



# GATES CHILI CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

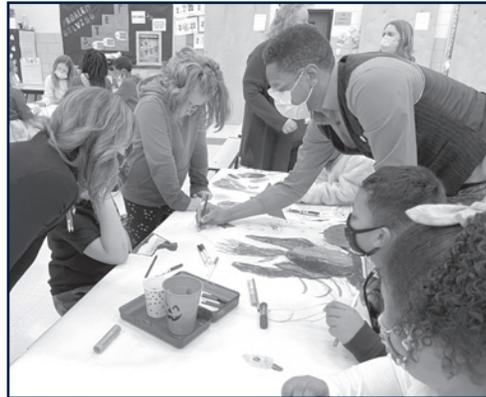
Winter Newsletter 2022

## Disney, Dunwoody collaborate to foster sense of belonging

From a brainstorm to a sketch and then finally a masterpiece; third- and fourth-grade artists at Walt Disney Elementary School are bringing the transformative power of art to life through a mural project focused on belonging.

The district’s goal of cultivating a welcoming and affirming environment begins with students and staff feeling a sense of belonging. For students at Walt Disney Elementary School, belonging isn’t just a word; it’s the building’s theme for the year so they tapped a local expert in art and positivity to help.

Shawn Dunwoody is well known in Rochester and beyond for his murals, sculptures and more. His artwork can be seen in museums, on t-shirts and even on downtown buildings and structures, and it seeks to inspire and affect positive change. Students in Kelly Hanning’s art classes learn about public art and its importance in building positive community. Hanning connected with Dunwoody, who agreed to collaborate on a mural project to cultivate that sense of belonging in every area of the school.



“Shawn is a skilled artist from our community, which is important because students can see that they can become like him,” Hanning said. “His work is always positive and aims to uplift its viewers. Students have been living through a hectic two years with the pandemic, so it was important to me to connect students with an artist who works to bring positivity and inspiration to all who see his work.”

During a first session with Dunwoody, 16 teams of third- and fourth-grade artists brainstormed their messages to the school community. Students wrote words and phrases such as “be kind” and “believe in yourself” on giant sheets of paper and Dunwoody worked with each team to hone their ideas for their mural.

“What better way to develop this sense of belonging, than to have the students decide what that means to them?” Hanning said. “By having the students drive the ideas and designs, this will better reflect the creativity, identities, and student-ownership of our school, further emphasizing students’ sense of belonging.”

Over the next several weeks, students worked on their murals during their art classes, primed the plywood panels for their murals, and sketched out the final designs. Dunwoody will visit for a third round of residency when the murals are completed so he and the students can review the process and discuss what they have learned and how the artwork can instill a sense of belonging for everyone in the school and in the greater school community.

“Students were tracking me down in the hallways, telling me how much fun they had with this project,” Hanning continued. “What was more powerful was that they said that Shawn inspired them to make more art outside of school to spread messages of positivity.”

The murals will be installed in Disney’s cafeteria and hallways this spring, just in time for the spring art shows and concerts.



“It was great working with Mrs. Hanning’s students on collaborative, connected and creative public art.”

- Shawn Dunwoody, Rochester artist

### ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Voters approve project .....pg. 3
- Kindergartener published .....pg. 4
- Honor society inductees .....pg. 7
- Esports kick-off .....pg. 9
- Top Workplace win .....pg. 11

## Letter from the Superintendent



Dear Gates Chili School Community,

A new year brings with it new opportunities to impact students and create the lifelong memories

they will carry with them long after their time at Gates Chili. From working with renowned artists to experiencing authentic business acumen, and even blazing a trail into a new sports arena, Gates Chili students are maximizing their learning in ways we never imagined.

These opportunities would not be possible without the support of our extended learning community; district parents and guardians,

neighbors, business owners and other residents. Your overwhelming support of our next capital project, approved by voter referendum on Feb. 2, will allow the district to continue to empower its learners, be responsive to their needs and set them up for success for many years to come.

The new year has also brought with it many challenges related to COVID-19, including countless updates to protocols, staff shortages due to illness and quarantine, and much frustration on the part of many in our school community. However, as a result of these challenges, we are seeing our staff step up in many ways, going above and beyond to ensure our schools remain open for in-person learning. I am inspired each day by the dedication these

Spartans exhibit and I urge you to continue to do your part to help keep our students in the classroom: wear a mask, limit gatherings and if you are feeling sick, please stay home.

