



COVID testing paves way for in-person instruction

Results show schools safe for learning, working

Nurses are on the frontline at Hamburg Central in order to keep schools open for in-person hybrid learning. Since mid-December, nurses from Aveanna Healthcare as well as Hamburg’s school registered nurses have been conducting COVID-19 testing of students and staff, as required under the state’s MicroCluster Strategy for schools in Yellow and Orange Zones having in-person instruction.



Aveanna nurse Carol Kish administers a test to a Middle School student.

Given consent are tested.

At the time testing began, five of the district’s schools fell within

the Orange Zone, while Boston Valley Elementary (BVS) was in the less restrictive Yellow Zone. BVS was initially included in testing but then completed its obligation after two weeks and was no longer required to COVID test.

While the Orange Zone status is in place, 20% of in-person students and staff must be tested over each one-month period. For Hamburg Schools, this equates to more than 700 tests in a month. If the sampling generates nine or more positive cases in any school during the one-month, the school is required to return to fully remote instruction.



Aveanna nurse Melanie Fetzer checks results.

As of the time of this publication, 789 tests have been administered with zero positive cases. It’s known that the spread of the virus in school settings is rare compared to the rest of the community. Hamburg prioritizes in-person learning and has a mosaic of strategies in place to keep schools safe for all those in its buildings. Since September, students and staff have faithfully committed to keeping each other safe through face masks, physical distancing, hand/respiratory hygiene, symptom checking and quarantining when required.

The random COVID testing of students by the private nursing *(Please turn to back page)*

Student scores with equipment to benefit Rec Center

Lots of kids. Lots of activities. Sometimes not enough sports equipment, arts & crafts supplies, games or books.

Having participated in many of the after-school programs and events at the Hamburg Village Recreation Center as a youngster, Hamburg High School senior Hannah Kruszka didn’t have to think twice about what she wanted to do for a community service project when she had some free time on her hands. So she recently single-handedly organized and ran a collection of items donated to the Rec Center to benefit children in village programs and sports leagues for years to come.

“The reason I chose donating to the Rec Center



Hannah Kruszka and items collected for the Rec Center

is because no one has ever done it before,” Hannah explained. “Being a kid at the Rec Center, there are things to do, but with tons of kids, unfortunately everything’s not available to do.”

A member of Hamburg girls varsity basketball, whose winter season was put on hold due to the pandemic, she reached out seeking donations from teammates and from peers in her Participation in Government classes. Connecting with everyone was difficult when school went fully remote in late November-early December. Not to be deterred, Hannah created flyers and walked the streets near the Rec Center to drum up donations from neigh-

(Please turn to back page)



Superintendent's Column

School community resilient in face of Covid-19 challenge

Albert Einstein said that “adversity introduces a man to himself”, and so it is that Covid-19 has introduced our community to ourselves over the past year. What I believe that our Covid-introduced introduction to ourselves has uncovered is a school community that has remained connected despite the requirement that we keep our distance, is willing to lend a hand to anyone in need, has been resilient in the face of great challenge and always focused on the needs of children because that is the essence of our mission. This reflection leaves me all the more grateful for the great people and partnerships that remain the bedrock of the Hamburg Schools.

The purpose of this *Focus* column is to provide you with important updates within the context of the three key areas of our reopening plan.

Instructional Services

We continue to work really hard to blend in-person and off-campus instruction into a “bricks and clicks” model of learning for students so that we optimize student learning in each of our learning models. It is important to remember that we had been working to optimize student learning under the traditional school model for more than 100 years before March of 2020. Since that time, we have all learned a lot about helping children learn in the “new now” in which we’ve found ourselves since then. Our educators, families and students have all joined hands as partners under new and changing circumstances. An important development for our secondary students is the fact that so many of our middle school and high school teachers are exercising the option to provide synchronous learning for students when they are home on off-campus days. We are working closely with our teachers to assist them in effectively incorporating this tool into their regular routines.

Our skilled and dedicated educators are also continuing to strike the right balance between assignments, assessments and grading for students in grades PreK – 12 so that we are ensuring great learning every day, we are able to assess what students know and can do as a result of those learning opportunities, and to provide helpful feedback to students and families about how they’ve demonstrated their learning. As always, please continue to reach out to your child’s teachers when you feel that the dialogue will assist us in meeting your child’s learning needs.



Michael Cornell
Superintendent

Social Emotional Learning

We remain committed to ensuring that every child has a sense of belonging as an important element to our “whole person” approach to meeting the mental/physical/emotional health needs of our students and staff.

