

# COMMUNITY CONNECTION



A PUBLICATION OF THE CHEEKTOWAGA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

BACK TO SCHOOL 2017

## Getting Schools Set for September

### *Facilities Staff Works All Summer to be Ready*

Driving past Cheektowaga Central School District during summer break, you may think it looks deserted. There aren't many students; the parking lots are uncharacteristically empty. You may think summer is a leisurely time for schools. But you would be mistaken.

"It looks like a ghost town, but inside the walls all heck is breaking loose," says Bruce Vona, Cheektowaga Central School District's director of facilities.

Summer in a school district is no slow roll, as administrators and staff prepare programs, services, and buildings for the start of a new school year in September. Registration, student records, finance, special education, transportation, accounting, human resources, pupil services and all other functions of the District Office are in high gear during the summer.



Facilities staff takes a brief moment over the summer to pose for a photo. Shown here left to right with Bruce Vona (center, kneeling) are (front row) Debbie Kaczmarek, Chrissy Roland, Cindy Nurmi; (second row) Debbie Langa, Darlene Minotti, Cookie Eich, Michele Morris, Mary Jean Lelek, Donna Wolcott; (back row) Tom Szczepaniak, Mark Dean, Terry Allen, Russ Carroccia, Tom Laschinger, Mark Holt, Tim Roberts, John Kasperek, Head Custodian Henry Bess, Gary Feldt, Ron Epps. (Not pictured: Geri Machtel, Eric Herdlein, Bill Dorman, Tammy Ferguson, Denise North, Doris North, Todd Zawadski, Kurt Stefaniak, Tom Gagliardo, Joe Ziomek, Nancy Weber.)

## First Day, School Hours

The first day of school for all students (UPK – 12) is Tuesday, September 5.

### 2017-2018 School Hours

#### Union East Elementary:

8:55 a.m. – 3:20 p.m. (Grades K – 4)  
9 a.m. - 3 p.m. (UPK)

**Middle School:** 8:10 a.m. – 2:40 p.m.  
(Grades 5 – 8)

**High School:** 7:22 a.m. – 1:47 p.m.  
(Grades 9- 12)

**Pine Hill:** 8:50 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.  
(Grades K-12 alternative)



## School Bus Information

All parents and guardians registered in the Cheektowaga Central School District should receive notification from WNY Bus Company with the time and location of the bus that will be transporting their children to and from school in the 2017-18 school year. **If you do not receive this information by Aug. 30, contact WNY Bus Company at 681-2100.**

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## Message from the Superintendent

### It's All About the Learning.

As we embark on year two of our strategic plan, I applaud not only my hardworking staff and administrators, but the work of our students as well. Our vision is to inspire, our mission is to provide opportunities for all children to succeed. With your guidance our students have embraced opportunities through academics, the arts, music, athletics, and college and career readiness.



Superintendent  
Mary Morris

For the 2017-2018 school year, our goal is to inspire a high level of learning for all students. Much is planned for this school year to help us achieve this goal. We will continue our partnership with Buffalo State College in improving mathematic instruction. Our instructional coaches continue to help teachers implement and share best practices. Erie 1 BOCES is assisting teachers with new curricula in science and social studies. Our special area teachers continue to provide engaging and enriching content. Enrollment in AP and college level courses continues to grow and thrive. Project Positive (the five B's) and character development also continues to be an unwavering commitment districtwide.

At Union East Elementary School, many classrooms have been painted and have new flooring. Every classroom in grades pre-K, K, 2, 3 and 4 will have Smart Boards, with Grade 1 to be completed in the 2018-2019 school year. We will be placing a greater emphasis on writing in K-12. In the Middle School, French and Spanish will be added to the course selection for Grade 7, giving more students the opportunity to take advanced courses in high school when the time comes.

The High School continues to offer many electives that are relevant to 21st century careers. A new science research course will be introduced this school year. 125 students are enrolled in six AP courses and 75 more in college-level courses. Pine Hill Education Center will embark on a new program to assist struggling Grade 9 students. They support the district in a districtwide restorative justice initiative. In Central Office, Mrs. George and Mrs. Sukdolak continue to implement effective programming that lays the foundation so that all children have the greatest opportunity for learning.