I'm hopeful that our staff and students will continue to persevere and move into the spring with a renewed sense of motivation and enthusiasm.

Go Spartans!



Christopher J. Dailey  
Superintendent of Schools



### Register for

# Kindergarten

### at Gates Chili!

Download and complete a registration packet at [gateschili.org/Kindergarten](https://gateschili.org/Kindergarten) or pick one up at 3 Spartan Way.

Return the completed packet by email or at Kindergarten Registration Packet Drop-off on March 1-2 from 5-7 p.m. at the Gates Chili HS Field House. Families should enter at door 5.

Children must be 5 years old by Dec. 1 in order to attend kindergarten during the 2022-23 school year.



## PREKINDERGARTEN applications now being accepted

Gates Chili offers a free, exploratory Universal Prekindergarten program that teaches kindergarten readiness, early math and literacy skills. Children must be 4 years old on or before Dec. 1, 2022. Openings will be filled through a lottery process and placement letters will be mailed the week of April 4. The deadline to apply for the lottery is April 3. You can find the lottery application at [gateschili.org/UPK](https://gateschili.org/UPK).

# Capital Project Update

There may not be lights and cameras ready yet, but there certainly is action as crews work to finish up construction on the brand new, state-of-the-art Gates Chili Performing Arts Center. While some delays have arisen with labor and materials due to the pandemic, crews have been able to maintain a steady pace to ensure the progression of the project.

Students have already begun moving into some of the new spaces, including new choral and band rooms. Meanwhile, crews started the new year having wrapped up all plumbing, drywall, roof work, auditorium seating, the stage floor and more. They have spent the last several weeks finishing up flooring and painting and balancing air handlers. Crews also began the installation of stage rigging and lighting.

The entire project is currently on budget and a grand opening celebration for the performing arts center will be announced soon. Check the Gates Chili website and/or social media channels for details in March 2022.



The exterior of the GCPAC features large letters that light up at night.



The PAC lobby is a large, open space featuring concessions and a box office.



High school students have already begun using the new instrumental music room.



The new choral music room features a large open space and a mirrored wall for rehearsal.



Visitors can enjoy musical and theatrical performances from one of more than a thousand seats in the new auditorium.



The performing arts center stage is 50 feet wide and will host Gates Chili performers of all varieties.



Gates Chili voters have approved a \$45.5 million capital project that will provide facilities improvements throughout the district.

Yes - 291 (78.8%)

No - 83 (22.2%)

Some of these anticipated upgrades include the creation of a Universal Prekindergarten Center at the site of the current Administration Building, upgrades to technology classrooms at both the high school and middle school, updated music rooms at the middle school, and the construction of a multi-purpose turf field near Buffalo Road. In the coming weeks and months, the district will begin working with internal groups and architectural firm SEI Design Group to design plans that will be submitted to New York State for approval. Construction is expected to begin in the summer of 2024.

Thank you to the Gates Chili CSD community for its continued support of our students, staff and programs.

## BUDGET AMBASSADORS ANNOUNCED

Thank you to the following individuals who have volunteered their time to serve as Budget Ambassadors for the 2022-23 budget development process:

- |                   |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Scott Barrows     | Lisa Singletary          |
| Barbara Brody     | Tanya Srbnovski          |
| Charles Johnson   | Roger Thaine             |
| Jodyann Lawhorn   | Marenda Thornton-Lawhorn |
| Carol Jean Miceli |                          |
| Tara Preteroti    |                          |

This group will provide valuable feedback during the budget development process and recommend any modifications to the Board of Education.

## Walt Disney kindergartner *celebrated* by NYS Senate

A kindergarten student at Walt Disney Elementary School has gained recognition and applause for a project she undertook during the second year of the pandemic: authoring and publishing a book of positive affirmations!

The New York State Senate issued a proclamation celebrating Journee Campbell, the author of “The Little Voice In My Head,” an alphabet book with positive affirmations for each letter. State Senator Jeremy Cooney (D-56) presented the proclamation to Journee, her parents and extended family and members of the Gates Chili Central School District administration.

