

Check out our 2020-21 Information Guide inside!



# THE JOURNEY

*Newsletter of the Gilbertsville-Mount Upton Central School District*

**Volume 31, Number 1**

**FALL 2020**



*So Happy Together!*



**GMU students are back and ready to learn!**







## **Gilbertsville-Mount Upton Central School District**

**693 State Highway 51  
Gilbertsville, NY 13776  
Phone: 607-783-2207  
Fax: 607-783-2254**

### **Administration**

Superintendent, Annette Hammond  
[ahammond@gmucsd.org](mailto:ahammond@gmucsd.org)  
Principal, Heather Wilcox  
[hwilcox@gmucsd.org](mailto:hwilcox@gmucsd.org)  
District Treasurer, Dorothy Iannello  
[diannello@gmucsd.org](mailto:diannello@gmucsd.org)  
District Clerk, Jarrin Hayen  
[jhayen@gmucsd.org](mailto:jhayen@gmucsd.org)

### **Board of Education**

President, Jeremy Pain  
[jeremypain@gmucsd.org](mailto:jeremypain@gmucsd.org)  
Vice President, Larry Smith  
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Member, Jed Barnes  
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[hillarygiuda@gmucsd.org](mailto:hillarygiuda@gmucsd.org)  
Member, Brian Underwood  
[brianunderwood@gmucsd.org](mailto:brianunderwood@gmucsd.org)

### **Our Mission**

At Gilbertsville-Mount Upton Central School, we use a trauma-sensitive approach to cultivate confident individuals with the desire to take risks, experience new opportunities, and to recognize the potential within themselves. We are a student-centered learning community that values:

- A Growth Mindset
- Essential Skills for Career Readiness
- Social-Emotional Wellness
- Resilience
- Critical Thinking
- High Expectations
- Meaningful Relationships

### **Our Vision**

To provide an inclusive learning community which fosters life-long personal and academic growth.

### **Our Motto**

**"It's the Quality of the journey  
that counts"**

## *Superintendent's Message*

### **Students are back thanks to GMU staff, community**

So much about schools and how we function has changed tremendously over the past 10 months. I have utilized our automated-calling system frequently to provide up-to-date information to our families. Our entire community pulled together to support our school in the work we had to do to ensure students could safely return to school when September arrived.

It is so amazing to finally have students back in the building after a very long spring and summer without seeing their faces and hearing their voices and laughter. I told our students that a school comes alive when they arrive and that this past spring and summer were very difficult without them!

The GMU staff is working hard to follow guidelines for distancing and cleaning because our greatest wish is to continue to have students attend school in person as much as possible. We are hoping to increase the number of students in the school building as regulations allow.

Our students have been great, coming to school after temperature-checking and masking up to keep themselves and the staff at GMU safe. This fall's reopening has been a true team effort and I thank the amazing GMU staff for making it happen. Our summer consisted of in-person and Zoom meetings, trainings, phone calls and lots of reading and collaborating to make sure we were ready to reopen in the safest way possible.

With the looming threat of aid cuts to schools, we have an added challenge to continue providing quality education while finding funds to offset potential cuts. This is becoming more difficult to do without hurting programming. In my budget presentation this year, I will clearly map out where we are financially and where we are projected to be as time goes on.

Most experts in the field of school finance claim that, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, schools will continue to struggle financially for at least two years beyond. I give this community my word that I will work with our GMU team to find creative solutions to manage a reduction in funding while building a budget that our taxpayers can support.

*Continued on next page*





## GMU recognized as School of Distinction!



Gilbertsville-Mount Upton has been recognized as a CFES Brilliant Pathways School of Distinction based on its performance during the 2019-2020 school year, Superintendent Annette Hammond announced in September.

Hammond received a letter of commendation from CFES Brilliant Pathways Vice President of Programs Tara Smith, who wrote:

“Achievement of School of Distinction status is testimony that Gilbertsville-Mount Upton Central School not only developed and executed an exemplary plan for its CFES Scholars, but also involved the entire school in the CFES core practices of mentoring, essential skills, and pathways to college and career. This is a particularly impressive achievement in the wake of a global pandemic that has upended the entire education system and forced schools to implement creative solutions.”

