



# GATES CHILI

## CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Winter Newsletter 2024

## Inspiring Spartans to ‘Shout’ for what they believe in

“Get Ready” because Gates Chili students are going to change the world with some help from The Temptations.

Middle and high school students recently learned what it means to be an “artist” with lessons based on “Ain’t Too Proud: The Life and Times of The Temptations,” an electrifying musical that traces the story of the legendary supergroup.

The integration of “Ain’t Too Proud” into classrooms is part of ARTS Partners, a collaboration between the Rochester Broadway Theatre League (RBTL) and area schools. The program infuses arts into the classroom by connecting curriculum to selected touring Broadway productions presented at the West Herr Auditorium Theatre. At the end of the program, participating students get the opportunity to see the selected production live and in person.

The Temptations rose to fame during the Civil Rights Movement. As the push for equal rights and justice for Black people grew in the 1960s, the group began using their music for advocacy. They used their position as popular artists to address issues and create songs in support of the Civil Rights Movement, promoting peace and equality and highlighting injustice.



As young Black men navigating a nation of civil unrest and dealing with a society that tries to take them down, the story of The Temptations is still relevant today. More than six decades later, “Ain’t Too Proud” had high school and middle school students exploring themes that related to these historical concepts, including progress, sacrifice and art as a force for change. Teachers in content areas including music, art, English and humanities worked with the RBTL to implement specially designed lessons and activities in their classrooms.

One of those lessons had middle school art students thinking critically about an issue they care about and raising awareness by creating a piece of art. As part of the assignment, the students also wrote an artist statement to help draw the viewer into their thoughts and

give background on their chosen issue. To emphasize the idea that history is always repeating itself, other students considered historical movements of the past and how they relate to the present by writing a speech for a chosen historical figure as if they were delivering the speech today. Some students also participated in in-depth discussions and lyric analysis with the protest song “Ball of Confusion” through the lens of the past and the lens of today. Music students also had the chance to take their learning to the next level during vocal and dance workshops with cast member AJ Knight.

The award-winning ARTS Partners program is now in its seventh year at Gates Chili. Third-grade students at all four of the district’s elementary schools participated in ARTS Partners this fall. They learned about the journey of a character by delving into “Annie” and its themes of optimism, belonging, facing challenges and finding value before attending a performance of the iconic musical.



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Together we teach and inspire excellence for all learners.

## Letter from the Superintendent



Dear Gates Chili School Community,

It is hard to believe we are already halfway through the school year. Our students and staff are showing the Spartan Way every day — working hard, demonstrating responsibility and showing respect and compassion.

This year, we have been focused on fostering belonging, supporting the wellness of our learning community and maximizing academic achievement for each student. From important lessons in the classroom to those learned on the field or stage, you will see in the pages of this newsletter that innovation, collaboration and cooperation are present each day throughout the district.

As we move through the second half of the 2023-24 school year, I want to thank the community for their ongoing support of our students and staff. Please check out our upcoming events on the back cover of this publication or on our district website to see many opportunities for school and community involvement. There is always something going on in Gates Chili!

Thank you for your continued support!

Go Spartans!

Christopher J. Dailey  
Superintendent of Schools



@GatesChiliSuper

## Navigating campus now easier than ever

As part of the district's ongoing efforts to improve navigation and provide clear information to visitors and staff, the district has installed a series of new signs on its main campus. Entrances to campus were renamed to include cardinal directions (north, west and south) and outfitted with new signs to help with clarity. Crews also installed wayfinding signs to direct people to points of interest and parking lot signs to help decipher the best place to park for those points of interest. Lastly, schools and buildings on main campus received new building signs. The next phase of the district's signage project will include new signs at elementary schools.



## Budget Ambassadors announced!

Thank you to the following individuals who have volunteered their time to serve as Budget Ambassadors for the 2024-25 budget development process:

Joe Cario  
Raymond Finocchio  
Timna Frank-Spock  
Lauren Goggin  
Charles Johnson  
Emily Klinzing  
Peggy McGowan  
Andrea Minchella  
Louis Witt

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





# Building Brighter Futures

## Capital Project Update

The project is approved and the first round of bids have been awarded on phase one of the district's next capital improvement project! New York State Education Department (NYSED) approval, which became official on Nov. 28, clears the path for construction to begin on this no-tax-impact project that voters approved nearly two years ago.

