

# EXPRESS

ELMIRA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

INSIDE

A VISIT FROM  
NEW YORK STATE  
EDUCATION  
COMMISSIONER



ALSO  
INSIDE

## AN UPDATE ON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

HEALTHY  
SMILES

New dental  
program for Elmira  
families

INNOVATION  
AT WORK

How devices are  
changing the  
student experience

MINDFULNESS  
& GRATITUDE

Restorative Practice  
as an emerging  
social science



# A Letter from our Superintendent | Fall 2018

Dear friends,

It never ceases to amaze me how exciting it is to start afresh. There is an energy that envelops you — a sense of prosperity in a new academic year, mixed with a twinge of eagerness to dive-in and start the important work we are all called here to do. I'm marveled at the idea that we recently welcomed our littlest learners this year as the **incoming class of 2032!**

As educators, our priority is to always provide a safe educational environment where students can thrive. We are actively working toward developing the whole-child, from rigor around academics to character development and emotional well-being. The Elmira City School District is at the forefront of the national **Community Schools** movement focused on a holistic and comprehensive approach to education. This approach prioritizes student wellness, **community partnerships**, and family engagement as key strategies to leverage better academic outcomes among our students.

We recognize that all students need various opportunities to be involved, actively engaged, and connected. The most significant relationships are those that can bring services directly to our students. Our students, empowered by engaging academic programs and real-world experiential learning, become successful contributors to our global society. These are the most important aspects of the **Community Schools** initiative.

As you read throughout this newsletter, you'll learn more about the significant impact the **Community Schools** model is offering Elmira. You'll also see that we are not only preparing our students to be career and college ready, but we are also helping to transform our community.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Let's Go Express!



Hillary Austin  
Superintendent of Schools  
Elmira City School District



## Elmira City School District



## Community Schools

### CAPTION FROM COVER

A kindergarten student named Beau stands in front of a framed mirror that greets him and his peers each day as they enter Riverside Elementary School. The message reads "I See a Graduate!" This is just one message as part of a hallway display of mirrors with similar inspirational and motivational messages. Visualizing success and promoting positivity is part of the Restorative Practice program in Elmira. *>Read more on page 5.*



### OUR PROMISE

We are committed to whole-child, whole-community development by removing barriers and delivering support services as a way to achieve academic excellence in an evolving community.

# State Recognition as a Community Schools Leader



## COMMISSIONER VISIT | OCTOBER 4, 2018

It isn't every day that the New York State Education Commissioner pays a visit to learn about all the great things happening in Elmira.

On October 4, NYSED Commissioner MaryEllen Elia stopped by Thomas K. Beecher Elementary School before visiting the Greater Southern Tier BOCES District. The Commissioner visited Elmira to learn more about our Community Schools model and heard from a panel of our community partners who work every day to bring services to our students and families. From yoga classes to trauma support, mental health, behavioral interventions, health care accessibility, dental services, safety and security, the Commissioner learned about the significant impact of Elmira's Community Schools model.

"The work that Elmira is doing is extremely important for students and families and it's showing that communities who are stretched for resources can come together. Elmira is a great model and I plan to share it with other districts around the state. I will encourage other districts to come and visit Elmira to learn about their successful Community Schools model," says Commissioner MaryEllen Elia.



By providing children an array of health and social support and broader, richer learning opportunities, Community Schools lay the foundation for more enriching and impactful learning.



“Community Schools enable the school district to improve Elmira's health, economy and quality of life.”

~ Hillary Austin, Superintendent

## EDUCATION REVOLUTION

The **Community Schools** initiative is an educational philosophy that is a critical component of the Elmira City School District's Improvement Plan. In 2013, our School leadership identified Community Schools as a way to re-imagine the school system in a way that continues to deliver high quality academic instruction along with social, emotional and physical health support for students. This model addresses the whole student and recognizes that students who face chronic obstacles, from hunger to health, can be connected with programming to improve academic achievement.

There are six key pillars of the Community Schools model in Elmira. Under each, we have significant relationships among 50+ local and regional organizations that work with the school district to provide support to our families.

