



SCARSDALE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

'Dale Dispatch: District e-Newsletter

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From Dr. Thomas Hagerman

Superintendent of Schools

On Communicating...



It's difficult to imagine that we are in the last week of school. It seems like only weeks ago that we were kicking off another exciting school year. And, yet, here we are already, closing another circle. The end of the year is always a bittersweet time. Upon reflection, there have been a host of individual achievements and collective accomplishments -- so much hard work to be proud of from the entire school community. But we are also reminded at this time of year of the many goodbyes just on the horizon. This week we are saying farewell to 403 seniors, who are taking their final steps in our High School before Friday's graduation. As the saying goes, when one door closes, another one opens. And we are confident that our students will continue to represent us well long into the future as they continue to uphold our motto of *non sibi*, and lead lives of purpose as scholars, athletes, musicians, artists, and so much more.

In addition to our students, we are also saying goodbye to 26 retirees, who represent over 630 years of collective experience. The deep commitment that these individuals have consistently brought their students -- along with all those remaining behind -- is truly the hallmark of a Scarsdale education. To our graduates and retirees, we wish you the best in all that lies ahead.

Just as the year is drawing to a close, so are many of this year's initiatives and goals. Since this

is the last edition of the 'Dale Dispatch' for the 2016-17 school year, we wanted to review our annual progress with respect to the Transition Plan. The other articles by Cabinet Members in this issue will provide highlights of accomplishments in each of their respective areas.

A major goal area that I tended to this year is communication. Annual highlights of this work are as follows:

- Superintendent's Cabinet group made a commitment to utilize *Twitter* as a way of sharing student experiences across the District;
- The District's official Facebook page now has over 1,300 followers, garnering hundreds of "likes" for its regular postings of school activities;
- *Insight*, our quarterly print mailer, was mailed to six thousand households, along with 117 business and more than 400 retirees;
- *'Dale Dispatch*, our monthly e-newsletter, experienced more refinements and thematic coordination in its second year;
- BoardDocs was a new feature of Board work and furthered our goal of transparency;
- The District's newly redesigned website and new e-Spark pages continued to update the community on construction and facility issues, with a strong emphasis on Greenacres, the Master Facilities Plan, and a potential 2017 bond, and Board Highlights continued to be distributed after each Board meeting.

The area of communication has and will continue to be a significant part of our work here in Scarsdale. A few of the advances described above demonstrate our continued commitment to this goal of transparency and accountability. However, since we only have access to our students, their parents, and community individuals who self-select to subscribe to our email lists, we recognize that we do not always capture the attention of the broader community. This continues to be an area of focus, and, of course, we are always open to suggestions and ideas on how to improve our practices.

As the 2016-17 school year comes to a close, we wish all of our students, families, and staff a healthy, safe, and relaxing summer. We look forward to seeing you all again in the fall.

Warm regards,
Dr. Thomas Hagerman



Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: Year-End Highlights

By Lynne Shain, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction

Scarsdale's Education for Tomorrow 2.0 continues to provide the framework for teaching and learning in our District. This year marked a shift in emphasis from *what students know* to *what students are able to do with what they know*. Teachers are more aware of how giving students "choice and voice" in their learning experiences boosts student engagement and fosters more enduring learning over time. By designing student-centered, project-based learning experiences where students apply what they know to solve authentic problems, teachers are providing opportunities for students to transfer what they know into action.

Student achievement in Scarsdale, measured through the traditional metrics of New York State

tests, national tests such as SAT, ACT, AP, and college admissions, continue to be strong, as evidenced by the [data](#) presented to the Board of Education and public in October, 2016. This annual report on student assessment will next be presented in October, 2017, reflecting student learning in 2016-2017.

The Scarsdale Center for Innovation (CFI) completed its fifth year and continued to impact our educational program in many ways.

