



OUR SCHOOLS

SPRING 2025

Superintendent's Message

Lessons From a 15 Year Old

Since our student, Sydney Sterlace, auditioned on NBC's The Voice until the show's finale, our school community, the greater West Seneca Community and all of Western New York cheered for this shining star who demonstrated poise, grace and vocals well beyond her years. There is a lot we can learn from this young talent.

Lesson 1: Success is not luck or happenstance. Success takes hard work and perseverance. Sydney's commitment to honing her craft is reflective of her dedication to improvement. These are skills we strive to instill in our students as they learn how to overcome obstacles, rebound from setbacks and keep moving forward.

Lesson 2: An attitude of gratitude is always in style. Throughout interviews, Sydney regularly expressed her appreciation for her teachers, choral directors, voice coach, and other role models who helped her to develop vocally. She gave heartfelt thanks to her hometown, Buffalo, and all of Western New York for their love and support. And in return, she became a beloved contestant.



Lisa Krueger, Ed.D.

Lesson 3: Go for it. A 15 year old entering a highly competitive national singing contest on one of the top rated networks? Some may have doubted that a 15 year old (who turned 16 during the filming of the show) could handle the pressure, judgement or fear of rejection. Imagine if Sydney allowed fear or self-doubt to hold her back. The world would have never experienced this incredible young talent. Her humble confidence was a Master Class in and of itself.

Recently, the West Seneca Chamber of Commerce acknowledged Sydney with a Youth Award, in recognition of how well she represented West Seneca and the WNY region. While Sydney's singing talent and experience is rare and remarkable, there are shining stars with bright futures throughout our school community.

One shining star is a young man named Richie Schack who has advocated for safer conditions for pedestrians and, more recently, has started a petition to place limits on the proximity of tobacco and marijuana dispensaries to schools. Another, is a constellation of shining special education students at West Elementary who gathered hundreds of pairs of socks for individuals in need in their "Socktober" drive. Our stars include our East Senior students who engaged in their annual Trojan Take Action day of Community Service. We also have a dedicated group of retired teachers who generously give of their time to sort, organize and work at our Clothing Closet for children in need.

Superintendent's Message, Continued

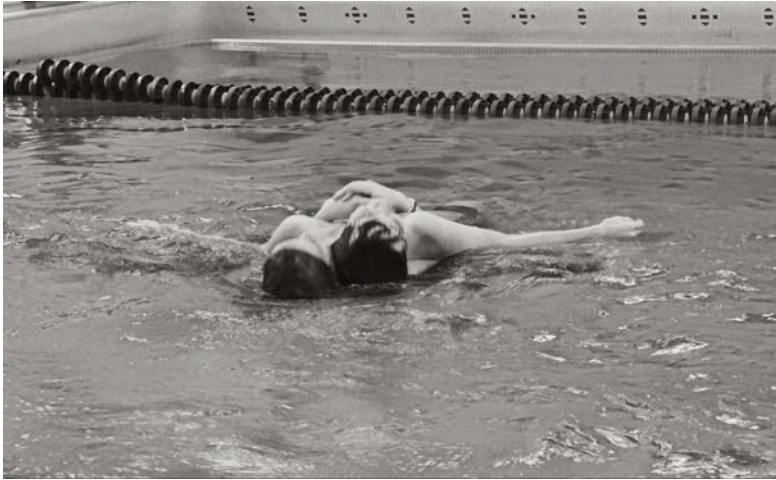
Regularly, the following retirees volunteer in our Clothing Closet:

- Liz Dolce
- Renee Faiella
- Susan Gawrys
- Lynda Grostefon
- Donna Holgerson
- Trish Modleski
- Jan Nowak
- Maria Prentice
- Ann Reukauf
- Karen Stamos
- Lisa Wells

They continue to serve as an example of volunteerism so that our students can shine. Thank you, Sydney, for the lessons you have taught us and for an incredibly fun journey cheering for you. And, thank you to all of our students, faculty, staff and administrators, who work tirelessly for the betterment of themselves and our community. We will always be cheering for you and all of our WSCSD students! Keep shining!