# OUR APPROACH

## HEALTH SERVICES

In Elmira, we are making connections to important health and social supports by bringing community health agencies, dentists, and mental health practitioners directly to our families. From the Beecher Health Clinic to new dental programs and on-site counseling services, all of these services help create the kind of supportive environment that keeps students healthy, safe and in school.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

We are all in this together! A commitment to Community Schools, a transformational approach, is evidenced by strong partnerships among principals, parents, teachers, and community-based organizations and reflects the strengths of our regional Elmira community. Community support is imperative to the success of this program.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD

We believe that academic readiness begins at birth so we are engaging with our families from day one. From the Bibs in Bags program at Arnot Health to Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Programs as well as a partnership with CIDS for early childhood screenings, we are able to identify our families early and prepare each individual for a successful academic path.

## EXTENDED LEARNING

Whether it's credit recovery, ESAP, ARCADE, a club, a sports team, or homework help, the Elmira City School District provides a wide array of extended-day programming for children and youth. Enrolled students have the opportunity to participate in these after-school services throughout the school year, including academic enrichment, arts and technology instruction, leadership development, fitness and recreation, community engagement, college readiness, and exposure to career possibilities.

### BIBS IN BAGS

Recently, we have teamed up with our partners in the Labor and Delivery unit of Arnot Health to reach our families on day one. Elmira families, delivering their babies at Arnot Health, receive "Bibs in Bags" full of information to welcome their brand new addition to the Elmira educational experience that awaits them.



“By connecting school and community resources, Community Schools are efficient and effective.” ~Derek Almy, Director of Student Services

## RESULTS-BASED PLANNING

Community Schools always start with a set of results that measure the rate of success. In Elmira, we have identified three primary performance indicators to measure the level of impact our Community Schools initiative is having on the District at-large. Decreasing chronic absenteeism, improving graduation rates, and improving student behavior are the results framework that, together with our partners, we have seen a steady improvement in since beginning this initiative in **2013-14 Academic Year**.

### GRADUATION, ATTENDANCE, BEHAVIOR

- ▶ Since implementation of **Community Schools** programming, we have experienced a 1-2% annual increase in **graduation rates**.
- ▶ In the last four years, we have experienced a consistent downward trend in **behavior interventions**, demonstrated by a reduction of Superintendent hearings and suspensions.
- ▶ From 2014-15 year, we've made a 2% significant gain in **student attendance**.

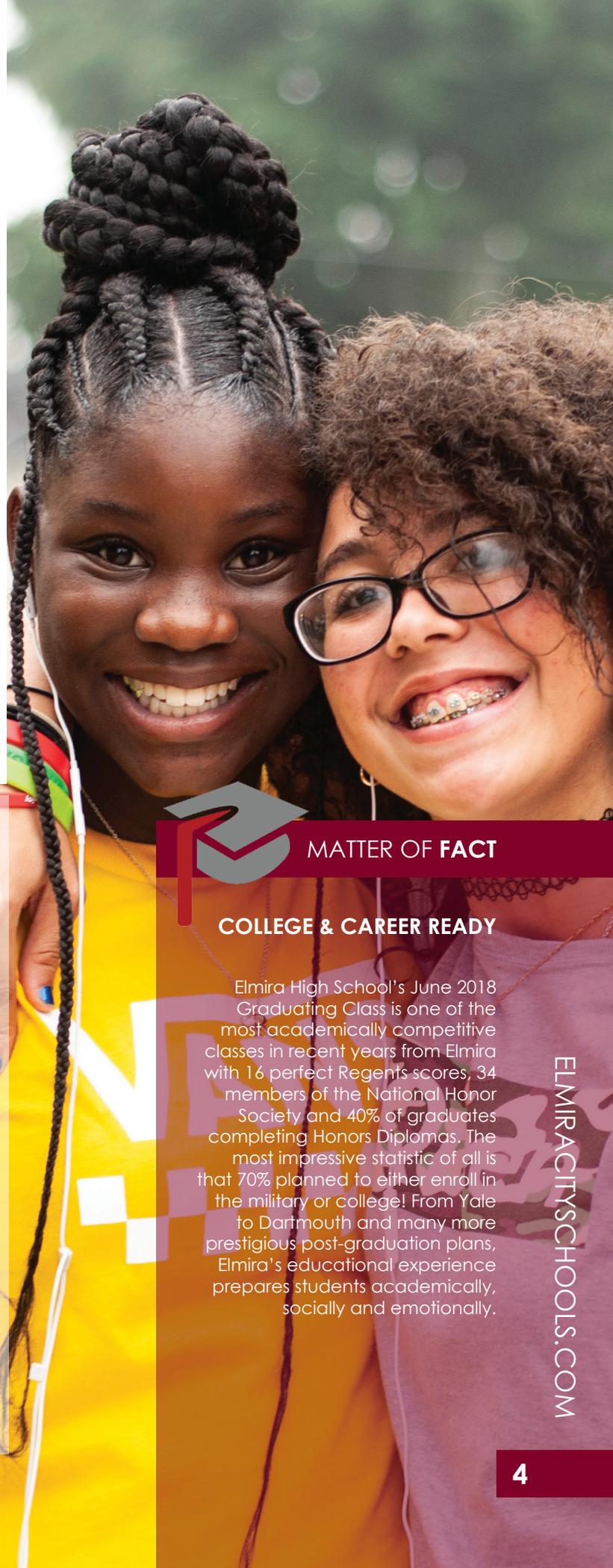
### FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Our faculty and staff work together with our families to provide the best support possible to our students. Throughout the year, our teachers and staff are encouraged to create opportunities for families to visit the classroom and school building for programming.