According to Daniel Coyle, in the *Culture Code*, safety is a key component to students feeling like that have a sense of belonging and connection to their school, school-based adults and classmates. When students feel this sense of belonging, they learn better, form more productive relationships with peers and adults, and feel safe sharing their feelings about what they are going through — both good and bad. Every adult who works in our schools knows the value of forging caring relationships with our students, precisely because we know that without a relationship there can be no learning.

relationships with our students, precisely because we know that without a relationship there can be no learning.

District Operations

As you know from our Reopening Guide, the safety of our students and staff is our top priority. From masking protocols and physical distancing to Covid-19 testing and reporting, we have done everything we can to provide the safest possible environment for learning and work. As of today, our in-district Covid-19 testing program has not uncovered a single Covid-positive person, and the 7-day rolling average of positive cases from all testing programs remains at less than 0.5%. In short, because of our faithful adherence to all of the disease mitigation strategies, there is very little presence of Covid-19 in the Hamburg Schools. Rest assured that we will not let our guard down. You can count on us to press on with all that we are doing so that we can keep everyone safe and healthy.

We also continue providing meals for students in need on their off-campus days and remain committed to resolving issues related to internet connectivity and access to devices.

I started with Albert Einstein and I’ll close with Bob Marley. Bob Marley said that “you don’t know how strong you are until strong is your only choice.” Covid-19 has revealed the strength of our community, and being able to rely on the varied and considerable strengths of each other has gotten us through what seems to be the worst of this crisis. We know that there will be more difficulty ahead, but our collective strength will take us through to the other side.



Piece by piece, Middle School concert unites students in virtual harmony

The show must go on.

For Hamburg Middle School's Music Department that meant rethinking how to present the annual winter holiday concert in December given limitations of the pandemic, then using some ingenuity to make it happen.

The result was an almost hour-long pre-recorded concert streamed on YouTube on a December evening. With seasonal selections performed by several student music groups, it had much the same sound of an in-person event but a much different look and feel.

Middle School music teacher Sharon Meholick, who spearheaded the project, said it was important for students to have a goal in mind — knowing their rehearsing would lead to an opportunity to perform for an audience. So their teachers' goal became how to adapt given that no traditional large group events are taking place in the schools due to pandemic safety restrictions.

"We figured that everything is not the same but we knew we could come up with something where students and their families could sit and enjoy the music together," Mrs. Meholick said.

"Everybody this year is just trying to make the best of it. This was a positive moment for everyone."

Some of the obstacles overcome included social distancing requirements and only having half the students in-person at school on a given day, less rehearsal time and an unanticipated switch from hybrid to fully remote learning for three weeks in late No-

vember-early December. As a result, some of the performances were recorded in-school, socially distanced in the cafeteria. Other video-audio segments were submitted by students from home and synched together. This all took place weeks before the concert so that the many pieces could be united into the final video. The final video-audio editing was done by Mrs. Meholick's husband, Brad. PTSA funded the undertaking.

In a normal year, there would have been four individual concerts for the specific instrumental and vocal groups, with multiple selections performed by each. This year, each group performed one piece and the choruses weren't included because of logistical issues. Featured were:

Virtual pieces – 6th Grade Brass & Percussion, 7th Grade Brass & Percussion, 8th Grade Brass & Percussion, Jazz Ensemble, all directed by Matt Miraglia; 6th Grade Orchestra, 7th Grade Orchestra, 8th Grade Orchestra, Select Strings, all directed by Mrs. Meholick

Live recordings – 6th Grade Woodwinds, 7th Grade Woodwinds, 8th Grade Woodwinds, all directed by Sandy Freitag

Music compositions/holiday remixes – Students of Amy Hartman, using the app Soundtrap provided by the district

With the winter season under their belt, the music teachers are already thinking ahead to spring concerts and the possibility of performing outdoors in May-June. As they've proven, where there's a will, there's a way.

“ **Everybody this year is just trying to make the best of it. This was a positive moment for everyone.** ”

— Virtual Backpacks replace paper take-home flyers —



The Hamburg Central School District (HCS D) will now be placing flyers meant to come home with students on the Virtual Backpacks on the HCS D website and the HCS D app. Virtual Backpacks is located under the "About Us" menu on the district website. On the HCS D app, simply click on the Virtual Backpack icon.

Having flyers available on the Virtual Backpacks will mean that families are able to access the information at any time throughout the year, and it will reduce the number of papers being sent home with students. Flyers vary in content, but can include announcements about events, fundraisers, extracurricular activities, community programs and school-specific information. Flyers relevant to the entire district are listed, and each school has its own Virtual Backpack that you can click on and check for information that is meant for each individual school's community.

