A Letter from our Superintendent

Dear Friends,

As we turn the corner and settle into 2019, I am reflective of the progress we’ve made in the first half of the year and optimistic for a successful second semester. Academically, our students are accessing updated curriculum (read more about our connections to Mark Twain), experiencing innovative programming in our after-school activities, and benefiting from expanded health services as part of our Community Schools approach. We work to build bridges between our 11 buildings for students and families, and at the same time make connections with local, regional and national organizations. The broader our reach, the more opportunities we can provide to our students.

Collaborating with community partners is the key to successful school improvement and planning. School safety continues to be our number one priority. Our school safety plans are updated regularly and we practice scenarios to be sure that we proactively plan for possible situations and that we give our staff every opportunity to feel prepared. Please read more about these efforts throughout this newsletter.

Pride begins with the feeling of being included. We know that Elmira Express pride runs deep for so many and it’s our goal every single day to make our community proud too!

In the next few months of winter, please know that we have seeds planted to blossom this spring! Our next generation of leaders need nurturing and encouragement. Please join me in championing their eagerness to do great things!

Thank you in advance for supporting the Express!

Hillary J. Austin
Superintendent of Schools
Elmira City School District

CAPTION FROM COVER

2002 Elmira Alumnae, Kylene Kiah, is working with students of ARCADE on an inspirational quote project installed in student restrooms around the District.

As an alumnae, artist, local business owner, and now a mom of students in the Elmira City School District, our school community is so grateful to Kylene and these students who are inspiring others with kind words.

Go Express!

After-school programs, a key component of our Community Schools programming, often deliver academic, social and emotional enrichment opportunities.
Our festive friends from across all six first grade classrooms at Fassett Elementary School joined together in December and traveled across the globe to learn about holiday traditions in other cultures. In inclusive environments like in Elmira classrooms, you’ll find mutual respect, effective relationships, genuinely valued diversity and equity.
The term inclusion captures, in one word, an all-embracing societal ideology. Regarding individuals with disabilities and special education, inclusion secures opportunities for students with disabilities to learn alongside their non-disabled peers in general education classrooms.

Inclusion is...

- Inclusion is when everyone is treated with equity and respect
- Inclusion is experienced when people believe that their unique and authentic self is valued while having a sense of connectedness to the group. There is a feeling of value and belonging
- Inclusion is when people feel empowered to grow and do one’s best work, focusing on their strengths and talents and not their deficits
We are committed to making our schools a place of acceptance for everyone, every day. However, the inclusion revolution is not just occurring in educational settings. It is happening on sports fields, throughout communities and businesses across the country and around the globe. It is also not just for people with disabilities, it is a growing undertaking that is about accepting and respecting all of our differences whether it is age, race/color, ethnicity or gender.

Elmira City Schools’ mission statement proclaims we are going to provide meaningful opportunities in a safe and engaging environment for all. This work towards becoming a more inclusive environment for all students and staff will allow us to see the potential and the unique strength in everyone. To achieve success we know that attitude is equally as important as ability.

We are proud to offer Unified Sports in partnership with The New York State Public High School Athletic Association, Special Olympics New York, and the Southern Tier Athletic Conference (STAC).

Unified Sports is an athletic opportunity for student-athletes with and without intellectual disabilities to compete together in various sports. The goal of the program is to increase inclusion, build understanding, and create a greater sense of community within schools.

Elmira City School District introduced its first Unified Sports Basketball team last year and we will continue this program again. In fact, Elmira High School Unified Sports athletes, Alexa Wagner and Devin Hoskins, were recently selected by New York State to develop a training video on how to engage more students in Unified Sports. On behalf of the Youth Activation Committee of EHS, Alexa and Devin will present their ideas at the YAC Summit Training in Owego in February.

Elmira City School District

Leveling the Playing Field

Inclusive education supports a whole-child, whole-school approach and is supported by partnerships under the Community Schools initiative. These two models of INCLUSION and COMMUNITY SCHOOLS are synergistic, supporting the success of all students.
The Footlighters of Elmira High School Present RENT

“THEATRE, AT ITS MOST POWERFUL AND PROFOUND, ILLUMINATES THE HUMAN CONDITION AND PROVOKES MEANINGFUL DISCOURSE ABOUT WEIGHTY, REAL-LIFE ISSUES,” SAYS MRS. JESSICA A. LIBRIZZI, VOCAL MUSIC OF ELMIRA HIGH SCHOOL.

