

Niagara Falls Your Public Schools

FALL 2023 Community Newsletter **Volume 10 Issue 1**

Each year, it seems we have just settled into our summer activities when those school supplies and school clothes ads launch their sneaky return. And as the air turns cooler (slightly!), it rustles in the beginning of a new school year and the opportunity for a fresh start. It's like New Year's Eve in September, as students, staff, teachers, associates, administrators, and Board of Education members set new goals, and the District provides what they need to meet them. Here are some highlights of what's new in 2023-2024.

An addition that will be obvious the minute our classroom doors open this year is our new Clear Touch interactive boards. The District purchased 510 new Clear Touch interactive whiteboards for its teachers and students; they are a classroom standout! These state-of-the-art boards feature all of the following:

- Full motion up/down movement
- Clarity
- Flatboard
- 20-point multi-touch
- Expanded software
- Mobile document camera
- Multi-screen divisions
- Management/messaging from one source
- Casting Student Laptops
- Infinite wisdom



The Niagara Falls City School District (NFCSD) keeps up with the latest technology to help grab students' interest and keep them engaged.

Elementary students will stay longer in school this year as all elementary schools will dismiss at 3:20 p.m. five days a week. That means there will be no early dismissal for any elementary school any day of the week. This is excellent news because it means time has been created for student participation in "specials." "Specials" are art, music, STEM, and physical education

classes. They are the activities that allow our children to expend extra energy and express their creativity.

This year high school students will enjoy expanded opportunities to explore career options for life after high school. They will have more choices of classes they can take as dual-enrollment to earn college credit with Buffalo State University and Niagara University.

The District has seven new business partners in its Labor, Trades, and Skills Pathway and four new partners in its Business/Hospitality track. Our business partners are Seneca Niagara Casino, Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, and M&T Bank Tech Hub.

It's time to get back to it. The District keeps growing, adding more new programs that drive everyone forward to precisely what we're seeing now: a graduation rate of 85% we are confident will continue to climb steadily. Raising the graduation rate will always be the District's resolution, no matter what.



New playground at Hyde Park Elementary

The District held a ceremonial groundbreaking for the new playground at Hyde Park Elementary on May 3, 2023. With the completion of this playground, every single NFCSD elementary school has its own playground!

The Dr. Gerald E. DeMauro Award

The Annual NYS DATAG Excellence in Education Award, named the Dr. Gerald E. DeMauro Award, recognizes an individual who has made a significant contribution to the educational performance of students by promoting data driven policies.

This year's recipient, Niagara Falls City School District (NFCSD) Superintendent Mark Laurie, demonstrates outstanding leadership in promoting policies in the NFCSD that positively impacts the educational performance of students.

Superintendent Mark Laurie was selected as this year's recipient of the Dr. Gerald E. DeMauro Excellence in Education Award by the state-wide Data Analysts Technical Assistance Group (DATAG). This DATAG award recognizes an individual who has made significant contributions to the educational performance of students by promoting data driven practice. The award was presented to Superintendent Laurie at the DATAG summer conference held in Saratoga Springs in July.

Congratulations, Mr. Laurie!



From Niagara Falls City School District
Superintendent Mark Laurie



Happy new school year!
This year, we certainly have something to celebrate. The Niagara Falls City School District (NFCSD) begins the

2023 – 2024 school year having ended the 2022 – 2023 school year with an 85% graduation rate. The graduation rate has grown from 66% in 2019 to 85% in 2023. An increase of 19% is something to celebrate as we embark on a new school year with new programs, new challenges, and what is sure to be many great successes.

The District is proud of our Class of 2023 graduation rate. But the journey isn't over. The District's graduation rate goal is in the high 90s. We know how to get there. We get there with our high-quality programs and new ones we'll introduce. What follows is a look at what is new for 2023 -2024 in the NFCSD.

Let's start with our youngest students in our exceptional primary and elementary schools. This year, we are giving them the gift of time. There will be no early dismissal of students any day of the week. Monday – Friday, schools will conduct class until 3:20 p.m. The time gained allows us to offer our students "specials" daily. "Specials" include instruction in art, music, and physical education. These programs allow students to work out their energy and be creative.

