

District welcomes Dr. Terry Ward as Superintendent of Schools



The North Syracuse Central School District (NSCSD) Board of Education is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Terry Ward as the district's new Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Ward was appointed to the position at a regular board meeting on Nov. 4, 2024. He will assume his role on Jan. 6, 2025. Dr. Ward joins NSCSD from the Cato-Meridian Central School District, where he has served as Superintendent for more than six years.

Dr. Ward's selection comes after an extensive search process managed by OCM BOCES District Superintendent Dr. Matt Cook. Stakeholder input was gathered from staff, community members and students on desired leadership qualities. Dr. Ward emerged as the leading candidate from a competitive pool, chosen for his experience, vision, and proven track record in education.

Throughout his career, Dr. Ward has achieved notable milestones, including overseeing strategic initiatives, completing significant capital projects and implementing a widely recognized Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) plan that has set a high standard across the state. Under his leadership, the Cato-Meridian district saw impressive gains, including doubling ELA proficiency rates for grades 3-8, establishing a Multi-Tiered System of Supports and launching innovative programs that expand student learning opportunities. Dr. Ward has also led impactful initiatives in fiscal responsibility, including the successful completion of a \$43 million capital project and an Energy Performance Contract.

In addition to his K-12 leadership, Dr. Ward has contributed to the professional development of future educational leaders as a professor and Dissertation Chair at the Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES Leadership Institute through St. John Fisher University, where he advises candidates in the Executive Leadership Program. His expertise in succession planning and educational administration has made him a sought-after author and advisor in these areas.

Board of Education President Michael A. Mirizio expressed confidence in the district's new leader, stating, "We are excited to welcome Dr. Ward to NSCSD. His dedication to academic excellence, his commitment to students and staff, and his proactive engagement with the community make him an ideal match for our district's mission and vision."

FREE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM FOR NORTH SYRACUSE CSD FAMILIES

Is your child ready for preschool? The North Syracuse Central School District (NSCSD) is excited to be able to offer free half-day and full-day Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) programs for the 2025-26 school year. If your child will be 4 years of age by Dec. 1, 2026, they are eligible for free preschool programming for the 2025-26 school year. Transportation is provided for some UPK locations.

Enrollment will begin on Jan. 6 and the initial lottery will end on Feb. 6. Placements will be determined by a lottery system and notifications will be sent to families in March. Visit www.nscsd.org/upk to learn more and to secure a spot. If your child is already 4 and not enrolled in a preschool program, you can also join the wait list for this year's program.

District-wide hurricane relief efforts



A student in Mrs. Hahn's first grade class at KWS Bear Road Elementary School is pictured with one of many handwritten messages to victims of recent hurricanes in North Carolina and Florida.

Throughout the NSCSD, teachers, staff and students have come together to make a difference in the lives of those affected by recent hurricanes. In addition to individual teacher, staff and school building efforts, the North Syracuse Junior High School's Community Builder's Club and National Honor Society recently put together a district-wide donation drive to gather essential supplies. Through those efforts, thousands of items were collected from North Syracuse Junior High School, Cicero-North Syracuse High School, the North Syracuse Early Education Program and Gillette Road and Roxboro Road Middle Schools. These donations, delivered by the Compassion Coalition, will reach affected communities in need.





Thoughts from the Interim Superintendent

DISTRICT INFORMATION

Board of Education

Michael A. Mirizio, President
 Xavier Moody-Wusik, Vice President
 Robert Crabtree
 Paul Farfaglia
 Matthew Hermann
 Beth Kramer
 Joshua Ludden
 Amanda Sugrue
 Mark Thorne
 Azariyah Fernandez, Student Ex-Officio
 Jilian Herrera, District Clerk

Administration

Interim Superintendent of Schools,
 Michael A. Schiedo
 Associate Superintendent for Teaching & Learning,
 Christopher R. Leahey, Ed. D.
 Associate Superintendent for Business Services,
 Donald F.X. Keegan
 Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources,
 Michael G. Baroody

Board of Education Meetings

December 2 & 16, 2024
 January 13 & 27, 2025
 February 10 & 24, 2025
 March 10 & 24, 2025
 April 7 & 21, 2025
 May 5 & 12, 2025
 June 2 & 16, 2025

Newsletter Information

The District Dispatch is published by the NSCSD to inform residents about issues, events and achievements. Suggestions are welcome and should be directed to:

Laurie Cook, School Information Officer
 Phone: 315-218-2190
 Email: lcook@nscsd.org

We are now a few months into the 2024-25 school year and I'm happy to say we're off to a good start. Our schools and grounds are in excellent condition and school spirit is up. We saw excellent participation for our District-Wide School Spirit Week and our Homecoming football game attendance was tremendous.

