

U N I O N E N D I C O T T TIGER TRENDS

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Welcome back U-E Tigers!

U-E Tigers are ready for another fantastic year!



Students prep for middle school

Being a Tiger in the middle at U-E brings about many opportunities. One of those is getting some prep time in before the school year starts during Prep Academy.

Over the course of four half days, incoming sixth-graders at JFS and incoming eighth- and ninth-graders at Tiger Ventures-LWW spent the mornings at their respective schools to get an idea of what school will be like.

Students experienced the fundamentals of school, including going through the cafeteria line and eating breakfast, opening their lockers, walking through their schedule, and touring the building. They also met teachers and principals.

At the newly-opened Tiger Ventures-LWW, students worked on projects, participated in community building activities, and were trained in basic ▶

See Academy, page 3.



Tiger Pride-Rich Traditions & Boundless Opportunities

A message from

Superintendent Dr. Suzanne McLeod



We enjoyed a wonderful beginning to the school year with the successful continuation of many of our traditional events, including homecoming, parent-teacher curriculum nights in every school, and the arrival of our Italian Exchange students, just to name a few. In addition, new events, and ones we hope will become

traditions, also helped successfully launch the school year. The first includes the expansion of Kindergarten Jump Start. This program brings our youngest students to school for four half days before the year begins so they can get comfortable with their new school. The second is Prep Academy. Sixth-graders at Jennie F. Snapp Middle School and eighth- and ninth-graders at the new Tiger Ventures program at the Linnaeus W. West School also spent four half days getting to know their new school, meeting teachers, and learning about their new daily schedules.

With the school year underway, we can turn our thoughts to accomplishing our long-range goals. Every year the board sets academic goals for our students that focus on graduation rate, elementary students reading at or above grade level, good attendance, and a high level of performance in both coursework and assessments.

Additionally, the board regularly examines the financial condition of the district, determining whether our immediate goals are met and analyzing our long-range fiscal projections. This work is also audited on a regular basis by the New York state comptroller's office, by an independent external auditor, and by two separate levels of internal auditors. With the roller coaster ride of state aid, the gap elimination adjustment, and the uncertainties of the overall economy, our goal is to ensure that we have adequate reserves so our students have the resources they need for their education, while also being respectful of our community's limited resources.

This is why we have ALWAYS created and presented budgets to the community that do not exceed the tax levy limit. This is why we carefully manage our reserves so that when big expenses occur, such as capital project work, we have reserve funds to offset the local share. And, this is why our students, despite the ups and downs of the state's finances, have continued to enjoy excellent educational experiences.

I sincerely thank all of you for your support.
Go Tigers!

School-wide PSATs return to UEHS

For the second year, all students in grades nine through 11 took the PSATs on November 2, introducing them to the exam. On the same day, seniors visited either Binghamton University or SUNY Broome to get a glimpse of college.

Typically, only juniors take the PSATs, but the district believes that by exposing all underclassmen to the exam before they are juniors, more students will be college- and career-ready. For seniors, getting the opportunity to visit local campuses can help them better prepare for next year as college freshmen.

Last year, the PSATs provided an encouraging snapshot of student achievement at UEHS. Freshmen and sophomores exceeded the national average in meeting both ELA and math benchmarks, and last year's junior class was on pace with New York state averages for meeting or exceeding the same benchmarks. In addition, the administrative and guidance teams learned valuable lessons about implementing this exam to over 1,000 students simultaneously.

The high school team will update the board of education and community when the 2016 PSAT scores are available early next year. ^{UE}

Jump Start jumps into its second year

Once again, U-E's youngest students got a head start on school through the district-wide Kindergarten Jump Start program, now in its second year.

Over the course of four half days, students learned about being a kindergartner, from riding the bus, touring their school, eating breakfast in the cafeteria, and meeting teachers and principals. Students also participated in engaging classroom stations and fun experiences in art, PE and music. The program gave students a look and feel for what kindergarten will be like in a quite, comfortable time frame for just their grade.

Parent Rachel Talcott said, "My son really benefitted from Jump Start because he had never been to TJW before. When the first day of school arrived, he felt very comfortable." ^{UE}



Academy, from page 1.

concepts of restorative practices. Christine Coveney, grades 6-12 director of curriculum said, "The academy introduced students to the program, helping them find their place in the school community."



Principal Riddleberger helps a student with his locker.

At JFS, Principal Toby Riddleberger, Assistant Principal Mike Moran, and other staff greeted students and talked with them about sixth grade. Students then went with teachers to see classrooms, find their lockers and practice opening them.

Riddleberger said, "JFS Prep Academy was a wonderful experience for our incoming sixth-graders who attended. Students and parents came with some hesitation on the first day. By the end, they were smiling and looking forward to the start of the school year." UE



Students and staff at Tiger Ventures-LWW had the chance to meet.

Head of security is more than building safety

His official title in the district is head of security, but Lynn Parker feels his job goes far beyond the walls of the schools he helps to keep safe. For Parker, it's far more about the relationships he makes with students and staff.

As is typical of security personnel in schools, checking doors, monitoring halls and rest rooms, and keeping a general watch is a main priority. The other priority for Parker is being seen as a mentor for students and establishing professional relationships with staff. This means being available and being seen in the halls, the cafeterias, on the playgrounds, and in the classrooms.

Currently, his primary office is located at the high school, where he starts his day greeting students as they come in and walking the halls before first period starts. Next he

heads to LWW. From there he reports to JFS where he spends three lunch periods talking and spending time with students and just being a general presence on campus. Throughout the week, he also travels to the four elementary schools to meet with students and staff and work out any issues that may arise.

He said, "I feel the importance of my job is creating a safe environment for both students and staff where students can learn and grow." UE



Lynn Parker spends time with JFS students during their free time at lunch.



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Teaching writing to elementary students a priority for staff

Since this past June, a main focus for elementary teachers has been literacy. To give teachers the expertise they need to teach this very important part of elementary education, they have been using “Units of Study for Teaching Writing,” by Lucy Calkins.

In June, teachers began professional

development with trained staff from Teachers’ College Columbia University with district literacy coordinators attending an intensive workshop at Teachers’ College on this unit.

Once coordinators completed their training, they conducted professional development work sessions for

teachers from the four elementary buildings during Superintendent’s Conference Day.

“Units of Study for Teaching Writing” is a best practice framework that supports the Literacy Collaborative Writer’s Workshop framework currently used in the district. These units focus on opinion/argument, information, and narrative writing in grades K-8 with increasing complexity. Through this writing work, students will foster high-level thinking, including regular chances to synthesize, analyze and critique. They will develop and refine strategies for writing across the curriculum with increased ability through varied writing opportunities. The process of writing will be fostered in primary grades and developed through the intermediate years. ^{UE}



**JFS Musical
hits the
theater**

