

Messenger



A Message from the Superintendent

Dear Watkins Glen School Community,

I hope you are well and enjoying the beauty of fall in our region. The 2024-25 school year is off to a fantastic start and I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has contributed to making these first two months such a success. Your dedication and support truly make a difference and I am excited about all the great things ahead for our students and community.

Welcome to Our New WG Family Members

At Watkins Glen, we take immense pride in bringing talented, passionate individuals into our school family. It's been our tradition to introduce new staff members in the November newsletter, and this year, we are thrilled to welcome a vibrant group of educators and staff. Our hiring teams worked hard throughout the spring and summer to select the best candidates and we are confident that their energy, experience and dedication will have a positive impact on our students. Please join me in giving them a warm welcome to our wonderful community.

Celebrating Homecoming Spirit and Community Support

Homecoming this year was an unforgettable celebration of school pride and community spirit. From the lively parade to the spirited games and events, it was a true showcase of what it means to be a Lake Hawk. Our students, staff and families came together to celebrate, showing the strength of our community and the pride we all share in our school.

I want to personally thank everyone who participated, attended and supported Homecoming. Whether you cheered from the sidelines, helped with events or simply wore your Lake Hawk colors, your involvement made it a huge success. This year's turnout and enthusiasm were truly inspiring and it reminds me just how special our Watkins Glen community is. Your support helps create an environment where our students can soar both in and out of the classroom.

Health and Safety

As we move through the school year, we continue to prioritize the health and well-being of our students and staff. We remain mindful of ongoing health concerns and are committed to keeping our community safe by following current guidelines and best practices. We encourage everyone to stay informed, and as always, we are here to support you in any way we can.

We will continue to provide regular updates through our district website, Facebook, X (Twitter) and email communications. Your engagement is vital to our shared success, so please stay connected.

Thank you again for your ongoing support. I wish you a happy, healthy and vibrant fall season. Let's continue to SOAR together, Lake Hawks!

Warm regards,

Kai D'Alleva
Superintendent of Schools

District Welcomes New Staff Members

Name: Shelby Clark

Position: Second-Grade Teacher

Education: Clark earned a B.S. in Meteorology and Minor in Mathematics from SUNY Oswego and a Masters in Childhood Education from Western Governors University.

Prior Work Experience: Clark

was a substitute teacher for Watkins Glen Elementary School since 2021 and also was the Chief Meteorologist at WETM for eight years, where she traveled to schools around the Twin Tiers to help students learn more about weather.

Why did you choose to work for WGCSD? "I love this community! I feel lucky to teach at the school I grew up attending."



Name: Cameron Cron

Position: Cleaner

Education: Cron earned a GED.

Prior work experience: Cron has worked as a housekeeper for Seneca Sol Glamping.

Why did you choose to work for WGCSD? "I love the community and this is a great way to get my foot in the door."



Name: Nicole Firestine

Position: High School Library Media Specialist

Education: Firestine earned a BA in English Literature and Secondary English Education (7-12) from Ithaca College, MSEd in Literacy/Reading (K-12) from Nazareth University and MS in School Librarianship from University at Buffalo.

Prior work experience: Firestine has worked as an English Teacher (9-12), Reading Teacher (5-8) and Library Media Specialist (9-12).

Why did you choose to work for WGCSD? "Watkins Glen CSD is a supportive and innovative school community. I am eager to contribute my teaching and librarian skills to foster the love of reading, discovering and learning to make a positive impact on our students' lives."



Name: Alex Gill and Kelsey Gill

Position: Alex is Senior Class Set and Technical Director; Kelsey is Senior Class Play Director

Education: Alex received a bachelor's degree in Engineering from Binghamton University.



Kelsey received her bachelor's degree in Speech and Hearing from Elmira College, a master's degree in Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing from SJU.

Prior work experience: Alex works as an engineer for Corning, Inc. and Kelsey is a speech therapist at Odessa-Montour Central School District.

Why did you choose to work for WGCSD? Alex and Kelsey are a husband-and-wife team. Kelsey is an alum of Watkins Glen and performed on the stage in the school musicals every year. She is excited to come back and work with the kids on her favorite stage. Alex's family graduated and worked for Watkins Glen. He is excited to be joining the team and creating an amazing show.

