



Shaker High School students hosted a Construction event to benefit the SHS Food Pantry. Learn more on page 7.

ALBANY COUNTY LEGISLATURE AWARDS NCCSD GRANTS IN SUPPORT OF ANTI-BULLYING AND TOBACCO & SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION EDUCATION

North Colonie Central School District is grateful to be the recipient of two significant grants from the Albany County Legislature. Both were awarded to representatives from the district at a grants award ceremony on Friday, Jan. 31 in the atrium of MVP Arena.

Supervisor of Health and Physical Education Dave Stadlander and Elementary Health Education Teacher Jennifer Moran were on hand to accept a check for \$15,841, which will support tobacco and substance use prevention education in our schools. More specifically, this grant will support the implementation of the Healthy Choices: BE SMART, DON'T START Program for students in grades 1, 3, and 5. The goal of the program is to prevent tobacco, alcohol, and substance use among our students by providing age-appropriate education and promoting healthy decision-making skills. The funding will procure education materials, professional development opportunities for our educators, and an advocacy program for students among other things.

Superintendent of Schools Kathleen Skeals accepted the second grant check for \$11,000, which will support anti-bullying and youth violence prevention programming. With this funding, the district will purchase curriculum materials for our K-8 students that will foster a sense of community and belonging and reduce harmful behaviors.

"We are deeply grateful for our partnership with Albany County and the two generous grants that will help us foster a stronger, healthier school community," said Skeals. "These grants allow our educators to create new programs that will enhance student well-being and create a more supportive learning environment for all."

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NORTH COLONIE STAFF SPOTLIGHT



BRIAN AUSTIN
*34 Years with North Colonie
 Director of Orchestras,
 Music Technology Teacher,
 "Voice of the Bison"
 at Shaker High School*

At the age of 8, Mr. Austin decided he wanted to be an orchestra teacher and with the help of several mentors, he did just that. He attended the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam before beginning his career in education. Mr. Austin is synonymous with North Colonie. He has spent the entirety of his 34 year teaching career with NCCSD... the first 18 years at Shaker Junior High School (Middle School) and the last 16 at Shaker High School. He is retiring at the end of this school year. Even if you haven't had him in orchestra, there's a chance you know him. Mr. Austin is "The Voice of the Bison," serving as the public address announcer at football games and other athletic events around campus. He also deejays the school dances!

Most Rewarding Part of Your Job: "It's just a great school district. I tell the student teachers that come through that this is kind of a dream job. When you get a job at a district like this, you should really count your blessings because it's few and far between. So, I am very fortunate to have been in a district as good as North Colonie."

Mrs. Avellino has been a fixture at Shaker High School as both a math and computer science teacher for nearly three decades. An Albany native and graduate of Albany High, Avellino played softball at the College of Saint Rose where she double majored in business finance and computer science. She loves to learn. In fact, Mrs. Avellino loves taking classes so much that she still takes the occasional class at Siena College and says she would take more if she could! She has two daughters and likes to work out in her free time. In the past couple years, Mrs. Avellino has taken up pickleball and teams up with fellow SHS math teacher Mrs. Simkulet, playing in a partner league together.

Most Rewarding Part of Your Job: "I just love working with students. Especially with computer science, I'm teaching them something brand new. It's not even just a little bit of a continuation of what they've been doing for years. I just love that. I can see when they're actually getting something and when they really get into it."



CARM AVELLINO
*28 Years with North Colonie
 Computer Science & Math
 Teacher at Shaker High
 School*

NORTH COLONIE STAFF SPOTLIGHT



AMI HWANG
*1 Year with North Colonie
 ENL Teacher at Shaker
 High School*

A Syracuse native, Mrs. Hwang is relatively new to the North Colonie CSD. She joined NCCSD in August of 2024 as an English as a New Language (ENL) Teacher at Shaker High School. Her experience working in the English as a Second Language (ESL) program as an undergraduate college student solidified her decision to pursue a career as an ENL teacher. Mrs. Hwang has a strong interest in learning about different countries and cultures, which fuels her passion for traveling both in the United States and internationally. In her free time, she cherishes spending time with her three daughters and her husband.

Most Rewarding Part of Your Job: "My favorite aspect of working in the North Colonie district is the celebration of diversity and the sense of community it fosters. The school logo serves as a meaningful symbol of the strength and unity that arise from our community's diverse backgrounds. More importantly, I truly value being part of a district that actively honors and validates our students' multicultural and multilingual identities through its programs and practices."