The Virtual Backpacks will be updated any time a new flyer becomes available, and regular reminders to check them will be sent out to families.

Foundation grant will boost technology access for students

The Hamburg Alumni Foundation is lending a hand in Hamburg Central's multi-year effort to provide a digital device to every Grade 5-12 student. The Foundation awarded the district \$20,000 toward the purchase of Chromebooks in its fall round of grants announced in December. This technology grant was the largest allocation of seven projects receiving funding. The grant awards totaled more than \$23,600.

Hamburg started its 1:1 device rollout to students in 2018 and has been making steady progress toward increasing digital access at all grade levels. The technology boost is intended to support the curriculum, expand opportunities for exploration via the Internet, prepare students for life after High School and create lifelong learners. Technology access has become even more crucial given the shift to hybrid and remote off-campus learning during the pandemic.

"It's about preparing our students for the 21st century and the technology demands they're going to face," said Brent Jordan, the district's Director of Technology.

The district is awaiting delivery of 1,150 Chromebooks earmarked for students in Grades 6 and 10-12. The Foundation grant will cover a portion of that expense.

Also funded through the Foundation's fall grants are:

- Two flexible seating projects, Charlotte Avenue Elementary
- Cameras to "capture the moments," Hamburg High School
- STEM materials for third graders, Charlotte Avenue Elementary
- Replace gutter and stain wood on outdoor reading garden shelter, Boston Valley Elementary
- Globe for classroom, Hamburg Middle School

The Foundation is a not-for-profit organization whose purpose is to generate and distribute resources to support and enrich education for all students at Hamburg Central. It generally distributes grants twice a year and provides scholarships to graduating seniors.



Game On!

Even the youngest of fans sported red, white and blue in January to cheer on the Buffalo Bills during playoffs in the football team's quest to make a trip to the Super Bowl. Third grader Jackson Schmitt and kindergartner Harper Larson showed their team spirit on Buffalo Bills Day at Boston Valley Elementary.



Students embrace homework help offered in evenings

Hamburg's Grades 6-12 students have somewhere to turn when they need help with homework in the evenings. In December, the district started virtual After-Hours Homework Help, which provides academic assistance for Middle School and High School students with teachers in four subjects via Google Meet. Since the start of the program, more than 60 students have signed up for help sessions.

"As a district, we have been thrilled to see the number of students taking advantage of this after-hours program," said Kaitlin Sylvester, the district's Coordinator of Curriculum & Instruction. "While we recognized it was a need for students, with the holidays around the corner, we anticipated it might be a slow start. Much to our surprise, that has not been the case!"

Homework assistance is offered in English Language Arts (ELA) and Science from 6-7:30 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays; Math and Social Studies on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Students are required to sign up ahead of time via a link on the homepage of the school websites and can submit their questions, as well.

Teachers providing assistance are Jennifer Brooks, ELA; Abigail Cimato, Math; Tom Ferro, Science; Brendan McFall, Social Studies.

Students join ranks of World Language Honor Societies

Inductions to the Hamburg High School Latin, Spanish and French Honor Societies that were sidetracked last spring due to the pandemic and school closure weren't forgotten. Instead, the ceremonies took place in November and December, combining in-person with safety protocols and virtual to honor the inductees and uphold tradition.

The Société Honoraire de Français (SHF) held six individual ceremonies in early November to coincide with National French Week. Students in each cohort were inducted during their French class. Adam Beiter, SHF president, provided a video message to the inductees, while Principal Michael Gallagher attended each ceremony and addressed the students. Superintendent Michael Cornell also attended one of the in-person ceremonies. The tributes were recorded and posted to Google Classroom for students to share with their families.

2020 French inductees

Grace Baumgartner, Liam Bonner, Sabrina Clancy, Eliana Endress, Clara Forehand, Meredith Georger, Aiden Knop, Emily Kowalske, Ayden Link, Alyssa Riter, Liam Riter, Lila Ruff, Noé Saillen, Jack Skora, Payton Spaeth, Alexa Steffen, Lydia Strawbrich, Carrie Surprenant, Sarah Tanski, Jaden Troiano, Sofia Weissflach

Hamburg's chapter of La Sociedad Honoraria Hispánica welcomed 31 new members. To accommodate all the candidates, six

individual inductions were held, some virtual, some in-person, in November. Inductees took an oath to continue their Spanish language studies and use their language skills to promote global citizenship.