Name: Elizabeth Grant

Position: Seventh-Grade Math Teacher

Education: Grant earned her bachelor's degree and MS in Education from SUNY Brockport.

Why did you choose to work for WGCSD? "Being at WGHS has already been so rewarding working with great adults and students."



Name: Beth Herforth

Position: Elementary School Librarian

Education: Herforth received a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Medaille College and a masters in Library Media from St. John Fisher University.

Prior work experience: After teaching first and fourth grade for a total of 10 years and finishing her library degree, Herforth switched from the classroom to the library. This is her 12th year as an elementary school librarian.



Why did you choose to work for WGCSD? "I have lived in the Watkins Glen school district for eight years and I love the community. I am so excited to be teaching in the district in which I live and my son goes to school. I want to be able to contribute to the educational climate of our community in a positive way."

Name: Sarah Hopper

Position: Spanish Teacher

Education: Hopper received a bachelor's degree from St. Lawrence University and a master's degree from SUNY Cortland.

Prior work experience: Hopper previously worked at Corning-Painted Post High School.

Why did you choose to work for WGCSD? "I like the smaller community feel and the positive atmosphere."



New Staff (continued)

Name: Jessica Karandeyev
Position: Kindergarten Teacher
Education: Karandeyev has a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood and Childhood Education and a Masters in Literacy.

Prior Work Experience: Karandeyev has been teaching for nine years: eight in Kindergarten and one year in UPK.

Why did you choose to work for WGCSD? "I love working in small communities and getting to know everyone. I appreciated Watkins' commitment to working with the community and finding ways to bring the community and school together."



Name: Emily McIntosh
Position: Second-Grade Teacher
Education: McIntosh received a degree in Early Childhood/ Childhood Education from SUNY Geneseo.

Prior work experience: For the past year, McIntosh worked in various classrooms as a long-term substitute teacher.

Why did you choose to work for WGCSD? "I adore the community and how kind everyone is. I chose WGCSD because it is important that I surround myself with positivity. Watkins is a perfect fit for that alone."



Name: Deborah Michalski
Position: High School Food Service Helper



Name: September Mitchell
Position: High School Food Service Helper



Name: Madison Pelcher
Position: Fourth-Grade Teacher
Education: Pelcher earned a bachelor's in Childhood Education and Special Education and is currently working on her masters.
Prior work experience: While in college for her undergraduate degree, Pelcher was a substitute teacher in the Elmira Heights School District.

Why did you choose to work for WGCSD? "I really wanted to work in a smaller district to have that close community and home-like feel."



Name: Lindsey Smith
Position: Special Education Teacher, Grades 4-6
Education: Smith earned a Bachelor of Arts in Childhood Education and Childhood Special Education with a concentration in Mathematics from Elmira College.

Prior work experience: While going through college, Smith substitute taught for four years in the Moravia Central School District. She then student taught at Watkins Glen Elementary School this past school year from January through May, substitute taught in June and taught fifth and sixth grades for summer school.

Why did you choose to work for WGCSD? "I chose Watkins Glen because I had a really great experience student teaching here. I fell in love with the school, the community and all of the fun things there are to do around here. It also is very similar to my hometown of Moravia, so I felt like starting my adult life here was meant to be."



Name: Tony Thompson
Position: Eighth-Grade Social Studies

Education: Thompson earned an associate's degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences from FLCC and dual major Bachelors of Arts in Adolescence Education: Social Studies and History from SUNY Cortland.

Prior Work Experience: Thompson worked as a substitute Teacher at Penn Yan Central School District.



Why did you choose to work for WGCSD? "Growing up in Dundee, I fell in love with the Seneca Lake area and wanted to make the region my forever home. WGCSD also provides an excellent working community where I have felt welcome and a part of the family from day one."

Name: Brett Walters
Position: Certified Athletic Trainer

Education: Walters received his bachelor's degree in Athletic Training from Ithaca College and is a BOC Certified Athletic Trainer.

