

Canandaigua City School District

Digest vol. no. 56 issue #2 March 2018

Character Counts

Teaching Kids How to Think, not What to Think

A Braves Family

“We strive to be a district where every child and adult can achieve their potential, and where the life-changing power of love is evident in all we do.” Jeanie Grimm, Board of Education President

On the Cover

Canandaigua Academy ready a banner of solidarity to send to Marjory Stoneman Douglas

High School in Parkland, Florida. Is the latest

shooting a tipping point in a national debate?

How does the District guide the learning process

in order that students both understand the issues

and respond respectfully and appropriately?

Page 2

“It may be easy to feel frustrated and saddened by all this. Why does this sort of thing happen? What is the answer? I can’t profess to say without a doubt that I know, but I can easily and in good faith argue for the many varying viewpoints. I see mental health needs on the rise. I see the great service SROs can provide. Being raised with a healthy respect for the 2nd Amendment and exercising my right to bear arms, I appreciate my freedoms. And there are many other viable ideas as well. But this isn’t about my beliefs nor my feelings. It is about helping people feel heard and showing them how to appropriately advocate for what they believe is right. Isn’t that a large part of what makes a democratic society prosper? Can this frustration become something productive?” **Jamie Farr Superintendent**

Superintendent’s Perspective To Our Braves Family,

I am sure that you all share my angst and heartache for the victims, families, friends and the community of Parkland, Florida after the terrible events there. It is a stark reminder of our current societal realities. However, there is hope after heartbreak.

As I watch the nation respond and the ensuing debate on media outlets and social media, it only strengthens my core belief that in order for true, lasting change, we need to use relationships, compassion, and kindness as the foundation upon which we build.

During the Winter Break, I was interviewed by Rochester TV on the issue. Most observers would have thought the segment aired on Thursday and Friday, February 22-23 was well done. It spoke of increased security measures and featured one of our own, teacher

Jessica Teerlinck, who was interviewed as a parent, sharing that her children report feeling safe here in Canandaigua.

But I felt some disappointment with the sound clips chosen for the story. I felt it failed to portray what I hoped to communicate as its core message.

Therefore, we decided to produce this issue of Digest in order that everyone in our school district has the opportunity to hear directly from me regarding what I feel is most important as we respond to this dilemma.

Safety & Security

If you were to survey people who work in education about why they chose such a field, you would hear things like “I love children” or

“I want to inspire the next generation” or

“I want to make a difference”. You would be unlikely to hear any of them say they went into this job because they “want to keep children safe”. Yet here we are -- safety is our number one priority in a learning environment. It is an obvious requirement, a

necessary priority, yet it is equally obvious that such a reality is a sad situation to be in. Our mission is education.

Page 3

Heartache & Hope

During the TV interview and in pieces we have already communicated to district residents, I spoke about all the various security measures the district has put into place the last few years.

We are fortunate to have sound access controls for the entrances at each building. During our school day, the doors are locked and there is visual monitoring at each location. This is not failsafe prevention for break-ins, but our facilities now make forced entry

difficult for any assailant and provide the time for both building lockdown efforts to go into effect before entry is gained and for security officers both on and off campus to be notified and swiftly respond.

“Our District’s participation in any kind of activism should be focused on standing in solidarity with those in Parkland, Florida, and a call for safer schools. We want any action taken to be respectful, meaningful, and not a distraction from the educational process. Safety is our priority, loving relationships are the answer, and we will teach kids how to think, not what to think!” Inside the building, we have key fob entry into classrooms and the

ability to lock classroom doors remotely from the building office and/or the central Administration Center. We have security cameras that cover both inside hallways and exterior perimeters of all buildings.

We also have two fantastic School Resource Officers (SROs) with whom we have close working relationships, some mutual training, and instantaneous communications at all times. These officers of the law are here to protect us and connect families with

resources and also have the deep training to respond appropriately to all emergency situations.

