



2023

2024



# *Torrington High School*



HOME OF THE RAIDERS





# Superintendent Michael Wilson

## **Hello to the Incoming Ninth Grade Class and Torrington Public School Community,**

I just wanted to take a moment to share with you how amazing and wonderful Torrington High School is. Students attending the high school for the 2024-25 school year will be the first to experience our brand new High School in January of 2025 and will be a part of its first graduating class. At Torrington High School, we offer a wide variety of opportunities for each and every student. These opportunities assist our students to discover their career pathway. In addition to our amazing course offerings, you will have several choices for extracurricular activities (i.e sports, drama, band, and a wide variety of clubs) as well where you will find a smaller community that will help support you on your journey.

As you take the time to read through all of the pages in this magazine, you will see a number of students just like you. These students have benefited from their opportunities provided at Torrington High School and have been able to pursue their interests while earning their High School diploma. No matter what your passion or desire may be, Torrington High School is the place for you. Whether it be working on a car in mechanics, creating a souffle in culinary or building a guitar in shop class, you will be supported by dedicated teachers and thrive in a hands-on learning community.

As your Superintendent, I could not be prouder to serve as the Educational Leader of this wonderful community and I am dedicated to helping maintain and grow a rigorous teaching and learning environment that provides every student with a sense of belonging. As a Team we remain dedicated to helping all students to grow intellectually, emotionally, and socially which is critical to all students' success. My personal mission as your Superintendent is to ensure that all stakeholders are informed and take part in making sure that the educational needs of all children in Torrington are met.

The Team and I look forward to seeing your smiling faces next year at THS.

With great pride,

*Michael Wilson*

Michael Wilson, Superintendent

Go Raiders!



# Principal Brian Scott

As we at Torrington High School prepare to move into our new building next year we are filled with excitement about the endless opportunities that await us. We believe that the new building, our career pathways, THS's athletics, music, theater programs, and commitment to helping students find their path to success are the main reasons to join us as we move into the future.

The Torrington Public Schools Portrait of a Graduate work is well on our way and renews our commitment to students and their families. We believe that this commitment to prepare our students for the future is an essential reason to choose THS. Our Portrait of a Graduate is a community promise to learners and families that ensures all students will graduate with the skills and attributes needed to follow their chosen path to become contributing members of a global society.

At Torrington High School, students are focused on preparing themselves for their futures. Whether that path is college, career, or the military, we are here to help and support our students in this journey. Torrington High School offers eight AP and twelve ECE courses, which not only prepare our students for college, but also offer our students the chance to earn college credit while here at THS. Additionally, for students who are thinking of pursuing a career after graduation, we are developing a number of career pathways to help achieve that goal. Our pathways will include Business, Health and Wellness, Public Safety, Education, High Tech Manufacturing, and Applied Arts. These pathways are designed to help students acquire essential skills and knowledge to prepare them for their chosen career. Our JROTC program is an amazing opportunity to explore a military option for those who are interested.

As we prepare to move to the new Torrington High School, we see amazing opportunities and challenges that we will tackle together.



# GUIDANCE

Lao Tzu's famous proverb - that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step - has never proven more true than when one thinks about their high school career. Torrington students should know that attending Torrington High School is one of the most important steps they can take! As a school counseling department, our goal is to boldly disrupt the barriers that stand in the way of our students' success - this includes their academic, postsecondary, or social emotional success. Each step our students take on their journey through the halls of THS is one more step on their path to who they were designed to be. The opportunities that exist at THS help prepare our students for whatever life may throw their way once they graduate and leave these halls behind.

## Variety, Flexibility, and Opportunities.

At THS, opportunities abound. With over 30 clubs and organizations, an award-winning music and theater program, not to mention the access our students are provided to college partnerships, engaging in one's learning is the ultimate goal. THS offers a variety of electives - over 100 electives! - from Robotics, to String Orchestra, to Computer Science, and beyond. There is an elective for just about any interest area and our school counselors meet with every student at least once per year to develop a course plan that will meet their unique needs and goals.

Many of our students take part in Independent Studies or Teacher Assistant opportunities. If our students exhaust a content area and still want to delve even deeper into their interests, we allow the flexibility for our students to take an Independent Study based on their interests (with teacher and administrative approval, of course). We also offer opportunities for upperclassmen to work closely with teachers as a Teacher Assistant (TA) and earn high school credit for their work. Our Teacher Assistants assist their lead teacher in classroom, lab, or activity prep - and, depending on the TA's goals and interest, may even develop and deliver a lesson to an underclassmen class. These opportunities have proven life-changing to our students who have taken advantage of them. Our TAs have also created strong relationships with their lead teachers which has led to deeply beneficial experiences for both student and teacher.

