



Great Foundations!

At A.J. Schmidt, a 5th grader's love of reading led to the school's first Book Club. See inside for more about how students, teachers and other staff, parents, community members (even 4-legged ones) help shape a culture of learning and caring at Lake Shore Schools.

ALSO INSIDE ...

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Eagle Express Mid-Year Update

The Official Newsletter of the Lake Shore Central School District

Vol. 26 #3 Mid-Year Update 2022-23



Superintendent's Column/by Dan Pacos

Here's what's happening!

- ⇒ January exams are done
- ⇒ Attendance is up
- ⇒ 5-Year Building Conditions Survey is finished
- ⇒ Project planning is underway

With midterms and January Regents exams now finished (and the results look good!), we move into the second half of the school year. There's a lot of excitement, and not just because spring is closer.

Here's what's going on:

- **I'm happy to report that our student attendance for this year is much improved over last year.**

We hope the trend continues. Children don't learn if they are absent, and missing one or more lessons makes it difficult to catch up. We count on our parents and families to make sure children are in school every day, unless they are sick.

- **The District has completed its required Five-Year Building Conditions Survey. Based on items identified in that review of our District buildings, there are a number of items we need to address.**

We are planning a capital improvement project to address the big items, and anticipate asking for voter approval in May, along with the District's 2023-24 Budget. With funding from New York State and the Capital Reserve Fund, we anticipate NO additional local tax cost for the project.

- **While we are still working to firm up the numbers and narrow down the project scope, it looks like we will be able to complete some work in the bus parking lot area, the Middle School and the High School, and the athletic fields between the Middle and High School.**

Work at the bus parking lot will involve repaving of the upper lot where our large buses are kept. While this work is being done, we will add conduits in preparation for the power line runs that will be needed in the future for electric school buses.

At the High School, we are looking to replace aging classroom unit ventilators and add air conditioning coils to the new units. This will allow us to keep windows closed even during the warm weather months, and thus increase the safety and security of the building. We are investigating adding solar panels on the High School roof to allow the District to generate our own power. In the same fashion that the District drilled a number of gas wells decades ago that are still producing gas for us, we would like to produce our own electric power.

At the Middle School, we've identified some places where the building's cement block foundation needs



Cover Photo:

Principal Jill Clark noticed the little boy who stood outside A.J. Schmidt's library every morning, anxiously awaiting librarian Tracy Wing. "He would ask me, 'When can I see Mrs. Wing, when can I see Mrs. Wing,'" she said, "And I asked why he always needed to see Mrs. Wing." Kaleb Pokojski, a 5th grader, explained that he finished reading his latest book and urgently wanted another one. "What are you reading," asked Mrs. Clark. When she heard all the titles, she exclaimed, "You and I should start a book club!"

Their club launched quickly, with Roald Dahl's "The Witches," as the group's first book. In addition to Kaleb, Mrs. Clark, and Mrs. Wing, the club includes Caleb's teacher Alexandria Salansky, and six other students.

**In Appreciation ...
Students line the hallway with their
American flags to welcome veterans
to the Annual Veterans' Breakfast
at A.J. Schmidt.**



Superintendent's Column Con't ...

repair/replacement. We need to shore up the building to maintain the integrity of the exterior walls.

The District also is considering some improvements to our athletic fields that we were not able to make in our current capital project.

These include upgrading our baseball and softball fields to synthetic turf. We are forced to reschedule many games each year due to wet spring conditions. Increased drainage and an all-weather synthetic turf system would help address that issue and make the playing surfaces safer for students. We are considering upgrading our soccer/

lacrosse field to synthetic turf, if possible, like the baseball and softball fields. We are also looking to replace our football stadium seating to bring it up to current NYS code compliance standards.

This would be a two-sided bleacher system viewing both the football *and* soccer/lacrosse fields. A new announcer's booth, also two-sided, would also serve both fields. If possible, we also would like to upgrade our current track to an eight-lane track, which would allow us to host sectional and invitational tournaments here at Lake Shore. Stay tuned for updates as we move through the school year!

Key Communicators ...

Helping to Provide 2-Way Updates & Info



Lake Shore has formed a Key Communicators group to help establish solid, two-way communications about District issues. “The idea is help us give and receive information about important issues,” said Superintendent Dan Pacos.

