



SCARSDALE  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## 'Dale Dispatch: District e-Newsletter

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From Dr. Thomas Hagerman

Superintendent of Schools



### Measures of a World Class Education

Do Scarsdale students receive a "World Class" education? This is a question that comes up with some frequency. In a recent community meeting, the question was raised again. In response, one participant noted that this issue cannot be fully understood unless there are appropriate metrics to benchmark this work.

This reminded me that perhaps we have missed an opportunity to share several metrics that are already in place to measure the intercultural communications and global competencies that ensure students are prepared for all facets of their future lives by providing them with a true worldview:

**Formal assessments:** The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a triennial international exam that purports to evaluate education systems around the globe by testing the skills and knowledge of students in various content areas. The last time Scarsdale administered the PISA exam, it was based on Science content. The results showed that, if Scarsdale had been a country, it would have outscored Finland, the highest scoring country that year. This outcome actually propelled us to learn even more about our educational standing in comparison with schools in other countries, and has influenced much of our work on global preparedness ever since.

**College admissions:** In 2016, 1.2 million international students attended American colleges and

universities, representing nearly 10% of all college students. From Scarsdale's graduating class of 2017, 97% are now attending four-year, U.S. and international colleges. And, of these numbers, 59% were accepted at the "Most Competitive" colleges, while 69% were accepted in the "Highly Competitive" category, according to Barron's Profiles of American Colleges Rating Guide. Schools in both these categories attract the best international students, alongside those from the U.S. Although there are a host of other issues related to college admissions, it is clear that our students remain globally competitive.

**International student performances:** Each year dozens of our students travel internationally with the purpose of showcasing their talent and interacting with students in other countries. Our history of performance tours around the globe dates back to 1998, when the first tour was for the D-Day Commemoration in Lyon and Paris. Since then, hundreds of students have performed in Cuba, Ireland, Austria, Hungary, Denmark, England and more. Last year alone, 150 Scarsdale students traveled to Southern France, Germany, and Australia to perform. Many of these trips are invitational, and are themselves a testament to the renown of our outstanding fine arts educators and, of course, the incredible talents of our students.

**Language proficiency and cultural understanding in real time:** Last year we had 232 students who traveled internationally on learning excursions. Of these, 64 students participated in exchange programs, all of which included a homestay portion. These destinations included Spain, France, Germany, Australia, and Cambodia. When students and teachers had the opportunity to debrief these trips, students regularly attributed their successful travels to their extensive language and cultural studies here in Scarsdale.

**Academic benchmarking and student collaborative learning:** Scarsdale, in conjunction with Columbia University, is a co-founding member of the Global Learning Alliance (GLA), a consortium of some of the highest performing schools around the globe and their partnering research universities. Initially, the work of GLA focused on developing core capacities that are important for students to acquire to be prepared for the challenges of the 21st century, and developing a research framework based on these capacities. The next generation of work for the GLA was to develop a pilot assessment of students' ability to solve non-standard, complex, global problems in collaborative groups. This was accomplished last year by challenging participating students with a sophisticated problem on climate change, and eventually comparing results from students around the world. Scarsdale students excelled in this assessment. Scarsdale's participation on GLA assessments and research is ongoing, and a reflection of the District's determination to remain globally competitive (and collaborative).

While not a complete list of metrics for assessing a "World Class" education, I believe this does provide a sampling of the variety, depth, and commitment of this District to ensure that all our students are fully prepared for their future lives as global citizens.

Warm regards,  
Dr. Thomas Hagerman



## Center for Innovation Grants Inspire New Learning Spaces

*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*



With several school renovation projects already finished and others approaching completion, it is an appropriate moment to pause and recognize the connection between grants awarded by the Scarsdale Center for Innovation (CFI) and exciting new learning spaces for our students.

## **High School**

Several CFI grants inspired the creation of learning spaces at the High School.