## Early College Access

Torrington High School provides extensive opportunities for students to earn college credit while still in high school. THS offers 12 UCONN ECE Courses - courses for which students earn college credit at the University of



Connecticut. THS boasts the most UCONN ECE offerings, and most students enrolled in UCONN ECE courses, in Litchfield County and of any school of similar size and demographic in our state. We currently have 191 students earning a total of 1,160 UCONN college credits! In addition, THS offers 6 Advanced Placement classes. Students who take these courses have the opportunity to sit for the AP tests in the Spring for which they could earn college credit.

THS also partners with Northwestern Connecticut Community College (NCCC) to offer dual enrollment English and Science courses. Through this partnership, students will earn college credit at NCCC for their current THS classes with their THS teachers. Students may also

participate in NCCC's High School Partnership Program, which allows THS juniors and seniors to take courses at NCCC on campus for free! Currently, we have 19 students participating in the High School Partnership Program for the Fall of 2023. They are taking classes on campus with current college students and getting a taste of what college classes (and college life) are all about.

Access to the college experience is one of the highest predictors of students' postsecondary success - and so it is a priority to expose all of our students to the many opportunities that THS has to offer in this regard. Most students taking advantage of the opportunities listed above will graduate from THS with anywhere from 10 to 20 college credits under their belt. In recent years, several students have graduated THS with upwards of 60 college credits - that's two years worth of college credit - before they even go to college! These opportunities are just another step in the journey of our students' life-long success.

THS students are met on their journey by teachers who are engaging and caring. Our faculty and staff work to create an environment that supports learning. Our school counselors depend on a holistic and developmental approach to student learning and social-emotional development - especially when our juniors and seniors begin their postsecondary planning. As a school counseling department, we employ a hands-on approach to post-secondary planning. We plan parent evenings with presentations on college funding and college planning. We partner with local colleges and organizations to host FAFSA Workshops with translation services for our Spanish-speaking families. Throughout the year, we offer several college and career field trips and morning workshops. The school counselors provide a multitude of opportunities for our students to engage in their postsecondary planning and expose our students to as many postsecondary opportunities as possible. And, of course, the school counselors love to celebrate our students' success with ice cream trucks, pizza parties, and cupcakes as well!

Step by step, mile by mile, the THS school counselors walk alongside our students and encourage their success throughout their high school career. The journey may be long, but the years are short. As school counselors, we champion our students' every chance we get and provide the opportunities that will engage them - not only as they walk our halls, but once they launch from Torrington High School as well.



# WHY TORRINGTON HIGH SCHOOL?



**I'm Freyja Harrel,** I am a senior at Torrington high School, and I'm involved in a little bit of everything here at THS. From leadership clubs such as Student Council, NHS, and Rho Kappa, to art related clubs such as, Thespian Honor society, Choir, and of course THS Student Theater.

I can assure you that this was the best high school to get involved in a bit of everything. Since middle school I had known that there were lots of clubs that I wanted to be involved in and I wasn't sure which school would be able to provide a place where I could find many communities to get me involved, while of course still feeling welcomed. Once I had decided that I wanted to go to THS I felt welcomed.

I still remember the first day I walked into the Little Theater at the high school, it was scary. I mean I was at a school full of people and some of them were practically adults! But that anxiety was immediately calmed when I was welcomed with a big hello and given a run down by the director and seniors on what I was going to be doing during that show. But being welcomed of course isn't the only reason someone would want to pick THS.

The biggest factor in why I decided to go to THS, and honestly stay at THS, was the pride of Torrington everyone has. Everyone I had talked to was so incredibly into the school. The students would talk about going to football games or going to see their friend at the school performance. People would wear THS shirts and would engage in conversation about the previous night's game and how our teams could improve. Teachers would write on their board and hang up posters about fundraising events that were being held by school clubs. Band performances were widely celebrated and adored. And most importantly there were fun events such as Raider Rally, Homecoming, and semi formal. That's what sold me on THS.

I understand that choosing a high school seems like such a huge deal in middle school, I remember being stressed about making the correct choice and what would happen if I ended up having no friends. But I can assure you that there is a little bit of everything for everyone here. I am so thankful for my four years here at THS. I have met so many friends that I would have never known and so many teachers I have created a strong bond with. I have gotten to go to so many football games where I could support the band and players and got to be involved in so many clubs to the point where I could direct a show. I know that regardless of who you are THS will be the perfect choice for you.

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# WHY TORRINGTON HIGH SCHOOL?



**Patrick Minnerly** - The number one reason I am happy I chose Torrington High School is the arts and music programs it offers. I am someone who is very invested in music, and THS has the same commitment to the arts. I am proud to be a member of the marching band, which offers a great experience of community, teamwork, and performance. The marching band is known as the “Pride of Torrington,” and that name is well earned whenever we perform, whether it’s at the Torrington Memorial Day Parade or during halftime at football games. We’ve all formed a strong bond with each other.