Our goal, "To inspire a high level of learning for all students," is supported by the four cornerstones of our strategic plan. In cornerstone 1, we will establish procedures that clarify expectations and enhance learning. In cornerstone 2, we will build meaningful relationships to promote learning. In cornerstone 3, we will motivate staff and students to do their best work and inspire the love of learning, and in cornerstone 4, we will develop a culture of thinking and learning.

For the 2017-2018 school year, remember our motto: "It is all about the learning." Dr. Harvey Silver from Thoughtful Classroom is the author of this motto. We are inspired and excited for a productive and fun year learning.

## Getting Schools Set for September

### Facilities Staff Works All Summer to be Ready

*continued from page 1*

Nobody knows the breakneck pace better than Bruce Vona and his staff of custodians, laborers, maintenance workers, and cleaners, who take care of 500,000 square feet in four buildings, plus all district athletic fields and grounds.

Transportation, mail, and receiving are also in his area. "It's a support department," he says. "We support every single thing that goes on in these buildings. People think it up, and we make it happen."

When he joined Cheektowaga Central in 2014, Mr. Vona brought his experience as director of facilities at General Motors and Sisters Hospital, in construction management, and owning and operating a restaurant. He holds a bachelor's degree in engineering and an MBA in corporate finance, both from the University at Buffalo. But even with his background, the scope of the work continues to surprise him. "I would never have guessed how much we accomplish," he says. "Facilities management is the true definition of multitasking."

During the summer, in addition to routine maintenance, every classroom, office and area is emptied of all items. Floors are stripped and cleaned, and three coats of wax are applied and buffed. Carpets are shampooed. Items are cleaned and rooms are put back together.

This summer, capital project improvements are also taking place. Union East Elementary School, built in the early 1960s, was the focus of asbestos abatement. Staff were

temporarily relocated to other parts of the building. Old floor tiles were removed and replaced with new tile. Old classroom doors were replaced. The rooms affected by construction were repainted. Both general student bathrooms were gutted and renovated, with all new surfaces, fixtures and partitions. Exterior masonry work was done. At Pine Hill Education Center, the roof was replaced.

"And that's just the big jobs," notes Mr. Vona. Construction work is done by contractors, but all preparation and support work is done by district facilities staff. "There's a lot to do in a short period of time," says Henry Bess, head custodian. "We can do more in-depth repairs with no students around, that's why summer is the busiest time."

With a heavy workload that stretches across three shifts and the extra pressure of summer deadlines, Bruce Vona says Facilities staff is energized whenever they feel appreciation and respect from co-workers and administrators. "It's all about respect," Mr. Vona said, whether it's a cleaning job, paint job, maintenance, repair, or any other service.



Director of Facilities Bruce Vona can usually be seen with phone in hand, planning and directing jobs and projects large and small.



Custodial staff spotted in the High School lobby include (left to right) Ed Cramer, Tom Laschinger, Gary Feldt, Tim Roberts, and Jim Rechtsiegel.

While talking to this writer for 15 minutes on a summer afternoon, Mr. Vona's phone rang five times. His office is crowded with binders, contracts, blueprints and records. Despite the crazy pace—or maybe because of it—he says he is a perfect fit for the job. "I wouldn't be doing what I do if I didn't enjoy it."

Most of all, he likes being involved with education. "At the end of the day, you know you helped somebody do something. I like supporting people's visions. You get a lot of satisfaction out of helping people achieve."

# District Project Positive Program Stresses the 5Bs

***Be On Time, Respectful, Responsible, Safe and Kind***

– Nicole Kerner, Coordinator, Project Positive



*Union East students enjoyed a visit from the ice cream truck in a schoolwide celebration last spring.*

In the upcoming 2017-2018 school year, we move into our third year of implementation of Project Positive. The mission of Project Positive is to create a school climate across our district that encourages and promotes positive behaviors. The focus of Project Positive is teaching and re-teaching our students the importance and value of demonstrating our Districtwide Behavior Expectations, which we call the 5Bs:

- Be on time and ready
- Be respectful
- Be responsible
- Be safe
- Be kind, both in school and out in the community

In an effort to motivate and encourage students to continue demonstrating the 5Bs, in each building we have created an acknowledgement system that rewards and celebrates students for making positive choices. To help support students in reaching these goals, Professional Development was provided to our staff and progress updates were shared with students. If we reached our goal as a school, students earned a schoolwide celebration. Our schoolwide celebrations helped to build community and a sense of family and belonging within our buildings. In addition, they acknowledged every student for their efforts to consistently demonstrate positive behavior and working towards a common goal together.

