



# PORT NEWS

Port Jervis City School District

WINTER 2023

## CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATE

**Phase one** of the capital project focuses on the former middle school. As you drive by, you can see that the new addition, which we refer to as Area A is going up rather quickly. It will be home to the main office, cafeteria, gymnasium, elevator and a staircase. Area B is from the old gym to the center staircase. All of the interior walls have been demolished and new walls are being erected. This was necessary because the old classrooms were too small by state standards. Area C, which is from the center staircase to the auditorium, is still in the asbestos abatement stage. Go to our website: [www.pjschools.org](http://www.pjschools.org) and click on the "Capital Project" icon to see up-to-date photos of the project.

**Phase two** of the capital project will focus on the Route 209 campus. We have made a few changes to the plan. Originally, the ASK cafeteria was going to become a mini-auditorium. Once we realized it wasn't large enough to host a concert or drama production, we decided to switch gears and make it a music suite consisting of a band room, chorus room, practice rooms and instrumental storage space. The music suite was originally going to be located in the ASK kindergarten wing. The district office was also slated to move into the kindergarten wing at a cost of \$1.1 million.

The state is talking about making pre-K mandatory by 2030. We didn't want to spend more than \$1 million to convert classroom space into offices and then be short classroom space come 2030. Thus, we are going to leave that wing as classroom space for future use either because of new pre-K rules or as overflow space to benefit the high school and/or middle school. The district office and PPS office will remain on Pike Street for the foreseeable future. The Thompson Street building will be going up for sale.

We are preparing a **Phase three** capital project to take to the voters in May. It will include improvements to the high school auditorium and Glennette Field as well as other projects around the district needing attention. Stay tuned for more information in the spring.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Dr. John Bell

It's hard to believe that we are more than halfway through the school year! The lack of snow has allowed us to keep the students in a normal routine without those typical winter interruptions. Let's hope winter doesn't come next month just as spring sports are starting.

Believe it or not, we are very busy planning for next school year already. Whether it be adding more college courses in the high school, creating more middle school honors courses or selecting new textbooks, the planning happens now before we finalize the 2023-24 budget and start building student schedules for next year.

School safety and security is always a concern for all of us. The school resource officers have been a great addition to our school district. Earlier this school year, we had a safety report done by an outside firm to assess what we are doing well, what we need to improve upon and what new safety measures we should consider adding. While we don't share all the details in public for obvious reasons, we have added additional safety measures and plenty more are on the way.

In closing, I want to reiterate the four student goals I outlined in the district calendar that was mailed home this summer. We ask all students to: 1) push themselves academically, 2) have great attendance, 3) exhibit outstanding behavior, and 4) get involved in extracurricular activities. This is the recipe for student success so please reinforce them at home whenever you can.

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## ELEMENTARY DRAMA PRODUCTIONS



### WILLY WONKA JR., HBE Drama Club

HBE Drama Club, comprised of 70 4th, 5th & 6th graders, told the story of Roald Dahl's *Willy Wonka Jr.* on December 2nd & 3rd. The show follows enigmatic candy manufacturer Willy Wonka as he stages a contest by hiding golden tickets in five of his scrumptious candy bars. Whomever comes up with these tickets will win a free tour of the Wonka factory, as well as a lifetime supply of candy.



### CAMP ROCK, ASK Drama Club

A classic story of rivalry and power, *Disney's Camp Rock The Musical* opens with Mitchie and her friends arriving at Camp Rock, ready to spend another summer jamming out and having the time of their lives. But the new, flashy Camp Star across the lake now threatens Camp Rock's very existence. To keep the doors open, Mitchie steps up, rallies her fellow Camp Rockers and gets them into top shape for the ultimate showdown!

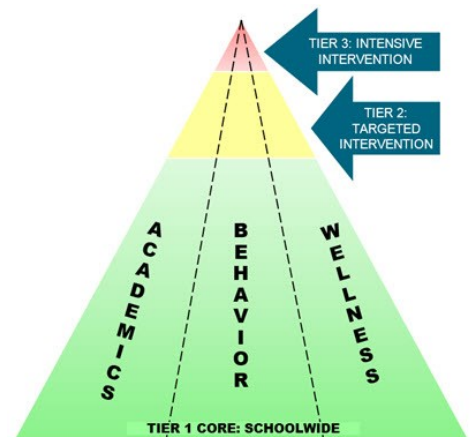
## WHAT IS M.T.S.S.?

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) may seem like a new initiative, as it was recently introduced into the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). However, MTSS is a culmination of smaller initiatives or systems that have been in our schools for several years. The purpose of using an MTSS framework is that it allows us to use a holistic approach to support individual student learning and engagement within the school community. The initiatives and systems that make up the MTSS framework include:

**Response to Intervention (RTI):** The tiered academic supports and interventions for reading, writing, and math that are implemented in the classroom or supported by support specialists in each school;

**Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS):** The tiered supports and interventions to support positive student and community expectations and behavior. PBIS supports are embedded in classroom management and school-wide programs to promote and reward positive behaviors for the school community;

**Social-Emotional Wellness and Character Development (SEL):** Tiered supports to explicitly teach characteristics of community, self-awareness, and emotional well-being.



