



Enter to Learn, Go Forth to Serve

Pleasantville Schools

DISTRICT NEWSLETTER pleasantvilleschools.com

Fall 2018

Vol. 67 No. 1

Dear Community Members,

As I begin my ninth year as Superintendent of Schools here in my beloved Pleasantville, I know I have the best job in the world. It is rewarding, demanding, at times exhausting, but always fulfilling and filled with purpose – a greater goal, a greater good – to provide the best possible public school education to the children of this community. This task cannot be accomplished alone – it takes a community. I am extremely fortunate to work with a number of outstanding individuals whose leadership is invaluable to this task:

- Our Board of Education, for their selfless service and dedication to the children of this district.
- Our administrative team, for their outstanding professionalism and wisdom.
- Our teachers, support staff, nurses, office staff, and facilities crew –for all they do to support our instructional program.
- Our parent organizations, foundations, and clubs, for their incredible and tireless student-centered focus.
- Our Village of Pleasantville officials, the Pleasantville Police Department, and our community organizations, for their invaluable partnerships.



Dr. Fadjo

This year we are excited to welcome Dr. Cameron Fadjo in his new role as Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services. For the past two years, Dr. Fadjo has worked with us on Years Three and Four of our Strategic Plan and our infrastructure upgrade through a contract with the Lower Hudson Regional Information Center. The retirement of our Computer Coordinator at the end of the last school year allowed us to restructure that position, including a different approach to the job's responsibilities, and hire

Dr. Fadjo to fill it – a budget neutral move. Dr. Fadjo led teams at Google in Computer Science Education and the New York City Department of Education, where he designed and developed the first fully-articulated computer science course sequence for grades 6-12. He holds a Ph.D. in the learning sciences (Cognitive Studies in Education) from Columbia University.

The 2018-19 school year offers incredible opportunities as we launch Year Five of our Strategic Plan, Pleasantville Schools 2026. This year

continued on page 7

Board Meetings through March 2019

Unless otherwise noted, all meetings of the Board of Education begin at 7:30 p.m. in the Pleasantville High School Library Media Center. Reports scheduled are subject to change. Information on the upcoming Board meeting is available at pleasantvilleschools.com (Board of Education>BoardDocs) and 741-1460. Every meeting provides an opportunity for comments and questions from the audience.

Tuesday, October 23

- Strategic Plan – Year 5

Tuesday, November 13

Joint Meeting w/Village Board

Tuesday, November 27

Tuesday, December 11

Joint Meeting w/PHS Student Government

- Fall Athletic Season Recap

Tuesday, January 8

- School Counseling Report
- Testing Report

Tuesday, January 22

- Financial Update
- Technology Update

Tuesday, February 5

- Budget Process – 2019-20 Tax Levy Cap

Tuesday, February 26

- Budget Review

Tuesday, March 12

- Budget Review

Tuesday, March 26

- Budget Review

PHS Students Earned 120 AP Scholar Awards



The College Board gave out 120 AP Scholar awards to 113 Pleasantville High School students for their exceptional achievement on the 2018 college-level Advanced Placement (AP) Exams. Fifty are members of the Class of 2019 and have the opportunity for further recognition.

Over 2.8 million students took AP Exams in 2018 and approximately 24% earned AP Scholar awards. At PHS, 247 students completed 579 AP Exams in 17 subjects.

AP Exams are graded on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest grade. The College Board recognizes several levels of achievement, based on the number of AP Exams taken and the scores earned: **AP Scholar** (scored 3 or higher on 3 or more AP Exams), **AP Scholar with Honor** (scored 3 or higher on 4 or more AP Exams, with an average grade of 3.25 or above), and **AP Scholar with Distinction** (scored 3 or higher on 5 or more AP Exams, with an average grade of 3.5 or above).

Reporting errors sometimes occur. Anyone who is aware of one should contact The College Board directly.