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### *Superintendent Message, cont.*

I also want to mention that we have had some calendar changes that the Board of Education will vote on during our November meeting. This year, poor weather days will be handled with an automated call, as usual, informing students if school is canceled. Please know that because of our virtual capabilities, there is a chance that, on occasion, these days will be used as virtual learning days. You can see our most up-to-date calendar within this newsletter.

As we move further into winter, healthcare specialists are predicting an increase in virus spread. Here at GMU, we will do our best to keep students learning in-person as much as

GMU will receive an award and banner to display at school in recognition of this achievement. CFES Brilliant Pathways also recognized GMU with a School of Distinction Award for the 2018-2019 school year.

According to the CFES Brilliant Pathways website, its mission includes working “side-by-side with schools, colleges and businesses to help students find their own brilliant pathways by becoming college and career ready.” Districts that partner with CFES Brilliant Pathways to help high school students graduate and find college opportunities – regardless of income – are eligible for the award.

CFES Brilliant Pathways reports that 99 percent of its Scholars graduate high school and 95 percent enroll in college. For more information, visit the website <https://brilliantpathways.org/> or call GMU’s main office at 607-783-2207.

possible. I can assure you that in making decisions moving forward, I will always consider student, staff and community health, along with Health Department recommendations. We will never lose sight of our mission and vision statements and, of course, our motto: “It’s the Quality of the journey that counts!”

Wishing you and your family a healthy and happy holiday season.

Sincerely,  
Annette D. Hammond  
GMU Superintendent  
[ahammond@gmucsd.org](mailto:ahammond@gmucsd.org)





GILBERTSVILLE-MOUNT UPTON CENTRAL SCHOOL

# 2020-2021 DISTRICT GOALS

## **Goal 1: Students will show academic growth.**

*We want students to develop academic independence and confidence during the COVID19 pandemic.*

- Faculty will be structured into Productive Professional Learning Communities (Fridays) with a focus on:
  - Math, Reading, Writing, Civic Readiness
  - The identification of essential standards and sharing of best practices for teaching and learning during the COVID19 pandemic.
- Review student-learning data to inform instruction through a guaranteed, viable, aligned curriculum.
  - Literacy program
  - Writing program
  - Phonics program
  - Analyze assessment data (F&P, state assessments, formative and summative assessments, iReady)
  - Utilize our Universal Screening Tool to identify struggling students earlier (iReady)
  - Restructure RTI/AIS process
- Expose learners to diverse experiences including college, career and civic responsibilities through a variety of programs.
  - Develop Career Plans with students/Naviance
  - Virtual College and Career visits PK-12
  - STEAM Collaboration for all grades and subjects
  - Model & Integrate Essential Skills and Virtual Skills

## **Goal 2: Students will demonstrate personal growth.**

*We want students to develop social, emotional and physical health and self-awareness.*

- Peer Mentoring: Explore creative ways to connect during COVID19
- Assign an Ally: To each student to connect each day and build relationships
- School-Based Health Center: Encourage and increase enrollment
- System of Care Social Worker: Work on procedures during COVID19
- Maintain a Trauma Responsive Environment: Utilizing Kognito and restorative practices

## **Goal 3: Develop and enhance a professional collaborative culture.**

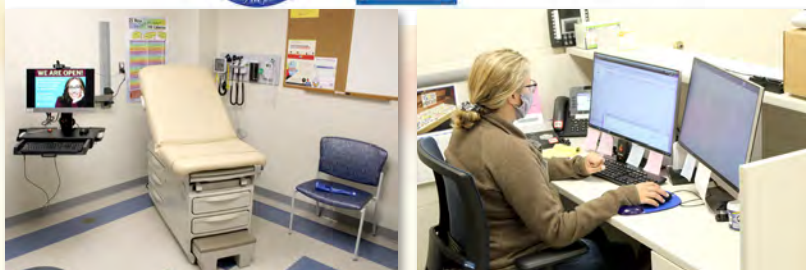
*We will enhance professional practice to improve student outcomes by providing training and support to ensure effectiveness of all GMU employees.*



# Bassett Healthcare Network



School-Based  
Health Center  
at GMU



## School-Based Health Center opens at GMU

Bassett Healthcare Network opened a new School-Based Health Center at Gilbertsville-Mount Upton in August, giving all PK-12 students the opportunity to receive quality healthcare with no out-of-pocket costs for families.