Among the topics discussed at the group’s first meeting were the school budget process, state requirements for electric bus transportation, and the UPK program. Also discussed was the capital project that is now winding down, and plans for what comes next. These next steps include ongoing studies for

no-additional-local-tax projects to address needs identified in the 5-Year Building Conditions Survey, produce solar power and update athletic fields. For more information on these and other projects, periodic updates will be posted at www.lakeshorecsd.org.

Above: Looking over early drafts for athletic updates, which include proposed turf fields for baseball, softball, soccer and lacrosse, are Superintendent Dan Pacos, center, with Key Communicator Group members, from left, Bonnie Militello, Spencer Vail and Krystle Herc.

Persistence of Lake Shore Board Members Leads to NYS Action To Lessen Lottery Winnings' Negative Impact on State Aid

Bringing Unintended Consequences to Light

The New York State Lottery is supposed to help education, but sometimes it hasn't worked that way.

Several years ago, the Lake Shore Central School District experienced this unintended consequence with the announcement of a mega-lottery winner who resided within the school district.

Lake Shore lost a large amount of State Aid because that lucky windfall of one resident was added to the school district's adjusted gross income—making it look like Lake Shore was a far wealthier district than it is.

Lake Shore School Board members Kathleen Chiavetta and Mike Franey worked to advocate for a change to prevent this from happening to school districts in the future. The Erie County Association of School Boards (ECASB) advanced the issue to its 30 member school districts.



Board of Education member Kathleen Chiavetta and Board Vice President Michael Franey successfully advocated for changing legislation that reduced State Aid to school districts as a result of large lottery wins.

Over the past few years, they spoke with legislators about introducing a bill to protect schools from the impact a single lottery winner would have on the entire school budget process. On December 28, 2022, Gov. Hochul signed the bill.

Bill A09878, sponsored by Assemblyman William Conrad, excludes lottery winnings exceeding 25% of a district's adjusted gross income for the year. A companion bill in the Senate, Bill S08701, was sponsored by senators Sean Ryan and George Borrello.

"Advocacy works," Ms. Chiavetta said. "You may have to work several years and say the same thing over and over, but it works."

Ms. Chiavetta is co-chair and Mr. Franey is a member of the ECASB Legislative Team.

Lake Shore School Board Members' Persistence Leads to Legislation to Lessen Lottery Mega-Winnings Impact on School State Aid Eligibility

Program Notes



Lake Shore Approved for NYS Seal of Biliteracy

'... an important statement of accomplishment for future employers and college admission.'

In addition to their diplomas, some Lake Shore High School students will seek medallions when they graduate in June. The medallions would represent their attainment of New York State's Seal of Biliteracy (NYSSB), which recognizes a high level of proficiency in English and one or more world languages.

"We are very excited about this," said Melissa Bergler, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction. "Lake Shore's appli-

cation for the Seal of Biliteracy has been approved and this is the beginning of a very exciting journey."

Mrs. Bergler said four German, French and Spanish students have been approved by the World Language Committee to participate in the first round. She notes that there is a separate rubric for languages such as Seneca and classical languages.

The NYSSB identifies high school graduates with language and biliteracy skills for employers, and provides universities with additional information about applicants.

"Multilingualism and multiliteracy are important in today's global society," said Mrs. Bergler, "which makes the Seal of Biliteracy an important statement of accomplishment for future employers and college admission."

NYSSB students receive a Seal on their diploma and a medallion worn at graduation. Members of the World Language Department who worked on Lake Shore's participation in the program were teachers Kelly Migliaccio, English; Fritz Schattauer, German, and Laura Kowal, Spanish.



2022 AP CSP Female Diversity Award



Lake Shore Earns College Board AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award

Lake Shore's high female representation in AP Computer Science Principles has earned the District the AP Computer Science Diversity Award from the College Board.

"We're honored that Lake Shore has earned this distinction and look forward to seeing these students achieve success in their future careers," said Superintendent Dan Pacos.

"Computer science is the source code of our economy

and so much of our daily lives," said Trevor Packer, College Board Head of the AP Program.

"In the five years since we began this award, it's heartening to see schools like Lake Shore welcome so many more young women into this vital field."



Flag Football to Debut at A.J. Schmidt

Flag football will soon debut at A.J. Schmidt Elementary School, following a successful grant application by physical education teacher **Sarah Pici**. The school will receive a kit for the NFL Flag In-School Program through NFL Fuel Up to Play 60. The goal is to introduce flag football to students and keep kids moving at least 60 minutes every day. The free kit includes 10 footballs, 50 flag belts, NFL Flag-In School Curriculum book and bookmarks.