Ms. Weimer loves to read. That should come as no surprise since she is a librarian! A Schoharie native and graduate of Middleburgh High School, Ms. Weimer initially started her career as a computer and business teacher, but was laid off during the financial crisis. As fate would have it, she was hired as a teaching assistant at North Colonie in the SMS library and that allowed her to discover another passion... books! Ms. Weimer went back to school for her library masters and quickly earned a job as a full-time librarian in the district! She spent 10 years at SHS before making the move to the middle school, which is a place she loves. Her favorite books are graphic novel comics and science fiction/fantasy. In addition to reading, Ms. Weimer also loves cats, baking, and local history.

Most Rewarding Part of Your Job: "I just love the middle school. They always say it takes a crazy type of person to be a middle school teacher and I think I fit that. I love the energy and the chaos of middle school and the kids have the type of motivation and that interest level still at this age which I love."



NICOLE WEIMER
*13 Years with North Colonie
 Librarian at SMS*

WORK AT NORTH COLONIE!

The North Colonie CSD is hiring!

Looking for something full-time, part-time, or as needed? We are hiring full-time, part-time, and substitute roles for:

- Nurses (starting at \$36.84 per hour)
- Custodial Department (starting at \$19.39 per hour)
- Bus Drivers (starting at \$24.48 per hour)
- Bus Aides (starting at \$18.49 per hour)
- Food Service Helpers (starting at \$20.69 per hour)
- Clerical Workers (starting at \$18.00 per hour)
- Short-Term Leave Positions
 - Special Education Teacher
 - Elementary Education Teacher

Apply now at NorthColonie.org/Employment

WE ARE *Hiring*

SEND AN EMAIL, RESUME,
 OR LETTER OF INTEREST TO
RECRUITMENT@NCCSK12.ORG

APPLY NOW



SPRING 2025 CONTINUING EDUCATION NOW OPEN - REGISTER TODAY!

Interested in learning how to decorate cupcakes? Want to learn more about finance or try a new fitness class? The Spring 2025 Continuing Education semester has begun! Register today on our website at www.northcolonie.org/CE or scan the QR code.



A MESSAGE FROM YOUR NORTH COLONIE CSD PTA - OFFICER POSITIONS AVAILABLE

The North Colonie Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) are successful each year because of the volunteers that participate at every step in running events. The PTA Officers for each school are a key driver of success and fun for our district.

This year we will be holding elections for every PTA Officer position in every school. Each PTA has formed a Nominating Committee and they are actively seeking candidates for each officer position. If you are interested in helping your PTA be successful, please consider running for this important role.

Contact any PTA Officer to have your name included in these elections. You may also reach out to the North Colonie PTA Council NorthColoniePTACouncil@gmail.com. Your support is appreciated.

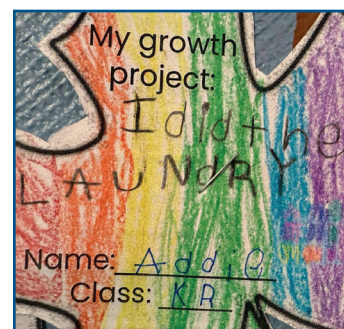
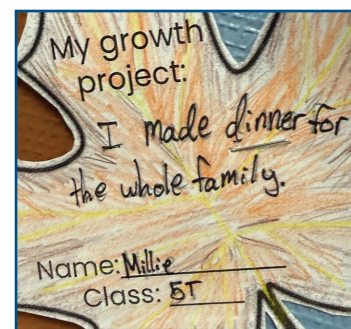
LOUDONVILLE LAUNCHES "LOUDONVILLE GROWS" PROGRAM

Spread your wings! That's what Loudonville Elementary School teachers and staff are hoping a new initiative at the school will help their students do. "Loudonville Grows," is an offshoot of "Let Grow," a larger movement to inspire increased independence in children in the hopes that they grow into capable and confident adults. Mrs. Sarah Boule says she has seen an increase in anxiety in young children over the past several years. The first grade teacher at Loudonville came across "Let Grow" as she was researching ways to help kids who are struggling. "For a variety of reasons, children today are spending less time engaging in unstructured, free play and less time discovering new things on their own, both of which are critical parts of childhood development. I was inspired by the Let Grow Experience because it unites schools, homes, and communities to promote childhood independence, giving kids the ability to make decisions, explore and learn from mistakes. Through discovering and experiencing on their own, children acquire skills like: resilience, perseverance, cognitive flexibility, problem solving, self control and more. They learn to trust themselves and what they are capable of. Trust and confidence are anxiety's neutralizers," Boule said. With the support of administration and the help of the building culture team, "Loudonville Grows" sprouted to life this school year. Each month, students have the opportunity to complete a project to help them learn independence. This is simply a homework assignment to go home and do something new, on their own. Parents

have been asked to discuss projects with their child(ren), but to avoid involving themselves in the project whenever possible. Students have done everything from baking banana bread, to folding laundry, and even packing their own lunch! Afterward, students reflect on their experience and write or draw about their projects to display in the school. 130 students participated in the first project in September. The projects culminate in a school-wide assembly at the end of each month to celebrate student growth and kick off the next month's project cycle.