Sen. Cooney said Journee’s “Little Voice In My Head” is a gift, a “reminder to lift up other people,” and an inspiration to New Yorkers across the state.



## *Robots* take over at Paul Road

School libraries have evolved in the last decade, harnessing the power of more than just books. At Paul Road Elementary School, this means taking advantage of the district library’s robotic offerings, part of its new Mobile Maker Collection.

The collection currently consists of eight class kits that support classroom curriculum, each in its own unique way and are available for check-out by small groups or whole classes. To increase engagement, problem solving and early computer programming skills, teachers and library staff at Paul Road are actively working together to use Cubetto and Ozobots, two of the collection’s robotic offerings.

“The goal of our Mobile Maker Collection is to provide all Gates Chili students with opportunities to engage with curriculum in alternative ways,” said Gates Chili District Library Media Coach Matt Harvey. “These tools in particular allow students to explore content, inquiry, and research in a more ‘hands-on’ approach.”

Cubetto is a screen-free wooden robot used to introduce coding concepts

to young students. By using color-coded blocks on a wooden board, the students create code with simple directional commands which communicate to the robot wirelessly. Currently, third-graders use Cubetto to complement their work in two subjects. In social studies, students exercise their understanding of maps by programming Cubetto to navigate the surrounding school community. Meanwhile, in science, students ‘teach’ Cubetto about climate, seasons and weather measurement after performing research and inquiry.

Cubetto is not the only robot educational tool making its way into classrooms. Students practice different skills using Ozobots, which are small robots equipped with a sensor base that reads specific colors. They can be programmed offline with paper and markers, or digitally with block or drag and drop code. Fourth-grade students used the Ozobots to take a hands-on approach to ELA.



“The Ozobots have provided a new and engaging way for students to represent their ideas on a number of different pieces of curriculum,” said fourth-grade teacher Ryan Fitzgerald. “In our classroom, students were fully engaged in using the Ozobots to show their responses using the RACE (recite, answer, cite, explain) writing strategy to answer an open-ended question.”

The Mobile Maker Collection was made possible with the help of a grant from the Gates Chili Education Foundation.

## *Armstrong Stars* learning to show the Spartan Way

In addition to academics, students throughout Gates Chili are focusing on their social-emotional development. Social-emotional learning (SEL) is helping all students develop a healthy understanding of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, develop relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

"Social-emotional learning helps students acquire the skills to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions," explained Katrina Cimato, school counselor at Armstrong. "These skills lay the foundation for what humans need to get along in school, the workplace, or anywhere else in life."

At Neil Armstrong Elementary School and other elementary schools throughout the district, counselors and other mental health providers lead SEL lessons. Students in grades K-1 take part in a program called Second Step, which is a research-based curriculum that promotes the social-emotional development, safety, and well-being of children. Meanwhile, students in grades 2-5 are engaging in school counselor curriculum, which has yearly topics such as empathy and compassion, problem-solving, peer pressure and more.

Building these skills is important for students when dealing with stressors in their lives, but also helps them care for and have compassion for others. Cimato said these lessons also incorporate the Spartan Way values of respect, responsibility, compassion and hard work.

"Using the lessons learned in class, a student can if identify they're feeling anxious and would use a coping skill such as talking to an adult, taking a deep breath, or counting to 10," continued Cimato. "Having those coping mechanisms and teaching students to have compassion for others has helped many of them with conflict resolution, which makes them better equipped to succeed academically."

## Chorus and band unite *Brasser Bears*

The Florence Brasser Elementary School band and chorus ensembles had a special opportunity to share their music with peers this January.

Winter concerts were held during the school day to provide a safe and fun environment for staff and students to enjoy a midday musical treat and support their fellow Bears.

On the first day of the concert series music teacher Donna Dunn led the fourth- and fifth-grade chorus for three pieces, each demonstrating a new technique they mastered during practice time. Even masks could not hide the smiles of the students patiently listening to their songs. Music teacher Jackie Daniels conducted the fourth- and fifth-grade band through exciting movements and closed out the winter concert series the next morning.

Both groups displayed their musical talents for their families during an evening performance later in the week.



## *Elementary* leadership changes



There have been several changes to administration at the elementary level. Rebecca Scott is the new principal at Neil Armstrong Elementary School. Scott has been a

Gates Chili Spartan since 2015, serving as assistant principal at Gates Chili Middle School and, most recently, at Florence Brasser Elementary School.