In addition to these events, our open houses, back-to-school barbecues and other school events have been well-attended. Our families are showing enthusiasm for being involved in our school community. This spirit of collaboration is vital, and it makes us stronger.

On Thursday, Sept. 26, we hosted a special event at Cicero-North Syracuse High School, which underscored the idea of education, industry, and government working together. The event focused on our growing collaboration with Micron and highlighted the educational opportunities that lie ahead for our students and staff. By working together with industry leaders and our dedicated educators, we are creating a brighter future for all our students, one that equips them to be innovators and leaders in the classroom and beyond.

We are excited for the months ahead and the many ways we will continue to connect, grow and thrive together as a district. Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to our students' success.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Schiedo, NSCSD Interim Superintendent of Schools



> CNS HOSTS MICRON PANEL DISCUSSION; EVENT HIGHLIGHTS COLLABORATION:

On Thursday, Sept. 26, 2024, Cicero-North Syracuse High School welcomed some high-profile guests, including U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, New York Governor Kathy Hochul, and AFT President Randi Weingarten.



The event, held in the school's library, celebrated a big moment for the North Syracuse Central School District, which is at the heart of an exciting partnership with Micron Technology. With Micron's new chip plant coming to the area, the district is set to play a major role in shaping both the education and economy of Central New York.



Communicating with NSCSD Staff

Cyber security for school districts is becoming an increasing concern as cyber attacks increase across the country. In order to protect North Syracuse Central School District staff and resources, we are transitioning to the removal of staff email addresses and directory information being published on our webpages.

Email is still an important form of communication, and we are not limiting the use of email between school and home. We are only changing the practice of publishing staff email addresses in a way that allows for easy scraping by web bots. This change is driven by increasing concerns around phishing campaigns, which often result from the scraping of email addresses posted publicly online. Many districts in the area are making a similar decision, and this is consistent with best practices for organizations of our size.

Parents and guardians also have access to staff through ParentSquare and can use the direct message feature to send messages to staff members. School and district phone numbers will continue to be published online and community members are asked to reach out in this manner.

Parents/Guardians, to contact your child's teacher, you can:

- Log into ParentSquare and use the direct message feature to contact him/her. Additional information for NSCSD ParentSquare users is available on district website.
- Log into SchoolTool and message your child's teacher. Additional information on using SchoolTool is available on the district website.
- Contact the main office at your child's school (phone numbers below), where our staff can provide further assistance.

Thank you for your understanding as we make these changes to our website. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the NSCSD Data Protection Officer Jason Clark at 315/218-2040.

WINTER WEATHER ALERTS

When there is inclement or forecasted inclement weather, the decision to close school, delay opening or dismiss early is based on travel conditions and weather predictions to ensure the safety of all students and staff.

When schools are closed because of weather conditions or other emergencies, announcements are sent on ParentSquare and posted on the district website. Other emergency conditions, such as impending storms, may require students to be dismissed before regular school closing time. Early closing/dismissal announcements are also sent through ParentSquare and posted on the district website. More information about ParentSquare is provided on page 8 of this newsletter.

While emergency closings are also shared with local media, district communications are the first and best source of information.

PREPARE NOW

- Update your contact information: Contact your student's school to request changes to your email address or phone number in SchoolTool. These changes can take up to 24 hours to process and update.
- Transportation: Ensure arrangements are in place for early dismissal situations. Please inform your student's school.
- Community Alerts: Grandparents and others can sign up for emergency alerts on ParentSquare by going to <https://bit.ly/3UdTk3d>.
- YMCA Childcare: YMCA childcare programs located within NSCSD elementary schools may have permission to remain open in some instances. If school is closed for an emergency, all buildings in the NSCSD must be closed and YMCA programs are also canceled. Parents with children in a YMCA program located in a school should check directly with the organization regarding program closures.

DIRECTORY OF SCHOOLS/BUILDINGS:

- ✓ North Syracuse Early Education Program 315/218-2200
- ✓ Allen Road Elementary School 315/218-2300
- ✓ Karl W. Saile Bear Road Elementary School 315/218-2400
- ✓ Cicero Elementary School 315/218-2500
- ✓ Lakeshore Road Elementary School 315/218-2600
- ✓ Roxboro Road Elementary School 315/218-2700
- ✓ Smith Road Elementary School 315/218-2800
- ✓ Gillette Road Middle School 315/218-3000
- ✓ Roxboro Road Middle School 315/218-3300
- ✓ North Syracuse Junior High School 315/218-3600
- ✓ Cicero-North Syracuse High School 315/218-4100
- ✓ Jerome F. Melvin Administrative Office Building 315/218-2100



Structured for
SUCCESS!



