

AMBRIDGE AREA



Bridger Bulletin Winter 2024



Rachel's Challenge: Inspiring Positive Change in Our Schools

This year, our school district proudly launched Rachel's Challenge, a nationally recognized program dedicated to fostering kindness, respect, and empathy among students. Named after Rachel Scott, the first victim of the Columbine tragedy, this program is designed to create a culture of compassion and connection in schools by addressing bullying, isolation, and negative behaviors.

Since its introduction, Rachel's Challenge has inspired students and staff through engaging assemblies, classroom lessons, and ongoing activities. The program's message emphasizes the power of small acts of kindness to create a ripple effect of positive change, transforming school culture and improving relationships.



Already, we've seen the impact of this initiative, with students embracing the challenge to "start a chain reaction" of kindness and compassion. Districts that implement Rachel's Challenge often report reduced bullying, increased feelings of safety, and stronger connections, and we're excited to see these benefits take root in our schools.

Together, we are building a community where kindness thrives and every student feels valued.

Rachel's Challenge at Ambridge

Spreading Kindness Through Action



Since introducing Rachel's Challenge in August, our students have fully embraced its mission by taking meaningful steps to spread kindness and positivity throughout our schools. They've launched a student-led Instagram page, @FORAmbridge, to share uplifting stories and messages, fostering a sense of community online.

In addition, students have created kindness bracelets to brighten each other's days and have posted positive messages around the school to encourage everyone to support one another. One of the most heartwarming efforts has been the introduction of the "Teacher Feature," where students vote during lunch to recognize and celebrate teachers who make a difference.

These initiatives reflect the incredible impact of Rachel's Challenge, as students take the lead in creating a culture of kindness, respect, and connection in our district. We are proud to see their enthusiasm making a real difference!



**KINDNESS
Changes
EVERYTHING**



Ambridge Interact Club: A Year of Service and Community Impact



Since the start of the school year, the Ambridge High School Interact Club has been actively engaged in service projects that highlight the spirit of giving back to our community. The year began with students volunteering as tour guides during Freshman Orientation, setting a welcoming tone for the newest members of our high school.

In October, the club took part in the annual Spooktacular Halloween event, hosting a Trick-or-Treat celebration. Under the leadership of President Maddie Kozak and Norah Marchionda, members transformed the first-floor hallways with festive decorations, passed out candy, and organized games for children in the gymnasium. The High School Book Club, led by President Maddy Palmer, joined the event, handing out donated books to young attendees.



Ambridge Interact Club: A Year of Service and Community Impact



As the holidays approached, Interact students embraced the season of giving. They served as Santa's helpers during the Santa Shops at State Street and Highland Elementary schools. Senior Joshua Kuny spearheaded the CYS Toy Drive, providing gifts for 29 children, with contributions from staff and students. Juniors Lila Gerle, Caylin Fedora, and Kevonte Saunders led efforts to assist with Harmony Township's "Shop with a Cop" program by organizing gift wrapping for this community event.

Beyond these projects, Interact members decorated the high school lobby for the Winter Band and Choral concerts and the Winter Art Show. Senior Nico Caprini also led a food drive to support local families and students over winter break, showcasing the club's dedication to helping those in need.

Looking ahead, the Interact Club is already preparing for its spring service projects, including the much-anticipated Fun and Field Days at our elementary schools. As part of Rotary International and sponsored by the Ambridge Rotary Club, the Interact Club remains committed to fostering community service and international understanding, making a positive impact in every effort they undertake.

Ambridge Middle School Celebrates the Season

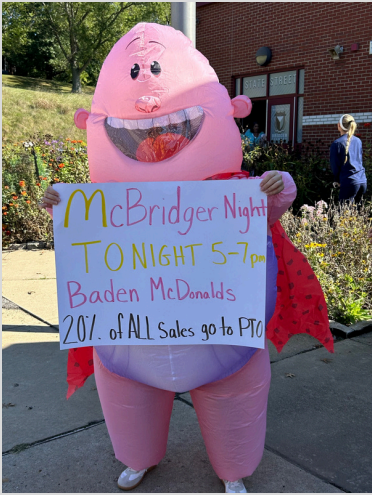


This fall, Ambridge Middle School students enjoyed a spooky good time at the annual Spooktacular Dance. The event was filled with music, fun, and festive spirit, bringing the school community together for a night to remember.



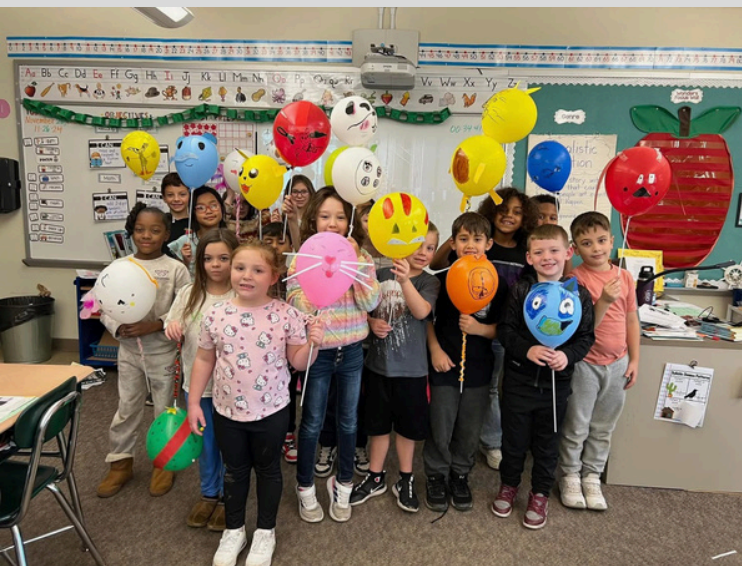
As the year comes to a close, the middle school is also preparing to showcase the talents of its students with the holiday concert. The band and chorus are excited to spread holiday cheer through their performances, highlighting the hard work and dedication of our young musicians.