Our highly successful and ever-growing Post Secondary Success Program (PS2) program will see its biggest year yet in 2023 - 2024. PS2 partner Buffalo State University is offering two new college-credit-bearing courses for dual enrollment: Intro to Africana Studies and Intro to Theatre, emphasizing African American History. Our friends at Niagara University will hold the following new courses for dual enrollment: Intro to Hospitality, Sport, and Tourism; Intro to Sport Management; and Intro to Python (Coding).

For the students who have selected an education pathway for their PS2 program, new dual-enrollment courses with Buffalo State University have been added: School for Society, Disability Awareness, and College Prep Course in English. The District has seven new business partners in its Labor, Trades, and Skills Pathway and four new partners in its Business/Hospitality track. The partnerships mean Niagara Falls High School students are introduced to careers not by reading about them in a book but in person on a job site or in an office building with a mentor by their side.

In July 2023, the District was awarded a 2nd PTECH grant focusing on computer science. Our business partners are Seneca Niagara Casino, Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, and M&T Bank Tech Hub.

The 2023-2024 school year will serve as a planning year. Eighth graders will be recruited in February 2024 and March 2024. They will serve as our first cohort of PTECH Computer Science students.

The new incoming ninth-grade PTECH cohort has 50 students. This year, we will have PTECH students in ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade. Our tenth graders will have the potential to earn eight college credits. Our eleventh graders will have the potential to earn ten college credits, maybe more, depending on any AP courses that will be taken simultaneously.

The District purchased 510 new Clear Touch interactive whiteboards for our teachers and students that will take learning to a whole new tech level. These devices will capture and maintain our students' attention with features including full motion up/down movement, a mobile document camera, and casting student laptops.

These are just a few things that students will enjoy due to careful planning and intelligent fiscal decisions from our Board of Education. The Board and staff are ready for the new school year. We're here to help and to provide the best educational experience for our students so they can live happy and fulfilling lives. Happy School Year, see you September 7.

Petrozzi sworn in as Board president,
Paretto selected as vice president

At its reorganization meeting on July 6, 2023, the Niagara Falls City School District Board of Education held a swearing-in ceremony for its newly-elected Board officers.

District Clerk Judie Glaser officiated the swearing-in of Russell Petrozzi as Board president and Anthony Paretto as Board vice president, each for a one-year term.

Petrozzi has been a member of the Board of Education for over two decades. He is president of Capitol Cleaners and a 1975 graduate of LaSalle High School. Upon graduating high school, Petrozzi attended Niagara University, earning a Bachelor of Arts in accounting. Petrozzi is President of the Board of Directors for Empower (formerly Niagara Cerebral Palsy). He has received many awards for his philanthropic accomplishments. Most recently, the Niagara Falls Education Foundation presented Petrozzi with its Distinguished Alumni Award. He has been awarded The Paul Harris Award from the Rotary Club of Niagara, the Citizen of the Year Award (shared with his father, the late Joseph Petrozzi) from the Niagara Falls Kiwanis Club, and the Good Neighbor Award. These honors were for community service and the "Coats for Kids" program.

Anthony Paretto has worked as a union electrician for over 20 years and is currently a City electrician. He resides in LaSalle with his wife, Sue, and his three children, Kaitlyn, Michael, and Anthony Jr. Mr. Paretto is also a volunteer coach for the Niagara Falls High School Football team and the Niagara Falls Junior Football Club. He said his priority is to ensure teachers have all the tools necessary to educate children to the highest possible standard.

Paretto said he is passionate about a continuous rise in the graduation rate and that his goal as vice president is to give the District's schools the support they need to make it happen.



District Clerk Judie Glaser officiates the swearing in of Anthony Paretto as Vice President of the board of education.



District Clerk Judie Glaser administers the oath of office for the board Presidency to Russell Petrozzi.

Explore and
More Field Trip

On Monday, August 7, 2023, 41 students and parents from Bloneva Bond Primary School attended a field trip to the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Children's Museum.



79th Street School joins district in Goin’ Bald for Bucks

Goin’ Bald for Bucks is a fundraising program where participants shave their heads, donate their hair, style their locks, or grow out their beards to support cancer research and patient-care programs at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Why should we Go Bald for Bucks?