Capital project updates

The following updates fall under the Structured for Success referendum:

The North Syracuse Central School District's Facilities Department is working hard with our contractors and construction managers with capital improvement projects that are underway. These voter-approved improvements are a not only an investment, but a source of pride.

★ STRUCTURED FOR SUCCESS

In 2021, the district began a Structured for Success referendum to designate capital improvements as part of its long-term facilities plan. This plan ensures that all school environments encourage student success at the highest level. Initial projects included renovations and heating/cooling system replacements at CNS and significant renovations to Lakeshore and Cicero Elementary Schools.

In 2022, voters approved a second series of projects including district-wide security enhancements, infrastructure work, energy performance improvements and a new artificial turf multi-sport baseball field at Gillette Road Middle School. Much of this work is currently in design or awaiting state approvals.

These capital projects ensure our facilities meet the needs of our students, staff and community. Investing in our facilities is imperative to maintaining a solid infrastructure, greater efficiencies and most importantly, to meet the ever-changing programmatic needs.

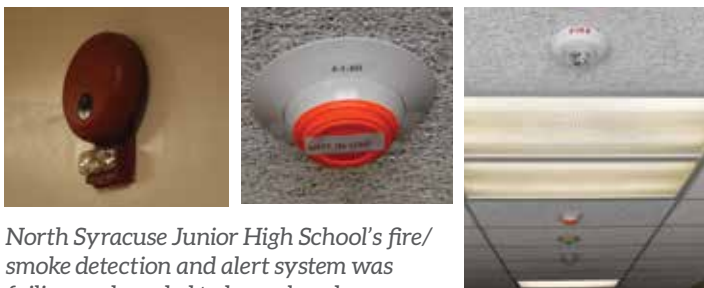
★ NORTH SYRACUSE EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM



Necessary repairs to the school's roof have been completed. Work needed for the school's plumbing and piping system repairs are scheduled to take place over the winter recess.

★ NORTH SYRACUSE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

The outdated fire/smoke detection and alert system at North Syracuse Junior High School is being replaced as part of an emergency project. We hope to have the new system up and running early in 2025.



North Syracuse Junior High School's fire/smoke detection and alert system was failing and needed to be replaced urgently. New systems that utilize current technology are being installed in hallways and classrooms throughout the school to ensure the safety of students and staff.



★ LAKESHORE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Lakeshore Road Elementary School students and staff have relocated for the 2024-25 school year and major renovations to the building have begun. Workers have substantially completed abatement and demolition work and renovations will begin soon. Because the building needed to be empty prior to demolition, staff needed to relocate offices, classrooms, kitchen/cafeteria/library equipment, programs and services to St. Margaret's.



Major renovations are underway at Lakeshore Road Elementary School including complete demolition in some areas.



Lakeshore students and staff were welcomed back to school by many special visitors on the first day of the school year.



Lakeshore staff and students have transitioned incredibly well to their new environment at St. Margaret's School. Pictured above: Interim Superintendent of Schools Michael Schiedo visits with David Schmidt's third grade Lakeshore Road Elementary students at the beginning of the school year.



CAPITAL UPDATES - Continued from page 4

★ CNS HIGH SCHOOL

Phase one work to overhaul the HVAC system is complete. Upgrades made throughout the winter and summer months of 2024 allowed the team to make up a significant amount of time on the project. All equipment is operational and the project will be completed within weeks.

Phase two work, which includes renovations to the auditorium, gym, and locker rooms, is about half-way completed and it is anticipated that we will be opening the newly renovated Main Gym for limited after school use before the Christmas holiday. Completion of this work supports work associated with the pool addition. A ground-breaking ceremony was held on Oct. 30 to mark the official start of the pool's construction.



New HVAC systems will dramatically improve comfort, air quality and efficiency for students and staff at CNS High School.



The main gymnasium at CNS High School is almost completely renovated and should be available for limited use before year end.



Construction projects involving the new community pool are ongoing.

★ GILLETTE ROAD MIDDLE SCHOOL

The work at Gillette Road Middle School is currently in the design phase. The scope of work includes updating HVAC systems and the addition of air conditioning in the two-story educational wing, site accessibility, and a new multi-sport athletic field.

★ ENERGY PERFORMANCE CONTRACT

This no tax-impact project approved by voters in May of 2022, recently received approval and portions of the work will be able to begin soon. The initiative will convert outdated lighting systems to LED (light-emitting diode) and make energy saving enhancements to antiquated building systems. The work will reduce energy demand and improve the quality of lighting and comfort in classrooms. Once a schedule is set, the district will communicate with those impacted.

