

PHOENIX

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Winter 2023



Phoenix schools to celebrate its rich music history with Music Hall of Fame

Nominations open through March 1 for inaugural class

The Phoenix Central School District is unveiling plans to celebrate its rich history of top-notch performing artists and teachers through a newly formed Music Hall of Fame.

The effort stems from countless hours of behind-the-scenes planning, reflection and discussion. District officials recognized the need to celebrate the students, staff and community members who have contributed to the success of the Firebird music program over the years.

“We have such incredible musical talent and we wanted to find a way to celebrate the folks who have made our music program such a success,” said PCSD Superintendent of Schools Christopher Byrne. “It is our hope to not only recognize and develop appreciation for the history of the Phoenix music program, but also to inspire future students to strive for greatness.”

Inductees must be nominated and voted upon by a selection committee comprised of the Director of

Music and Fine Arts, a Board of Education member and two music teachers. To nominate a student (must have graduated at least 10 years ago) or staff member (must have retired at least five years ago), please complete the nomination form available at phoenixcsd.org/musichalloffame. Nominations are due March 1 for consideration in this year’s inaugural class.

“We have had so many tremendous singers, actors, directors and music contributors in our schools,” Byrne said. “We are thrilled to have a platform to honor these role models who exemplify the PCSD’s commitment to academics, community and music excellence.”

The first class of Music Hall of Fame inductees will be recognized during a ceremony in May, with plaques on display near the John C. Birdlebough High School auditorium entrance. Additional information about the ceremony and nominees will be released as the selection process moves forward.

Dot Foods supports Phoenix athletic program

The Phoenix Central School District Athletic Department will have some new equipment thanks to a \$7,250 donation from Dot Foods.

“Our goal is to use the funds to benefit as many Phoenix students and student-athletes as possible, which is why we are thinking about improving some weight room machines,” said PCSD Director of Health, Physical Education and Athletics John Jeffries. “We are extremely grateful for Dot Foods and their donation to help our athletic program.”

Jeffries noted that the community has shown tremendous support for the athletic program over the years. Local businesses such as Duskees, Phoenix Sports Restaurant, RFH’s, Family Dollar and others have been at the forefront of various fundraising efforts.

“We are grateful for all our local businesses and everything they do for our athletes,” Jeffries said. “And we cannot thank Dot Foods enough for their generosity and, most importantly, their support of the Phoenix School District.”

JCB Drama Club to present ‘Shrek – The Musical’



The feel-good tale of a heroic green ogre will unfold on the John C. Birdlebough High School stage in March as the drama club presents “Shrek — The Musical.”

Based on the DreamWorks Animation film, the story follows an ogre named Shrek as he journeys to save

his home while rescuing a fairy princess. Shrek’s life-changing journey is filled with a diverse cast of characters, including Princess Fiona, a wisecracking

Donkey, a short-tempered bad guy and over a dozen other fairy tale misfits.

“This is such a fun production,” said JCB Drama Club co-advisor and the show’s producer, Lisa Spereno. “We have an awesome cast and crew, and we can’t wait to see everything come together. The students are working hard and looking forward to opening night.”

Performances will take place at 4 p.m. March 9, 7:30 p.m. March 10, and 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. March 11. All shows will be held in the JCB Auditorium of the high school, 552 Main St., Phoenix.

Tickets are on sale now at www.showtix4u.com/events/JCBDramaClub, or may be purchased the day of the show or by emailing lspereno@phoenixcsd.org. Adult tickets are \$12; and senior citizen and children/student tickets cost \$8.



EJD students earn character education awards

Emerson J. Dillon Middle School students were recently lauded for embracing various positive character traits and earned a celebration in their honor.

The fifth-grade “yellow team” was treated to a breakfast pizza party and had a chance to play games and interact with their peers as a result of the recognition. They gathered in the school

cafeteria where staff and administration were on hand to congratulate them for exhibiting gratitude, kindness and responsibility.

“We’re incredibly proud of our students for embracing these values,” said EJD Principal Jessica Ariola. “They are fantastic members of our school community, and we are grateful they are members of our Firebird family.”



EJD students play games with staff during a quarterly character education celebration.

MAM gears up for One School, One Book literacy initiative

A schoolwide reading initiative will launch at Michael A. Maroun Elementary School this month, and students are abuzz with excitement as the official kick-off assembly approaches.

The effort, spearheaded by teachers Amanda Slater and Erin Soluri, is part of a national campaign called One School, One Book, which aims to promote reading among the entire student population. A committee of MAM teachers has planned several literacy activities during the upcoming weeks, and each student will receive a copy of the book to read at home as a family. At school, students will delve into the novel with their classmates.

“We’re excited to be able to implement this program for our youngest readers,” said PCSD



Executive Director of Instruction and Personnel, Nicole Covell. “Combining in-class reading with home-based activities helps reinforce reading instruction, bolsters parental involvement and builds an entire reading community. We’re grateful to the entire planning committee for their dedication and commitment to our students.”