Volunteers Pitch In ...

To Help Build Cognitive Skills & Character Learning

Volunteer readers at J.T. Waugh Elementary



Mrs. Sciarrino



Mrs. Hanlon



Miss Stevens



Mrs. Crowden



Miss Cook

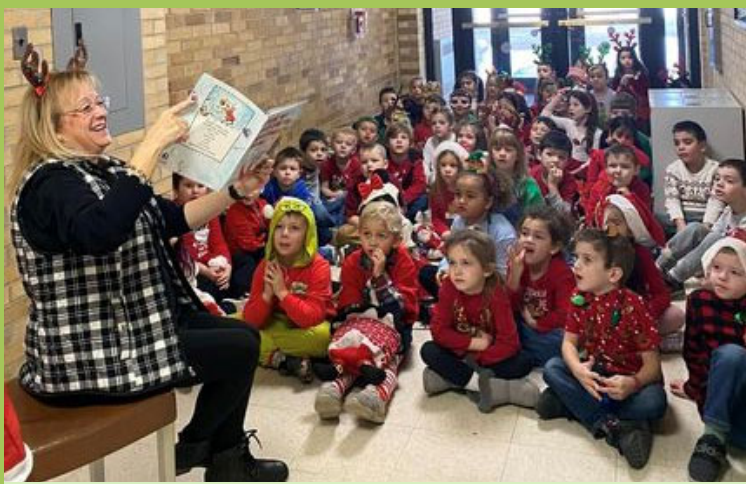


Miss Bomberski



Superintendent of Schools Dan Pacos reads to Kindergarteners at Highland Elementary School.

Reading aloud to children has important cognitive benefits, and strengthens social, emotional and character development. Here are some of the many students, parents and staff who volunteer as readers in our classrooms.



Highland secretary Sue Huber reads to Kindergarteners.



Highland 5th graders read to Kindergarteners.

All Aboard!

Grant-Funded Mentor Program 'on boards' New Teachers

Have you ever started

a new job and felt overwhelmed as you learned the ropes and routines?

If you're a teacher at Lake Shore, that's unlikely to happen. The Mentor Teacher Intern Program (MTIP), one of only 28 in New York State, pairs an experienced teacher (mentor) with a new teacher (intern). For the next year, mentors support and coach the intern. And they remain a go-to resource beyond that first year, as well.

The program is supported by a grant that provides mentor stipends, supplies and materials, and professional development, including New Teacher Orientation and other after-school programs.

"It's nice to have someone to guide us, especially with so many different things that we do in special education. She's always there for us, no matter what the time of day," says Tallie King, a former teaching assistant now in her first year as a special education teacher at J.T. Waugh Elementary School.

Christy Przepasniak mentors both Mrs. King and Dyllon Gartley, another first year special education teacher at J.T. Waugh. Mrs. Przepasniak is quick to point out that it's a team effort. "It's nice to share strategies that are effective for a self-contained classroom and to watch new teachers grow throughout the year and to give positive feedback."



Mentor Christy Przepasniak, center, with "mentees" Tallie King, left, and Dyllon Gartley, have a classroom strategy discussion at J.T. Waugh Elementary School.

Lake Shore currently has 29

"I'm thankful for this program," adds Miss Gartley. "Some districts don't offer it, but we always have a go-to person, so we're not lost."

The mentors and interns collaborate and navigate through the year as partners, with resources and the "how to's" of everything from filling out report cards and ordering supplies to curriculum and behavior management techniques.

A Mentor Steering Committee, composed of teachers, psychologists, tech integrators and administrators from each building, meets three times a year to discuss the program and suggest improvements.

**'I'm thankful
for this
program.**

**We always have
a go-to person.'**

- Dyllon Gartley,
first-year teacher at J.T. Waugh

LSHS's New Assistant Principal

Meet Mrs. Julie Schwab!

'There's a time for lecture, but it cannot be the only thing, because it just doesn't work for all kids.'



From a young age, Julie Schwab watched how teachers taught ... and saw that some very bright kids just weren't learning.

"I wanted to be in education because I know that students are capable of learning, but they can get so beaten down," she says. "I was fascinated with administration because I wanted to show that kids *can* learn ... that the barrier isn't a disability, it's a *difference*."