The initiative has grown on at least one Loudonville parent. "At first I thought, just another thing to remember! However, it's actually been really nice to think of something simple, but nice to do at home that shows independence and joy! Both children have made letters for family and accomplished tasks they wouldn't normally do!" As the principal at Loudonville, Mr. Scott Thompson has seen the impact "Loudonville Grows" has had on his students. "Our intention is to give students opportunities to be independent, build self-confidence, and pride while also helping to reduce anxieties. Giving students chances to succeed and fail a bit. As we all learn more from our failures than our successes."



LEARN MORE ABOUT: HOME-SCHOOL COORDINATORS



For the start of the 2024-25 school year, North Colonie CSD transformed the role of the elementary school Building Assistant to the role of Home-School Coordinator. With one Home-School Coordinator in each elementary building, the coordinators have become a main point of contact and serve as a bridge between families and the schools, which in turn has improved in communications between the schools and families. "Within the building, I support a vibrant school culture where students are safe, responsible, and respectful," said Boght Hills Home-School Coordinator Shane Duesler. "My overall experience has been very welcoming and supportive from students, staff, and families." Want to learn more about the role of Home-School Coordinator? Scan the QR code or visit our website!



2024 TRANSFER TO CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATE

In May 2024, the North Colonie community approved our transfer to capital project. Since then, the district has been working to coordinate updates throughout the district. Below are the updates set to take place in summer 2025.

01.	Shaker High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Athletic Field Track, Fencing, and Walkway Updates C&D Wing Bathroom and Office Reconstruction Dover Elevator Upgrades E-Wing Bathroom Renovations Secure H-Gym Entrance
02.	Blue Creek Elementary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cafeteria Abatement
03.	Loudonville Elementary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paint Music Room and Hang Wall Mounted Accessories Restore and Paint Original Exterior Architectural Woodwork
04.	Latham Ridge and Southgate Elementary Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cafeteria Sound Panel Replacement

SOUTHGATE ADDS ADAPTIVE PLAYGROUND

Southgate now has an adaptive playground, dedicated in memory of former physical education teacher Peter Mravlja. Learn more and see photos of the playground by scanning the QR code or visiting our website.



SHAKER HIGH SCHOOL ADDS FRESHMAN SEMINAR TO CURRICULUM

Freshman Seminar was added to the course offerings for the 2024-25 school year and is required for all ninth grade students. It is designed to build a strong foundation for success in high school and beyond, and offers personalized support so students can thrive in their new school environment. Scan the QR code for a video introduction to Freshman Seminar with Mrs. Kim Murray and Mrs. Hope Dils.



“FRIEND OF A FRIEND: TALES OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD” VISITS SHAKER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Seventh grade students at SMS attended a performance of “Friend of a Friend: Tales of the Underground Railroad” by Maggie Mancinelli-Cahill & Jill Rafferty-Weinisch, offered by the Capital Repertory Theatre’s On-The-Go! in-school touring production. The play focused on Solomon Northup, a resident of Saratoga Springs who was kidnapped as a free man and forced into slavery for 12 years before regaining his freedom. The play aligns with the seventh grade social studies curriculum and highlighted many locations throughout the Capital Region that participated in the underground railroad.

The 45 minute performance was followed by a brief question and answer session. Students asked the actors a variety of questions, ranging from what was their largest acting role to date to what inspired them to take part in this particular story.

“We don’t often talk about the legends in our city now,” explained Drew Drake, who played the role of Northup. “For me, it’s really beautiful to talk about folks who were here, in the Albany area... I want kids to be curious.”