One grant, awarded in 2012, set the groundwork for the new High School Fitness Center:

### **Transforming Physical Education: An Interdisciplinary Approach - High School - 2012**

*Kevin Blake (Physical Education), George Blessing (District coordinator, Health and Physical Education), Jodi Giroux (Technology), Devin Hoover (Physical Education), Bob Siracuse (Director of Athletics), Jeremy Szerlip (Science), Stacey Suffridge Wierl (Physical Education)*

The goal of this project was to re-imagine and redesign the teaching of physical education in the High School, by developing an interdisciplinary curriculum that unites physical education, health education, science, and technology. The team examined how current trends in health, wellness, physical activity, nutrition, and exercise science can be integrated into the course of study. This project considered the development of a Center for Wellness and Exercise Science. The team researched facility design and equipment to create a prototype state-of-the-art fitness center for students, staff, and community members.

Another CFI grant helped to inspire the High School I-Lab and D-Lab:

### **Imagining and Designing Flexible Learning Spaces for the School of the Future - High School - 2012**

*Maggie Favretti (Social Studies), and Lisa Yokana (Art)*

This team explored innovation education programs and the space designs that support them by first researching, then visiting other schools and interviewing program organizers and participants. Working with architects, administrators, faculty, students, alumni, and parents, the team developed a vision statement and proposal about innovation education at the High School. What are the skills all innovators use? How can we best develop the kind of integrated thinking and internal motivation that innovation rests on? How can the design of innovation spaces influence the students and teachers who will use them? How will they help facilitate desired outcome?

## **Middle School**

At the Middle School, two CFI grants helped teachers "rethink" how instructional spaces can be organized:

### **The NEST (New Educational Studio for Technology) at the Middle School - 2014**

*Doug Rose (Head Computer teacher), Meghan Lahey (Social Studies), Marci Rothman (Social Studies), Denise Cassano (Art)*

This project re-designed the computer lab spaces in Popham and Fountain Houses to create the NEST: New Educational Studio for Technology. Each NEST room incorporated the concepts of learning studios and Maker Spaces to support essential learning modalities, including project-based learning, student presentation, collaboration, independent study, play-based learning, and mobile technology use.

## **A Music Maker Museum at the Middle School: Creation and Installation - 2014**

*Jessica Slotwinski (Music Department Chair), Jeff Tuttle (Technology Education), Michael Pincus (Computer Technology), Steve Rambone (Technology Education)*

The focus of this project was to develop a Music Maker Museum, a STEAM ecosystem where sixth grade Exploring Music students designed, created, and displayed electronic instruments and "programmable" artwork.

## **Elementary**

The Maker Spaces at each elementary school were inspired by this CFI project:

### **Creating Prototype Maker Space to Promote STEM Opportunities for Elementary Students - Fox Meadow - 2012**

*Dan Brodsky (Third Grade), Sara Faranda (Art), Alethea Lynch (Third Grade), Peter McKenna (Technology), David Scholl (Learning Resource Center), Jan Schorr (Librarian), Duncan Wilson (Principal)*

Once, households across the nation had basements and garages where parents and children created, tinkered, and worked with tools and materials. Students need more time - and space - to solve real-life engineering tasks. The growing Maker movement aims to reinvent American ingenuity and manufacturing on a small, personal scale, encouraging experiential learning, collaboration, creativity, and authentic critical thinking. This team developed a prototype Media lab/Maker Space that gave elementary students the opportunity to engage in real engineering and design work, and promote experiential learning in STEM (Science-Technology-Engineering-Math). The lab was equipped with a variety of computers, creative software, building and circuit kits, models, robotics kits and materials, 3D printers, and other emerging technology. Now, five years later, each of Scarsdale's seven schools has a Maker Space.

As we reflect on the fifth anniversary of the Center for Innovation, we can see how these grants impacted our thinking about learning spaces, and eagerly look forward to what new ideas will be nurtured by future CFI grants.