Now, after three decades in education, she brings the weight of research and experience to her position as an assistant principal at Lake Shore High School. And she brings an ongoing passion to find the key to individuals' learning styles.

"There's a time for lecture, but it cannot be the only thing, because it just doesn't work for all kids," she says. "There are kids who sit in classrooms and are very capable of learning, but you can't just talk at them. You can't say, 'Just LEARN.' You have to find the mechanism that works."

Sometimes a different approach is all it takes. A student who struggles for words when speaking may communicate much better when using a

keyboard. Someone who can't recall words can recall just fine when there is a visual.

There's also "Stop and Talk." After five minutes, the teacher stops talking and students turn to a friend and ask them what THEY heard. "That way, you hear things that you might have missed and you both develop a summary of the important ideas," she says.

"I've seen some beautiful lessons at Lake Shore," she continues, citing one where students took on the role of the President's Cabinet. "There were slides and videos of the war in Ukraine to give background, then they were assigned to advise the President of strategies the U.S. should take. They took *ownership* of that lesson. They couldn't just sit there. Everyone had a role and a responsibility and they couldn't duck out of it.

"This is where we should be heading in education. I see teachers at Lake Shore doing it and I watch the kids thrive."

When she's not in school, Mrs. Schwab loves to camp and ski and be out in nature. She has two daughters, one is a teacher and one is going into social work. In addition to the 667 students at Lake Shore, there is another very important student in her life: her granddaughter, Aubrey, who just started Kindergarten this year.

Around the District ...



Anonymous Volunteer Repairs, Decorates School's Therapeutic Trike

Check out the gigantic smile! Check out the green detail! Kimberly Cassidy, physical therapist at A.J. Schmidt Elementary School, sent out a request to the community for help in repairing the school's therapeutic trike.

A wonderful person created this decked out bike. That's 1st grader Audrey Queer joyfully taking it for a spin.



Andrea Cwynar

New J.T. Waugh Principal Starts on Feb. 27

J.T. Waugh Elementary School's new principal starts at the school on Feb. 27.

Please welcome Andrea Cwynar, who comes to Lake Shore from

Elmwood Village Charter School, where she is assistant principal. Mrs. Cwynar previously was Academic Dean/Upper Elementary at Buffalo United Charter School. Prior to that, she was a coordinator for Early Learning & Elementary ELA and math at Erie 1 BOCES. She also taught 3rd grade at Buffalo Public Schools' Discovery School. Mrs. Cwynar is a graduate of Buffalo State College with bachelor's degree in education and dual certification in Exceptional Education and Childhood Education. She holds a master's of science in education as a literacy specialist. She also completed the Educational Leadership program at Stony Brook University.