★ SAFETY AND SECURITY PROJECT

Approval from the State Education Department is expected very soon and the work necessary for this project will be planned in conjunction with the Energy Performance work at each location. Additional details will be made available as contracts are awarded.

DISTRICT BREAKS GROUND ON NEW COMMUNITY POOL AT CNS

On Oct. 30, the NSCS D celebrated the groundbreaking of our much-anticipated new community pool, marking the official start of construction. This pool represents a significant step forward in providing expanded athletic and wellness opportunities for both our students and the wider community.

The groundbreaking ceremony saw the first shovels of dirt turned by some of the key contributors to this state-of-the-art aquatics facility. Once completed, the pool will serve as a dedicated space for

student aquatics programming and a local venue for training and competitions.

Designed with security in mind, the facility will include separate entrances for community members, ensuring a safe and secure environment for students during school hours. This thoughtful design will make the pool accessible to the community while prioritizing the safety of district students and athletes.



The first shovels of earth were turned by NSCS D BOE President Michael A. Mirizio, Assemblyman Al Stirpe, and swim coaches Paul Gill and Brad Raineri. Event attendees included BOE members Robert Crabtree, Mark Thorne and Xavier Moody-Wusik; Interim Superintendent of Schools Michael Schiedo; Director of Facilities Matt Erwin; Athletic Director Timothy Bednarski; Associate Superintendent for Business Services Donald Keegan and CNS Executive Principal Kristen Hill.



Honoring Constance Turose for 50 years of dedicated service



The North Syracuse Central School District extends its gratitude to Constance Turose, who has served the district for more than 50 years. Constance (Connee) is retiring from the district as the Principal of North Syracuse Junior High School. Connee joined the district in Sept. of 1974, as a Science Teacher at Gillette Road Middle School and North Syracuse Junior High School.

Connee became the school's principal in the summer of 1994. In this role, she fostered a supportive environment for students and staff alike and worked in that role for three decades. As Connee retires, her impact on the school community remains strong. The district thanks her for her contributions and wishes her a fulfilling retirement.

Building Planning Teams use Strategic Plan as roadmap to success

The North Syracuse Central School District is now in year three of our work toward a renewed mission, vision and shared goals. Building Planning Teams (BPTs) from each of our 11 schools have been taking time to present their individual building goals to our board of education.

Our BPTs work hard to ensure their building's goals are aligned with the district's Strategic Plan. We're so proud of the progress they are making and we want to share their successes with the greater NSCSD community. In an effort to show how each BPT goal benefits students, we have asked our principals to highlight some examples of their work in action.

OUR BPTS HAVE DEVELOPED THREE MAIN GOALS:

1 INCREASE high school graduation rates

GOAL 1 is to increase the high school graduation rate by preparing every student for a successful graduation and their chosen post-secondary pathway. All schools in the district have developed specific, targeted goals. These goals aim to guide students toward their unique paths, ensuring they build the skills, resilience, and knowledge needed to pursue successful futures.



All schools in the NSCSD are working to improve overall graduation rates by starting early. From elementary to high school, schools are focusing on building strong attendance, fostering a love for learning and helping students develop habits that lead to lifelong success.

2 ENSURE ALL students become proficient readers

GOAL 2 is to ensure that every student achieves reading proficiency. The NSCSD supports this goal by providing instructional coaches and consultant teachers to offer direct, hands-on assistance, personalized mentorship and targeted professional development to equip educators with the tools and strategies needed to elevate student literacy across all grade levels.



With support from instructional coaches and consultant teachers, NSCSD is committed to ensuring that every student achieves reading proficiency by providing educators with personalized mentorship and the strategies needed to elevate literacy across all grade levels.

3 HELP STUDENTS become emotionally competent

GOAL 3 is to help all students develop emotional competence through a comprehensive mental health and wellness support system that emphasizes suicide prevention. This multi-faceted approach is strengthened by our close partnerships with local law enforcement, including school resource officers (SROs) and special patrol officers (SPOs).

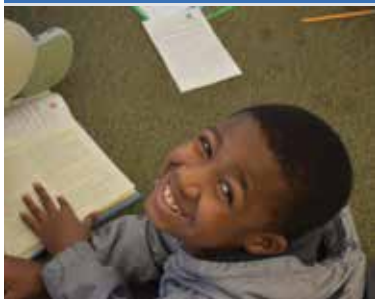


Our law enforcement partners are instrumental in creating safe, supportive school environments where students feel connected and understood. By building trusting relationships and serving as positive role models, they help students feel secure and supported.

