



Tiger TRADITIONS

Inspiring Excellence and Leadership in All!

Winter Newsletter 2024 Volume 29 • Issue 2

Voters pass \$18.2M Capital Project referendum

The \$18.2 million MACS Capital Project 2023 referendum from mid-December has passed, district officials announced.

Final totals from across the three elementary voting sites showed 133 in favor of the project and 41 against. Voting took place from noon to 9 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 12.

The project will have no additional tax increase as a result of the proposed work.

"We thank those who came out and voted," said MACS Superintendent Dr. Donna Runner. "We look forward to getting started on the Capital Project and keeping you informed every step of the way on these much-needed

improvements and upgrades to all of our buildings and the bus garage."

Follow along with updates as the project is put in motion at:

mexicocsd.org/capitalproject2023

MACS National Honor Society inducts 11 new members

The MACS National Honor Society added 11 students to its prestigious ranks during its annual Induction ceremony at Mexico High School.

National Honor Society recognizes those students who have demonstrated excellence in the areas commonly referred to as the organization's "four pillars" — scholarship, leadership, service and character.

MACS Superintendent Dr. Donna Runner and Mexico High School Principal Christopher Soluri were on hand to celebrate the occasion and offered remarks to the gathered crowd of families, friends, mentors and community members.

"The students being honored tonight have not only achieved academic excellence but have also shown a commitment to making a difference in their communities," said Soluri. "Through countless hours of service, they have demonstrated the importance of giving back and making a positive impact on the lives of others. They understand that true leadership is not about personal glory but about serving others and lifting those around them."

The MACS chapter, known as Los Inteligentes, inducted Ethan Becker, Ashley Bennett, Emily Bennett, Bennett Bertolini, Riley Gagnier, Zoe Grzesik, Rosina Hawkins, Emily Hough, Luke Lemke, Sarah Marsden and Kaden Perry.

The ceremony was led by MACS NHS Advisor Joseph Deckman, who is also an English teacher at the high school.

"This group of NHS inductees shows that dedication and commitment to school and community really pays off," said Deckman. "Members are upstanding students from all walks of life that showcase their skills through sports, drama clubs, band, and several other school activities."

Deckman said all the inductees earned their position through dedication to the NHS's four pillars and that he looks forward to the new members working with the organization to better the educational and local communities.

Pictured are photos from the 2023 National Honor Society induction ceremony for Mexico's chapter, Los Inteligentes. Mexico's NHS is advised by Joseph Deckman.



A message from the Superintendent

Dear MACS School Family and Community,



Thank you for your approval of the Capital Project for our school district! Your support is instrumental in ensuring the safety and infrastructure of our schools.

We are currently in the design phase, planning for security upgrades, air handlers at the High School, improving the Middle School parking area and bus loop as well as most windows

and masonry restoration for all buildings and select roof replacement.

Also included are architectural components for the overhead doors and the railing in the mezzanine at the Bus Garage, and the cafeteria windows at the Middle School and High School. We are planning to replace the elevator at the High School.

These improvements will benefit our students and staff for years to come. We are proud to be part of a community that values education and invests in the future of our children.

We are grateful for the years of service provided by retiring Principal Kim Holliday and appreciate her legacy. I would like to welcome Principal Patrick Dunham to our school family at the Middle School. He has expressed great excitement at joining us.

On April 8, we have the opportunity to experience what for many will be a once-in-a-lifetime event with the total solar eclipse in our viewing area. The district will dismiss early on that day for all students and staff, providing solar safety glasses and directions on how to view the eclipse safely.

We appreciate you partnering with us to educate the young people of this community.

Sincerely,

Donna Runner

Dr. Donna Runner, Superintendent

Updates to the Community Rec. Program: Hours, programs updated

The message below comes from the Community Recreation Program team.

Thank you to all the community members who completed the community recreation survey; your feedback is valuable and appreciated. We are in the process of enhancing our communication and have included an updated facility and program schedule.

Our committee is working diligently to examine additional program offerings and we encourage you to visit the Community Recreation Center page on the school website via the nearby QR code or under the Community tab for the most up-to-date information on facilities and programs. You can also visit the updated Facebook page: Mexico Academy Community Recreation Program for weekly updates.