I’ve also been very lucky to join choir for this year, and instantly it has been just as rewarding as band. Just this

school year, the choir has been able to perform in a traveling Christmas show at the Warner Theatre, sing the national anthem at Torrington’s elementary schools for Veterans Day, and participate in the annual Light Up Torrington event, where we sang Christmas carols. We have so much fun in the choir, and that shows in everything we do.

Overall, when it comes to the music department, you won’t get anything better than THS. If you’re currently in band, chorus, or orchestra, or simply interested in joining any of these, you’ll be happy if you choose Torrington High School.

I have always been involved in theater, and THS offers a great theater program. If like me, you’re interested in the performing arts, THS would be a great fit. We put on two to three performances each year, made by the incredibly hardworking students and staff of the theater department, who put in so much effort and time to make these shows possible. Each production is an excellent display of hard work and dedication, creating memories that I know will last a lifetime. There really is no greater feeling than seeing a show come together. And if theater isn’t really your thing, these performances are for an audience to enjoy! They enhance the culture of THS in a very positive way.

I would be remiss to not mention the variety of everything else THS has to offer, from strong athletics to exciting electives to clubs catering to many different interests. There’s a club for pretty much everyone here. The list is too long to describe in full, but I myself have been a part of Student Council, which fundraises for events and advocates for the student body, and Interact Club, a service organization that emphasizes helping out around the community for various causes. All of the different aspects I have discussed come together to make THS a wonderful place to be, and I am very glad I chose it.

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# WHY TORRINGTON HIGH SCHOOL?



**Sabrina He** - Why Torrington High School? "THS is a bad school." Something negative is usually the response that you get when asking about THS and people usually believe it. But the problem is: How would you know? You can't be the judge of that based on what someone else said, but only from your own personal experience.

Now with that said, you might think that my words should be taken with a grain of salt, since you're reading "Why THS?" from a complete stranger and not from your own personal experience or someone that you know. However, four years ago, I was in the same exact position as you are currently in and was scared to attend THS. I had heard many people say that THS is a bad school. Now, being a senior, I find it absolutely ridiculous to have believed everything I heard about THS.

I wish to give incoming freshmen some insight about THS. In giving you my insight throughout my four years at THS, I hope that you will take what I say into consideration when picking a high school that is just right for you.

THS has an amazing faculty. The teachers here WANT to teach you and see you succeed. Throughout my four years here, I have not had one teacher that wouldn't be willing to help me if I'm struggling (make sure to let your teacher know).

Not only are the teachers willing to help you when you are struggling, you also build strong relationships with your teachers. I can guarantee you that you will have a connection with a specific teacher, which might take less than a year or more than a year or two. But by the end of your senior year, you will have a teacher that you can talk to just about anything with.

Not only do you create strong and lasting bonds with your teachers, you also create strong and possibly even life-long friendships. Trying to fit into a new school can be difficult, especially if you're a freshman. This is where you try to get involved. THS has a ton of clubs, after school activities, and groups to offer such as band, orchestra, chorus, and more. Once you find what is right for you, everything else will fall into place.

Another thing to highlight is that THS has amazing opportunities to offer. THS offers ECE (early college experience) courses, a partnership with UConn, which earns you college credit without needing to take an AP class and getting a certain score to earn college credit. For those interested in graduating college early, you can start taking ECE classes as early as sophomore year. Along with the partnership with CT community college, starting junior year, you can graduate an entire year earlier for college!

THS is far from a "perfect" school, as it is far from a terrible one. It is what you make out of your time at THS that makes it a great school, but THS will always welcome you with open arms.

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# WHY TORRINGTON HIGH SCHOOL?



**Will Parkhouse** - Torrington High School is a great school choice for many reasons. The school is very closely connected with the community.

Students are given the opportunity to help those in Torrington and in the greater Torrington area. Students also can have a very close relationship with their mentors and teachers that they have throughout their high school career.

All of the staff here are very personable and relatable, making it a very smooth and easy transition from the Middle School to the High School.

Another reason to choose THS is because of the vast

variety of electives students are able to take.

THS has a very good Tech-Ed program where students can learn carpentry, videography, photography, mechanics, and they can even learn how to build your own robot!

Besides the electives, THS offers many college classes as well, allowing students to get an early start on earning college credit.

The school also has awesome sports programs where students can connect with friends and build up the community and school spirit.

Everything at THS is tailored to your likes and interests. The school really does care about your future and wants you to succeed which is why I chose THS and you should too!



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# WHY TORRINGTON HIGH SCHOOL?



**My name is Olivier Dubois.** I am a senior at Torrington High School, a Football team captain, and Honor Roll student. But I was none of those things when I started.