Last year we began to pilot a mentor/check-in, checkout program targeting a small group of students that were not responding to our universal supports. Students and mentors were given a feedback survey, and this valuable feedback will help direct our efforts this year to continue to build and strengthen these supports to better meet the student's needs.



*Middle School Principal Micah Hanford and students had a Hawaiian-themed schoolwide celebration in April.*

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## Renee Wilson Honored by ECASB

The president of the Cheektowaga Central School District Board of Education was honored in June by the Erie County Association of School Boards. Renee Wilson, along with two other ECASB members, was awarded Medallion Club designation for service, learning and leadership on school boards, the highest level in the organization's Shine On award series.



The three-tier Shine On awards program recognizes ECASB school board members for outstanding leadership, learning and service. Medallion Club designation honors ongoing commitment and dedication to expanding personal knowledge of issues in education, governance and best practices, as well as working with colleagues from other ECASB member boards on priority issues.

Mrs. Wilson achieved the first and second tiers, Rising Star and Shining Star, by completing at least four ECASB training programs per year and accumulating a record of active service on the group's delegate assembly, budget and finance team, or legislative team. She reached the Medallion Club by completing at least three ECASB programs in a single year, with continued service on ECASB teams and attending the annual Western New York Education Law Conference. She also completed state-required six-hour trainings in governance and fiscal oversight.

## Retirees

Cheektowaga Central School District said goodbye with gratitude for their years of service to the following employees in June:

- **Nicholas Bordonaro**, teacher, career development/occupational studies, High School
- **Mary Crowe**, teacher, kindergarten, Union East Elementary School
- **Robin D'Abate**, teacher, special education, Union East Elementary School
- **John-Paul Martin**, teacher, science, Middle School
- **Mary Ellen Polito**, teacher, Grade 2, Union East Elementary School

# Class of 2017 Top 10 Seniors

1



**Brandon Statz,  
Valedictorian**

Cumulative GPA: 100.51  
University at Buffalo  
Engineering

2



**Valerie Bevan,  
Salutatorian**

Cumulative GPA: 99.82  
University at Buffalo  
Environmental Engineering

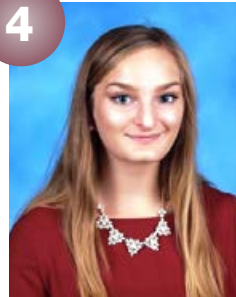
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**Kira Herkey**

Cumulative GPA: 98.64  
Buffalo State College  
Mathematics Education

4



**Melanie Hornung**

Cumulative GPA: 98.3  
D'Youville College  
Physician Assistant

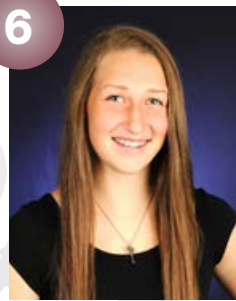
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**Jena Ponosny**

Cumulative GPA: 98.15  
Daemen College  
Nursing

6



**Megan Marafino**

Cumulative GPA: 97.22  
Villa Maria College  
Interior Design

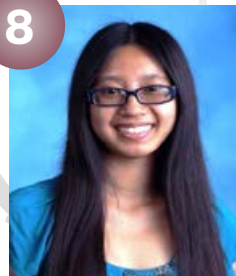
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**William Le**

Cumulative GPA: 97.11  
University at Buffalo  
Medical Field

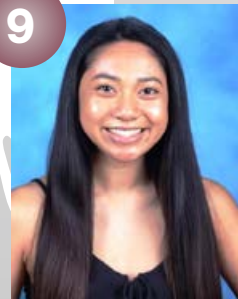
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**Sandra Van**