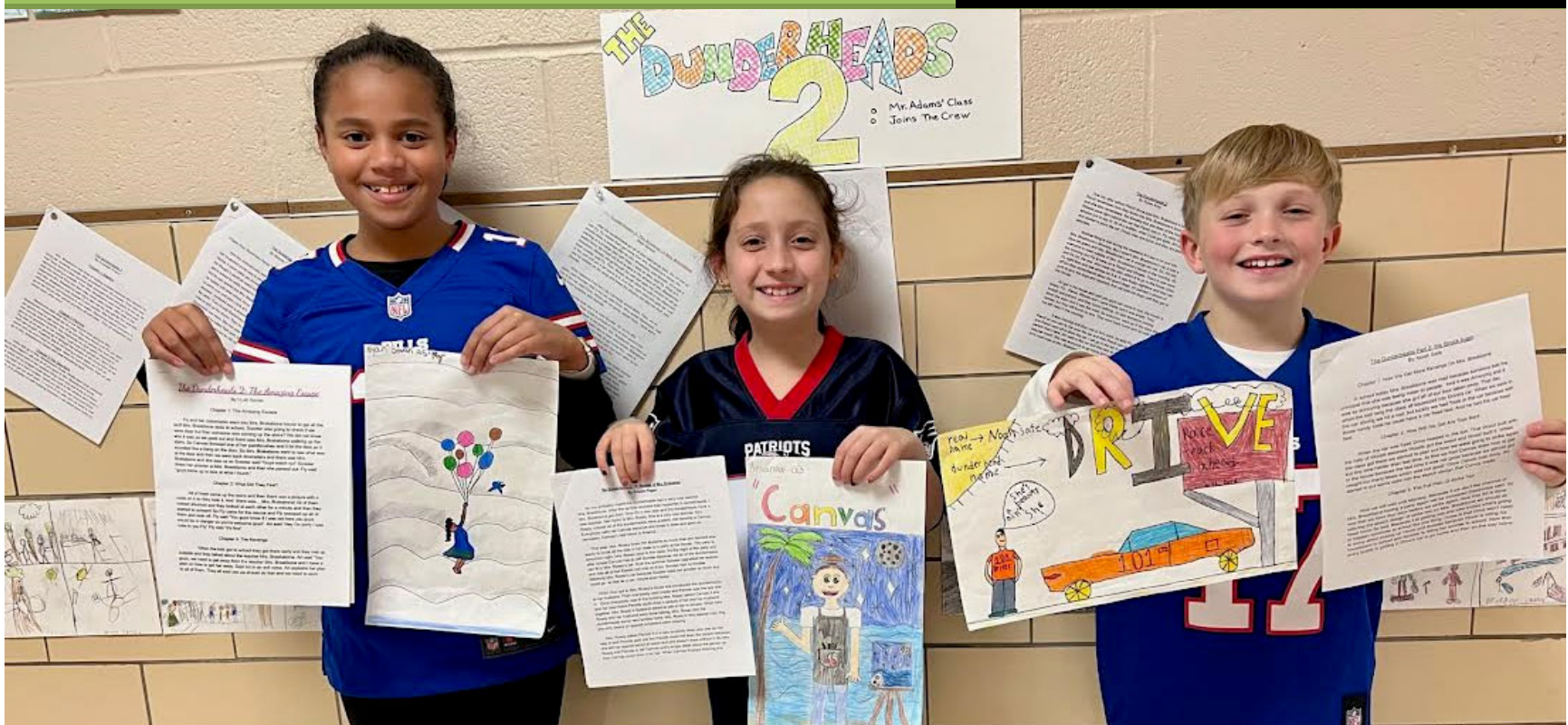


Wi-Fi Wednesday is a hit! This intramural opportunity for Highland Kindergarten and 1st graders is offered by teachers Traci Smardz and Susan Serena. It teaches technology, problem-solving, and higher level thinking through games.

Dunderheads



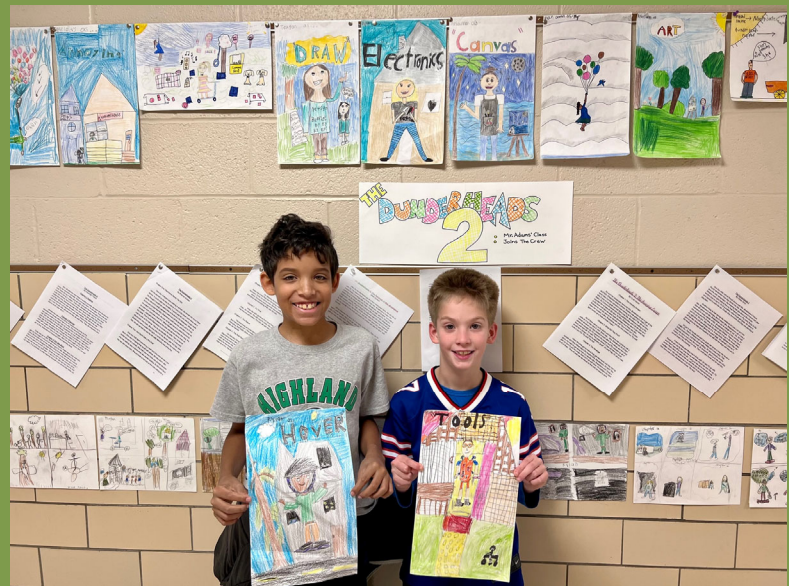
Multiple Intelligences



Above, from left: Nyah Govan, Arianna Pagan, Noah Safe. Bottom photo: Rylan Asante and Jeremiah Cole, Jr.

Students in the ELA class of Matthew Adams and Michelle Teijeira at Highland Elementary School celebrated multiple intelligences, teamwork, and kid power when they read *The Dunderheads* by Paul Fleischman. These stories reveal how each kid's special talent becomes critical to spectacular displays of teamwork. The 4th graders then wrote a sequel, entitled *The Dunderheads 2*, with their own original writing and illustrations bringing a talented group of underdogs to life.

