building Condition Survey conducted in 2022 identified a possible \$100 million in needed improvements. With the completion of this project, we will be able to address some of the most pressing needs.

HOW WERE THE MOST URGENT NEEDS DETERMINED?

Every five years the New York State Department of Education requires school districts to conduct a Building Condition Survey. We partnered with an architectural firm to have their expert architects and engineers complete that study to report to the state. From that study, we collaborated to create a five-year plan to be a tool used by the district to actively manage our capital needs. Needs and priorities change regularly as projects are completed or deferred capital items further deteriorate. The up-to-date five-year plan identified the current condition of the district's facilities and prioritizes the necessary improvements for each building. From that plan, we selected the most urgent safety items to address first followed by infrastructure needs. We further partnered with a construction management firm to review the priority list to confirm the anticipated costs and we determined that the \$18.2 million Capital Project will address those priorities identified in the five-year plan.

PROJECT REFERENDUM AMOUNT \$18,225,000



ADDITIONAL TAX INCREASE = \$0

CAPITAL PROJECT PROPOSAL VOTE

Tuesday, Dec. 12, 2023

Noon to 9 p.m. at district elementary schools

**Last Day for Voter Registration is Dec. 7
at 2 p.m. in the Office of the District Clerk.**

ABSENTEE BALLOTS:

Qualified voters of the District may obtain applications for an absentee ballot from the office of the Clerk of the District. Completed applications must be received by the Clerk of the District no later than 4 p.m. Dec. 11, 2023, and must be received no later than 4 p.m. Dec. 5, 2023, if the absentee ballot is to be mailed to the voter. Completed applications received after 4 p.m. Dec. 5, 2023, will require the voter to personally appear at the office of the Clerk of the District to receive an absentee ballot. A listing of all persons to whom an absentee ballot is issued will be available for inspection by any qualified voter in the office of the Clerk of the District between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. during each of the five business days prior to the election.

JUNE 2024

MAY 2024						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

JULY 2024						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
2						1 Sherburne Pageant of Bands
3	HS Top 100 Dinner	4 5th Grade Band/Chorus Concert 6pm MS Aud MS 6th Grade Band/Chorus Concert 7pm MS Aud PAL PTC 4pm / ME PTO 6pm Regents Exam Day NO SCHOOL for HS students	5 4th Grade Band Concert 6pm MS Aud Block M Awards 6pm HS Aud	6 BOE Workshop Meeting 6pm DO Boardroom	7 ME Picnic with Your People 5pm PAL PTC Mother/Son Olympics 6pm	8 Senior Dinner Dance at Curtis Manor
9		10 7/8 Band and Chorus Concert 7pm MS Aud NH PTC 3:30pm	11 Senior Awards 6pm HS Aud	12 LAST DAY OF HS CLASSES Seniorpalooza HALF DAY Early Dismissal PK-8 Records Day	13 REGENTS EXAMS	14 15
16		17 Senior Walk TOWN HALL with Dr. Runner 6pm, Zoom Dollars for Scholars 4:30pm HS NH PTC Picnic With Your People 5:30pm	18 JUNETEENTH NO SCHOOL	19 REGENTS EXAMS	20 BOE Business Meeting 6pm MS Aud HALF DAY Early Dismissal PK-8 Records Day	21 NH K Concert PAL UPK Celebration ME UPK Celebration
23	24 PAL K Moving Up Ceremony ME K Moving Up Ceremony NH UPK Celebration	25 GRADUATION REHEARSAL HALF DAY Early Dismissal PK-8 PAL 4th Gr. Moving Up Ceremony ME 4th Gr. Moving Up Ceremony NH 4th Gr. Moving Up Ceremony	26 ELEMENTARY PLAY/RACE DAYS LAST DAY OF SCHOOL HALF DAY Early Dismissal PK-8	27 REGENTS EXAMS	28 REGENTS EXAMS	29 198th MACS Alumni Banquet, The Eis House
		30 REGENTS EXAMS				SUMMER VACATION BEGINS!

CORRECTION FROM MAILED CALENDAR
Red = Half day entered in error, date is a FULL DAY of school

MACS Athletic Hall of Fame inducts longtime European basketball player Babcock Jr.

