



*Striving for Excellence*  
**Canastota**

Central School District • 120 Roberts Street, Canastota, NY 13032 • [www.canastotacsd.org](http://www.canastotacsd.org)

## Canastota Hosts Regional Special Olympics

More than 300 student-athletes from across the region ran, jumped and threw their way through this year's Special Olympics Autumn Games, held October 9 in the Canastota athletic complex. The games, in their 9th year, featured a variety of track and field events, including shot put, softball toss, long jump, and running races as well as Adaptive Games for students with additional needs.

The Games began with the traditional Parade of Athletes, with students walking in by school delegation. The CHS Marching Band and Color Guard led the parade and the Select Choir led the National Anthem. Superintendent Shawn Bissetta shared welcome remarks, and Pastor Tony Paredes of South Bay Chapel led the invocation.

Among the participating athletes were 39 from Canastota, all of whom wore bright yellow team shirts. Teachers Brian Dwyer and Luray Moshier organized 76 student volunteers in grades 8-12 who walked athletes to events, organized kickball and soccer for down times, timed races, measured throws and jumps, and passed out lunches!



## A Message From The Superintendent

The new year is off to a terrific start, and the school is calendar filled with a variety of activities keeping students, staff and families extremely busy. With the opening of school behind us, it's now a perfect time to revisit the goals and priorities we established for the 2019-20 academic year.

I would like to reiterate an important point outlined in the summer newsletter – our district goal is to be the premier district in our region in terms of providing opportunities for students while being respectful of our taxpayers. How do we accomplish this task? Over the summer, I alluded to three primary concepts that would shape our work in the new year: a shared purpose and commitment to excellence; frequent and substantive communication/collaboration; and hard work and a shared sense of accountability to each other.

There are several district initiatives underway that specifically address these principles:

At the October 8th Board of Education meeting, the district paved the way for a December 5th capital project referendum. In the coming weeks, the district will be hosting numerous informational sessions outlining the scope and rationale of this important project. Additionally, we will be distributing a variety of information

## Building Excellence: A Plan to Invest in Our Schools

The Canastota school district is embarking on a facilities improvement project to address many of our buildings' long-overdue safety and infrastructure needs. The *Building Excellence* project will include replacing and updating a significant number of mechanical, electrical and plumbing items, including boilers, pipes, wiring, air handling units, bathrooms, roofing and more at all four of our schools and the transportation building.

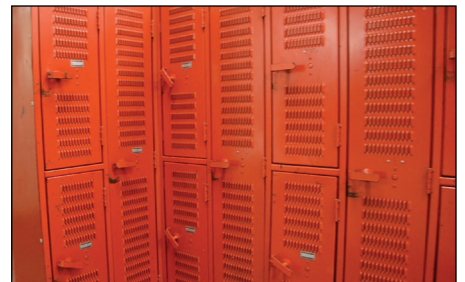
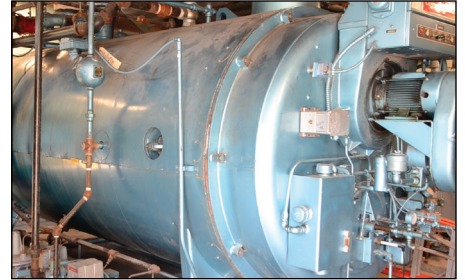
Included in this proposal are several major security and safety upgrades, such as secure entry vestibules in each school and repairs to sidewalks, driveways and parking lots across the district.

This proposal will also allow us the opportunity to install an all-weather athletic field to benefit both our athletics and physical education programs and serve as another point of pride for the Canastota community.

The total project cost is \$25.89 million, and 87% of eligible expenses will be covered by State Aid. Another \$3.2 million will be covered through our Capital Reserve Fund. Local taxpayers will be asked to invest about \$3.4 million over 15 years to complete this work, which ranges from about \$10-\$28 per year on a \$100,000 home.