"I liked how we got to add our friends to the story and how we got to draw ourselves as Dunderheads," said Jace Maybee, aka "Balloons." Adam Barringer, aka "Bolts," added, "It was fun to think of new ideas and be creative." "I liked how we could write as many chapters as we wanted," noted Jax Weaver, aka "Inferno." Rylee Arns aka, "Art," remarked, "I chose "Art" as my name because I like to create art and when it's raining I like to look up how to draw things."



Entrepreneurial Spirit

Alive & Well at LSHS



Wakelet CEO Jamil Khalil (center back), with James Davis, Head of Community, and Ryan McGinnis, Professional Development Coordinator N.Y. and Pa. (in black Wakelet shirts), spoke with students in the Academy of Business & Finance and the 43North program.

‘The Internet was just too easy to get lost in.’

- Jamil Khalil,

What does it take to be an entrepreneur? It takes a person willing to actively seek change. The entrepreneur isn't complacent or content with the status quo—instead, this person is innovative and looks for new and better ways of doing things.

So it was with Jamil Khalil, who grew up in Manchester, UK, and became frustrated with sorting through multitudes of lists and links, articles and images. “The Internet was just too easy to get lost in,” he realized.

He decided to clean things up, and created Wakelet, a free web-based platform where articles, images, tweets – pretty much anything – can be saved and organized. The content is saved into story-like collections called “wakes” (like the wake of a boat), where it can be easily maintained and shared - or kept private, if you prefer.

Mr. Khalil recently spoke to the High School's Academy of Business and Finance students to talk about creating his company, and demonstrate the platform to students in the 43North classes, who are working on pitches to get funding for their own entrepreneurial business ideas.

Mr. Khalil told students he always wanted to build a company, and build it he did – more than seven million people use Wakelet every month. As CEO, he advised that, "You have to be super passionate" and "Get used to change."

In addition to giving insights into building and maintaining a business, Mr. Khalil introduced students to Wakelet's Student Ambassador program, which they will use to organize their information and materials for the portfolios they must create for the Academy.

"Wakelet is a pinterest of education where you can add images, links, files from Google Drive, pdfs, etc.," said Lake Shore Technology Integrator Deann Poleon. "It's safe, secure, and easy to use, and will make a big difference for students organizing a great deal of information."

That will be vital for these juniors and seniors, who are also organizing material and messaging as they learn to pitch business ideas to investors. In April, they will pitch their ideas in the

43North competition, where more than 700 applicants from across the U.S. and the world were recently narrowed down to 15 finalists vying for funding from the Buffalo-based venture capital company.

"Our students will be vying for 43North scholarships," says AOBF Director and Business Teacher Danielle Arnone, "So to observe the process in action, they attended the semi-finals at Seneca One Tower."

"They were looking for their chance to win 1 million dollars!" said senior Jason Conklin. "Each company gave their best pitch in five minutes to the 24 judges (businesspeople, entrepreneurs and investors), who narrowed the 15 down to eight companies.

"We then had the opportunity to see first-hand the eight companies that would compete against each other at Shea's Performing Arts Center the next night, where five companies would be named the \$1 million winners."

School Counselor Steven Brown worked with 43North to make these unique opportunities available to the students.

'This is part of our continuing effort to learn about new business opportunities in our hometown and how students can make their own local and global impact.'

**- Danielle Arnone,
Business Teacher**



Team Building ...

After-School Game Clubs Help Build Teams & Strategizing Skills



Did you think team-building and game strategy happen only on the athletic field? Think again!

Dozens of Lake Shore students are meeting after school and learning those same skills in a different kind of game setting.

Scholastic Esports is one example. Last year, fewer than 10 students participated in Scholastic Esports. This year, 40 students participate on Tuesdays and Thursdays after school, and numbers are likely to grow, says District Technology Integrator Michael Drezek, as more students learn about it, want to grow their skills, and be part of a team representing Lake Shore.

The growing numbers led to a designated Esports space, with 25 computers and gaming keyboards. "It isn't all games though," says Mr. Drezek. "Just like in other sports, without practice and effective communication,

it is hard to win. It takes hard work, strategic thinking, a willingness to learn, and being a good teammate and having good sportsmanship, or gamesmanship, as some call it." This type of competitive gaming also helps engage students and prepare them for a variety of careers in STEM fields or in other Esports-related jobs. "They have learned quickly through competing against other schools that wins don't come easily. They need to communicate effectively, as well as analyze things in their play that are working well and things that need adjusting. They must be able to get themselves in the zone and really focused on their play, just like in any sport," says Mr. Drezek.