- High School students were able to learn from an engineer-in-residence who worked with them on STEAM projects (Engineer in Residence: *Monica Palekar, Lisa Yokana, and Brian McDonald, from Scarsdale High School*).
- Elementary students collaborated with High School architecture students and faculty in designing the elementary school classroom of the future (What Could We Do with Room 18? *Marilyn Blackley, Matt Fitzpatrick, Lisa Forte, and Paul Tomizawa, from Edgewood*).
- Middle School teachers researched models of strengthening personal connections among students and teachers (Beyond Advisory: *Meghan Troy, Meghan Lahey, and Will Maldarelli, from Scarsdale Middle School*).
- Elementary students learned the fundamentals of coding in an interactive environment while reinforcing specific math concepts, and then shared their new knowledge and skills with peers, using an Edcamp model as inspiration (Designing, Creating, and Coding with Spero SPRK+: *Cristal Edwards, Nancy Pavia, and Chris Casal, from Heathcote*).
- A Middle School teacher and a High School teacher studied student engagement, and explored Personalized Learning and Project-Based Instruction at two innovative independent schools. (Transforming the Design of Education: *Liz Gallo and Fallon Plunkett, from Scarsdale Middle School and Scarsdale High School*)

CFI sparks new ideas by bringing in guest speakers to share ideas and arranging site visits to see innovative learning spaces. This year's speakers were [Renee Hobbs](#) (Professor, Digital and Media Literacy) and [Chris Lehman](#) (Head of Science Leadership Academy, Philadelphia, PA). Members of the CFI Steering Committee visited the [Yale School of Management](#) and the [Avenues](#) School in New York City to see how facility design supports student learning.

Wellness continues to be a District focus, with related programs in each of our seven schools. In April, a team of distinguished educators from the Tri-State Consortium conducted a consultancy in our District to study our work on wellness as represented in our [Self Study](#) and to give us commendations and recommendations for continued work. We expect their report by the end of June, and will post it on the District website.

Following a comprehensive review of our World Language Program, a recommendation was made and funded to offer a before-school Mandarin Enrichment Program to 6th graders in 2017-2018. An extensive [report](#) was presented to the Board of Education in November, 2016.

In Scarsdale we believe in continuous improvement. In that spirit, teachers review and refresh curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessments over the summer through Program Improvement and Professional Development opportunities. This summer there are 214 projects planned, most involving collaborative teacher teams for at least one day.

As the 2016-17 school year draws to a close, we look forward to continuing and strengthening this year's achievements in teaching and learning when we return next fall.

Human Resources and Leadership Development:

Year-End Portfolio Update

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



As we approach summer, it is startling that my first year in the District is coming to an end. While many of the school-year rhythms were familiar, a new community, a new culture, and a new slate of responsibilities made for a dynamic, yet productive, year. What follows is a status report for a select subset of the many goals and associated tasks in the Human Capital and Leadership Development portfolio.

Recruitment, Selection, and Induction.

Recruiting, selecting, onboarding, and inducting talent is a key function of any HR office. This year, retirements, resignations, and position additions combined to create the need to hire 33 certified educators across all levels, including a new principal for Scarsdale Middle School. All but five of these positions have been filled as of June 20, and the remaining positions emerged as vacancies only in the last few weeks. This year also resulted in the groundwork being laid to transition our five elementary Teachers-in-Charge to positions into more formal positional authority and the title of Assistant Principal. These individuals formally assume their new roles as of July 1. The classified service also experienced several retirements and resignations, necessitating the hiring of 10 secretaries and custodians to replace our departing colleagues. Finally, three budgetary position additions were in the mix. We have successfully recruited a second nurse for the High School, and will add two additional custodial staff members later in the year to account for newly renovated and constructed space at the High School.

Collective Bargaining.

My entry to Scarsdale coincided with two recently-concluded negotiations. The first was with the Scarsdale Teachers Association (STA), and the second with the Scarsdale Principals Association (SPA). One of my first orders of business was enacting the memoranda of agreement with each group, resulting in the implementation of significant cost-saving changes to our health benefits, along with negotiating the addition of time to the school day across all three levels. Though negotiations were underway in July with our Association of Scarsdale Teacher Aides and Assistants, an agreement wasn't reached until late August. As part of that agreement, a new evaluation process was developed in early fall, and implemented this spring. Late winter saw the onset of negotiations with the Managers and District Services Association, which concluded last week with the ratification of a new agreement by the Board of Education. Finally, negotiations are underway with the Scarsdale Association of Educational Secretaries, and poised to begin with our Custodial Unit and our Transportation Unit, which will hopefully conclude before the school year begins.

HR Efficiencies and Workflow.

