All that is gold does not glitter, not all those who wander are lost; the old that is strong does not wither, deep roots are not reached by the frost. J. R. R. Tolkien

The goal of education is not to increase the amount of knowledge but to create the possibilities for a child to invent and discover, to create men and women who are capable of doing new things. Jean Piaget

Upcoming Events:

- **Thursday, March 7**
  - HS Parent/Teacher Conferences, 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
- **Friday, March 8**
  - Progress Reports #3 Available on Parent Portal
- **Monday, March 11**
  - BPT, 2:25 p.m., Conference Room
- **Tuesday, March 12**
  - Faculty Meeting, 2:25 p.m., PAC
- **Tuesday, March 12**
  - Board of Education Meeting, 7:00 p.m., District Office
- **Wednesday, March 13**
  - HS Music in Our Schools Month Concert, 7:00 p.m.
- **Thursday, March 14**
  - Teacher Leader Meeting, 1:00 p.m., Conference Room
- **Tuesday, March 19**
  - Department Meetings, 2:25 p.m.
- **Thursday, March 21**
  - Districtwide Band Concert, 7:00 p.m.
- **Friday, March 22**
  - Superintendent’s Conference Day, No School for HS
- **Saturday, March 23**
  - Evening of Jazz, 6:30 p.m., West Café
- **Monday, March 25**
  - BPT (STA Only), 2:25 p.m., Conference Room
- **Tuesday, March 26**
  - Board of Education Meeting, 7:00 p.m., District Office
- **Tuesday, March 26**
  - Faculty Meeting, 2:25 p.m., PAC
- **Saturday, March 30**
  - Boys Varsity Lacrosse vs. Schroeder, 12:00 p.m., Ranger Stadium
- **Saturday, March 30**
  - Girls Varsity Lacrosse vs. Corning, 4:00 p.m. Ranger Stadium
- **Monday, April 1**
  - Varsity Baseball @ East Irondequoit, 4:30 p.m.
- **Monday, April 1**
  - Varsity Softball @ Wayne, 4:30 p.m.
- **Monday, April 1**
  - Boys Varsity Tennis vs. Batavia, 4:30 p.m. SHS
- **Monday, April 1**
  - Girls Varsity Lacrosse vs. Penfield, 6:15 p.m., Ranger Stadium
- **Tuesday, April 2**
  - Boys Varsity Tennis vs. Brockport, 4:15 p.m., SHS
- **Tuesday, April 2**
  - Boys Varsity Lacrosse @ Penfield, 7:00 p.m.
- **Tuesday, April 2**
  - Talent Show, 6:30 p.m., PAC
**Student Updates**

Congratulations to senior Hai-Yen Nguyen and junior Sophia Moran who were selected as our January Students of the Month for Positive Attitude. And as always, thank you to the “Lions” for their support of this recognition!

On Saturday March 2, members of the Service Learning Internship Program volunteered at the 6th annual Maple Sugar Fest. The festival included a pancake breakfast, arts and crafts, face painting, snow shoeing, geocaching and an interactive demonstration of the process of tapping trees, which took place in the new instructional pavilion in the Spencerport Nature Center. The event was a huge success.
Samantha Ricotta, winner of the Spencerport Shakespeare Monologue Competition, participated in the ESU Rochester Branch Shakespeare Competition on Saturday, March 2, 2019, at the University of Rochester. She competed against seven other representatives from seven other schools, performing Lady Macbeth’s Sleepwalking Scene from *Macbeth* and Sonnet 27. Although she did not place in the competition this year, she gave a compelling performance and received some great feedback and advice from the professionals in attendance. Also, Bethany Ferguson, Spencerport’s runner up, performed a speech by Juliet from *Romeo and Juliet* and Sonnet 8 as a warm up performance for the judges. Both young ladies are to be congratulated for their fine work!

The following students also competed in the Spencerport Shakespeare Monologue Competition, and congratulations are in order for them as well!!

Ally Battaglia, Viceli Figueroa, Addy Ouimet, Beth Resch, Brianna Donnelly, Ella Voelkl, TJ Weaver, Sara Bonfiglio, Sydney Brongo, Thomas Hager, and Emma Kane.
On Friday, February 1, members of the CHOICES program delivered their second lesson to the eighth grade students at Cosgrove. The lesson focused on goals, achieving them and avoiding road blocks. The Junior and Senior members of CHOICES wanted to thank all of their teachers and administrators for the support and flexibility so they can attend training sessions and Cosgrove visits.