Last year, the Port Jervis district MTSS committee was formed to evaluate our existing PK-12 systems and programs that fall under the MTSS umbrella. The district team was tasked with evaluating our academic (RTI), behavior (PBIS), and wellness (SEL/character development) supports and programming. The district MTSS team worked collectively to form a K-12 continuum of services to support students, parents, teachers, and the community. This year, parents, students and staff may have noticed changes in our academic support programs, with push-in services at the secondary level. Additionally, our Port PRIDE and character education programs are now district-wide with incentives such as positive referrals sent home, rewards for demonstrating character traits, and school-wide events focusing on social issues and expectations. Our district looks forward to the continued development of our MTSS program and appreciates the support of our school community!



**If a child doesn't know how to read, we teach. If a child doesn't know how to swim, we teach.  
 If a child doesn't know how to multiply, we teach. If a child doesn't know how to drive, we teach.  
 If a child doesn't know how to behave, we... teach? ...punish?**

**Why can't we finish the last sentence as automatically as we do the others?**

-Tom Herner

When one ponders the idea of teaching behavior, why does it raise such concerns? Teachers go to school to teach subject areas and learn about classroom management, but what happens when a student doesn't respond to traditional classroom management techniques? Enter the system of **PBIS**. PBIS stands for **Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports**. The purpose of a school-wide PBIS system is to teach and reward desired positive behaviors.

During the summer of 2022, the Port Jervis School District put together a committee, made up of representatives from each of the four buildings, to form a central set of core values. The committee decided on The Port Pride 5: *Be Kind, Be Honest, Be Responsible, Be Respectful and Be Involved*. The Port Pride 5 makes up the foundation of expected school behaviors. The expected behaviors are explicitly taught in classrooms the first week of school using a set of common language. Students who demonstrate those expectations are rewarded in a token system. Each building utilizes a token system that is personalized to their school theme. In a tiered PBIS system, most students respond to tier 1 behavioral expectations. To develop and maintain a school-wide PBIS system, all staff in the school must be invested and committed. Involvement comes from everyone the child meets from the time they leave their home until they are returned to their home at the end of the day. This includes the bus drivers, custodians, support staff as well as the teachers, office staff and administrators.

When a student is repeatedly struggling with school-wide expectations, the student is identified by staff and moved to a set of tier 2 supports. The tier 2 supports are put in place to prevent the problem from worsening. The efforts in a tier 2 system focus on the function of the behavior, or underlying issues, that may be causing the student to struggle behaviorally. When a student doesn't respond to tier 2 supports, the student is moved to tier 3 supports. These supports are put in place to specifically support students who display high-risk behaviors. The supports at this level are very specific to the student and typically involve specialized staff to address the behavior.

When a PBIS system is put into place in a school district, everyone wins. Schools that implement a successful PBIS system show increased positive behavior, less negative behavior and an overall improvement in school climate.



# EXCITING INFORMATION ON NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS!

By: Dr. Natasha Walkowicz, ASI

Students and parents might notice a big change to our academic programming for the 2023-24 school year!

The Port Jervis CSD elementary schools will begin Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Launch, a hands-on real-world PK-5 program focusing on science, technology, and engineering. Our 6-8th grade students will have STEM offerings through PLTW Gateway, with course pathways in biomedical science, computer science, and engineering available to all students. We are also expanding our 7th & 8th grade honors courses in science, math, English, and social studies.

Students at the high school level will be able to choose from an expanded list of college courses and electives through the following pathways: STEM, humanities, the arts, career and technical education (CTE), and business. Students can choose a pathway to support their high school interests while helping to refine their college and career goals. College courses will be offered at no cost to families and available in all pathways.

More information will follow shortly on Project Lead the Way, honors, and college courses. For more information on Project Lead the Way, visit their website at: <https://www.pltw.org/our-programs>. Our early college high school partners are: SUNY Orange, SUNY Albany, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, and Mount Saint Mary College.

## WHO DO I CALL??????

Sometimes an issue arises and you are not sure who the first person is to call. Here are some helpful ideas on who to call depending on the situation. A second level person is also listed in case your issue isn't rectified at the first level.

### Classroom Concerns

First: Teacher  
Second: Principal

### Discipline

First: Teacher  
Second: Asst. Principal

### Scheduling

First: Teacher (if course specific)  
Second: Counselor

### Special Education

First: Special Education Teacher  
Second: Counselor

### Athletics

First: Coach  
Second: Athletic Director

### Extra-Curricular Clubs

First: Club Advisor  
Second: Principal

### Health/Medical

First: School Nurse  
Second: Principal

### Attendance

First: Teacher (if course specific)  
Second: School Secretary

### Cafeteria

First: School Secretary  
Second: Food Service Director

### Transportation

First: School Secretary  
Second: Quality Bus



## PJ School District Line: (845) 858-3100

Port Jervis High School:	Ext. 1500	Athletic Department:	Ext. 1881
Port Jervis Middle School:	Ext. 2500	Food Service Department:	Ext. 3896
ASK Elementary:	Ext. 3500	Pupil Personnel Services:	Ext. 6504
HBE Elementary:	Ext. 4500	Buildings & Grounds:	Ext 7501