AP Scholar, Class of 2018: Caitlin Anttila, John Bentley, Vincent Carway, Jack Cooper, Cullen Dell, Lauren Duggan, Mallory Gerosa, Julia Hunt, Katie Keane, Sophia Lamb, Andrew Mathew, Declan McDermott, Grace O'Hara, Alexa Pettenati, Cathryn Puglia, Samuel Raffalli, Brian Reda, Mateo Rodriguez, Jared Rosenshine, Kamelle Ruano, Nicholas Satriale, Kiara Vedovino, Natalia Zambon; **Class of 2019:** Jonathan Albaum, Cyrus Ansari, Iman Behbehani, Charlotte Berg, Maureen Ederer, Rebecca

Graham, Charlotte Harter, Jack Howe, Daniel Keon, Ryan Kwiat, Evelyn Lee, Samuel Lord, Daniel Melillo, Hayley Moses, Kaylei Raefski, Lily Rosenbaum.

AP Scholar with Honor, Class of 2018: Vikrant Bakshi, Timothy Driscoll, Gabriel Healy, Alden Iaconis, Michael Kokkatt, Stuard Mejia, Katherine Pedlow, Daniel Stangarone, Michael Urbietta, Joseph Zucker; **Class of 2019:** Lucy Allen, Anisha Chandy, Patrick Doherty, Julia Goodman, Jonathan Hayes, Ciara Hickey, Melanie Ipyam, Devin Juros, Shannon Kauber, Mary Kennedy, Brendan O'Neill, Adrian Rippstein, Andrew Scardina, Daniel Schuster, Devon Seixas, Samuel Selesnick, Asher Stein, Sofia Tomé.

AP Scholar with Distinction, Class of 2018: Daniel Ammirati, Benjamin Baylies, Thomas Carty, Rohan Chandy, Maxwell Coleman, Hannah Collins, Allegra Copland, Olivia DeMeo, Mia Dillon, Gabriel Finehout, Melissa Jacobs, Sydney Levine, Kayley Lewis, Charles McPhee, Anna Grace Mockler, Leonie Mohrs, James Persons, Sophie Rapley, Arthur Rogers, Katelin Schaub, Sydney Shulman-Arno, Andrew Song, Katherine Stargiotti, Conor Sweeney, Carter Tanis, Benjamin Trombetta, Ian Ward, Harrison Waxler, Olivia Wislocki, Philippe Yahia; **Class of 2019:** Olivia Ashton, Guy Barzilai, Andrei Captan, Akimoto Cornelius, Rosa Hahn, Garrick Hoadley, Daniel Igielski, Mark Indriolo, Catherine Kauber, Julian Loring, Emma Murphy, Jack Roye, Amanda Santos, Andrew Skrzypczak, Sarah Whynott, Sarah Wike.

National AP Scholar: Rohan Chandy, Hannah Collins, Gabriel Finehout, Sydney Levine, Kayley Lewis, Katelin Schaub, and Andrew Song – all members of the Class of 2018 – also received the National AP Scholar Award, given to students who scored 4 or higher on 8 or more AP Exams and had an average grade of at least 4 on all AP Exams taken.

National Merit Awards



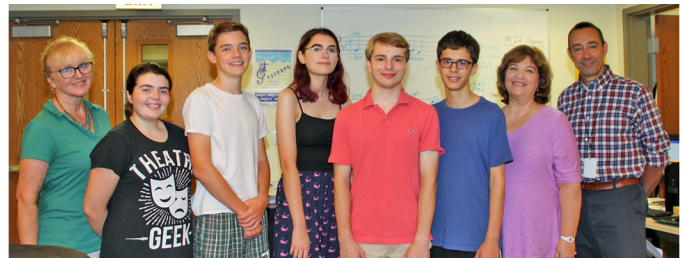
Andrew Skrzypczak, Patrick Doherty, Devin Juros

Andrew Skrzypczak is one of approximately 16,000 seniors nationwide who attained Semifinalist status in the 2019 National Merit Scholarship Program, making him eligible to continue in the competition for one of 7,500 scholarships that will be awarded in Spring 2019. Patrick Doherty and Kevin Juros were named Commended Students.

Semifinalists are designated on a state representational basis and comprise less than 1% of high school seniors. This year's qualifying score for Semifinalist status ranged from 212 to 223 and was 221 in New York State.

Only the top 50,000 scorers (212 or above) of the over 1.6 million students who entered the 2019 competition are named Semifinalists or Commended Students.