It is with this in mind that the Footlighters of Elmira High School will present RENT. A rock opera with music, lyrics, and book by Jonathan Larson, RENT is based on Giacomo Puccini’s opera La Bohème. It tells the story of a group of impoverished young artists struggling to survive and create a life in New York City’s East Village in the thriving days of Bohemian Alphabet City, under the shadow of drug abuse and HIV/AIDS.

RENT deals with mature subject matter and is not suitable for younger audiences.

JOIN US

- March 22-23, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.
- O’Dell Theater at Elmira High School
- Call 735-3288 for information

Teaching Acceptance, Behind the Set

Themes of sexuality and HIV/AIDS run throughout the show. The Footlighters of Elmira High School are working with the Sexual Health Task Force of Chemung County and other community agencies to offer opportunities for the cast and crew of RENT to participate in a series of discussions centered around the themes of the show. Open to all Elmira High School students, discussions will be planned with members of PRISM and GSA. Elmira High School health faculty are collaborating with the Footlighters group on cross-curriculum teaching moments.

During the times of the performance, information tables will be set up by multiple community agencies in the lobby of Elmira High School.

In Elmira, we believe in the power of honest, trusting relationships and that individuals can make a difference toward student achievement.
EXPRESS YOURSELF
SHOP BY CUSTOM DESIGN, ONLINE

ELMIRA EXPRESS
OFFICIAL ONLINE STORE

SHOP ONLINE

EXPRESS GEAR
Express your pride! Shop from hundreds of great designs all year long!
Customize your swag by sports, activities, colors and more!

https://sideline.bsnspor.ts.com/schools/new_york/elmira/elmira-high-school
Planning Ahead, Being Prepared

SCHOOL SAFETY PLANNING

As a proactive measure and as part of our overall District Safety Plan, we partner with city, county, and state law enforcement agencies regularly to ensure proper safety protocols and training in our schools. During the October 19th Superintendent Conference Day, select staff from across the District participated in an ‘active shooter’ training at Ernie Davis Academy alongside our School Resource Officers and regional officers.

Exercises like this are intended to ultimately protect students and staff from violence. As a District, we are dedicated to ensuring our schools are as safe as possible – this includes protecting students from exposure to weapons and threats, theft, bullying, and the sale or use of illegal substances on school grounds.

We continue to be grateful to our many community partners who help to protect our students and staff every single day.

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

School administrators, counselors, school resource officers, law enforcement officers, & threat assessment teams across the GST BOCES, including our staff, gathered at Elmira College in October for a school safety seminar called “Sandy Hook: A Parent’s Perspective.”

LOCKDOWN VS. LOCKOUT

WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE?

Commonly confused and misused interchangeably, we wanted to help define these two terms (below) as a way for our community to understand the difference.

LOCKOUT
A lockout is used to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an imminent concern outside of the school.

LOCKDOWN
A lockdown is used to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an immediate threat of violence in or around the school.
Sole to Soul

Each year around the holidays, faculty and staff from around the District act anonymously as Santa’s Elves by making sure those in need are provided with food supplies and packages to place under the tree for Christmas morning. These efforts are supported by countless community groups in and around our region and state.

Exceptionally this year, our local efforts were complemented by a gift of 146 sneakers from a student group attending Mount Saint Joseph Academy in Flourtown, PA (just north of Philadelphia). Organized by Mr. William Osgood, their high school chemistry teacher, the sneaker gift was delivered days before holiday recess and were distributed to Elmira students.

Mr. Osgood grew up in Elmira before moving outside of the area. Once again more closely tied to the area with his daughter attending college in Ithaca, he wanted to extend his philanthropy to Elmira. Several years ago, he began donating track shoes and now works with Elmira High School faculty during the holiday season to provide more shoes to more students. We are so grateful for the generosity shown by this group and Mr. Osgood!

FAMILY, SCHOOL, COMMUNITY: TOGETHER WE SUCCEED!

