

NewsHub

The quarterly newsletter of your Erie's Public Schools

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Erie's Public Schools

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www.eriesd.org

Brian J. Polito,
Superintendent



Class of '23 Ready to Shine

Many will head to four-year colleges or universities.

Some will choose two-year postsecondary programs or enter a trade or technical school.

Others will enter the armed services or begin a fellowship, apprenticeship or other job training program.

Still others will enter the workforce directly as newly minted graduates of Erie High School and Northwest Pennsylvania Collegiate Academy.

After four years marked by perseverance, mental toughness and uncommon achievement, more than 500 Erie's Public Schools seniors are expected to receive their diplomas during graduation ceremonies at Erie Veterans Memorial Stadium on June 3. The members of the Class of 2023 are as unique and varied as their backgrounds, but all have at least one thing in common: They are very ready to leave a lasting impression.

Construction reshaping Erie's Public Schools

\$182M plan includes construction of first new school in district in 25 years



Photo: Erie Times-News/GoErie.com

Drive past Erie High School and you'll see a very different exterior from just a year ago.

A complete overhaul of the front entrance to the school, including a new façade, a parking lot, and fresh landscaping now greets staff, students and visitors. The long-awaited makeover is part of the first phase of what ultimately will be a \$72 million transformation of the district's largest high school, home to nearly 1,800 students.

Phase 1 of the project, now largely complete, also included all new heating and ventilation, and new electric, lighting and flooring in the north side of the building.

"We could not be more excited about the work happening at Erie High and throughout the district, and to finally be in a position to make these investments," Superintendent Brian Polito said. "It's what our staff, students and community deserve."

Work on the second phase has now begun, including HVAC, flooring, lighting and electric on the south side of the building, renovations to both gyms and, soon, the construction of an athletics entrance at the back of the building.

The entrance will lead into a lobby with a concession stand, ticket booth and a new permanent display that aims to recognize and celebrate athletes from all district high schools, past and present, in one consolidated space. Called the Erie's Public Schools Hall of Fame, the display will feature photos, championship trophies, medals and other memorabilia that showcase the accomplishments of district athletes throughout the ages.

"This is a tremendous opportunity to bring together our past and present," Athletic Director Dale Mills said. "We are celebrating our current athletes who play under the new banner of the Erie Royals while also honoring those students from past schools who helped build our athletic legacy."

The construction at Erie High is just one piece of a \$182 million districtwide facilities plan that touches every school in the district in some way, part of Superintendent Polito's mission to ensure that every building is warm, safe and dry.

Read on for updates about two other projects: The construction of the first new school in 25 years and renovations to Biletnikoff Field.



A renovated science lab at Erie High School.

Biletnikoff Field Renovations

The much-anticipated and long-overdue renovations that will transform Biletnikoff Field into a state-of-the-art multisport athletic facility at Erie High School will begin with a groundbreaking ceremony on May 25.

Renovations include new turf, the construction of a concession stand and bleachers, and the installation of the district's first all-weather, regulation-size track. The \$6 million project will also include construction of new areas for field events, including javelin, shotput and discus. The renovations follow the installation of a new sign honoring the man for whom the field is named: NFL Hall of Famer Fred Biletnikoff.

Biletnikoff, a 1961 graduate of Technical Memorial High School, was a wide receiver on the Super Bowl XI-winning Oakland Raiders team, and was named MVP of that game. He and his wife Angela are expected to be in attendance at the groundbreaking ceremony.



Edison Elementary School, Version 2.0

The Erie School Board earlier this year approved construction of a new Edison Elementary School for Erie's east side, the first new school construction project in 25 years.

The \$34 million project includes the demolition of the existing school on East Lake Road and construction of a new, 80,000 square foot building immediately to the south, on what is now the school's playground area. The site plan includes a modern interior courtyard, a separate gymnasium and cafeteria (the current building uses one space for both functions) and a loop road for student pick up and drop off. The new Edison will house as many as 600 students.