Lifeguarding/CPR Course



This September, West Seneca students were given the opportunity to enroll in a Lifeguarding/CPR semester course. The launch of the Lifeguarding and CPR class in West Seneca is a significant step forward in equipping young people with essential life-saving skills. With the instructor's 20 years of experience teaching lifesaving and CPR courses through the American Red Cross, students are receiving expert guidance and hands-on training that will serve them well in real-world emergency situations.

This program not only provides valuable certifications but also plays an important role in fostering a sense of responsibility and community engagement. The life-saving knowledge gained can make a huge difference in both personal and public safety, and it's wonderful to see the class creating opportunities for students to contribute positively to their community. Plus, the potential for job opportunities in aquatic safety and public health is a great bonus for those pursuing these certifications. We are excited for the opportunity to bring this expertise to the school setting, inspiring the next generation of trained professionals!



Universal Pre-School

Since the 2021-2022 school year, the West Seneca Central School District's UPK program has grown significantly from 218 half day students to 69 half day students and 195 full day students. Since our program is in high demand, we implement the required lottery system to ensure equitable access to all families. Starting this Spring, we will also be moving to online registration, which mirrors the registration process for our K-12 students. As a District, we work with New York State Department of Education's Office of Early Learning to pursue opportunities for expansion grants and to advocate for more funding opportunities to grow our programming in the future. We currently hold our UPK classrooms in several Community Based Organizations throughout West Seneca: Bright Path Kids, Candy Land Day Care of WNY, Great Expectations Child Care Center, Page 1 Preschool, and St. John's. Additional classrooms are held within Northwood Elementary and Winchester Potters Elementary.

West Seneca Central School District ensures all UPK students have equitable access to rich learning resources. All 17 of the District's UPK classes use the Benchmark Ready to Advance Curriculum. This provides consistency and high expectations across the District by using a developmentally appropriate and activity oriented curriculum. Each unit of Benchmark Ready to Advance is centered on one topic, such as families and friends, animals, and transportation. Every month, caregivers receive a take-home activity calendar that provides additional activities that can be done at home as a family.



As a District, we utilize our Superintendent Conference Days to professionally develop the UPK teachers in our school based classrooms and in our community based organizations. At our November 5, 2024 Superintendent's Day, 19 UPK teachers came together for a presentation from Benchmark Advanced on language development within the curriculum. Language is the foundation of literacy. UPK students are building comprehension skills through listening, engaging in lively back-and-forth conversations, pretend play, and active read alouds where teachers and students are having a dialogue about the book. Our staff shared ways to increase student engagement and student discussion throughout instruction, center work, and purposeful play.

This year's goal for our UPK teachers is to collaboratively look at the data that we collect to show student growth and our processes towards transitioning students smoothly to Kindergarten. We are also working to strengthen our support for ELL students in UPK. This includes building up our culturally and linguistically responsive classroom environments, communication with caregivers and families, and curriculum and instruction.

Registration for the 2025-2026 school year began January 2, 2025. All students registered between January 2 and April 4, 2025 will be eligible for the lottery. The lottery, which will take place on April 14, 2025, places students equitably into the full and half day sections across the District. Students can still be registered after April 4, 2025 and throughout the spring and summer.

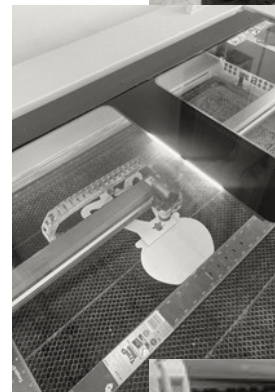
Career & Technical Education

The West Seneca Central School District has received the Perkins V Grant for the last few years as funding for Career and Technology courses. This grant expands opportunities for West Seneca students to explore Career and Technical Education Programs of study and pathways. The West Seneca Central School District has worked to develop new curriculum and plans for CTE courses in the district and has used the grant funding to update existing machinery aligned to curriculum updates as a way to provide relevant opportunities for students as they gain career readiness skills and work towards graduation.