Elementary Excitement: Spreading Joy Across Our Schools



State Street Elementary: Community and Celebration

State Street Elementary has been buzzing with activity this fall, bringing students, families, and the community together. From hosting a heartfelt Veterans Day breakfast to celebrating with a festive balloon parade, the school has created memorable experiences for all. Students also enjoyed a fire prevention field trip and had a blast supporting their teachers during a McTeacher's Night fundraiser at McDonald's. These events highlight the strong sense of community and connection that make State Street Elementary so special!



Elementary Excitement: Spreading Joy Across Our Schools



Economy Elementary has been recognized as a 2024 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education, a prestigious honor celebrating exceptional academic performance and progress in closing achievement gaps.

This recognition highlights the collaborative efforts of the entire Economy Elementary community, including its dedicated principal, teachers, staff, students, and parents. National Blue Ribbon Schools exemplify high standards, effective teaching practices, and strong community partnerships, serving as models of excellence for educators nationwide.



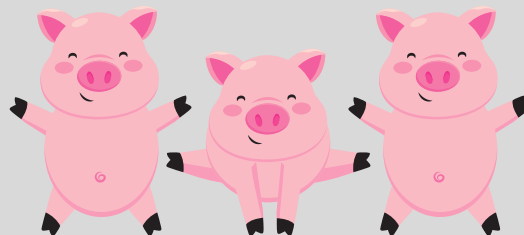
The award reflects the commitment to academic excellence and equity at Economy Elementary, and we extend our heartfelt congratulations to everyone who contributed to this remarkable achievement.

Congratulations to Economy Elementary on this incredible honor and best wishes for continued success!

Elementary Excitement: Spreading Joy Across Our Schools



This fall, Highland Elementary students had the chance to meet Willow and Cedar, two friendly mini pigs, during their first visit to the school. Students in grades 4, 5, and Pre-K learned all about mini pigs and enjoyed spending time with them. One lucky Pre-K student even won extra cuddle time with Cedar.



Willow and Cedar returned on November 12 for grades 2 and 3, and again on December 3 for 1st grade and Kindergarten. These visits bring fun and learning together in an unforgettable way!

New Principal for Middle School



Meet David DiCaprio Jr.

I am David DiCaprio Jr. I am from New Castle, Pennsylvania. I have two daughters and a wife at home. I enjoy coaching baseball, softball, basketball for my daughter and in the community. I also enjoy hiking, watching movies, weightlifting, and spending time with friends and families.

I have been in education since 2011. I graduated from Slippery Rock with a bachelors in elementary and special education. I started for four years as a teacher at Cray Challenges in New Castle. I went on to work at PA Cyber for seven years with two of those years being the Director of Special Education Curriculum. I then became the Director of Curriculum at Moniteau School District. Next, I was the assistant Principal at Mohawk Jr./Sr. High School in New Castle. I recently wrapped up my Superintendent courses as well at Edinboro University.

Moreover, I am a certified GED and HiSET test proctor and go to local jails to test inmates. This work is satisfying in helping the community and changing people's lives.

New Assistant Principal for High School



Meet Tony Amadio

I am excited to serve as your new Assistant Principal and Athletic Director. With a dedication to bringing a strong passion for student success and a commitment to fostering a well-rounded school environment. I believe with 30 years of creating positive, supportive environments for both students and staff, my aim is to further enhance our school's academic and athletic programs, ensuring that students not only excel in the classroom but also grow through extracurricular activities.

As Athletic Director, I am excited to build upon the traditions of excellence in our sports programs while working closely with our student-athletes, coaches, and families to ensure a safe and inclusive environment for all. Their leadership will continue to drive our goal of promoting teamwork, discipline, and sportsmanship on and off the field.

I hope to make a positive impact on our students, staff, and community of the place I call my second home.

Go Bridgers!

New Director of Curriculum and Instruction



Meet Meghan Watelet

Dr. Meghan Watelet is starting as the new Coordinator of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment at Ambridge Area School District. Dr. Watelet comes from North Hills School District where she was the high school assistant principal for the last three years.

In addition to being a high school assistant principal at North Hills High School and Chartiers Valley High School, Dr. Watelet has experience as a special education teacher, high school English teacher, and school counselor. She is very excited to be part of the Ambridge community to provide high quality education for all students. Meghan currently lives with her husband Zach and dog Brady in McCandless.