The book title will remain under wraps until its unveiling at the Feb. 27 kick-off assembly, but

staff members have been dropping hints already to build anticipation. Students have noticed frog and hamster posters in the building, along with different frog projects in class and other activities hinting at the title.

“It really is a far-reaching effort,” said MAM Assistant Principal Stephanie Critelli-Locke. “In addition to dedicated reading time and in-class projects, the students will also have a variety of fun activities to do at home. They’ll receive a bag with a copy of the book, family fun cards, frog activities, vocabulary sheets and other material to reinforce some of the concepts from the book.”

For more information about One School, One Book, visit readtothem.org.

Phoenix students learn life-saving skills in PE class



With a focus on heart health, John C. Birdlebough High School students recently learned about the cardiovascular system and how to perform hands-only CPR.

According to physical education teacher Angie Neiss, the hands-only CPR technique is encouraged by the American Heart Association to help

improve the chances of a victim’s survival after suffering cardiac arrest.

“It requires the bystander to perform chest compressions hard and fast at the center of the chest,” she said. “The compressions push the blood from the heart to the brain; the chance of survival is three times greater than if no CPR is performed.”

JCB students had an opportunity to simulate the technique on mannequins during PE classes. In addition to learning how to properly administer chest compressions, they also learned about AEDs and the importance of using one if available.

Community Connections: EJD art displayed at new Oswego County Federal Credit Union



Thanks to a partnership between the Phoenix Central School District and the newly opened Oswego County Federal Credit Union Branch on Volney Street, patrons can see student artwork on display. Emerson J. Dillon Middle School student artists have created some fantastic work that OCFCU is showcasing in its lobby area. The gallery will change each month, with new work featured on a rotating basis. Stop by the credit union during its hours of operation to check out the artwork!

ATTENDANCE

in the early grades

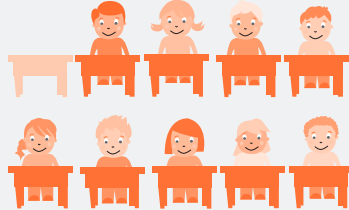
Many of our youngest students miss 10 percent of the school year—about 18 days a year or just two days every month. Chronic absenteeism in kindergarten, and even pre-K, can predict lower test scores, poor attendance and retention in later grades, especially if the problem persists for more than a year. Do you know how many young children are chronically absent in your school or community?

Who Is Affected

Kindergarten and 1st grade classes often have absenteeism rates as high as those in high school. Many of these absences are excused, but they still add up to lost time in the classroom.

1 in 10 kids

in kindergarten and 1st grade are chronically absent. In some schools, it's as high as 1 in 4.¹



2 in 10 low-income kids

miss too much school. They're also more likely to suffer academically.²



2.5 in 10 homeless kids

are chronically absent.²



4 in 10 transient kids

miss too much school when families move.²

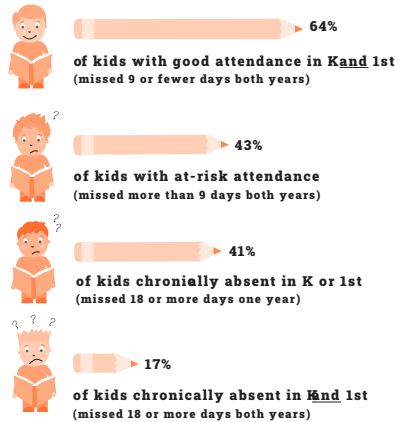


Why It Matters

If children don't show up for school regularly, they miss out on fundamental reading and math skills and the chance to build a habit of good attendance that will carry them into college and careers.

Preliminary data from a California study found that children who were chronically absent in kindergarten and 1st grade were far less likely to read proficiently at the end of 3rd grade.

Who Can Read on Grade Level After 3rd Grade?³



³ Attendance in Early Elementary Grades: Association with Student Characteristics, School Readiness and Third Grade Outcomes, Applied Survey Research, May 2011.

What We Can Do

Engage Families



Many parents and students don't realize how quickly early absences can add up to academic trouble. Community members and teachers can educate families and build a culture of attendance through early outreach, incentives and attention to data.

Fix Transportation



The lack of a reliable car, or simply missing the school bus, can mean some students don't make it to class. Schools, transit agencies and community partners can organize car pools, supply bus passes or find other ways to get kids to school.

Address Health Needs



Health concerns, particularly asthma and dental problems, are among the leading reasons students miss school in the early grades. Schools and medical professionals can work together to give children and families health care and advice.

Track the Right Data



Schools too often overlook chronic absence because they track average attendance or unexcused absences, not how many kids miss too many days for any reason. Attendance Works has free data-tracking tools.

These are a few steps that communities and schools can take. How do you think you can help?

