



EAST ROCHESTER UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT School District News

Winter 2024

Dr. Jevon Hunter and East Rochester Union Free School District Collaborate

Dr. Hunter has been very involved with our staff and student population this season.

We welcomed Dr. Hunter, Woods-Beals Endowed Chair in Urban Education, School of Education and Associate Professor, Elementary Education, Literacy, and Educational Leadership at Buffalo State University, to the East Rochester Union Free School District this winter for a unique opportunity for a Community Building and Belonging assembly for K-5 elementary students. Following the larger assembly, there were two smaller breakout sessions for grades 4 and 5 that took a deeper dive into being 'Upstanders' vs 'Bystanders' in an attempt to prevent bullying.

At the Middle Level Academy and High School, our English Language Arts and Social Studies Departments were able to partner with Dr. Hunter to make adjustments to their curriculum. Specifically, these adjustments focus on making curriculum more culturally responsive to student needs. Culturally Relevant Education takes into account students' lived experiences, perspectives and cultures, all of which influence how they understand and make sense of the world. It allows students to make deeper meaning of what they are learning.

Teachers embedded opportunities for inquiry and youth culture into the curriculum to make learning more engaging for our students. For example, eighth grade students recently worked on a research project in their social studies classes where they explored the question: *How do names shape our identity?* During this project, students did research on a specific indigenous person who experienced assimilation (name change and change of culture) at one of the hundreds of boarding schools in the United States in the late 1800s and early 1900s. As part of this project, students made connections on how their own names were important to their own identity and how this connection helped them to better understand indigenous peoples' assimilation experience.

In addition, students in the ninth grade are dreaming big as they explore the concept of freedom dreaming. Inspired by the work of American historian Robin D. G. Kelley, students are creating and pursuing their very own freedom dreams with the goal being to positively impact themselves and their community around them. Students have been preparing for this project by reading Frederick Douglass' first autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. While reading this text, students have written journal entries inspired by Douglass' freedom dream. These personalized journals serve as the foundation for students' journeys toward their own freedom dreams.

Additionally, we are pleased to announce that in partnership with West Irondequoit Central School District and Nazareth University, we will provide our students with a local Youth Voices Conference opportunity. The purpose of the conference will be to celebrate our students' work as they put into practice the tenets of Culturally Relevant Education.

On **Thursday, May 2 from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.**, we are coordinating an event at Nazareth University for East Rochester and West Irondequoit students to share their Critical Inquiry Projects and/or social justice work.

We are appreciative of the time, effort, and attention Dr. Hunter has put into collaborating with the East Rochester Union Free School District's students and staff! Please join us in praising our students' hard work in May!



Our District's Mission

The Mission of the East Rochester School District is to prepare students to be college and career ready and to provide a quality education in a safe environment where all students develop the abilities, attitudes and values necessary for responsible, productive citizenship.

Our Vision

The Vision of the East Rochester School District is that students will learn through the highest quality instruction which recognizes each student's strengths, talents, interests, learning styles and rates of learning, using developmentally appropriate methods.

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A message from the Superintendent

Dear ER Community,

In early January, we saw some dire weather forecasts with wind advisories and concerns about power outages. Just a reminder that in the event we lose power during the school day, we have generators that engage shortly after that provide electrical backup power so we can continue with our daily school district operations. Please note, that we do have a small number of electrical systems that can take a longer period of time to reset or are not connected to our generators. It is normal for students and staff to notice a momentary lapse in lighting at the beginning and end of generator usage on our East Rochester School District Campus.

Again, we want to thank the voters for approving our Capital Improvement Project during the vote on January 18, 2024. We provide a synopsis of the next steps in development of the project later in this newsletter.

Lastly, I wanted to commend our instructional administrators and teachers for their commitment to refocusing our approach

to reading instruction by participating in Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) for the past three years. LETRS is a professional learning course designed to provide early childhood and elementary educators with deep knowledge to be literacy and language experts in the science of reading. LETRS teaches the skills needed to master the foundational elements and fundamentals of reading and writing instruction. By engaging in this training, this has given our district a head start on the P-20 Literacy Initiative that Governor Hochul highlighted in her recent budget proposal.

We look forward to a great end to winter and a strong start to spring here on campus.