Schools across the Niagara Falls School District (NFCSD) always strongly support the Bald for Bucks program. and the opportunity to fundraise for Roswell Park and make a difference in the lives of cancer patients throughout our community.

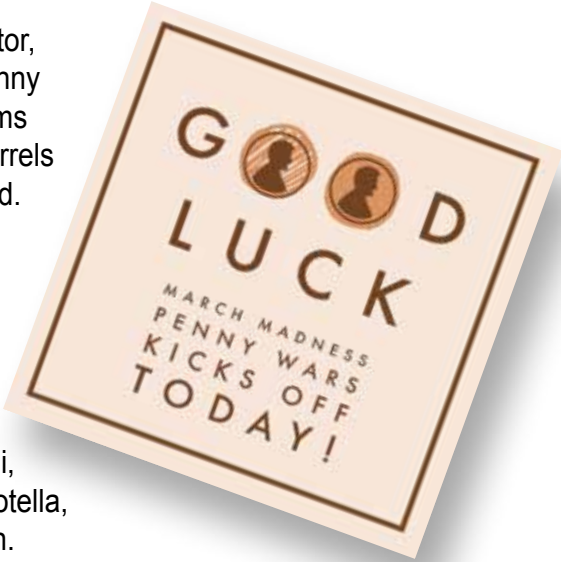
The District’s 79th Street Elementary took part in Bald for Bucks andBy Goin’ Bald for Bucks, our school will join 50+ other Western New York schools in the fight against cancer.

Organizing a Bald for Bucks fundraising event provides students with great leadership opportunities. Students learn valuable skills, such as team building, event planning, fundraising and more, and get to see the results of their hard work.

At 79th Street School, our student council raises funds throughout the year for local community outreach programs. However, this year student council chair, Samantha Mashiak, teamed up with Pamela

Garabedian, 79th Street Bald for Bucks coordinator, to collect funds for Roswell Cancer Center. A “penny war” was created school-wide amongst classrooms to raise funds for the Bald for Bucks program. Barrels of pennies were collected each week and counted. The total amount collected in pennies from the 79th Street school community was \$1,400. Additional funds were raised by the staff and students who participated in the actual Bald for Bucks event. The students who participated in the event held at Niagara Falls High School on April 27, 2023 were David Byrd, Veronica Carli, Jax Hook, Logan Rolfe, Logan Rotella, Mason Rotella, Ezekiel White, Olivia White, and Mrs. Garabedian.

Each year those who participate usually are the ones whose lives or loved ones have been touched by this horrible disease. But, when we come together as a community we offer so much more than financial support - we raise awareness of the disease and we offer hope for those suffering. The personal stories we share while attending the event give all of us a sense of purpose, bearing each other’s burdens in our community.



Maple pairs up with Niagara Greenway Commission

by Maple Avenue Elementary Principal Jeff Showers

We’re pleased to announce that we begin our third consecutive year in partnership with the Niagara Greenway Commission. Maple Avenue School is completely invested in the beautiful environmental landscape that surrounds our school.

We have natures hand at our disposal with the Gorge View Trail for walking and biking. We have natural wildlife, conservancy, indigenous wildflowers and trees, and local history for our students to learn about. With the direction of the Niagara Greenway Commission, support of the Niagara Falls City School District, and Mark Cerrone, Inc. Maple Avenue its own pollinating garden. Lisa Vitello, Administrative Director of Niagara Greenway along with Maple Avenue 6th grade science teacher Tom Sauvageau, worked with students in planting indigenous seeds, cultivating the garden, and maintaining the garden. In September, 2023 we will be joined by Niagara Greenway in a dedication of the Maple Avenue pollinating garden to be shared with

our community. Niagara Greenway will be donating a plaque to be placed on the two ton bolder that sits next to the garden.

We have taken numerous field trips with students and their families far away from the grips of social media. Students & parents have experienced multiple Maple bike rides to the Falls on the Gorge View Trail, learning about the Underground Railroad at the Schoellkopf overhang by the old Schoellkopf Power Station, the Devil’s Hole winter walk with reinactors, and the Power Vista tour to find out how their media is powered. This year we will continue our bike rides and will add to our trip plan an October Dusk walk into the French Castle of Fort Niagara.