During the Winter Break and in the immediate aftermath of the Parkland, Florida shootings, our administration met with law enforcement to review our safety protocols and we have shared that updated information with staff. We have NYS Education Department

mandated safety plans in place and we meet all requirements for practicing drills. In response to the Florida tragedy, I will reinforce these efforts in the near future.

In my TV interview, I was asked about any increased safety measures and my response was that we have the strong safety measures in place and a close working relationship with the Canandaigua City Police Department as I have described above, but that we

continually evaluate our plans and are taking any ideas people give us under consideration. We have already collected some very good suggestions from staff and community members and have begun the process of evaluation.

One parent wondered what it would cost for a third School Resource Officer for the District and we are still investigating the budgetary impact of such an addition at this point, and its feasibility for the Canandaigua City Police Department. Police agencies, the

City, and the state are all looking at whether additional funding can be procured that might provide even more extensive SRO services to schools.

New, well-supported funding streams to help address this issue are welcome, of course.

But I believe the real hope lies elsewhere.

Politics, Advocacy & Teaching

Governor Cuomo has joined with Governors of New Jersey, Rhode Island and Connecticut to launch States for Gun Safety - what he terms “a multi-state coalition to take action against gun violence in the face of failed leadership at the federal level.” But the

Governor’s remarks verge on the political realm and it is not the District’s place to go there. Instead, we must focus on the practicalities of our security situation and our mission of education.

During the television interview, the reporter asked about my feelings regarding potential student walk-outs being planned around the nation. I explained that I had met with building principals to discuss this and to consider plans, but nothing had been solidified

because we wanted input from students and staff so that they have a major voice in these decisions.

Should our District participate in any kind of advocacy it ought to be focused on standing in solidarity with those in Parkland, Florida and a call for safer schools. We want any action taken to be respectful, meaningful, and not a distraction from the educational

process. It isn’t our job to teach kids what to think but rather how to think.

Safer schools can be any number of things. To some, safer schools may mean gun control. To others it may mean more mental health services or governmentally paid SROs, etc. There are a number of ideas and options out there, but calling for safer schools can include or exclude any of those depending on each individual's core belief. If a student or staff member wants to advocate for their specific idea, perhaps an after-school letter writing campaign may be appropriate. This is a process we can appropriately guide, but not drive. And these must be collaborative decisions that honor all viewpoints.

Relationships

As we look to shape the future, through teaching and appropriate activism, we are grateful to this community for the detailed safety measures already in place. This is a very positive thing. But there are no guarantees.

I truly feel our greatest defense against the unthinkable is through providing a supportive and connected learning environment where everyone feels valued. That is what matters most. It is through success in this effort that the school district makes its greatest contribution to the debate.

In the coming days, weeks, months, we will hear plenty of such debate on local news, social media outlets and beyond, but I do not want there to be any confusion about where the Canandaigua City School District stands: Safety is our priority, loving relationships are the answer, and we will teach kids how to think, not what to think!

For hope and healing, I concentrate on a core belief: The few very bad people of this world do not define us. They are not the majority. In fact, they are immensely outnumbered by all the wonderful people of the world and of this community, and that is to be celebrated.

I needed to refocus my mind so that I could remember that the work of an educator matters. Do things need to change? Can we improve? Of course, but let us never lose sight of the fact that great things continue to happen here in the Canandaigua City School District because of each of our students, our teachers and staff, the support of parents and families and this greatly generous community, full of caring citizens and leaders.

We are a Braves Family and we are Canandaigua Proud.

We can meet this challenge, providing safety and security but never losing sight of the mission -- education! Jamie Farr, Superintendent

Page 5

United States Constitution

Key Articles of the Bill of Rights

The 1st Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

The 2nd Amendment

A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.

The 9th Amendment

The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

The 10th Amendment

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people

Teaching & Learning

How – Not What

There are many subjects of study that are not open to debate, a few examples being: the periodic table, the proven and natural laws of physics, basic algebra and calculus methodology. But the social and political issues of the day are not etched in stone and do not necessarily have absolute truths that are inviolate in every situation. Our Founding Fathers did a remarkable job in establishing what they hoped would be inviolate precepts that would provide a framework for future leaders and the advancement and success of the newly established United States of America. Yet we have discussed and disagreed about the essence of the Constitution, especially the Bill of Rights, since the day of its ratification.

