



WINTER 2022

Community Newsletter

Volume 9 Issue 2

Congressman Higgins Announces \$1 Million grant to support District school safety measures

At a news conference at Niagara Falls High School on October 12, 2022, Congressman Brian Higgins (NY-26) joined Niagara Falls City School District (NFCSD) Superintendent Mark Laurrie along with Niagara County Sheriff Michael Filicetti, City of Niagara Falls Mayor Robert Restaino, Niagara Falls Police Chief John Faso, Pastor Craig Pridgen and Niagara University Provost Dr. Timothy Ireland to announce a \$1 million federal grant to support safety in schools across the Niagara Falls District.

“From outside threats to internal conflicts, violence has no place in our schools,” said Congressman Higgins. “Districts face a range of challenges and significant costs related to school safety. These federal resources for the Niagara Falls City School District will allow for the implementation of strategies that advance a safe and healthy school climate, providing a renewed peace of mind for parents, students, and teachers and ultimately supporting improved learning outcomes.”

“Our priority is ensuring that our students are safe in school and that our parents feel secure leaving their children under our care,” said Niagara Falls City School District Superintendent Mark Laurrie. “This \$1 million Safer Communities Act (NFCSD) grant funds mental health services and school-based violence prevention programs that begin with our youngest students in pre-K and continue through high school. As a result, our students will receive the best anti-violence and mental health support for the duration of their school years.”

The funding for the grant is provided through the Safer Communities Act, supported by Congressman Higgins, approved by the House of Representatives on May 18, followed by Senate approval in June, and signed into law by President Joe Biden on June 25, 2022. The bipartisan bill, which took steps to reduce gun and community violence, included support for mental health and community violence intervention programs, policies strengthening “red flag” laws, measures to prevent straw purchases and interstate gun trafficking, and funding for investments in school safety, including early intervention and support services.

City of Niagara Falls Mayor Robert Restaino said, “We need to remember that our schools are places for learning. Unfortunately, we live in times when some people have other ideas for our school environment and our students and staff. Congressman Higgins’s support of the Safe Communities Act again underscores his continuing commitment to our community, families, and children.”

“As a parent and teacher in the Niagara Falls City School district, students and teachers must feel safe in our schools,” said Niagara County 5th District Legislator and Minority Leader Christopher Robins. “This grant is a big step toward obtaining safety for all.”

Pastor Craig Pridgen, President of the Niagara Falls Ministerial Council, said, “As a father, it breaks my heart that these are conversations we are forced to have. However, it gives me peace

knowing that I have partners in government like my dear friend Congressman Brian Higgins. He continues to fight to ensure the safety of our children and those in communities that are often overlooked. The one million dollars allocated for our schools is a great start to resources for our children and to promote dialogue in our community.”

Rev. James J. Maher, C.M., president, Niagara University, added, “As partners in education, Niagara University is proud to support Mark Laurrie and the Niagara Falls City School District through mental health programs designed to make our schools safer. It is also important to commend Congressman Brian Higgins for his work in securing

continued on pg 2



Dozens of volunteers from The Chapel spruce up Abate



Every year, The Chapel at Niagara Falls celebrates Serve Day. On Serve Day volunteers from the church donate their time working on a project at a local organization. This year, The Chapel provided their services at Harry F. Abate Elementary.

On Saturday, September 24, 2022, over 90 Serve Day volunteers spruced up the landscaping and other outdoor areas of the school.





From the Superintendent
Mark Laurrie

As we anticipate the arrival of 2023, the Niagara Falls City School District (NFCSD) is grateful for the innovative programs that keep our students safe and engaged in learning. In 2022, the District equipped all of our schools with weapons detection systems. In addition, we enacted a policy requiring all visitors and guests to call ahead before entering any school, as we must monitor and keep a record of all persons within our facilities. In addition, our buildings are monitored by school personnel and police 24 hours a day with over 300 exterior and interior cameras. Finally, as we learned from the horrible event at Robb Elementary in Uvalde, Texas, last spring, it only takes one propped door to initiate a tragedy. Therefore, we will outfit all exterior doors to our facilities with an alarm system.