“We are so excited to introduce this program into our community,” GMU Superintendent Annette Hammond said. “It takes a village to raise a child, and we have an incredible village.”

Enrolled students are eligible to receive medical care—wellness checks, physicals, vaccinations, flu shots, follow-up care, etc.—on the GMU campus Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. The SBHC at GMU also offers a mental-health therapist (Mondays, Thursdays) and a nutritionist (once a month) on site.

“We have an amazing team of individuals here in Gilbertsville-Mount Upton and in all the communities that SBHC serves,” said program co-director Dr. Chris Kjolhede, also a Bassett pediatrician. “They are dedicated to caring for these children and addressing their needs individually. It is our passion and shared commitment to improve the health of the population Bassett serves.”

There is no out-of-pocket cost for services provided by the SBHC as health-insurance companies of students are billed directly. The SBHC can help students without health insurance enroll in the state’s Child Health Plus plan.

SBHC services are also available via telephone or Zoom. For more information or to enroll your student, call the SBHC at GMU at 607-783-2250 during regular school hours Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Parents, guardians and caregivers can connect with a provider or make an appointment at an open neighboring site any day by calling the School-Based Health program at 1-844-255-7242 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. (excluding major holidays).

The SBHC at GMU is Bassett’s 21st in central New York and was funded by a grant and monies secured by Senator James Seward, as well as a generous contribution from the Clark Foundation.

“Our School-Based Health Center has come together with the support of many constituents,” Hammond said. “We are grateful to Bassett Healthcare Network for their partnership on this journey and also extend our true appreciation to the Clark Foundation and Senator James Seward. This program will be tremendously positive for our school district and rural area.”

For more information about Bassett’s School-Based Health Services, visit <https://www.bassett.org/services/school-based-health-services> online.

## Meet Our New Teacher!



*Samantha Wise*

Say hello to Samantha Wise, Gilbertsville-Mount Upton’s new kindergarten teacher!

A Norwich native, Samantha recently completed her student-teaching requirements at GMU while earning a Masters of Education from Grand Canyon University. She is certified in general and special education for children from birth to second grade.

Samantha also has a bachelor’s degree in Child Development from SUNY Empire and an Intervention Specialist associate’s degree from Stark State College.

Fun fact: Samantha’s very familiar with our area as her grandparents are from Mount Upton!

Welcome to our GMU Family, Samantha!

## Meet Our New Nurse!



*Kelly Ingham*

Say hello to Kelly Ingham, Gilbertsville-Mount Upton’s new school nurse!

Kelly (RN, BSN) takes over for longtime GMU school nurse Carol Angelone, who retired after the 2019-2020 school year.

Welcome to our GMU Family, Kelly!

*Welcome to GMU!*



## GMU fundraisers set for December

Gilbertsville-Mount Upton's Board of Education Scholarship Fundraiser will be a Chicken Dinner Pickup on December 22. Proceeds will go toward scholarships for the Class of 2021.

Brooks' House of Bar-B-Q chicken dinners may be picked up at school from 3-7 p.m. December 22. All chicken dinners (half-chicken, baked potato, homemade coleslaw or macaroni, homemade cookie) must be pre-ordered by December 14 and cost \$15 apiece. To pre-order, call Jarrin Hayen at 607-783-2207, ext. 140, or email her at [jhayen@gmucsd.org](mailto:jhayen@gmucsd.org).

GMU also will host a White Elephant fundraiser in December to benefit its Class of 2023. Items will be showcased for in-person viewing from 3-6 p.m. December 16-18. All payments are due the morning of December 21 as the drawing will take place later that day. Prizes may be picked up during the Chicken Dinner fundraiser on December 22.

If you would like to donate items for White Elephant fundraiser baskets, please email Teresa Titus at [ttitus@gmucsd.org](mailto:ttitus@gmucsd.org). Those who cannot attend this event in person to purchase tickets should email Teresa Titus.