Massive cheers rang out as the newest member of the Mexico Tigers Athletic Hall of Fame was celebrated in late September ahead of the varsity football home opener.

Arthur J. Babcock Jr., a 1974 MACS graduate and longtime coach, was the lone inductee into the Hall of Fame this year and was officially enshrined with a ceremony and permanent plaque in the athletic foyer of the high school.

While playing for the Tigers, Babcock was first-team all-league in 1972-73 and 1973-74, all-state and team MVP in 1973-74 and in that year led the Oswego County League in scoring, averaging 21.6 points per game. He received a full athletic scholarship to Kings College where he was a two-year starter before playing professionally in Europe for 13 years between France, Germany, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland.

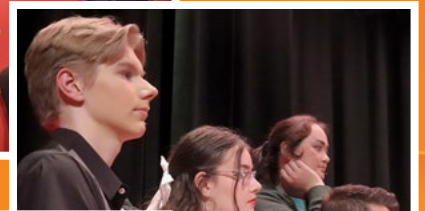
Nominations for the MACS Athletic Hall of Fame are accepted at any time via the application found via the Athletic Department page. Nominations must be received by Feb. 1 of each year to be considered for the fall inductee class.



Arthur Babcock Jr., a 1974 MACS graduate, waves to the crowd as he was honored ahead of the Mexico Tigers varsity football home opener in the fall. Babcock was this year's inductee into the MACS Athletic Hall of Fame.

Gallery: Mexico Drama Club stages 'The Hope and Heartache Diner'

The Mexico High School Drama Club staged "The Hope and Heartache Diner" as its 2023 fall play. Enjoy a gallery of our favorite photos from the show, which ran two nights in early November at Avery Skinner Auditorium.



Mexico HS JROTC cadet earns national recognition

Avery Mack, a senior at Mexico High School, has been named one of just six Marine Corps Junior ROTC (MCJROTC) cadets to receive the prestigious Legion of Valor Bronze Cross for Achievement.

Mack, a cadet captain in Mexico's MCJROTC unit, was presented her medal by U.S. Rep. Claudia Tenney during a ceremony mid-September at Mexico High School. Tenney represents Mexico, Oswego County and a number of neighboring counties in the U.S. House of Representatives, and said she was honored to be on hand for Mack's special day.

"I am incredibly honored to recognize Cadet Captain Avery Mack's outstanding achievements and leadership in the JROTC with the prestigious Legion of Valor Bronze Medal," said Congresswoman Tenney. "Avery exemplifies the values of excellence, dedication, and service in both her academic achievements and leadership within the MCJROTC program at Mexico High School. She is a truly exceptional young woman, and I am eager to see all that she accomplishes in her future endeavors."

Mack, who is among the top-ranked members of the MACS Class of 2024, has been involved in the JROTC program all four years of high school, taking part as a member of the Drill, Academics, Youth Physical Fitness and Color Guard teams. After graduation, Mack hopes

to serve in the U.S. Air Force as an intelligence officer.

"Cadet Mack is exceptional, and she possesses two of the most intangible values a person can have: unselfishness and courage," said MACS MCJROTC leader Lt. Col. John Freda, USMC retired. "The difference between truly exceptional managers and leaders is the unselfishness to place the welfare your team and its objectives instinctively before your own. Courage is the gateway to the process of self-growth that enables the opportunity for someone to become the best version of themselves. This, in a nutshell, is what helps set her apart."

Also in attendance in addition to a number of Mack's family and friends were MACS administrators, Board of Education members, staff and community members who came to celebrate the accomplishment. After speaking, Tenney herself pinned the medal on a beaming and excited Mack, at which the crowd applauded.

"We are incredibly proud of you, Avery. As only six MCJROTC cadets receive this award nationally each year, this recognition is truly a testament to Avery's hard work, dedication, intelligence, and belief in herself," said MACS Superintendent Dr. Donna Runner. "She is not only a great cadet and scholar, but also a valuable member of this MACS community. We are anxious to see her go out and make positive change in this world."

"To everyone able to join us today, especially Congresswoman Tenney, thank you for taking time to honor Avery in being awarded this exceptional achievement."



