

10-Week Update 2017 - 2018

At the conclusion of each 10 weeks in the academic year, I provide the community with a look at what we in the school district have accomplished. Here is a look at what we have done.

By far the two highest-profile items we have worked toward are the Healthy Bodies curriculum and the upcoming capital projects vote. The change in the health curriculum was discussed at public meetings held at various schools, at a meeting of our District Parent Committee meeting, and at a public hearing before the Board of Education. We are seeking to add more information on sexual health and responsible choices, in the hopes of impacting the pregnancy rate and the rate of sexually transmitted diseases among our youth. Both numbers are unacceptably high.

The second item, the Stewardship Project, seeks approval by the community to spend \$55 million to replace roofs at Maple, NFHS, and Cataract schools, make parking lot repairs at the constantly-used high school, replace windows at GJ Mann School, build a kitchen in the existing footprint of 79th Street School, install air-conditioning in the four elementary schools that do not already have it, and fix the bell tower at Maple Avenue School. In addition, we want to upgrade the internet wiring at all schools to Category 6/6a to ensure compatibility with all our technology. There are many other projects, too, like repointing masonry and so on. Please vote December 12 noon to nine p.m. and visit us at www.nfschools.net for more on this.

Meanwhile, our curriculum office and teachers have been implementing our new district-wide math program, new science standards, and piloting three ELA programs across seven different. They are also preparing for Computer-Based Testing, which the state is requires to be fully implemented in a few short years.

They also are implementing a reading intervention program, for students in grades 2-4, which is designed to meet the needs of students who have not been successful with traditional phonics instruction.

We have begun offering high school–level social studies classes at Gaskill Prep, to allow advanced students to begin high school work in that subject, with the hopes that by junior or senior year, they will have time in their schedules to take college credit-bearing classes. We have also started a drama group at the school so students interested in theater can start performing at a younger age.

At NFHS, a local history elective was created, giving students the opportunity to learn about this community in an in-depth way.

The District received a grant from the NYS Office of Children and Family Services Empire After School Program in the amount of \$2.3 million cumulative to provide academic support, increase school engagement and provide mental and social support programs. Our Extended Day programming is in place at all schools, allowing students who choose to to remain in school longer and engage in productive activities and recreation.

Working with the City, Go Bike Buffalo, and Cornell Cooperative Extension, we are painting crosswalks with vibrant art near our schools in the hopes of slowing traffic. All schools also conducted required drills and we had our District-wide examination and report by the Fire Department to ensure safety.

Our Maintenance Department completed renovation work at Gaskill Prep's natatorium, including: new lighting, ventilation system, drop ceiling, benches, and a complete re-grouting of the entire pool. It also completed the refinishing and restriping of Maple Avenue's and GJ Mann's school's gymnasiums.

Work continues on a new website, which will be unveiled soon. We improved our newsletter, implemented a District app, and will soon make available a history of our public schools called Schools Days. We honored five Outstanding Alumni and are currently seeking nominations for our Athletic Hall of Fame.

We congratulated Abate Principal Cynthia Jones, who received the Education Award from the YWCA of the Niagara Frontier on September 26.

We held Dads Take Your Child To School Day, the District Mile Run for grades five and six, an Empower Your Life conference for students at the Community Education Center, the Cardboard Challenge, Dad's Game Nights, and so much more.

Interesting new activities are held at every school, for example:

Abate and NFHS held the Far West Teacher Network Poverty Simulation Activity with staff and continued their book study [Understanding Poverty In the Classroom](#).

Cataract Parent group hosted "Tea and Tissues" for our Pre-K parents on the first day of school.

Maple's student body posed for a school-wide photo, taken by drone and held a .95th birthday party. Kalfas hosted a 60th birthday celebration and welcomed the daughter of Henry J. Kalfas and past staff.

I continue to personally visit schools daily and attend faculty meetings. My goals going forward include re-thinking the parent –teacher conference design and addressing the opioid crisis as it affects our schools. I urge you to stay up to date with what we are trying to achieve in the District. As a community, we can move forward and ensure success to every child.