



Dear Pleasantville Families and Community Members,  
Our fourth-grade team of students, teachers and staff provided me with such inspiration that I just had to share it with you. The fourth-grade class performances this year consist of singing, identifying themes, and making curricular connections. Did I mention they are having fun and are amazing?

The first song of their performance was “Count on Me” by Bruno Mars. They said, “Through life’s twists and turns, we can count on each other and all of you.” Some of the lyrics include:

*If you ever find yourself stuck in the middle of the sea  
I’ll sail the world to find you  
If you ever find yourself lost in the dark and you can’t see  
I’ll be the light to guide you  
Find out what we’re made of  
When we are called to help our friends in need*

They also sang “Sunday Best” by Surfaces and noted the song’s theme of perseverance, defined as “continuing on, even when something is difficult.” They sang:

*Everyday can be a better day despite the challenge  
All you gotta do is leave it better than you found it  
It’s gonna get difficult to stand but hold your balance  
I just say whatever cause there is no way around it cause  
Everyone falls down sometimes  
But you just gotta know it’ll all be fine  
It’s okay, uh-huh  
It’s okay, it’s okay*

They said the song “Stand by Me” by Ben E. King “resonates with us because our class is a team.

Similarly, we learned this year that the Iroquois valued teamwork. In a famous legend, the Iroquois use five arrows to represent strength in unity.” In the group of five arrows, each arrow represents one of the five founding tribes of the Iroquois League. While one arrow could be easily broken, the five together represented unity and strength in numbers.

The fourth graders also sang “A Million Dreams” from *The Greatest Showman* and noted it as a source of inspiration for them. They quoted Walt Disney, who once said, “If you can dream it, you can do it.” The fourth graders said, “Anything is possible in our future, as long as we believe in ourselves!” They belted out:

*’Cause every night I lie in bed  
The brightest colors fill my head  
A million dreams are keeping me awake  
I think of what the world could be  
A vision of the one I see  
A million dreams is all it’s gonna take  
A million dreams for the world we’re gonna make*

The final song was “Three Little Birds” by Bob Marley. The fourth graders told the audience, “The three little birds give the listener a message of hope and motivation.”

The students ended their show by thanking those who contributed to their success. We thank you, our amazing students, for teaching us, supporting us, and being our inspiration. You have showed me that if

you persevere, stick together and keep dreaming, every little thing is going to be all right!

For the youth,  
Dr. Tina DeSa



# Superintendent's Message

Dear District and Community Members,

I hope this newsletter finds you and your loved ones well. It has been an amazing two months as your Superintendent of Schools. I have found our students, staff, families, and community members to be welcoming, honest, and extremely supportive of our school district. I have met with three parent organizations (BRS PTA, PMS PTA and PHS PCO) and each one identified the sense of community as a major strength for Pleasantville. They shared example after example of times that Pleasantville has come together to overcome tragedy, celebrate success, and everything in between.

At one of the meetings, a parent asked me if I could share some things I have come to learn about Pleasantville. Part of being new is listening to and learning from everyone about everything. There is not a meeting nor newsletter long enough to convey all that I have come to learn and appreciate about Pleasantville. However, I thought I would share a few aspects of our District that I have found to make us unique and special and contribute to the sense of community we feel.

1. Did you know about the green room at the high school? I was not involved in theater in high school, but I am confident these types of spaces do not exist in all high schools. I walked into this room and could not believe my eyes – the color-coded rack of material, sewing machines, props. I was in awe looking at the amazing costumes that are created by volunteers so our students may have a world-class production each spring. I cannot wait to see *Seussical* and what the costumes will look like!

2. Did you know our middle school students have health class for one quarter each year of middle school? This is incredible. Providing health lessons at this time of physical, emotional, and social growth in a child's life is so important. Some of the lessons include DBT STEPS-A instruction. Students are

explicitly and directly taught skills and strategies to support mindfulness, emotion regulation, distress tolerance, and interpersonal effectiveness. This is a tremendous opportunity to support our middle school students.



**BRS Holidays Around the World**



**MS Science Olympiad**



**PHS Student Store**

3. Did you know our kindergarten teachers planned a 'Holidays Around the World' event for kindergarteners to learn about holidays from other cultures and religions? The teachers, staff and students all had a great day.

4. Did you know our middle school students and volunteer coaches involved in Science Olympiad work tirelessly to prepare to compete in the program? I saw innovative thinking, perseverance, resilience, collaboration, and commitment. The students live the quote by Morihei Ueshiba: "Failure is the key to success; each mistake teaches us something."