A Foundation for Life

In teaching at the K-12 level, the developmental stage for all young students, it is a critical goal to build in each student the ability to competently think and assess – so that students can come to their own conclusions about “the what” through sound research and reasoning, and develop this competence as a lifelong habit and skill.

Why is this so important? Because the sound and fury from all sides on the issues of the day is so often skewed, incomplete and, worst of all, intentionally misleading. Throw into the mix the proven manipulation occurring regularly in modern social media, and the effort to teach how to think, not what to think becomes ever more important. As Frederick Douglass famously said, “It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”

Start with Questions

Anywhere in education where usages and norms and insights and understandings can change based on new evidence or propaganda, great teaching is done through inquiry and research. “If we are really going to emphasize “How, not What” then classroom spaces need to start with questions,” says CA English teacher and International Baccalaureate Programme

Coordinator Keith Pedzich. “First, questions that come from teachers to model what good questions look like. Then, working with students to foster curiosity around topics and develop questions that they want to seek answers to.”

Such an approach is the foundation for IB, and is applied in many other courses that Canandaigua Academy students take in their four years at the school, including in Mr. Pedzich's English 103 and Media Maker classes and various Social Studies courses. “All IB courses are driven by inquiry approaches, where students develop questions and work together to

find answers. It culminates in the capstone project, the IB Extended Essay, which is intended to expose the student's ability to engage in sustained, independent research and reflect what the student has learned” via their independently derived process. In English 103, students engage in semester long research projects developed around topics they are passionate about, and perhaps more importantly, “we ask that these students take their research and work to make it authentic by sharing through creating informative websites, and then ultimately developing arguments written as, again, authentic texts: blogs, wikis, editorials, op-eds, speeches, problem-solving proposals. In this course, students are guided through research— preliminary phases, information collection, evaluation, synthesis, creation. These students get something very similar in approach to what the IB students get, a course in how to conduct college-level research.”

Sources & Credibility

“The New Framework for Social Studies places a heavy emphasis on the “how” by focusing on the building of skills knowledge in students to critically evaluate sources for bias, background and accuracy,” says Social Studies Lead Teacher Kristine VanDuyne. “For example, students could read a primary source account of a Japanese doctor who survived the Pearl Harbor attack and its aftermath. Students would have a working knowledge of the event in history and would be able to critically view the source and discern the bias and credibility of the document. Students in K-9 are immersed in this new Framework now; it will be applied in grade 10 next year, and on up.”

“We [as teachers] need to get kids to think about sources as PEOPLE. Who is giving us this information? What is the person’s bias or perspective? Who does this person work for? What platform is this person publishing on? Who asked this person to create?”

These are the questions that generate healthy skepticism and greater energy to search for the truth at the center, and ultimate understanding of an issue.

“My 5th grader is rock solid in her beliefs from the 11 years of love, respect and guidance from her mother and I. She will not waver from her upbringing no matter how much pressure may or may not be applied by people outside of our family. She understands school is for knowledge of math, science, English and History, etc....She knows that others’ opinions about social issues are irrelevant to her own path in life. Especially those opinions of people who are not proven.

I do not worry about what is said at school. Mr. Farr said all I need to hear. The school does not teach students what to think. Just how to think for themselves. Thank you, Mr. Farr. My wife and I have the rest under control. God bless.”

- from our facebook page

“Please remind the teachers and staff that not everyone manages grief, fear and compassion the same. There are fears in so many different areas of this topic. I am starting to hear teacher/staff “persuading” students to participate in “solidarity” and questioning why they would not want to. “Following the leader” is not what this should be about but rather listening to yourself and what is right for each individual. Respect is allowing everyone to choose how they process situations without judgement, especially from those who have power and influence. Thank you.”

- from our facebook page

“After being in the school during the occurrence of the May 5, 2008 tragedy, in our own high school, I strongly stand with the students!! I know a lot of people try to forget our own tragedies within the school, but it is embedded in the minds of those that were there, the parents, and family members of those that were in the high school that day.