For the 2024-2025 school year, the Perkins V Grant awarded the West Seneca Central School District \$49,682 in funding. With that funding, the district was able to provide upgrades to CTE curriculum and machinery. The areas of Technology and Business purchased sublimation printers, Dewalt CNC Cutting Machines, a Cricut Machine and 3-D printers as upgrades to the existing materials and machinery aligned to career readiness curriculum.

Mr. Kutina, a technology teacher at East Senior, stated “The opportunities provided by Perkins Funding have allowed us to provide many opportunities for our students that otherwise may not have been possible. We have been able to modernize the equipment for our Robotics courses which allows the Engineering Academy students access to educational opportunities which will better prepare them for collegiate engineering programs. Additionally, Perkins Funding has provided us with a laser engraver which has allowed all of our students access to modern manufacturing techniques and equipment.”

For technology courses, 3-D printers and Dewalt CNC Cutting Machines are necessary updates. Students are able to work on their manufacturing skills that are commonly found in technology focused careers.



Continued on Page 6

Career & Technical Education



At the Middle School level, students have the opportunity to learn how to build Infento machines in collaborative groups. The Infento building kits give students the ability to follow directions in a group setting while creating life-size products that can be used. East Middle School Technology Teacher Mr. Szyplman stated, “The Infento kits are 100% modular parts that power students to create life-size, rideable vehicles together. From walkers and scooters to go-karts and electric quads, Infento lets you build infinite rides. Each project becomes a shared student adventure, fostering teamwork that gives the students an insight into engineering and mechanics.”



For business courses, purchased machines such as the Cricut and Epilog Laser Machines add student learned skills to a growing list of business electives for students to explore. One of those opportunities is a new entrepreneur class, West Designs. This class allows students the opportunity to design, produce and market materials in-house. Ms. Funk, Business Teacher at East and West Senior High School stated "The Perkins Grant plays a crucial role in equipping CTE programs with the latest technologies and machinery, ensuring that students are trained on tools that mirror real-world industry standards. By updating equipment, these programs not only enhance the learning experience but also better prepare students for the workforce, giving them the skills necessary to excel in today's rapidly advancing industries."



For the 2025-2026 school year, the District is expecting an increase of projected allocations in Perkins V funding. The plan is to continue to update the current curriculum and machinery to allow students more opportunities in Career and Technology courses. Our goal is to build the current programming with more of a focus on career readiness as students complete their 4-years in High School.

West Designs

This year, West Senior High School has added a new Business and Technology Course named West Designs. While at first glance it looks like a typical high school class, the truth is that West Designs is run more like a business. This course gives students the opportunity to learn about product development, customer service and how to work collaboratively with their classmates from start to finish. Students use their cooperation and delegation skills as they create, problem solve and finish each unique product that is ordered. (Several students absent from class picture)



On any given day, there are students hard at work designing Buffalo-themed and West Seneca School District-themed graphic designs using an Epilogue Laser Engraver creating custom made clothing that are printed with peelable stickers on a Roland TrueVis eco-solvent printer, designing and wood cutting on a Dewalt CNC Machine custom products and wood burning on numerous speciality ornaments.

On the whiteboard displayed in a connected Business and Technology classroom, Mr. Mergenhagen and Ms. Harden have a job board that highlights the need-to-dos and the completed progress of each order. “This new class is providing students with invaluable real-world skills by focusing on hands-on experiences that challenge them to think critically and solve problems. Through collaboration and teamwork, students are not only developing technical abilities but also learning to communicate effectively and support each other’s growth. The class fosters a sense of school pride by empowering students to create projects that they can be proud of, turning their ideas into tangible achievements and helping them understand the importance of contributing to the school community,” stated Ms. Harden, High School business teacher. Both teachers aim to create a hands-on experience for students that focuses on product design, production, selling, marketing and distribution of a growing number of customized products for in-district needs. This course provides students real-world skills as they progress to post-graduation career readiness.



Continued on Page 8

West Designs

There are currently 32 students and two teachers that are part of this first year program. Modeled after other entrepreneur student programs in the WNY area, this course combines business and technology in a way that allows students to be creative and collaborative as a cohort.