Avery Mack, right, a Cadet Captain in Mexico's MCJROTC unit, was presented her medal by U.S. Rep. Claudia Tenney during a ceremony at Mexico High School while JROTC instructor Lt. Col. John Freda, USMC retired, looks on.



Cadet Avery Mack with her parents prior to the ceremony.

Homecoming celebrates Mexico CSD spirit

MACS held its annual homecoming parade, football game, pep rally, dance and powder puff football game the weekend of Oct. 13 with much fanfare and Tiger spirit showcased.

The parade, which ran through the village from the district's Bus Garage and past historic Mexico High School, featured a float from each current MHS class, several Tiger sports teams and other clubs and youth activities in the district.

Elementary schools and the middle school also got in on the fun with spirit days and a similar orange and black theme for Friday's school day.

A spirit-filled pep rally was held at halftime of the football game which followed the parade, and students enjoyed their homecoming dance.

The following day, homecoming weekend was capped with the annual tradition of junior versus senior class powder puff football. The junior girls were able to defeat the Class of 2024 girls in what was a fun game for all.

"It was a great weekend," said MACS Superintendent Dr. Donna Runner. "We know MACS alumni are so incredibly proud of their district and it was great to see so many of them for homecoming. We always look forward to it."



Smile: Mexico Middle School Leadership Wall a hit

During its annual open house, Mexico Middle School staff helped set up a special spot for student-leaders to capture this moment with their families and friends. Overall, the grades five through eight event was highly attended with many rooms packed with students and their families.

Check out just a few of our friends who stopped by the wall, which had Taylor Swift-themed signs available for use as props.



MHS, MMS visits Manufacturing Day Expo

MACS middle and high school students recently attended the Manufacturing Day Expo at CiTi BOCES.

Students were able to learn about the industry and its diverse career paths by engaging with 32 different local manufacturers who were present for the event.

The Manufacturing Day Expo is one of several career exploration and workforce development opportunities that CiTi is providing all students in Oswego County as part of its Career Connection Series.



Middle School 7/8 fall concert wows audience

Students from Mexico Middle School's seventh and eighth grade recently held their first band and chorus concerts of the year in the school's auditorium.

Despite being just seven weeks into classes and lessons, students produced a wonderful show featuring the sounds of autumn, Halloween and other classics.

The chorus gave it their all for a great-sounding performance in front of a packed audience, followed by the band who also rocked.



Welcome to MACS: Soluri, Briggs, Wylie join administrative team

Mexico CSD has welcomed three new administrators in recent months.

At Mexico High School, Christopher Soluri took over as principal in July and Brittany Wylie officially started her role as the school's new assistant principal in late September.

Meanwhile, at Palermo Elementary, MACS welcomed back Robert Briggs to the district as principal. Briggs had previously been principal at Mexico Elementary.

All other principals, Jennifer Granholm (New Haven Elementary), Kimberly Holliday (Mexico Middle School) and Lisa Voegler (Mexico Elementary) and the middle school assistant principal, Laurie Nohle, were the same entering the 2023-24 school year.

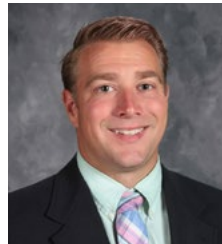
See below for a look at the three new administrators and their backgrounds.



Robert Briggs
Palermo Elementary

Mr. Briggs is no stranger to MACS, as he has served as principal at Mexico Elementary School twice – from

2009-11 and 2014-19. In total, he has 13-plus years as an elementary school principal, also having served in the Liverpool and Fulton school districts. Since 2021, Mr. Briggs has been a manager at the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development where he collaborated with district-level leadership to create sustainable development plans and recommend resources for adult learning. Mr. Briggs also has been teaching at Le Moyne College as an adjunct professor since 2021 for its Graduate Educational Leadership Program. He is certified as a school district leader, school building leader, teacher for newborn to sixth, and earned diplomas from SUNY Geneseo and SUNY Oswego. Mr. Briggs started in July and is taking the helm after longtime Palermo Principal Peg Scorzelli retired that same month.