From left, French Honor Society inductees Sofia Weissflach, Ayden Link and Carrie Surprenant



At the Spanish Honor Society Induction, Clarissa O'Connor, left, and Emily Schuler

2020 Spanish inductees

Kelly Bement, Lauren Beres, Maddy Beres, Emelia Bottoms, Peyton Buell, Abby Buffum, Bryce Clark, Lyndsey Cyrek, Josef Dunlap, Ellen Forehand, Rachel Gregoire, Sydney Grossman, Ashlie Hansen, Quinn Heine, Cailyn Hine, Lillian Hoffman, Sophia Lyons, Madison Martin, Magdalene Meyer, Mary Nawotka, Clarissa O'Connor, Ava Sargente, Courtney Schaeffer, Emma Schneeberger, Emily Schuler, Vincenzo Scioli, Ingrid Siudzinski, Lily Syracuse, Johnny Vu, Bryce Zeltman, Brooke Zimmer

The National Junior Classical League Latin Honor Society ceremony was held virtually for all inductees in December. Led by chief officers Claire Danyluk, Anastasia Ellis and Madeline Della Vella, the ceremony featured an introduction by Mr. Gallagher before students formally expressed their intentions to uphold the values of leadership and learning about the classical world. Senior Jaden Troiano captured screenshots of the event.

2020 Latin inductees

Jenna Crowley, Leah Iwanitzki, Jenna Jablonski, Leah Jarzynski, Melissa Kern, Delaney O'Brien, Ella Piazza, Grace Sauda, Cassida Schunk, Chika Simon, Sarah Waite

Latin students in peak form at first virtual Certamen

Twelve Hamburg High School students represented the school district on the state level with academic integrity, enthusiasm and success when they participated in the first-ever virtual New York State Junior Classical League Fall Fest Certamen in November.

Usually an in-person event, this virtual day of competition and learning used Google applications as the main platform. Activities included a quiz bowl style team competition over Google Meets, academic testing via Google



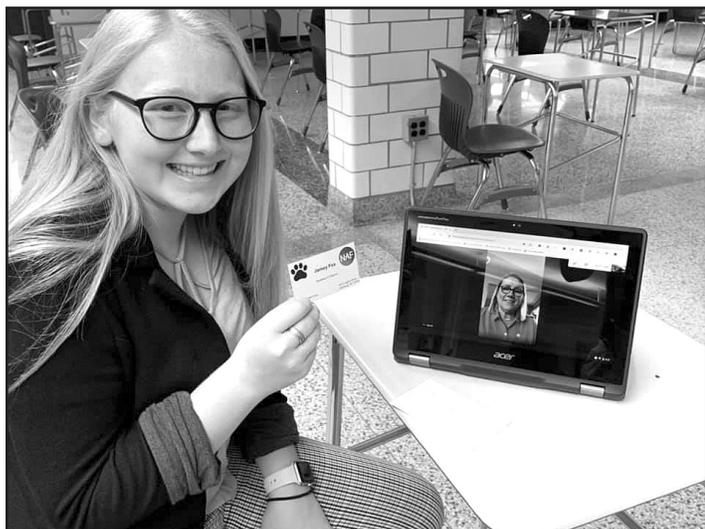
Forms, a virtual one-mile run and classically-themed art competitions. Student representatives ranged from freshman to senior across all levels of Latin: Sage Malloy, Liam Tillou, Macey Blum, Stella Pelkey, Bradley Tobin, Jacob Walters, Jaden Troiano, Chika Simon, Melissa Kern, Leah Jarzynski, Anastasia Ellis and Claire Danyluk.

On academic testing:

Freshman Sage Malloy earned second place on Level II Derivatives. Sophomore Bradley Tobin earned first place on Level III Derivatives. Junior Chika Simon earned second place on Lat-

in IV Pentathlon. Senior Claire Danyluk earned first place on Level IV Derivatives. Senior Anastasia Ellis earned first place on Level IV Mythology. Senior Jaden Troiano earned third place on Level IV Derivatives and third place on Level IV Pentathlon.

In the state-wide Kahoot Competition, Claire Danyluk and Chika Simon won first and third place, respectively. Sage Malloy earned second place overall on the poster contest based on the national theme "Each harvests one's own farm." Finally, Jaden Troiano and Bradley Tobin earned first and second place, respectively, on the one-mile run.