The first phase includes upgrades to high school and middle school technology classrooms, upgrades to middle school music classrooms, upgrades and relocation of high school family and consumer science (FACS) classrooms, the relocation

of district office staff from the Administration Building to the high school, and the addition of restrooms near the Gates Chili Professional Learning Center (GCPLC).

Meanwhile, the district is having to change course on its plan to renovate the Gates Chili Administration Building into prekindergarten classrooms. While NYSED approved the plans to construct these classrooms, it unexpectedly did not approve state funding for this space. That funding would have offset the majority of the cost of construction. Acknowledging a commitment to not increasing the local tax burden, the district is now

looking at other ways to use this space to support student learning, while being mindful of the impact on local property taxes.

The second phase of this project has been submitted to NYSED for approval. It includes work at Florence Brasser Elementary School, the creation of a multipurpose turf complex near the middle school, and general building upkeep such as upgrades to heating and ventilation units and other regular maintenance. The entire project is expected to be completed in 2026.



## *Charging* more vehicles, faster

The district's newest electric school bus charging stations are up and running and are already making for more efficient charge times.

Thanks to the two new charging stations, transportation employees can now charge four buses at once. This is an improvement over the district's other two charging stations, which are able to charge one bus at a time. Due to the higher voltage of these new charging stations, electric school buses can also charge at a faster rate, effectively cutting charge time in half. Though a welcome change, the faster charge times and increase in capacity are just one piece of the puzzle.

"Right now, our infrastructure can support four more of these high-voltage chargers and two more of the lower-voltage chargers," said Matt Helmbold, director of transportation. "That would allow us to support 20% of our 87-bus fleet."

Right now, the district has five electric school buses. Thanks to new incentives available to offset costs, the district plans to purchase more electric school buses as part of its regular bus replacement plan. In June 2022, Gates Chili became the first district in upstate New York to add electric school buses to its fleet.



## From page to practice: *Armstrong Stars* aim to 'Just Help'

"How will you help today?" This meaningful question sets the tone for Neil Armstrong Elementary School's literary adventure this school year.

That adventure involves all students, teachers, administrators and families reading and talking about one chosen book. This year at Armstrong, that book is "Just Help," written by Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor. The book welcomes young readers into a community where individuals of all ages collaborate to enhance their world and community for the benefit of everyone.

"Through this book, we are witnessing the transformative power of a shared literary journey," shared Principal Rebecca Scott. "This initiative not only nurtures a love for reading but

also weaves the fabric of our school community tighter."

The "Just Help" journey kicked off this fall with a high-energy assembly, highlighting the Spartan Way value of respect and intertwining it with the book's narrative. Since then, Armstrong Stars have been taking part in activities that aim to recognize positive behavior. From an engaging bulletin board to impactful service-learning projects, each activity resonates with the central message of the book. In classrooms, students explored the book's themes during community circles and brainstormed ways to 'just help' within the community.

Since the new year, Armstrong students have continued to highlight



"Just Help" by including the Spartan Way value of compassion. All of this will soon lead to a year-end service-learning project benefiting the Ugandan Water Project, a local non-profit organization focused on clean water solutions in Uganda.

"As we turn the pages together, we discover not just the words of a story, but the shared values and connections that bind us as one resilient, helpful, Armstrong family," said Scott.

## Leveling up *learning*

With technology constantly evolving, there have never been more ways to learn than right now! With every innovative new gadget, gizmo or program, students are invited on an exciting adventure where education and learning are being rewritten in real-time. For Gates Chili second-graders, that means diving into a whole new adventure using Minecraft Education.

What starts in a textbook or on a worksheet is now shape shifting giving second-graders the opportunity to become architects of their learning. Paul Road Panthers and other

elementary students throughout the district are studying worlds of rural, urban and suburban life then using digital tools to bring the communities they've studied to life.

And it's not just second-graders. Students of all ages are stepping into this game that transforms classrooms into unique spaces to learn, create and problem solve. From science experiments that may be considered too risky to do in person to exploring wildlife and conservation in their own digital adventures, students' imaginations can go farther than ever before.

"The opportunities are endless," shared Mike Munski, innovation coach. "It's just finding those meaningful opportunities to connect to you, connect to our lessons and let you soar."