All-State Musicians



Choral teacher Kathleen Donovan-Warren, Meghan McLane, Kyle Largey, Charlotte Berg, Andrew Skrzypczak, Daniel Schuster, orchestra teacher Mary Ann Meade, band teacher Jon Vercesi

Five PHS students have been recognized by the NYS School Music Association (NYSSMA): Charlotte Berg and Kyle Largey were selected to perform in the All-State Chorus; Meghan McLane is an alternate. Charlotte (violin) also is an alternate in the All-State Symphonic Orchestra. Daniel Schuster (trumpet) and Andrew Skrzypczak (bassoon) were selected to play in the All-State Symphonic Band.

Approximately 900 All-State musicians were chosen from the over 6,500 high school sophomores and juniors who auditioned last spring at 43 solo festival sites throughout the state. They will perform at NYSSMA's annual All-State Festival in Rochester, November 29-December 2.

Tri-M Music Honor Society Inducts New & Continuing Members



Front row: **New Members** Sarah Schuster, Ryan Dirgins, Victoria Craig, Scott Castillo, Emma Carty, Iman Behbehani, Amber Alirahi. Middle row: **Continuing Members** Meghan McLane, Lucas Lee, Kyle Largey, Daniel Bucci, James Blasdell, Charlotte Berg. Back row: **Continuing Members** Anahita Subramanya, Owen Stone, Andrew Skrzypczak, Lyndsey Minerva. Not pictured: **New Members** Ryan Burton, Jonathan Hayes, Kelly Madison, Daniel Schuster, Ethan Spanierman, Victoria Stargiotti, Daniel Wallen; **Continuing Members** Akimoto Cornelius, Shannon Kauber, Ethan Lin.

Writing Contest Winners



PHS English teacher **Leigh Meyer**, **Akimoto Cornelius**, **Iman Behbehani**, **Charlotte Harter**, **Katy Anderson**, author/contest sponsor **Joe Wallace**

Seniors Katy Anderson, Charlotte Berg, Iman Behbehani, and Akimoto Cornelius are the winners of last spring's 11th Grade Writing Contest, sponsored by local author Joe Wallace. Charlotte Harter and Devin Juros were named runners-up. English teacher Leigh Meyer co-ordinates student participation in the contest, which is open to all 11th grade students.

Student Ambassadors



Calum Macphee, Katy Andersen, Tory Craig

Three High School participants in the Pleasantville International Association's exchange programs – Katy Andersen (India), Tory Craig (Ecuador), and Calum Macphee (Germany) – gave presentations about their summer experiences abroad at P.I.A.'s annual Ambassador Night. They also will speak throughout the school year in all three schools as well as at various community organizations.

Watch Board Meetings & other District programming on pctv76.org, Verizon Channel 32, and Cablevision Channel 77 (simulcast Fridays on Channel 76).

K-12 District Art Show



A young artist with BRS art teacher **Erica Siciliano**

Making a Difference



Chloe Balin

Eighth-grader Chloe Balin collected approximately 600 children's books for a Title I school in Yonkers through the Give More HUGS (GMH) Book Share program. She and a group of friends enclosed messages inside the books to encourage the young recipients. Chloe plans to hold another book drive in the spring.

For his Eagle Scout project, junior Michael Promisel spent his summer working in the Middle School courtyard. He pressure-washed, sanded, and stained eight benches; built two coffee tables and an additional bench; weeded and pruned the area; laid down mulch; and pressure-washed the stone tiles.



Michael Promisel and MS Principal Don Marra

Staff Changes

Our new staff members fill positions made available through retirements, leaves of absence, and resignations. Some have previously worked in our schools in other capacities.

At Bedford Road School, Janet Young is the leave replacement for 4th grade teacher Tara (Goldstein) Praino and Samantha Tanner will soon be the leave replacement for kindergarten teacher Jen Picco. New to BRS is 4th grade band teacher Amanda Rimm-Hewitt, who also teaches two sections of general music as well as 5th & 6th grade band at the Middle School.

New staff members at the Middle School include teachers Kelly Brunelle (5-7 physical education & 5-6 health), Rachel Heyman (5-8 chorus & 7-8 general music), Brittany Kunow (7-8 math), and Marilyn Sable (6th & 8th French); teaching assistants Christopher Angiolino and Briana Zuccaro; and educational technology specialist Kelly Nocca. Also, Annamarie Mancini is the leave replacement for 7th & 8th grade Spanish teacher Laura Lang.

Pleasantville High School welcomed school counselor Allyson Winston; teaching assistants Demmetruis Carrero and Logan Goldstein; and aide Anthony Godino (greeter).