**Staff Reminders/Updates**

- Any proposals for new clubs for the 2019-2020 school year are due to my office by May 30, 2019. I would like to collect all of these proposals at one time so Ty can review them and then prepare to present them all at once to the School Board.

- On **Monday March 18** we will be running a modified schedule so that our entire student body (with the exception of those students whose parents/guardians have opted them out) can take the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. The data from this survey is invaluable to us in our efforts to help support our students. Students will end their day in an extended Advisement so they can complete the 70 question survey using their laptops. Announcements will be conducted at the beginning of 2nd block. Below is the schedule we will follow:
<table>
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<th>Period</th>
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<td>7:25 a.m. - 8:35 a.m.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>8:40 a.m. – 9:50 a.m.</td>
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<td>3 and Lunch</td>
<td>9:55 a.m. – 11:40 a.m.</td>
<td>105 minutes</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>11:45 a.m. – 12:55 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advisement</td>
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<td>3A (lunch)</td>
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<td>3B (class)</td>
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<td>3B (lunch)</td>
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<td>3C (class)</td>
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<td>11:10 – 11:40</td>
<td>3C (lunch)</td>
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More information will follow the week before the survey. Any questions can be directed to Kate Zobkiw or Jessica Silsby.

− Advisement Committee Update: As noted in the BPT minutes, the Advisement Committee that had been tasked with studying the placement on Advisement in the schedule recommended that no change be made at this time. Data from the surveys collected did show there was interest from both staff and students in looking at adding time to Advisement. BPT has asked the Advisement Committee to look at this topic and to develop a recommendation for BPT to consider. This work will continue.

− Val/Sal Committee: This committee has met once so far. The committee did agree that we would like to move away from naming a Val and Sal and to begin exploring other ways to recognize our students for their academic excellence. The committee will create a recommendation to present to the School Board on April 9. We have invited representatives from two local colleges (RIT and SUNY Brockport) to join our committee to provide their insight into naming a Val and Sal. Committee membership is: Alex Elkins, Tony Guzzetta, Christina Falbo, Kristen Paolini, Tim O’Connor, David Gibardo (Board Member), Heidi Morgan, Jake Lenhard, Jamie Schneider, Katie Mason, Sandi-Ben-Dov, Sean McCabe, Megan Sarkis (SUNY Brockport) and Mark Muenzer (RIT).

− In the coming weeks, we will be practicing more emergency drills. Tim O’Connor will send out emails to staff with details on these drills a few days prior to each one occurring. Please continue to review your emergency plans and keep them in a readily accessible location both for you and a substitute teacher.

− Please continue to be vigilant in practicing simple, but effective, safety procedures. Some of these are: always wearing your ID and asking anyone you don’t recognize for their ID (if you don’t see one visible), letting the greeters know ahead of time about any visitors you are expecting and always locking classroom doors when staff are not present (students should never be left unsupervised).
− Attendance needs to be taken within the first 5 minutes of every class. Taking timely and accurate attendance is another important aspect of student safety. I have directed Wendy Simoncelli to continue to send reminders to teachers not taking attendance in a timely manner and Jessica Silsby to follow up with teachers where there is a pattern of attendance not being taken or that it is inaccurate. Overall this has improved greatly, but our goal with this procedure is a 100% accuracy.

− Advisement reminder: Students traveling during Advisement need to have a pre-signed pass. Honor passes are not in effect during Advisement. If students are sent to the bathroom/locker, they should have a pass in their planners. Everyone’s consistency with this expectation is greatly appreciated.

− 100 days celebration: On Wednesday, March 13, there will be a variety of events to mark 100 days until graduation. Our senior class will gather in the East Gym at 7:10 a.m. for their class picture, and this may interrupt 5-10 minutes of first block. Festivities will resume during fourth block at 12:50 p.m. in the East Gym and East Café and last through Activity Period. Although this is a voluntary event, all seniors are eligible to attend starting at 12:50 p.m. As usual, an announcement will be made dismissing the students from their classrooms. We are encouraging all 12th grade classroom teachers to come down to witness the fun and participate in this activity if they are available. Please direct any questions to Tim O’Connor.

