

December 2024

THE HOOK

Volume XV Issue 1

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

As we conclude the first semester and the busy holiday season, I look back with much gratitude for all that our students and staff accomplished so far this year. We have so much to celebrate at "The Ship" in the first half of the 2024-2025 school year including athletic successes, field trips, competition success, club participation, and academics!

To highlight a few notable groups, our MHS Army JROTC has been in full swing of participating in competitions including Raiders and Rifle Team, and our Raiders team finished 5th in the state! In addition, our JROTC cadets participated in events around the community such as the Veterans Day Parade and other ceremonies and recognitions around Flagler. Our Theater department had a great fall season, including their fall play "Up the Down Staircase" and preparing their District Thespian Festival pieces, including a one-act and several solo and ensemble pieces, which were recognized with superior ratings at the District Festival! Our Blue Steel Steelband is now world-famous, having performed for an international group of educators at the Apple Distinguished Schools conference in Orlando. In addition, they performed at the Flagler Beach First Friday, and the Starlight Parade, as well as putting on their performances at MHS during their Caribbean Cafe and their Holiday Concert. The Band of Pirates Marching Band wrapped up a hugely successful season by earning straight superiors at their Music Performance Assessment in November. Our band also performed at the Flagler Beach Christmas Parade and put on their annual Holiday Concert in the Pirate Theater for parents and community members. Our talented piano, guitar, and chorus musicians also shared their talents with the community with their concerts this winter season.

We're also proud of the community service that our students have been engaged with in this season of giving. From food drives, angel trees, and our annual Breakfast with Santa, groups like the National Honor Society, Key Club, Interact, and the Leo Club are helping our students give back to the local community and those less fortunate.

As we turn the page from 2024 to 2025, we eagerly anticipate the completion of our expansion project and hope to be moved into our new space in the early weeks of 2025. I thank all of the members of our Matanzas community for your support of Pirate Nation and wish all of our students, parents, and guardians a safe and happy holiday season.



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matanzas/matanzas.php](http://www.academypublishing.com/schools/matanzas/matanzas.php)



VISION STATEMENT

Through the collective partnership with our families, students, staff, and community, Matanzas will become a premier high school in the nation by inspiring independence and confidence in all learners as they prepare for college, career, and life.

MISSION STATEMENT

By providing a rigorous education, Matanzas prepares all students for success and empowers them as passionate learners to lead lives of purpose.

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Flagler County School Board

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COUNSELORS' CORNER

With cooler weather finally rolling in, we're reminded how quickly this school year is flying by! If your family is traveling this holiday season, we hope you can tour prospective colleges, technical and trade schools, or other programs.

COLLEGE AND CAREER PREP

Throughout September and October, the School Counseling Team completed freshman-senior presentations with information specific to support each grade level. Students were given tools, tips, and assessment inventories to plan for life after high school. The goal was for students to learn more about themselves, and their aptitudes, and learn about school and community resources available to assist them in preparing for their future aspirations.

Students also received a resource packet that included career, college, and scholarship search engines, planning timelines, community service opportunities, graduation requirements, state testing requirements and concordant scores, and personality and career interest inventories among other helpful items.

Students are encouraged to start building resumes, researching scholarship opportunities such as Raise.me, and utilize career interest inventories such as the O*Net Interest Profiler and also to continue doing the following:

- Check the MHS website (MHSpirates.com) for announcements, news, dates, and other information
- Work towards good grades, retake tests, use organization tools, and ask for help when needed
- Attend the MHS free tutoring opportunity on Tuesdays and Thursdays after school from 3:00-4:30 pm (activities bus provided for students that live in the MHS zone)
- Engage in MHS clubs, activities, athletics, and other opportunities
- Accumulate community service hours and/or paid work hours to meet the Bright Futures Scholarship requirements, and look marketable for other scholarships, colleges, and programs
- Utilize college/career planning resources such as Floridashines.org and MyNextMove.org to start developing your future career and post-secondary plans

The counselors look forward to supporting students throughout their high school career!

SENIOR NEWS

Please bookmark and consistently check the Senior Page and Senior Schoology site <https://www.mhsirates.com/students-families/seniors>

Don't wait to order your cap and gown! To order, visit <https://www.jostens.com/apps/store/customer/1472073/MATANZAS-HIGH-SCHOOL/>.

Questions about your cap and gown order or senior activities and events? Contact the MHS activities director at alredb@flaglerschools.com.