Gaskill’s annual trip to our nation’s capital

They hold their first meeting about the trip just a few weeks into the school year. That is how important and well-planned Gaskill Prep’s yearly trip to Washington, D.C., is. It’s hands-on learning at its finest. The event is considered a big part of the Gaskill Prep experience.

Last school year, 95 Gaskill students and ten Gaskill staff members attended the trip on May 17-19. The group visited all of the monuments listed below:

- FDR Memorial
 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial
- Korean Memorial
 - Lincoln Memorial
 - Vietnam Memorial

WWII Memorial Students were paired up and were responsible for giving a digital presentation (PowerPoint) to the group about one of the monuments on the tour.

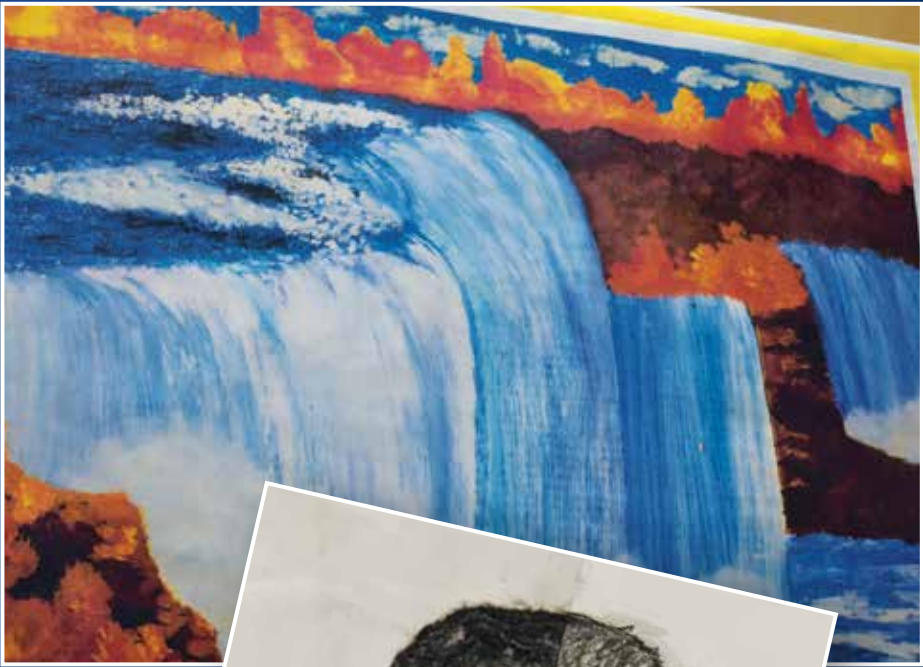
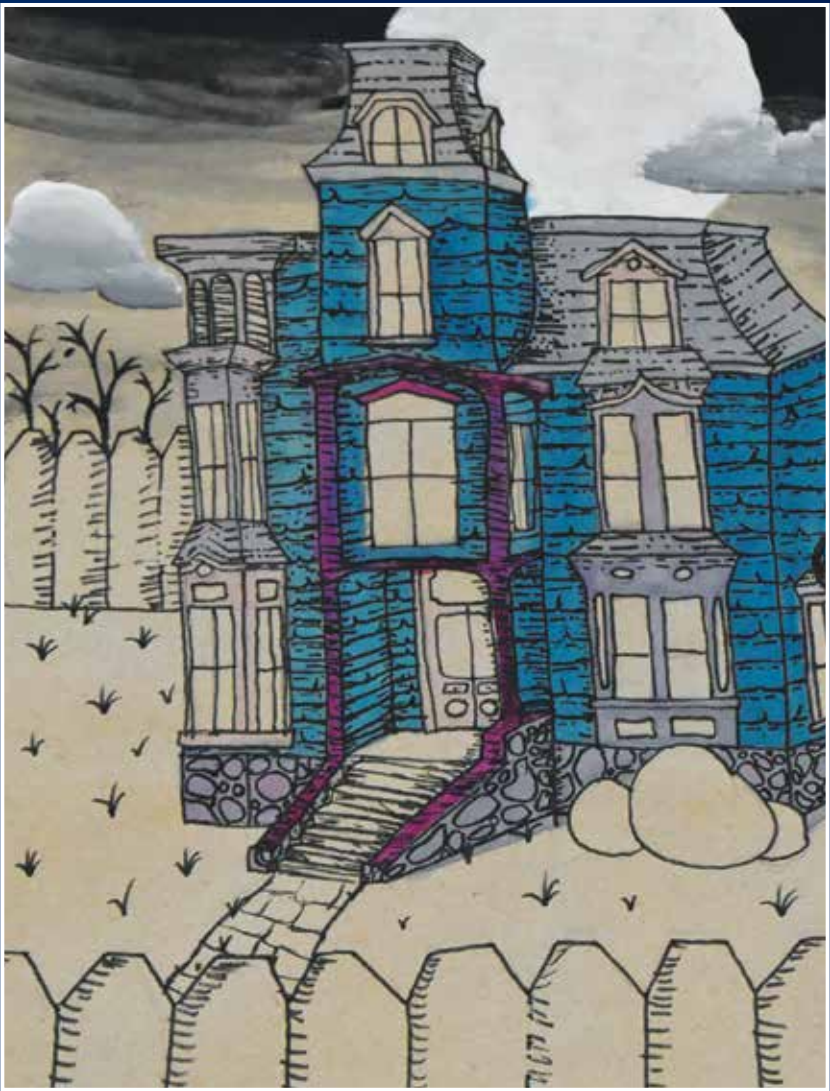
One of the memorable moments was the group dancing to music right outside the White House.