MAKING A CONNECTION —Sophomores in Hamburg High School's Academy of Finance (AOF) participated in "Virtual Networking" in November with business partners from the AOF Advisory Board. Prior to the networking, students prepared by writing "elevator pitches," making business cards and discussing virtual meeting etiquette. *Pictured: Jamey Fox connected with Deb Welch of Evans Bank.*

Student artwork conveys thanks for service of School Board members

Photographs by Hamburg High School student artists were recently presented to each Hamburg School Board member in recognition of School Board Appreciation Month.

High School art teachers Michelle Cyrek and Mike Edwards coordinated the student artwork donation. The photos highlighted design elements found within the Village of Hamburg. The contributing artists are: Madeline Dahlgren, Grade 9; Anna Reif, Grade 10; Carly Glashauser, Emily Kowalske, Alanna Michienzi, Cameron Viavada, Summer Weidner, Jake Gladke, Grade 11; Nathan Van Volkinburg, Grace Baccoli, Grade 12.

At the December School Board meeting, Superintendent Michael Cornell said he was grateful for the board's partnership and commended members for being thoughtful and engaged in their work, always acting in the best interest of students. Serving as board members are President Thomas Flynn, Vice President Cam Hall, Laura Heeter, Robbin List, Michael McGarry, Richard Schneider and David Yoviene.

Enrollment begins for Kindergarten and PreK 2021-22

Enrollment is underway for Hamburg Central's Kindergarten and PreKindergarten (PreK) programs for the 2021-22 school year.

The district offers full-day kindergarten for children who are legal residents on the opening day of school and who are or will be five years old on or before Dec. 1, 2021.

The PreK program, housed at Charlotte Avenue Elementary School, is for children who will be four years old on or before Dec. 1, 2021. There is no cost to families who reside in the school

district and no income eligibility restrictions. There are both full-day and half-day PreK class options. For more information on the program, see the PreK section of the school district website (hamburgschools.org).

Registration forms for both Kindergarten and PreK are also available on the district website. Registration is online only. See the Enrolling Students icon on the homepage of the district website. Contact the Central Registration Office for more information at 646-3200, ext. 7217 or email centralreg@hcsdk12.org.

Classmates, teachers are inspiration for portraits by High School junior

Classmates and teachers are often the subjects of portraits painted by Hamburg High School junior Carly Glashauser. She takes their photos then rapidly completes the paintings, sometimes as many as two a week, according to art teacher Michelle Cyrek. The result is a gallery of faces captured in oil on canvas that were recently displayed in the district Administration Building.

Carly is very involved in the arts and plans to apply to an art college. At school, she has taken Studio and Media Arts, Graphic Design, Fashion Design, Drawing 1, Painting 1, Photography, Sculpture, AP Studio 2D and AP Studio Drawing. Next year, she plans to take AP Studio 3D, Ceramics, Animation and Digital Drawing, if offered. She has also participated in classes at Buffalo Arts Studio, where she completed one of the pieces. The others she created at home and for AP Studio.

One of her latest projects was trying her hand at larger paintings, 3x3 feet. "We are all really excited to see what she does next," commented Mrs. Cyrek.



Superintendent Michael Cornell and student artist Carly Glashauser



Junior Class pitches in on toy drive

The holidays were brighter for families in the Town of Hamburg thanks to an annual Toy Drive spearheaded in part by the Hamburg High School Junior Class. Partnering with the Town of Hamburg Youth Bureau and WNY Holiday Partnership, the 11th graders collected new toys in December at the Iris Housing Complex. Doing their part, *from left:* Alyssa Riter, Ava Sargente, Lydia Strawbrich and Junior Class Adviser Kelly Owens.

Students hear from peers about life as Jewish teen

Students in five classes at Hamburg High School heard from their peers about their lives as Jewish teens to put a human face to Judaism. The six teens from area high schools who facilitated the peer-to-peer dialogue included Adam Beiter, a Hamburg senior.



A. Beiter

Their virtual presentation in November was through the Student to Student program, which strives to reduce prejudice and bigotry, and foster understanding among peers. This national program was piloted locally in partnership with the Holocaust Resource Center, Jewish Community Relations Council and Center of Jewish Engagement and Learning.

The students discussed Judaism, the Holocaust, antisemitism and Israel. English teacher Lori Raybold said the group was originally scheduled to visit Hamburg in-person to coincide with students' study of the Holocaust memoir, "Night," by Elie Wiesel. The visit shifted to virtual when schools went fully remote.