I struggled a lot in Middle school academically and when I was a Freshman at THS, the world was in the middle of a pandemic.

School was a huge source of stress for me, and I was absent all the time. After a hard year of distance learning, I went into my sophomore year with a new attitude, one of hard work and confidence.

Thanks to the encouragement of the guidance counselors

and teachers along with my family, I stepped far out of my comfort zone and joined the football team as a sophomore.

Joining the Football team was the best decision I've ever made! It changed my life and gave me new motivation to come to school and better myself mentally and physically.

Three years later, I'm a team captain and two-year varsity starter who's looking at division two colleges!

There are so many programs at THS, not just Football, that can change your whole outlook and school experience.

THS has some of the best Extracurriculars in the State! We have an award-winning band program and many sports teams competing for championships every year, as well as over 50 clubs. THS has by far the widest variety of courses and programs of any school in the area, including UCONN courses that count for college credits.

At my school you could be building a house in construction class 5th period and making pots and sculptures the next!

I was nervous going into High School, but after 4 years I see that I had no reason to be. High School will be some of the most fun years of your life!



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# WHY TORRINGTON HIGH SCHOOL?



**Diani Lucas** - Coming to this school really opened my eyes because so far, my mindset has changed, my attitude, my grades, and my school life.

I learned how to write an essay, I learned my history, my path for the future, my learning ability, and my hidden talents.

When I first arrived at this school in the middle of freshman year, I honestly knew nothing. My old school didn't care about my learning or any of the abilities I had.

Torrington High School opened doors for me that I didn't even know could open. I can now focus on my future and not have to worry about getting into a good college that isn't the perfect fit for me.

THS offers honors, AP, and UCONN classes which not only look good on your transcript, but if you join these UCONN classes you get college credits and go into college with some credits which saves a lot of money.

These classes benefit us and our learning. I never knew that was even possible. THS is a good school for students to prepare for the real world.

Last but not least, Torrington High School has a great support system with a wide variety of amazing teachers, sports, advisory clubs, tutoring programs, scholarship opportunities, and volunteer opportunities.

What high school do you know that gives you volunteering AND scholarship opportunities?! No school I've seen! Not to mention all of the clubs we have here.

They get us involved with the community and our peers. When you get to this school, you'll start to socialize pretty quickly.

People welcome you with open arms (most of the time). When you come to THS make sure you hold your head up high and don't be afraid to branch out. Sometimes you have to close a door to open a window.



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# WHY TORRINGTON HIGH SCHOOL?



**Sofia Calabrese** - The biggest thing I have taken away from my time at Torrington High School is that it is what you make of it.

There are countless opportunities, field trips, clubs, and teams to involve yourself in. Personally, involving myself in student council and sports has been a crucial part of my high school experience. Our student council provides the THS community with fun activities and opportunities to give back, including being able to participate in pep rallies and spirit weeks.

The volleyball team has also been a highlight of my time at THS. Sports are always a great escape for students, especially when taking rigorous courses that challenge you and push you to your limit. One thing about THS sports that really stands out is the passion that most, if not all, of the athletes have. It doesn't take being on the best team or winning state championships to work hard, have fun, and play the game you love with your teammates.

There are many academic levels at THS and there are courses and electives for everyone. For me, the AP and Honors courses that THS offers challenged me to want to improve and reach my full potential. Being able to customize your course load and choose classes that interest and challenge you is a great way to ensure that your high school experience sets you up for success after THS.

The THS community strongly encourages diversity and students' voices to be heard. With Mr. Scott and his student panel providing students with a vessel to communicate their ideas, there are so many ways to be heard at THS.

One thing that particularly helped me throughout all of high school was building strong rapport with my teachers, counselors, and administrators. A quick "hello" in the hallway goes a long way, and it can make a world of difference when it comes to feeling safe and welcomed at THS. It can be scary to think about going to high school and fitting in and making friends, but the most important thing to remember is that no matter where you go to school, you are your own person, and you are amazing. There will always be challenges, but you will find your people and your passion. THS counselors and teachers are always there for you. They will always do their best to assist you with whatever feat you might be facing or whatever idea you might want to bring to life.

So, when choosing to come to THS, choose to come in with a positive attitude, take classes that challenge you, build rapport with teachers and administrators, and get involved.



# WHY TORRINGTON HIGH SCHOOL?



**Chelsea Cliff** - As a senior at Torrington High School, I stand before you not only as a student but as a proud member of a community that has truly shaped my high school experience. Torrington High School is not just an educational institution; it's a vibrant tapestry of traditions, friendship, and opportunities for personal growth.