MACS PROGRAM & FACILITY SCHEDULE

Adult Lap Swim: Monday-Friday, *5-7 AM

AquaFit Class: Tuesdays & Thursdays 6-6:45 AM

Community Swim: Saturdays from 11 AM to 1:30 PM (September-June);
Wednesdays from 6-8 PM (March-August)

Fitness Center: Monday-Friday, 5-7 AM and 5-8 PM;
Saturday 10:30 AM to 1:30 PM (September-June)

Resistance Training Class: Monday/Wednesday/Friday 6-6:45 AM

Learn to Swim: June-August (visit website for more information & registration)

*Adult lap swim may switch to a 6 AM start based on lifeguard availability, visit the Facebook page for updates.

Additional community program offerings not managed or operated by MACS, such as youth sports and adult recreation events, are now linked on the website for ease of access.

We hope this encourages participation in all the activities our community has to offer. Go Tigers!

Boys cross country wins Class C title, place 5th at states

The Mexico Tigers varsity boys cross country team was crowned Section III Class C champions during the sectional championship meet at VVS on Saturday, Nov. 4.

MACS senior Ethan Becker placed first in the Class C race with a time of 16:38, while his teammates Logan Fitzgerald (17:57) and Everett Bryant (18:05) had top-15 finishes and Mexico's Aiden Bartlett (18:16), Collin Fitzgerald (18:27) and Daniel Gagnier (18:33) placed in the top 25.

Other members of this year's team included Braydon Beasley, Sam Gillespy, Hunter Herrington, Aiden DeGroff,

Jack Deckman, Dakota DeFalco and Gavin Nickolas.

The team is coached by Joseph Deckman and Matt McGiff.

The Tigers went on to compete in the New York State meet on Saturday, Nov. 11, where they placed fifth overall in the state. Becker finished fourth overall in the state meet.

Front left to right: Coach Deckman, Ethan Becker, Collin Fitzgerald, Braydon Beasley, Aiden Bartlett, Sam Gillespy, Coach McGiff. Back left to right: Daniel Gagnier, Everett Bryant, Logan Fitzgerald, Hunter Herrington, Aiden DeGroff, Jack Deckman. Athletes not present: Dakota DeFalco and Gavin Nickolas.



MACS students shine at All-County Band show

More than a dozen student musicians from Mexico Academy & Central School District earned selection to the All-County Band.

Both the Senior High All-County and Junior High All-County bands took the stage at Paul V. Moore High School in mid-January for a concert highlighting Oswego County student musician excellence.

Students from Mexico High School selected to the Senior High All-County Band included Emily Bennett (baritone saxophone) Riley Gagnier (clarinet), Dylan Hoye (trumpet), Damien King (bass clarinet), Cosette Laffan (French horn) and Kinzy Laffan (alto saxophone).

"I was excited to see the extra effort in preparing both the audition music and festival repertoire pay off for the students in the form of an excellent performance," said MHS Band Director Brian Carnes. "We had more students audition this year than we have in recent memory, and I know that foundation they have laid by striving for excellence will serve the band well moving forward."

Those selected for the Junior High All-County Band were Makayla Bee (trombone), McKenzie Bristol (tuba), Terra Gagnier (alto saxophone), Ethan Gilbert (clarinet), Alexis Jackson (flute), Isabella Ladd (flute), Owen Larrabee (trombone), Sophie Madden (oboe), Joseph Mulcahey (trumpet), Ava Petrocci (euphonium), Marshall Rowley (clarinet), Madison Snyder (mallet percussion), Tilly Tunis (trumpet), Jacob Upcraft (clarinet) and Ava Warchol (euphonium).

Riley Gagnier, a junior at MHS, said students auditioned in front of judges who picked the bands based on musicianship and technique.

Those who earned All-County status spent a Friday afternoon learning from their conductor, Dr. Timothy Diem of Syracuse University for the Senior High and Kristyn Cutler, a veteran music director at Westmoreland CSD for the Junior High.

"(Dr. Diem) was a very nice guy, talked a lot of different techniques you could use to play your instrument better and different ways to play the music," said Damien King, a MACS junior. "Over the course of the two days it went by very smoothly and prepared four songs and sounded very good."

Cosette Laffan, also a junior, said the experience always gives you something to take away.

"It's great, it's another level of playing and really cool to experience that firsthand," she said. "The fact that you are a part of that experience is really awesome."