At its October 20, 2022, meeting, the NFCSD Board of Education authorized the District to proceed with the following safety and security capital projects:

- Secure vestibules for 14 NFCSD buildings – The District will furnish all schools with enhanced vestibules with bulletproof glass. Once inside the first set of doors, school personnel will ask each visitor for his/her driver’s license and scan the document using the Raptor system. Raptor checks the license to see if the individual is on the sex offender registry or has an outstanding criminal issue. The staff member who scans the I.D. will make a badge if necessary. At that point, the visitor will be buzzed into a second door and will pass through the Evolv Weapons Detection System.
- Cameras for all building access doors – The District will equip all 221 of its additional exterior doors with a device that will sound an alarm if a door is propped open. Cameras will record all activity at these entranceways.

The Board approved conducting a public referendum at all polling sites on January 17, 2023. The referendum asks voters to grant the District permission to raise the debt ceiling to fund the capital projects mentioned above.

Once again, if approved this referendum will not impact the local tax levy. These projects will allow the District to receive a 98% reimbursement on every construction dollar spent. The additional two percent will come from the District’s allocation of casino revenue for one year. Local union labor will again be called upon to complete all construction.

Providing interventions to correct behavior before it starts is the District’s ultimate goal. The Pathways to Excellence Program at Niagara Falls High School (NFHS) aims to do just that, and the program is proving to be very successful. The Pathways to Excellence Program individualizes the educational experience for each student, emphasizing healthy and respectful relationships between students and staff. Community partners, NFHS teachers, and staff help guide students in entering the workforce, pursuing career training, and preparing for a post-secondary educational program.

In the 2022 – 2023 school year, 99 students are participating in the program, availing themselves of support to recover credits while utilizing flexible scheduling.

The goals of the program are:

- To improve academic achievement, self-management, social skills, and conflict resolution through guided mentorship
- Reduce school violence
- Reduce suspension rates
- Increase attendance and retention
- Improve school connectedness and engagement

Creative programs, checking and connecting with students are helping our students to thrive and grow. The District is committed to the mindset of continuous improvement and achievement.

Sincerely,
 Mark Laurrie, Superintendent
 Niagara Falls City School District

\$1 Million grant *continued from pg 1*

this critical funding for our schools, which will improve the academic climate for students throughout the Niagara Falls school system.”

The federal grant for the Niagara Falls City School District will support a three-year comprehensive school safety initiative benefiting approximately 8,000 students that includes:

- The establishment and deployment of a Threat Assessment Team to evaluate needs and vulnerabilities in NFCSD schools
- Classroom-based violence prevention programming for students in grades pre-K through 12
- After-school violence prevention programs for middle and high school students
- Targeted mentoring for high-risk youth
- Expansion of student-led violence prevention and mitigation strategies, including the district’s Restorative Justice program to address bullying and school violence
- Training and professional development for teachers and administrators in preventing and responding to threats of violence on campus



The Niagara Falls City School District grant is provided under the U.S. Department of Justice Student, Teachers, and Officers evidence-based strategies to address violence and threat prevention.

ESL program is a family affair

The Niagara Falls City School District (NFCSD) has initiated an Adult English as a Second (ESL) program in partnership with Niagara University. This program seeks to provide English as a new language instruction to adult English language learners (ELLs) in the City of Niagara Falls.

The NFCSD Adult English as a Second Language (ESL) program serves adults whose first language is not English. The primary objective is to enable adult learners who are not fully fluent and literate in English to become proficient in communicating in English, so that they can meet their personal, employment, community, and academic goals.

The program started at the beginning of the 2022-2023 academic year. Classes are held on Saturday mornings from 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Instruction is planned, implemented and reflected to meet the linguistic and cultural needs of participants. Evidence-based strategies are used to facilitate language and literacy instruction.

Once a month, families participate in instructional sessions together. These sessions incorporate family literacy strategies and model interactive activities that can be used at home to further literacy development and language proficiency. These authentic learning experiences support academic growth as well as strengthen relationships within families and the community.

