



SCARSDALE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

'Dale Dispatch: District e-Newsletter

IN THIS ISSUE (MARCH, 2018)

Superintendent's Message (Dr. Thomas Hagerman)

School Calendars/Days of Session (Drew Patrick, Asst. Supt. for Human Resources)

Early Learning Provides STEAM Foundation (Lynne Shain, Asst. Supt. for Curriculum and Jerry Crisci, Director of Instructional Technology & CFI Co-Directors)

Digital Upgrades (Rachel Moseley, Director, Information Technology)

Facilities Update (Stuart Matthey, Asst. Supt. for Business)

CSE Annual Reviews (Eric Rauschenbach, Director, Special Education and Student Services)

From Dr. Thomas Hagerman
Superintendent of Schools



Our Students: The Next Generation of Leaders

One of my favorite things to do as Superintendent is to talk about the fantastic teaching and learning that happens throughout our District on a daily basis. Of course, much of this occurs in classrooms with our teachers imparting knowledge, facilitating inquiry, and challenging students with complex ideas and problem-solving opportunities. But those roles can also reverse at times, leading to moments when students create the teachable moments, and we, as educators and adults, are the ones who are inspired by the next generation.

One of those reversals occurred on March 14, when our students at both the Middle School and High School led peaceful walkouts in response to the tragedy in Parkland, Florida, as well as many other acts of horrific violence at schools across the country before that.

At Scarsdale Middle School approximately 500 students walked out. They were directed to four secure locations on campus. About 40 teachers volunteered to provide supervision. In addition, several members of the Scarsdale Police Department were present to assist. The students were quiet and respectful as they gathered, with some carrying posters. As expected from these younger students, most of them were somewhat unsure about what to do next. For a few moments students would chant "no guns." In their quiet way, our Middle School students' presence made their statement of solidarity clear. Then, at 10:17 students returned to class, under

the close supervision of building staff. Afterwards, some students organized an "I Wish Wall" in the Great Hall which created a space for students to place their words and thoughts about kindness, friendship and an end to school violence.

The students at the High School were exceptionally self-directed and organized. At 9:55 a.m. they walked out to Butler Field, and started a thoughtful, and well-designed program that commenced with a performance of the civil rights anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing" by our a capella singing group, *For Good Measure*. This was followed by SHS student tributes and a moment of silence for each of the students and staff members who lost their lives in the Parkland shooting. After the tributes and moments of silence, students were given the choice to stay and hear some politically-oriented speeches or return to class. The majority remained, and heard a number of poignant speeches by SHS students on topics ranging from gun safety to mental health issues. All students were incredibly respectful, and their passion and commitment to this work was evident. Many staff members were also present and provided supervision of the event, as well as local law enforcement.

These peaceful demonstrations were heartening on multiple fronts, not the least of which being the recognition that these students will be tomorrow's leaders. Addressing and solving the challenges we face today and in the future will require them to own their voices, share their passions, and take stands on issues about which they care. On March 14, it became even clearer that Scarsdale students are on that path.

Warm regards,
Dr. Thomas Hagerman

School Calendars and Days of Session

*By Drew Patrick, Assistant Superintendent
for Human Resources and Leadership Development*



The frustrations and challenges of inclement weather have been foremost on our minds lately. Between power outages and school cancellations, our collective patience has been tried. From the standpoint of District operations, these challenges also translate into trying to make sure we meet our minimum requirements in terms of calendar days and instructional minutes. It became apparent after the recent communications we sent to parents explaining the "what" of these requirements that there is a demand for better understanding the "why." Thus, this Dispatch article is dedicated to highlighting the parameters that guide District decisions around days of session, and to updating readers on anticipated changes in these parameters for 2018-19.