The Award Spring Senior Local Scholarship Application is open! Visit the MHS Scholarship Page to locate the application (Deadline - Jan. 21) Reach out to the Flagler County Ed Foundation for questions/assistance.

Be sure to hand in your community service sheets to the Guidance Secretary! You need 100 volunteer and/or paid work hours as part of the eligibility requirements for the top Bright Futures award, and having approximately 250 volunteer hours makes you more marketable for scholarships. Be sure to submit pay stubs or other evidence of paid work hours.

Seniors, you must complete the Florida Financial Aid Application (Bright Futures App) by graduation as part of the eligibility requirements. The link is as follows: <https://www.floridastudentfinancialaidsg.org/SAPHome/SAPHome?url=home>. Please see your Senior College & Career Prep Packet for instructions or reach out to your school counselor for the guide.



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FortifyFL is a suspicious activity reporting tool that allows you to instantly relay information to appropriate law enforcement agencies and school officials. FortifyFL was created and funded by the 2018 Florida Legislature as part of the Margory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act.

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MARINE SCIENCE HAPPENINGS

This semester, AICE Marine Science students had an incredible opportunity to visit the University of Florida's Whitney Laboratory for Marine Bioscience. During the trip, students engaged in hands-on investigations of marine invertebrates such as horseshoe crabs, lobsters, sea urchins, upside-down jellyfish, and sea stars. They also participated in a microbiology lab where they discussed cutting-edge neuroscience research with zebrafish and explored how this data could potentially benefit human health in the future. The day concluded with a tour of the lab's grounds and turtle hospital, followed by a visit to the River to Sea Preserve to study coquina rocks and enjoy lunch—complete with ice cream! It was a fun and educational experience for all.



Last month, Marine Science students participated in a series of engaging mini-labs to reinforce key concepts in plate tectonics. One activity involved making Oobleck, a non-Newtonian fluid that behaves like a solid under pressure but flows like a liquid when the pressure is released, mimicking the behavior of Earth's mantle. Students also created mini lava lamps to demonstrate convection currents within the mantle, which drive plate movement. While there were a few small "mishaps" and it took Ms. Hall hours to clean the room, the hands-on activities made for a memorable and fun learning experience!!



BLUE STEEL EVENTS

Matanzas Blue Steel and Percussion Ensemble has some exciting events for this school year.

- Wednesday, December 18 at 7 pm in our Pirate Theater: Holiday Extravaganza concert featuring Blue Steel! Admission is by donation.
- Tuesday, February 4 at 7 pm in Pirate Theater: Percussion Ensemble will premiere their Percussion Ensemble, including solos and ensembles prepared for our District Solo and Ensemble Music Performance Assessment.
- Thursday, April 17 at 7 pm in the MHS Courtyard: Outback Night featuring Blue Steel performing with Tom Miller, Adjunct Steelpan Professor at the University of Denver. Outback Night is a ticketed dinner fundraiser sponsored by Outback Steakhouse.
- Tuesday and Wednesday, April 29 and 30 at 7 pm in our Pirate Theater: The most popular show A Night of Percussion will feature all of the steelbands and the percussion ensemble's outstanding accomplishments this year. It is a show that you won't want to miss! The Night of Percussion is admission by donation.

Thank you so much for supporting Matanzas Blue Steel and Percussion. We can't wait to jam with you at our next show!

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AICE/AP FEATURED TEACHERS

Each month a nomination form is shared through our Remind group for parents and students to recognize an AICE/AP teacher. Please take the time to write a few words about your favorite AICE/AP teacher using the provided link: <https://forms.gle/dCXXN5ydRyi76RRY6>.



September AICE/AP Teacher of the Month is **Tara Doyle, AICE Thinking Skills**

Working with people in one form of service or another has always been my passion. During my 25 years into this career, I am certain I have found my purpose. Beginning in Pinellas County as a substitute teacher with a degree in Counseling, I was blessed to be mentored by those who supported my path toward acquiring my certifications. I began in an elementary school working with drop-out prevention students who struggled to pass their state tests. Since then I have taught every grade (yes, even kindergarten) and found that my best attribute was meeting kids right where they are, persuading, leading, and sometimes offering a little push, to just THINK. When an opportunity to work with the AICE Thinking Skills students arose, I did not hesitate to accept the assignment!