Prior work experience: Walters has worked as an athletic training student intern for Cayuga Sports Medicine, Cortland Crush Baseball, Cornell Men's Ice Hockey and various other collegiate sports teams.



Why did you choose to work for WGCSD? "I get to come back home and serve the community I grew up in. As the athletic trainer for Watkins Glen, I have the opportunity to be a vital resource for both students and parents, ensuring the health and well-being of our athletes."

New Staff (continued)

Name: Beverly Welch
Position: Food Service Helper
Education: Welch is a graduate of Southside High School in Elmira and Corning Community College.
Prior work experience: Welch has worked for ProAction Head Start as a family educator.
Why did you choose to work for WGCSD? "Serving nutritious foods for the children helps set them up for learning."



Name: Tammy Youmans
Position: Bus Driver
Education: Youmans is a high school graduate.
Prior work experience: Youmans has worked for Horseheads CSD Transportation.
Why did you choose to work for WGCSD? "I love Watkins Glen and the friendly, family-oriented work environment."



Name: Bronwyn Stermer-Cabuk
Position: Music Teacher and Choral Director



Artwork by Wendy Coleman

Girls Soccer Wins Division Title



Girls Varsity soccer had another great fall season. The team recently earned its third consecutive IAC division title and wrapped up the season with a 12-2 record. Congratulations, Lady Lake Hawks!

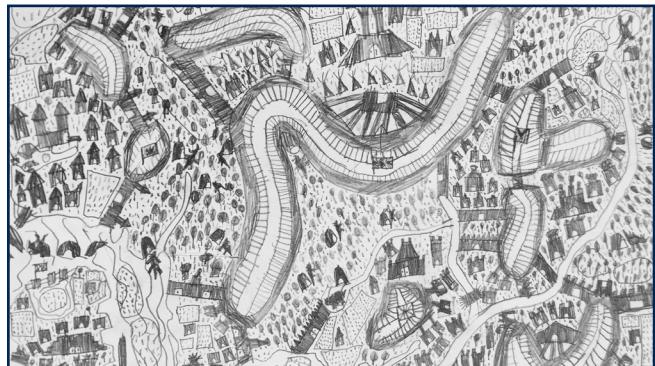
Food Bank Recognizes Teacher

Watkins Glen High School teacher Amy Planty was named the 2024 recipient of the Jack Balinski Charity and Justice Award at the recent Food Bank of the Southern Tier's Harvest Partner Recognition event.



She was honored for her work with our in-district food pantry, the *Dub G Market*, where she collaborates with the Food Bank of the Southern Tier to help bring access to food to our school community.

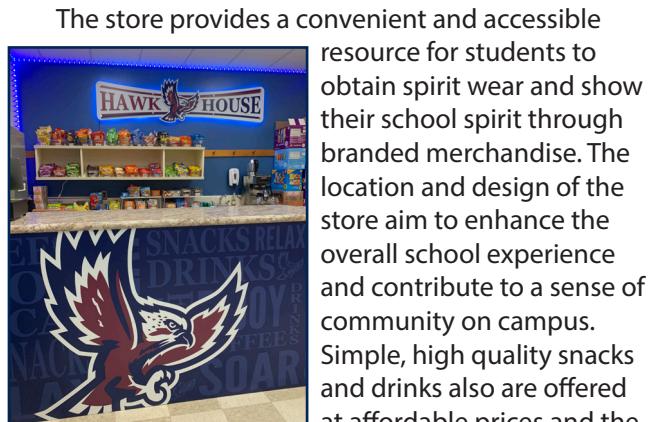
Congratulations, Mrs. Planty! Thank you for your dedication to WGCSD and our community.



Artwork by Mark Fabrizi

The Hawk House Store

The *Hawk House*, the Lake Hawk's school store, is a work-based learning enterprise run by WGHS students and supervised by Certified Work-Based Learning Coordinator and Business Education Teacher Kathleen Popovich.



The store provides a convenient and accessible resource for students to obtain spirit wear and show their school spirit through branded merchandise. The location and design of the store aim to enhance the overall school experience and contribute to a sense of community on campus. Simple, high quality snacks and drinks also are offered at affordable prices and the

Hawk House provides a safe, uplifting and relaxing in-school setting for students to enjoy them.