Our Family and Community Outreach Coordinators check-in with families often, and connect them with the right mix of community resources necessary to improve their students' life as well as their own.

### ADULT EDUCATION

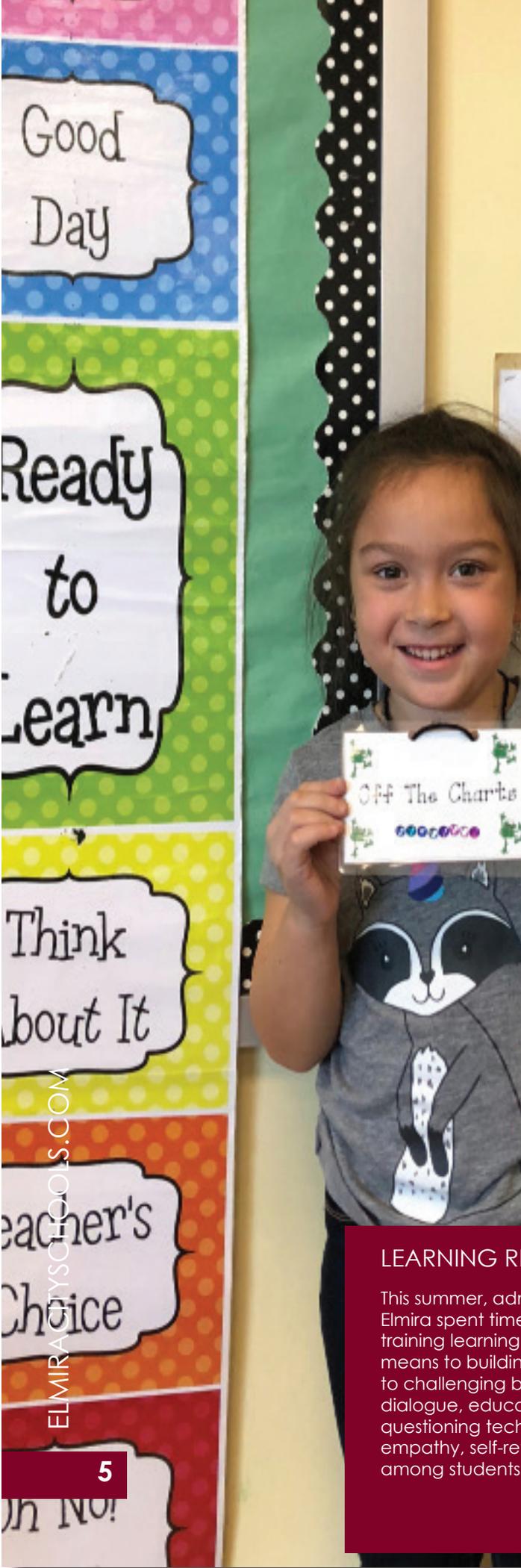
We know that greater connections between families, students and educators can positively impact a student's life. Language barriers, difficult work schedules, and other family obligations can keep parents from getting involved in their child's student life. In Elmira, we work every day to try to reduce the barriers that prevent families from becoming more involved.