Cumulative GPA: 96.81  
University at Buffalo  
Medical Field

9



**Ai Van Hoang**

Cumulative GPA: 96.78  
D'Youville College  
Nursing

10



**Kyle Krzanowicz**

Cumulative GPA: 96.63  
University at Buffalo  
Engineering

# Unified Basketball Comes to Central

Cheektowaga Central School District fielded a Unified Basketball team for the first time during the 2016-17 school year. It was a great success and will be returning to the sports schedule in the spring. Unified Basketball, a partner of Special Olympics New York, is an inclusive sports program combining equal numbers of athletes (students with intellectual disabilities) and partners (students without intellectual disabilities) on teams for training and competitions. The Unified team is coached by Mr. Pane along with assistant coach Mr. Sedor. Everyone is welcome to come and enjoy these games.



# District Project Positive Program Stresses the 5Bs

*continued from page 3*

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to please continue to praise and acknowledge your child each time you catch them demonstrating any of the 5Bs at home. Using this common language both in school and at home will increase the occurrence of positive behaviors being demonstrated. With the support from home and at school we are looking forward to another successful year for our students here at Cheektowaga Central School District. Please visit our website to stay up to date and current as to our progress with Project Positive, and for helpful resources to use with your child for promoting positive behavior at home. Go to [www.cheektowagak12.org](http://www.cheektowagak12.org), click "Quick Links," click "Project Positive," and then select areas of interest from the tool bar located to the left of the screen. You can also follow us on Twitter (@ProjPositive) and Facebook.



Pine Hill students spent a fun-filled day at Beaver Island State Park on Grand Island at their end-of-year schoolwide celebration.



High school students headed outside for a barbecue as their final schoolwide celebration of the year.

# Youth Climate Summit

Cheektowaga Central High School juniors Emily Christman, Maya Karmilowicz, and Rachel Blake were among 90 local high school students at Buffalo State College to participate in the first-ever WNY Youth Climate Action Summit in June. The event was organized by the Master Teacher program, of which Cheektowaga Central earth science teacher Stan Skotnicki is a member. The summit featured guest speakers, activities and workshops to raise awareness about the state of the planet. Students also created community action plans with a partner school, which they plan to implement within their own schools.



(l-r) Emily, Maya and Rachel with Mr. Skotnicki aboard the Miss Buffalo, which was the setting for the final activities of the day.

"The entire day was so inspiring, as the students were beyond enthusiastic to discuss their ideas and work with their peers who share a similar goal, protecting our planet," Mr. Skotnicki said. "It was a proud teaching moment, it was truly an example of why we teach. So far my time working with the Master Teacher program has been a huge success. We are already in the planning process for next year's summit."



[www.cheektowagak12.org](http://www.cheektowagak12.org)

# Annual Reminders

## Statement of Compliance – Title VI, Title IX, Section 504 and Age Discrimination

The Cheektowaga Central School District does not discriminate on the basis of age, religion, creed, ethnic origin, marital status, race, color, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, disability or handicap, in the educational programs or activities it operates. This policy of non-discrimination includes the hiring and advancement of employees; salaries and other benefits; counseling services for students; student access to course offerings; educational programs (including technical education programs), athletics and other activities; and the business activities of the Board of Education. The coordinators of activities relating to compliance with Title IX and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended) at the Cheektowaga Central School District are Christine Ljungberg and Gretchen Sukdolak, who may be contacted at 3600 Union Road, Cheektowaga, NY 14225; phone (716) 686-3605.

## Detailed Budget Statement

The School District has copies of the current school year budget available in each school building throughout the school year. Also, budget information can be found online on the District website at [Cheektowagak12.org](http://Cheektowagak12.org). The budget for the following school year will be made available in each school building seven days prior to the budget hearing for the next school year.

### District Policies on website

Cheektowaga Central School District school and district policies can be found online on the District website:

[www.Cheektowagak12.org](http://www.Cheektowagak12.org)

## Alternate Transportation Request

### Before/After School Alternate Transportation Request

Parents in the Cheektowaga Central School District with children who require transportation to a daycare provider before or after school are required to notify the Transportation Office so proper arrangements can be made. This includes District students attending Union East Elementary School, Cheektowaga Middle School, Pine Hill Education Center, or a non-public school. The licensed daycare center or private babysitter's residence must be located within the boundaries of the District. The request must be consistent daily; requests for multiple pickups or drop-offs on different days will not be honored.