The shop was recently branded with Lake Hawk themed artwork designed locally by JH Design, LLC. We could not be more #WG Proud of the finishing touches.

Hands-On Horticulture

WGCS High School CTE Agriculture Teacher Alexis Bellavigna took her Horticulture class on a field trip to *Ivy Lane Flowers*, a local floral shop in downtown Watkins Glen.

The students were given hands-on experience processing flowers, making arrangements and learning all about plant structures.

Owner Abby Lane said, "I can't wait to welcome more students to the shop, starting with our first intern!" Caelyn Baker, a WGHS junior taking plant science and horticulture classes, will be interning with Ms. Lane this semester and fulfilling daily floral shop duties. On her first "work" day, Baker completed her first floral arrangement.



School Learning Adventures

On September 19, our kindergarteners embarked on an exciting field trip to Apples & Moore. Students, along with their teachers, explored the wonders of trees and learned about the vital roles of community helpers and farmers. The hands-on experience of picking apples allowed them to connect with nature and gain a deeper understanding of their local community. It was a delightful day filled with learning and fun.



In October, students from several elementary grade levels enjoyed a special outing to the Watkins Glen Movie Theatre to watch "The Wild Robot." This engaging film brought to life the beloved story, sparking curiosity and conversation among the kids. It was a wonderful opportunity for them to experience a shared adventure, deepen their understanding of the story and enjoy a fun day out together.

WG Participates in Unity Day

October 16 was Unity Day, a day that focused on kindness, acceptance and inclusion while standing up against bullying. One way that we showed support for this initiative was to wear orange. The other was a WGES Community activity called *Project Connect*. Our message was, "while one person can speak out against bullying, the message is much stronger when we come together to make a difference."

Classes participated in the same activity as last year.



Each student was provided a strip of orange construction paper and asked to write a quality that makes them unique and proud of who they are as individuals. The WG Elementary School community then united to make a chain long enough to cover the elementary hallways! Our school community makes us #WG Proud!

Athletics Update

The Winter Sports Season is underway for modified boys basketball and girls modified volleyball. JV and Varsity winter sports will start practice on November 18. These sports include basketball, bowling, cheerleading, wrestling and boys swimming and diving.

Modified (seventh- and eighth- grade) girls basketball, boys swimming and wrestling will start after the holiday break on January 2. All sign ups for sports are through FinalForms, found on the athletic page or under parent resources on the district website: www.wgcsd.org.

Our sports schedules are maintained in a program called Aktivate (formerly known as Schedule Galaxy) and can be accessed on the athletic page of the district website. Potential spectators are encouraged to check the notes section of Aktivate for any updated school protocols.

We also have a live streaming service in place for the main fieldhouse gym, pool and outdoor turf facility. The system provides automatic live streaming of any home games in those areas with quality streaming that will follow the action similar to games professionally broadcast.

There is a cost to spectators for the service. A monthly package is available for \$11.99 per month and an annual package costs less than \$7 per month. Payment goes directly to NFHS, which is providing the service and cameras to the district at no cost. The school is only responsible for scheduling games in the system. A link to NFHS streaming is available on the athletics page of the WGCS website.

New Drone Soccer Club

GST BOCES has launched a Drone Soccer league with 14 participating districts including Watkins Glen. The league started this fall with matches on Saturday at surrounding GST BOCES locations.



Student meetings, practice and game play began in late September. League games run weekly for the season from October through December. Playoffs will be held throughout January and February. Watkins Glen's club has had a great showing and currently has 15 team members.

To learn more, please contact Trish Ervay at tervay@wgcsd.org.



Your behavior says a lot about your CHARACTER. Everyone is watching! Let's all #BenchBadBehavior!

How do you behave at high school athletic events?

Is your behavior always...
Respectful? Encouraging?
Supportive?

Coffey Attends Homecoming

Olympian and Watkins Glen native Olivia Coffey joined the community for 2024 Homecoming events on Saturday, October 12. Throughout the evening, she mingled with students, staff and community members and provided autographs during the tailgate party at WGHS prior to the Schuyler Storm football game kickoff.