**Residents will be asked to vote on December 5, 2019 from 12 noon to 9 pm at Roberts Street Elementary School and South Side Elementary School. A public hearing is scheduled for November 21 at 6:30 pm.**

More information is available on our website, and community members can attend a number of upcoming forums in the coming weeks to ask questions, share their concerns and learn as much as they can about our long-term investment in our schools.



## Seminar Focuses on Positive Choices

The Class of 2023 took a day out of their new high school schedules to learn more about positive self-image and making good choices during this year's Freshman Seminar. The annual event helps provide Canastota 9th graders with a safe place to discuss self-confidence, self-respect, self-esteem, and in the importance of "investing" in oneself. CHS staff members shared stories that emphasized the importance of making good choices in high school and what it means to become a young adult.

Students said they were motivated and inspired by day, sharing comments like "You never know someone else's story" and "It changed me as a person."

Thanks to the Madison County Youth Bureau for leading team-building activities, and to Trooper DeRochie and Investigator Cook from NYS for talking about social media safety. And a special thanks to teachers Lisa Visalli and Kelley Brenon for coordinating such a great day for our freshmen.

# Teacher Supports Literacy, Technology



Veteran elementary school teacher Cecile Retrosi will be on special assignment this year for a one-year districtwide position supporting her colleagues with literacy and technology.

In her dual role as a K-6 Literacy Coach and a K-12 Technology Coach, Ms. Retrosi will work with teachers in all buildings to support the district's goals of adding new elements to the elementary ELA curriculum and infusing technology into the classroom to enhance student learning, achievement and engagement.

"Teaching is incredibly difficult and demanding, and I'm excited to be able to work with teachers on their journey," she said. "I want to be able to support them every step of the way."

As a literacy coach, Ms. Retrosi will work with teachers on balanced literacy, including Lucy Calkins' Units of Study in writing as well as guided and shared reading. She will also support literacy professional development with literacy consultant Olivia Wahl, who has worked with Canastota for several years.

As a technology coach, she will support the implementation of Raider 1:1, which provides a Chromebook to each student in grades 2-12 and shared devices for K-1. She will also help teachers effectively implement technology with students. Over the summer, she led the district's Summer Technology Institute for 15 teachers in grades 4, 7 and 8, discussing ways to use instructional technology in more meaningful ways.

"It's important to think about teaching and learning differently," she said. "We want kids to think about not just consuming information but taking information and creating something with it and making learning meaningful."

The district is utilizing a state School Improvement Grant (SIG) to support the position, Deputy Superintendent Jason Mitchell said. SIG funds help schools and districts identified as in need of improvement due to state assessment results. Mr. Mitchell said the district's data indicates students struggle with reading and writing, and Ms. Retrosi's work is intended to address those gaps.

"Ultimately, our goal is to see improved student performance in reading and writing and, eventually, on state assessments," he said.

# American Legion Donates School Supplies



A big thank you to the American Legion Post 140 in Canastota for conducting their annual school supplies drive at RSES. Your support of our students is appreciated!

## WELCOME TO 'STOTA!

We have 16 new staff members joining the Canastota team this year. If you see them, say hi!

### Junior-Senior High School

Rebecca Borquist - Social Studies  
Kaylee Napolitano - Guidance Counselor

### Peterboro Street ES

Rebekah Swart - 1st grade  
Meghann Woodruff - Elementary Music (shared between all elementary schools)  
Sue Miller - Pre-k  
Stephanie Emmerich - Pre-k aide

### Roberts Street ES

Kristen Zlatniski - 6th grade

### South Side ES

Robert Taube - Principal  
Rebecca Emmerich - 2nd grade special education

### Buildings and Grounds

Victoria Truax - PSES cleaner  
Tim Meyers - Maintenance Worker  
Cory Robertson - RSES cleaner

### Transportation

Gene Stankivitz - Driver  
Bob Hale - Driver

### District Office

Nick Panuccio - School Business Leader  
Karen Henner - Administrative Intern

## Stepping Stones Reinforces Skills

About 70 students in K-3 participated in this summer's four-week Stepping Stones program, held at RSES. The summer program, coordinated through MOBOCES, offers students fun, hands-on, interdisciplinary activities to help reinforce both academic and social skills.