The School Year

The boundaries of the public school year are broadly established by [New York State law](#) and Regulations of the Commissioner. In New York, the start of the school year for students cannot occur prior to September 1, and school cannot be held after Regents Rating Day, typically sometime during the last week in June. School may not be scheduled on Saturdays, or on legal holidays (except for Election Day, Washington's Birthday, and Lincoln's Birthday). Beyond these parameters, it is up to local school districts to determine the total number of days in the school year (subject to collective bargaining), additional holidays (i.e., religious days of observance, Friday after Thanksgiving) and vacation days. In Scarsdale, collective bargaining, past practice, tradition, and the ability to account for closure due to inclement weather have

combined to establish our current norm -- a school year with between 184 - 185 days.

Days of Session

Within the boundaries of the school year, districts are mandated to hold at least 180 days of session between September and June. Included within these days are, "days on which attendance is taken, days on which Regents examinations, State Assessments or local examinations are given and days on which superintendent's conference days are held." Districts are allowed to hold up to four Superintendent Conference Days (SCDs) annually, and, unlike student days, SCDs can be scheduled during the last two weeks in August. SCDs count as days of session *even though students do not attend*.

The quest for a minimum of 180 days, or the full 185 in Scarsdale, gets further complicated by shortened-session days. Some of these days cannot count as days of session under NYS rules. For example, our half-day of school on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, and half-days for grades K-8 during the last week of school in June, do not count as days of session. However, days shortened for parent-teacher conferences can count as days of session, provided we meet a minimum amount of instructional time in that week (25 hours for elementary, and 27.5 hours for middle and high school). This is the reason we have staggered our K-5 (fall) and K-2 (spring) parent-teacher conference across several weeks, so as to ensure each of these days is credited as a day of session. Finally, inclement weather days do not count as days of session, and therefore are deducted from our planned count.

Calendar Adjustments for Inclement Weather

As inclement weather days (snow days) occur during the year, our scheduled days of session decrease. When the number of inclement weather days causes us to drop below 180 scheduled days of session, we are forced to make an adjustment to the calendar. In the most recent example of this, our fifth school closure on March 21 put us in the position of having only 179 days. This has caused us to need to capture an additional day of session from the only discretionary time we have left this year -- April vacation. However, our 2017-18 calendar includes three, not four, SCDs. This has enabled us to schedule a fourth SCD, and reach 180 days of session, on April 5, 2018 so as to not disrupt the plans of our students and their families. Please note that this "contingency" practice is noted annually on the school calendar. For example, the recently-adopted [2018-19 school calendar](#) states, "In the event make-up school days are needed, the District schools will use, in the following order: Thursday, April 18th, Wednesday, April 17th, Tuesday, April 16th, Monday, April 15th." This is our contingency plan for meeting our statutory requirement in the event we have too many forced closures.

New Rules for 2018-2019?

Having heard over the past year from parents and district officials representing all regions of the State, the State Education Department has [proposed changes](#) to the days of session rules for 2018-19. While the 180 day minimum will still be in place, the Board of Regents is expected to adopt changes that shift the minutes of instruction minimum from a weekly minimum to an annual total. This will give districts more flexibility to establish parent-teacher conference day schedules that make sense, and to include more half-days in the count toward days of session. We anticipate this change will be adopted in April, at which time we will release an update to the 2018-19 calendar that includes parent-teacher conference days.

Our aim is to create a sensible school calendar that supports student learning balanced with family life, all within the parameters of state mandates.



Early Learning Activities Provide a STEAM Foundation



By Lynne Shain, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction, and Jerry Crisci, Director of

Instructional Technology and Innovation -- Co-Directors of the Center for Innovation

Scarsdale teachers believe that it's important to provide even our youngest learners with activities that will help them understand basic science and pre-engineering principles. Last year, a team of District teachers developed a K-12 STEAM sequence to articulate the progression of STEAM studies by grade level, showcasing how science and technology instruction begins in the lower grades.