Construction is slated to begin this summer and is expected to be complete by fall 2025.



Renderings of a classroom, left, and lobby of the new Edison Elementary School, courtesy of HHSDR Architects & Engineers.

Class of 2023 :



SHENARRI CLANTON, 18

When Shenarri Clanton was accepted to Bethany College in West Virginia, the announcement came with a special title: first-generation college student.

Shenarri, who plans to study nursing or business, will be the first person in her family to attend college.

"I want to be successful in life," the Erie High School senior said. "I want to make my mom proud because she didn't have the opportunity to do this."

For now, Shenarri is making the most of the little time left in her high school career, running for prom queen and making memories.

Shenarri shakes her head in incredulity when she thinks of how quickly the years have flown by.

"We were just in middle school," she said.

AMYA GRIESHABER, 17

When COVID-19 forced classes to switch to a virtual format in her freshman year, Amya Grieshaber found herself falling behind and struggling to chart a future. She needed direction.

In her junior year, Amya enrolled in Erie's Public Schools Cyber Choice Academy. "Being here really helped me be able to push through," Amya said. "It's a matter of, are you willing to do the work?"

Amya also credits her success to a newfound faith.

"My family went through really trying times (during COVID), and it just shifted everything when I found God. It really pushed me to want better for myself and the people around me," she said.

Amya plans to attend Westminster College's pre-ministry program. Her ultimate goal is to become a counselor for children.



RICHARD ROMANSKI, 18

Richard Romanski grew up knowing what it means to serve.

His father is an officer with the Erie's Public Schools Police Department and his uncle is a firefighter, so it came as no surprise to his family that Richard plans to follow suit.

"I've always had the need to serve people and the community in general," said Richard, a senior in Erie High School's protective services program.

Richard enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps, where he plans to serve as communication specialist. He leaves for boot camp in Parris Island, S.C., in August.

Graduating is "bittersweet," Richard said.

"But I'm going to take it in stride and see what life brings next," he said. "I feel like its going to be a fun adventure with the Marine Corps."



Ready for Launch

ERIC CUI, 18

Eric Cui, a senior at Northwest Pennsylvania Collegiate Academy, describes his high school career in one word: Transformative.

"As a freshman, I was the most timid kid possible," Eric said. "I didn't talk to anyone. You grow so much in high school."

Eric intends to study computer science at either Georgia Tech or the University of Michigan. Ultimately, he wants to become a software engineer and, one day, own his own tech company.

"I'm really excited to focus all my time and energy on something that I really enjoy," Eric said.

That said, Collegiate Academy also taught him about the importance of balance, he said.

"It's definitely important to find time for yourself, time to enjoy other people, and not get bogged down in the academic part," he said.



AUSTIN WILLIAMS, 18



Austin Williams is facing a lot of pressure. The senior at Northwest Pennsylvania Collegiate Academy has been accepted into both Northwestern University and Purdue University, and his household is split on the decision.

"It's a civil war," the Northwest Pennsylvania Collegiate Academy senior said and laughed.

Austin plans to study economics wherever he lands. He hopes to one day work in academia or for the federal government.

"I'm very excited about being able to tailor my education experience to what I want to study," he said. "I'm most excited for the coursework. A lot of people say 'the people,' but I just like learning. I just like knowing things and I want to learn more."



ZARIA FRITH, 18

Erie High School senior Zaria Frith visited a lot of schools, but ultimately chose Slippery Rock University as the next stop on her educational journey.

A student in Erie High's cosmetology program and a cheerleader, she's both excited and nervous to begin life after graduation.

"Going to a new school and waking up in a new environment, it's nerve-racking," said Zaria, who plans to major in finance. "But I'm excited about the new experiences I'm going to have and the new people I'm going to meet. It's a restart."

Walking across the stage at Erie Veterans Memorial Stadium will mark the culmination of four years of hard work, a milestone for her and her family.

"I'm excited to see them so happy for me," she said.