To make arrangements for a child to be transported by the District to or from a childcare provider, parents should complete an Alternate Transportation Request form. To obtain the form, call the Transportation Office at 686-3644, email [dadamczy@ccsd-k12.org](mailto:dadamczy@ccsd-k12.org); or download the form from the District website at [CheektowagaK12.org/domain/331](http://CheektowagaK12.org/domain/331). Mail or bring the completed form to the Transportation Office, Cheektowaga Central School District, 3600 Union Road, Cheektowaga, NY 14225; or fax to 681-5232; or email to [dadamczy@ccsd-k12.org](mailto:dadamczy@ccsd-k12.org). Please note: it takes up to five student attendance days after the form is received to finalize transportation arrangements.

## Gun-Free Schools

The Cheektowaga Central School District has adopted the following Gun-Free School Policy in accordance with state and federal laws:

- No student shall bring onto school premises or have in his or her possession on school premises any firearm as defined by federal law.
- Any student found guilty of bringing a firearm onto school premises or having such a firearm in his or her possession on school premises, after a hearing has been provided, may be suspended from school for a period of not less than one year.

## HIPAA and Its Application to the School Setting

HIPAA (the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act) is a federal law that imposes new standards for the protection of individual health information. The confidentiality and privacy of school health records that are part of the student's educational record are governed solely by FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act). The passage of HIPAA does not change that in any way. HIPAA does, however, affect the nature of the exchange of information from the student's health care provider to the school. Informal exchanges between health providers and school health staff are no longer permitted; explicit written authorization is required from the parent or guardian in order for information to flow to the school. For example, immunization records require such authorization.

Within the school setting, FERPA continues to govern the exchange of health care information that is contained in the student's educational record. It is not necessary to obtain a release of information from a parent or guardian in order to share such information with school staff for the purposes of insuring the best and most appropriate care for a student.



## Policy on Tobacco Use

The Cheektowaga Central School District's policy on the use of tobacco on school grounds is in accordance with the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, the Pro-Children Act of 1994, and the New York State Clean Indoor Air Act. The District's policy states that tobacco use shall not be permitted and no person shall use tobacco on school grounds, in any district building, or in any vehicles used to transport students or staff.

# Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act – FERPA

The Cheektowaga Central School District is required by law to provide an annual reminder of the rights of parents and eligible students (18 years of age and older) concerning school records.

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), also known as the Buckley Amendment, parents and eligible students are guaranteed access to a student's school records. Copies are available to parents or eligible students upon request at a fixed cost.

Parents have the right to challenge the content of a school record. This right includes the right to a hearing to present evidence that the school record should be changed. The school is required to maintain the confidentiality of all pupil records. Under FERPA, school districts may disclose designated directory information if they have given notice and information to parents/guardians and adult students on how to opt out of this disclosure of data.

Finally, under FERPA, school districts may release the name, address and phone number of students to military recruiters unless parents/guardians opt out.

## Availability of the Asbestos Management Plan

Part 763.93(G)(4) of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations implementing the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act of 1987 (AHERA) requires annual notification of parent and employee organizations of the availability of the district's asbestos management plan. The management plan identifies the location of asbestos-containing building materials, the condition and friability of the materials, and the response action to be taken. The management plan is on file in the administrative office of each school in the Cheektowaga Central School District, and in the Business Office. It will be made available for inspection within five (5) working days of receipt of a written request

## Pesticide Notification

New York State Education Law Section 409-11 requires all public and non-public schools to provide notification to all persons in parental relation, faculty and staff about pesticide applications. The Cheektowaga Central School District currently uses integrated pest management practices and the least toxic approach to managing pests. Although we do not anticipate the application of a pesticide in any of our school buildings, we will place any interested person's name on a list for 48-hour prior notification of pesticide use, as required by New York State Education Law. To receive 48-hour notification of pesticide application, complete the accompanying form and fax it to 681-5232, or return it to Bruce Vona, Director of Facilities, Cheektowaga Central School District, 3600 Union Road, Cheektowaga, NY 14225.