5. Did you know there is a theater, with audience seating, at BRS? It is rare to have a little theater for elementary students to use. The class performances this year have been outstanding. It takes a lot of courage for our students to stand up and perform with the lights on them and the seats filled with people watching.

6. Did you know there is a mini store in our high school? I love going in for an afternoon sweet treat or seltzer. Our students work on social skills, practice their mathematics, and operate our real store. They calculate change and may use a device to communicate with the customers. Creating authentic, real-world experiences for our students to apply skills is priceless.

7. Did you know that our district has a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access Committee? The committee meets once a month. We have a shared learning experience related to the topic and then reflect on our current strategic plan, mission, and beliefs.

There is so much Pleasantville Panther Pride! I look forward to learning about the many more opportunities our district offers our students.

For the youth,  
Dr. Tina DeSa



### Creative Writing Awards 11th Grade Writing Contest



**11th Grade Creative Writing Contest winners** (bottom row) Bronwyn Bruder, Miyako Cornelius, Alexandra Powell, Jillian Kraus, (top row) Mia Hoxhaj, Sedge Algieri, Nikian Sauthoff, Alexander Kylander-Kreiner, Rose Collins

Author Joe Wallace announced the winners of the 11th Grade Creative Writing contest, chosen by a panel of writing professionals from “a remarkable assortment” of approximately fifty submissions. Mr. Wallace and The Village Bookstore are co-sponsors of the contest, now in its twelfth year. PHS English teacher Leigh Meyer coordinated student participation. As part of their contest winnings, the students are invited to participate as judges in the 8th Grade Writing Contest.

### Scholastic Writing Competition



**Scholastic Writing Competition award winners** (bottom row) Laura Mujica, Fariha Rahman, Miyako Cornelius, Emma Selesnick, Alexander Kylander-Kreiner, (middle row) Amina Fayaz, Erin Weitzman, Mia Hoxhaj, Daniel Kauber, (top row) Dana Balin, Claire McSpedon, Dylan Levine

Twelve PHS students received awards in the regional division of the 2021-22 Scholastic Writing Competition.

- Critical Essay – Gold Key & American Voices Nominee: Alexander Kylander-Kreiner
- Short Story – Gold Key: Miyako Cornelius; Honorable Mention: Amina Fayaz
- Science Fiction and Fantasy – Gold Key: Laura Mujica; Honorable Mention: Dylan Levine
- Flash Fiction – Silver Key: Mia Hoxhaj
- Poetry – Silver Key: Daniel Kauber, Laura Mujica, Fariha Rahman, Emma Selesnick; Honorable Mention: Dana Balin, Claire McSpedon
- Dramatic Script – Honorable Mention: Erin Weitzman

A panel of literary professionals judged some 1,900 submissions and conferred 5 American Voice Nominees to the “strongest” regional works, 130 Gold Keys to the “most accomplished” works, 203 Silver Keys to “distinguished” works, and 363 Honorable Mentions to “promising” works. Gold Keys are automatically forwarded for consideration at the national level of the Scholastic Writing Awards.

### Literary Magazine Programs



*Reflections* advisors (far left & far right) Leigh Meyer and Gaffney Murray with student editors Erin Weitzman, Angela Berg, Georgia Peters, Emma Selesnick, Jordan Rosen, Emma Marks. Not pictured: Lauren Duncan, Amina Fayaz, Sara O’Leary; PHS Class of 2021 Nicole Danilova, Jake Tanis, David Terzuoli, Isabella Tomé, Nicholas Wiebke, Joshua Zweibaum

The 2020-21 issue of *Reflections*, the PHS literary magazine, received a rank of Excellent in the Recognizing Excellence in Art and Literary Magazines (REALM) program of the National Council of Teachers of English. The magazine also earned second place honors in the American Scholastic Association’s Yearbook and Magazine Awards program.

## Fall Varsity Awards

**Boys Cross Country.** *All Section:* Alex Searle. *All League:* Liam Coyle, Theo Lynch, Alex Searle. *All League Honorable Mention:* Nate Lynch, Joe Sdao. *All State:* Alex Searle. *Section I Class C Championship, 1st place:* Alex Searle. *Journal News/lohud Westchester/Putnam All Stars, 1st Team:* Alex Searle. *NYS Championships Qualifier:* Alex Searle.