High school students are also helping to bridge the students' learning. In addition to making connections with younger students, students part of the Junior Achievement High School Heroes Program are helping students stay on task when building in a digital environment and infusing important social studies concepts into their creations.





# Dragon Buddies help build a *stronger* school community

It's a typical morning at Walt Disney Elementary School. A kindergartener and a third-grader approach each other in the hallway and greet each other with a big hug.

Typically, older and younger students wouldn't interact much let alone embrace each other so enthusiastically, but these two students are friends. It's all thanks to Dragon Buddies, a new program aimed at building community across grade levels.

Launched at the beginning of the school year, Dragon Buddies brings older and younger students together. Students are paired by grade levels and classrooms, kindergarteners with third-graders, first-graders with fourth-graders and second-graders with fifth-graders. The idea started with Disney's School Improvement and Equity Team and the desire for teachers and students to work with peers that they don't normally work with.

"We have our wings [in the building] and people work together in the wings, but very seldomly did we work together across wings," said Principal Dr. Daniel Zdanowski.



Dragon Buddies meet on the last Friday of the month, known as GC Pride Days. Each month has a focus based on social-emotional learning (SEL) topics like empathy, community support and safety. Teachers whose classes are paired up work together to come up with fun and engaging activities related to the month's focus. Zdanowski explained that teams are doing a great job of infusing academics into their activities as well. Earlier this year, classes measured pumpkins and taste tested and rated different kinds of apples and then graphed the results. Besides reinforcing social-emotional learning and academic skills, Dragon Buddies is an opportunity for younger students to meet more people that they can look to for support.

"We focus on identifying two safe adults at school, but it's really important that we identify safe peers too to have that true sense of community, and we thought a program like this would be a good chance to develop those relationships," said Zdanowski.

For older students, Dragon Buddies is an opportunity to develop leadership skills.

"I like having fun and helping them with stuff," said Gio, a third-grader.

"When they see themselves as leaders in the community, they tend to hold themselves to higher standards, whether it's behavior or academics or attendance," said Zdanowski. "I guarantee you if they knew Dragon Buddies Day was on Friday, nobody wanted to miss school on Friday."



## Calling all members of the Gates Chili

**Class of 2037**



Kindergarten registration is now open! Children must be 5 years old by Dec. 1, 2024 in order to attend kindergarten during the 2024-25 school year.

Download and complete a registration packet at [gateschili.org/Kindergarten](https://gateschili.org/Kindergarten). Email forms and other required materials to the district registrar at [registrar@gateschili.org](mailto:registrar@gateschili.org) or drop them off in person at the Gates Chili Administration Building at 3 Spartan Way on weekdays between 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

## Apply for a spot in Gates Chili's **UPK PROGRAM!**

Gates Chili is looking forward to its 11th year of hosting Universal Prekindergarten (UPK)! Prekindergarten programs are free for residents and teach kindergarten readiness, early math and literacy skills. Children must be 4 years old on or before Dec. 1, 2024 and students who are age-eligible for kindergarten are not eligible for this program.

Openings will be filled through a lottery process. To be considered, families should complete the online application available at [gateschili.org/UPK](https://gateschili.org/UPK) by Friday, March 8.

# Ready, set, ECLIPSE: GCMS Outdoor Club Eclipse Ambassadors countdown to April 8



Following the success of the Eclipse Fair, the Gates Chili Middle School Outdoor Club Eclipse Ambassadors are planning another out-of-this-world event this spring.

More than 100 students, staff and community members came out for the Dec. 6 fair, which included student-led activities, demonstrations, crafts, snacks and more! 13WHAM even stopped by and featured a story about the fair on its 11 p.m. newscast and website.

Outdoor Club members hosted the event as part of its duties as Community Eclipse Ambassadors. The club was awarded the designation by the Rochester Museum and Science Center (RMSC). As one of 50 local organizations serving as ambassadors, the club has been tasked with exciting and educating the community about the total solar eclipse on April 8, 2024.

When the eclipse passes over Mexico, the United States and Canada, Greater Rochester will be in the path of totality and experience one of the rarest and most spectacular happenings in nature. In a total solar eclipse, people who are in the path of totality see the moon completely cover the sun, causing what seems like night in the middle of the day for a short period of time.