As I head toward the final years of my career I hope to continue leading students to their highest thinking selves. When home, I spend time with my three fur children, journaling, playing music, and enjoying the solitude of my quiet country setting.



October AICE/AP Teacher of the Month is **James Johnson, AICE English General Paper**

After serving in the Marines, I attended the University of Florida, earning a Bachelor's degree in Health Education. I began my teaching career as an instructor of Varying Exceptionalities which I taught for 8 years. Then I recertified and began teaching English. I have been teaching for 34 years and have been teaching AICE courses since 2016. I love the outdoors and enjoy hiking, kayaking, and an array of physical activities.

AICE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Matanzas offers an AICE club called the AICE General Assembly. The AICE General Assembly meets on the third Thursday of each month at 7:30 am in the Plank. Students interested in attending these meetings should have a parent opt-in form on file: <https://forms.gle/2jxt5jse1BKv8UpP8>

The AICE General Assembly is a time to support each other and to plan activities and events for AICE Cohort students. We are working on a winter social, fundraising ideas for end-of-the-year festivities and our next (A)ICE Pops giveaway. AICE students participated in the MHS Trunk or Treat, a community service event.

AICE would like to recognize our October Students of the Month in each course as recognized by their nominating teacher:

Spanish	John Polack
Sports & Physical Ed	Daniel Reyes
Thinking Skills	Jaci Kassha
Environmental Management	Stephanie Ibarra
Literature	Elizabeth Hull
Marine Science	Yeva Dermenshy & Calvin Khek
English General Paper	Sophia Temple
US History	Katie Kern
European History	Carma Lottering
English Language	Roy Gregory
Geography	Anika Witos
Drama	Logan Blanton
Biology	Karley Cobb
Travel & Tourism	Shah Hahm-Game

If you want to keep up with everything AICE, please join our REMIND group by texting @gg4cab2 to 81010. Remind is updated regularly with testing information, club information, and community service opportunities.

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LOCAL AUTHORS ENGAGE MARKETING STUDENTS

Our Marketing Applications classes recently welcomed guest speakers Karen Flaherty and Jackie Rector, who represent an impressive group of 26 authors from Seeking Insights on Solutions (SIS). These authors collaborated on a thought-provoking anthology exploring Black and White perspectives and experiences.

The visit fostered a valuable exchange of ideas. Students provided the authors with insights and suggestions for promoting their anthology through social media advertising. Additionally, they explored potential internship opportunities with SIS, gaining valuable exposure to the world of publishing. A big thank you to the Flagler Ed Foundation for connecting SIS with our classroom and facilitating this enriching learning experience.

For more information about Seeking Insights on Solutions, visit their website:
<https://seekinginsightsforsolutions.com>.

MHS STUDENT AUTHOR!

Congratulations to our very own Abigail Standish on publishing the first book in her new series, *The Prophecy of Times End*. This young adult fantasy novel takes readers on an epic journey filled with adventure, magic, and the timeless battle between light and darkness. You can grab a copy on Amazon or check it out from the MHS library. Don't miss this incredible read!



CONGRATULATIONS TO ANA HEARTZ

Ana Hertz was recently presented with the Daughters of the American Revolution Award. The award went to a senior-class female who exemplifies the qualities of a good citizen, which include truthfulness, loyalty, punctuality, trustworthiness, cooperation, courtesy, contributing to the welfare of others, self-control, ability to assume responsibility, inspiring others, a decision-maker, devotion to and support of one's country, supporting service members and veterans, working for causes that make one's community stronger, appreciating the cultural and historical importance of America's unique population. Ana was nominated by her teachers and voted on by her senior classmates to receive the award. She is a member of JROTC and was awarded the DAR JROTC award her freshman year and was honored to earn this award as a senior. Ana looks forward to graduating and continuing her journey in the service of our country.

DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

The World Language Spanish 2 team recently celebrated Dia de los Muertos with their students through various engaging activities. The students compared Halloween with Dia de los Muertos, created replicas of the Mexican altars (ofrendas), painted and colored Day of the Dead skulls, crafted Mexican paper (papel picado), and researched this wonderful Hispanic celebration.

We are also pleased to announce that all the projects completed by our students will be displayed at the upcoming World Celebration at Matanzas in March 2025. More details about this multicultural event will be shared soon.



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ROTC STRONG!