With more and more tragedies happening, it’s great to see more young people standing in solidarity for action! I commend the schools’ administrators, faculty and staff for also standing with the students! It’s about time something be done!!

- from our facebook page

“As a retired CA teacher, my heart is with the students and my former colleagues. Protecting the kids’ right to peaceful assembly is as important as protecting them physically. They will be living history, not merely studying it, as they demonstrate for the right to pursue their education without fear of injury or death from a murderer’s bullet. These are lessons they will not forget. As you say forthrightly, our mission is and always has been to teach students to think, not teach them what to think. In an era characterized by propaganda and bias, your commitment is as refreshing as it is honorable.

- from our facebook page

For many student, academic essays are painful and tedious. Pedzich believes that is a fault of traditional education, one that we must fix.

Sources, says Pedzich, should never be objects. “If we were to say: I want you to collect three sources—an article, a website, a newspaper source—we’re having students think about information only in terms of where the information resides. It’s much more powerful to have them think of sources as people and in terms of their functionality. How is this source being used? How can I or how should I use this source? What about this source must be included or discarded from my work?”

The Purpose of a Paper

The academic essay, well-researched and well-stated, is an important document for every student to learn how to produce. In Social Studies, students produce one essay per unit in courses such as Global Studies 9 and 10 and U.S. History 11 Regents and Honors classes.

“Global 10 students recently wrote an essay where they considered the perspectives of countries who imperialized – took over – other countries vs. countries who were taken over of dominated economically. Students were scored on the evidence brought to the essay.”

“We do a disservice to students when all we ask them to produce is a “paper.” When was the last time anyone but an actual scholar wrote an “academic essay” or a paper. This article for *Digest* is outside of the boundaries of that genre. The pieces that Board President Jeanie Grimm writes for the first day of school, the BOE presentations that Superintendent Farr or Asst. Superintendent for Instruction Matt Schrage prepare, the emails that come from Mr. Farr to staff, statements from District leaders to our residents — none of these are academic essays or papers.”

“However, these assignments are good exercises to build mastery as students are able to connect writing to verbally being able to express themselves, with a solid argument, in real conversations,” adds VanDuyne.

“Most if not all of our students are going to need to write, and write well, upon leaving CA,” says Pedzich, “and they’ll need to make sound, supported arguments—in editorials, presentations, cover letters, blogs, in their jobs with co-workers, in spoken discussions. It’s an essential skill for this modern world. So if we think about the product of research only as a “paper”, we’re doing damage.”

The Bill of Rights & Current Events

The Bill of Rights is specifically addressed in the Canandaigua curriculum in Grade 7 and in U.S. History in 11th grade. The historical background of the Bill of Rights is studied as a true moment of negotiation around the Constitution. CA students in the required Participation in Government civics class apply the Bill of Rights as they explore case studies through inquiries.

“For current events, there is no absolute in the classroom,” says VanDuyne. “It varies by teacher and incident and issue but always should be contextualized back to curriculum.”

For example, 10th grade students have recently been engaged in Cold War studies and opposing ideologies. This learning was linked to current events through reading and discussion of an article on Russian/US affairs. “The goal with current events is always to tie them to a unit currently being studied,” concludes VanDuyne. “Students must be able to capably defend their opinions about current events by applying the historical context, basic knowledge and sourcing credibility they acquire through the formal curriculum.”

The Power of responsive classroom

Every child deserves to feel accepted, valued, respected and included at school. These are the hallmarks of positive school culture. The Canandaigua Primary-Elementary School uses a teaching approach known as Responsive Classroom to create a safe and joyful school family. This research-based approach to education provides effective tools and strategies to make learning communities of each classroom where every child feels valued and included.

In Responsive Classroom, positive school climate and optimal student learning is built on four crucial and inter-related domains:

Engaging Academics where adults create learning tasks that are active, interactive, appropriately challenging, purposeful and connected to students’ interests

Effective Management where adults nurture a sense of belonging, significance, and emotional safety so that students feel comfortable taking risks and working with a variety of peers.