“West Designs is the best thing I’ve seen in High School. It gives our students the opportunity, from start to finish, to create, market and sell products. The real-world career readiness of this program is preparing our students with marketable skills for post-graduation,” said Mr. Brinker, Principal of West Senior High School.

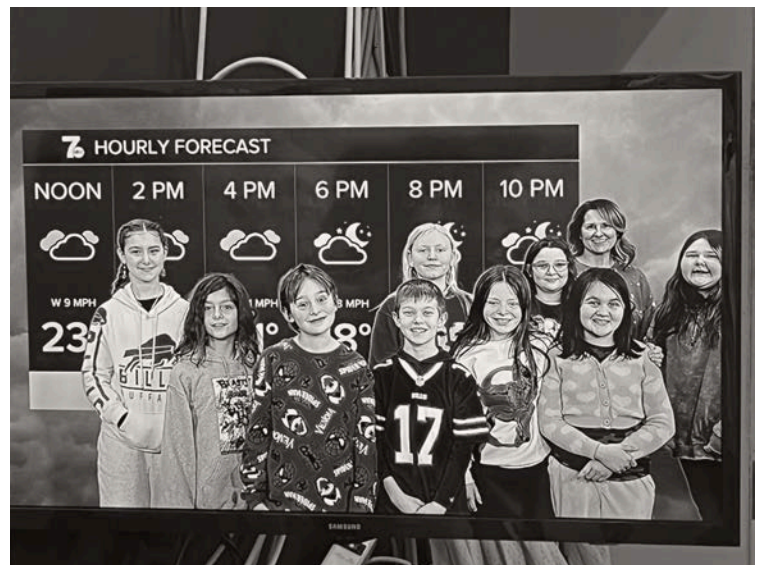
West Designs has many moving parts during its 80 minute class period to keep the business running at peak efficiency. Students rise to the test and work to complete all product needs in a timely fashion. West Designs is an elective that students can sign up for as a full-year course. Students are excited to attend class each day and are invested in the program. Junior Emma Franklin Co-CEO in the class said “West Designs is a really good class where we get work done but also have fun! I have made a lot of new friends and memories. There are a lot of experiences to be learned and lots of different things you can do. We make shirts, stickers, cups, coasters, cutting boards, and so much more. It is like running a small business. Everyone has their own speciality and we put them all together to come up with product ideas”.

West Designs plans to expand to East Designs (course offered at East Senior High School), for the 2025-2026 school year as the program grows in student size and interest. Currently, East Senior students that are interested in the course can join the program at the West Senior High School Campus.