This year’s trip will be May 15-17, 2024.



District Art Show





Board Meeting Highlights

The Niagara Falls City School District Board of Education periodically honors and recognizes outstanding students, teachers, staff and others in the Niagara Falls community and beyond for outstanding achievements in academics, athletics, the visual and performing arts, volunteerism, philanthropy, work ethic and more. It was a busy spring 2023 for our Board as it celebrated the individuals, organizations and groups below.

Golden Apple Award

At its June 22, 2023 meeting, Superintendent Mark Laurrie presented The Chapel with the Board of Education’s highest honor, the Golden Apple Award. The Chapel was recognized for its overwhelming support of the outdoor beautification of Harry F. Abate Elementary. Over 90 volunteers have worked on projects at the school.

Niagara Falls Teachers/Niagara Falls Board of Education Minority Future Teacher Scholarship

At the June 22, 2023 meeting, Superintendent Mark Laurrie and Niagara Falls Teachers (NFT) Union President Dan Weiss presented NFHS Class of 2023 graduate Ngwa Obaid the Niagara Falls Teachers/Niagara Falls Board of Education Minority Future Teacher Scholarship Award. This scholarship is presented each year to a senior pursuing a teaching career. Obaid is planning a career in early childhood education.

Kalfas Staff – Special Recognition

Also at the June 22, 2023 meeting, Kalfas Primary School Principal Carrie Buchman recognized three of her staff members for coming to the aid of a kindergarten student who was showing signs of choking. The quick-thinking staff members who went to the young boy’s rescue are teacher Kara Klump, classroom associate Audrey DeWeen, and school nurse Quinn Putaski.

Special Recognition

At its April 25, 2023 meeting, the Board of Education recognized Niagara Falls High School Class of 2023 graduate Jaden Crumpler for his first-place finish at the New York State Wrestling Championships in the 126-pound category. Also, Superintendent Laurrie congratulated Crumpler for being a scholar athlete and for placing second at the National Wrestling Championship.



From left to right: NFT Union President Dan Weiss, Superintendent Mark Laurrie, Ngwa Obaid, Niagara Falls Teachers/Niagara Falls Board of Education Minority Future Teacher Scholarship Award recipient.



From left to right: Quinn Putaski, school nurse; Audry DeWeen, classroom associate; Kara Klump, teacher.



Jaden Crumpler



Superintendent Mark Laurrie, Pastor Mark Cushing, teacher Kara Klump and Abate Elementary Principal Lynn Tompkins.