Throughout the summer, teachers often partnered with different grade levels for lessons, program coordinator Sean Dwyer said. That provided younger students with an opportunity to learn from older peers and gain exposure to next year's curriculum; and it allowed older students to help teach content, practice their own skills, and help model positive behavior.

The program's timing coincided with the NYSED Summer Meals program, which provided free breakfast and lunch to all children under 18.

Thanks to our Stepping Stones teachers for another great summer: Susan Maison, Tammy Moran, Stephany Scalzo, Jennifer Nolan, Caitlin Brewster, Kim Pierce, Courtney Giufre, Danielle Birkhead, Leah Turner and Daphne Tully.



## District Joins National Harvard Study

The Canastota school district is one of just 30 in New York selected to participate in a nationally-funded five-year study on chronic absenteeism, college readiness and college enrollment in rural schools. The study, funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, is an initiative of the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University.

Participating districts join the National Center for Rural Education Research Networks (NCRERN) and utilize evidence-based strategies to address the three key focus areas. This include identifying students at risk for chronic absenteeism and being unprepared for college. Districts share with each other their successes and challenges to help the Center guide future work on school improvement.

Districts from New York and Ohio were selected based on their strategic goals, capacity to use data, commitment to continuous improvement and their geographic distribution. Canastota is the only participating district from Madison County.

Deputy Superintendent Jason Mitchell said the district's advisory team had already identified attendance and college/career readiness as areas of focus, so applying for this study fit well with work already happening in Canastota.

"We are excited about being part of a network of similar schools working together and with Harvard to explore and implement research-based strategies to improve our students' attendance, probability to graduate and their college and/or career readiness," he said. "We are confident that this process will lead to positive changes for the district and our students."

## Hale Helps NYS FFA During State Fair

Senior Kyle Hale, president of the CHS chapter of FFA, joined his FFA colleagues from across the state for Maple Day at The Great New York State Fair in August. Regional, state and chapter leaders manned tables throughout the fair's run to share information about FFA's work teaching youth about agriculture and leadership.

On Maple Day, NYS FFA unveiled its new mobile maple exhibit, which will tour the state this fall. Kyle helped demonstrate the exhibit's evaporator, used in the maple production process, and talked with legislators and state officials about the importance of FFA's work and mission.



# OUR SUMMER

## Teachers Work On School Improvement Efforts

RSES teachers worked this summer to develop their School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP), which will serve as the framework for their school improvement efforts over the next year.

The SCEP is part of NYSED's designation of RSES as a Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) school, meaning it did not meet one or more accountability factors under ESSA. The creation of the SCEP provides the school with an opportunity to develop a system of evidence-based strategies to improve educational equity and student achievement.

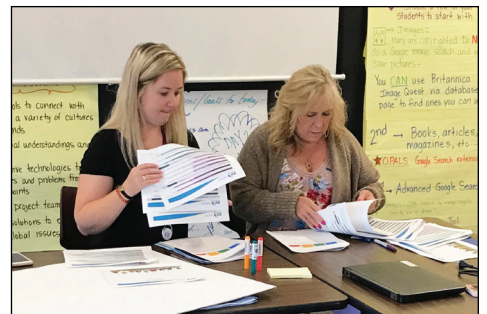
Over the course of a week in July, RSES teachers held full-day intensive meetings to develop a three-year strategic action plan. The plan's key goals are to increase student engagement, stabilize student attendance, and cultivate community and parent involvement.

"The entire RSES staff deserves a tremendous amount of credit and recognition for their attention to detail and dedication to help move Roberts Street forward toward comprehensive improvement," Principal Mike Faustino said.