Now, the Outdoor Club Eclipse Ambassadors are getting ready for their next big community outreach effort. They will host an outdoor event at Spartan Stadium on Monday, March 25 — two weeks ahead of the eclipse. The group will release more details in the coming weeks.

*Be sure to check out the Eclipse Ambassadors dedicated section in each month's district e-newsletter where they share resources, interesting facts, information and/or activities about eclipses. See past issues at [gateschili.org/newsletter](https://gateschili.org/newsletter).*



## Eclipse Ambassador's Guide to Eclipse Safety

*The Eclipse Ambassadors have some important safety tips to share before the April 8 total solar eclipse:*

### **Wear safety glasses**

The sun can burn your eyes if they're not protected. The only safe way to look directly at the sun is through special solar eclipse glasses. Animal eyes are actually almost identical to human eyes, but due to their basic reflexes, animals never look directly at the sun, so according to NASA experts, there's no need for your pets to use eclipse glasses. Ahead of the upcoming eclipse, GCCSD will provide safety glasses to human students and staff so everyone can view safely! Remember you should not wear your solar eclipse viewing glasses while driving as this would be the same as driving blind.

### **No cameras, telescopes or binoculars**

We know you may want to photograph this historic event; however, using a camera, telescope or binoculars during the solar eclipse can make UV rays stronger and more dangerous. As fun as the eclipse sounds, it is important to be safe while looking at its beauty. One way to stay safe is to put a special solar filter in the front of your camera, telescope or binoculars. Do NOT use eclipse glasses or handheld viewers with cameras, binoculars or telescopes.

### **Protect your skin**

If you are watching an entire eclipse, you may be in direct sunlight for hours. Remember to apply sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher 30 minutes before going outside, and wear a hat and protective clothing to prevent skin damage.



# Captivating clicks lead to *flash fiction* phenomena

Once upon a time, in a high school where every photograph held a tale untold, two dozen Spartans dared to weave their own stories into just 150 magical words.

Inspired by the success of a schoolwide book club last year, this year brought the school's first-ever flash fiction writing contest. Teachers Angelina Brodie and Sandra Train wanted a way to spark imagination and provide an exciting platform for students to display their talents, so they came up with a plan to tap into the creative potential of Gates Chili students.

"I decided to participate to get my stories out there," shared Jamie C., a student participant whose story earned an honorable mention. "I've always loved to write and just getting to have someone hear what I've written really excites me about what my future holds as a writer."

A total of 22 students and two staff members enthusiastically took part in the contest, each crafting an engaging short story of 150 words or fewer. The judging panel, made up of five staff members and one student, carefully evaluated the submissions using set criteria. The judging process blended classroom learning and a love of writing by focusing on key elements like conflict, structure, point of view, characterization, suspense, creativity, originality and grammar mechanics.

What made the contest even more unique was that participants drew inspiration from photographs provided by students in the high school's Digital Photography class. Despite starting with the same visual prompt, the stories varied in genre, ranging from science fiction to suspenseful tales, with many exploring personal struggles. For many students, the contest gave them the chance to celebrate and showcase their creative voices.

"Growing up I would write little stories about my favorite characters," continued Jamie C. "Just being able to come up with my own [characters] and create their own stories is truly a gift in its own. I enjoy my stories and I'm glad other people enjoy them too."

Students can look forward to more chances to share their own stories and inspire others as plans are underway for two additional writing contests later this year.



## JAZZED UP AND JIVING!



It was true "Easy Living" at the Gates Chili Performing Arts Center on Feb. 9 as Java Jazz cast its spell, inviting the audience to "Take Five" and embark on a rhythmic journey. During the annual fundraiser for music students, each ensemble — the Middle School Jazz Band, Friday Jazz Band and the High School Jazz Ensemble — brought its unique swing, transporting the audience to the golden era of jazz. The night's lineup featured two talented special guests: Grammy-nominated saxophonist and Rochester music legend Jimmie Highsmith Jr. and The Joey Stempien Big Band, whose namesake leader composed an original song titled "Old Ozark Village" for the High School Jazz Ensemble. With its bluegrass Americana style, that composition served as a melodic symbol of the students' upcoming trip to Nashville this spring. Thanks to Java Jazz's generous support, all event proceeds will directly benefit students attending the April trip.



