

# Catch the WAVE

Monthly updates from Superintendent Chambers

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## A Teacher To Be Counted On To Make A Real Difference!

**Student Editorial**

**By: Holley Jean Garrison**

During the COVID 19 pandemic, we have often referred to front line workers as medical professionals. Our outstanding group of educators and support staff have often been overlooked. One special educator in particular is Niceville High School's Melody Kortbein, whose impact on many students' education is vast.

When I moved to Okaloosa County in the wake of Hurricane Michael, Mrs. Kortbein welcomed me with open arms. In the three years I've been here I've had several teachers make a critical impact on my education. The one I'm highlighting today is Melody Kortbein, a teacher of mathematics at NHS.

Mrs. Kortbein has been teaching at NHS for over 35 years and many will agree that she's had an impact. During the pandemic, it wasn't unusual for her to deliver assignments and tests to students so they didn't fall behind in quarantine nor was it a surprise that when students expressed they needed extra help, she provided all the resources she could to them. She didn't just teach during the pandemic, she made sure we were thoroughly educated.

We All Value Education

Mrs. Kortbein was by no means the only teacher that did these things, but instead of being distracted by the dangers of teaching in a pandemic and her becoming a grandmother for the first time, she kept all of us focused in the classroom and provided a safe learning environment.

I came into AP Calculus my junior year exhausted of math. The end of the 2019-2020 school year online really threw me for a loop, and I really wasn't sure if I was going to continue my path of advanced math. Through interesting instruction and having an instructor who truly cared, I am happy to say I am going into a math-related field in college next fall.

I'd like to thank all of the wonderful staff at Niceville High School, and across the district, for the hard work they have put in over the past two years to keep our schools safe and strong. Your dedication has not gone unnoticed and I applaud you.

## OCS D Rated High Performing!



Okaloosa County School District was rated an Academically High-Performing School District for the 2020-2021 school year by the Florida Department of Education! The Academically-High Performing designation is based on a combination of factors including school grades, financial audit, and class-size compliance.

"We are very proud to be one of the few districts who have received this recognition for nine consecutive years! It's important because it confirms not only academic excellence but also sound financial stewardship." – Superintendent Chambers

To be recognized, districts must earn a grade of A for two consecutive years, have no material weaknesses or instances of material noncompliance noted in the annual financial audit, and comply with all class size requirements.

## New Worlds Reading Initiative

Readers are leaders. The New Worlds Reading Initiative is partnering with our schools to support K-5 readers and families through a free book delivery program. Learn more by visiting [www.newworldsreading.com](http://www.newworldsreading.com).



## Patriotic Essay Contests for Students

Students in grades 5-8 are invited to express their patriotism through essay contests sponsored by the ELKS Lodge and The Daughters of the American Revolution. Specific topics and requirements for each contest can be found on the next page.

### ELKS 2021-2022 Grand Lodge Americanism Essay Contest

The theme for the 2021-22 Americanism Essay is "What Does It Mean to Love Your Country". The theme of the essay is important because it gives students an opportunity to express their views on their pride in America.

1. Eligible participants must be students enrolled in 5th, 6th, 7th or 8th grade at the time of the contest, and must be identified by name, grade, school attending.
2. Essays should not exceed 300 words in length.
3. Essays must be typed or printed in ink submitted by the entrant.
4. Essays are due at the local ELKS lodge by December 15.

More information can be obtained from your Social Studies teacher, or contact Thomas McLaughlin [tmclaughlin@nwfdailynews.com](mailto:tmclaughlin@nwfdailynews.com).

## Daughters of the American Revolution American History Contest

The topic of the American History Essay for 2021-22 sponsored by National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution honors the 100th Anniversary of the dedication of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Students are asked to imagine they attended the dedication and describe what it meant to them and their families.