One of the hallmarks of THS is the experiences that await every student. From the unforgettable pep rallies that ignite school spirit to the pride-filled spirit weeks that showcase our creativity and unity, THS is a place where every day brings a new reason to celebrate. Our competitive sports games, award-winning marching band shows, and stellar theater productions contribute to an atmosphere of excellence that permeates every corner of the school.

Beyond the excitement of events and activities, THS is committed to fostering a positive and inclusive environment. The school's mission is clear: we will uphold TRADITION, and bring HONOR and SUCCESS to ourselves, our school, and our community. This mission is not just

a statement; it is the heartbeat of our school, guiding us in our journey toward becoming responsible and compassionate individuals.

As the president of my class, I have had the privilege of working alongside the best classmates and staff. The opportunities for leadership and organization at THS are abundant, allowing me to contribute to the vibrant tapestry of our school's activities. Whether it's organizing events, collaborating with fellow students, or participating in various clubs and sports teams, THS has provided a platform for me to grow, learn, and connect with individuals across all grade levels.

What sets Torrington High School apart is the sense of family that permeates every interaction. Beyond the classroom, we support each other in our endeavors, be it through school events like Haunted Hallways, Pink Rose Fund, Turkington, or other charitable initiatives. THS not only encourages us to excel academically but also emphasizes the importance of giving back to our local community. The funds we raise are not just numbers on a balance sheet; they are a testament to our commitment to making a positive impact on the lives of those around us.

THS upholds a high standard of tradition, honor, and success. These values are not just words; they are principles that guide us in everything we do. Whether we are in the classroom, on the sports field, or participating in community service, we carry the torch of tradition, honor, and success with pride. As a senior, I can confidently say that THS has prepared me not just for the next academic step but for a future where I can make meaningful contributions to society.

Torrington High School is more than a place of education; it's a community that fosters personal and collective growth. From the spirited events that create lasting memories to the commitment to giving back to our community, THS is a place where tradition, honor, and success are not just ideals but lived experiences. As I prepare to graduate, I carry with me a deep appreciation for the friendships, memories, and life skills that THS has given me. Torrington High School isn't just a school; it's a home, and I am proud to call it mine.

# WOODWORKING

At THS there are several course offerings that are based out of the “wood shop.” Each of the four different courses begins with an introduction to the shop space, the machines, and the projects that will keep students physically active every day of the course. The experiences in the wood shop are designed to engage the body and the mind.

We constantly impress upon the students that the learning objectives target content specific to the state standards as well as 21st century learning skills. There is never a shortage of student discourse, collaboration, and problem solving. Additionally, an eye for safety is paramount. The value of the wood shop experience at THS is evidenced by the popularity of the courses, so be sure to sign up early in your high school career.

**Wood Tech I** - This course introduces students to the “wood shop” as a space that will become “theirs” once they demonstrate a level of competence, confidence, and independence on each machine. Student ownership of the shop becomes real as the teacher becomes more of a facilitator of learning and less of a direct instructor. Some examples of projects include maple cutting boards, wood pens, bird houses, serving trays and foot stools.

**Wood Tech II** - This class offers an even greater level of independence to the students. After a re-introduction to shop safety, the students are given more choice with the design and materials as they begin their projects. A more in-depth study of the machines, jigs and joinery techniques plays more of a role in the shop experience. Some of the projects in this course include human figure models, box-joint boxes, wood and acrylic pens, ice-cream scoopers, wands, and woven-seat shaker stools.

**Construction Class** - This course gives students the hands-on experience of building a 12'x16' timber frame barn. Students employ a number of construction techniques involving sharpening, measurement and layout, use of hand tools, use of antique machines and use of “state of the art” tools to carve as many as 60 timbers sourced from local forests. Additionally, students learn safety on the job site including personal protective equipment and the building of scaffolding. The culminating experience has students raising the barn in a single day after site preparation, leveling of the ground, and squaring up the sills.

**Applied STEM** - In keeping with the theme of hands-on STEM learning, the students in this course tackle three group projects. Taking advantage of the season and the



various species of maples here in New England, students learn how to make maple syrup. The project takes students all the way from the tree taps to pancakes on the breakfast plate while focusing on the science and engineering behind the processes and the preparation of the syrup. The second project has students using the CNC machine and various machines and tools in the wood and soldering shops to build a fully functioning electric guitar. Other STEM projects have included designing, engineering, and racing Pinewood Derby cars, as well as building a simple solar electric system or an earthen pizza oven.

# CULINARY

At Torrington High School, the Family and Consumer Science Department is creating a stir, not just with its upcoming brand-new kitchen lab, but with a comprehensive culinary program that serves as a foundation for budding chefs and food enthusiasts. This program, deeply rooted in a tradition of excellence and innovation, is preparing to elevate its offerings to new heights with the completion of the new school building next year.

