



WINTER 2023 NEWSLETTER

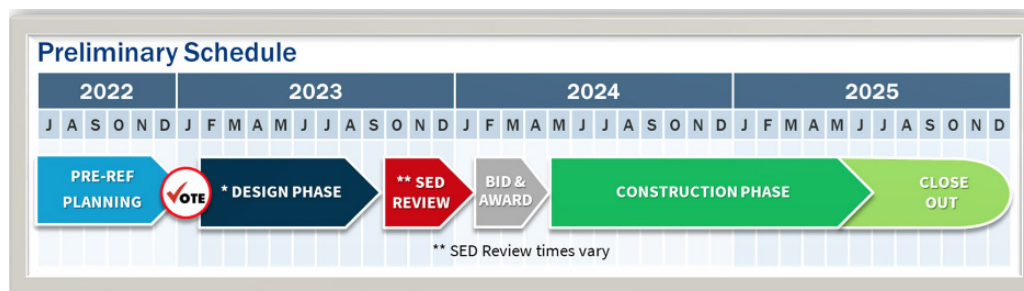
A Message From The Superintendent



Dear Cato-Meridian School Community,

As a school district, we are committed to keeping our community informed. This quarterly newsletter publication is one way we share information. Other forms of communication for our school district include our Website, Facebook Page, various Twitter accounts, YouTube channel and our newest tool, ParentSquare. We hope you enjoy this edition of our Newsletter.

This is a very exciting time for our school district. We can't thank you enough for approving our next capital improvement project. Since voter approval in January, we have been working with our Architects, Project Managers, Financial, and Facilities Teams to further plan for our capital improvements. The detailed design work will be completed by September of 2023. We estimate New York State Education Department approval by January of 2024. We will ask for contractor bids in March of 2024. Construction will begin in the Spring of 2024. Our project will be completed by late Fall of 2025. Yes, that is two years of ongoing construction to both the Elementary and Jr.-Sr. High School. Although two years of construction can be inconvenient, the enhancements and improvements will be fantastic for our students for years to come.



Lastly, we would like everyone to know we will be updating our elementary playground. Thank you to our families who took the time to provide feedback on our survey. The new playground will be handicapped accessible, as well as replacing our playground equipment. Construction for our new playground will be completed by late fall of 2023.

We hope you enjoy this edition of our Newsletter. It is a great time to be a Blue Devil!

Until Next Time,

Sincerely,

Dr. Terry L. Ward
Superintendent

IN THIS EDITION:

Page 2

Excitement in the Elementary

Page 3

Jr.-Sr. High School Happenings

Page 4

Students Recognized for CNY Scholastic Art Awards

Page 5

*Business Office Update
Curriculum Update*

Page 6

Bright Futures

Page 7

Winter Sports Snapshots

Page 8

Upcoming Events

SMALL COMMUNITY, BIG IMPACT

EXCITEMENT IN THE *Elementary*



This year, we have made a concerted effort to reconnect with our families as we had prior to the pandemic. In doing so, we have created a Family Engagement Committee which regularly meets to plan monthly activities. We kicked off the school year with a PTO Back to School BBQ. We then welcomed families at our

Open House and hosted a Read Aloud Night in October. November brought many parents/guardians for conferences with their teachers and a very well attended Science Fair at the end of the month. Music filled our auditorium with concerts in December and many shoppers attended the annual PTO Christmas Bazaar. The new year rolled in with our second roller skating event and a multicultural evening.

As we move into the spring, we will be co-hosting an Easter Egg Hunt with the PTO on March 31. (There will not be a PTO Movie Night on March 24 as previously scheduled.) On April 13, our halls will be filled

with many student projects, including the traditional sixth grade Egyptian projects. On May 4 & 5, we are excited to bring back Special Persons' Day! Due to our large enrollment, we will be splitting the day by grade levels with PK-2 on May 4 and grades 3-6 on May 5. More details to follow in April. Then June will bring us Field Days, Kindergarten Celebration, Sixth Grade Graduation and Moving Up Day!

We are thrilled to have families join us again in person and re-open our doors to volunteers and guests. If you would like to be a classroom volunteer, please contact our main office for an application. Volunteers at events such as roller skating and field days do not need to complete an application. As always, please contact the main office of your child's teacher with any questions. We value your input and appreciate your support!