### MATTER OF FACT

#### COLLEGE & CAREER READY

Elmira High School's June 2018 Graduating Class is one of the most academically competitive classes in recent years from Elmira with 16 perfect Regents scores, 34 members of the National Honor Society and 40% of graduates completing Honors Diplomas. The most impressive statistic of all is that 70% planned to either enroll in the military or college! From Yale to Dartmouth and many more prestigious post-graduation plans, Elmira's educational experience prepares students academically, socially and emotionally.



## RESTORATIVE PRACTICE AN EMERGING SOCIAL SCIENCE

MINDFULNESS AND GRATITUDE IS CHANGING  
OUR SCHOOL CULTURE

Effective education begins with building relationships in the classroom. Likewise, understanding student motivation and behavior, beyond "they broke a rule," is exactly the understanding behind an emerging social science called Restorative Practice. This philosophy is a proactive approach to helping our teachers build and sustain relationships with students.



### How does Restorative Practice work?

A conflict occurs in the classroom - instead of removing the student temporarily by sending him or her to in-school suspension or to an administrator, a teacher privately engages the student in a restorative conversation.

The exchange always begins in the same way:

"So, what happened in there?"  
"How do you feel about what happened?"  
"How do you think that outburst affected those around you?"  
etc.

Each morning, students in Mr. Roe's sixth grade class at Beecher Elementary check-in with their mood on a custom computer software Mr. Roe developed as his "Mood-Meter."

The Mood Meter is a tool used to recognize and understand student emotions. It's divided into four color quadrants - red, blue, green, and yellow - each representing a different set of feelings. Feelings are grouped together on the mood meter based on their mood and energy level.

"Helping students recognize their feelings helps them understand how their decisions and behaviors impact themselves and others. It's also the first step in helping students develop empathy, the ability to understand the feelings of another person," says Mr. Roe.

More examples of Restorative Practice are emerging throughout the District as a sustainable method to building and restoring peer-to-peer, teacher-to-student, and teacher-to-teacher relationships.



### LEARNING RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

This summer, administrators and teachers in Elmira spent time in professional development training learning about this framework as a means to building community and responding to challenging behavior. Through authentic dialogue, educators in Elmira are using questioning techniques in hopes of inducing empathy, self-reflection and accountability among students, and each other.

## YOGA AT PARLEY COBURN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Parley Coburn teachers and staff are turning detention into meditation, gym time into mindful readiness and reactive behavior into proactive self-control. A progressive approach to Y.O.G.A. = Your Objectives Get Accomplished!

In its second year, the YOGA program offers every student at Parley Coburn Elementary 30 minutes of yoga. This strategy ties into the District's commitment to Restorative Practice technique and is in response to an increasing need for teaching our students calming and centering techniques.



## CONNECTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Using Restorative Practice techniques, our Elmira High School physical education experience is changing in a way that improves and restores relationships between students and teachers.

Using a "Connected PE" approach, Mr. Arciolla is implementing different 'lily pads' for students to hop along before and after gym class, all the while exploring their feelings and choices.

The experience begins with "Today I Feel" and students choose an emoji path based on their general mood at that moment. From there, they engage with a "choices" labyrinth where they can choose the path they want to take based on where they want to be. All the while, students are engaging with their PE teacher as a warm-up exercise before gym class. From reading and conversing, to jumping and running, our teachers and students are optimizing every minute of Physical Education with a whole-child approach.



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TODAY I FEEL

# AN A DAY



## FREE FRESH FRUITS & VEGETABLES

Fruits and vegetables are the foods that provide the healthy fuel our minds need to learn and grow. And that's why we are excited to have recently introduced a Fresh Fruits and Vegetables program for students in six of our elementary buildings.



On Tuesdays and Thursdays, teachers serve the fruit or vegetable in their classroom and enjoy the snack with students, acting as role models for healthy eating!

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) began this year in Elmira and is a federally assisted program providing free fresh fruits and vegetables to elementary children twice a week during the school day. The goal of the FFVP is to introduce children to fresh fruits and vegetables, to include new and different varieties, encourage healthy snacking, and to increase overall acceptance and consumption of fresh, unprocessed produce among children.



## BackPack Program in Partnership with the Food Bank of the Southern Tier

Every Thursday after school, Elmira staff accept and distribute bags of food provided by the Food Bank of the Southern Tier. The program offers our students a chance to have healthy food for the weekends when otherwise they might not have it. Anonymously, students receive a backpack in their locker each week during the school year. Families can sign-up for the backpack program right at their school by contacting the main office.