While the excitement for the new kitchen lab is palpable, it's the holistic approach to culinary education that truly sets the program apart. The curriculum, a blend of practical skills, theoretical knowledge, and creative exploration, is designed to inspire and challenge students. From mastering basic cooking techniques to exploring global cuisines and understanding nutritional science, the program covers a broad spectrum of culinary arts.

In anticipation of the new kitchen lab, the department is gearing up to integrate these state-of-the-art facilities into its already robust curriculum. This lab, mirroring a professional kitchen, will provide an unparalleled opportunity for students to apply their learning in a real-world setting. It will serve as a hub for innovation, where students can experiment with new techniques, ingredients, and recipes, under the guidance of experienced educators and chefs.

The beauty of the program lies in its versatility. Whether a student aims to pursue a career in the culinary industry, or simply wants to hone their cooking skills, the program offers something for everyone. For those looking to step into the professional world, the course provides a solid foundation in culinary fundamentals, along with exposure to the latest trends and technologies in food preparation and presentation. Students interested in further culinary education will find themselves well-prepared for advanced studies, having gained a comprehensive understanding of the culinary arts.

Beyond the technical skills, the program emphasizes the importance of creativity, teamwork, and leadership in the culinary field. Students are encouraged to collaborate on projects, participate in cooking competitions, and engage in community events. These experiences not only enhance their culinary skills but also help develop critical soft skills essential in any professional setting. As Torrington looks forward to the completion of its new school building and the inauguration of the new kitchen lab, the Family and Consumer Science Department remains committed to nurturing the next generation of culinary talents. With a program that balances tradition and innovation, practical skills, and creative expression, it is poised to continue its legacy of excellence in culinary education.



# AUTOMOTIVE

The first, and perhaps grimmest, response to this question might be to counter with the question of “Why not THS?” A multitude of entities have attempted to answer this question by focusing not on the quality of their own programs, but the false perception that Torrington High School is not a quality institution. A quick look at the awards won by programs, clubs, and individuals; prestigious institutions of higher education attended by THS Alumni; career paths and trajectories of THS Alumni; and the training and experience of THS Staff will easily end these rumors.

This quick discussion misses a more valid point intended for these pages. Few people are lucky enough to know what career they hope to work in at 13 or 14 years old. Most 18 year olds also struggle with this issue. Even many adults change this answer several times in life. If a student is lucky enough to know this, Vocational Schools, Charter Schools, and Magnet Schools do indeed make a great choice. For the rest of us a well rounded education, where ample variety to sample various career pathways plays a key role in helping to determine what we do, and occasionally comically do not, wish to pursue in life. When we add in the rapidly evolving world of A.I. and its very real impact on career training, skills, and at times even viability, a well rounded education should have much more value.

As a Tech Ed teacher in a public school, I do not feel compelled to claim that all of my students will be automotive technicians in the future. Some have discovered this desire, and it is my job to assist them in this pursuit. Most of my students gain a better understanding of safety, machinery, science, math, and economics. I have had students who thought it was their desire to work on cars discover that they really don't want to get dirty. I have also seen students, still college bound, completely change their life trajectory when they discover a career outlet which enables them to chase the science or math which they love. I have seen other students, who struggled or drifted through school, come alive at the realization that they can pursue a career doing something with their hands and minds.

When I came down to the tech wing, most students in the building did not know where tech wing was, or what happened down here. Our construction project has helped students find this end of the building, but many students, parents, and even staff are shocked to discover what we do down here. Occasionally, I will bring a high interest vehicle into the building, and it does make me laugh to see students peering in through the window. Many times they are shocked when I open the door and invite them in for a closer look. This year, a very similar event occurred during Parent Night. An older, rare, high interest Harley-Davidson (a long term project for an advanced student) was directly in front of my open door. It was amusing to see someone



stop in their tracks at the sight of the Motorcycle in the shop, and increased the number of parents I talked to that night by tenfold. Most parents, and still many students, are shocked to discover what we offer.

While the goal of education has always been to provide a high quality, well rounded education, society seems to finally be moving away from seeing this through the lens of traditional college being the only worthwhile option after high school. In the last half century, districts have gutted their hands on tech ed offerings. In the past decade, we have seen a value in CTE and STEM tech education return to public school at multimillion dollar expenses. Torrington has during that time, maintained a proud tradition of preparing students for a multitude of realities after high school, and providing hands on STEM classes. Yes, I do mean to say that THS has been doing CTE and STEM before they were “cool.” With out new building, we have proudly made the commitment to maintain and advanced these programs. Our new areas will continue to provide these valuable learning opportunities and career pathway exposure to generations of THS students.





# ROBOTICS

The Torrington High School Tech Ed wing is not just a place for classes; it's an immersive experience that transcends conventional education.