During their planning meetings, teachers worked with Amy Konz, Regional Data Leader from the Mohawk Regional Information Center (MORIC), to examine the school's ESSA data. These included performance and participation in state 3-8 ELA and math assessments as well as student growth, chronic absenteeism, parent engagement and other markers NYSED considers under ESSA. Konz led whole group conversation about the school's data and the overall plan they are creating, then worked with small groups to develop targeted goals that will help the school move toward a "good standing" designation.

School and district leaders utilized the teachers' work during the remainder of the summer to complete a formal plan of action. The school submitted its SCEP document to NYSED on August 30 and will await feedback and guidance from state education leaders.

The RSES planning sessions were just one piece of the district's summer work. Teachers from PSES up through the high school participated in a variety of professional development programs to improve their teaching practices, refine their curriculum, and learn new student engagement strategies. These include teachers working with literacy expert Olivia Wahl on writing instruction; working with regional math specialist Jody Popple from MOBOCES on curriculum writing for math; participating in a regional conference on building relationships and addressing challenging behaviors; learning about NYS Next Generation Learning Standards; and attending a summer technology institute led by Technology and Literacy Coach Cecile Retrosi.



## District Progressing On Smart Schools Upgrades

The Technology and Facilities teams made significant strides on the district's \$1.36 million state-funded Smart Schools project. Smart Schools funding is designated for school security, network infrastructure and learning technology.

The project scope includes: replacing analog clocks and PA systems with an emergency notification system that has visual strobe and digital messaging capabilities in all classrooms of all buildings; replacing and upgrading security cameras at the Albanese Complex and installing cameras at PSES and SSES; and upgrading wifi access and increasing coverage to every instructional space in all buildings.

## WALL OF DISTINCTION 2019 INDUCTEES



Congratulations to our 2019 Canastota Wall of Distinction inductees: Lorraine Bruno Arsenault, Class of 1966; Tracey Carpenter Burkey, Class of 1981; Michael J. Clarke, Class of 1981; Douglas M. Gustin, Class of 1975; Douglas R. Holdridge, Class of 1970 and Gregory Joseph Wright, Class of 1978.

The Wall of Distinction honors Canastota graduates who have made outstanding contributions in areas such as profession, athletics, community service, business, religion and arts. The Wall of Distinction serves as a vision and source of pride for our community and our student body. Nominees must have graduated at least 10 years ago to be considered.

This year's induction banquet was held on October 19 at Theodore's. Stephen Tornatore, the Wall of Distinction Chairperson, emceed the event; Peter Finocchiaro delivered the welcome address; Canastota Superintendent Shawn Bissetta introduced the Board of Education; and Rev. William Wilcox gave an invocation and benediction. Mr. Bissetta and Mr. Tornatore presented the induction awards.

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## Superintendent's Message

regarding the project through print and electronic channels. It is imperative that the district demonstrate a commitment to the long-term maintenance of our schools' infrastructure. The proposed scope of work - with heavy emphasis on student security, building safety and basic infrastructure needs such as roofs and plumbing - is evidence that we take very seriously our responsibility to ensure the long-term interests of the district and community. Please join us at an upcoming sessions to learn more about what the project entails.

I would also like to draw your attention to our weekly *community engagement meetings*. Since mid-July, the district has been hosting meetings every Wednesday morning at 8:30 am in the high school. The purpose of these meetings is to bring together a diverse and dynamic group of community members committed to making Canastota the very best it can be. Staff members, business leaders and community organization representatives have come together not only to share ideas, but to create a specific action plan that will serve to benefit the entire community. If you are interested in participating in this exciting initiative, please contact me or simply join us at one of the meetings.



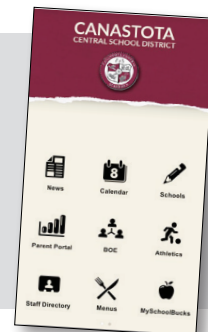
Our school, like many others around the state, faces significant challenges. The examples cited above are just two of the many ways the district is tackling these challenges directly. Our focus will continue to be on ensuring that basic accountability structures are in place throughout all layers of the district – consistent and coordinated operation is a must to get to where we need to be. In terms of student performance, operational efficiency and opportunities for continuous improvement, we will continue to focus on the basics. We are not concerned with flash-in-the-pan, flavor-of-the-month answers to the challenges that confront us. The key to our success will be sustained attention to consistency, hard work and a commitment to the implementation of proven, research-based practices. Nothing fancy, but undeniably effective. I look forward to updating you as we move full-speed ahead on this important mission.