**Girls Cross Country.** *All Section:* Adriana Catalano. *All League:* Sara Agabob, Camilla Browand, Adriana Catalano, Kate Moroney, Clara Shingler. *All League Honorable Mention:* Elizabeth Dean, Mallory Watts. *Section I Class C Championship, 3rd place:* Adriana Catalano. *Journal News/lohud Westchester/Putnam All Stars, 2nd Team:* Adriana Catalano. *NYS Championships Qualifier:* Adriana Catalano.

**Field Hockey.** *All Section Honorable Mention:* Caitlin Rubsamen. *All League:* Isabelle Baxter, Maeve McCourtney, Hailey Praslick, Caitlin Rubsamen, Ryan Sullivan. *All League Honorable Mention:* Mackenzie Ennis, Kerri Finnegan, Elizabeth Hoadley, Ava Horigan, Natalie O'Malley, Kirsten Owens. *Journal News/lohud Westchester/Putnam All Stars, Honorable Mention:* Caitlin Rubsamen. *\*Golden Dozen:* Caitlin Rubsamen.

**Football.** *All Section:* Kieran Cotter, Michael Gordon, Daniel Picart. *All Conference:* Michael LaCapria, John McCarthy, Ryan Miller, Ryan Raefski. *All League:* Joe Alesawy, Jacob Carozza, Kieran Cotter, Michael Gordon, Ryan Horigan, Cooper Kittsley, Dominic Matica, Owen Mooney, Daniel Picart, Joe Reich. *All League Honorable Mention:* Erik Coleman, Quinn Egan, Aidan Finnegan, Carl Herzner, Michael Hundzynski, Emmet McDermott, Nick Paternostro, Aidan Picart, Ethan Taboh, Bryson Williamson. *Class B League B Co-Player of the Year:* Daniel Picart; *Back of the Year:* Kieran Cotter; *Lineman of the Year:* Michael Gordon; *Receiver of the Year:* Daniel Picart. *Journal News/lohud Westchester/Putnam All Stars, 1st Team Offense:* Daniel Picart; *2nd Team Offense:* Kieran Cotter; *Honorable Mention:* Michael Gordon, Ryan

Horigan, Michael LaCapria, John McCarthy. *NYS Sports Writers Association (NYSSWA) All State, 1st Team Offense:* Daniel Picart; *2nd Team Offense:* John McCarthy; *3rd Team Defense:* Kieran Cotter; *4th Team Offense:* Michael Gordon; *Honorable Mention:* Ryan Horigan.

**Boys Soccer.** *All Section:* Ryan Kang. *All Section Honorable Mention:* Rainer Ducmanh. *All League:* Shubhro Biswas, Rainer Ducmanh, Ryan Kang, Will Peacock. *All League Honorable Mention:* Ryan Challice, Luke LaMagna, Adam Panek. *Journal News/lohud Westchester/Putnam All Stars, Honorable Mention:* Ryan Kang.

**Girls Soccer.** *All Section:* Jess Beck, Madeline Braverman. *All Section Honorable Mention:* Riley Vavolizza. *All League:* Molly Baxter, Jess Beck, Madeline Braverman, Sadie Kim, Riley Vavolizza. *All League Honorable Mention:* Skylar Aghen, Nadia Berkowitz, Gianna Doto, Heather Vamossy. *Journal News/lohud Westchester/Putnam All Stars, Honorable Mention:* Jess Beck, Madeline Braverman, Riley Vavolizza. *NYS Sportswriters & Coaches Organization for Girls Sports (NYSSCOG) All State, 3rd Team:* Jess Beck.

**Swimming. NYS Scholar/Athlete Team.** *All League:* Nicole Gerosa. *NYS Championships Qualifier:* Nicole Gerosa.

**Volleyball.** *All Section:* Bella Lleshaj. *All Conference:* Bella Lleshaj, Meghan Hogan. *All League:* Bella Lleshaj, Meghan Hogan, Abby McAllister.

*NYS Scholar/Athlete Team — a team's average GPA for 75% of the roster must be greater than or equal to 90.00*

*\*Field Hockey Golden Dozen — Section I players who achieved on the field, in the classroom, and in community service.*



### Girls Cross Country Earns First League Championship



The Girls Cross Country team won its first-ever League Championship. Additionally, the eighth grade team members finished the season as the Westchester County Freshman Champions.