Regards,

James Haugh
Superintendent of Schools
East Rochester Union Free School District

East Rochester Third Grade Elementary Compost Project Update

The East Rochester Union Free School District Compost Project started this past fall. The Compost Project allows third graders to learn about their impact on the planet along with the positive environmental benefits to which they are contributing. The project began as a pilot project by University of Rochester Pediatric Resident Dr. Sarah Khan who wanted to focus her work on climate change and connected with the East Rochester Union Free School District. Through this initiative, she was able to get a grant from the Hoekelman Center that allows for Impact Earth to take our compost to a nearby facility in Henrietta twice a week to make soil from trash waste. Dr. Sarah Khan and Doug Carney from Impact Earth have visited our students to talk about this topic and their participation.

During lunch, third grade students have access to place compostable trash (meat or other food scraps, paper products or napkins) in five-gallon buckets with biodegradable liners in the cafeteria following their meals. The elementary students are doing great work.

East Rochester Elementary School Third Grade Teacher and K-5 Science Excellence Leader Mark Denecke said, "As a Science Teacher, it's important for me to talk to students about their environmental impact. They need to understand where their trash goes and that they have a role in that process, you don't just throw things away and forget about it. This is a productive way to cut down on garbage cost and provide no waste."

2023 East Rochester Elementary Compost Weights

- October - 78 lbs
- November - 39 lbs (during this month the toters were empty from 11/10 until 12/1)
- December - 155 lbs
- Total - 272 lbs of compost were collected
- Emissions of CO2-e Diverted: 234.42 kg



Capital Improvement Project Approved

**Thank you to everyone who came out on January 18, 2024
to vote on the Capital Improvement Project**

It was approved with 130 in favor and 12 opposed. The approved \$10 million project will begin in summer 2025. The main areas of focus include: roof replacement, indoor pool renovation, safety and security, and playground phase 2. There will be no increase in taxes to District property owners as a result of this project.

For more information, please visit our website: www.erschools.org/district/2024_construction_improvement_project

We appreciate your continued support of the East Rochester Union Free School District.



2024-2025 Budget Development Update

East Rochester administrators and the Board of Education held their first Budget Workshop for the 2024-2025 school year budget on Tuesday, February 6. Topics included a review of the Governor's proposed Executive Budget, a review of the tax cap calculation, and a review of the UPK program. Additional workshops are scheduled for Tuesday, March 5 and Tuesday, April 9, 2024. A Public Hearing on the Budget will be held Tuesday, May 7, 2024, at 7 p.m. The Budget Vote will take place from 7 a.m. - 9 p.m. on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 in the Multipurpose Room. More information on the 2024-2025 budget will be provided in the April Community Newsletter. Updated information can also be found on the district website, under the Budget section (https://erschools.org/district/budget/2024-2025_budget). If you have any questions relating to the school budget, please reach out to ER Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, Staci SanSoucie at staci.sansoucie@erschools.org or (585) 248-6308.

National Honor Society Welcomes New Inductees

New members were inducted into the East Rochester National Honor Society on Thursday, November 16, 2023. Selection into the National Honor Society is based on four qualities: scholarship, leadership, service and character. Students selected must demonstrate outstanding performance in all four areas. High school students are eligible for induction into Honor Society if they have maintained an overall academic average of at least 90%.

Congratulations to the new National Honor Society Inductees: Kayla Blackman, Evan Boldt, Treasure Chambers, Morgan DeLooze, Benjamin Madison, Benjamin Newman, Gregory Pita, Nia J. Robinson, Domenic Romach, Chloe Shanley, and Eli Tanner.



The East Rochester National Honor Society's new and existing members

East Rochester Winter Athletic 2023-2024 Highlights

East Rochester Athletics has had a great start to the Winter Season. The Bombers Wrestling Team are the Wayne-Finger Lakes Central Division Champions for 2023-2024. In addition to the team success on the mats, 8th Grader Talulah Williams Johnson has qualified for the 2024 NYS Girls Wrestling State Championship as the number one qualifier in Section V.

Both our girls and boys basketball teams are having great seasons and we look forward to upcoming sectional play. Our indoor track and cheer teams have had successful winter seasons up to this point as well.

Good luck to all ER athletes as they complete in the 2023-2024 Winter Sports Season. Thank you to the coaches, athletes, game day staff and boosters that have helped make the ER Winter Sports season a massive success thus far!