NFHS participates in American Music Abroad



by Jill Wagner, World Language Teacher

What is AMA?

American Music Abroad is a music organization that was founded in 1975 by a high school band director and his wife to share their love of music in Europe and provide opportunities for high school, college students and young adults. This organization contacted the Niagara Falls High School Music Departments and inquired if there could be any interested students. The teachers shared this information with their classes and three students expressed interest in attending. The three students were Madisyn Tolfa, Dashia Royster and Elizabeth Wagner. The students then raised the money needed for the trip and worked individually through-

out the academic school year learning their performance music pieces.

In mid-July, students from across the United States travelled to Kean University in New Jersey to practice in intense training sessions three days prior to their departure for Europe. It was the first time everyone met each other to perform as a group. They were away from home from July 14- August 2 on the Freedom Tour.

There were six concert performances all throughout Europe in cathedrals, outdoor piazzas or plazas, and concert halls. The European tour included Venice, Italy, Abano Terme, Colmar, France, Salzburg, Austria, Frankfurt, Germany and Prague in the Czech Republic.

When they were not performing, they spent their time sightseeing, attending museums, palaces, throwing snowballs in the Alp Mountains, shopping in open-air markets, and enjoying dinner cruises. For these students, this experience was a dream come true as their hard work paid off on the trip of a lifetime. What an amazing opportunity I gained from attending with Niagara Falls High School. Thank you to Mr. and Mrs. Riederer (AMA- Niagara Wheatfield) and to

Mrs. Veronica Schucker, Mrs. Christina Custode-Macri and Mr. Brian Chmaj for sharing this program with all your music classes. Niagara Falls High School was well represented abroad.



Dashia Royster, Madisyn Tolfa, and Elizabeth Wagner ~The Lion of Lucerne Monument in Lucerne, Switzerland

National Honor Society Inductees



Niagara Falls High School held a special ceremony in May to honor the many students who were inducted into the National Honor Society. Selection is based on four criteria: scholarship (academic achievement), leadership, service, and character. Congratulations on being selected for this high honor.

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Katherine Adamec | Vincent Lodovico |
| Marwa Alshawli | Brianna London |
| Jordon Andrezejczyk | Rachael Maglio |
| Kendall Arbatosky | Aisha Makama |
| Rafay Bawamia | Jordyn Moore |
| Destiny Beghtol | Quiniece Moore |
| Angelica Biamonte | Aleena Mubashar |
| Zaria Booker | Ava-Marie Ogrodowski |
| Peter Carlo | Jasmine Purewal |
| Matthew Catanzaro | Emmalyn Pyra |
| Dezar're Chandler | Elsa Rodriguez-Pedraza |
| Madisyn Colvin | Jaelyn Reilly |
| Alison Condino | Alana Roszel |
| Ethan Copelin | Cheyann Saez |
| Evan DalPorto | Anthony Savino |
| Natalie Deweese | James Smith |
| Aiden Elledge | Raven Thuman |
| Noriana Ellison | Bianca Tiede |
| Anairis Gaylord | Jonathan Touma |
| Kyasia Hall | Elizabeth Wagner |
| Savannah Heller | Ke'ajahnae Walker |
| Jakob Henry | Kaelyn Walter |
| Amber Hermanson | Layah Westbrook |
| Faiza Hossain | Tyanna Wheeler |
| Urwa Khalid | Alexandra Wunsch |
| Haylee Kurtis | Jasmine Wunsch |
| Laurana Laurino | |

Senior Awards Ceremony

Congratulations to the dozens of Niagara Falls High School Class of 2023 students who were awarded scholarships and given accolades at the Senior Awards Ceremony on Tuesday, June 13, 2023. The students were recognized for outstanding achievements in their four years at Niagara Falls High School. Well done!