Pictured, front row: \*Clara Shingler, \*Juliana Agati, Mallory Watts, \*Sara Agabob, \*Elizabeth Dean, \*Kallioppe Primis; 2nd row: Head Coach Tim Dirgins, Kate Moroney, Adriana Catalano, \*Lexi Busch, \*Camilla Browand, Assistant Coach May Beth Whalen. Photo: Coach Dirgins

\* Denotes 8th grade team member

### Football: League, Section, Regional Champions & NYS Finalist



The team finished its season with a 12-1 record and ranked #2 in the state in Class B.

Pictured, 1st row: Will Heffernan, Mateo Cardenas, Brendan McLane, Noah Maceyak, Michael Hundzynski, Erik Coleman, Grady Doran; 2nd row: Travis Rapley, Lorcan Healy, Aidan Finnegan, Brian Scopino, Brian Straus, Ryan Raefski, Nick Paternostro, Ryan Horigan, Quinn Egan; 3rd row: Ryan Kang, Ryan Miller, Coach Lamar, Coach Maceyak, Coach Becerra, Coach Christie, John McCarthy, Carl Herzner; 4th row: Jacob Carozza, Cooper Kittsley, Paul Scopino, Owen Mooney, Kieran Cotter, Joseph Reich, Dominic Matica, Frankie Keating, Ethan Taboh; 5th row: Michael Gordon, Gerald Ahmetaj, Lucas Malgarinos, Daniel Picart, Michael LaCapria, Bryson Williams, Aidan Picart, Thomas Cahill, AJ Moore, Joseph Alesawy. Not pictured: Michael Genitrini, Danny Quintero. Photo: PHS Yearbook



## College Bound Athletes



Five seniors have committed to playing their sports at the college level in the fall. Pictured above are Ryan Challice (lacrosse, Trinity College), Adriana Catalano (cross country & track, Johns Hopkins University), Abby McAllister (lacrosse, U.S. Coast Guard Academy), Caitlin Rubsamen (field hockey, Gettysburg College), and Ryan Miller (football, Catholic University).

## Syracuse University Project Advance (SUPA) Elective

Ten seniors enrolled in Introduction to African American Studies, the first SUPA elective offered at PHS. The course, taught by Social Studies teacher Rikki Saperstein, examined the causes and effects of the African Diaspora. As a culminating activity, each student chose a topic to research and present, both in class and at an evening symposium held in the PHS cafeteria. Among the topics presented were African-Americans in sports, music, literature, fashion, animated films, and World Wars, the Harlem Renaissance, and the misrepresentation of Afro-Caribbean religions.



Two of the posterboard presentations

## Middle School Musicals

Nearly sixty 5th/6th grade students were involved in the cast and crews of *The Wizard of Oz*, which streamed for ticket-holders on November 19 and 20. Teachers Rachel Heyman and Traci O'Sullivan directed the production. They and seventy 7th/8th grade students (and one from BRS) are now busy rehearsing *Shrek Jr.*, which will be presented live on the Middle School Multipurpose Room stage on March 25 and 26.



## PHS Performing Arts presents



a family-friendly musical based on the stories of Dr. Seuss.



Front: Rebecca Pedulla (Sour Kangaroo), Angie Berg (Mayzie la Bird), Nehla Sauthoff & Aubrey de Luca (Jojo), Ava Portmore (Gertrude), Miranda Miller (Cat in the Hat); Back: Student Directors Georgia Peters & Emma Selesnick, Kirsten Owens (Mrs. Mayor), Daniel Ward (Mr. Mayor), Kaden Geier (General Genghis Kahn Schmitz), Bruce McLane (Horton), Director Nadia Rizzo. Artwork: Mirabelle Lapenna & Nicholas Peters

**Seussical Performances:** March 11, 12, 18 & 19 at 7:30 p.m.; March 16 at 6 p.m.; March 13 at 2 p.m. **Tickets:** \$15 at [showtix4u.com](http://showtix4u.com) or at the door one hour prior to all performances.

### Middle School HVAC Project

At the December 14, 2021 Board of Education meeting, former superintendent Mary Fox-Alter presented the District's comprehensive plan to replace the Middle School's heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems (HVAC) with a single, highly energy-efficient one. She noted that the current components have either exceeded or are near the end of their useful life; some of the classroom unit ventilators date back to 1954. The Middle School is the only District building without a Building Management System to control and monitor the building HVAC system.

Middle School Principal Don Marra said, "A new HVAC system will significantly improve the working and learning environment at the Middle School. This improvement will also limit disruptions and increase the comfort and productivity of students, faculty and staff."