¹ Chang, Hedy; Romero, MariaJose, Present, *Engaged and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades*, National Center for Children in Poverty, NY: NY, September 2008.
² *Chronic Absence in Utah*, Utah Education Policy Center at the University of Utah, 2012.

Phoenix trio to perform at state symposium

Three Phoenix Central School District students will perform alongside the most elite musicians in the state during an upcoming symposium.



Eighth-graders Mirabella Beerman, Alexis Yager and Isabella Whitehead were recently selected to represent the district at the New York State Band Director's Association Spring Symposium in March. The honor, noted Emerson J. Dillon Middle School band teacher David Frateschi, is no small feat.

"Applications were sent in from every area of New York state," Frateschi said. "That's a lot of school districts, and only a select few districts/students were chosen."

The selection takes into account the students' resumes as well as their performances in the previous year's NYSSMA solo festival. Each student noted they put in countless hours of practice to perform at such a high level.

"We all work really hard, so this is amazing to be recognized," said Whitehead, who noted she is looking forward to the symposium.

The symposium will feature other elite student musicians on a variety of instruments. Beerman and Yager will play the French horn, while Whitehead will be featured on the tenor saxophone.

"It is quite an accomplishment for the students and their respective teachers/program to have such a high honor," Frateschi said. "I am so proud of them, and I know they will do great things at the next level."

EJD music students learn about spirituals, create own verses

After learning and singing spirituals, fifth-graders in Carrie Wilson's music class recently put a creative spin on their lesson and created some spiritual verses of their own.

The Emerson J. Dillon Middle School students took their knowledge of spiritual songs to create a verbal map with clues for their classmates.

"The lyrics to 'Follow the Drinking Gourd' were a map song leading to freedom," Wilson said. "Students worked in groups to write their own 'map lyrics' with secret starting and ending locations around the school."

Using the lyrics from each group, the students navigated to different locations throughout the school. They relied on subtle hints to determine the correct destination.

"This was a great way to combine music with history and it provided our students with a fun opportunity to work together," Wilson said.





Phoenix Central Schools

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Mission Statement

The Phoenix Central School District is committed to a challenging educational program that promotes academic and personal growth for all students. Each student will become a confident, productive, responsible individual with a strong academic foundation, and the ability to make positive ethical choices. Our goal is to cultivate a sense of pride, character, and accountability in our students and community. The Board of Education, staff, parents, students, and community share responsibility for this mission.

Cooking, sewing lessons spark excitement among Phoenix students

Emerson J. Dillon Middle School students sew tooth fairy pillows to be given to elementary students who have lost a tooth during the school day.



In the family and consumer science classroom at Emerson J. Dillon Middle School, students have been busy learning a variety of life skills ranging from cooking to sewing.

According to teacher Tracey Amyot, her students have immersed themselves in each activity and have seen some fantastic results. After completing a lesson where they made Bechamel and red sauce with homemade noodles, students dove into a sewing unit making tooth fairy pillows.

"The pillows have a pouch to hold the tooth and will be given to elementary students who have lost a tooth during the school day," Amyot said. "The MAM nurse can hand them out as needed."

The tooth fairy pillows are one of many ideas Amyot is hoping to implement to benefit the student population in the Phoenix Central School District.

Phoenix artists shine in CNY Scholastic Arts competition

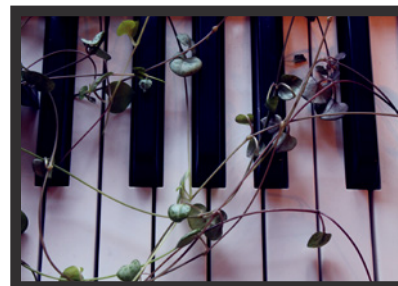
Nearly a dozen Phoenix Central School District students were lauded for their artistic talents recently as their work was selected to be exhibited at Onondaga Community College.

The selected work was entered into the Central New York Scholastic Arts competition, which included more than 4,600 submissions from local student artists. Of the pieces submitted, a panel of judges reviewed each submission and selected the best to be included in the OCC exhibit.

"Our students are incredibly talented, and we are so proud of their accomplishments," said PCSD Art Department teachers. "They worked so hard on their submissions and it is fantastic to see that effort recognized at a regional level."

The prestigious Gold Key honor was given to Emerson J. Dillon Middle School student Jackson Collier and JCB student Alex Bell. Silver Key distinction went to EJD's Hailey Prickett and JCB's Bell, Arlin Russo and Ryleah Breckenridge. Honorable Mention awards were presented to EJD's JJ Fyler, Faith Thomas (two), Sage Byrne, Hailey Szyikowski and Natasia Worley, and JCB's Bell, Russo and Erika Dygert.

Their work will be on display at the Whitney Applied Technology Center at OCC through March 3. The exhibit is free and open to the public.



JCB student Alex Bell earned the Gold Key in the CNY Scholastic Art competition for "Overgrown Piano."