Program Objectives

This program will:

- Increase English language proficiency, in all language modalities, including reading, writing, speaking and listening, for adult ELLs in the Niagara Falls City School District
- Strengthen essential literacy skills needed for 21st century living
- Establish family ESL literacy, which focuses on knowledge and skills that parents need to help their children succeed in U.S. schools
- Facilitate family ESL literacy activities
- Provide interactive, take home activities for further reinforcement



The The Niagara Falls City School District ENL (English as a New Language) Parent and Family reception was held on Wednesday, October 26, 2022, at Kalfas Primary School. The well-attended reception featured ethnic foods from Niagara Falls restaurants and musical selections from the Niagara Falls High School Swing choir. Food tastings were followed by student activities, henna tattoos, and an informational meeting for parents conducted by representatives from RBERN (Regional Bilingual Educational Resource Network).

The District's large and growing immigrant population adds to the rich tapestry of diversity. This evening celebrated students and families from throughout the District. It provided an opportunity for them to learn from each other.

Superintendent Mark Laurrie, administrators, teachers, Niagara University student volunteers, and nine ENL teachers from our District were in attendance.

In addition, Jewish Family Services provided information on services available to newcomers to our country and area. Finally, Niagara University professor Elizabeth Falzone, Ph.D. spoke about Saturday adult ENL classes held at Abate Elementary School.



Niagara Falls High School Homecoming 2022

Pep Rally - Friday, October 7, 2022

Homecoming Football Game vs. Hutchinson-Central Tech/Emerson Vo-Tech/City Honors -
BIG Wolverines WIN 27 - 0 - Saturday, October 8, 2022

Homecoming Dance - Saturday, October 8, 2022







Bloneva Bond Primary celebrates a new playground

Officials cut the ribbon on Bloneva Bond Primary's new playground during an official opening ceremony Thursday, September 22, 2022. Bloneva Bond Primary students have been having a blast on the new playground!

Thank you to the Board of Education and Superintendent Mark Laurrie for helping to make it happen!



Another outstanding, extremely well-attended Dads Take Your Child To School Day (DTYCTSD) took place on September 28 and 29, 2022. Hundreds of dads, moms, grandfathers, grandmothers, uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, and mentors turned out to celebrate the day and support our students.

Dads Take Your Child To School Day

DTYCTSD is a yearly event to show the importance of positive role models in our students' lives. All of the District's elementary schools took part in the day: 79th Street School, Abate Elementary, Bloneva Bond Primary, Cataract Elementary, GJ Mann, Hyde Park Elementary, Kalfas Elementary and Maple Elementary.



Ms. Grant and Mrs. Slaiman's Functioning Life Skills students at Niagara Falls High School are out in the community working hard completing internships at the Niagara Falls State Park and at the Hard Rock Cafe. These students intern two days a week, earning work-based learning hours as well as acquiring new and diverse skills that are needed for future employment.



The Niagara Falls High School (NFHS) girl's junior varsity and varsity volleyball teams dedicated their October 4, 2022, games versus Charter School for Applied Technology (CSAT) to breast cancer awareness. The teams raised \$450 for breast cancer awareness in Niagara Falls. Plus, the junior varsity and varsity teams both won their games against CSAT! Fans wore pink and the community came out to support the teams. Thank you for your support! It was a very special night.



Maple Avenue turns 100

Maple Avenue Elementary students, families, current and former staff members, former students and the community at large came out big time for the celebration as Maple Avenue Elementary turned 100 years old!

The event on Tuesday, September 13, 2022, was a tribute to the school and the proud history of the Niagara Falls City School District. The school's 100th birthday party coincided with its 2022 - 2023 school year Open House.



Hands-on Farm-to-school

Students in Theresa Mannarino's class at LaSalle Prep traveled to Sanger Farms on October 24, 2022, to see the workings of a farm firsthand. The field trip was part of the District's Farm to School Grant, which encourages opportunities for students to learn about the environment and make them more conscious about where and how fruits and vegetables are grown. It also aims to increase the consumption of fresh local fruits in schools. At the farm, the students picked apples and had lunch.