Mrs. Danielle Mahoney
CMES Principal



Science Fair



Winter Concert



Multicultural Evening



Roller Skating



JR.-SR. HIGH SCHOOL *Happenings*



When I walked through the doors of the Cato-Meridian Jr.-Sr. High School in July, I knew that I was right where I belonged. Being a part of the C-M school community has been such a joy and I feel incredibly lucky everyday to be a leader in this school district.

Cato-Meridian has a sense of pride and family values that has created a community of learners. Our students are invested in their learning and preparing for their lives outside of high school. Strong academics and hard work is at the core of every student and teacher. This quarter we celebrated 192 students who achieved honor roll status, 50% of our students have averages above 85%. Students who may

not have met the honor roll threshold continue to improve upon their studies and are engaging in interventions to support their struggles. As a team, we continue to encourage independence as well as being self motivated to succeed.

Success is also being demonstrated in our extra curricular activities. Our winter athletes have had numerous wins and the team spirit is at an all time high. Our spectators are plentiful and we have a large number of students participating in athletics. FFA club has been busy attending local conferences and competing in various competitions. They are looking forward to attending the state conference in May. Student council actively meets and provides fun offerings for our students. They celebrated the holidays by

bringing back their very popular kids night in. Our elementary friends had a blast engaging in a variety of fun activities with our big kids. Our upcoming musical performers have been spending their after school hours and Saturdays prepping for the March performance. Grease is sure to be a hit that you won't want to miss.

I could go on and on about how proud I am being a principal at Cato-Meridian School. I have a tremendous student body, staff, leadership and families. Thank you for all you do to support your child's education. Looking forward to a great spring full of fun events and gearing up for the class of 2023 to take the stage.

Yours in education,

Ms. Jennifer Kelly
Junior-Senior High School Principal



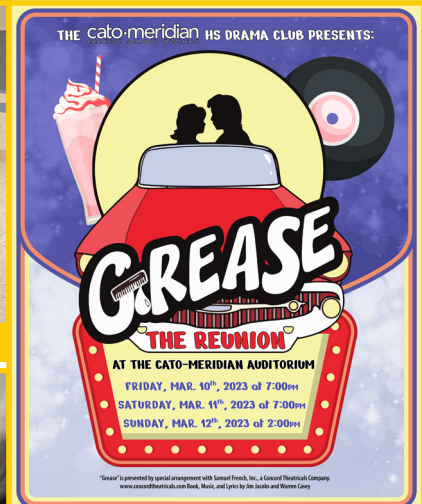
FFA Leadership Development Event



Student Council Valentine's Day Sale



Root Beer Float Celebration for Honor Roll Students



Cato-Meridian Students Thrilled to be Recognized for CNY Scholastic Art Awards

Cato-Meridian Junior-Senior High School students Mallory Gardner and Alexia Sherwood recently received honors for their artwork in the 2023 CNY Scholastic Art Awards. In total, over 4,000 pieces throughout the region were submitted, and just over 1,100 pieces received Gold Key, Silver Key, or honorable mention awards.

Over the years, art has held a special place in these Cato-Meridian students' hearts.

Gardner, a ninth-grade student, became more interested in art a few years ago during the height of COVID-19. She found herself with a lot of spare time and concentrated on drawing.

"I like working with a pencil," Gardner said. "There are so many things you can do with it. You can blend, you can go harder to make the lines darker. . . there are so many different gradients."

Gardner received an honorable mention award for her piece, "The Spectre." She explained that the inspiration for the piece came from a life and death concept in class, as she began to

sketch a deer skull. The award came as a pleasant surprise to her.

"I thought it was something I would just keep to myself, but I was happy because I really enjoy art. It's like an escape for me. It relaxes me. It's something that I'm proud of."

Sherwood, a tenth-grade student, said she did some form of artwork with her father every night as a child. She continued to draw and paint over the years.

"I think it started in third grade, when I started having actual 'stuff' to draw, and then it just built up over time," Sherwood said.

Sherwood received a Gold Key for her drawing, "My Submerged Mind," and a Silver Key for her photo, "Drawing at Dawn." She also received honorable mention awards for her drawing, "Self Identity" and photo, "Blessed."