THANK YOU!

More than Officers Helping Hands

We recently celebrated Law Enforcement Appreciation Day by recognizing our School Resource Officers. More than Officers in our buildings, our law enforcement partners have become positive role models in each of our buildings. Often, you’ll find our students giving high fives and fist pumps to our friendly officers.

“School Resource Officers are there to create safer schools, but their impact far exceeds that. They are heroes, role models and friends,” says Mrs. Cox, Principal at Fassett Elementary School.
Teaching Legacy, Building Pride

TWAIN FOR TEACHERS

Nationally recognized Mark Twain Scholar and Harvard University Professor, Jocelyn Chadwick, is spending time with teachers at Hendy Elementary School and Elmira High School. The collaboration is an effort to increase student knowledge of Mark Twain, his works, and his connection to Elmira. Michelle Halperin, a fourth grade teacher at Hendy Elementary School, has been teaching her students about Twain for over 20 years. The two Twain enthusiasts were connected through The Center for Mark Twain Studies at Elmira College and have made a special connection. Together, they are working to infuse Twain lessons within the district’s required curriculum. The hope is that these lessons will be shared with other area educators in the near future. Dr. Chadwick visited Halperin’s classroom and classrooms at Elmira High School last fall. We look forward to hosting Dr. Chadwick again in second semester.

“Dr. Chadwick collaborates with teachers around the country and we are thrilled with her interest in our Elmira students. With an integrated curriculum design and a focus on English language arts and social studies, Chadwick emphasizes how teachers can leverage student interests to hone reading, writing, thinking, listening, speaking, and viewing skills,” says Mr. Marc Vesci, Principal at Hendy Elementary School.”

THE STORY OF OUR CITY

Mark Twain wrote his most famous works in an octagonal study overlooking Elmira, NY, the hometown of his wife, Olivia. For more than two decades the Clemens’s summered with Olivia’s family at Quarry Farm. All are buried at nearby Woodlawn Cemetery. In 1983 Quarry Farm was given to Elmira College as a Center for Mark Twain Studies.
Getting Better All the Time

PEER-TO-PEER MENTORING

Sixth graders at Hendy Avenue Elementary School spend their lunch time each week reading alongside third graders, serving as tutors, mentors and heroes. In this scenario, our older students are learning how to give back and help their younger peers all the while devoting much needed one-on-one time improving literacy with young third graders.

Literacy skills, including both reading and writing, is supported by the Read 180 program across the District in grades 3-10. This program allows students to experience reading at their level, with incremental goals of becoming readers at grade level.

We know that programs like this support early literacy in students as well as character development.

After-School Enrichment

BUILDING COMMUNITY AROUND THE KIDS TABLE

As a District, we offer a free after-school program called the ARCADE program. ARCADE is designed for second through sixth graders and is funded with a five-year 21st Century Community Learning grant and will support our programming from 2017-2022.

The ARCADE staff are very often teaming up with community partners to offer enrichment in all areas of social and academic enrichment.

This program is designed to increase academic performance, build positive traits and, help families support children. Activities include homework help, tutoring, physical fitness, Adventure Based Learning, STEM projects (engineering, robotics, natural science), fine arts, service learning and cooking/nutrition instruction. Most recently, the ARCADE program acquired mini kitchenettes as a way to allow students a hands-on approach to cooking healthy and nutritious snacks!
Welcoming the Classes of 2031-32

PRE-K AND KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

We are pleased to offer Pre-Kindergarten to children residing in the Elmira City School District. The child must be 4 years old on or before December 1st and it is highly recommended they be toilet trained. Please note, the child cannot ride the bus until they turn 4 years old. Therefore you will be responsible for transporting until the child turns 4.

There are several options available, based on your family’s needs. Some programs offer wrap-around childcare. Please contact the YWCA (733-5575) for more info on wrap-around childcare. For your convenience you may register at any of the schools below regardless of the school you choose. Children need not be present to register.