1. The contest is open to students in grades 5-8, including home schooled students
2. Essay length depends upon your grade level.
  - a. Grade 5: 300-600 Words
  - b. Grade 6-8: 600-1000 Words
3. Essays should be handwritten in black ink or typed and should include a bibliography.
4. Essays are due by November 8 to Kathy Kiser, 110 Lincoln Shirer Drive, Niceville, FL 32578. More information can be obtained from your Social Studies or ELA teacher, or contact Katherine Kiser at [iserk@rbc.org](mailto:iserk@rbc.org).

## Exceptional Student Education (ESE)

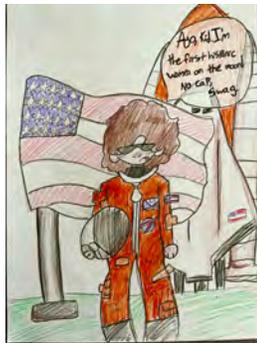
Disability History and Awareness Weeks began on October 1st and extended through the first two weeks of October. One of every five Americans is a person with a disability. Over 400,000 students identified with disabilities are participating in Florida's K-12 public education system and are working toward graduating and going on to postsecondary education or employment. As a part of October's Disability Awareness Initiative, we want to recognize the contributions of our students with disabilities and our extraordinary teachers, staff and faculty who go above and beyond to support 100% student success.

## Hispanic Heritage Month Contest Winners

### Art Contest



Grades 4-5  
Mackenzie Pace,  
Bob Sikes



Grades 6-8  
Riley Bongero, Bruner



Sophia Bigiuseppe  
Bruner

### Door Decorating Contest



Elementary School:  
Ms. Jacks  
Longwood



Middle School:  
Ms. Ortiz  
Destin Middle



Ms. Lusk  
Richbourg School



Elementary School:  
Ms. Scott  
Florosa

# Covid-19 Update

The number of positive COVID-19 cases has fallen significantly in our schools. In the most recent week, 14 positive cases were reported among students and staff. This represents a 97% decrease in positive cases from our high point at the end of August. Cleaning and sanitizing measures are still occurring in schools, and we continue to watch and report positive cases on our COVID-19 Dashboard at [www.okaloosaschools.com](http://www.okaloosaschools.com).

# OCS D Capital Improvement Program

Construction is ongoing this fall at many schools as we work to complete all safety-related projects in our schools. In addition, major roofing projects have been completed or are underway at Edge Elementary, Pryor Middle School, Mary Esther Elementary, and Crestview High School, and much-needed gym floor replacements for Davidson Middle School and Lewis School are scheduled for this year. All of these projects and more are being accomplished thanks to the voter-approved ½ Cent Sales Tax. Thank you!

In addition, construction work on cafeteriums, multi-purpose facilities, and classroom additions at fifteen campuses is in the final planning stage and should begin after the first of the year. It will take a few years to complete these projects, but none of them would be possible without the ½ Cent Sales Tax. Learn more about the sales tax projects at each school by visiting our Capital Improvement Program Dashboard at [www.okaloosaschools.com/okaloosa-capital-improvement-program-dashboard](http://www.okaloosaschools.com/okaloosa-capital-improvement-program-dashboard)



There are also exciting and long overdue projects underway funded through our regular capital budget. Those include HVAC upgrades, resurfacing projects, and LED lighting projects at our high school stadiums that will provide cost savings over time. Middle and high school bands will be able to start the process of replacing their aging inventory of instruments as well this year! Finally, we've ordered twenty additional school buses in our continuing commitment to modernize our fleet. More information on the OCS D Capital Budget can be found here: [www.okaloosa.k12.fl.us/finance/Publications/BudgetBooksFY2022/Capital/2.pdf](http://www.okaloosa.k12.fl.us/finance/Publications/BudgetBooksFY2022/Capital/2.pdf)

# Half Cent Sales Tax Update

## Citizens' Oversight Committee

The next Sales Surtax Citizens' Oversight Committee meeting is scheduled for October 26, 2021 at 4:00pm in the Training Room at the School District Central Complex in Niceville.

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