## *Hidden in Plain Sight:* helping families spot signs of drug and alcohol use

Drugs stashed in a computer mouse, a water bottle, a stick of deodorant and secret pockets in a pair of shorts or sneakers. A highlighter that's actually a vape. Gates Chili parents and guardians got a firsthand look at some of the ways that teens could be hiding drugs and tobacco products in their bedrooms.

It was part of Hidden in Plain Sight, an interactive drug prevention program that gives parents, guardians and adults who work with children the opportunity to experience the world of a teen and learn to spot signs of drug and alcohol use and other risky behavior.

In this event hosted by the high school and middle school, experts from the Council on Alcoholism and Addictions of the Finger Lakes (CAAFL) set up a mock teen bedroom in a classroom at Gates Chili Middle School over three nights in January. To start, participants were given five minutes to search the room for drugs and paraphernalia. The experts then took them through the exhibit, showing them all the things they missed.

"All this stuff is real life," said Molly Smales, the middle school's Delphi



Rise prevention counselor. "You can learn things from a textbook, or you can learn things from a presentation, but ultimately, it's different when you're in that setting. When you're able to look and say, 'OK, my kid has a bed like this.'"

Programs like Hidden in Plain Sight keep caregivers informed about current drug trends and provide them with knowledge and skills to recognize early signs of drug use, helping them be proactive about protecting their teens.

"Quite a bit has changed since I was younger," said Bridget Querns, a parent of four Gates Chili students. "I just never think it's a bad idea to educate yourself, learn more about what to look out for and how to keep our kiddos safe."

"We're trying to prevent young people from making mistakes, and if we can

help their parents understand what's out there and what's going on in our neighborhoods, hopefully, we can help save some young people's lives," said CAAFL Executive Director Tim VanDamme.

Besides providing families with tools to spot signs of risky behavior, Hidden in Plain Sight also helps prepare them to talk to their teens about drugs and alcohol.

"The reason we do this is you might see something to generate a conversation," said VanDamme. "If you see something, talk about it. You start a conversation and meet with your kids, they could get them some kind of help if there is a problem, or they could potentially stop it before it starts."

For tips on how to talk to your teen about drug prevention, visit [gateschili.org/DrugFree](https://gateschili.org/DrugFree).



## *Experience belonging* at Gates Chili

Gates Chili prides itself on embracing its students, staff, families and community members. New this year, the district is offering a virtual glimpse into what it's like to experience belonging. Those new to the district, as well as job seekers, can get to know Gates Chili through the eyes of students.

In the first installation of this new campus tour series, Gates Chili High School students Mariah Q. and Noah L. serve as guides to the heart of their educational environment. The 11th-grade duo offered their personal perspectives on what makes their school a special place as they lead a virtual audience on a tour throughout the building. From the field house to the atrium, they showcase facilities while highlighting the perks of being a Spartan.

"Gates Chili is a welcoming and inclusive environment because no matter who you are, you will be able to find people that you can connect with," said Noah L.

Experience Belonging tours are set to continue throughout the school year, with each building in the district receiving its moment in the spotlight. Building by building, tour by tour, the district will continue to work towards every person knowing that Gates Chili is right where they belong. To watch the video referenced above, go to [gateschili.org/ExperienceBelonging](https://gateschili.org/ExperienceBelonging).







# BUILDING A CHAMPIONSHIP CULTURE: Spartan Hockey 'sticks' together

With blades flashing, pucks flying and cheers echoing, the Spartan hockey team carved out their mark on the ice at the Blue Cross Arena in a nail-biting game against the Penfield Patriots on Jan. 22.

For many players, the Blue Cross Arena wasn't just a venue; it was a childhood dream realized. Senior player Braylon A. summed up the feeling when he said, "Everyone grows up watching the Amerks play at the arena and always dreams of playing there as kids growing up. So, getting the opportunity to play there...was a great experience for our team as we got an opportunity to play on a bigger stage."

At first glance, a final score of 2-7 may not appear to be a victory, but for these Spartans, victory goes beyond winning or losing. Victory also recognizes the collective effort needed to unite athletes from four school districts — Gates Chili, Rush-Henrietta, Wayne Central and Wheatland-Chili — into a cohesive and formidable team. If not for this collaboration, the students would not have the chance to play hockey at the high school level.