Positive Community where adults create a calm, orderly environment that promotes autonomy and allows students to focus on learning.

Developmental Awareness where adults use knowledge of child development, along with observations of students, to create a developmentally appropriate learning environment.

For over two decades, our Primary-Elementary school has been implementing Responsive Classroom practices. This past summer, and again in January, our teachers had training opportunities in the use of these important strategies. Responsive Classroom continues to be our vehicle for teaching, modeling and practicing good character every single day.

In our school, you will hear respectful and kind “good mornings” shared among classmates at a morning meeting. You will see the explicit teaching of how to line up, put materials away, work with a partner in a way that’s safe and responsible. You will notice adults giving kind but firm reminders about how to disagree with a classmate in a way that is respectful and takes care of everyone’s feelings. You will hear encouraging teacher language like, “You worked hard today and showed real effort on something that was challenging for you.” You will see teachers interactively modeling how to invite someone to join in a game or include a classmate in an activity in a way that follows the classroom rules. You will see students reflecting on and celebrating their learning at the end of the day in a closing circle.

“Schools must provide effective teaching that can build students’ academic muscle, grit, resilience and courageous spirits,” says Lora Hodges, executive director of the nonprofit Center for Responsive Schools, developer of the Responsive Classroom approach. In Canandaigua, we feel Responsive Classroom has proven itself to help our children have better quality social skills and improved academic competencies, and builds a school family feeling that is sustained through the later years of our educational program.

From the Board President

Page 9

Dear Braves Family,

When we brought together school and community members years ago to craft a vision statement for the district, we landed on this: “The Canandaigua City School District will lead and inspire a community of learners to fulfill their academic and creative potential.”

In our discussions about this, and the supporting mission statement, we talked extensively about academic rigor, character education, community partnerships, and opportunities for kids. Not once did we consider a phrase about providing physical protection for children or acting as their human shields.

We are a school district.

We are educators.

We are a community of adults devoted to leading and inspiring children.

We teach, we coach, we direct, and we guide students to discover who they are and who they can become.

In 1996, this District’s leaders brought to life a particularly progressive educational effort that we still strongly believe is our best method of violence prevention: our Character Education initiative.

Over 20 years later, we have strong evidence that Character Education in our District -- truly a community-wide effort involving students, teachers, families, community agencies and businesses -- has been highly successful in the development of well-rounded young people ready to engage the world with fine academic skills and a worthy ethical foundation.

On pages 10-11, this publication addresses some current applications of our Character Education initiative, which has been newly refreshed in 2017-18

to account for a changing world. These efforts are like seeding fertile ground. You can never be sure when the fruits will appear, but you can be certain that they will be of real impact and value.

While we feel equally strongly about each of our Character Education traits, allow me to focus on “Kindness leads to Compassion” here, given the purpose of this piece.

The Primary-Elementary School Kindness display case pictured below lists specific acts of kindness done by K-5 students. Fellow students see these and learn from them. Our Academy Student Government sponsored motivational speaker and kindness advocate Houston Kraft to talk with students, faculty and staff about character and compassion. This event occurred on February 14th, the same day as the Parkland shootings. It was a powerful and moving presentation, particularly under the circumstances, and will have a lasting positive impact. The Middle School spends time in Advisory each morning engaging with students to identify and carry out deliberate acts of kindness. This work must and will continue.

On the heels of another tragic and heartbreaking school shooting, we cannot say that our schools are safe, with no qualifications. We can say we have done much to increase safety and security. We can say that the safety of our students and adults is of paramount concern, that we work on it and that we welcome your input and observations.

What we can also say is that we all – within and outside of our schools – can do something to improve the culture of kindness and compassion, every single day. We can welcome the stranger, invite newcomers to sit with us, be kind even when we are frustrated, compose an email in the heat of the moment and choose not to send it, send a note of appreciation – the list is endless! This work of kindness is essential and will never be complete.