Sincerely,

Shawn Bissetta, Superintendent

### DOWNLOAD OUR MOBILE APP

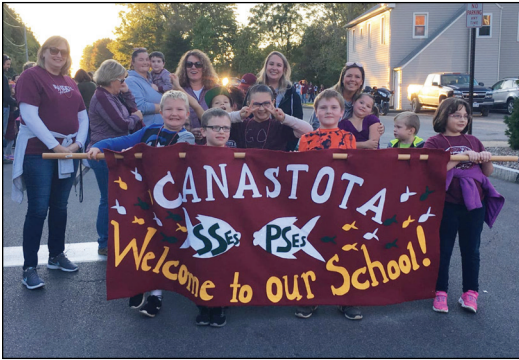
Canastota's new mobile app is available in the Apple and Android stores. The free app gives users quick access to the most popular information from our website. Users can also customize the app to receive news, building and School Messenger alerts from the district.



# HOMECOMING FESTIVITIES

Thank you to Denise Whalen, Jackie Hood, Stan Congden, Chris Clancy, South Side ES & MOBOCES for these photos!

## Parade



Students, staff and parents from PSES and SSES march in the Homecoming Parade.

## 2019 Homecoming Court



Brandon Ball, Isabella Barry, Alexandra Campbell, Carly Cashel, Skyler Donley, Nick Engle, Nick Fox, Brett Gustin, Andrew Marshall, Grace Morris, Abby O'Connell, Greg Olden, Payten Shirley, Dylan VanValkenburgh, Nick Weber and Valona Whitehead.

## Football Game



Raiders beat Mt. Markham by 56-0.

## Pep Rally



# district

## administration

**Mr. Shawn Bissetta**  
Superintendent

**Mr. Jason Mitchell**  
Deputy Superintendent

**Mr. Christopher Clancy**  
Assistant Superintendent for  
Special Education, RTI &  
Technology

**Mr. Nicholas Panuccio Jr.**  
School Business Leader

**Mr. Jay Altobello**  
Jr./Sr. High School Principal

**Mr. Andrew Kennedy**  
Jr./Sr. High School  
Assistant Principal

**Mr. Stanley Congden**  
Athletic Director & Jr./Sr. High  
School Assistant Principal

**Mr. Michael Faustino**  
Roberts Street Elementary  
School Principal

**Ms. Jennifer Carnahan**  
Peterboro Street Elementary  
School Principal

**Mr. Robert Taube**  
South Side Elementary  
School Principal

**Ms. Cynthia Clark**  
Transportation Supervisor

**Mr. Nick Campbell**  
Facilities Leader



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## History Class Talks With Alumna

U.S. History students in Mrs. Visalli's class at JSHS had an exciting opportunity to videoconference with Canastota alumna Dominique Cesario, who is now a full-time student at SUNY Geneseo! Dominique is spending this semester studying abroad in South Korea, and she answered students' questions about culture, geography, her personal travels and life in college.



In true Raider spirit, Dominique is planning to climb Machu Picchu in Peru this spring and is fundraising for her climb on behalf of the The Andrew McDonough B+ Foundation, a childhood cancer charity.

## RSES Joins Eat Smart NY Program

RSES is partnering with Cornell Cooperative Extension's Eat Smart New York program this year to raise awareness among students about healthy eating and lifestyle choices. Students are using the CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health) curriculum, which helps them identify healthy foods and encourages daily physical activity. Sixth graders are also participating in an afterschool cooking program called Cooking Matters for Teens.



### Canastota CSD

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