Currently, Lake Shore Esports participates in High School Esports League tournaments along with schools from across New York and the Eastern U.S. Students compete in Rocket League, Fortnite, Brawlhalla, Valorant, and Chess at this time, says Mr. Drezek.

The students also are learning to capitalize on the various opportunities presented by HSEL, such as community events, job opportunities, and scholarships.

"In the future there will be live streamed matches and hopefully a student team of shoutcasters or broadcasters announcing the matches, just like when you watch other sports that are streamed or aired on TV," says Mr. Drezek. He also stresses that Lake Shore wants to prioritize healthy gaming. "This comes in the form of positive digital citizenship, as well as a healthy lifestyle – not a couch potato lifestyle," he says. "So many schools are scratching the surface to bring Esports to their schools and Lake Shore is ahead of the game," says Mr. Drezek. "We're grateful for Lake Shore's vision for opportunities and for a technology team that was able to network computers in a way that makes all of this work."

'They have learned quickly that wins don't come easily ... They need to communicate effectively, as well as analyze things in their play that are working well and things that need adjusting.'

- Michael Drezek,
Technology Integrator

Some 50 students can be found after school in the High School library, intently focused on Dungeons & Dragons.

The fantasy role playing game is similar to many of today's video games, but it's played as a group, in person. Each player takes on the role of an adventurer in a world created by a game leader known as the Dungeon Master. Each player has a character in their adventure party: Wizard, Fighter, Rogue, and

Cleric, amongst many others. As they progress through their adventures, they increase their skills, solve mysteries and defeat their foes. Sneaking in there with many fantastic creatures like Orcs, Dragons and Mind Flayers, are important skill-building experiences in cooperation, problem-solving, leadership and risk-assessment, as well as compassion, negotiation, bravery and improvisation—as well as the use of reading, writing and math skills. For those reasons, Dungeons & Dragons has found its way to Lake Shore and into schools across the world.

*Opposite Page:
Brody Himelein, Cole Hart and Asa Thompson are members of Lake Shore's Scholastic Esports team, which meets Tuesdays and Thursdays after school.*

*Bottom:
Chemistry teacher Ben Swanson and German teacher Fritz Schattauer advise the Dungeons & Dragons Club, another after-school group. Below, Dr. Swanson works with members of the club.*



A Friend Indeed!



Ellie!

Ellie, a beautiful English cream golden retriever, belongs to J.T. Waugh teacher Nicole Wegrzynowski. Ellie has a standing date two days a week with Mrs. Wegrzynowski's 4th grade class. Shown above petting Ellie is Seth Trembath, with classmates (clockwise) Zayden Butlak, Robby Hummell and Abel Sedor.

Some stress

is good—it helps us learn to cope and become resilient.

But, too much stress makes it hard to focus and remember things. That interferes with learning and can mean greater risk for anxiety and depression.

With that in mind, Lake Shore has taken many steps to provide social emotional/mental health supports for students. One recent measure allows support dogs in the classroom, part of a growing trend to use therapy dogs as social-emotional supports for children during the school day. After all, a friend – whether two-legged or four-legged—is a very effective way to alleviate stress and brighten a day.

When J.T. Waugh teacher Nicole Wegrzynowski asked her 4th graders how they felt when Ellie, her 18-month-old English cream golden retriever, was in the classroom, they said: Happy. Excited. Glad. REALLY happy. “Saved.” Ecstatic.

Ellie provides an upbeat, comforting presence twice a week, and she’s available to other students or staff who may need a boost. When a young girl refused repeatedly to go out to her bus, she was asked if she wanted Ellie to walk her out. She said yes and grabbed her back pack and was on her way. When another youngster was having a difficult day in class, he was invited to spend some time with Ellie. Soon, he was centered again.

At the Middle School, special education teacher Jenn Linsley has similar experiences with her dog Lulu. “She greets the kids and they get their boost of serotonin—a little boost of happiness to start the day. Faculty come in and lunch people come in to see her. Counselors borrow her when kids are upset. She calms kids down.” Mrs. Linsley says Lulu is a great motivator for students with learning differences. “She’s used as a reward. The students get to feed and groom her and learn about petcare.”