Whether you're a Freshman stepping into your first Tech class or a seasoned Senior navigating your 8th Tech course, one thing is certain – YOU BELONG HERE. Regardless of your prior experience or knowledge, our Tech Ed department is designed to be an exciting and inclusive space.

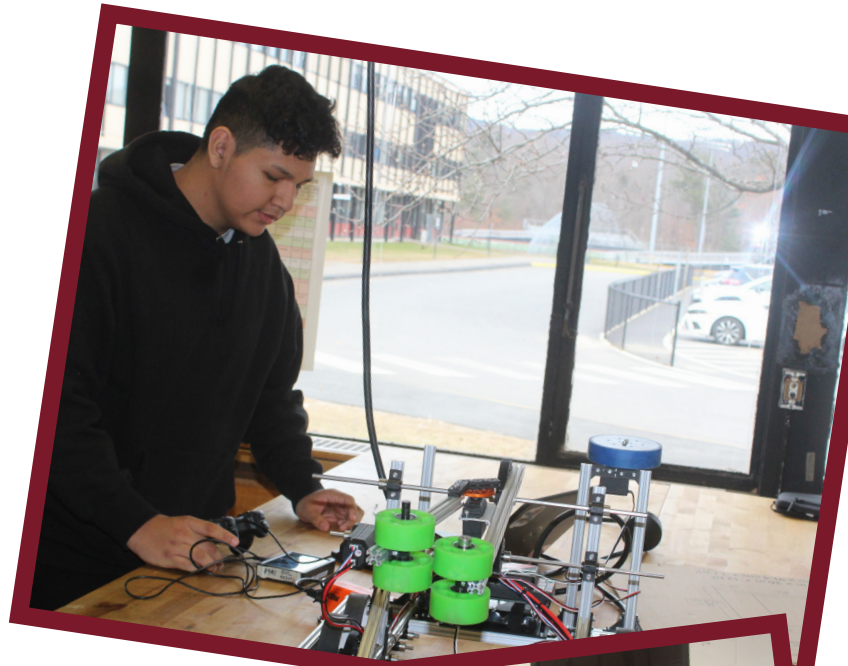
Our teachers are dedicated to providing students with the tools and environment needed for hands-on experiences in designing, building, problem-solving, and collaborative work. We believe in the power of learning through doing, and that includes the valuable lessons that come from both success and failure. As students navigate through various tools and equipment, we not only aim to instill confidence but also recognize that the process involves trial and error. Embracing failure as a part of the learning journey, we encourage students to extract insights from setbacks, fostering resilience and adaptability. This approach equips them not only with tangible skills but also with the mindset to overcome challenges, enhancing their capacity for lifelong learning and potentially sparking a passion for future career paths.

One highlight of our offerings is the Robotics class, aligned with the principles of FIRST Robotics – a global community preparing young minds for the future through STEM education. In this class, students form engineering teams, navigating the intricate phases of research, design, testing and modifications as they build and program competitive robots.

The classroom boasts a 12 ft x 12 ft robotics competition field, creating an authentic setting for students to apply their skills. The experience extends beyond the physical realm, with students creating a digital Engineering Notebook. This Engineering Notebook can be a crucial piece of evidence to present to a desired college, demonstrating a strong commitment to the field of engineering and setting the student apart from the crowd of applicants.

Excitement continues to build as our teachers actively pursue professional development opportunities. This summer, our Robotics teacher is set to attend the FIRST Tech Challenge Academy, a week-long program designed for educators offering this high school course, ensuring our students receive cutting-edge instruction. Last summer our Wood Technology & Engineering teachers attended a STEM Guitar workshop, adding even more to the STEM offerings.

In the realm of computer science, our Intro to Coding course, split into two sections, provides a full year of comprehensive learning. Recognizing the increasing importance of computer science in college applications, we've partnered with Code.org, a nonprofit foundation



backed by industry giants like Google and Amazon. Our students not only learn the fundamentals of coding but also gain practical experience with industry-standard programs like Visual Studio Code, creating real web pages.