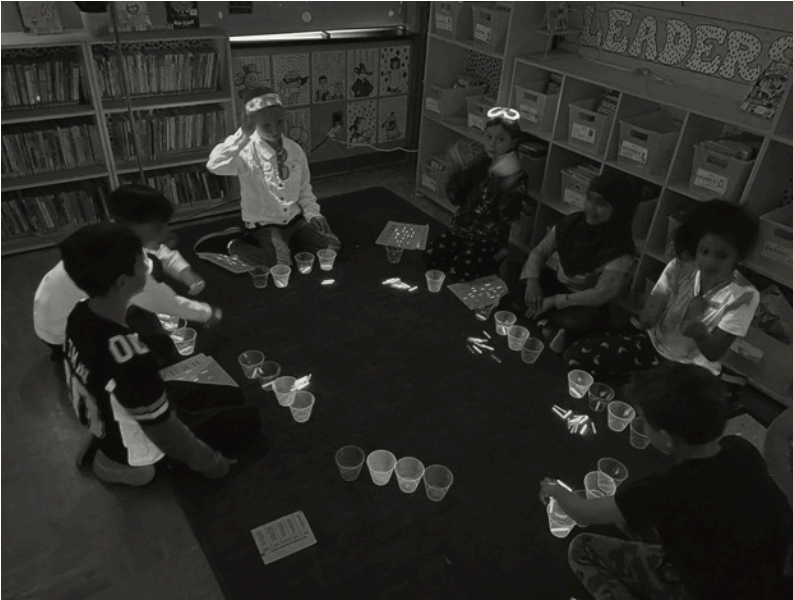
Winchester Potters Visit to WKBW

On Friday, January 25th the Winchester Potters Morning Media Club, comprised of 10 fifth grade students, got the opportunity to take a field trip to Channel 7 to see behind the scenes of the Channel 7 news. Students met with Meteorologist Aaron Mentkowski who gave us a tour of the news room and explained the different roles that all help to make the morning news so amazing. We got to see the control room, and then were able to see how Mr. Mentkowski prepares his weather reports.. He showed us various maps and computer information. We were able to see Mr. Mentkowski's live weather report. The green screen was really cool. The kids were able to try it out and see themselves on camera with various backgrounds. They were also able to sit at the actual Channel 7 news desk. Investigative reporter and morning anchor, Ed Drantch had a great conversation with the kids about investigative reporting and all that goes into his job. All the kids were enthralled and asked meaningful questions. The field trip was a great experience. Mr. Drantch shared a picture of our students on the morning news on Monday and commented on how inquisitive our students were and even thinks we may have some future reporters on our hands. The kids were able to compare their live morning show with the morning show of Channel 7.

The Winchester Potters Morning Media Club is made up of 10 fifth grade students who do a live broadcast each morning to all students at Winchester Potters. They have different roles that are rotated each week and provide pertinent announcements, lunch, the weather, school birthdays, and often have guests come on to tell jokes or do the weather. All Winchester Potters students can earn tickets to come on the morning show through the Winchester Potters PBIS initiative. Mr. Holes (fifth grade teacher) and Mrs. Przybyszewski (Building TOSA) are the moderators of this club. Mrs. DiPasquale (social worker) was gracious enough to arrange the field trip through her friendship with Aaron Mentkowski.



Clinton Street Elementary



The third annual Literacy Glow Day, *We are Wild About Reading*, to be held on March 21, 2025 at Clinton Elementary. Students will participate in developmentally appropriate literacy rotations throughout the day. One of the most loved rotations is the Glow Room. In these blacklight illuminated rooms, students will be practicing letters, sounds, CVC words, snap words, syllables, and unscrambling positive affirmation sentences. After reading *If I Ran the Zoo* by Dr. Seuss, students across all grade levels will be writing what they would do if they ran the zoo. Students will also be creating jungle artwork pieces to be hung as a schoolwide mural. These magnificent pieces will also be illuminated with blacklights.

Clinton Street Elementary's Kindness Club recently wrapped up their first fundraiser. Students sold stickers for Valentine's Day and sent them to friends throughout the building. Our Kindness Club participants wanted to donate to a cause close to their heart. Many of the kids had family members affected by the storms in the fall. Students raised \$290 to donate to the Hurricane Relief Fund through the American Red Cross. We are happy to send some sunshine to the sunshine state.