Navigating the intricate web of coordination across four different



school districts, communicating with school staff spanning two counties and ensuring a seamless connection with families spread across various locations requires a leader of exceptional skill and dedication. Enter varsity hockey's head coach and physical education teacher Joseph Jehlen, the foundation of this collaborative endeavor.

In Spartan hockey's four-decade history, the coaching legacy has been entrusted to just two individuals. Jim McLean, the program's inaugural coach, laid the foundation for success before passing the coaching baton to his mentee, Coach Jehlen. For the past 24 years, Coach Jehlen has stood as the guiding force, tirelessly working to unite athletes from diverse school

districts under the common banner of Spartan hockey, embodying the spirit of dedication that propels forward.

"Coach Jehlen has done an incredible job bringing these kids together under one umbrella, wearing the Gates Chili jersey and wearing it proudly," states Ken Hammel, director of physical education, health and athletics.

Victory in Spartan hockey is deeply rooted in the essence of teamwork, where everyone's contributions seamlessly come together to form a united team. Despite the absence of a single defining moment for team camaraderie, the team strengthens bonds with team dinners and gatherings throughout the season. That united team extends beyond players too, to families, alumni and fans whose support Jehlen said has shaped the identity of the team.

So, while some might think that a score of 2-7 is far from a victory, Spartan hockey recognizes that victory is more than a final score. Victory is found in the collaborative efforts, in the unwavering dedication, and in the seamless teamwork that defines the essence of the team.



## Staff Spotlight: Parent finds professional calling at Paul Road

When Theresa Annello first stepped foot into Paul Road Elementary School as the parent of a kindergartener, she had no idea that she would still be there more than 30 years later.

Over that time, she has worn many different hats as a member of the school community: parent, volunteer, Paul Road School and Family Association (PRSFA) member, classroom aide, substitute and kindergarten, third-, fourth- and now second-grade teacher. Paul Road is where Annello discovered her professional calling.

"I did a lot of volunteering here and spent a lot of time in classrooms, and I knew I wanted to do more," she said.

Once all three of her children were old enough to go to school, Annello became a student again herself, returning to college to finish her degree. She commuted back and forth to SUNY Geneseo, where she earned a bachelor's degree, and then, graduated from SUNY Brockport with a master's degree. She had a job as a long-term substitute before she even finished her student-teaching assignment and has

been at Paul Road ever since. "I love this school," said Annello. "This is such a great community. For the adults who work here, for the children that come to school here. I don't even think of it as coming to work most of the time."

Over the years, the Annello family has been involved in many school volunteer projects. They helped build a playground as well as the school's pavilion, garden and nature center. Annello is still an active member of the PRSFA, serving as a teacher representative.

Her inclination towards school settings has also rubbed off on two of her three children, who all attended Paul Road and graduated from the district. One of her daughters is also a teacher and worked at Paul Road for several years. Another is an occupational therapy assistant for Mary Cariola. Annello is still as passionate as ever about her profession and continuing her own learning.

"I'm really excited about the strides were making in becoming better teachers. You become a teacher because you're a learner too," said Annello.



*Theresa Annello*  
**Second-Grade Teacher**  
**Paul Road Elementary School**

"Throughout her outstanding career, Mrs. Annello has dedicated countless hours to the community through her work both in and out of the classroom," said Paul Road Principal Andraya Cutaia. "Her dedication to this community is truly something to admire."

While Annello has taught different grades and loved them all, she says she's found a "sweet spot" with second grade.

"Each grade has its gifts and challenges, but I really love this age," said Annello. "They're still little, but they have some independence. Most of the time, they're pretty excited about learning. They love school. You can just do so much, and you can see the growth."



**MEALS ARE  
FREE  
BUT DON'T  
FORGET...**

Families are urged to complete the Income Eligibility Form, which is tied to other important benefits for students such as fee waivers, tuition assistance, state funding and more!



Scan the QR code above with your mobile device's camera or go to [gateschili.org/FreeMeals](https://gateschili.org/FreeMeals)

## Middle school's Brenneis wins *Golden Apple*

Gates Chili Middle School teacher Dorothy Brenneis is the latest GC educator to win a Golden Apple Award! Students surprised Brenneis with the award on Feb. 6 with the help of WROC TV Channel 8. Brenneis won the award for her dedication and her extra work leading the middle school's Eclipse Ambassadors. Once available, you'll be able to watch students surprise their teacher with this award at [gateschili.org/BrenneisGoldenApple](https://gateschili.org/BrenneisGoldenApple).