Ms. Raybold said, "My students enjoyed the presentations and said things like, 'I really enjoyed it,' 'I loved learning about the Holy Days and what it means to eat Kosher,' 'The presenters were good communicators and I appreciated their thoughtful answers to my questions' and 'Hearing actual stories about Jewish life was much better than just reading from a textbook.'"

Free meals for children continue until June 30

Breakfast and lunch are available free until June 30 to all families with children age 18 and under who reside in the Hamburg Central School District. This applies whether or not the children attend Hamburg Schools.

The district offers a weekly meal bag via curbside pickup on Wednesdays. Weekly sign up begins on Wednesday evenings through an online Google form available on the district website (hamburgschools.org). Families must sign up by 7 a.m. on Mondays to receive the meals. Meals for children with special dietary needs or food allergies are also available.

Meal pick up is from 3-5:30 p.m. at either Hamburg High School or Boston Valley Elementary.

Questions? Please email Anne Rich, Director of Food & Nutrition Services (arich@hcsdk12.org).

Drive provides gift cards to families in need

Organizers of Hamburg High School's annual Thanksgiving Drive extend thanks to the community for helping the drive surpass expectations in November.

The drive normally distributes turkeys and food for several meals to school families in need. This year, due to logistical challenges of the pandemic, the call went out for donations of grocery gift cards instead.

School counselor Kathy Battin, who coordinates the drive, said the response was overwhelming, resulting in more than 200 families each receiving about \$250 worth of gift cards to create their own meals.

"Pandemic or not, genuine care and concern for our neighbors prevails in Hamburg, NY," said Mrs. Battin.



C. Schaeffer



J. Federick

Bulldog Dash names winners

The Hamburg Bulldogs Booster Club and Hamburg High School Health Science Academy announce winners of the 2020 Virtual Bulldog Dash 5K Fun Run/Walk – In Celebration of Conor Long, held in October. Overall winner is Courtney Schaeffer, a Hamburg High School junior, with a time of 20.12. Top male is Jonathan Federick, with a time of 20.53. The dash supported the Health Science Academy and Booster Club, with a \$500 donation to ConnectLife. Full results can be found at www.score-this.com.



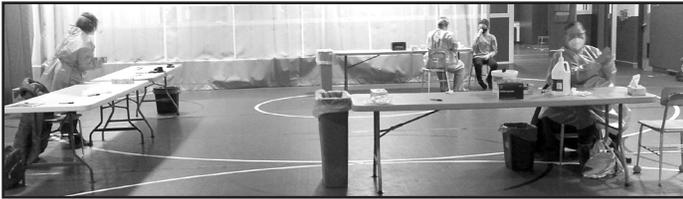
Administration Building
5305 Abbott Rd.
Hamburg, N.Y. 14075

Published by the Board of Education
Thomas F. Flynn III, Board President
Michael Cornell, Superintendent
Michele Darstein, Editor

Armor Elementary 646-3350
Boston Valley Elementary..... 646-3240
Charlotte Avenue Elementary 646-3370
Union Pleasant Elementary..... 646-3280
Hamburg Middle School..... 646-3250
Hamburg High School 646-3300
General Information..... 646-3200

hamburgschools.org

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Buffalo, NY
Permit No. 1002



COVID testing

(Continued from page one)

agency occurs during the school day, generally on Mondays and Thursdays, alternating between buildings and cohorts. The district additionally has agreements with Independent Nursing Care and Medical People Staffing, should the need arise for additional testing services. Staff testing on Wednesdays is conducted by school nurses. BinaxNow Rapid antigen tests provided by the state are used, with results known in 15 minutes. The test indicates if an individual has an active Coronavirus infection.

In a related issue, it's unclear what role schools will play in vaccinating staff members but preparations were being made in January so that the district will be ready for that possibility.

Student scores

(Continued from page one)

bors. On the wish list were donations of new or gently used school supplies, equipment for indoor and outdoor activities and monetary/gift cards for purchases.

As added incentive, some of what was collected will be put to use by Hamburg Little Cagers basketball, a program in which Hannah participated as a youngster and where she learned to love the game. As a teen, she volunteer coaches with Little Cagers to help younger players learn the game.

Hannah estimates she put about 20 hours into the project but says it was only successful due to the support of her parents and Josh Haeick, Village Supervisor of Parks and Recreation, on top of response from the community.



Snowmen of all sizes at Union Pleasant Elementary

Leave it to kindergartners. No matter how little snow there is, a snowman is simply a must. Enjoying a rite of winter, *from left*, are Union Pleasant Elementary students Brayden Cwynar, Preston Rachow and Luke Heater, all students in Laura Eye's class.