Sherwood said she was nervous to submit her pieces at first, but it was nice to see her hard work rewarded.

"I was excited to tell my family and they were very, very proud of me," she said. "I've done art contests in the past and won those, but they were mainly just coloring. This one was a big one for me!"

Sherwood's passion shines through in her YouTube channel, The Everything Art. On her channel, she reviews art supplies, shows off her projects, and discusses other art-related content.

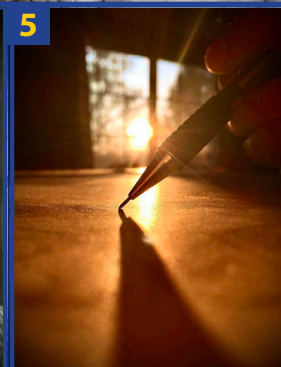
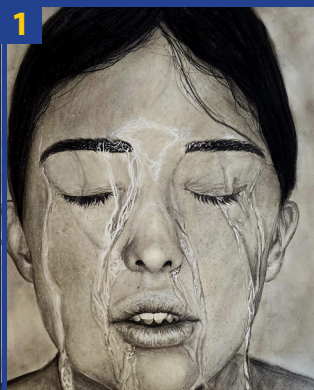
Art teacher Camille Gruner said she was impressed with the amount of talent and hard work she saw from many of her students, especially Gardner and Sherwood.

"These two in particular are top-notch and such a pleasure to work with," Gruner said. "And they're advocates for the arts, too."

1. "My Submerged Mind"
2. "The Spectre"
3. "Self Identity"
4. "Blessed"
5. "Drawing at Dawn"



Alexia Sherwood & Mallory Gardner





Capital Project: Our Architect and Construction Management Team have begun working on plans for the recently approved Capital Project. The team will be working on developing our project and will begin design work shortly.

Capital Outlay: Construction on our bus garage will begin in the spring. This \$100,000 project will be focused on the installment of insulation

and repairing masonry in our bus garage. The project will be completed prior to the end of the school year.

Emergency Project: The bidding process for the stabilization of our Front Porticos has been completed and the bid awarded. We anticipate this work to begin within the next few weeks.

Elementary Playground Project: We are currently working to amend our Federal Grant to allow for the renovation of our Elementary Playground to

ensure more accessibility for all. Thank you for your participation in our survey. We are hopeful that we can make positive changes in this space.

Budget Preparation: The Administrative Team is currently working on budget development. Initial state aid runs indicated a modest increase in state aid that does not reflect inflation pressures.

Ms. Elizabeth Kupiec
Assistant Superintendent

Small Community, BIG IMPACT



Dear Cato-Meridian Families,

Our teachers and staff are learners too! CMCS D values high-quality **professional development** to create spaces for teachers to share ideas and collaborate in their learning.

Here are just a few of the workshops our teachers have engaged in:

- Book Study: The Writing Revolution by Judith Hochman and Natalie Wexler
- Benchmark Data Analysis to Inform Instruction
- Ongoing Professional Learning Teams
- The Arts Community Collaborative
- CKLA: Instructional Planning



Our **Literacy Coach**, Jen Taylor, has been hard at work with our teachers by working collaboratively to implement a quality reading program that is research based and meets the needs of all students.

This allows the classroom teacher and Literacy Coach to align instruction so that the teaching is congruent and of high quality for a guaranteed and viable curriculum.

It has been over ten years since we have analyzed a math program in our elementary school. In that time, standards have changed. We also recognize the impact Covid had on student learning. We have recently formed a **math committee** made up of a diverse group of educators from early primary to high school to allow for a vertical lens when evaluating programs for our elementary students. Some of the criteria we will be looking at include:

Alignment to the NYS Next Generation Mathematics Learning Standards, focus on resources that align to equitable practices, inclusion of resources for differentiating instruction: intervention as well as enrichment, digital resources, number routines/number talks, word problems, inquiry-based tasks, and formative assessments. Our hope is to implement a new program in the Fall of 2023.

If you are looking for more information about any of our academic programs, please visit the Curriculum and Instruction tab on our district webpage.