SOUTHGATE HOSTS TULIP PLANTING & BOGHT HILLS LEARNS TO PLANT GARLIC

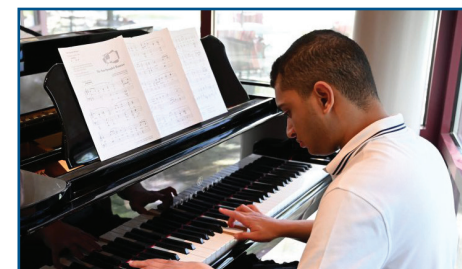
Student knowledge isn’t the only thing growing in North Colonie! In the fall, Boght Hills kindergartners planted garlic bulbs and carrot seeds with the help of Mr. John Barker from Forts Ferry Farm. The garlic will be picked in the late spring or mid-summer. Across town at Southgate, fourth grade students planted 87 tulips with the help of North Colonie Farm to School Facilitator Amber Cost. We’re growing our minds, while also beautifying our schools!



LEARN MORE ABOUT: NORTH COLONIE KIDS CARE



September 2024 – Sahana, Ruby and Max Miracle



October 2024 – Anthony Sadek



November 2024 – Dillon Gilbert



December 2024 – Katie Shimick



January 2025 – Declan Halliday

North Colonie Kids Care provides our district with the chance to spotlight students whose accomplishments stand out, even among the many wonderful achievements of our students. Learn more about our recent recipients on our website at northcolonie.org/north-colonie-kids-care



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE SHAKER BOYS' SOCCER TEAM!

The 2024 Shaker Boys’ Varsity Soccer Team had an unforgettable fall season. The team, now three time defending sectional champions, went through the season with tenacity and determination and was ranked fourth in the state. The team received a special proclamation from the Colonie Town Board, and earned the title of State Finalists. Congratulations to the team on an extraordinary season!

SHS STUDENTS MEET SENIOR PEN PALS



Since 2017, SHS students in Dr. Jim Bell’s classes have participated in a pen pal program with residents of Avila Retirement Community. Prior to the holiday break, students visited Avila to meet their pen pals in person.

SIENA VISITS BLUE CREEK

Fourth and fifth grade students at Blue Creek were treated to a visit from the Siena College men’s and women’s basketball teams. The teams shared their experiences and facts about themselves in a panel format, with Principal Chris Turcio leading the group to ask questions.



CANSTRUCTION AT SHS



SHS held a “Canstruction” fundraiser and competition, where students and staff collected canned goods and used the cans to construct a shape, scene, or design of their choice. All donations went to the SHS Food Pantry.



Not Sure Who to Contact? Visit the NCCSD Chain of Command

Have a question about bussing? Curious about accommodating food allergies? Want to learn more about how something was graded? The best points of contact can now be found on our Chain of Command. Scan the QR code or visit www.northcolonie.org/chain-of-command to learn more.



UPCOMING NORTH COLONIE CSD EVENTS

MARCH

- March 4** Budget Committee Meeting - NCCSD Goals and Measures of Student Success at Central Office Training Room, 6 p.m.
- March 8** SHS SAT 7:30 a.m.
- March 11** Budget Committee Meeting - Instructional Support Budget Development at Central Office Training Room, 6 p.m.
- March 14 – NO SCHOOL - K-12 Superintendent's Conference Day**
- March 18** Budget Committee Meeting - New Programs and Initiatives at SMS Auditorium, 6 p.m.
- March 24** BOE Regular Meeting at Boght Hills, 6:30 p.m.
- March 31 – NO SCHOOL - Eid al-Fitr**

APRIL

- April 1** Budget Committee Meeting - 2025-2026 Budget Adoption by Board of Education at SMS Auditorium, 6 p.m.
- April 7-May 16** 3-8 English Language Arts & Math Administration and 5-8 Science Administration
- April 14-18 – NO SCHOOL - Spring Recess**
- April 23** BOE Regular Meeting (BOCES Budget) at Latham Ridge Auditorium, 6:30 p.m.
- April 25** SHS Q3 Report Cards Posted
- April 29** SMS Q3 Report Cards Posted

MAY

- May 5-15** SHS AP Exams
- May 7** Public Hearing on Proposed 2025-2026 Budget at SMS Auditorium, 6 p.m.
- May 12** BOE Regular Meeting at SHS Media Center, 6:30 p.m.
- May 20** Annual School District Budget Vote and Board Elections (Central Office/Goodrich 6 a.m. - 9 p.m.)
- May 26 – NO SCHOOL - Memorial Day**

JUNE

- June 10** Life Science, Biology & Earth, & Space Sciences Regents
- June 11** Geometry Regents
- June 17-25** Regents Exams
- June 19 – NO SCHOOL - Juneteenth**
- June 26** Last Day of classes for K-8
- June 26-27** Regents Rating Day
- June 27** Graduation

Scan the QR code to view our previous district newsletters or visit our website at www.northcolonie.org/district-newsletters