Varsity Girls Basketball Team



Daryl Pierson Duals Hosted by East Rochester Wrestling

On Saturday January 13, East Rochester Wrestling once again hosted the Daryl Pierson Duals. The Duals are hosted in memory of Police Officer and ER Graduate Daryl Pierson who tragically lost his life in the line of duty on September 3, 2014. The event started with a beautiful performance of the National Anthem by Sophomore Wrestler Addison Forrest. We were pleased to have the Rochester Tactical Unit Honor Guard present the colors for the moment of silence and national anthem. For the first time in the 10 year history of the Pierson Duals, ER went 5-0 and were named the 2024 Daryl Pierson Duals tournament champions.

East Rochester Students Perform at NYSSMA Winter Conference and Downtown for the Holidays

The East Rochester Union Free School District High School Music Department had some wonderful student performance opportunities. Under the leadership of Mark Gowman with assistance from Noah Wallace and Leanne Zito, our percussion and Róisín Dubh ensembles recently performed at the NYSSMA Winter Conference. The invitation to perform came through a recorded performance audition in the spring, and East Rochester represents two out of just 11 school ensembles selected from across New York State to perform at this year's conference. In addition, our Jazz band and Select Choir had the opportunity to perform for a Holiday Performance at the Monroe County Building in downtown Rochester.



ERHS Select Choir and Jazz Band



ERHS Percussion Ensemble



ER's Irish music ensemble Róisín Dubh

MLA Performs Madagascar the Musical

This January, the MLA Drama Club performed Madagascar the Musical! Congratulations to our MLA students for their great performances of Madagascar on Jan. 12 and 13. Thank you to our students, staff, and families for all of your efforts in making this production a success! Also, a very special thank you to the directors Mykel Sapienza and Saige Horvath.



East Rochester Art in Nazareth University's Shared Spaces Show

The East Rochester Art Department is participating in Nazareth University's Shared Spaces 2024: The High School Art Teacher and Student Show. Many art teachers and students from Monroe County and beyond will be showing their artwork side by side at the University Gallery from Feb. 9 through March 10. Eliza Page, 10th grade, Alina Blaga, 11th grade, and Maya DiPane, 12th grade have been selected to showcase their artwork alongside teachers Kate D'Onofrio-McIndoe, Jack Golden and Sulyn Bennett-Hennessey (EMCC). The opening reception was Feb. 9 from 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.



The Nazareth University Art and Design Department presents
Shared Spaces 2024: The High School Art Teacher and Student Show

February 9 - March 10

Reception: February 9, 5 - 7pm

Amy Oliveri & Cameron Conheady	Tom Galambos & Mitch Schottland
Sara Rogers & Katie Chapados	Kelley Allen & Gracie Jones
Matthew Naber & Tyler Thomas	Michelle Patterson & Lilyan King
Lorin Easton & Keira Tsang	Kylie Dahlberg & Ava Benoit
Mandi Antonucci & Kayla Richenberg	Anna Sprague & Meera Renjen
Mackenzie Galusha & Owen Wittmeyer	Anne Punzi & Chloe Smits
Katie Cole Moley & Hannah Marangola	Chris Pelletier & Anna Turley
Sarah Jessu & Marta Ross	Beth Quattrocchi & Max Izzo
Jennilyn Pickering & Paix Day-Magallon	Sarah Zakalik & Lainy Miccoli
Jessica Ophardt & Tess Neilans	Maribeth Curran & Aadil Ahmed
Mary Warth & Bryanna Herring	Amy Palermo & Kate Neufeglis
Vicki McArdle & Lily Clement	Amanda Measer & Teah Silliman
Jordyn Wolcott & Azura Jones	Kat Cramer & Julia Gamet
Jonathan Woodard & Arlo Sushko	Adam Gurselin & Charlie Haynes
Kelly Bosco & Sydney Goettel	Gregory Lawson & Uruba Harris
Geoffrey Morgan & Jaheem Barnes	Gemine Glavich-Hawkins & Grey Jenkins
Tim Graham & Jayla Rosario	Jack A. Latorre & Taylor Markham
Jack Golden & Alina Blaga	Danielle Zatkowsky & Alexandra Zilist
Kate D'Onofrio-McIndoe & Eliza Page	Francella Smith & Sophie Metchick
Katie Donlon & Jal'Quell Madison	Anna Mack & Amir Williams
Sulyn Bennett-Hennessey & Maya DiPane	Christie Gordon & Christina Hannan
Michael Bailey & Gianna Torres	Leah Sarneckis & Meredith Hogan
Sarah Beehler & Gretchen Claroc	Andy Reddout & Alexa Walther
James Zegar & Kiran Ray	Dave Denner & Analle VanMannen
Amanda Gilbert & Kendall Green	Adam Spector & Zoe Vandenberg
Virginia Malone & Jasper Wolf	Shawn Duckworth & Lizzie Engle
Laurie Warren & Charlize Osbourne	Cate Zalewski & Gianna Gallo
John Brien & May Chadwick	Cheryl Simon & Corintha Griffith
Elissa DeChick & Selena Sanchez	Todd Stahl & Gweneth Tetzlitz
Emily Patton & Emonnie Weaver	Cathy Morrill & Jessica Van Wichen
Christine Rhodes & Daphne Hix	Kat Harrison & Carson Hogan
Aydin Ture & Phn Clinton	Valerie Savage & Sienna Mekker
Greg Lendack & Andy Magioncalda	Sarah Speer & MS