MS stages musical 'Mary Poppins Jr.'

Dozens of Mexico Middle School students presented "Mary Poppins Jr." The story, which was staged by MMS in late November, told the classic tale of "Mary Poppins" with many recognizable musical numbers based on the Walt Disney film and stories of P.L. Travers.



Full house for Mex El's holiday concert

Mexico Elementary's chorus was hard at work ahead of the holiday season preparing for its holiday show held in front of a packed audience at Mexico Middle School.

Students sang several songs to get attendees in the holiday spirit and wore festive attire to spread cheer.

During one of the songs, a few students who learned a melody came down to accompany the chorus on percussion instruments.



MACS welcomes Patrick Dunham as new Middle School Principal



The new Mexico Middle School principal was welcomed in January as Patrick Dunham officially began his role with the district.

Dunham comes to Mexico Academy & Central School District after his time as principal in the Bradford school district and an assistant principal for Watertown's intermediate and middle school, before which he was a music instructor for grades 4-6 at Naples

and grades 4-12 at Dundee.

"Everyone at MACS has been tremendously welcoming, helpful, and friendly so far," said Dunham of his initial weeks. "Working with the adults and students in the Middle School has been everything I hoped it would be."

Sharing his educational philosophy, Dunham said he feels that with the proper tools and supports, every student can be successful, adding he views "education as a transformative and empowering journey that should be inclusive, recognizing the unique strengths and challenges of each individual."

In addition to his past education experience, Dunham is the commander of the 198th Army Band for the U.S. Army Reserves in which he actively serves.

Dunham grew up attending the Alexandria Central School District and received his bachelor's in music education from West Virginia University. He then earned his master's degree in education and instructional design at American Intercontinental University and his CAS in Educational Leadership from nearby SUNY Oswego.

Among Dunham's top priorities as principal is safety - he knows how important it is to ensure a safe and effective learning environment for all students and staff.

"Safety is paramount," Dunham said. "Parents entrust our school to not only provide a rigorous and meaningful education to their children, but to provide a safe physical and emotionally stable environment to them every minute of the school day."

During the school year, Dunham lives with his wife, three kids and two dogs in neighboring Jefferson County village Chaumont. In the summers, he spends a lot of time in New Haven where his parents live and where his family owns a summer camp.

Dunham took over as principal following the retirement of Kim Holiday, who led Mexico Middle School for 17.5 years.

New Haven UPK visits Tops

New Haven Elementary's pre-K classes recently took a field trip to learn about a local business and its operations.

On separate days, the two UPK classes traveled by bus to grocer Tops in nearby Mexico. There, students met with staff and learned about different departments while touring the grocery business.

Since fall 2022, MACS has hosted Universal Pre-Kindergarten as a full-day offering in all three of its elementary schools. Learn more about how to register for the 2024-25 cohort on our website, mexicocsd.org.



Middle School celebrates **student achievement** at Quarter 2 Pep Rally


Mexico Middle School held its Quarter 2 pep rally, honoring students who have succeeded and worked hard throughout the marking period.

In addition to awards, there were several games which involved students and staff – such as musical chairs, toilet paper mummies and a spin on Hungry, Hungry Hippos.

The jazz band also performed throughout the event, featuring a number of student musicians in addition to Music Instructor Kevin Upcraft and the new Middle School Principal Patrick Dunham.



What I LOVE about MACS



They have a lot of activities for us to do and I never get bored. I'm on the unified bowling team and I love the coaches, teammates and learning about the sport.

Allysa S., MHS Freshman



What I LOVE about MACS

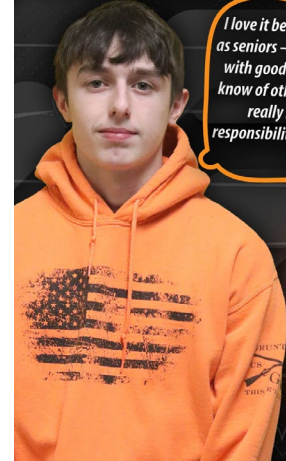


I've got great colleagues, community support, and the opportunity to spark student interest in potential careers in the trades. Also the kids will learn skills that they can use forever.

Andrew MacDonald, MHS Instructor




What I LOVE about MACS



I love it because of the freedoms we get as seniors – like leaving during study hall with good grades and behavior. I don't know of other schools that do that, and I really love that I get the added responsibility and can enjoy my free time.