## Important College Information

Welcome back, GMU students and families! We are excited to have you back as we begin a busy and exciting year at GMU! Fall is a great time for juniors and seniors to visit colleges. If visiting in-person is not an option because of the COVID-19 pandemic, there are many virtual opportunities to explore campuses. A wonderful online resource is <https://www.youvisit.com/collegesearch/>.

Choosing the right college can be one of the most important decisions a young adult makes. Contact the admissions offices at the colleges/universities you are interested in possibly attending to find out about open houses, admission interviews, overnight stays and opportunities to meet with faculty and coaches.

The following is a schedule of the remaining college entrance test dates during the 2020-2021 school year.

### **SAT Test Date (Registration Deadline)**

#### **2021**

March 13 (February 12)

May 8 (April 8)

June 5 (May 6)

### **ACT Test Date (Registration Deadline)**

#### **2021**

February 6 (January 8)

April 17 (March 12)

June 12 (May 7)

## GMU celebrates School Board Recognition

The Gilbertsville-Mount Upton Central School District would like to thank its Board of Education members for their continued commitment to our children's education. GMU joins the New York State School Boards Association and public schools across the state in celebrating School Board Recognition in October 2020.

GMU's Board of Education is comprised of President Jeremy Pain, Vice President Larry Smith, and Members Jed Barnes, Sean Barrows, Cole Covington, Hillary Giuda-Philpott and Brian Underwood. Thank you, one and all, for your dedication to our student-centered learning community, for supporting our vision to provide an inclusive learning community that fosters life-long personal and academic growth, and for contributing to "The Quality of the journey at GMU!"

## GMU graduate recognized for work ethic



Dominick Carey is putting his Mike Rowe Work Ethic Scholarship to good use as the 2020 Gilbertsville-Mount Upton graduate is studying Electrical Construction and Utility Management at SUNY Delhi.

Working toward a career as a lineman, Dominick is staying busy as a full-time college student and a part-time employee for the Catskill Shed Company. He received the Mike Rowe Works Foundation Work Ethic Scholarship after graduation in recognition of his character, achievements and potential.

Dominick made the most of his high school experience, taking college courses, participating in a variety of extracurricular activities, earning multiple academic and character-based rewards, and completing a work-study program. He was a natural for the Work Ethic Scholarship, established by the host of television programs such as "Dirty Jobs" and "Somebody's Gotta Do It."

The Mike Rowe Works Foundation website (<https://www.mikeroweworks.org/scholarship/#recipient>) says its scholarship program recognizes "the people who understand the importance of personal responsibility, delayed gratification, a positive attitude, and, of course, work ethic. The hardworking men and women who keep the lights on, water running, and air flowing – the next generation of skilled workers who will work smart and hard. These are the folks we consider rock stars, and we want to reward them."

GMU is very proud of you, Dominick! Keep up the good work!



## Section IV votes to postpone fall sports

The Section IV Athletic Association has voted to postpone the 2020 Fall Sports Season until March 2021, the organization announced Wednesday, September 16.

Therefore, all Section IV schools and leagues will follow New York State Public High School Athletic Association guidelines for a Fall Sports Season II, which is scheduled to begin March 1, 2021. This includes Gilbertsville-Mount Upton, which primarily competes in the Tri-Valley League.

The Delaware League, Interscholastic Athletic Conference, Midstate Athletic Conference and Southern Tier Athletic Conference are also in Section IV.

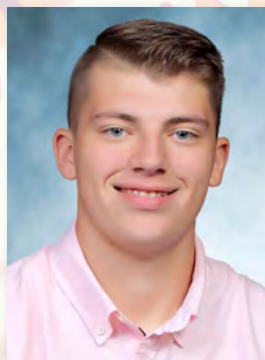
The Section IV Athletic Association's statement reads: "After much League and Section IV discussions, in the interest of student health & safety and with financial concerns due to New York State aid to Education cuts, Section IV member schools have voted – 59 YES; 10 NO; 1 abstention – to postpone the Section IV Fall Sport Season to the NYSPHSAA Fall Sports Season II with a start date of March 1, 2021."