GALLERY HOURS: Sunday 12 - 5pm, Monday - Closed,
Tuesday - Thursday 12 - 5pm, Friday - Saturday 12 - 5pm

Arts Center Gallery, Nazareth University Arts Center,
4245 East Ave, Rochester, NY 14618

ER HS Drama Presents: The Little Mermaid

We are excited to announce the upcoming East Rochester High School spring production of the Little Mermaid! Mark your calendars for three performances: March 21, 22, and 23.

If you are interested in dinner and a show, join us for the Thursday, March 21 at 6:30 p.m. performance. Dinner will be at 5 p.m. Presale ticket information for the dinner will be available soon.

Additionally, you can see the show on Friday, March 22 and Saturday, March 23 at 7 p.m. All tickets are \$5.00 and available at the door.



Fifth Graders Meet Special Guests During The Legacy Project

Fifth graders have had the opportunity to meet some interesting guests this school year. The fifth grade's ongoing Legacy Project is a final end of the year project that brings together everything they have learned this school year.

The goal of this project is to connect reading and writing to explore self, community, making change and incorporating that learning to connect to students' culture. As a part of that work, fifth grade teacher Barb Cira-Regan has invited special guests, who are making an impact in our ER community and beyond, into East Rochester Union Free School District from whom students can learn.

"The Legacy Project is intended to be our final project for fifth graders in which they will bring together the learning and exploration of self and community," Barb Cira-Regan said. "The thought is that students will work in groups to come up with a change they would like to make in our school (such as a club, or change to lunches, or community garden, even simply making our school a kinder place to be, etc.) and do the research and work to make it something that could actually be done. The hope is that all students will begin to see themselves as agents of change and some groups may actually institute a change (and therefore leave a legacy) by creating something new or changing something that isn't working in our elementary school before they move on to the MLA."

One presentation students attended was from Alexa Zappia where she talked about her career journey. Alexa Zappia is from Buffalo and attended college at St. John Fisher University. She was a student teacher at East Rochester Union Free



School District, but ended up going into producing for television.

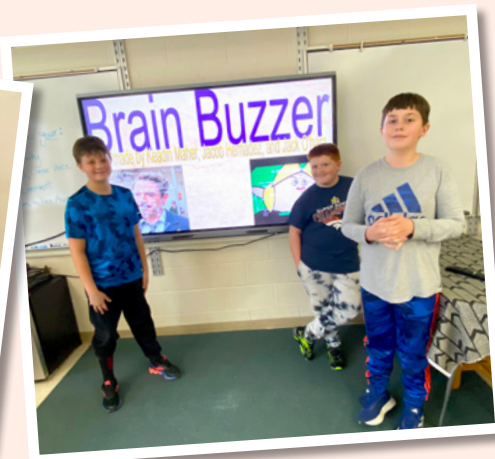
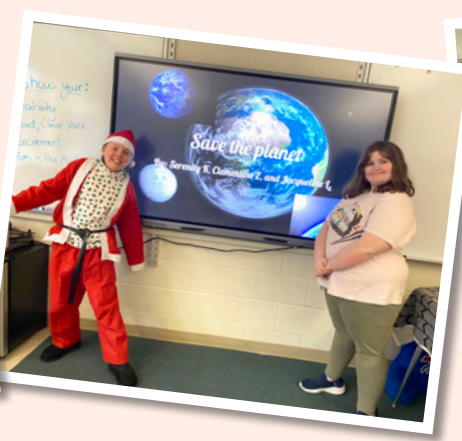
Alexa has been a producer on the following shows: Don't Forget the Lyrics, The Hustler, Married at First Sight, Love for the Ages, The One That Got Away, Worst Cooks in America, Big Brother Canada, The Bachelor, Supermarket Sweep, Claim to Fame, Property Brothers, The Julia Child Challenge, Asking for a Friend, and Love Is Blind. She has worked with many different networks, including: FOX, TLC, HGTV, Lifetime, Netflix, Peacock, ABC, Food Network, Prime Video, and more.

