



CHARLES H. WALSH SR.
ACADEMY & CAREER TECH HIGH SCHOOL

Walsh Academy

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Greetings!

February is often viewed as the "long stretch" of the school year. While it sits traditionally in the middle of winter, it serves as our vital bridge between the cold, quiet months and the upcoming energy of spring. Here at Walsh, we aren't letting the winter blues settle in; instead, we are leaning into our community spirit and celebrating the incredible momentum our students have built.

To keep our energy high, we are thrilled to announce the **Walsh Winter Olympics!** During the week of **February 16th**, students and staff will compete in various games and challenges designed to foster teamwork, healthy competition, and a lot of laughter. It's a great way to stay active and connected as we wait for the spring thaw.

Celebrating Student Progress by the Numbers: Our mid-year data reflects the hard work our students put in every day. We are seeing steady, meaningful growth across the board:

Category	Progress & Outcomes
Academic Growth	More students are currently on track for graduation than in previous terms.
IEP Goal Progress	Percentage of students making progress on their academic goals has risen to 77% .
Transition Planning	100% of students completed transition surveys and are enrolled in courses aligned with their post-secondary goals.
Career Pathways	CTE (Career & Technical Education) participation has more than doubled since our early baselines.
Behavioral Health	Significant improvement in our school environment, with behavioral incidents dropping from 128 to 76 over the last year.

Issue Date

February, 2026

Upcoming Events

- 2/16 – Staff Institute Day
- 2/26 – End of Q3
- 2/27 – Start of Q4

February is widely recognized as a month for reflecting on the importance of positive, emotionally healthy relationships. At Walsh, we see a direct connection between our Social Emotional Learning (SEL) focus and these blossoming relationships.

The strengthening of our schoolwide routines has not only led to the major drop in behavioral incidents mentioned above but has also empowered our students to engage more deeply with their peers and staff. By mastering SEL skills—such as self-regulation and effective communication—our students are building the confidence and independence necessary to maintain healthy connections in and out of the classroom.

We are incredibly proud of this community of learners who continue to grow in skill and character. Thank you for your continued partnership in your child's journey.

Be safe,

Dr. Ann M. Craig, Ed.D.
Principal / Director of Educational Services



Health Beat

National Children's Dental Health Month

February is **National Children's Dental Health Month**, a great reminder that healthy smiles are an important part of overall health and wellbeing!

Why Dental Health Matters

Good dental habits help prevent cavities, gum disease, pain, and missed school days. A healthy mouth also supports proper nutrition, speech development, and confidence.

Healthy Dental Tips

- Brush teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste
- Floss once daily
- Drink plenty of water, especially after meals
- Limit sugary snacks and drinks
- Eat tooth-friendly foods like fruits, vegetables, cheese and yogurt

Don't Forget the Dentist

You should see a dentist every 6 months for checkups and cleanings. Regular visits help catch small problems before they become big ones.

Wishing you a healthy February!

Your School Nurse,
Tracy Mullen, RN



Boost Your Self Esteem in February!

By: Kristina Nickels – Social Worker

February is recognized as international boost your self-esteem month. Self-esteem is defined as how you feel about yourself. Self-esteem begins to develop in early childhood and is ever-changing throughout one's lifespan. Self-esteem can change related to life events and may take an undesirable dip due to stressors or mental health factors. Experts believe that everyone has the power to develop their self-esteem and that the benefits of doing so can be significant. Having healthy self-esteem can be a way to improve your mental health by increasing feelings of self-worth and helping to manage feelings of sadness or emptiness. Some strategies to boost self-esteem include:

Stop the Negative Self-talk- The labels that we assign ourselves can become ingrained and begin to shape our perceptions. By paying attention to your self-talk, you can start to catch yourself when negative thoughts come up so that you can challenge or work to change them.

Accept your "flaws"- Everyone has aspects of themselves that they wish they could change or improve. It is beneficial to separate the flaws that can be worked on from those that are unchangeable. Accepting your flaws does not mean you have to like them, it can mean that you choose to no longer let something that cannot be changed have control over you, freeing up your mental focus to discover or enhance your personal strengths.

Celebrate your strengths- This is a simple activity that can be incorporated into your daily routine. Take a moment to yourself once a day to reflect on your personal strengths. They can be physical attributes or aspects of your personality, abilities, or relationships. If it is difficult to start identifying your strengths, it can be beneficial to seek feedback from trusted people in your life.

Practice Self-care- Taking better care of yourself is a way to provide an instant self-esteem boost but can be easy to ignore when you are not feeling your best. Self-care means focusing on yourself and your needs and includes getting enough sleep, eating healthily, engaging in daily hygiene, and engaging in activities that create a sense of peace or well-being. It is important to evaluate your self-care practices regularly to identify areas where you need improvement.

Achieving and maintaining healthy self-esteem is a process that can benefit your overall functioning. It may not be a cure for mental health issues or stressors in your life, but it can create a stronger sense of resilience to overcome these obstacles.



Getting to Know Us!

By: Joel Gonzalez – Administrative Assistant

This month, we're shining the spotlight on two wonderful members of our Walsh Academy community. Nate and Ms. Kat.

Nate, one of our seniors, has been part of Walsh academy for a little over a year. He's a talented artist who loves to draw, a big Ben Stiller movie fan and counting down the days to graduation. With his passion for technology and problem solving, his future in the IT world is looking incredibly bright.



Ms. Kat has been with Walsh Academy since day one, and her impact is felt throughout our entire community. She pours her heart into her work, and her students feel that every single day. They'll all tell you the same thing. Ms. Kat makes everyone feel seen, supported and valued.