## 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 the recipients for November, December and January!



*November recipients: HS students Alyse A., Joseph G., Laila G., Marissa H., Madison P., Jaylen R., Bryanna S., Jonathan V. and Caleb W.*



*December recipient: Clara Scardino, Benefits Clerk*



*January recipients: Sonia Rivera, Bus Driver and Edward Phillipson, FB Head Custodian*

## Spartans take on Wizards

The Spartan Field House was a hoopla of excitement on Jan. 12 as the Harlem Wizards brought their A-game to face off against a team of Gates Chili staff members, who traded in lesson plans for layups. The court was set, the crowd was on their feet and the anticipation in the air was nothing short of a slam dunk.

Jessica Frank, teacher at Walt Disney Elementary School, laced up her sneakers with the enthusiasm of a rookie and shared, "I wanted to try something new, and it's a Friday night, so it's something fun to do. I know my kids would want to see me playing on the court, and I was excited to finally make my debut."

For many students, like Armstrong's Rowan I., and Paul Road siblings Dylan and Lexi L., this wasn't just an ordinary basketball game – it was their first-ever basketball game.

"I've never been to a basketball game in real life," said Dylan. "I'm rooting for Paul Road. Good luck, coach; make us proud."

Meanwhile, Armstrong Star Jawuan B. felt a different connection to the magic on the court. Having showcased his basketball skills during the Wizards' assembly earlier that day, he reflected on how it made him feel supported by his peers.

"It was great because all my friends were cheering for me in the back, and it was fun because they knew I was a good basketball player. I was really happy for my friends and my teachers' support."

In the end, the Wizards versus Spartans game raised more than \$4,000 for the Gates Chili Education Foundation, but more importantly, it provided the backdrop for a night of community spirit, togetherness and perfect swish moments that would be remembered long after the final buzzer.





## GATES CHILI CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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*A NYSPRA award-winning publication*

## The Addams Family SCHOOL EDITION

*Gates Chili High School  
Musical Theatre proudly presents*

### THE ADDAMS FAMILY School Edition A NEW MUSICAL

**Friday, March 22 at 7 p.m.**

**Saturday, March 23 at 7 p.m.**

**Sunday, March 24 at 2 p.m.**

Gates Chili Performing Arts Center  
1 Spartan Way, Rochester, NY 14624

Buy tickets starting March 1 at  
[gateschili.org/tickets](http://gateschili.org/tickets)

The Addams Family School Edition is presented through special arrangement with and all authorized performance materials are supplied by Theatrical Rights Worldwide 1180 Avenue of the Americas, Suite 640, New York, NY 10036

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## Upcoming events and important dates to remember

### MARCH

4	MIOSM Instrumental Concert	7 p.m.
8	<b>Superintendent's Conference Day - No School for Students</b>	
10	Daylight saving time begins	
12	<b>Board of Education Meeting</b>	6:30 p.m.
13	PR Picture Day	
15	MS Grades 7-8 Social	7-8:30 p.m.
22	<b>#GCPride Day</b>	
22-23	HS Musical: The Addams Family	7 p.m.
24	HS Musical: The Addams Family	2 p.m.
26	<b>Board of Education Meeting</b>	6:30 p.m.
26	MS Art Show	5:30-7 p.m.
26	HS Choral Concert	7 p.m.
27	MIOSM Choral Concert	7 p.m.
28	PR Day of Play	
29	<b>Spring Recess - District Closed</b>	

### April

1-8	<b>Spring Recess - No School for Students and 10-Month Staff</b>	
8	<b>Total Solar Eclipse (District Closed)</b>	
10-17	NYS 3-8 ELA Assessment Window	
16	<b>Board of Education Meeting</b>	6:30 p.m.
17	HS Band Concert	7:30 p.m.
18	HS Academic Varsity Letter Ceremony	6:30-8:30 p.m.
26	<b>#GCPride Day</b>	
30	HS Grades 8-9 Transition Night	6:30-8:30 p.m.
30	<b>Board of Education Meeting</b>	6:30 p.m.