The assistant principal role at Brasser will soon be filled by Erin Ugine. This move to Brasser is a full-circle journey for Ugine, who started her Gates Chili career

at Brasser as a school psychologist in 1998. She spent several years as a special education administrator and then coordinator of early childhood education until her most recent role as Gates Chili's director of elementary education.



Meanwhile, Sara Mucino will take over for Ugine as the district's next director of elementary education. Mucino has been a Gates Chili Spartan since 2012,

serving as an AIS teacher at Paul Road Elementary School and, most recently, assistant principal at Walt Disney Elementary School.

# Building life skills ☕ and spreading cheer with 'Cafe 102'

Divide the orders, tally them up, separate the cups, heat the water and make the coffee...all in a morning's work for a group of Gates Chili Middle School students as they launched their first-ever coffee cart delivery service in late December.

These students are helping spread cheer and learning life skills along the way, as part of a first-of-its-kind program at the middle school. The new coffee cart is called Cafe 102, named after teacher Jenny Marciano's classroom. Students in Marciano's 12:1:1 class have practiced for weeks in the school's new life skills suite, featuring a full kitchen, washer and dryer.

The students practiced kitchen safety and prep in advance of their first day of orders of coffee, tea and hot chocolate. They also worked on counting money in a transaction and storing it safely on their mobile cart.

"These are real-life job skills with practical applications. Programs like these exist at the high school level, so we thought, 'let's start working on them earlier,'" explained Marciano.

On the first Monday of Cafe 102, students prepared and delivered dozens of pre-ordered hot drinks to faculty and staff around the school. The drinks cost \$1 each, and that money is re-invested into the program.

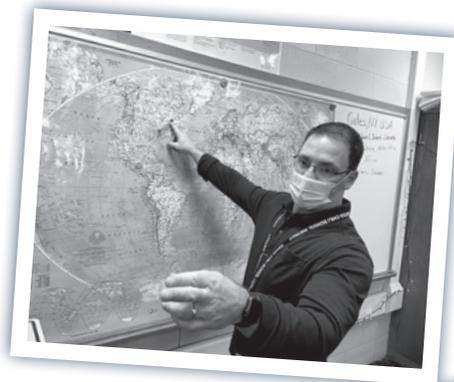


# 'Reading Around the World' takes GC students *around the globe*

Sixth-grade reading students at Gates Chili Middle School are taking a trip around the world without ever leaving their classroom, and they're making stops in some familiar places.

Throughout the district, Gates Chili students represent more than 30 home countries and speak more than 20 home languages. Many of the students in Judith Schnitzler's and Ronald LeClair's reading class are English Language Learners (ELLs). Early this year, LeClair and Schnitzler asked all their students to bring in picture books that represent their cultural traditions to share with the class, and 'Reading Around the World' was born!

The students take turns reading their books and sharing information about their languages, cultures and traditions with their peers. The class then plots the story's country of origin on a world map. So far, the class has "visited" Canada, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Israel, with plans to make stops in Sudan, Eastern Europe, Asia and the Caribbean before "returning" to the United States by the end of the school year!



## Increasing access for ENL families

Gates Chili is testing a new tool that allows important district-level and building-level updates to be shared in a student's home language. This feature, available through the district's Blackboard messaging platform, allows building and district leaders to translate emails, text messages and even some phone calls into the primary language listed in a student's SchoolTool profile. Families can also translate website content on [gateschili.org](http://gateschili.org) by clicking the Translate feature at the top of any webpage.

# BOCES 2 honors Gates Chili 'Superstars'

Six Gates Chili High School students earned "star status" at Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES as WEMOCO "SkillsUSA Framework Superstars" for November 2021.

Students are nominated by their program instructors and there can be only one nomination per class each month. Winners have met or surpassed the selection criteria and have demonstrated a passion for their chosen Career and Technical Education program. To be a SkillsUSA Framework Superstar one must excel in personal skills, technical skills grounded in academics or workplace skills as defined by SkillsUSA.