For more information about the NYSPHSAA's plan to return to interscholastic athletics, visit its COVID-19 information page online at <http://www.nysphsaa.org/COVID-19-Info>.



## GMU Senior of the Month

Gavin Bonczkowski, November 2020



Gavin Bonczkowski is many things to many people at Gilbertsville-Mount Upton. He's a mature, responsible and respectful leader. He's a polite, pleasant and hard-working student. He's a supportive and caring friend. And he's the perfect example of what makes our GMU community like family.

Gavin is extensively involved in drama, music, clubs and athletics at GMU. A Boy's State nominee, Gavin serves as treasurer of the National Honor Society and as a class representative on the High School Student Council.

Gavin is an exceptional stage performer, with several leading roles as a member of the GMU Drama Club (Gomez in *The Addams Family*, Bert in *Mary Poppins*, Grimsby in *The Little Mermaid*). The Senior Chorus treasurer is also musically gifted as he recently performed well on a Level 6 piece in the NYSSMA Solo Festival to earn a prestigious position in the Area All-State Mixed Chorus. Additionally, this All-County Chorus member plays first chair baritone in symphonic band, bass in jazz band and quads in marching band. He has been a part of GMU performing ensembles since the fourth grade.

Athletically, Gavin has influenced GMU sports for several years. His athletics resume includes Tri-Valley League All-Star recognition during four varsity soccer seasons; Midstate Athletic Conference All-Star honors during five varsity baseball seasons; and four varsity basketball seasons that featured multiple TV All-Star selections, Class D All-State accolades and 1,000 overall points through his junior year. He is also a Section IV representative on the New York State Public High School Athletic Association's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee.

Gavin continues to be a leader outside of school, too. Currently a Life Scout, he is very close to earning the highest level of Eagle Scout. Through the Boy Scouts (Troop 44), Gavin has challenged himself to succeed in many adventures. He recently completed his Eagle Scout Project to install a flagpole at GMU's track and soccer field so the national anthem could be played at every outdoor sporting event. The project included planning, presenting and earning approval from GMU's Board of Education.

Gavin also designed and built two picnic tables for the GMU Booster Club and participates in the 4H Gilbertsville Dairy Club, showing dairy cows, beef cows, rabbits and pigs during multiple events. Gavin completed the 4H Dairy Challenge and 4H Dairy Quiz, too, earning him the opportunity to compete at both regional and state competitions.

Also an active member of the Gilbertsville Baptist Church, Gavin has played AAU basketball in Utica, Legion baseball for Norwich and completed an internship as an Internet Live Stream Broadcaster for the Oneonta Outlaws.

Gavin is planning to play basketball at a four-year college or university and has expressed interest in accounting, sports management, communications and agriculture.

# Congratulations!



## GMU Senior of the Month

Emily Hammond, October 2020



Emily Hammond is a bubbly, empathetic and enthusiastic individual. She has been described as an extremely hard-working and motivated student. Emily is always cheerful and willing to try new things, including helping others and assisting wherever she can. Emily is known to be an extremely responsible young woman and self-advocates for the things she needs and wants.

Emily is heavily involved in our school community. She plays trombone in the symphonic band, marching band and jazz band. The symphonic band treasurer, Emily also participates in high school choir and lady's ensemble. She has sung the national anthem at home basketball games for the past two years, and she has played soccer and softball for several seasons.

Emily recently earned a prestigious spot as Treble Choir Soprano 2 in the 2020 NYSSMA All State Festival after scoring high during a NYSSMA Solo Festival Level 6 Solo audition. She has performed in musicals since elementary school and starred in a lead role of GMU's production of the "The Addams Family" last school year. Emily also won our talent show, "GMU's Got Talent."

Emily is a member of the Gilbertsville Dairy Club and shows both beef cows and pigs. She also is an altar server at St. Mary's Church in Oneonta, where she served as an assistant Sunday School teacher last year. Emily also is a Girls State nominee who attended a virtual conference this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Emily demonstrates perseverance, respect and responsibility in every aspect of her life, making her a great leader and role model for GMU students and others. Emily said she plans to attend college to prepare for a career as a special education teacher.

### WIFI available at community locations

Having trouble accessing remote instruction at home?