Yours in Education, Jeanie Grimm, Board President

“We strive to be a district where every child and adult can achieve their potential, and where the life-changing power of love is evident in all we do.”

Page 10

Of all of our approaches to ensuring the safest environment possible for all, perhaps none is more powerful than our Character Education initiative, supported by our deep and abiding belief in the transformative power of love.

Starting with our littlest Braves, we intentionally build and nurture community, and teach and model the power of positive relationships. Infused into morning meetings, literature, projects, and classroom management are our original character traits: Respect, Responsibility, Honesty, Kindness, and Healthy Choices, joined by our latest addition, Effort.

Over time, these traits grow more complex as our students mature and confront more complicated ethics. School-based activities related to the traits also change to reflect this more complex reality. Recently, the Board of Education approved the recommendation by our community wide Character Education Committee to update our basic Character Education traits to reflect character development through the K-12 trajectory:

Respect leads to **Civility**

Responsibility leads to **Accountability**

Honesty leads to **Integrity**

Kindness leads to **Compassion**

Effort leads to **Perseverance**

Healthy Choices lead to **Healthy Living**

The building-based activities described below have occurred or are planned for this school year. They are Character Education in action.

Primary Elementary School

Classroom Guidance Lessons - An interesting example of character education teaching at the Primary- Elementary School are Classroom Guidance Lessons. These are small discussion group lessons moderated by the school counselors, either in the Counseling room or in a regular classroom. Students sit in a circle and discuss questions like: "Is it hard to be honest?" and "How do you show responsibility?" Classroom Guidance Lessons are held twice each month and involve all Grade 4-5 students over the time period.

Responsive Classroom Morning Meetings - Guidance Lessons are followed up in Responsive Classroom morning meetings, which involve all students simultaneously. The Responsive Classroom Morning Meeting is an engaging way for students to start the day in their classroom, aimed at building community through greetings, sharing, group activities and a focused morning message or theme.

Consistent Language - At the PES, Character Traits are utilized for daily announcements. Teachers use the traits in reminding language for students in classroom activities and disciplinary situations,

Monthly Highlights - The school highlights a Character Trait each month. In January, Responsibility was highlighted through a school-wide initiative called *Rock 'n' Responsibility*, which tied together music and actions which showed responsibility. *Rock 'n' Responsibility* stories and activities were featured daily on WPES, the school TV broadcast.

PES Character Education Committee - The Committee, made up of teachers, support staff and administrators, guides the development of specific activities relating to character, and helps support these activities with various resources. Working with the Canandaigua PTSA as sponsor, the PES Character Committee is currently developing a Spring event that will celebrate all the character traits.

May 11, 2018 -- NYS State Senator Pamela Helming Listening Session at CA

New York State Senator Pamela Helming, who represents the Canandaigua City School District in Senate chambers in Albany

will hold a listening session with Canandaigua Academy students on May 11th at 1 p.m. to gather firsthand their insights and ideas about moving forward on school safety and limiting school violence.

The Academy will also hold a 25-30 minute student assembly that day. Various experts will deliver training to students and staff

regarding current best practices to enhance safety during direct crisis situations.

Page 11

Canandaigua Middle School

Valentines Day Cards - On February 14th, the day of the Parkland shootings, students in Team Otisco hand delivered a Valentines Day card to every student in the Middle School. Well over 800 cards were given out, and each card had a handwritten message to the individual recipient. This activity was student driven, planned and accomplished by Team Otisco students. It turned out to be an even more powerful act of kindness and inclusion in the wake of the crime in Florida.

CMS Olweus/Character Education Committee - This committee, which incorporates the prestigious Olweus anti-bullying precepts for local application, meets monthly to assess building "climate", recommend interventions, and devise character education activities.

Thursday Advisory - The Thursday Advisory each week is dedicated to character education issues and lessons, touching every student.

Character Education Fun Week - The Middle School had a successful "Fun Week" in January around character that tied character traits to a fun theme each day.

Banner Project - Large banners of the Character traits are being created, utilizing a local commercial vendor, for display in prominent places around the school before the end of the year.