Lulu, a golden retriever, is a comfort dog, not a service dog, says Mrs. Linsley. She has the temperament and training to tolerate a tug on the ear or a step on the tail, or a loud child. “She has two certifi-



Lulu! ... with 6th grader Nikita Giolando.

cations, one from the American Kennel Club and one from the SPCA. She has gone through a lot of testing and a lot of schooling.”

This mild temperament seems to run in the family. Ellie and Lulu are siblings, with the same mother and father. Addison (at right), the paw-ficer who works with the District’s School Resource Officers, has a different mother, but the same father. They are all welcome additions to the Lake Shore family.



Addison!



The High School Show Choir, directed by Deanna Civilette, sings the national anthem following the Pledge of Allegiance at a recent Board of Education meeting.

Let There Be Music!

“New students are joining or re-joining our music programs every month,” says Eric Blodgett, Chairperson of Lake Shore’s Music Department . For that infusion of interest, he credits Lake Shore’s support for instruments, music and repairs; the essential assistance from custodial and grounds staff, and the parents and students of Music Boosters “for their commitment to music in our schools and continued and unwavering support.”

'I can't tell you how dedicated these kids are ...'

Mr. Blodgett notes that

in addition to music theory (including AP), guitar and piano instruction, Lake Shore High School boasts a Show Choir, Jazz Ensemble, Pep Band and a musical that packs the house each year. There's also a Mixed Chorus, String Orchestra and Symphonic Band.

"I can't tell you how dedicated these kids are and it starts at the elementary schools, builds to the Middle School, and without that, it just wouldn't be possible," says High School Band Director Eric Blodgett .

He notes that the music department is moving closer to its goal of aligning musical experiences K-5, including experiences like African drumming, piano keyboarding, handbells, Orff Schuelwerk and Chorus. And students are responding with vigor: more than 150 students are in the Elementary 4th/5th Grade Band. More than 90 are in the Elementary String Orchestra.

When elementary students reach Middle School, they still have foundational music instruction, but things also get more specialized, with the Grade 6-8 Band, String Orchestra, and Chorus groups. "Over 40% of the building, that's more than 200 kids, participate in our Middle School Ensembles at the advanced level outside of general music," says Mr. Blodgett.

The students' music experiences aren't confined to the school buildings. They perform for senior citizens and at community events, and travel to perform and compete locally and nationally. They participate in All-County voice and instrumental auditions, as well as Area and Conference All-State voice and instrumental auditions and, if selected for Conference, All-National auditions. This year, 10 elementary students were selected for All-County Chorus, and six Middle School students were selected for Area All-State. "Approximately 30% of Middle School students will audition for All-County," he adds. At the High School, 10 students were accepted as Area All-State Musicians, and about 40% of students will audition for All-County. One High School student was even selected for the Conference All-State Symphonic Band and the All-Eastern Band.

"The High School Band has commissioned internationally-renowned composer and film orchestrator Rossano Galante to compose a piece just for Lake Shore's music program. The world premiere performance of our piece will take place at the High School Spring Concert on June 6th," he says.



Senior Josh Merritt, who plays French horn, has been accepted into the National Association for Music Education's (NAfME) All-Eastern Honor Band as one of the best student musicians in the Eastern United States. The All-Eastern rehearsals and performances will be in Rochester, NY, in April.

Lake Shore Central School District



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ALADDIN JR
March 2-4

A cast of 35 Middle School students, supported by 15 crew members, brings Aladdin Jr. to the stage on March 2-4.

Pictured at left in one of the daily after-school rehearsals are (from left) Luis Soto, Alexis Alvira, Elizabeth DeJoy, Gus Catalano, and Hunter Heater (who portrays the Genie).

MEAN GIRLS
Feb. 9-11

Lake Shore High School presents MEAN GIRLS (High School Version) Feb. 9-11.

In the photo, Victoria Cherry (front right) rehearses a mean girls scene with Clara Deeds (red and black plaid) and Allie Paterson (white and black plaid) and friends.



To get tickets ... Ticket sales for Mean Girls are underway at www.showtix4u.com.

Tickets for Aladdin Jr. go on sale Feb. 7, also at www.showtix4u.com. All performances are at the William G. Houston Middle School Auditorium.