Additionally, Alexa founded a nonprofit called Rocks of Unity which is a foundation focused on using dialogue and art to educate, empower, and advocate through educational workshops and civic outreach. The nonprofit reaches 25 different countries and 35 different states.

After learning about Alexa's work and the impact she is trying to make in the world, Mrs. Cira-Regan's class was inspired to create their own positive values-based reality shows. The students then "pitched" their ideas to their peers. This is just one part of the ongoing Legacy Project, engaging our 5th graders this year in reading, writing, and social emotional learning.

"Even if their idea doesn't become a reality, the idea is to give students a voice and show them that they can have an impact on the world around them in big or small ways, no matter what age they are," Cira-Regan said.

We can't wait to see the continued lessons our fifth graders learn and their end of the year Legacy Projects.



East Rochester Holds Veterans' Day Assembly to Honor Local Veterans



East Rochester Elementary held their annual Veterans' Day Assembly on Nov. 9 to recognize and thank our local Veterans for their service. With close to 50 veterans in attendance the guest speaker, a Rochester area veterans, spoke to the audience about her experience before and after her deployment. She spoke about K9 for Warriors, which is an organization that is a leading provider in our country for trained service dogs. Their purpose is to help those suffering from PTSD and other traumas that military veterans may face. The students welcomed and sat with their family members who had served. Thank you to Pam Larsen for your dedication to setting this assembly up and veterans, we cannot express enough how thankful we are for your service!



ERPTO Reminders

- Please join us for the first annual ER March Madness Basketball game of elementary staff/faculty vs. secondary on Tuesday, March 5 from 3 p.m. - 5 p.m.
- Don't forget to start saving your loose change as our coin wars fundraiser will be back again in late March
- We have a date change for an upcoming spring event. **Please note that the Fairytale Ball will be held on April 20, 2024.**

ERPTO
East Rochester Parent Teacher Organization

PARENT - TEACHER - STUDENT - COMMUNITY



Students Enjoy Educational Trip to Washington D.C.

A small, but mighty group of students from the Class of 2025 set out for Washington D.C. during Veterans' Day weekend. On the trip, students visited a number of interesting sites including: George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate, the Washington Monument, and a tour of the Vietnam/Lincoln/MLK Jr. Memorials. The trip was a success and the students had a wonderful time experiencing D.C.



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School District**

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ERUFSD Universal Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Upcoming Registration

The East Rochester Union Free School District is enrolling children in Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) and Kindergarten programs for the 2024-2025 school year.

Children born between December 2, 2019, and December 1, 2020, are eligible for the UPK program. UPK registration will run from February 1, 2024, to March 15, 2024.

Children born between December 2, 2018, and December 1, 2019, are eligible for the Young Kindergarten and Kindergarten program. The Kindergarten registration process begins on March 1, 2024, and ends on March 29, 2024.

The East Rochester Union Free School District also offers a full-day Young Kindergarten Program for students who are young at the grade level.

Kindergarten registration packets will be sent home with families at the end of February. Information regarding the registration process will be included in the mailing. Families can return the packets by

mail, to the school's single point of entry, or in the black mailbox outside the District Office.

Families will need to provide proof of residency, immunization and health records, as well as proof of each child's age. If you have any questions or need additional support with the registration process, please contact the District Registrar, Michele Griffith, at (585) 248-6306 or via email at er.registrar@erschools.org.

All students currently enrolled in UPK at East Rochester ARE REQUIRED to register for Kindergarten. If you have not received a registration packet or if your child will NOT be attending ER schools, please email the District Registrar at er.registrar@erschools.org. **In addition, parents of all young District residents are asked to email the District Registrar to make sure your child is on our census, even if you don't plan to enroll them in UPK or Kindergarten for the 2024-25 school year.**

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connected!



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