The Middle School Bridge - CMS students are where the change occurs developmentally in the appreciation and understanding of the District's Character Traits. CMS students bridge their understanding from the simplicity of the K-5 traits to the sophistication of the 6-12 traits. The 12 traits begin to be used interchangeably within the CMS in an effort to guide students to understanding about the subtle differences and nuanced meanings between the various terms.

Professional Development for Staff - Teaching staff how to effectively teach these nuances in a developmentally appropriate way is highly important. Various resources and teacher workshops are currently being devised for this purpose.

National Recognition - In 2014-2015, the Canandaigua Middle School was selected as a National School of Character by the Washington, D.C. based Partnership for Character Education (Character.org), a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonsectarian coalition of organizations and individuals committed to fostering effective character education in our nation's schools. Canandaigua Academy

A Banner for Parkland - Academy students have signed a giant banner of support that will be sent to Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, as an expression of solidarity with the students there.

CA Student Government is planning voluntary student body participation in the March 14th Silent Walkout for 17 minutes to remember those who lost their lives and to express support for progress on school safety efforts.

Valentine Day Speaker - On February 14th, all Canandaigua Academy students attended a presentation by motivational speaker Houston Kraft, whose emphasis is on how to create a culture of kindness that is automatic and instinctual and based on positive relationships. CA students were riveted by this master speaker's presentation. Many students and staff said it was the best assembly they had ever attended.

Academy Character Education Committee - Working to align planned activities to build on the experiences of Middle School students so that CA students get continuous growth regarding their understanding of the more sophisticated character traits, the CA Character Committee works closely with CA Student Government to develop

a calendar of activities designed to address potential improvements in school climate.

February included 4th period kindness messages and ideas during announcements each day. Work is now focused on planning Character activities for CA's annual Spring Fling event.

Distracted Driving Presentation - This presentation on the responsibilities around NOT driving while distracted is scheduled for late winter.

Mock Car Crash - The Mock Car Crash is an annual event for the senior class staged in partnership with various local police, emergency and judicial agencies. The event is a highly realistic automobile accident caused by drinking and/or texting. Students see how first responders handle the tragedy directly, as well as its aftermath in both the courts and at the funeral home.

Academic & College Ready Impacts - Civility, Integrity, Effort, Perseverance, Accountability are stressed as character traits that will improve academic success and classroom cooperation throughout the high school years. These traits are encouraged as foundations for college application essays and teacher college recommendation letters.

Back cover

A Look in the Mirror

Our Braves Family; A Culture of Kindness;

Canandaigua Proud; We CANandaigua: these statements are all true, but more importantly, they are aspirational.

We are not perfect.

Not all students in Canandaigua are accepted. Some are troubled. Bullying occurs. There are occasional fights. There can be rudeness and insensitivity. There is drug, alcohol and vaping experimentation among our youth. There is selling in our community. There are cliques in

our schools. We are not saying there are no problems.

We do say that we are challenging our weaknesses and that we have ongoing policies and activities designed to address those weaknesses and turn our deficits into assets. We do say that because of these efforts and the overall character strength of our students and staff, our problems do not undermine the ultimate effectiveness of our educational program.

We do say that we are always seeking new and effective methods to face our problems.

This is the purpose of addressing all as Our Braves Family. This is the purpose of stressing Canandaigua Pride. This is the purpose of developing and delivering a Culture of Kindness.

Speak openly about our weaknesses to us. We will receive your insights with compassion, thoughtfulness, and an ongoing will to find solutions.

As Our Braves Family, we are all in this together!

We CANandaigua.

Board of Education

Mrs. Jeanie Grimm, President

Mrs. Cheryl Birx, V.P.

Mr. Bill Patrowicz

Mrs. Michelle Pedzich

Mr. John Polimeni

Mr. Thomas Reho

Dr. Jennifer Schneider

Mrs. Beth Thomas

Mr. Ralph Undercoffler

Mr. Jamie Farr

Superintendent of Schools

Andy Thomas

Digest Editor & Design