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## **New Beginnings**

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



On August 31st, I had the privilege of officially recognizing 55 individuals at our annual Convocation ceremony who are either new to the Scarsdale Public Schools, or are returning, but in a new capacity for the 2017-18 school year. Twenty-five of these individuals are new faculty members starting a three- or four-year probationary period on a tenure track; one is a part-time faculty member; four have assumed full-year leave replacement positions for teachers on leaves of absence; and another eight are serving in partial-year leave positions.

Ten individuals have stepped into newly created, or filled vacant, leadership roles, including our five elementary assistant principals, and our new Scarsdale Middle School principal. We



welcomed a new nurse at Scarsdale High School, and promoted one of our accountants to the position of assistant business manager. Finally, along with welcoming two new secretaries and a new bus driver, two current secretaries were promoted to fill vacancies in the District.

In many ways, each of these individuals is experiencing a new beginning, and a major change in their professional lives. Paradoxically, even when we carry many years of experience in schools with us, we still feel that "being new" feeling. On the one hand, our experience combines to make us well qualified for our work with students, in offices, and on buses. On the other hand, feelings of uncertainty, and even doubt, over whether our skills will translate in the new setting creep into our minds. As I said to our new faculty, that feeling is important to have because it grounds us, and reminds us of the seriousness and importance of the work we do with, and on behalf of, students, every single day.

In *The Courage to Teach*, author Parker Palmer speaks to this phenomenon, reminding us that, "in certain circumstances, truth is a paradoxical joining of apparent opposites, and if we want to know that truth, we must learn to embrace the opposites as one." He goes on to list several "ordinary truths" about teaching that are expressed as paradoxes. My favorites include:

*"The knowledge I have gained from 30 years of teaching goes hand in hand with my sense of being a rank amateur at the start of each new class."*

*"Teaching always takes place at the crossroads of the personal and the public, and if I want to teach well, I must learn to stand where these opposites intersect."*

*"Intellect works in concert with feeling, so if I hope to open my students' minds, I must open their emotions as well."*

I believe we can all benefit from learning to embrace these paradoxes. They help remind us that ours is a profession that doesn't know perfection. Fortunately, the Scarsdale School District is an organization that is deeply committed to ongoing learning, professional renewal, collaboration, partnership, and community. Thus, even as we welcome our new faculty and staff, we challenge them to embrace lifelong learning and reflective practice as the means to the end of a successful career that touches the lives of our students in the most important ways.



## Welcoming and Supporting Students

*By Eric Rauschenbach, Director of Special Education and Student Services*

The first few weeks of school have flown by as our students and staff have gotten settled. It goes without saying that September is always busy, and new schedules have made it even busier. Even with these challenges, our year has gotten off to a very smooth start. As always, the start of school is a wonderful reminder of the flexibility and professionalism of our staff, teachers, and administrators who are able to problem-solve on the fly without impacting student experience. I would like to thank the entire special education staff and transportation staff for doing an unbelievable job making sure all of our students were welcomed into their various placements, especially the students who came to our community over the summer.

This school year we welcome another large cohort in our co-taught program, which will call Edgewood home. We have four wonderful teachers who are getting to know our new students and eager to dive into the curriculum. We have also adjusted one of the classes at Quaker Ridge to serve students in both kindergarten and first grade. This adjustment has helped us serve a number of students within their own community. The new program, called Bridge Class, will provide students with opportunities to join our general education classes for appropriate activities and become part of the larger community, while receiving their academic instruction in a small ratio class that can differentiate to individual student needs.

On the secondary level, the Scarsdale Support program is entering its second year after a very successful inaugural year. The program is running near capacity and we are receiving positive feedback from teachers and students alike. As the year progresses, the department will continue to gather data on the program and explore the need for supports in the Middle School and elementary grades. As the District at large is focused on wellness, this will be a very important topic.

Over the next few months the District will work to clarify its allergy procedures within the buildings, and better articulate the overall philosophy that guides development of those procedures. In particular, we will be updating procedures for Epi-Pens. Recent regulation changes have made it possible for us to install Epi-Pens in all the eating areas in our schools. This will allow faster access to them in an emergency, and also provide students with no prior history of allergies prompt access to treatment if they experience an anaphylactic event.