REGISTRATION DATES & LOCATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>PHONE #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fassett Elementary School</td>
<td>4/8/2019</td>
<td>10:30-1:30</td>
<td>735-3900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diven Elementary School</td>
<td>4/9/2019</td>
<td>10:30-1:30</td>
<td>735-3701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pine City Elementary School</td>
<td>4/10/2019</td>
<td>10:30-1:30</td>
<td>735-3801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverside Elementary School</td>
<td>4/11/2019</td>
<td>10:30-1:30</td>
<td>735-3851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin. Bldg.</td>
<td>4/10/2019</td>
<td>3:30 – 6:30</td>
<td>735-3040</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># OF CLASSROOMS</th>
<th>DIVEN</th>
<th>FASSETT</th>
<th>PINE CITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STUDENTS PER CLASS</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FULL/HALF DAY</td>
<td>FULL DAY</td>
<td>FULL DAY</td>
<td>FULL DAY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Elmira as a National Leader in Reading Instruction

ELMIRA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT DELIVERS NATIONAL CONFERENCE KEYNOTE

Members of our staff recently returned from the national “Read 180” Summit in Nashville, TN, where they presented as the conference Key Note. A product of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Read 180 is a blended learning solution for struggling readers in grades 4–12+. With a 41% improvement in Reading NWEA results for students in the Read 180 program for 2 years, Elmira was asked to present at the annual national conference as a benchmark district.

The Read 180 and System 44 programs were first piloted in 2016 with 437 fifth graders in Elmira. In year two, 101 eighth grade students were enrolled in the program. Since 2017, over 2,000 Elmira students in grades 3-10 have been enrolled in the programs.

“This program has been critical to addressing our students literacy needs at their own ability level. For us, that is Read 180 and System 44. Overall, this system provides consistency across grade levels which is optimal for our students. We have 150 teachers and 2,000+ students involved in this program. And everyone has a voice to make sure this is as effective as possible,” says Dr. Jessica Talada, Data and Curriculum Coordinator, Grades 5 & 6, for the Elmira City School District.

READ 180 provides a personalized learning experience for students in Grades 4–12+ reading two or more years below grade level and helps meet the instructional needs of teachers while helping students meet the rigorous expectations of the new standards and experience success on the new assessments. READ 180 uses the key instructional shifts to support teachers in enhancing their pedagogy and accelerate student achievement.

Vision Screenings | New in 2019

As part of our Health Services offerings, we’ve teamed up with the Lions Club to offer students a vision screening test above and beyond what is required by New York State. State Law requires the school nurse to check students at various grade levels for near vision, distant vision, and color vision problems. The Lions Club is bringing in special equipment which evaluates students’ optical health for significant eye problems that can lead to amblyopia or lazy eye. This test is done by trained Lions Club volunteers at the school, during the day, and at no cost to any of our families. The test can detect possible issues that could be missed through traditional screenings.
REMINDERS FOR DRIVERS

“It’s everyone’s responsibility to keep our kids safe.”

PENALTIES FOR PASSING A STOPPED SCHOOL BUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BY CONVICTIONS</th>
<th>MINIMUM FINE</th>
<th>MAXIMUM FINE</th>
<th>POSSIBLE IMPRISONMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FIRST CONVICTION</td>
<td>$250.00</td>
<td>$400.00</td>
<td>UP TO 30 DAYS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECOND CONVICTION (within 3 years)</td>
<td>$600.00</td>
<td>$750.00</td>
<td>UP TO 180 DAYS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THIRD OR SUBSEQUENT CONVICTIONS (within 3 years)</td>
<td>$750.00</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
<td>UP TO 180 DAYS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School buses are on the roads and students are walking along the side of the road and waiting for buses during the week.

- Please watch carefully for children near school buildings, in areas where school buses are traveling or where there are signs for school zones or bus stops.
- Remember that if you are approaching a school bus from either the front or behind, and its yellow lights are flashing, the bus is preparing to stop.
- If the red lights are flashing, YOU MUST STOP. It’s the law!

Safety Reminders from New York State

School buses are on the roads and students are walking along the side of the road and waiting for buses during the week.

NOTE: The only exception to this law is if the bus driver or a police officer signals that you may pass the bus.

This includes school buses that are:
- on the opposite sides of divided highways,
- on multiple lane roadways,
- in parking lots,
- on school grounds.
The Elmira Express Orchestra performed at Woodbrook Senior Assisted Living this holiday season to deliver some musical cheer.