Nico M., MHS Senior



5 MHS students earn CNY Scholastic Art Awards



Five Mexico High School student artists have been honored as 2024 CNY Scholastic Art Award winners and were featured on exhibit at Onondaga Community College in the month of February.

The students earning recognition included Madalyn Dann for her ceramic titled "My Father's Daughter," Amanda Guerra for her ceramic "Redesign," Marc Loomis for his ceramic "Rumination," Sarah Marsden for her drawing "Urban Ivy," and Harley Potter for her ceramic "Anxiety." Each of the five students earned Honorable Mention for their works.

"We are thrilled to have five of our students selected for the CNY Scholastics Art show," said MHS art teacher Brittany Malone. "Their dedication to their craft is truly inspiring and we couldn't be more proud of them. This recognition highlights the strength of our art program and the talent of our students. We look forward to seeing their work on display and celebrating their achievements."



MACS is turning 200!

Be a part of this magical 2026 celebration - email Dr. Donna Runner at DRunner@mexicocsd.org to be added to her list for more information. We'd love community input and assistance!



MACS IS TURNING 200

Proud to be MACS



Andrew MacDonald

Mexico High School | Teacher
October 2023



Margaret Wilson

Mexico High School | Retired Teacher
November 2023



Jennifer Ruttan

New Haven Elementary School | Teaching Assistant
December 2023



Beth Penrod

Mexico Middle School | 12:1-4 Classroom Teacher
January 2024



Sharon Kerfjen

Mexico Elementary | Substitute Clerical Staff
February 2024

100th day, hooray! Students reach major '23-24 milestone

Kindergarten students at Mexico Elementary recently crossed 100 days, a major learning milestone celebrated by the school as many learners and staff alike dress up as if they were 100 years old. Mexico Elementary celebrated this day in mid-February.

In addition to dressing up, each kindergarten class took part in special projects and classroom activities to mark 100 days of learning, growth and being together. A number of other classrooms throughout the building and district also celebrated 100 and 101 days.



BOARD OF EDUCATION

James Emery - *President*
Darlene Upcraft - *Vice President*
Chad Bigelow
Dennis Brooks
Mark Lichtenstein
Amy Shaw
Susan Teifke
Ethan Becker - *Student Representative*

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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Calendar update: Monday, April 8 now half day

District officials have announced that Monday, April 8, 2024, will be a half day for all students pre-K through 12th grade.

All of the Mexico school district will experience a total eclipse at approximately 3:22 p.m. EDT April 8, causing the sky to go dark for around 3.5 minutes. The partial eclipse will begin at about 2:09 p.m. and will last a little less than two and a half hours.

Officials also announced the district has purchased solar viewers for students to take home for safe viewing of the spectacle.

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.

Upcoming Events

March 4-6: Bus Safety Drills

March 6: Mexico Elementary Spring Pictures

March 7-9: HS Musical, "Into The Woods," 7pm

March 8: 25-Week Marking Period Ends

March 11: NO SCHOOL - Staff Development Day

March 11: Varsity/JV Spring Sports Start

March 11-15: Mex El Book Fair

March 12: NH PTC, 3:30pm

March 12: PAL PTC, 4pm

March 12: Mex El PTO, 6pm

March 14: NH St. Patrick's Day Bingo, 5:30pm

March 14: Music In Our Schools Month Concert 1, MS Gym, 6pm

March 19: Music In Our Schools Month Concert 2, HS Aud., 6pm

March 20: Virtual Superintendent Town Hall, Zoom, 6pm

March 21: BOE Business Meeting, MS Aud., 6pm

March 21-22: HS Variety Show, HS Aud., 7pm

March 23: Community Connections Event, MHS, 10am-1pm

March 27: Mex El Celebration of Learning

March 27: Art/Math Honor Society Inductions, HS Aud., 7 p.m.

March 28: English Honor Society Inductions, HS Aud., 6 p.m.

March 29: NO SCHOOL – Recess Day

April 1: NO SCHOOL – Recess Day

April 8: Modified Spring Sports Start

April 8: HALF DAY - Early Dismissal PK-12

April 22-26: NO SCHOOL – Spring Break

May 21: Budget Vote & BOE Elections, Noon-9pm, Elementary Schools