Gilbertsville-Mount Upton students can connect their school-issued devices to free WIFI at the following community locations during the 2020-2021 school year.

- Gilbertsville-Mount Upton CSD: Available 24/7 in parking lots (up to 100 feet from building).
- Gilbertsville Free Library: Available at library.
- Gilbertsville Presbyterian Church: Contact Jan Costello for availability.
- Mt. Upton Baptist Church: Available in side parking area and on porch.

For more information, call the District Office at 607-783-2207.



## GMU to deliver student meals on Mondays

Gilbertsville-Mount Upton will deliver no-cost meals to students' homes every Monday until further notice.

Meals will be automatically delivered to the homes of GMU students who qualified for free or reduced-cost school meals in 2020-2021. Likewise, families of non-qualifying students who signed up to receive no-cost meals earlier this year will get automatic Monday deliveries.

All other GMU families can sign up for Monday deliveries by calling the school at 607-783-2207. Please call the same number if you are on the automatic delivery list but would like to be removed.

Meals will be delivered by school buses during regular dismissal routes. All meals provided by GMU during the COVID-19 pandemic—in school and delivered—are currently free for students.

Thank you for supporting our School Meals program!

## Free School Meals through December 2020

### Why Should My Family Take Advantage of this?

- They are Free & help you stretch your household food budget!
  - They save you time & are available in school and even on virtual learning days!
  - They make the school day seem a little more NORMAL—And who can't use a little more normal?
  - You are helping to sustain jobs.
  - They are delicious, nutritious, fun and convenient!
  - They are FREE for all kids through December 2020
- Please contact Susan @ 783-2207, ext. 122 for more information.



## Super Summer Readers Celebrate!

Congratulations to six Gilbertsville-Mount Upton students who completed our 2020 Summer Reading Challenge. Each received certificates of achievement for reading at least 20 minutes a day during July and August.

Pictured from left to right are Gabby Barnes (fifth grade), Gigi Barnes (second grade), Eliza Trass (kindergarten), Amelia Beckwith (fourth grade), and Alaina Beckwith (first grade). Fifth-grader Sophie Parslow also completed the challenge.

"I am so proud of their commitment to their education and their dedication to becoming lifelong readers," said GMU Literacy Specialist Lauren Weidman, who hosted a Reading Celebration for her Super Summer Readers on October 15 as a reward for their efforts.

The celebration featured a variety of fun activities, including a virtual story time and craft with Miss Sarah and Miss Cassandra of the Sidney Memorial Library, and a delicious pizza lunch donated by New York Pizzeria in New Berlin.

Great job to all of our Super Summer Readers and thanks to everyone who helped make this day so special for them!





## GMU has two elite vocalists!

Congratulations to Gilbertsville-Mount Upton seniors **Emily Hammond** and **Gavin Bonczkowski**, who have been selected to perform in the New York State School Music Association Conference All-State Festival in December!

Emily and Gavin auditioned in an NYSSMA Solo Festival on a Level 6 Solo and received high scores in their respective evaluations. Emily earned a Soprano 2 part in Treble Choir and Gavin secured a Tenor 2 position in Mixed Chorus for the All-State Festival, which will be a virtual-only performance.

"Students selected for these groups are considered the best in the state of New York," GMU music teacher Deanna Perkosky said of her students, both Town of Butternuts residents. "It is very difficult to get in and we are very excited that both Emily and Gavin have made it!"

Approximately 7,000 student musicians auditioned for NYSSMA Conference Ensembles, with 3,000 recommended by NYSSMA Solo Festival adjudicators. Only 900 student musicians are accepted, with 600 selected as alternates.

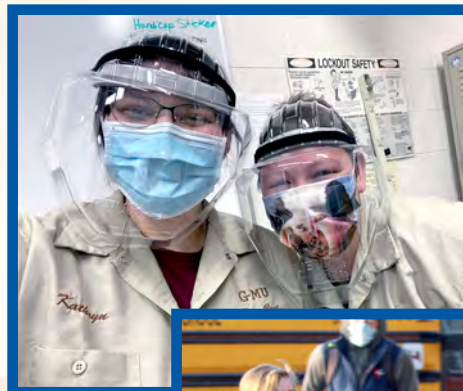
For voice parts, 3,500 auditioned and 408 were accepted. Soprano 2 parts went to 67 of 826 student vocalists who auditioned, while 35 of 287 were selected for Tenor 2.