New Elementary Science Standards

Elementary Science Coordinator Jennifer Kiley has been working to revise science units to make them compatible with New York State's version of the [Next Generation Science Standards](#) (NGSS). These standards were developed by a consortium of 26 states and by the National Science Teachers Association, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the National Research Council, and Achieve, and adopted by New York State in December, 2016. Ms. Kiley is working with teachers to prepare new units that promote applied science and pre-engineering.

Kindergarten teachers across the District have been piloting a science curriculum all this year that is aligned with these New York State Science Learning Standards (New York's version of NGSS). The Kindergarten Science 21 Curriculum (which was created by Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES) being used is comprised of three units that use the three-dimensional learning approach to science instruction as specified in the NGSS.

Engineering is Elementary

In grades one, three, and five, the District is currently in its second year of piloting the Engineering is Elementary curriculum that was developed by the Museum of Science in Boston. In first grade, students become agricultural engineers when they are faced with a dilemma about a flowering plant that is no longer making fruit because there are no bird or insect species that are natural pollinators for this particular plant. The students are challenged to design a hand pollinator so that fertilization can take place. Students discover the cause and effect relationships between pollination and fertilization and the production of seeds.

In third grade, students engage in an inquiry about magnets and become transportation engineers as they apply these discoveries to design, test, and improve a tabletop maglev package transportation system. In fifth grade, students are introduced to the problem of water pollution. They investigate the properties of filter materials, apply their knowledge of water, and think like environmental engineers as they plan, construct, test, and improve their own water filters.

Technology in Primary Grades

Technology activities at the primary level also support the District's STEAM goals. Elementary computer teachers have developed a coding and robotics sequence that integrates algorithmic problem solving with concrete, physical challenges. Computer teachers are developing a common coding and robotics vocabulary and concepts for all students. These concepts include Conditions (If/Then, If/Then/Else), Loops, Debugging, and the idea of a "Sequence."

For example, in Kindergarten, students work with Beebots to solve mazes and other challenges

using code entered right into the back of the robot. These hands-on coding activities allow students to program a robot's movements. Challenges include:

- Move forward and turn.
- Move forward, turn and move forward.
- Make a square.
- Make a rectangle.
- Using a grid map or maze.

Understanding basic coding principles allows students to become comfortable with trial and error. They use a resilient growth mindset and work collaboratively to brainstorm solutions. This is an important foundation for the work they will be doing in later years, when they will use "block-based" languages, moving to more sophisticated coding environments like Tynker in the upper grades, and programs like Scratch in 6th grade.



Digital Upgrades in Community Voting, School Dismissal, and Learning Management

By Rachel Moseley, Director of Information Technology

A BOLD move for Scarsdale Public School District Elections

This year, the District is implementing the Election Management System (EMS) by BOLD Systems, LLC.

Previously, voter registration was completed by using "buff cards" (voter registration cards) held in "books," which had to be manually updated and maintained annually. This process was labor-intensive and prone to human error.

With EMS, voter registration records are being digitized, and the process of maintaining records will be streamlined. The "books" and handwritten "buff cards" will be replaced with digitized voter registrations, printed poll books, and scanning pens. The system will reduce manual labor and discrepancies and be more efficient. The precise, customized, database incorporates validated County and School District voter data

Work has already begun to have this system fully implemented in time for the May 15 Budget Vote and Election

The actual voting experience will not be affected but voters will notice a change when they check in to vote. The poll books are smaller and contain printed voter signature lists, as shown here. The