− Upcoming faculty meetings/Superintendent’s Day:
  o 3/12: This faculty meeting will take place in the PAC starting at 2:25. Kate Zobkiw will be providing a training on Narcan for staff (all staff is invited to attend). Please plan on this meeting lasting until 3:20.
  o 3/22: Superintendent’s Day
    ▪ 8:00 - 9:00 a.m. - Grading discussion
    ▪ 9:00 - 9:55 a.m. - Positive Psychology with Amy O'Sullivan
    ▪ 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. - Mental Health presentation
    ▪ 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. - Lunch
    ▪ 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. - Department meetings
    ▪ 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. - Blended Learning

Principal’s Message
As we head into March, our conversation on grading will continue. Superintendent’s Day on March 22 will give us the opportunity to once again review our draft grading philosophy and to vote on it as a faculty. Feedback that was given on the draft can be found in Schoology. As I have said multiple times, I truly have enjoyed the opportunity for our entire faculty to engage in this discussion. It has had a positive impact on student learning in so many ways! Very powerful stuff😊.

I continue to be very impressed by the work each of you have done with instructional technology. In every classroom I visit I see instructional technology being used in support of the ISTE standards. A special thank you to our Digital Conversion Team for the support they have provided to our entire building. Thank you for being willing to take “risks” and to have your own personal “learning stretch” as we transition to a “one to one” learning environment. Please note that Teacher Leaders are working with Cory Allen on a
plan to collect laptops from our graduating seniors (9th-11th grade students will keep their laptops over the summer).

I hope everyone has a great week! Please feel free to see me at any time with questions, concerns, or comments…all the best! Sean

And thank you to Courtney Hoerner who shared the following grading article with me. I really enjoyed it. A quick and easy read if you so choose…😊.

Exploring Ways to Say So Long to Traditional Letter Grades
By Madeline Will, Education Week Feb. 5, 2019

High school junior Jadyn Sullivan tends to get stressed about schoolwork. Like many of her peers, she worries about her grades.

But in her physics class, there is no traditional A-F grading scale to worry about. That's because David Frangiosa, Jadyn's teacher at Pascack Hills High School in Montvale, N.J., uses standards-based grading instead.

In that system, students don't get grades on their assignments. Instead, Frangiosa gives them detailed feedback, and their performance is measured against specific course standards for mastery of the content.

Jadyn will only see a reported grade twice during the year: a midyear progress report and the final grade on her report card, which is based on a month-long final project. In many ways, she said, that is freeing.

"I feel like I'm learning a lot more than I would" if there was a grade attached to each assignment, she said. "I'm trying to actually find the answer rather than worrying about if it's right or wrong."

Jadyn's experience is not the norm in schools, but it's part of a growing trend of educators rethinking grading.

"In my opinion, it's probably the biggest elephant in the room in regards to school reform," Dan Kelley, the principal of Smithfield High School in Rhode Island, said of traditional grading. "We start [grading] at a young age, and it becomes all about accumulating points, and it's not about the learning anymore."

There are a few different strands of grading reform. Some schools have "no zero" policies that say the lowest score a student can receive on an assignment is a 50, at times even when a student fails to turn anything in. In addition to standards-based grading systems like Frangiosa's, there is competency-based learning, which allows students to progress in their learning at different rates based on how well they've mastered a set of standards or competencies.
The most radical approach of all is **ditching the grade book altogether**—in favor of giving students detailed feedback on their performance throughout the year and working with students to jointly assign a final report card grade, when the school requires it. (It's a small but passionate movement: About 10,000 educators are in a Facebook group devoted to throwing out grades.)

While these approaches vary, the educators who experiment with grades have a common rationale: The traditional A-F system doesn't inspire students to learn for the sake of learning. Grades are too heavily based on nonacademic factors, like punctuality and compliance. They stress some students out and cause others—particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds—to give up.

"Are students in school to get a grade and graduate or are they in school to get better at something, to improve themselves, and to actually learn something?" said Mike Stein, an English teacher at Coffee County Central High School in Manchester, Tenn., who has gotten rid of grades in his classroom.

"Sometimes, the answer can be both. Unfortunately, all too often, students get so focused on the number that it's literally all they care about. It's my job to do whatever I can to help them learn, even if that means taking away the numbers at the top of the page."

But the traditional grading system is entrenched in America's schools, and educators who experiment with grades have faced pushback from administrators, teachers, parents, and students themselves. And many school districts are not logistically set up for making radical grading changes, educators say.

"Grades aren't the best way to communicate learning; it's the easiest way, it's the most efficient way," said Starr Sackstein, the director of humanities for the West Hempstead, N.Y., school district and an edweek.org opinion blogger, who has written books about rethinking assessment.

"When we start ... understanding that kids aren't numbers or letters, they're complex people who often require a lot more than that—it's not that we don't want to give it to them, but I think we sometimes feel burdened by the extra responsibilities [and requirements] in the school system."