Christopher Soluri
Mexico High School

Mr. Soluri worked for the past decade as the assistant principal at Paul V. Moore High School in the Central Square

School District where he helped improve graduation rates, assisted in the implementation of a new master schedule and helped maintain a culture of professional development. He presented numerous staff development trainings and proactively sought to improve various areas of the building through the creation and analysis of stakeholder survey data. In addition, Mr. Soluri is certified as a building leader, district leader, teacher of social studies seven through 12, and as a coach. He attended SUNY Cortland for his bachelors and masters in adolescent education and received his certificate of advanced study from nearby SUNY Oswego. He taught social studies at Thousand Islands High School. Mr. Soluri began as principal in July, taking over for longtime MACS leader Mr. James Busco.



Brittany Wylie
Mexico High School

Ms. Wylie comes to Mexico Academy & Central School District via the North Syracuse Central School District,

where she spent six years in various roles, including teaching English as a new language and English language arts. She has also worked at OCM BOCES Regional Summer School for the past three years as an administrative intern, assistant principal and principal. Ms. Wylie is certified as a building leader, district leader, a teacher of ELA for grades five through 12 and English as a new language for K-12. She attended SUNY Potsdam for her bachelor's degree, the University at Buffalo for her master's and received her certificate of advanced study from nearby SUNY Oswego. Ms. Wylie officially began her new role in late September as longtime MACS science instructor and leader Christina Scales transferred to a new role at CiTi BOCES earlier this year.

Palermo Elementary synergizes with fall, interactive activities

Students throughout Palermo Elementary got to use part of a half-day in October for a Synergy Day.

Based on student preference, students went to a different classroom or area in the school for festive activities and items of interest like STEM kits, pumpkin crafts, fall centerpieces, exercise, board games and more. Students were able to interact with classmates and students from other grade levels and classrooms during throughout the event, allowing for new friendships to be formed, the opportunity to explore different skillsets and an extra level of synergy.

Similar days are planned throughout the building this year.



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Darlene Upcraft - *Vice President*
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SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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'Sharpen the Paw' gets NH students into fall spirit

A fall and festive-themed "Sharpen the Paw" event at the end of a New Haven Elementary day allowed students to synergize and meet fellow schoolmates while getting into the autumn spirit.

Activities ranged from making slime, masks, word bingo, Legos, water painting, STEM activities and more as each teacher hosted a session.

Similar "Sharpen the Paw" events are planned throughout the year at New Haven to help support social-emotional learning and give the students the opportunity to advance motor and cognitive skills during activities they enjoy. It also helps expose students to new activities they may not have tried before.



Upcoming Events

Nov. 22-24: NO SCHOOL - Thanksgiving Holiday

Nov. 28: HS P/T Conferences, 6-7:30pm

Dec. 5: HALF DAY PK-12

Dec. 5: Palermo PTC, 4pm

Dec. 5: Mexico Elementary PTO, 6pm

Dec. 6: HS Band/Chorus Concert, 7pm @ HS Aud

Dec. 7: BOE Workshop Meeting, NH Spotlight, 5pm Tour 6pm Meeting

Dec. 9: HS All-County Band and Chorus Auditions @ CS

Dec. 11: Mex El Chorus Concert, 6pm @ MS Aud

Dec. 12: Capital Project Vote, Noon to 9pm @ Elementary Schools

Dec. 12: NH Virtual Readers From Birth

Dec. 12: NH PTC, 3:30pm

Dec. 12: 5th Gr Chorus & Band Concert, 6pm @ MS

Dec. 12: 6th Gr Chorus & Band Concert, 7pm @ MS

Dec. 13: PAL Chorus Concert, 6pm @ MS Aud

Dec. 15: 15-Week Marking Period Ends

Dec. 19: NH Chorus Concert, 6pm @ MS Aud

Dec. 20: Monthly Virtual Town Hall w/ Dr. Runner, 6pm

Dec. 20: MS 7/8 Chorus & Band Concert, 7pm @ MS Aud

Dec. 21: BOE Business Meeting, 6pm @ MS Aud

Dec. 25-Jan. 1: NO SCHOOL – Holiday/New Year's Recess

Jan. 2: Classes resume

Jan. 4: BOE Workshop Meeting, 6pm @ DO

Jan. 8: Modified Wrestling/Girls Basketball/Boys Swim begins