While hiring new teachers and support staff and collective bargaining agreements are prominent symbols of our work, well-crafted systems and structures behind the scenes are critical to our success. To this end, we took on several projects this year aimed at creating greater efficiency, maximizing the sharing of important information, and responding to recommendations made by our auditors. One important example of this category of work has been the implementation of a new applicant tracking and onboarding system. This solution has enabled us to streamline the information flow between HR and the buildings and departments that conduct applicant screening and interviewing processes. The new tool allows all pertinent parties to identify the status of any

candidate in the process, efficiently schedule interviews, and record reference and background checks. Once a candidate is selected for a position, nearly all of the forms we require to bring a new employee onboard are securely delivered and completed electronically. This is a strong first step toward developing a modern personnel record-keeping system. The year ahead promises to bring more change to our back-office systems and processes.

We look forward to the challenges and opportunities awaiting us in the 2017-18 school year.



Student Services Year-End Review

By Eric Rauschenbach, Director of Special Education and Student Services

It's been an action-packed year in the Student Services Department! Our work has included policy changes, professional development in co-teaching and goal writing, improving communication with parents, and reviewing health-related procedures with an eye to more consistency across the District.

However, there was one accomplishment this year that deserves particular recognition in this month's *'Dale Dispatch'*. The Scarsdale Support Program is about to finish its inaugural year at Scarsdale High School, and it has been a wonderful addition to the services offered at our High School. This first year was one of learning but also of success. There are currently 12 students enrolled in the program and we are slated to have 13 starting in September. The students range in profile academically and emotionally, but there is one common denominator: the need for more intensive emotional support to help them access their education. The program has had the support of Dr. Kristin Oliverio and Ms. Catherine Flores working exclusively with these students and their teachers. They have successfully created a space and an environment that is welcoming and inviting while at the same time being open and honest with regard to the work students need to do.

Throughout the year, our deans and teachers have asked students for their feedback and also provided their own. This feedback, especially from students, has been overwhelmingly positive, and it has been studded with some really good ideas for improvement. Some of the most salient responses we have received highlighted the feeling of relief students experience knowing that they have access to a space and a confidant when they need it - rather than on a schedule. Many students have reported the ability to cope much better with emotionality, because they could access a person to talk with more quickly and had the freedom to leave a setting prior to having a less than ideal emotional response (because their teachers were aware, they did not have to ask to leave in a time of emotionality).

Teachers have also commented on the communication and understanding that Dr. Oliverio and Ms. Flores have been able to provide to colleagues as being pivotal in helping them reach some students who would have otherwise had much more trouble. Additionally, referrals to outside therapeutic programs have decreased (although we need more longitudinal data to determine whether this is a trend). I have also heard from a number of parents outside the program about how happy they are that these additional resources are available for students who need the most help in navigating a stressful environment.

The Scarsdale Support Program has by all measures been a valuable addition to our services; we

look forward to honing the program over the next few years and tailoring it in ways that will make it even more effective. We will also continue to watch and see whether this program helps us retain students in-District and helps our other school psychologists provide better coverage across the rest of the student population. As we move into next year, we plan to integrate some of the feedback we received around scheduling and group counseling structure, and will continue to study the effects the program is having on outside placements. We will also be obtaining more formal staff and student feedback in order to better report on the successes that seem apparent this year.

Finally, I would like to take this time to thank the staff and parents who work collaboratively all year to ensure their students have a wonderful experience at Scarsdale, and their continued willingness to engage in dialogue about what is best for our students across the District. Have a wonderful summer!

Facilities Update

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



With school about to recess for the summer months, construction will soon start at both Edgewood and Heathcote Elementary Schools for projects related to the December 2014 Bond authorization.

At Edgewood, construction on the new library addition will commence in July, with work continuing through the 2017-18 school year. An existing classroom will serve as next year's temporary library until the new library's opening, anticipated for the 2018-19 school year. Also at Edgewood, the main office will be moved to the central entrance at the front of the building to better allow for visitor management. This interior renovation is planned to be ready for the opening of school in September.

At Heathcote, construction will also begin very soon on a new multi-purpose room at the rear of the building, and continue through the 2017-18 school year.

As in all construction projects that occur both over the summer and during the course of the school year, student and staff safety is of paramount importance. In addition to adhering to detailed specifications concerning safe building and demolition practices, along with third party oversight, the District holds weekly construction meetings with the firms conducting the work, weekly building meetings to discuss logistics, and engages a construction management firm to be the eyes and ears of the District, and manage the many facets of the project on a daily basis.