Benefits to be realized from this project include:

- Central control of heating, cooling, ventilation;
- Improved indoor air quality from increased air flow and filtration;
- Individual classroom temperature and air exchange control;
- Quieter and more efficient air handling than provided by individual classroom unit ventilators with condensers;
- Energy recovery utilized to temper ventilation air with exhaust air.

Much of the funding for this project, estimated to cost \$6 million, has already been identified.

- The District received approval of a \$1,367,661 grant for the Middle School HVAC project from the federal government's American Rescue Plan (ARP) Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER). This grant must be used for specific improvements that will help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. If not put to use for the approved project by September 30, 2023, the grant is rescinded.
- The District realized savings of \$600,000 from the 2019 Capital Project bond.

- The Board and the administration included \$255,000 in the 2021-22 budget and \$455,000 in the 2022-23 budget to address the Middle School's HVAC needs in a piecemeal fashion before deciding on a comprehensive approach.
- The District will use \$1,322,339 from its Unassigned Fund Balance.

Contingent upon Board approval of the project, a \$2 million capital bond proposition will be added to the May 17, 2022 ballot. The District expects to receive approximately \$2.3 million in New York State Building Aid for the project (51.6% on approximately \$4.6 million; the ESSER grant is not eligible for state aid).

Board of Education President Shane McGaffey said, "The ESSER grant provides a unique opportunity to upgrade the central heating, cooling and ventilation system at the Middle School, an important project the BOE has had as a 'must do' for years, in a comprehensive, cost-effective way with little to no impact on property taxes."

For more information, watch the video of the MS HVAC Project presentation on the District website (Departments>Business/HR Office>Budget Information).

### 2019 Capital Project Update

Director of Facilities Steve Chamberlain reported progress made on and construction scheduled for the 2019 Capital Project in his presentations to the Board of Education on October 20, 2020 and September 28, 2021. Over the past two years, most items have been completed, including these major undertakings: addition of security entrances at all three schools; replacement of the Building Management System and installation of dehumidification controls on the HVAC system at BRS; recoating the metal roof at BRS; removal of asbestos tiles from MS hallways and the PHS auditorium; refurbishment of the wood cupola at PHS; replacement of the tennis courts; restoration of the MS/PHS track D-zones; and renovation of the BRS library and computer room. The replacement of older windows at the MS and PHS and older doors/locking systems at the MS have been delayed due to supply chain issues.

## The Board of Education

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### Board Meetings and

School Closings: 741-1460

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## 2022–2023

### School Calendar

**First Day of Classes**  
**September 6, 2022**

**Last Day for Students**  
**June 23, 2023**

### School Holidays

*Schools are closed on these days.*

#### 2022

**September 26–27:** Rosh Hashanah

**October 5:** Yom Kippur

**October 10:** Columbus Day

**November 8:** Supt. Conf. Day

**November 11:** Veterans Day

**November 24–25:** Thanksgiving

**December 26–30:** Holiday Recess

#### 2023

**January 2:** New Year's Day  
observed

**January 16:** M.L. King Jr. Day

**February 20–24:** Winter Recess

**March 13:** Supt. Conf. Day

**April 3–7:** Spring Recess

**May 29:** Memorial Day

**June 19:** Juneteenth

## Kindergarten Registration

A Letter of Intent was sent to Bedford Road School's list of households with children eligible to enter kindergarten in September 2022 (five-years-old on or before December 1, 2022). Those who did not receive this letter should contact the BRS Main Office (914-741-1441).

Incoming Kindergarten parents are invited to attend an orientation program, "A Peek into Kindergarten," at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 22. Kindergarten screening will take place by appointment on May 24 & 25.

## Transportation Requests

Requests for transportation to private and parochial schools for the 2022-2023 school year must be submitted in writing to the District Office by Friday, April 1, 2022. A family moving into the District after this date must submit a written request to the District Office within 30 days of occupancy.

A new request must be submitted each year, even if transportation is currently being provided. A form is available on the District website under Parents/Community>Transportation Request. For more information, contact the Business Office at 741-1400, x10521.

## Budget Vote and School Board Election

To be eligible to vote in the Annual Budget Vote and School Board Election on May 17, 2022, you must be: a citizen of the United States; at least 18 years of age (by May 17, 2022); a Pleasantville UFSD resident at least 30 days immediately prior to the day of the vote; and registered with the Westchester County Board of Elections OR registered to vote with the District by no later than May 12, 2022. Voter registration forms & additional information is available on the District website (Parents/Community>Voter Registration).