PollNum: 1 North Elm	CLERK	VOTER'S SIGNATURE
AGGRIPPINO DANIEL 12 Wheelbarrow Ln Demotown, NY 11943	11-15-1952	AGGRIPPINO DANIEL
AGNEW KEVIN 540 Sand Hill Rd Demotown, NY 11943	01-24-1948	AGNEW KEVIN
AIKEN KELLY 821 Strang Dr Demotown, NY 11943	08-23-1978	AIKEN KELLY
AIMONE LILLIAN 49 Grey Ln Samletown, NY 11933	11-17-1947	AIMONE LILLIAN
AINSLEY MARK 74 Swan Ln Samletown, NY 11933	07-24-1937	AINSLEY MARK
AINSWORTH MARY 74 Swan Ln Samletown, NY 11933	01-18-1976	AINSWORTH MARY
AITCHESON RALPH 49 Grey Ln Samletown, NY 11933	03-11-1983	AITCHESON RALPH
AITKEN DAVID 49 Grey Ln Samletown, NY 11933	11-28-1979	AITKEN DAVID
AITKEN KATHLEEN 49 Grey Ln Samletown, NY 11933	01-25-1948	AITKEN KATHLEEN
AKERS LOUISE 52 Sprucewood Dr Samletown, NY 11933	09-25-1954	AKERS LOUISE
AKIN THOMAS 239 Duckpond Dr S Demotown, NY 11943	05-01-1945	AKIN THOMAS
AKIN TIFFANY 501 Sand Hill Rd Demotown, NY 11943	05-31-1985	AKIN TIFFANY
AKOTS JENNIFER 74 Swan Ln Samletown, NY 11933	04-14-1937	AKOTS JENNIFER
ALAGO PAMELA 19 Curve Ln Samletown, NY 11933	01-03-1972	ALAGO PAMELA
ALAM BENJAMIN 58 Crescent Ln Samletown, NY 11933	04-23-1957	ALAM BENJAMIN
ALAM ERIKA 58 Crescent Ln Samletown, NY 11933	11-25-1933	ALAM ERIKA

I swear or affirm that: I am a Citizen of the United States.
I am 18 years old or more.
I will have lived in this district for at least 30 days before this election.
This is my signature or mark on the line below.
The above information is true.

poll worker will locate and confirm the voters name, address, and birthdate and then request that the voter sign next to their name. Once the voter signs above their name, the poll worker will scan the voter's barcode which will allow the District to produce an electronic poll list, and also enable the District to run various reports.

Other new exciting features of the Bold System include: the ability to verify registration from the District's website, customized voter poll books and roster of registered voters, and post-election analysis by neighborhoods.

School Dismissal Manager

Three more elementary schools have just concluded the training for a new dismissal tracking system, School Dismissal Manager. This system enables parents to notify their school about changes to their child's dismissal plans with just a few clicks in a mobile app.

This replaces the need for parents to write notes or make a call to the school about dismissal plan changes. For the school administration and teachers, this system gives up-to-the minute reporting on every student's dismissal plans. Quaker Ridge School implemented School Dismissal Manager last fall. Three more elementary schools, Edgewood, Greenacres, and Heathcote, will go live with this system on April 16th. Parents from these three schools will receive detailed information from their principals in the coming weeks. Fox Meadow will go live with this system at the beginning of the next school year.

Middle School Learning Management System

Schoology, a Learning Management System, will be launched at the Middle School next fall. Schoology provides tools that help teachers create engaging content, design lessons, and assess student understanding. The Data Services team has been working closely with the Middle School computer teachers to prepare Schoology so several teachers can pilot the system for the remainder of this school year. The teachers who are participating in the pilot have received training, and the integration of Schoology with Infinite Campus (our student information system) has been completed.

Facilities Update

*By Stuart Mattey,
Assistant Superintendent for Business and Facilities*



Facilities improvements continue to be a major focus of the District's operations. In fact, several capital projects undertaken as part of the 2014 Bond Project are now "open for business" and incorporated into our educational programs, while the recently passed 2018 Bond Project has

now entered into the design development phase.

The 2014 Bond Projects, with support from the Scarsdale Schools Education Foundation, focused primarily on renovating older building areas at the High School, transforming them into 21st century learning and gathering spaces. In addition, this Bond also dedicated funding to support an expanded library at Edgewood; a new multi-purpose room and some interior renovations at Heathcote, and a new Orchestra Room addition and renovated Band Room at the Middle School. The 2014 Bond projects also included District-wide technology improvements, and roof work at Quaker Ridge.