Clockwise from top left: Jacob Rogers, Engineering and Metal Fabrication - Machining; Heidi McGurk, Cosmetology; Michael Cassidy, Auto Body & Collision Repair Technology; Mackenzie Alley, Dental Assisting; Pablo Hemmerich, Engineering and Metal Fabrication - Machining; Sierra Schmackpfeffer, Nurse Assisting and Associated Health Careers

## 30 students inducted into National Honor Society

The Gates Chili High School National Honor Society welcomed 30 new members in a virtual ceremony. Students were celebrated for their commitment to scholarship, leadership, service and character.



Congratulations to the following inductees: Huraba Arif, Rebecca Bready, Giovanni Buonomo, Emma Cedenno, Jack Dallo, Gracie Day, Kelsey D'Imperio, Chloe Evans, Nolan Every, Collin Feissner, Megan Firnstein, Cecelia Gardner, Daniel Haag, Emily Huynh, Quang Huynh, Nicole Leiter, Giorden Martin, Dani Mayer, Emily McManus, Emily Montulli, Braedon Nace-Brenner, Jessica Pham, Brandon Randolph, Mya Rone, Evan Schmidt, Sairus Seng, Sierra Stonehouse, Jazalynn Thompson, Faith Walter and Jericho Yates.

To watch the virtual ceremony, go to [gateschili.org/NHS2021](http://gateschili.org/NHS2021).

## National Technical Honor Society inductions

Two Gates Chili High School students are the newest members of the National Technical Honor Society. Arianna Leo and Molly Hong, students at the BOCES 2 Career and Technical Education Center at WEMOCO, were inducted at a ceremony on Nov. 30.

To be considered for this honor, students must maintain an 88 average or above and remain in good academic standing for the entire senior year, have an attendance record of 95%, have the highest standard of personal conduct at all times, receive a teacher endorsement, strive for excellence in all aspects of his or her education and/or employment, and demonstrate leadership, citizenship and scholarship. They also must maintain the highest standard of personal conduct at their home school and receive a letter of recommendation from their home school.



l-r: Arianna Leo, Digital and Visual Communication; and Molly Hong, Nurse Assisting and Associated Health Careers

## GCHS alum brings *fresh style* back to school

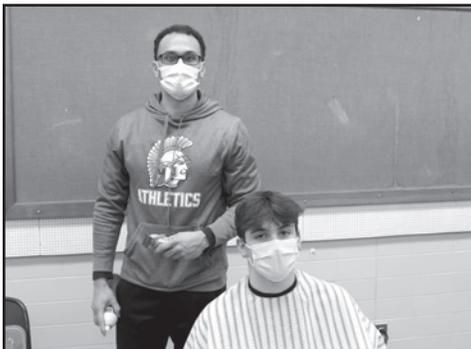
Visiting your old stomping grounds can mean revisiting old memories, but for local barber and 2008 GCHS graduate Juan Pena, his goal was to make some new ones for his fellow Spartans.

Pena is an accomplished barber with a local clientele, and he brought his special skills back for an event providing free haircuts to students. Pena said he was surprised to get the invitation from GCHS social worker Rachel Bonanni, but that he jumped at the chance to give back at his alma mater.

While he cut students' hair, Pena regaled them with tales of his high school antics in the halls of GCHS.

"I've been where they are...and I am happy to give back," Pena said.

GCHS track coach Patrick Tindal also stepped up to provide some haircuts. He and Pena were so busy that Bonanni said she will organize future barber events to meet the demand for stylish, fresh cuts.



## HS Drama Club makes *fairy tales* come alive

With the performing arts center still under construction this fall, Gates Chili High School's Drama Club had to find creative ways to hold a public performance.

"Our goal was to think outside of the theatrical box and allow the students the chance to create a product on their own," said Drama club advisers Heather Coughlin and Jessica Volpe. "The result was a fully student-centered experience where they owned every bit of their shows from casting to movement, to props and costumes."

That result? Taking their show on the road, high school students performed fairy tales for kindergarteners and first-graders at all four elementary schools in the district. Ahead of the visits to each school, the advisers supplied teachers with activities for students to do ahead of the performances. These activities align with the NYS Learning Standards for the Arts and Theatre and provided a basis for students to enjoy the show.



"We did the one where kids were led by their body parts (chest, head, nose, etc.) to show emotions," Paul Road first-grade teacher Shannon Parmalee shared. "We also read and reenacted 'Three Billy Goats Gruff' using different voices. Some of the students were really into it and even shy students were willing to participate!"