Thank you for your continued commitment to your child's education.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Jennifer Dorschel
Director of Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment

BRIGHT FUTURES



We are excited to feature the Class of 2023 in our new series, "Bright Futures," which highlights seniors who have decided what they will be doing after graduation. Are you going to college? Do you have a job waiting for you? Will you be enlisting in the military? No matter what your plans are, we want to show you off in "Bright Futures!" Each senior who wishes to be recognized will have a photo shoot (family members are welcome to

attend), as well as a written article, which will be shared on our social media channels and the district website!

If you would like to be featured in "Bright Futures," please contact Rob Wren, Athletic Director/Coordinator of Student Services, at rwren@catomeridian.org or at 315-626-3439, Ext. 3806.

Mr. Robert Wren, Athletic Director and Student Services Coordinator

Bright Futures: Julia Wilson Looks Forward to Balancing Nursing and Athletics at Keuka College

In only a few months, Julia Wilson ('23) will have a full schedule when she begins at Keuka College- and not just because of the classes she'll take as a Nursing student. She also recently committed to run on Keuka's cross country team and play on the softball team.

For many, starting a demanding program and participating in athletics in a new environment might seem daunting. But being busy is nothing new for Wilson, who has managed her time very well at Cato-Meridian. She frequently completes her homework during study hall and whenever she has free time. Going forward, she plans to work around her scheduled practices.

Wilson said that Keuka was her number one school for as long as she heard about it. She loved the energy around the small school.

"It's such a nice small-town feeling college," Wilson said. "It's good to know that we have small classes because it makes me feel like I'll have a more secure education. I could never imagine living in a big city or going to a big college."

Wilson, who has participated in basketball, softball, and cross country at Cato-Meridian, has always found ways to challenge herself in athletics- even when she didn't quite know what she was getting herself into. Just ask her about her first day on the cross country team.

"I joined thinking it was archery, so the first day of practice was like a slap to the face," she recalled with a laugh. "I had no intention of running, but it was fun once I got out there. Almost every year I was like 'I can't take this anymore' but I'd still come back the next year."

Through all three sports, Wilson has made a lot of friends. In particular, she credited cross country teammate Ariana Proper for always pushing

her to run faster in practices and meets, even when her legs felt like they were burning. "I don't know how she kept going, but she did!"

Although she's not continuing the sport at Keuka, Wilson had glowing praise for her basketball coach, Kevin Aukema.

"He has taught me how to go for whatever I want and how to put myself in a leadership position," she said. "He definitely pushes me to do my best."

Even outside of athletics, Wilson has already demonstrated exceptional leadership abilities. She used the CPR and Narcan training she learned in Donna Cappellano's "bones, bodies, and bandages" class to assist with two overdoses in the area, saving a man's life in the process. Her heroic actions led to Cayuga County declaring November 22 "Julia Wilson Day." But she knew she wanted to be a nurse before that real-world experience.

"Ms. Cappellano's classes have made me so much more interested in the medical field," Wilson said. "Once I completed that class, I knew I wanted to be a nurse."

Wilson sees herself as a traveling nurse because she likes the idea of exploring different towns and cities. As a traveling nurse, she'll also be exposed to many different types of environments.

"They can put you in the emergency room, they can put you in the OB wing, or they can put you into the surgical room. They can just throw you wherever they need you, which is kind of why I like that. I like the diversity of the situations you can be in."

In the future, Wilson hopes to be settled into a career she enjoys and stay somewhat local, with two golden retrievers by her side.

BRIGHT FUTURES



Winter SPORTS SNAPSHOTS



GO BLUE DEVILS!

Cato-Meridian Central School District
2851 Route 370
Cato, NY 13033
315.626.3439
www.catomeridian.org

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Upcoming Events

- | | |
|---|---|
| March 10-12.....Jr-Sr High School Musical "Grease"
7 PM & 2 PM, Auditorium | March 31Easter Egg Hunt
4-6 PM Elementary |
| March 15National Honor Society Induction
7 PM, Auditorium | April 3-10 Spring Recess - No School |
| March 15 2-Hour Delay | April 13..... Elementary Spring Showcase |
| | April 21/22..... Grade 9-12 Spanish/Drama
Club Trip to NYC |