We also welcomed nine psychology interns, who work under the supervision of Dr. Rukmini Bhalla and the school psychologists in the buildings to which they are assigned. Pleasantville is the only public school district in New York State to have a psychology



Janet Young, Brittany Kunow, Rachel Heyman, Kelly Brunelle, Amanda Rimm-Hewitt, Allyson Winston



Annamarie Mancini, Marilyn Sable, Kelly Nocca



Samantha Tanner, Jen Picco



Christopher Angiolino



Briana Zuccaro



Anthony Godino



Demmetruis Carrero, Logan Goldstein



Psychology Interns, seated: Ariel Blum (BRS), Arielle Walzer (MS), Ewa Adamek (PHS), Thomas Kelly (PHS); standing: Melissa Jeffay (BRS), Ranjana Hari (BRS), Stephanie Luk-Oprea (MS), Angelica Tsakas (MS), Alana Flynn (PHS)

internship program accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA).

BRS Assistant Principal



Mrs. Galotti & Mrs. Hunger

Previously announced in the Summer 2018 issue of the District Newsletter, Rachel Hunger was appointed BRS assistant principal as of July 1 and has since been hard at work alongside Principal Peggy Galotti. She

noted, in her welcome letter on the BRS website, “It has been wonderful meeting the staff and parents... I look forward ...to working closely together to build on the great work that has marked student success at BRS.” Before joining us, Mrs. Hunger (B.S. in Elementary Education, University of Maryland; M.S. in Literacy, Mercy College; M.S. in School District Leadership, Baruch College) was assistant principal of PS 204 in the Bronx; prior to that, she taught first and fifth grades and science.

Familiar Faces, Different Places

Several staff members are now working in different schools or positions. Teachers Rene Battaglia and Stephanie Roth moved from BRS to the Middle School; Dora DeBiasi moved from the Middle School to the High School; and Jon Vercesi, who taught at BRS and the Middle School, is now at the Middle School and the High School. Lauren Peterson, a teaching assistant, is now a special education teacher at the Middle School; and Michael Marrone, the IT teaching assistant at the Middle School, is lead teacher at Pleasantville Academy, our alternative high school. Retiree Barbara Vaccaro, who recently worked as an aide at the Middle School, is now a special education teacher at BRS.

A Fond Farewell



Joann LaBarbera

High School nurse Joann LaBarbera retired on October 5. She kept track of students’ medical records and provided them with doses of TLC for over twenty years. She now looks forward to having more time for family and travel.

Silver Anniversaries



Superintendent **Mary Fox-Alter** (center) recognized teachers **Tony Becerra** and **Chris DeGrazia**, custodian **Craig Rodgers**, and communications officer **Julie Schwartz** for their twenty-five years of service to the District at the first Superintendent’s Conference Day of the school year.

Six-Day Cycle for K-12

Throughout the last school year, building administrators researched scheduling solutions that would maximize and provide greater consistency of instruction for grades K-12. The outcome of this effort is a schedule built on a six-day rotation cycle. Instead of defining a week as Monday–Friday, the six-day cycle is labeled A–F. With a Monday–Friday schedule, holidays and days off (expected and unexpected) result in students missing instruction in classes. The new six-day cycle provides consistent programming for every course of instruction.

As we acclimate to the new schedule, we will display the letter day in a variety of places, such as at each school’s front entrance, during morning announcements, and on our District website.

Annual Notices

To read the District’s Asbestos Management Plan and/or to obtain a Pesticide Application Notification form, go to the District website and click on Departments>Buildings & Grounds. For more information, contact Steve Chamberlain, Director of Facilities, at chamberlains@pleasantvilleschools.org or 914-741-1400 x.50510.

District News

Dear Community Members.....*from front page*
our “Technology Infused Environments” in Science and the Arts include new STEAM and Inquiry Labs at the MS; Technology for All in grades five and nine; Coding Curriculum in all three schools; and Microsoft Teams, a new, collaborative, cloud-based workspace for teachers. We are also continuing Thinking Maps, our cognitive-based instructional initiative.

Our Director of Facilities Steve Chamberlain and his crew are dedicated in their support of our philosophy of having our facilities match the academic excellence that occurs within our schools. In addition to a number of summer projects – such as the replacement of the front part of the BRS playground, a new MS/HS sidewalk, a new front entrance area at the Middle School, and a new coffee bar located in the PHS senior lounge – they have given every instructional space and classroom that special TLC so they look amazing for our teachers and students.