When it came time for the performances, there was no shortage of smiles or giggles from the audience of rambunctious young learners, with kindergarten teachers like Brasser's Todd Gundy sharing, "my students really enjoyed seeing the

high-schoolers perform and they enjoyed connecting what we did in the classroom to the performance."

For the high school students, the trip down memory lane was equally nostalgic and rewarding.

"It was so nice to see my old teachers and have them see how much I've grown up since I was a student at Disney," shared Kaley Sumeriski, senior. "The students' reactions were the best part, though. We had no idea what they would laugh at but seeing them laugh and interact with us was great."

"I feel that presenting what I love to humans at such an age is giving them an idea. [Through this experience] I was able to revisit a certain feeling of joy and pride that makes me want to be an educator," said senior LaVarr Fuller. "I'm hoping to be the inspiration for the children to become future actors and take an interest in theater."



# Building a *CHAMPIONSHIP CULTURE*

One of the fastest-growing competitive sports in the world is officially underway at Gates Chili with the launch of the district's new e-gaming program.

The 10-member esports Spartans kicked off their first season of Rocket League, a game of simulated soccer with a twist. Each player works together to control a vehicle, using offensive and defensive tactics to move a ball down a virtual field. Student-athletes utilize traditional skill sets associated with athletics, responding to coaching and working together to develop effective "on-field" strategies.

"Students really get to work on their teamwork, communication, and coordination skills," said Coach Jon Bergersen. "This is like any sport where student-athletes get to learn the importance of being reliable, sticking to deadlines and practicing punctuality."

The e-gaming program, only a few months into its inaugural season, has an impressive set up in the high school

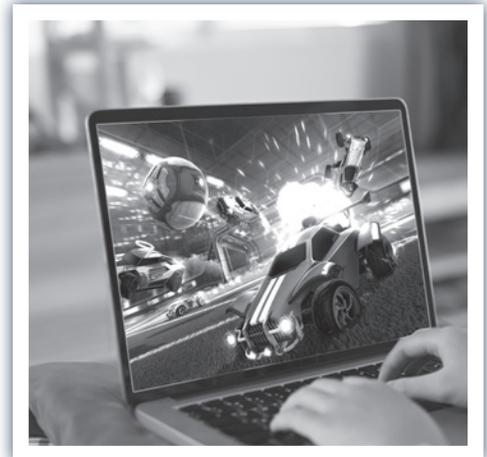
library with 15 gaming computers, each with their own mouse, keyboard and headset. Each week, there is a new match against other student-athletes from all over the country. On game day, the Spartans enter an online queue to play against league competitors. So far, the team has competed against schools in Kentucky, Ohio and Texas.

"This promotes a different type of athleticism but still reinforces our championship culture," explained Dr. Patrick Irving, director of physical education, health and athletics. "Esports revolves around fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination and quick muscle response. This opens up athletic and competitive opportunities for student-athletes who might not be interested in 'traditional' athletic offerings."

Gates Chili is one of the first local districts to launch an e-gaming program at the school level. E-gaming opens up many opportunities for students beyond high school, too.

Nearly 200 colleges and universities around the country offer e-gaming programs and even award scholarships for competitive play. Last year, U.S. colleges awarded \$16 million in esports scholarships.

Gates Chili's official spring season is just beginning, but the team is looking to grow. Email [Jon\\_Bergersen@gateschili.org](mailto:Jon_Bergersen@gateschili.org) to learn more about joining the team.



## Save the Date



**Thursday, Nov. 10, 2022**  
**Gates Chili Field House**



**THE HARLEM WIZARDS RETURNING TO GATES CHILI**  
**Friday, March 4 at 7 p.m.**

Trick shots and laughs will fill the Gates Chili High School when the Harlem Wizards stop for a visit on March 4. The Wizards are a show basketball entity and will be helping the Gates Chili Educational Foundation raise funds for students. Gates Chili staff members will be teaming up to participate in this entertainment event.

Tickets are available on the Harlem Wizards website at [www.harlemwizards.com](http://www.harlemwizards.com). Navigate to tickets and find the Gates Chili March 4 event on the calendar. Varying ticket prices are available including courtside seating. Advance ticket purchase is recommended. Doors will open at 6 p.m. for the event.