September 2023

For an updated list of school events log on to www.nfschools.net

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--------|--|---|--|--|---------------------|----------|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 Labor Day – No Staff/No Students | 5 Teachers report for a full day, A.M. – NFT Meeting; P.M. Faculty Meeting 4:30 p.m. – Washington, DC trip info meeting | 6 Superintendent Conference Day – Professional Development First Day for Early Head Start Students | 7 First Day for Students PreK Screening First Day for Head Start Students | 8 PreK Screening | 9 |
| 10 | 11 6:00 p.m. - NFHS PEG Meeting 9:15 a.m. – BBP PreK Family Orientation Twister | 12 | 13 | 14 5:30 p.m. – BOE Review Meeting 5:00 p.m. – Hyde Park Open House | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 NFHS Underclassmen Pictures NFHS Senior Pictures | 19 NFHS Underclassmen Pictures NFHS Senior Pictures | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 5:00 p.m. – HJK PEG Meeting 5:15 p.m. – DPC Meeting | 27 8:30 a.m. – Bonding with Dads, BBP | 28 5:30 p.m. – BOE Regular Meeting 5:00 p.m. – Hyde Park PEG Meeting | 29 | 30 |

October 2023

For an updated list of school events log on to www.nfschools.net

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | 9 Holiday – No Staff/No Students | 10 6:00 p.m. – NFHS PEG Meeting | 11 9:30 a.m. – BBP Parent Academy Kick-off Community Resource Fair NFHS Senior Pictures | 12 5:30 p.m. – BOE Review Meeting Senior Pictures | 13 Senior Pictures | 14 |
| 15 | 16 Hyde Park Picture Day GJM Picture Day | 17 BBP Picture Day 7:00 p.m. – NFHS Choir - You are Enough: A Concert for Mental Health, PAC | 18 | 19 5:30 p.m. – BOE Regular Meeting 7:00 p.m. – NFHS Choir – You are Enough: A Concert for Mental Health, @ Wilson High School 5:30 p.m. – BOE Regular Meeting | 20 HJK Picture Day 20 Homecoming Spirit Week Fall Pep Rally | 21 Homecoming Football Game 7:00 p.m. – Homecoming Dance |
| HOMECOMING SPIRIT WEEK | | | | | | |
| 22 | 23 | 24 5:00 p.m. – HJK PEG Meeting 5:15 p.m. – DPC Meeting | 25 NFHS Senior Pictures Due | 26 5:00 p.m. – Hyde Park PEG Meeting | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 31  | | | | |

November 2023

For an updated list of school events log on to www.nfschools.net

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|---|--|--|---|
| | | | 1 | 2 7:00 p.m. – <i>The Diary of Anne Frank</i> – Student Play | 3 7:00 p.m. – <i>The Diary of Anne Frank</i> – Student Play | 4 1:00 and 7:00 p.m. – <i>The Diary of Anne Frank</i> – Student Play |
| 5 | 6 | 7 Superintendent’s Conference Day – All Levels A.M./P.M. Professional Development | 8 | 9 5:30 p.m. BOE Review Meeting | 10 Veteran’s Day Observance – No Students/No Staff | 11 |
| 12 | 13 6:00 p.m. – NFHS PEG Meeting | 14 | 15 | 16 5:30 p.m. – BOE Regular Meeting | 17 10 Week Marking Period Closes | 18 20-Week Marking Period Opens |
| 19 CES Fall Festival Dance | 20 | 21 | 22 Thanksgiving – No 10 Month Staff/No Students/No Teachers Report Cards Mailed | 23 Thanksgiving – No Staff/No Students  | 24 Thanksgiving – No Staff/No Students | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 5:00 p.m. – HJK PEG Meeting 5:15 p.m. – DPC Meeting Last Day to Enter Grades | 29 | 30 5:00 p.m. – Hyde Park PEG Meeting | | |

HFA - Abate School
CES - Cataract Elem.
HJK - Kalfas School

GJM - Mann School
BBP - Bloneva Bond Primary
GPS - Gaskill Prep

LPS - LaSalle Prep
CEC - Comm. Ed.
PAC -Performing Arts Center at NFHS

NFHS – Niagara Falls High School
BOE - Board of Ed.
SCD -Superintendent’s Conference Day

UPK- Universal Pre-Kindergarten
NFT- Niagara Falls Teachers
DPC- District Parent Committee



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 Vilardo
946-8522



Mark Laurrie
Superintendent
286-4190 (w)

THE PUBLIC IS WELCOME
at all Board of Education Meetings.