New front entrance area at the Middle School

As we start the school year, please allow me to remind everyone of the importance of public education, an incredible institution that serves 90% of our country’s children. It’s a “first-of-its-kind” model that is inclusive and free to all children regardless of race, religion, nationality, socioeconomic status, gender, or ability.

Public schools are the engines for the solutions to the issues of our economy. It is from our schools that the educated, innovative, and creative workforces of tomorrow will come. And public schools are filled with choice and multiple pathways for success,

not linear environments made for certain types of students. I know we as a district will continue to support all children and do our utmost to give them the best education possible in a warm and welcoming public school environment. As we stated in our Five Year Strategic Plan, our mission is “to empower all students to thrive as lifelong learners, dynamic thinkers, and compassionate, contributing citizens” of this incredible nation of ours.

Sincerely,
Mary Fox-Alter
Superintendent of Schools

Technology for All

In September, all students in grades five and nine received Windows 10 laptops. This will continue each school year until all students in grades 5-12 have their own personal devices. Fifth and ninth grade teachers attended workshops over the summer on using the laptops to enhance student learning and will receive additional professional development throughout the school year. Starting in 2019, teachers in grades six and ten will receive laptops and training in preparation for next school year. Successive deployment of laptops to faculty will continue for the following two years until all teachers in grades 5-12 have been trained.

This instructional shift is a gradual process, beginning with students becoming familiar with their personal devices, learning to use Microsoft Office products for email, cloud-based storage, word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, and note-taking. As proficiency increases, the laptops will be a centralized location for homework, assignments, and due dates for all classes; provide more efficient assignment management; lead to student-centered classrooms; foster student agency; and allow for learning experiences that are progressively more individualized, personal, and adaptable. The overarching goal is to “prepare and develop students’ 21st century digital skills while continuing to foster interpersonal connections with peers and faculty.”

Technology for All is a budget-neutral initiative based on a re-allocation of expenses for technology equipment from such items as desktop computers and computer carts to laptops.

The Board of Education

President

Angela Vella (769-5729)
VellaA@pleasantvilleschools.org

Vice President

Emily Rubin Persons (747-0136)
PersonsE@pleasantvilleschools.org

Members

Larry Boes (773-1882)
BoesLa@pleasantvilleschools.org
Louis Conte (773-1532)
ConteLou@pleasantvilleschools.org
Shane McGaffey (409-3487)
McGaffeyS@pleasantvilleschools.org

Superintendent of Schools

Mary Fox-Alter

District Website

pleasantvilleschools.com

Board Meetings and

School Closings: 741-1460

Editor / Photographer

Julie Schwartz

Board of Education
Pleasantville Union Free School District
60 Romer Avenue
Pleasantville, New York 10570

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BoardDocs

All Board of Education agendas, minutes, and presentations from March 2018 forward can be found on BoardDocs, a cloud-based board management tool. It provides a means of electronically publishing and revising agenda items and support documents while maintaining a searchable repository of all data.

On the District website, click on BoardDocs under Board of Education. The agenda for the upcoming meeting is listed on the home page; click on Meetings for previous meetings. Presentations are included in the agenda for a meeting. Minutes of a meeting are posted only after they have been approved by the Board.

Minutes of meetings and reports made prior to March 2018 can be found on the District website under Board of Education>About the Board at Minutes Archive and Reports to the Board, respectively.

PHS Alumni Plaza – A Growing Tradition

The Pleasantville Fund for Learning's Bricklaying Ceremony has been a Homecoming Weekend tradition for over twenty years. The record 34 bricks installed this year honored alumni, retirees, and – a first – two NYS championship teams. Master of Ceremonies Dodd Kittsley, himself a PHS alumnus, provided mini biographies of the honorees – adding to the Homecoming ambience.

Visit phsalumniplaza.org to purchase a brick, as well as for pictures of this and previous ceremonies.



Dodd & LaVern Kittsley (Alumni Plaza Chair) and attendees

Change of Address

Please note the new email addresses for the Board of Education, listed in the upper left box on this page.

Volunteers Needed

• Science Olympiad • STEM Career Fair • Science Research • & More
INTERESTED?

Click on "Volunteer Form" at pleasantvilleschools.com