2022 DEC.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 BBP Picture Retake Day CES School Picture Retake	2 Maple Ave. Picture Retake	3
4	5 79th St. School PEG 6:30 p.m.	6 HJK Picture Retake Day	7 GPS PEG Meeting	8 Hyde Park Picture Retake Day BOE Review Meeting 5:30 p.m.	9 First Trimester Marking Period Closes	10 Second Trimester Marking Period Begins
11	12	13 Maple Ave. PEG 6:00 p.m.	14 BBP Family & Caregivers Meeting 9:00 a.m. NFHS Winter Band Concert	15 CES PEG 5:30 p.m. BOE Regular Meeting 5:30 p.m. Last Day for Teachers to Enter Grades	16	17 Hyde Park Scholastic Book Fair Sept. 17 - 23
18	19 Report Cards Printed	20 NFHS Winter Choir Concert 7:00 p.m.	21 Report Cards Mailed	22 Last Day of Classes Before Winter Recess	23 Winter Recess - No Students/No Teachers/ No 10 Month Staff Dec. 23 - Jan. 2	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
WINTER RECESS		WINTER RECESS		WINTER RECESS		WINTER RECESS

2023 JAN.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 Winter Recess - No Staff/No Students	3 Return from Winter Recess	4 GPS PEG Meeting	5	6	7
WINTER RECESS		8	9 79th PEG Meeting 6:30 p.m.	10 Maple Ave. PEG Meeting 6:00 p.m.	11 BBP Family & Caregivers Meeting 9:00 a.m.	12 BOE Review Meeting 5:30 p.m. Prep School Musical School Performance 10:00 a.m.
13	14 Prep School Musical Public Performance 1:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.	15	16 Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday No Staff/ No Students	17	18	19
20	21	22 Class of 2025 Krispy Kreme Donut Sale Jan. 23 - Feb. 3	23	24 Regents Exams	25 Regents Exams	26 CES PEG Meeting 5:30 p.m. Regents Exams BOE Regular Meeting 5:30 p.m. NFHS Student Play Crimes of the Heart 7:00 p.m.
27 SCD - Elementary AM/PM Regents Exams 20 Week Marking Period Closes NFHS Student Play Crimes of the Heart 7:00 p.m.	28 30 Week Marking Period Begins NFHS Student Play Crimes of the Heart 7:00 p.m.	29	30	31 DPC 5:30 p.m.		

2023 FEB.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 GPS PEG Meeting	2 Teachers Last Day to Enter Grades	3	4
5	6 79th Street PEG Meeting 6:30 p.m.	7 Maple Ave. PEG Meeting 6:00 p.m. Report Cards Printed	8 BBP Family & Caregivers Meeting 9:00 a.m.	9 BOE Review Meeting 5:30 p.m. Report Cards Mailed	10	11
12	13 NFHS Winter Spirit Week Feb. 13-17 Class of 2025 Krispy Kreme Donut Sale Pick Up	14 NFHS Winter Spirit Week	15 NFHS Winter Spirit Week	16 NFHS Student/Staff Blood Drive NFHS Winter Spirit Week	17 NFHS Winter Spirit Week	18 NFHS Winterfest Dance
19	20 President's Day - No Students/No Staff	21 SCD - NFHS AM/PM Professional Development	22	23 CES PEG 5:30 p.m. BOE Regular Meeting 5:30 p.m. NFHS Choralfest Pops Concert 6:00 p.m.	24	25
26	27	28 DPC Meeting 5:30 p.m.				



2022-2023
Board of Education
www.nfschools.net



Russell Petrozzi
President
297-8663 (h)
282-7971 (w)



Anthony Paretto
Vice President
371-0986 (h)



Earl Bass
471-9775 (c)



Robert Bilson
940-4990



Vincent "Jimmy" Cancemi
622-2992 (c)
284-2688 (w)



Michael Capizzi
481-2312



Clara Dunn
998-4539



Paul Kudela
308-1819



Nick Vilaro
946-8522



Mark Laurrie
Superintendent
286-4190 (w)

HFA - Abate School GJM - Mann School LPS - LaSalle Prep NFHAS - Niagara Falls High School UPK - Universal Pre-Kindergarten
 CES - Cataract Elem. BBP - Bloneva Bond Primary CEC - Comm. Ed. BOE - Board of Ed. NFT - Niagara Falls Teachers
 HJK - Kalfas School GPS - Gaskill Prep PAC - Performing Arts Center at NFHS SCD - Superintendent's Conference Day DPC - District Parent Committee

THE PUBLIC IS WELCOME
at all Board of Education Meetings.