It was a great 2nd quarter in Matanzas JROTC. The cadets continue to grow in their leadership skills and are gaining discipline to be successful in life as we focus on the goal of developing leaders and inspiring cadets to become better citizens. The program has also focused on team building and experiences outside the classroom. JROTC cadets continued supporting the Matanzas football team by providing parking support and color guard support to their home football games. JROTC also provided color guard support at the school board meeting, FPC football game, Veterans Day celebration at Hammock Dunes Golf Club, and the Jacksonville Iceman hockey game. JROTC cadets also marched in the Veterans Day parade and participated in the Flagler County Veterans Day ceremony. Our cadets participated in the CTE brief at BTMS and ITMS. JROTC cadets volunteered over 1000 hours to the community this quarter!

One of JROTC's bigger community events was honoring Veterans by participating in Flagler County's annual parade. Cadets marched down the historic State Road 100 in battalion formation ending at the government service building. Cadets then participated in the annual Veterans Day ceremony hosted by Flagler County. We wish to thank those who have served.

JROTC Cadets also had the opportunity to take several field trips during school. On the Camp Blanding field trip, cadets had the opportunity to rappel down a 72-foot tower which is part of the Army Air Assaults Course. To Army cadets, personal courage can be defined as facing fear, danger, and adversity, whether it is physical or moral. These cadets are taught throughout the course how developing these values contribute

to their everyday life and overall decision-making. The seven values taught are loyalty, duty, respect, honor, selfless service, personal courage, and integrity.

Our Matanzas JROTC Raider team qualified for the state-level competition in November. This is only the school's 3rd time attending states in the program's history! We look forward to continuing this success for years to come. The team, led by Cadet Smith and Cadet Weisenberger, placed 4th in the cross-country relay and 6th overall. Throughout this season every cadet exemplified dedication and teamwork to accomplish this goal. Congratulations to every cadet who participated in the Raider competitions this year, and we hope to see you next year as well!

As Raider season comes to a close, Matanzas JROTC will now move on to Air Rifle season. This year's team is led by Cadet Weisenberger. The team practices throughout the week and holds competitions every Thursday. Since the start of the season, our Rifle team has been undefeated and has the two highest marksmen in the area, Cadet Kirkman and Cadet Weisenberger. The team is currently in 1st place in our district. Congratulations to these cadets. Good luck with the rest of the season.

Mrs. de Beauvoir, MHS ROTC, and other MHS Pirates honored Veterans by participating in the Veterans Day Parade.



POP ART PORTRAITS

Digital Media 1 students created these Andy Warhol-inspired Pop Art Portraits using Adobe Photoshop. Featured are portraits by Devon Hoffman, Zaniyah Nixon, Annabelle Meier, and Lily Whalen.



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SPORTS

SUPER GIRLS

Matanzas, FPC, and Seabreeze students recently traveled to Jacksonville representing Volusia and Flagler Counties at the Air Force-sponsored Super Girl Pro. Three Matanzas and one FPC girl helped make up a collective team that attended the Super Girl Lacrosse camp and took first place in the beach lacrosse tournament! The girls played five games to win the tournament. MHS participants included Camryn Greiner, Mia Apfelback, and Paityn Lawrence. It was an awesome event!



Also taking first place in the Surf Lifesaving Competition was the Volusia County Ocean Rescue Lifeguard team of three Seabreeze swimmers and MHS junior McKenzie Manhart. The fellow Volusia County Ocean Rescue Lifeguards competed in Run Swim Run, Distance Swim, Four by One relay, and Beach Flags. O'Keefe and Smurdon from Seabreeze placed in the FHSAA State Swim meet two days before and McKenzie Manhart is attending the State JROTC Raiders meet this Saturday. They are all truly super girls!



SOFTBALL NEWS

The 2025 Softball Pre-Season Classic has been renamed to honor Matanzas former Head Softball Coach and current Assistant Principal, Sara Novak. During the pre-season classic, we will host an alumni event on Saturday, February 15. Please help spread the news and alumni save the date!

Any girls interested in playing softball this spring should contact Coach Manhart, at manharts@flaglerschools.com or see her in the gym before or after school. Softball team building and conditioning has begun. Arm care is January 8-9 and 14-16. Tryouts for the spring season will be January 21-24, 2025. There will be a mandatory parent meeting and our annual field day on Saturday, February 1. Also, the team will host an alumni event on Friday and Saturday, February 14 and 15. Please help spread the news and alumni, save the date! More details will follow on social media.