Coffey is a five-time World Champion (2013-2018) for women's rowing earning three gold and two bronze medals. She has competed in two consecutive Olympics on Team USA for women's rowing, placing fourth in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and fifth this summer at the 2024 Olympics in Paris.



Coffey pictured with Homecoming Court members Julia Spahalski and Sam Caslin.

Homecoming 2024 Highlights



Watkins Glen students, staff, alumni and community members came together to celebrate Homecoming with the annual parade, tailgating before the football game, a "pinkout" and the crowning of this year's Homecoming King and Queen.

Homecoming 2024 Highlights (cont.)



The football team STORMing the field before kickoff.



Congratulations to Julia Spahalski and Liam Smith on being crowned 2024 Homecoming Queen and King.



Schuyler Storm fans showing their spirit by participating in a "pinkout" to wrap up spirit week.



Hunter Mowry (O-M) prepares to make a pass during Saturday evening's game.



Members of the 2024 Homecoming Court were: Molly Coolican, Isaiah Rudy, Julia Spahalski, Liam Smith, Kendra Fish and Sam Caslin.

Dub G Market in Full Swing

The Dub G Market in the halls of the High School is up and running full force with our market open to all WGCSD students during the school day.

Since opening in September 2023, we've distributed more than 50,000 pounds of food to our students. We are planning to expand our service this November by having more after-school "open market" hours when families can come in and shop!

We also are launching a home delivery program for families who face obstacles that prevent them from in-person access to the Market.

For additional information, you may reach out to Amy Planty at aplanty@wgcsd.org.



Emergency School Closings

When weather or snow conditions cause emergency closings of our schools, the following radio and television stations will make an announcement during their regular programs in the morning: WELM, WINK, WLKY, WGMF, WPGI, WNGZ, WFLR, WWLZ, WENY-TV 36, WETM-TV 18 and WSTM-TV 5 and Spectrum News Now.

Updates on closings and delays also can be found on the school district's website at www.wgcsd.org or the Watkins Glen CSD app for android or Apple phones and tablets.

Generally, the decision to close schools for emergency reasons will be made prior to 6:00 a.m. If you do not hear an announcement of closing, please do not call the school or school officials. The district will use an automated system to notify families through various social media platforms, while also calling and texting families directly. Please sure you update your contact information throughout the school year in Final Forms. This helps us keep you informed of school happenings as well as school emergencies and closings.

Thank You, BOE Members

School Board Recognition Week was held October 14-18. This special week provided an opportunity to highlight the crucial role of board members within the school community and recognize them for their efforts and commitment to education.

Special thank you to our WGCSD Board members: President Keith Caslin, Vice-President Theresa Butler, Craig Bianco, Barbara Schimizzi, Joe Stansfield and Tracey VanSkiver for your service and dedication.

Upcoming Events

November

1	High School Make-Up Picture Day
4-8	Elementary School Book Fair
7	Elementary School Parent/Teacher Conferences, 5-7 p.m.
8	No School - Parent/Teacher Conference Day
11	No School - Veterans Day
18	JV and Varsity Winter Sports Begin
18-22	Senior Trip
22	Senior Picture Retakes
25	Elementary School Make-Up Picture Day
27-29	Thanksgiving Break

December

2	Modified Winter Season 2 Sports Registration Opens
6	Half Day for Students (Pre-K through grade 12)
9	Elementary/High School Report Cards
11	Winter Concert (snow date 12/12)
14	PTO Breakfast with Santa, 8-11 a.m.
17	Winter Concert 2 (snow date 12/18)
23-Jan 1	Winter Recess

Stay Up-To-Date

For the latest news and information within our school district, visit our website: www.wgcsd.org.

You also can download our NEW official Watkins Glen School District free app. Search "Watkins Glen CSD" on Apple or Android play stores.



Contact Us

District Office.....	607-535-3219
High School	607-535-3210
High School Health Office.....	607-535-3210
Elementary School	607-535-3250
Elementary School Health Office.....	607-525-3250
Director of Special Programs.....	607-535-3254
Athletic Office.....	607-535-3280
Food Services Office.....	607-535-3214
Transportation.....	607-535-3270