Although construction is behind schedule a bit at the Middle School, we anticipate the new orchestra room addition to be completed on time and be ready for the 2017-18 school year.

At the High School, the new Learning Commons has now received the necessary shipments of steel, and has had all structural framing and decking installed to form the mezzanine. The climbing wall in Gym A is now fully installed and will be ready for use once the new school year begins.

At the Fitness Center, work is progressing just about on schedule. Design Lab work will now commence with expected completion in mid-autumn. Please remember that for safety reasons all construction areas are off limits. If you have any questions regarding any of these projects please contact me at smatley@scarsdaleschools.org.

Work also continues in planning for a facilities-related Bond Referendum in December 2017, which has been underway for the past two and a half years. During that time the District has held Building Committee meetings and has contracted for development of Roofing and Fields Master Plans. In addition, a Building Condition Survey was prepared by the District's previous architect. This past winter the District hired a new architectural firm (BBS Architects & Engineers) to not only review and study all of this past work, but also to provide the District with a fresh look at the infrastructure of our buildings (Facility Needs), and a study of how our buildings can best be improved to provide 21st century learning and community spaces for our students (Spatial Needs). These two studies, Facility Needs and Spatial Needs, will together comprise a Master Facilities Plan that will drive capital work in the District for the next 15 years.

BBS has recently presented these developing Master Plans at two Board of Education Meetings and recent Public Forums. You may find additional information on the [District's webpage](#).



Information Technology Year-End Update

By Rachel Moseley, Director of Information Technology

The Information Technology team had another successful year implementing several new systems and system upgrades, helping to improve workflow, and providing staff and parents with technology support. The two most significant projects completed in the 2016-17 school year are:

- Implementation of an Online Student Registration system, in conjunction with the implementation of Central Registration
- Replacement of our servers, along with a migration of our operating system from Novell to Microsoft

Online Registration System and Central Registration

The District launched a student registration system this year which allows parents/guardians to enter student information online. In addition, the system enables families who already have a child enrolled in the Scarsdale Public Schools, or who have received private school transportation through the District, to access Online Registration via the Parent Portal. This eliminates the need for parents to re-enter household information that is already on file.

We launched the pilot program for the Online Student Registration system and Central Registration in December of 2016. Our Central Registrar has already processed hundreds of online registrations for incoming Kindergarten students, transportation requests for families of private and parochial school children, and registrations from families new to the District.

Server Infrastructure Replacement and Novell to Microsoft Migration

Last summer, we had planned to replace District servers. However, as we came closer to the start of the project, we realized that we had a unique opportunity to combine the server

replacement project with a long-needed migration from the Novell network operating system to the Microsoft operating system and Active Directory.

We immediately embarked on planning and executing this complex project involving a large number of servers and services, including user authentication, file storage, printing, backups, and more, that needed to be replaced in tandem. While this has likely been the most challenging infrastructure initiative tackled by the District, it is also one of the most exciting for our Technical Services team. This project allows us to move our server infrastructure to the newest technology, enabling us to:

- Offer greater server resilience, stability, and performance
- Upgrade Windows computers to the Windows 10 operating system
- Build a central user database (with Active Directory)

These upgrades will be the foundation for many more technology enhancements, which the team looks forward to implementing over the coming months and years. This June, just twelve months after we decided to go ahead with the Novell to Microsoft migration, the new servers are fully operational and the team has started to migrate users to the new system.

Of course, all of this work is designed to provide students and teachers with a technology platform that supports high-quality teaching and learning, the hallmark of a Scarsdale education.

A Communication Plan for Athletics

By Ray Pappalardi,

Director of Physical Education, Health, and Athletics



I spent a great deal of time this year with members of the community in an attempt to define the purpose of sports for the children in Scarsdale. During the first half of the academic year, members of the PTC, Maroon & White, the High School administration and I engaged in preliminary discussions that included issues with youth sports and interscholastic sports at the Middle and High schools, respectively. We soon realized that any successful resolution of the issues would need input from the greater Scarsdale community.

The backdrop for this work was the *Report on Youth Sports* compiled by a Scarsdale community group, the Advisory Council on Youth, in 2004, incorporating a survey conducted by BuzzBack Market Research. Many of the issues identified in that report are still present in youth sports and were revisited in our discussions.