## Staff Spotlight



**El Haj Marigh**  
ESOL Teacher  
Gates Chili High School

Gates Chili celebrates its students' unique cultural identities, representing many races, religions and languages. For English Language Learners (ELLs), language barriers can present a challenge, but teachers like Gates Chili High School's El Haj Marigh strive to help students attain the highest level of academic success and language proficiency.

Marigh teaches English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and helps students see growth in themselves through the skills of learning a new language. He welcomes these ELLs and their families into the district with open arms and words of encouragement, a journey he himself once navigated. Marigh grew up in Morocco, where he first started learning English in high school. It was his own ESOL teacher that inspired him to study the language.

"I thought the English language was fascinating," Marigh revealed. First, Marigh obtained a bachelor's degree in English literature with a specialization in linguistics, then he used his language analysis skills in a position working for the Peace Corps as a language and culture instructor. There he met his wife, a Rochester native, and they moved to the U.S. together in 2003. Marigh dove into new languages, earning a French certification and completing two master's degrees—one in applied linguistics and another in ESL curriculum and instruction. He began teaching French and Arabic at local colleges, which eventually led him to substitute teach in the Gates Chili Central School District.

"I liked the environment of Gates Chili High School," shared Marigh. "I felt welcomed by teachers and administrators and I thought it would be perfect if I could one day become an ESOL teacher in the GC community."

Now, four years later, Marigh is changing the lives of students every day. He speaks five languages, including two dialects, and hopes that he can one day acquire a sixth language. It's Marigh's unique knowledge and skills, along with his ability to reach students, that

colleagues say, that makes him a one-of-a-kind member of the team. Students see him as a trusted adviser and confidant.

"What makes Mr. Marigh a great teacher is that he understands," explained junior Kenisha Chonge. "He's really helpful and makes sure you stay on track with your work. I don't think I would've made it this far if it weren't for him."

"He is a great teacher because he is like a friend," said tenth-grader Alshureek Saeed. "Sometimes if a Arabic student didn't understand what in English, he help and explain in Arabic and he make a lot of jokes (sic)."

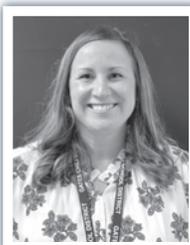
"Haj's personal experiences, combined with his understanding of language acquisition and ability to individualize the learning experience, helps him give students the confidence and tools to learn and grow," said GCHS Principal Ken Hammel.

Of his experience at Gates Chili, Marigh remarked, "Every day that I go to school I enjoy cultural conversations with my students, my colleagues, administrators, staff, custodians and other individuals in the district. They make this position amazing!"

## GC reads, writes, grows with new K-5 *literacy coach*

Jennifer Christensen is moving from one classroom at Brassier to many across the district as she partners with teachers to grow and strengthen Gates Chili's literacy practices. As the district's new K-5 literacy coach, Christensen will assist with progress toward creating a standards-based ELA curriculum at the elementary level by developing consistent and sustainable practices across our four elementary buildings.

"She is a true instructional specialist with a passion to engage students and collaborate with teachers and teams," said Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Troy Olin. "Her knowledge of literacy coupled with her genuine approachable style, poise, and commitment to Gates Chili teachers makes her an ideal addition to our coaching team."



Jennifer Christensen  
@GCReadWriteGrow

## Fostering a welcoming, affirming environment for all

Gates Chili's Strategic Plan for Equity continues to move forward with the district's third cohort of Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education (CR-SE) training.

Nearly 200 staff members have gone through the extensive training so far, which focuses on how an individual's identity and cultural experiences impact equity work, and how that work aligns with the district's mission and vision. The training also reinforces the importance of creating a culturally-safe and welcoming environment in which to learn and work.

This latest cohort of instructional and non-instructional staff members is the first to be facilitated entirely by Gates Chili master trainers. The district will continue to offer new cohorts of the CR-SE training for all employees.

## GC PRIDE Award

Gates Chili CSD is proud to recognize students, staff and community members who go above and beyond on behalf of the district and its students. The GC PRIDE Award stands for and honors professionalism, respect, innovation, dedication and excellence. Congratulations to all of the recipients for December and January.