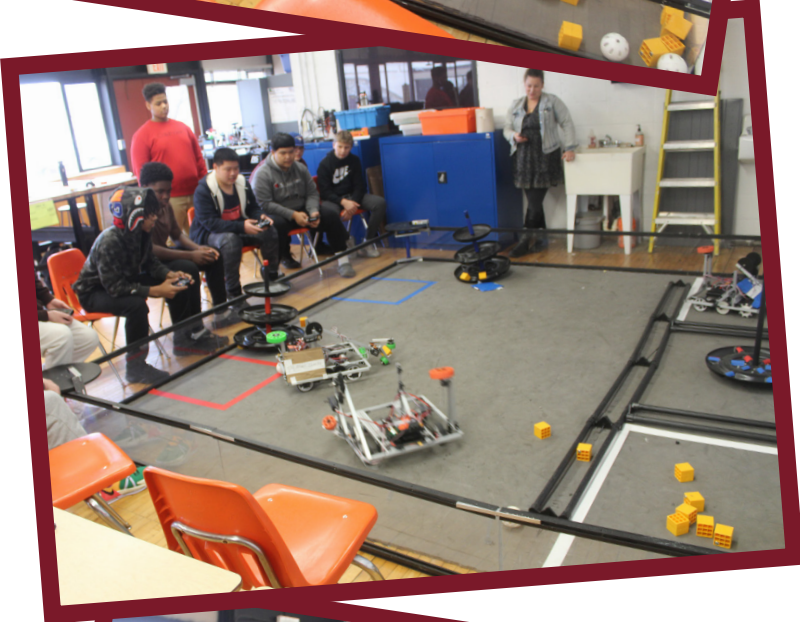
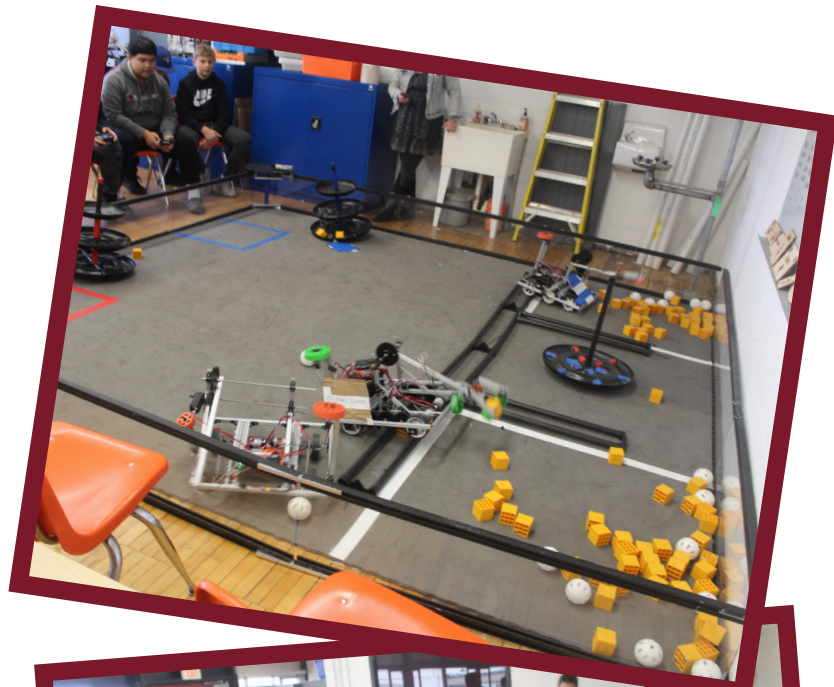
The curriculum is evolving to include units in Unity for game design and Swift for app development, providing students with a diverse skill set and tangible proof of their interest for college applications. Our CADD courses center around the use of Autodesk Fusion 360, a widely recognized industry-standard program.

A standout project among our students involves the redesign of the Parkinson's Pill Bottle, which gained fame through the 3D printing community on social media during the pandemic. The constant hum of 3D printers echoes throughout the day as they diligently produce prototypes from this class. In our pursuit of improvement and expansion, we are actively exploring opportunities, including the Perkins grant, with the aim of adding more 3D printers this year to further enrich our students' experiences.

In the Tech Ed wing at Torrington High School, we're not just teaching classes; we're fostering a community of learners, creators, and innovators. We believe in preparing our students for a future where technology and creativity intersect and every day is an opportunity to discover, learn, and build the skills that will shape their journey beyond high school.

So, why THS? Because here, in the heart of our Tech Ed department, the future is being crafted, one innovative project at a time. In the dynamic Tech Ed wing at Torrington High School, our commitment goes beyond conventional classroom instruction; we are nurturing a vibrant community of learners, creators, and innovators. Beyond the confines of traditional education, we have a broader mission—to prepare students for a future seamlessly blending technology and creativity. Every day presents opportunities for discovery, continuous learning, and the development of skills that extend beyond high school.

Our focus isn't just on academic success; it's on equipping students with the practical skills needed for real-life scenarios. As they engage in hands-on projects, they gain the expertise to become homeowners, adept at fixing appliances, and capable of maintaining their vehicles. We empower them with the skills to navigate the challenges of daily life, ensuring they are not just prepared for the future but also equipped to thrive in it. So, why choose THS? Because nestled in the vibrant heart of our Tech Ed department, we are actively shaping the future, one innovative project at a time, and preparing students not just for academic achievement but for the practical challenges and joys of life beyond the classroom.





*Coming Soon!*



**Torrington Board of Education**

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