Building Planning Teams: Helping Students Succeed

We are highlighting the work our schools' Building Planning Teams (BPTs) are doing to ensure their goals are aligned with the district's Strategic Plan, "Brighter Together." This issue will feature the first four schools whose BPTs have presented to the Board of Education and the work they are doing as individual school communities.

> ROXBORO ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Roxboro Road Elementary is committed to improving reading proficiency. The school's data-driven approach includes targeted interventions and student goal-setting, supported by dedicated programs like ELA WINN (What I Need Now) groups. The daily sessions provide academic support focused on each students' individual needs.

During a recent visit, district staff had the opportunity to

see some WINN groups in action. Teachers work with small groups on activities like "Words Their Way" with Ms. Pop, engaging book clubs with Ms. Redmond, Ms. Sgroi and Ms. Johnson and focused support through Core 5 and Really Great Reading. Other groups emphasize fluency practice and IEP goal support, ensuring each student receives the personalized instruction needed to thrive.



> LAKESHORE ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Lakeshore Road Elementary School is dedicated to advancing reading proficiency, with a goal to raise AimswebPlus scores and NYS ELA proficiency numbers. The school employs data-driven strategies and collaborative team meetings, utilizing a guaranteed curriculum to support literacy at all grade levels. Grade level teams are working on goals to support ELA and utilizing WIN time (What I Need) to support individual student needs. Pictured: Teachers Meghan Krupa and Rebecca Vaughn work with Instructional Coach Mary Sciarrino to review classwork and plan specific, skill-based interventions designed to meet each student's individual needs.



> KWS BEAR ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



At KWS Bear Road Elementary, students are WINning with specialized weekly instruction in "What I Need Now" (WINN) groups. In WINN, instructional staff collaborate to provide personalized instruction in reading and math. Using data from assessments like CKLA and Lexia Core 5, teachers identify specific student needs and deliver targeted support. With additional guidance from instructional coaches and the AIS Department, these WINN groups help ensure every student has the focused help needed to succeed. Pictured: During WINN groups, AIS staff work one-on-one with students in reading and math to ensure their individual academic needs are met.

> ALLEN ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Allen Road Elementary is excited to highlight its Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) initiatives as part of its commitment to fostering emotional competence and building a supportive school community. Allen Road has dedicated resources to a robust SEL program that includes Second Step classroom sessions, monthly assemblies and daily SEL tips shared during announcements. Efforts are designed to give students the skills they need to navigate emotions, build positive relationships and support one another.

An essential component of the school's SEL initiative involves encouraging students and staff to greet each other by name each day. By focusing on the power of personal connection, Allen Road is building a community where every individual feels valued and recognized. This simple practice helps reinforce the school's inclusive environment and shows students the importance of kindness, respect and acknowledgment.

By implementing a proactive approach, Allen Road aims to equip students with coping strategies and interpersonal skills that can help prevent mental health challenges before they arise. This is supported by regular assemblies focused on community building, peer support, and positive behavior, allowing students to experience firsthand the impact of a supportive and unified school environment.





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Produced in cooperation with Capital Region BOCES Engagement & Development Services.

Stay Connected! Use ParentSquare for communications

The NSCSD uses ParentSquare for essential communications with families. Many important, student-specific messages are sent through the system. Parents should be able to see all their children in one account and receive important notifications.

- **Automatic Accounts:** Accounts are created based on email or cell phone information in SchoolTool, NSCSD's student data system. Updates in SchoolTool take 24 hours to sync with ParentSquare.
- **Register:** Visit parentsquare.com/signin and use the email or phone number listed in SchoolTool. For convenience, download the ParentSquare app for iOS or Android.
- **Check Your Info:** Click on your name > My Account in ParentSquare to verify your contact details. If changes are needed, please contact your child's school office to update SchoolTool.



Community members can join ParentSquare

Did you know that grandparents and community members can sign up for emergency alerts on ParentSquare?

- **Receive Updates:** Join community groups to get district news about emergency closings, registration, budget votes, school/district events and more.
- **Sign Up:** Go to <https://bit.ly/3UdTk3d> or scan the QR code to the right. Parents/guardians and staff are already registered and do not need to join.
- **Options:** Customize your notification settings, preferred language, and communication method (email, text, or app).

Individuals who enroll will be able to:

- Receive district communication via email, text or app notification.
- Manage notification settings.
- Communicate in their preferred language.

Learn More or Sign Up



- > Scan QR Code OR
- > Go to: <https://bit.ly/3UdTk3d>

BRIGHTER TOGETHER