"Students look for this food each week, and it puts a smile on their faces to be able to take it home with them." ~Chris Dille, Teacher Aide at Broadway Elementary School.

## Apple Snacks | Measuring and Sequencing at Pine City



Nothing says fall like the smell of baked apples. And there's nothing better than project-based learning, especially for our kindergartners. In Pine City, kindergarten students have been busy this fall learning about apples all the while practicing fine motor skills, mathematics, sequencing and teamwork. All the senses were engaged during an apple-baking activity. Students peeled the apples and helped to measure and mix the ingredients together. They talked about following a recipe and at the end of the day, they enjoyed the **'fruits' of their labor.**

# HEALTH SERVICES

## NEW HEALTHY SMILES

New this year, each student of the Elmira City School District will receive a free dental screening, toothbrush, and floss.

Through Regional Primary Care Network (RPCN) Rushville Community Health Center, the RPCN Community Dentistry Program team are visiting our schools and teaching our children how to floss and brush their teeth the correct way, what snacks are healthiest, and how plaque and the decay process happen.

Other services that parents/guardians, may request are dental exam by a pediatric dentist, dental cleanings, fluoride treatments and dental sealants (if recommended).

The Community Dentistry Program is available to students in all buildings in the Elmira City School District during the 2018-2019 school year.



## BEECHER HEALTH CLINIC

The Elmira City School District is proud to partner with Arnot Health to provide an on-site healthcare clinic in Beecher Elementary School. Non-emergency, basic illness and injury care are provided. District families can access the clinic by entering through the main doors at Beecher. After checking-in at the Main Office, a healthcare navigator will escort you to the clinic.

*ArnotHealth*

2018-19 Hours of operation when school is in session, excluding holidays and breaks:

Monday	8 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Wednesday	1 p.m. – 5 p.m.
Thursday	8 a.m. – 10 a.m.



## COUNSELING SUPPORT SERVICES

School counseling programs promote school success through a focus on academic achievement, prevention and intervention activities, advocacy and social/emotional development and college and career readiness.

The Elmira City School District is fortunate to have available a multitude of academic and supportive services for all students. One of the cornerstones of these services lies in the school counseling office. The school counseling department pulls together the academic, social and emotional needs of each student, and makes sure that they are being met by the school and district in the most appropriate manner.

## INNOVATION AT WORK

### HOW DEVICES ARE CHANGING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

As educators, our job is to prepare students to be progressive leaders. And that means providing tools that simulate our ever-changing global world. Digital literacy is a necessary skill for success. That's why, after launching a 1:1 Device program last year to all seventh graders in Elmira, we've expanded the device program to include all sixth and eighth grade students as well.

"Our students today will be entering a world where technology is all around them. From doctor appointments to receipts at the grocery store, we are surrounded by software systems that make up our world. It is our responsibility to prepare our students for the modern environment they will be entering," says Kelley Bacalles, Supervisor of School Innovation at the Elmira City School District.

Each day students go to their classroom, pick up their devices from their cart and carry it throughout the day. Once a month, on Fridays, we have what we call "Device Free Friday." Scheduled around the time Microsoft launches their monthly updates, student devices are held at the school from "Device Free Friday" through the weekend for our software staff to make the updates on each system.

Made by Bak USA in Buffalo, NY, each student is provided an Atlas Hybrid Device (between a laptop and tablet) with Microsoft 365 software installed to supplement their work in the classroom. From team collaboration to taking classroom notes and drawing, the technology is integrated into their daily experience. Students carry the same device throughout the day, from classroom to classroom, and leave it in school overnight for recharging. Using programs like Learning.com, teachers are able to create mobile laboratories, digitize curricula, and streamline content online and offline while advancing technology skills necessary for their success.

### CYBER SECURITY & DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Student safety is our top priority. We have web content filters, by age levels, that block and allow certain sites. With the help of LanSchool software, students are focused on the educational sites that they are directed to by their teachers and lessons.