Major projects that are now completed include:

- High School: Learning Commons, I-Lab, Design Lab, Fitness Center, and Courtyard drainage
- Middle School: Orchestra Room addition and Band Room renovation

Projects scheduled for completion:

- Edgewood Library (estimated July/August 2018)
- Heathcote: Multi-purpose room (estimated July 2018)

We are grateful to the Scarsdale Schools Education Foundation for the gift of funds in support of both the Design Lab and the Fitness Center, and to Maroon & White and the Madoff family for the gift of additional funds in support of equipment for the Fitness Center.

Meetings have now begun to assist in the design development phase of the recently approved 2018 Bond Projects. These meetings are currently focused on interior design development at Greenacres that supports instruction. These meetings will take place throughout the spring, continuing through early fall of the next school year. Full submission of plans to the State Education Department is expected to occur in November, with construction projected to commence in July 2019. A Greenacres Safety Committee will be convened in September 2018 which will focus this aspect of the project.

In addition to Greenacres work, the 2018 Bond Project includes District-wide facilities work centered around health and safety improvements, including construction of security vestibules at all elementary buildings; replacement of aging building systems including roofs, boilers, and electrical panels; and new installation or replacement of air ventilation systems. Although we plan on Summer 2019 for security vestibule construction, timelines for other projects are still being finalized.

We will continue to update the community as plans and construction progress.



Spring is Here: So Are Annual Reviews

By Eric Rauschenbach,

Director of Special Education and Student Services

As April showers (or Nor'easters, if March is any indication) bring May flowers, spring heralds the beginning of our annual review meetings for special education students. This also means that it's time for the annual guide to CSE meetings 'Dale Dispatch' article...

There are a number of websites and articles one might access that give advice on preparing for a CSE meeting, but here are a few suggestions to make these meetings productive, collaborative, and effective.

First and most important, please ask questions before, during, and after your meetings. The special education staff is always willing to hear your concerns and explain their point of view. However, our staff conducts over 450 meetings in a span of three months. We can fall into the habit of speaking in acronyms, or making assumptions about what you know about our programs. If during a meeting you feel unsure or don't understand a program, term, or plan, please ask. Often CSE meetings are packed with information and it can be hard to digest everything you are hearing in a relatively short period. Do not hesitate to call the special education teacher or chairperson after the meeting to clarify or double-check what you heard.

Second, please keep in mind that these are working meetings, and everyone brings a different perspective to this collaborative process. Everyone in the room may not agree with every perspective, but it is important to note that all viewpoints bring valuable information to the table. Everyone on your child's team wants your child to succeed, but might see your child in a different setting and come to different conclusions as a result. We all strive to remain respectful and engage in active listening, but please don't be shy about questioning points of view or delving deeper into the reasons why someone might feel the way they do. Our goal at each meeting is to find common ground, clarity on the issues, and determine what is best for your children and our students.

Finally, the goal of special education is help students become independent learners who not only understand the concepts being taught, but also understand and feel confident about their abilities. The CSE's primary responsibility is to provide enough support to help your child make progress and access the general education curriculum, but the CSE is also required to look at how to enable your child to become more independent, and decide when it would be appropriate to reduce supports in order to foster that independence. This is especially true through the secondary years of middle and high school, when students are preparing in earnest to enter the next phase of their lives (which is both a challenging and an exciting time for parents as well as their children).

CSE meetings bring caring professionals and invested parents to the table; they are an effective way to summarize, analyze, and plan in a collaborative way. Our special education students have outstanding outcomes, and those are made possible through collaboration and discussion. We look forward to working with all of our parents over the next few months and planning for your child's educational career.



[SIGN UP FOR EMAILS](#)

[SHARE THIS EMAIL](#)

**2 Brewster Road
Scarsdale, NY
(914) 721-2525**