Emily and Gavin are the first GMU students to earn NYSSMA Conference All-State Festival parts since 2017, when **Tim Picozzi** made it for Wind Ensemble-Trombone. Other All-State GMU students musicians were **Elaina Palada** (2015, Wind Ensemble-Flute); **Khaya Palada** (2010, Mixed Chorus-Soprano); **Amanda Tourtellotte** (1998, Mixed Chorus-Alto); and **Tamara Nelson** (1998, Symphonic Band-Flute).



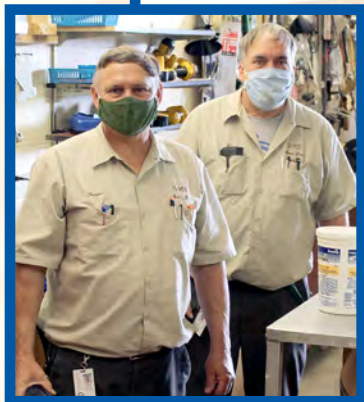
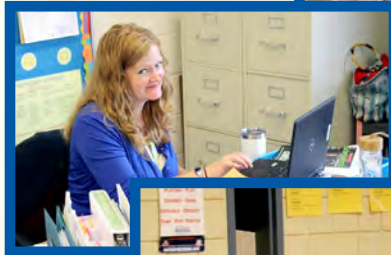
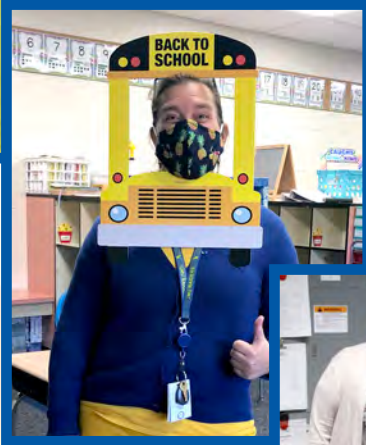
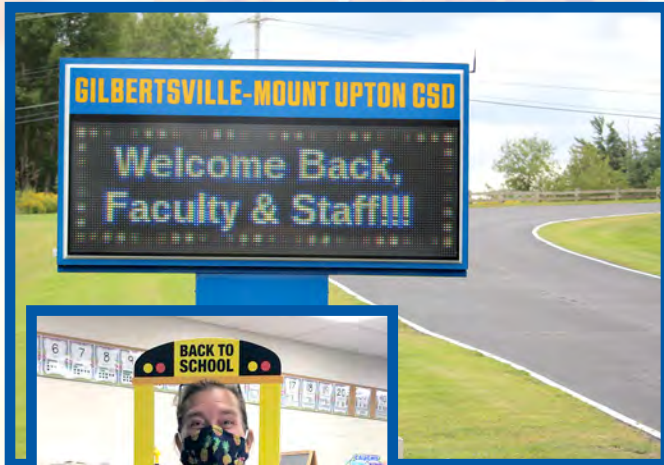
## Congratulations!

## Welcome back!





# *Welcome back students and staff!*





**GILBERTSVILLE-MOUNT UPTON  
CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
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#### **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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Brian Underwood

Annette D. Hammond, Superintendent  
Jarrin Hayen, District Clerk

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**ECRWSS  
BOXHOLDER**

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(@GMUCentral)



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(@GMUCentral)



## **OUR MISSION & VISION**

### **Our Mission**

At Gilbertsville-Mount Upton Central School, we use a trauma-sensitive approach to cultivate confident individuals with the desire to take risks, experience new opportunities, and to recognize the potential within themselves.

We are a student-centered learning community that values:

- A Growth Mindset
- Essential Skills for Career Readiness
- Social-Emotional Wellness
- Resilience
- Critical Thinking
- High Expectations
- Meaningful Relationships

### **Our Vision**

We strive to provide an inclusive learning community that fosters life-long personal and academic growth.

***"It's the Quality of the journey that counts"***