**Shifting Students' Mindsets**

A body of research has found that grades tend to reduce students' interest in learning. Anecdotally, teachers who shifted away from the traditional A-F grading system say that after some implementation bumps, their students seem more engaged in the subject material. They take more ownership of their learning. And they stop asking the dreaded question: "What do I need to do to get an A?"
"My classroom has never been more enjoyable to me since I started this," said Frangiosa, who volunteered to switch to standards-based grading four years ago when his assistant principal was looking for someone to develop and pilot the model.

"I'm a science teacher. The nature of my class is to investigate," he said. But before he made the switch, "any time I gave students feedback, ... it would all go back to the grade."

Now, students receive one letter grade at the end of the year—and it's not based on their understanding of the content, but rather the skills baked into the course standards. While students take (and must pass) periodic content quizzes, their final grade is based on skills used in their final assignment and assessment, because that should be their best work, Frangiosa said.

This year, about 10 percent of teachers in his school are using alternate assessments, although not all are standards-based, he said.

The standards-based model, he said, gives students "the opportunity to try things out of their comfort zones and not be afraid to fail, because these mistakes and failures are really where we learn."

Stein, the Tennessee teacher who went gradeless after presenting a plan to his principal, said his students have appreciated the "mindset shift" that comes with not having a grade. Other teachers in his school have expressed interest after seeing how engaged his students are, Stein said, but no one else has taken the plunge.

Still, he does have to give his students a final grade to put on their report card due to school policy. His workaround: letting students pitch him what grade they think they've earned.

 Typically, about two-thirds of Stein's students give themselves the grade that he would have given them. A handful of the remaining students will try to inflate their grades, but it's more typical for students to low-ball themselves, he said.

That's common, grading experts say.

Without grades, "students became better advocates for their own learning; they were able to speak to what they know in terms of the standards. They were able to ask for help more succinctly and know what they needed help with," Sackstein said. "I think they also became more confident learners."

**A Lightning Rod Issue**

Still, it's hard work to rethink grades, educators say. They can face resistance at every corner, including from students, who are used to "playing the game of school," Sackstein said.
And without all parties on board, the reform can fail. Five years ago, Kelley, the Rhode Island high school principal, had to walk back a few grade-related changes he made. He had preceded the changes with three years of conversations about grading practices with staff members.

The changes called, for example, for teachers to allow revisions on summative assessments and stop giving zeroes. Teachers were also asked to consider how and why they were grading homework.

Kelley thought that it was a good first step toward lessening the focus on grades, but the rollout went poorly.

"I've never had so much anger, hostility, frustration," Kelley said. "Here I was thinking as a leader, we took our time with the conversation, but grading practices are so ingrained [that] it is really, really, really hard to break some of these practices that I think are toxic."

Most of the pushback came from parents, he said.

A common critique of grading reforms is that they don't teach students personal responsibility or work ethic.

Laura Fuchs, a high school history teacher in the District of Columbia, said she understands the arguments for getting rid of traditional grades. But grades help hold her students accountable. Learning that responsibility, she said, is important as students prepare for the workforce.

"No job is going to pay you if you don't do what your boss tells you to do," she said.

Perhaps no area of grade-related reform has been as hotly criticized as the no-zero policy. But for Michael Megyesi, the principal of Chesterton Middle School in Indiana, switching to that policy for homework and classwork was a game changer for his students. Before, many students were failing classes, even though they were passing the tests.

"The zero was more indicative of their behavior than their academic performance," he said. "This eliminates all behaviors from the grade." Now, if a student is failing a class, teachers know it's because he or she doesn't know the material and can deliver early interventions, Megyesi said.

**Equitable Grading**

Megyesi said the no-zero policy also puts students on a "level playing field." Some students, he said, don't have support at home, and it's not fair to punish them if they are unable to complete their homework.
Indeed, Joe Feldman, an education consultant and author based in Oakland, Calif., said traditional grading "thwarts efforts to make schools more-equitable places."

The practice, he said, is vulnerable to teacher bias and favors students with privilege while harming those from low-income backgrounds or with special needs. Instead of motivating students to work harder, Feldman, a former teacher, said low grades often cause students to withdraw from school out of discouragement.

After all, A, B, C, and so on are labels that educators are putting on students, said Mark Barnes, the creator of the Hack Learning book series and an advocate for getting rid of grades entirely.

"The more you work to get kids to believe in learning for the sake of learning, the better they become as learners for the rest of their lives," Barnes said. "When you put a grade on something, learning stops. That's the worst thing about grades. And as teachers, we should want learning to go on forever."