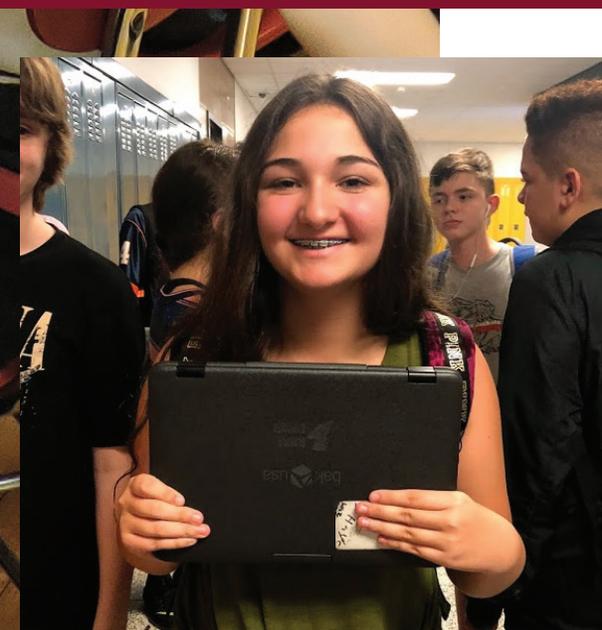
Digital citizenship begins with respect, education and protection. As technology becomes more necessary, and children use technology at a younger age, digital citizenship for kids is very important. From an early age, we know our students are extremely familiar with computers and the internet. From password safety to how to interact online, our teachers and administrators are talking about online behaviors with our students.





Faculty members of Broadway Academy are in year two of using student devices and digitally enhanced formative assessment in their classrooms.

# JOIN US CYBER SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS | FREE CLASS



As parents, we are navigating uncharted territory when it comes to raising children in the digital age. From cyberbullying to gaming with global competitors, it is critical that we not only know where our children are spending time online but also protect them when online.

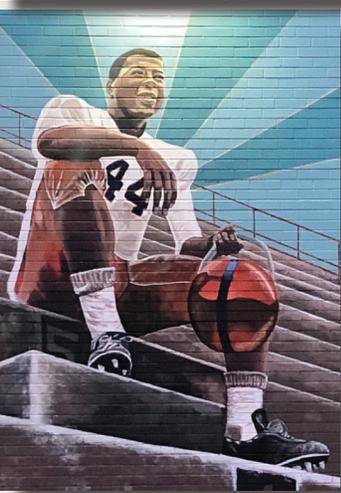
But where do you even begin? Join us for a free event, **CYBER SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS**, on November 15 to learn more about online safety tips from teachers, gamers and law enforcement.

Thursday, November 15, 2018  
5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.  
Ernie Davis Academy  
Free and open to the public

# Reinventing the Classroom Experience

# INNOVATION ZONE

ERNIE DAVIS ACADEMY



## STEAM | SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, ART & MATH

Middle school is a time of exploration. Students are figuring out what they're passionate about today and how that relates to who they'll become tomorrow.

That's why the centerpiece of the Ernie Davis Academy renovation is the new **STEAM Suite (SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, ART, AND MATH)**. The renovations will be a dramatic change from the traditional straight rows of desks. From Interactive Projectors to a makerspace, a 3D printer technology, and Project Lead the Way project space, classrooms in the STEAM Suite are designed for 21st Century teaching and learning. Situated in the East wing of the building, the completed space is designed with the idea to have as much flexibility as possible to create space for students to present and showcase their work.

### WHAT IS PROJECT LEAD THE WAY?

To enhance the new STEAM space, secondary teachers are unifying and connecting curriculum developed by Project Lead the Way across grades 7-12. The Project creates an engaging, hands-on classroom environment and empowers students to develop in-demand knowledge and skills they need for real-world learning. As they engage in hands-on, collaborative problem solving focused on real-world challenges, students use and stretch their imaginations in brand new ways and connect their learning to life. All the while, students step into roles spanning the career landscape – a crucial experience during this transitional time in their lives.



### WHAT IS A MAKERSPACE?

Using high tech and low tech tools, a makerspace is a collaborative work environment inside a school designed for creating, learning, and exploring. The new space at Ernie Davis Academy will provide hands-on learning in order to help with critical thinking skills and even boost self-confidence in students. An additional purpose of the new makerspace is to provide our educators with a hands-on, creative, user-friendly, "anytime, anyplace," professional development tool.



“Innovation combined with art and technology is critical to our curriculum, especially in the middle years. This new creative space will provide our students an opportunity to explore ideas that will eventually prepare them for the evolving global world around them.” ~Mrs. Rollins, Principal at Ernie Davis Academy

# Building Our Future

Our facilities are one of the greatest assets of our community and we use them to prepare our youth for the real world. Regular maintenance and capital improvements create optimal learning environments and always include innovation and technology upgrades, climate control considerations, engineering efficiencies, student safety regulations, and more. Beginning this summer and continuing into the fall, Ernie Davis Academy has undergone renovations. We look forward to the completion of these projects by mid-academic year.