LADIES LACROSSE

Are you interested in joining a winning team? Ladies Lacrosse conditioning began in November meeting on Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:15 pm - 4:15 pm. Bring a water bottle, cleats, and your stick. If interested or have any questions, contact Coach Alred in room 6-152 or email her at alredb@flaglerschools.com. For information on the required athletic clearance, go to www.athleticclearance.com.

BOWLING



Congratulations, top female bowler Olivia Rabbat who advanced to the Bowling State Finals.

CLUBS

CHESS CLUB

Chess Club officers/members Calvin Khek, Corina Vogel, Andrew Robinson, Stanley Leblanc, Brandon Nong, and Club Sponsor Coach Frank Novak visited the Windsor Senior Citizen Care Center to introduce the game of chess to anyone who wanted to learn, relearn, or even play this awesome game. Lifestyle Enrichment Assistant Mario Santos commented that this age group is often forgotten. The chess club members and the Windsor participants enjoyed interacting with one another and the visit was truly appreciated. The club wants to bring chess into the community and make a difference even if just in some small way. After the successful visit to Windsor, the club decided to visit once a month for the rest of this school year. The club looks forward to more smiles of joy and spreading holiday cheer on their December visit.

Our next visit will be December 14th as we aim to bring some holiday cheer to Windsor from our MHS Chess Club! Happy Holidays! Checkmate!

MHS SPEECH & DEBATE

The MHS Speech and Debate team competed at Jacksonville University in the first Incubate Debate session of the season. Congratulations to Remmika Battles and Sthefany Cruz for earning Hemingway Leadership awards and to Ethan Tincher for finishing 6th overall. The team also competed at Lincoln Middle School for the Florida Civics and Debate Initiative's first competition of the year. Ethan Tincher won 2nd place in Original Oratory. In November, the team competed at Toco Creek High School in St. Augustine and in early December at Indian Trails Middle School. Congratulations to Faith Liebel who earned 3rd place in Dramatic Performance at the FCDI Virtual Tournament.



EASTERN EUROPEAN CLUB

Mrs. Lagocki, ESOL Resource Teacher, and the newly formed Eastern European club students were awarded a Beaver Toyota grant to start a lunchtime snack store featuring snacks and foods that represent Eastern European countries. The club's mission is to increase the cultural awareness of students from various backgrounds who have overcome immense struggles and to fundraise for sending care packages to orphanages in Ukraine.



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CLUBS continued....

ART NEWS

Art Club will meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month after school in 1-120, Ms. Vitkus. Student's parents must fill out the permission form online. A group of art students attended the DSC HS Art Academy in October. MHS celebrates Devon Hoffman for 3rd place in Sculpture and Tatiyana Pedro was awarded Best of Show! Their artwork is on display in the lower spot case.

Students Chloe Dotson, Maria Phillips, and Nyla-Janae Vileinor were assisted by Ms. Taylor to paint a mural for the Festival of Lights at Town Center. Enjoy the holiday festivities and be sure to see the mural themed "The Magic of Rotary".

KEY CLUB

Key Club has officially kicked off the holiday season! Our dedicated members have been working tirelessly to achieve our club's goals. Recently, we wrapped presents and brainstormed creative ideas for our upcoming fundraising events, including our highly anticipated Breakfast with Santa, which will help to further enhance our involvement in the community and support our plans. We are so excited to welcome many of our new members and hope to see more in the future. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Mrs. Cypert in 9-111.

VYSTAR TRAINING TAUGHT BY MHS ALUM!

In early November, MHS VyStar interns traveled to Jacksonville to attend a Preventing Cyber Fraud/Cyber Security training. The training was taught by Matanzas High School Class of 2015 graduate Camille (Leake) Veit.

Applications will be accepted starting in late January for any student interested in becoming a Vystar intern for the 2025-2026 school year. If you are interested or have questions, see Coach Schaefer in Room 5-239 or email schaeferj@flaglerschools.com for more information.



BLUE STEEL CELEBRATES!

For the 20th anniversary of MHS, Blue Steel hosted an alumni band from graduates as far back as the Class of 2012 and also included previous community band members. They formed a band of around 30 and performed two songs together at the Blue Steel Caribbean Cafe concert. They were joined by the founding director of Blue Steel, Rachel Palmer, who traveled from Denmark for the reunion. The alumni are a testament to how strong the program is and the amazing things Blue Steel has been able to accomplish because of their commitment.