This year we are also starting to plan the vision for our work over the next few years. This process will include surveying staff and students, seeking parent input, and working collaboratively across District departments. This year should prove to be an exciting one!

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## Facilities Update and Bond Planning

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



This past summer was a busy one with regard to work on the District's facilities. Major capital projects undertaken as part of the December 2014 bond were underway, in addition to plant improvement projects that were funded by the 2017-18 budget. Intertwined with these projects was the annual thorough cleaning that all our buildings receive each summer. Our team of custodians and cleaners deserve our gratitude for an extraordinary job done in assuring that our buildings were clean and safe for the return of teachers and students.

Some of the 2014 bond projects are now open for student use, including the new Fitness Center at the High School, the Middle School Instrumental Music Room addition and the renovated Band Room, and the Edgewood Main Office and centrally situated main school entrance. Projects still underway include:

- High School: Learning Commons (estimated November opening), I-Lab (estimated November opening), Design Lab (estimated late January opening), and Courtyard drainage

(estimated December completion)

- Edgewood: Library addition (estimated late spring opening)
- Heathcote: Multi-purpose room (estimated late spring opening)

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 the Fitness Center.

Plant Improvement projects completed over the summer months include a new playground and concrete repairs at Heathcote, new sections of roof at the High School and Fox Meadow, bathroom renovations at the Middle School, and outdoor stair replacements at Fox Meadow. Other work completed over the summer included exterior painting at Edgewood, District-wide roof repairs and asbestos floor tile removal.

In addition to this previously scheduled work, we have engaged in development of a bond to be put forth in a referendum. The current scope of proposed facilities work to be funded by this bond is centered around District-wide health and safety improvements, including construction of security vestibules at all elementary buildings and the Middle School; the District-wide replacement of aging building systems including roofs, boilers, and electrical panels; installation of new or replacement air ventilation systems; and a significant expansion and renovation of Greenacres. Both a District-wide and a Greenacres Building Committee have been formed to assist in the planning for these projects, with the Greenacres Building Committee specifically formed to work through the many logistical issues that confront larger projects. Information regarding this proposed bond project can be found on the District website [here](#).

We count on an informed, engaged community to consider these proposals, and thank the many volunteers who are serving on committees that are furthering this work.

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## Information Technology Update

*By Rachel Moseley, Director of Information Technology*

The Information Technology team had an extremely busy summer upgrading our District's technology infrastructure and applications; purchasing and configuring new computers and other technology items; and implementing a variety of system enhancements and automation.

The Technical Services team completed a series of complex projects:

- Replacing a large number of servers and services, including file storage, printing, and backups;
- Migrating the network operating system from Novell to Microsoft;
- Building a central user database with Microsoft's Active Directory, and migrating all users (staff and students) to Active Directory;
- Upgrading Windows computers to the Windows 10 operating system;
- Replacing the core network switches in all seven buildings; and
- Upgrading the District's wide area network (WAN) from 1GB to 10GB.

With the completion of these projects we moved our server infrastructure to the newest technology, offering greater server resilience, stability, and performance. These upgrades also give us the foundation for further technology enhancements. For example, the implementation of Active Directory allows us to consolidate school-based wireless networks into District-wide networks. This has already been completed for the guest and the bring-your-own device (BYOD) networks. The instructional WiFi network will be the last to be migrated from being school-based to being District-wide. When that is completed next summer, staff and students will be able to travel between buildings and seamlessly use the technology that best supports their teaching and learning.

The Data Services team has started a large-scale project to replace the Time Clock system currently used by our custodians. We formed a project team which evaluated several systems and selected the one that best meets the District's needs. The plan is to install the new time clocks and software over the next few months, as well as to expand this time tracking solution to aides and bus drivers.

The technology team has worked incredibly hard and has done an outstanding job at planning and executing complex projects while continuing to do all the day-to-day operational work needed to provide our staff and students with technology equipment, systems, and support.



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