Dec. 7 recipients: Allison Amesbury, Brassler student; Brian Romeo, Brassler fifth-grade teacher; Maleah White, Brassler student.



Dec. 21 recipients: Dorothy Brenneis, GCMS science teacher; Tyna Fowler, GCMS school nurse; Karen Jefferson, GCMS health aide; Cathy Phillips, retired athletics secretary.



Jan. 25 recipients: Kathy Acton, substitute; Brian Cieslinski, Senior Principal at SEI Design Group

## BECOME A SPARTAN!

Many of our employment opportunities provide flexible schedules that align with the 10-month school year. GCCSD employees also qualify for NYS pension and may enroll in health benefits.

Apply at [gateschili.org/jobs](https://gateschili.org/jobs)

## Gates Chili named Top Workplace USA for second year in a row



For the second year in a row, the Gates Chili Central School District has been honored with a USA Top Workplace award by Energage, LLC, a provider of technology-based employee engagement tools. The anonymous survey measures employee feedback on several facets of workplace culture, including alignment, execution, connection and more. The national Top Workplaces list is determined solely on this employee feedback.

“Gates Chili has continued to invest in its faculty, staff and administration. Last year, we committed to creating a welcoming, affirming and equitable environment for all and we truly appreciate being recognized for fostering a culture where our team feels valued,” said Gates Chili Superintendent of Schools Christopher Dailey.

In 2021, Gates Chili earned a Top Workplace designation and was the recipient of a national diversity, equity and inclusion ranking. The district focused professional learning on improving these practices and eliminating barriers for students and the community at large.

## GCCSD distributes rapid test kits

Gates Chili faculty and staff dispersed more than 10,000 rapid COVID-19 tests kits to GC families this school year. Some were distributed as part of drive-up events, while others were sent home with students.

Our Gates Chili staff has worked tirelessly over the past years to help keep students and families healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you to our GC families for their vigilance and dedication to protecting students!



**GATES CHILI CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

3 Spartan Way  
Rochester, New York 14624  
585.247.5050

**Board of Education**

Jeffrey Pettenski, *President*  
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Nicole Littlewood  
Robert Long  
Francis Muscato  
Andrea Hinchey Unson

**Superintendent of Schools**

Christopher J. Dailey

**Director of Communications, Editor**

Iva Petrosino

**Contributors**

Lindsey Reddig  
Nicole Mauro  
Kylee Ego-Walters

**Graphic Designer**

Lisa Constantine

[gateschili.org](http://gateschili.org)

*Designed and printed at Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES*



*A NYSPRA award-winning publication*

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Rochester, NY  
Permit No. 1034

# FREE MEALS for every student, every day

Thanks to an extension of federal funds, all students in the Gates Chili Central School District are able to receive free breakfast and lunch during the 2021-22 school year.

Families should still submit free and reduced meal applications as other benefits and scholarships are often tied to having a current application on record.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### March

3	HS Gr. 10-11 Student and Parent Night	6:30-8:30 p.m.
8	Board of Education Meeting	6:30 p.m.
9	Music in Our Schools Instrumental Concert	7 p.m.
<b>11</b>	<b>Superintendent's Conference Day - No School for Students</b>	
15	HS Winter Choral Concert	7 p.m.
18	MS Talent Show	6:30-8 p.m.
21	Music in Our Schools Choral Concert	7 p.m.
22	MS Grades 7-8 Chorus Concert	7 p.m.
22	Board of Education Meeting	6:30 p.m.
<b>25</b>	<b>#GCPrize Day</b>	
29	MS Grade 6 Band Concert	7 p.m.

### April

5	PR Book Fair and Art Show	6-8 p.m.
5	Board of Education Meeting	6:30 p.m.
6	MS Grades 7-8 Band and Jazz Concert	7 p.m.
7	MS Art Show	6-7 p.m.
12	HS Academic Varsity Awards	6:30 p.m.
12	Board of Education Meeting	6:30 p.m.
<b>15-22</b>	<b>Spring Recess</b>	
26	Board of Education Meeting	6:30 p.m.
28	HS Band Spring Concert	7:30 p.m.
<b>29</b>	<b>#GCPrize Day</b>	

Always check [gateschili.org/calendar](http://gateschili.org/calendar) for the most up-to-date times and locations.