Building Community

Erie High CTE students learn trades, practice skills while giving back

There is more to value about the career and technical programs offered at Erie High School than the indispensable skills students are learning.

Beyond the unique training opportunities and the hands-on experience students take with them into the workforce (sometimes directly after graduation), the nearly 675 students enrolled in the 18 different career and technical education programs are also learning something less tangible but arguably just as rewarding: The power of using your time and talent to give back.

Students across programs are showcasing their knowledge through acts of service, part of a broader effort to make deeper, broader connections with the Erie community, said Jason Burgert, director of career and technical education.

"We don't just want to be a part of the community, we want to help shape it and contribute to it in a positive, meaningful way," Burgert said.



That's happening in ways large and small. Earlier this school year, students in the Machine Trades program helped repair the sleds used by the Mighty Otters Sled Hockey Team, a regional sled hockey team sponsored by Shriners Children's Erie. The students recalibrated and sharpened the sled blades, allowing the sleds to glide more quickly and efficiently across the ice.

More recently, students in the medical programs cluster (Nursing Assistant, Medical Assistant, Sports Medicine/Rehabilitation) practiced their newfound skills during visits to their old elementary schools, where they conducted free health screenings for staff members - including some of their former teachers.

Students in the Cosmetology program are doing their part, too, visiting Elmwood Nursing Home each month to provide free manicures to the residents.



Top left: A student in the medical cluster of CTE programs at Erie High takes the blood pressure of Assistant Superintendent Neal Brokman. Above: Contributed photo of the Mighty Otters Sled Hockey Team.



SPORTS SPOTLIGHT

Erie's Public Schools recently recognized nearly 90 students for their athletic and academic achievements during the winter sports season.

Fifty-nine high school students representing district basketball, swimming, cheerleading, bowling, and wrestling teams were awarded Scholar Athlete certificates in recognition of earning a grade point average of 3.0 or greater during the winter season. Another 28 student-athletes from district middle schools were awarded Rising Royal Athletic Scholar certificates for the same achievement.

"Over the course of the winter season, these young men and women have proudly worn the 'E' and served as shining examples of what it means to be a scholar-athlete: They are students first, athletes second," Erie's Public Schools Athletic Director Dale Mills said. "We are so excited to recognize their efforts."

The names of all winter Scholar Athletes can be found on the district website, www.eriesd.org/scholarathletes.

The recognition capped off a fantastic winter sports season filled with individual and team accomplishments, including a **District 10 championship for the boys' varsity basketball team.**



Tips for Halting the 'Summer Slide'

How can parents make sure the valuable lessons learned over the course of the school year are retained? Read on for helpful ways to make the most of summer vacation, stop learning loss and plan for the year ahead.

ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL

1. Your child has access to iReady and Amplify for math and English Language Arts practice over the summer. Log on and take advantage!
2. Create a summer reading list for your child. Reward them each time they finish a book.
3. Check out local library resources. For complete information about the Erie County Public Library system, visit www.erialibrary.org.
4. Keep your mind AND your body active. Learn about healthy habits at www.kidshealth.org.

HIGH SCHOOL

1. Set aside at least one day a week to focus on reviewing math and science skills. And read, read, read! And then read some more.
2. College or post-secondary ed in your future? Start researching and talking about financial aid now.
3. It's never too early to start developing your professional resume, and summer is the perfect time to land a part-time job.
4. Volunteer! The opportunities are endless. Visit www.serverie.com to get connected with an organization that needs your help.



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Spring Enrollment Event

Wednesday, May 17

3-4:30 p.m.

All District Elementary Schools

Now Enrolling All Grades, Pre-K through 12

Families who are enrolling students should bring the following if possible:

- Proof of child's age (original or copy of birth certificate or passport)
- Child's immunization record
- Photo ID of parent/guardian
- Two proofs of residency (lease, utility bill, vehicle registration or insurance card.)

For complete information and a school locator map, visit eriesd.org/registration.