In the new STEAM Suite (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), completed spaces will include state-of-the-art technology for students to study, design and present their creations in large presentation space.



A new corridor between the cafeteria and the main building of Ernie Davis Academy will improve student flow patterns. A beautiful green space courtyard will also be added near the new corridor.



Arctic® Chiller Systems will cool classrooms, the cafeteria, the auditorium, the Community Room and some office spaces of Ernie Davis Academy.

## SCHOOL SAFETY + POSITIVE MENTORING

### RETIRED LAW ENFORCEMENT SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

In partnership with Chemung County, we have added four more School Resource Officers to our staff. Our SROs, retired police officers from the area, are serving at our elementary school buildings. The goal of these officers is to interact with students in a positive manner on a daily basis. SROs can assist with counseling, crisis management, school safety and provide education to students on how to become productive members of this community.



# School Safety Change for the Better

Officer Tom, as our Fassett Falcons call him, greets students each day he's at Fassett Elementary School with a smile, a fist pump and a good morning greeting.

## SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS IN-ACTION

In many cases, our students first interaction with a police officer perhaps involves a traumatic experience outside of school. Having School Resource Officers in our buildings, in uniform, creates a positive image for law enforcement in the minds of our most impressionable population.

From the school cafeteria to the front door, our officers are greeting students as a friendly presence to make them feel welcomed and comfortable. The role of our Elementary Building officers far exceeds the most important responsibility of safety, and often stretches to acting as mentors, friends, and role models.

# EXPRESS In the Community

The Community Schools philosophy blurs the lines between school and community. From community agencies present in our buildings and classrooms, to our students integrated into the community, the Express model of Community schools is reciprocal in many ways with the great Elmira region. Our students and faculty are often found out and about volunteering at a variety of community events.

Our Broadway Academy seventh grader students are often in the action! From the Chemung County Humane Society's "Walk n' Wag" event to the Alzheimer's Walk, our community-minded students are making a difference in Elmira.



## EXPRESS ATHLETIC CHAMPIONS

VARSITY Boys and girls soccer won the STAC West Division Championships

VARSITY Football team won the Section IV Division 1 Championships

Sports Schedule: [www.schedulegalaxy.com/schools/128](http://www.schedulegalaxy.com/schools/128)





“

Spirit Week | Elmira High School

“Every fall, Elmira High School staff and students rally together and celebrate school spirit all week long with themed dress days. From Disney to decades day, class day, Hawaiian day and Express Day, the week was full of comraderie. Spirit Week is a longstanding tradition that everyone looks forward to each year.”

~ Mr. Krantz, Elmira High School Principal



**#GoExpress**

## OUR PEOPLE

### SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Hillary J. Austin  
Elmira City School District

### BOARD OF EDUCATION

Sara Lattin  
President

Maryann Friebis  
Vice-President

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

WELCOMING OUR  
NEW STUDENT BOARD  
REPRESENTATIVES TO THE  
2018-19 ACADEMIC YEAR

Audem Jackson  
Student Representative

Alexa Wagner  
Student Representative



## SALUTE THE SCHOLARS



On September 13, we hosted a commencement ceremony for summer school students who completed all requirements for their High School diploma. *Congratulations Graduates!*



## 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](http://elmiracityschools.com/taxes.cfm)

# ICYMI You Tell Us IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



Elmira City School District ...

September 5, 2018 at 9:23 AM | 🌐

Staff and students of Parley Coburn Elementary gathered at the flag pole this morning as a united school community to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. What a great start to the school year! 🇺🇸

#GoExpress



STAY CONNECTED

   #GOEXPRESS

**We're listening.** Please connect with us on social media and share your positive stories about the Elmira City School District. Use #GoExpress when posting!

@ECSD\_Schools on Twitter, or Elmira City School District on Facebook.



## JOIN OUR TEAM

Looking for your next opportunity? Consider joining our team to make a difference.

LEARN MORE:

[elmiracityschools.com/employment](http://elmiracityschools.com/employment)





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# ELMIRA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT



FAMILY,  
SCHOOL,  
COMMUNITY:  
TOGETHER WE  
SUCCEED