### Cheektowaga Central School District

## Request for 48-Hour Notice of Pesticide Application

(please print clearly)

School Building: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Day telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Evening telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

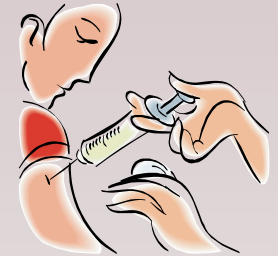
Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

# Annual Reminders

## A Message from Your School Nurse

As of Sept. 1, 2016 all students in Grade 7 and Grade 12 must have meningococcal vaccines (shots) in order to attend school. Students in Grade 7 will require proof of one dose of meningococcal vaccine.

Students in Grade 12 will require either two doses of meningococcal vaccine with the booster dose given on or after age 16, or one dose if the first dose was given on or after age 16.



Cheektowaga Central School District school nurses request that parents and guardians contact their family doctor or health care provider to make sure their children have all the required immunizations to attend school this fall. For more information, parents may contact Mrs. Brock, the High School nurse, at 686-3628; Mrs. Heerdt, the Middle School nurse, at 686-3657; or Mrs. Nayda, the Pine Hill nurse, at 686-3682.

**For the 2017-18 School Year**

**Parents:**  
All kids entering 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades must have the meningococcal vaccine. Without it, they can't start school.

**About the Vaccine:**

- It's not a new vaccine. It's been recommended for a decade.
- Most parents already choose to vaccinate their children.
- The meningococcal vaccine has been required for school entry since Sept. 1, 2016.

**About Meningococcal Disease:**

- It causes bacterial meningitis and other serious diseases.
- Teens and young adults are at greater risk.
- It comes on quickly and without warning.
- Its symptoms are similar to the flu.
- Every case of this disease can result in death or long-term disability.

**Check with your doctor.** Even kids who have had a shot before may need a booster to start school.

To learn more, visit [health.ny.gov/immunize](http://health.ny.gov/immunize)

**Immunization is Protection.**

NY STATE Department of Health

<p><b><u>Establish</u></b> procedures that clarify expectations &amp; enhance learning</p>	<p><b><i>“It’s all about the learning”</i></b></p>	<p><b><u>Build</u></b> meaningful relationships with staff, students and community to promote learning</p>
<p><b><u>Vision</u></b> To inspire...</p>	<p><b>CHEEKTOWAGA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT</b></p>	<p><b><u>Mission</u></b> To provide every student with the resources and opportunities for academic success and personal growth.</p>
<p><b><u>Develop</u></b> a culture of thinking &amp; learning</p>	<p><b><u>Goal</u></b> Inspire a high level of learning for all students</p>	<p><b><u>Motivate</u></b> staff and students to do their best work &amp; inspire the love of learning</p>



## Kristen Pastore-Capuana Earns Doctoral Degree

According to “The Atlantic,” less than 1 percent of all public elementary and secondary school teachers nationwide have doctorates. In May, one of Cheektowaga Central School District’s teachers joined the ranks of this prestigious group after defending her dissertation. Congratulations to Kristen Pastore-Capuana, who graduated from the University at Buffalo with her Ph.D. in English curriculum and instruction with a focus on literacy. Dr. Pastore-Capuana teaches English language arts in the High School.



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 Heather E. DuBard, *Vice President*  
 Walter R. Burgett, *Trustee*  
 Carol Kiripolsky, *Trustee*  
 Thomas Raczka, *Trustee*  
 Edward W. Schaefer, *Trustee*  
 Matthew A. Weigand, *Trustee*

**Superintendent of Schools**  
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[www.cheektowagak12.org](http://www.cheektowagak12.org)  
**District Offices**  
 3600 Union Road  
 Cheektowaga, NY 14225  
 716.686.3606  
**Registration Office**  
 716.686.3665  
[Registration@ccsd-k12.org](mailto:Registration@ccsd-k12.org)



School Board meetings are generally held the second Tuesday of the month at the District Office, 3600 Union Road, Cheektowaga, at 7 p.m. Those planning on attending are encouraged to verify meeting date and time by calling 686-3606.