CTE Update!

By: Barbara Samaniego – Paraprofessional/Job Coach

CTE students are expanding their career awareness through a structured writing assignment. They begin by researching key aspects of a chosen career, including job responsibilities, typical work locations, required skills or education, and starting and average salaries. Students also describe how professionals in the field contribute to others and conclude by explaining why the career interests them.

In cooking class, students learned to prepare quick and nutritious breakfast options. They made egg bites with cheese and spinach and viewed a video on different methods of cooking eggs while their dishes baked. The following week, they practiced knife skills by slicing vegetables to prepare sausage rolls topped with onions and peppers.

CTE students have also returned to St. Benedict's to assist with weekly Bingo on Thursday afternoons. Both students and staff received a warm welcome from the residents. Ms. Loretta, an artist and resident, created portraits of Ms. Maysaloon, Ms. Rorie, Corey, and Jacob using pen and crayon. [See photos of Jacob and Corey below]



After winter break, it has been refreshing to return to familiar routines while also engaging in new experiences. We look forward to seeing what our students achieve next.

What is your favorite color?	
N – Purple/ Turquoise	K – Shades in the purple/pink family.
What is/was your favorite subject in school?	
N - Math	K – I love History, particularly Ancient History.
Have you ever had a nickname?	
N – Nate Dogg or Natzavivo Bambino	K – My friends in middle school started calling me Kitty Kat, and Kat eventually stuck.
What is your favorite holiday?	
N - Hanukkah	K – I love Christmas time. The lights, decorations, and Christmas morning anticipation are the best, especially when the kids were little.
What is something you've done that you are proud of?	
N – I flew by myself when I was 12 to Canada.	K – Coaching my daughters in volleyball.
What is your favorite movie, show, and/or book?	
N – Shawshank Redemption	K – Most people who know me will be surprised by this answer, but my favorite movie of all time is Shawshank Redemption! My favorite book is Nightingale by Kristin Hannah.
If you were a superhero, what powers would you have?	
N – To sit on a chair at any time.	K – Teleporting would be my superhero power.
If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go and why?	
N – Japan for the food and culture	K – I love traveling abroad! My next stop will be Greece! The views, beaches, and culture are my motivations. Oh, and Mr. George, too! LOL
What's your go-to comfort food?	
N – Brisket and mashed potatoes	K – Mexican food, period! I can have it for breakfast, lunch, and dinner!
Tell us something interesting about you.	
N – I love cooking	K – It's been 31 years and counting...!YKYK
What is the best part about being a student/staff at Walsh Academy?	
N – We have no homework	K – It's knowing that we are making a difference in our students' lives! (I can see the eye rolls already, LOL) And the connections we make with the staff.

Classroom Corner

By: Natalie Greenfield - Teacher

Happy February! The groundhog did not see his shadow this month, so we are looking forward to early spring! Students are excited for the weather to change and the snow to stop. Let's look at what teachers are doing this quarter:

- Mr. Justin's class is working on factoring trinomials in algebra. Students are working hard to increase their algebraic knowledge.
- The Cold War is being taught in Ms. L's class. They are learning about the effects it has had on America, and the world.
- Ms. Karlesky's class is understanding taxes in math concepts. They are really pushing students towards independence in the real world.
- Mr. Trerotola's class does daily journaling; this allows students to express their needs through a structured process while practicing writing skills.
- Geometry is getting sporty in Mr. Steven's class! They are learning about angles through real life examples in soccer and football.
- Mr. Steve's class is learning about different math computations and how they are used in real life in consumer education.
- "Wonder" by R. J. Palacio is being read in Ms. R's class. They are focusing on how their differences can impact others and themselves.
- Students are all over in different locations for job sites in Ms. Natalie's class. They are focusing on different skills such as working with others and keeping a schedule for themselves.

As we wait for the weather to warm up, we enjoy each and every day learning and communicating with each other. Students are motivated to continue to pass classes and get through each quarter together.

What's New at Walsh? Walsh's First Career Fair

By: Mark Trerotola - Teacher

On Thursday, January 15, Walsh Academy had their first job fair with 16 representatives from many different organizations. Among those present were:

- Niles Fire Department
- Mid-America Carpenter's Apprentice Program
- CISCO Construction Industry Services
- John Amico School of Hair Design
- Niles Public Works Department
- Kappy's American Grill
- Ebony Tattoo Lush
- Niles Police Department
- BMO Bank
- Niles Family Services
- The Dog House

Of the 10+ businesses to learn about, many students showed a high interest with Ebony Tattoo Lush, John Amico School of Hair Design and even the Niles Police Department. Representatives from Ebony Tattoo Lush were applying temporary tattoos on staff and students as they described what it takes to become an ink artist. Students from the John Amico School of Hair Design demonstrated how to do a facial and how to cut hair on two Walsh staff volunteers. They also had different wigs for kids to try on and mannequin heads with hair that Walsh students could actually cut. Walsh shared this experience with our neighbor, Bridges, a program in District 219. They came to Walsh Academy to experience the career fair and learn about different jobs, too. This was a great opportunity for students to get their career ideas flowing and think about what they may want to do in the future.





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FEB 14, 2026 | 7 P.M.

ALLSTATE ARENA

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TICKETS:

\$30.27 - \$55.63



[HTTPS://WWW.GOFEVO.COM/EVENT/MARYVILLEWALSHACAD](https://www.gofevo.com/event/maryvillewalshacad)

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