Members of the National Junior Honor Society at Ernie Davis Academy assembled “Survival Kits” throughout the holiday season for the fire departments in our area. This project aligns with the group’s core mission of philanthropy and service.

Students of Broadway Elementary School set out to collect 500 books to donate to the Big Red Bookshelf program this winter. Far exceeding their goal, students collected and donated 1,917 books and celebrated with a school-wide holiday assembly!

Seventh grade APEX staff along with 40+ students of Broadway Academy teamed up with Elmira College on a college visit recently! As part of the after-school APEX program at Broadway Academy, 7th grade students dove into campus life with a variety of on-campus activities including interactions with the basketball teams and student life staff.

In an after-school setting, APEX supports positive academic and social growth of students and fosters college aspirations and career success of middle school students. This visit was part of a College and Career Readiness program through APEX.
IN ELMIRA, WE BELIEVE...

In connecting young people and their families with the tools they need to learn, grow, and reach their fullest potential.

In the power of honest, trusting relationships and that individuals can make a difference toward student achievement.

In reimagining and revitalizing our schools with comprehensive, community-based partnerships in order to build the capacity of schools, school district, and the evolving needs of our community.

In developing the whole-child by supporting the social and emotional health of our families as a means to academic excellence.

Since November, Mr. Maloney’s fourth grade class has been getting to know their assigned pen pals as part of a writing and community project. They’ve exchanged letters and gotten to know one another through written form. As a culminating activity, students and pen pals met for the first time by participating in volunteer service hours at the local food pantry.

Together, they designed centerpieces and positive notes to place on the tables. The class and pen pals rolled silverware, greeted guests and served the community during their school day.

Teaching kids about community by modeling civic responsibility is the best way to leave an impact and ultimately, make our world a better place. Moments like these are happening every day in our classrooms and are made special in collaboration with our vibrant community.

#GoExpress

ELMIRACITYSCHOOLS.COM
SCHOOL TAXES

Taxes can be paid in two installments. The first installment is due by Oct. 31, 2018, and the second installment is due by March 31, 2019.

PAY YOUR TAX BILL ONLINE

Pay your tax bill online using your Visa, Mastercard, American Express, or Discover card. A convenience fee of 2.65% for credit card payments and $1.50 per e-check transaction will be collected by the online payment provider, not by the Elmira City School District.

Payments can also be mailed to School Tax Collector, P.O. Box 5504, Binghamton, NY 13902-5504.

elmiracityschools.com/taxes.cfm

MORE BANG FOR THE $ BUCK

The Hansen Family Foundation of Elmira recently awarded seven mini-grants to the Elmira City School District to support the purchase of new musical instruments and accessories. From expanded percussion equipment (including ethnic drums) to a viola, a string base and a concert tuba, our enthusiastic staff will use the $19,670 to acquire high quality equipment to best use with our talented student musicians.

OUR PEOPLE

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
Hillary J. Austin
Elmira City School District

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Sara Lattin Randy Reid
President Vice-President

Lynn Grottenthaler
Scott Moore
Josh Palmer
Ron Shaw
Kevin Sullivan
Deborah White

Audem Jackson
Student Representative

Alexa Wagner
Student Representative

Members of the Elmira City School District Board of Education volunteered an evening in December wrapping and packing for the Arctic League in Elmira. Special opportunities like this help advance our Community Schools model — a reciprocal partnership between Family, School and Community.
The Rachel’s Challenge program, first introduced in 2017-2018, continued this year with another presentation by the organization based on the life of Rachel Scott, the first victim tragically lost in the 1999 Columbine shooting. After hearing the presentation, students were encouraged to begin and sustain a service group called the “Friends of Rachel” club.

The F.O.R. Club or “Friends of Rachel” club members are training to be peer mentors at Elmira High School. From suicide training to dating violence, sexual assault and drugs and alcohol trainings, diversity and inclusion, this peer group will be known among the student population as a group of students who are available if someone needs to talk. This group will be trained to also identify when a discussion needs to be brought to the next level (to an adult’s attention).

#GoExpress
FAMILY, SCHOOL, COMMUNITY: TOGETHER WE SUCCEED