While these discussions revealed a myriad of issues with sports participation consistent with the report, the main challenge to fully realizing changes and implementing new systems was communication. Communication has proved to be a challenge; this is especially true with interscholastic athletics. Determining when and how to communicate with families most effectively in a time of change requires a plan.

Research tells us that frequency is only one consideration in creating an effective communication plan. In addition to the frequency of communication, process and consequences play a vital part in effective communication. The plan I am proposing will be focused on measured communication based on both new and existing tools we have within the Scarsdale School District.

For one-way communication, we will use our [website](#), seasonal emails through Constant Contact, targeted messages through Infinite Campus, and surveys to obtain feedback from families. For two-way communication we will utilize guidelines developed by the [Scarsdale Parent-Educator Partnership](#) and a [communication](#) protocol for interscholastic athletics. Seasonal meetings will be held to provide information and elicit feedback from the community.

Mode of communication	Type of Information	Frequency
Website	Philosophy, curriculum, contact information, upcoming events, news, team information, information on sport clearance, athletic schedules, and directions.	On demand
Constant Contact seasonal email	Seasonal information - start dates, tryout information	3 times per year - Before the fall, winter and spring seasons
Infinite Campus messages	Specific, situational information	As needed to provide information to specific groups within the school community
Seasonal meetings	Organizational information related to seasonal sports activities	3 times per year - Before the fall, winter and spring seasons

We hope that the implementation of this communications system will enhance the youth sports experience for Scarsdale students.



A Year of Technology Enhancing Education

By Jerry Crisci,

Director of Instructional Technology and Innovation

From the delivery of new technology last summer, to the final, fifth grade Capstone projects in the spring, we have had another very busy year in the instructional technology program. We launched several new initiatives this year as we began the implementation of the first year of our new Technology Plan.

Digital Literacies

At the elementary level, we kicked off a successful 1:1 Chromebook program in all third grade classes, completing our 1:1 program in grades 3-5. Elementary blogging and publishing were also a focus of our work; students used apps like SeeSaw and online services like Campus Press to share their writing with peers. This shift, from writing for a single teacher to publishing for a

wider audience, also helps to prepare our students for authentic writing experiences.

STEAM

We created a new K-12 STEAM Sequence, combining activities and projects already in the curriculum with new projects, courses and content, to ensure a smooth progression of content, comprehension, and skills development. This sequence was created by the computer teachers, science teachers, Middle School Technology teachers, and the High School art department. We also began the first year of High School STEAM courses -- Introduction to Engineering and Introduction to Design and Fabrication. In addition, several elementary schools and their PTA teams hosted STEAM days, and a District STEAM Day was organized by the PTA.

K-12 Coding

Computer teachers throughout the District launched a new coding sequence that begins with robotics and coding in the primary grades, and moves to block-based programming environments in the upper grades and Middle School. At the High School, we continued to offer coding courses, and for the first time ever, one of our Computer Science classes enrolled more girls than boys.

Professional Development

The District's computer teachers offered many workshops and professional development sessions, and taught STI courses. An innovative professional development option, featuring one-hour mini-workshops, was a popular choice for teachers. Known as the Scarsdale Teachers Collaborative (ST@C), this program was designed by two Edgewood teachers: Paul Tomizawa, elementary computer teacher, and William Yang, teacher-in-charge, who launched their idea with a Center for Innovation grant.

Online Communication and Social Media

District Website development continued, featuring Tagboards that displayed Twitter feeds posted by teachers and other District staff. The District also launched a series of Adobe Spark pages to inform the community about facilities work. Our Facebook page (now with over 1,300 followers) hosted dozens of postings to help share information about the District.

Innovation

In partnership with my colleague Lynne Shain, the Center for Innovation hosted site visits, speakers, and innovation project grants (see Lynne Shain's article for additional information).

Impact Beyond Scarsdale

As in previous years, the District technology team hosted visitors from several local school districts, as well as visitors from schools as far away as Colorado and Australia. Our computer teachers gave presentations at several technology conferences, and we recently hosted a meeting of about 30 tech directors from around the Hudson Valley region.

In closing, I would like to thank all of the computer teachers for their work with students, as well as our partners in the Technical Services team, the Information Technology department, the PTAs, and other members of the community who supported us this year. We are looking forward to working with everyone next year as we continue to use technology to enhance and transform instruction. Have a wonderful summer!





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