Allendale: Annual Winterfest

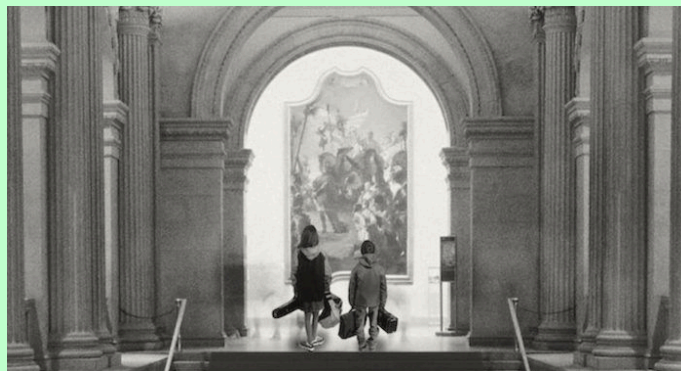


Allendale Literacy Week

We just finished up our "One School, One Book" program that ran from January 27th - February 14th and our book this year was "Dragons in a Bag." Keeping with that theme, our March into Literacy theme for this year is "Reading is Magical." Our celebration of reading will kick off on Monday, March 17th with our "Lucky to be Readers Day" students can wear green and attend our kick off pep rally. Woflie, our mascot, and Reada, the Buffalo & Erie Country Public Library Mascot, along with our Reading Department and some 5th Grade students will help us start off the week. During the week there will be guest readers in every classroom, a display of teachers and staff with their favorite books, daily video read alouds, themed dress up days and a Read a Thon. Thursday, March 20th is our Book Fair, Art Show and Literacy Night after school - we will have dragon themed crafts, taco in a bag, magical snacks, basket raffle and art work from every student on display. The culmination of our reading celebration is on Friday with our Dragon Walk where students will walk around Allendale to look at themed paper bags decorated by students with their favorite book, magic bookmark and reading potion crafts and a mystery scavenger hunt.



Northwood: One School, One Book



At Northwood we are reading *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* by e.l. Konigsburg. We will be reading it from March 3- 24th. To go along with the book we will have a spirit week and our very own "Metropolitan Museum of Art" gallery with an opportunity for students to participate in art related literacy and STEM activities. We will also have trivia questions and at home activities to go along with the daily reading.

West Elementary

The extremely talented 5th graders at West Elementary School along with their Musical Director, Ms. Helper, performed the "The Music Man Kids!" this past January.

School musicals in elementary school are incredibly valuable for both students and the overall school community. They not only help build confidence, promote teamwork and collaboration, provide an outlet for creativity and expression. Students engage in acting, singing, dancing, and even stage design, which encourages them to express themselves artistically and think outside the box.

Overall, school musicals are not just about performing; they contribute to a child's emotional, social, and academic development, providing a fun and supportive environment for students to grow in many different ways.

Kudos to the 5th grade class for putting on such an amazing show!



Staff Spotlight

We've had a busy winter. The grounds crew has frequently been tasked to clear snow and salt the district's lots during off hours and weekends. Custodial crews at all buildings have frequently been called in early in the morning. Their hard work has made a huge impact on our district this winter.

Early in the season we had a few large lake effect events where the department was under a deadline to get the district open. They got it done. Nick Banks, for example, volunteered to work very long hours, even overnight, operating our loader to clear and move snow. His efforts are a great example of many team members who went above and beyond for the good of the kids.



Holiday Bowl

The holiday season wasn't quite finished this year when East Middle returned to school after winter break. The 3rd annual Holiday Bowl still needed to be rescheduled due to delays from the recent snowstorm. The chilly Western New York weather remained a concern with its biting temperatures and gusty winds. There was some discussion about canceling the event, but when the students were asked, they exclaimed, "We want to play!" That was all Mr. Marchioli needed to hear, and the Holiday Bowl was back on.

Over 65 students braved the cold and wind to participate in the competition. The athletes arrived as prepared as possible to tackle the harsh conditions. The most crucial elements they brought were their positive attitudes and a strong sense of sportsmanship. Students engaged in 15-minute games as part of a double elimination tournament. Three separate competitions took place: one for 6th grade boys, another for 7th & 8th grade boys, and a third for girls in grades 6-8. Teams were formed before the tournament, and it was heartwarming to see the students unite as enthusiastic and cooperative teams so quickly.

In preparation for this event, students participated in morning intramurals led by Mr. Overton and Mr. Nicosia every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Mr. William Hill has done an excellent job keeping the teams updated in our hallways, while Mr. Paul Kempf has been instrumental in solving layout challenges and setting everything up. The weather will not deter the athletes or organizers from creating unforgettable memories for years to come.

The athletes who took part in the Holiday Bowl also gathered over 10 bags of non-perishable food items to donate to the West Seneca Food Bank.





West Seneca Central School District
900 Mill Road
West Seneca, NY 14224

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BUFFALO, NY
Permit No. 3317

Board of Education

Edmund Bedient, *President*
Laura Sokol-Scott, *Vice President*
Lorene Barulich, *Board Member*
Marla Greenberg, *Board Member*
Jeremy Maloney, *Board Member*
Sarah Piwowarczyk, *Board Member*
Vincent Vanderlip, *Board Member*

Lisa Krueger, Ed.D., *Superintendent*

*****ECRWSS
POSTAL CUSTOMER



*Join
Our
Team!*

