



SCARSDALE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

'Dale Dispatch: District e-Newsletter

IN THIS ISSUE (APRIL 2016)

Superintendent's Message (Dr. Thomas Hagerman)

ALERT: Half Days Reinstated in June

Student Assessment (Lynne Shain, Asst. Supt. for Curriculum)

A Moveable Feast (Dr. Bernard Josefsberg, Asst. Supt. for Personnel)

Projects Work Plan (Stuart Matthey, Asst. Supt. for Business)

SHS Learning Resource Center (Eric Rauschenbach, Director of Special Education)

Full STEAM Ahead (Jerry Crisci, Director of Instructional Technology and Innovation)

From Dr. Thomas Hagerman
Superintendent of Schools



Three Teachers for Every Student? Absolutely!

"There are three teachers of children: adults, other children, and their physical environment."

- Loris Malaguzzi

Although design thinking is certainly in vogue at the moment, many educators will recall the release of the book, *The Third Teacher* (2010), several years ago. It is an aesthetic, informative, and inspiring look at how purposeful design both influences and informs teaching and learning in the classroom. Although the book focuses on more macro-level, best practices, I was reminded about the importance of this message on a recent visit to some elementary classrooms at Fox Meadow.

During the visit, I had the opportunity to observe a couple of writing lessons. As a former English teacher myself, I was immediately hooked.

On the floor, in the front of one particular class, the teacher was providing a mini lesson on developing concluding paragraphs for a book report to four students. There was a very short demonstration, followed by conferring and questions. As I scanned the rest of the room, students were actively engaged in independent writing. At one point, I noticed a student had stopped; she began tapping her pencil on her desk. I recognized that look: she was "stuck." After a moment or two, she leaned over to her neighbor and whispered, "transition words?" The student obliged and pointed to the wall on the far side of the room. The young author stood up, walked over to the wall with a large grid of different words: above, over, under, below, etc. After scanning for a few moments, she spotted a word that had obviously evaded her earlier, and went back to her desk and continued to write.

A few moments later, a student raised his hand and asked about adjectives. Without missing a beat, the teacher asked if he looked at his "personal toolkit." He had not, but quickly produced what looked like a handmade notebook with a wide array of information that appeared to be an on-going collaboration between himself and his teacher. He found the page labeled "Adjectives." As with the student before, there was a thoughtful pause, an "aha" moment when the perfect word was chosen, and writing continued.

This type of interaction occurred repeatedly in a seamless fashion with the teacher working intensively with a small group, but attending to the larger class as needed. The magic of the moment was that all students were engaged, regardless of where they were in the writing process. Does it need to be said that this was a first grade classroom? I think it does. Without seeing it, many might not believe that some of our youngest students are capable of this level of inter- and intra- dependence.

In addition to physical resources like word walls, timelines, class libraries, graphic organizers, and demonstrations of high quality student work, we can also engage technology to provide real time support to students of all ages. Kristin Ziemke, author of *Amplify: Digital Teaching and Learning in the K-6 Classroom* and innovation specialist for the Big Shoulders Fund in Chicago, visited Scarsdale last week. While speaking with groups of teachers, she reminded us that each student should have a carefully curated collection of apps or other digital tools that can be referred to at any given time for independent guidance across all content areas.

Over the course of the year, we have spent considerable time talking about the importance of student agency in individual learning. We've acknowledged the importance of choice, student voice, and authentic assessments in this work. And, as a school community, we have moved towards a greater shared understanding of the critical role of student engagement and social dynamics in deep and enduring understanding.

Even as our vision is coalescing around what we think we know is best for kids, and what we want for them, it is important to note that it is not always easy to implement this on a daily basis. Learning is always necessarily messy. Kids are people with very different academic and developmental needs. Teachers are people too, trying to balance a host of individuals and issues competing for their attention. When we recognize this, and intentionally design our educational environments to be teaching tools for all students, both the use of other students as the *second teacher*, and the environment and personalized toolkits as the *third teacher*, we not only

provide optimal learning for students, but also help students to see themselves as capable learners, those who can access the information they need, evaluate appropriate resources, solve problems, and check their understanding.

While everyone recognizes there is no substitute for a great classroom teacher, if we, as parents and educators, can engage the influence of space, personalized resources, and digital tools, we help our children to understand that they are very capable learners, with many teachers around them to bolster their efforts.

With warm regards,
Dr. Thomas Hagerman

ALERT:

UNUSED SNOW DAYS ALLOW FOR HALF-DAYS IN JUNE

Because the District needed to use only one snow day this year, three half-days will be reinstated during the last school week in June, on the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of that week. High School Graduation is the Friday of that week, and is always an early dismissal day.

The new schedule is as follows:

Monday, June 20	FULL DAY
Tuesday, June 21	HALF DAY
Wednesday, June 22	HALF DAY
Thursday, June 23	HALF DAY
Friday, June 24	10 a.m. DISMISSAL



Student Assessment in the Scarsdale Schools

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

With the onset of spring, comes the required New York State Testing Program for students in Grades 3-8 in ELA and Math and in Science for students in Grades 4 and 8. This article seeks to provide context and clarity about Scarsdale's approach to student assessment.

Scarsdale embraces the importance of student *assessment*. It is one of the three, integral facets of the teaching and learning cycle along with *curriculum* and *instruction*.

Curriculum:	What do we want students to know and be able to do?
Instruction:	How do we teach the curriculum?
Assessment:	How do we measure student learning?

Student assessment in the Scarsdale Schools includes both formal and informal classroom assessments and standardized testing. It is common for people to use "standardized testing" synonymously with "student assessment." However, these are really not the same thing and do not serve the same purpose. Standardized testing is a snapshot in time of students' performance on a given measure. Student assessment is much broader, encompassing a variety of ways to determine how students are progressing along a trajectory of learning over time.

In Scarsdale, student assessment includes authentically evaluating students' abilities, relative strengths and weaknesses, and their ability to apply knowledge to "the real world." It is an ongoing, iterative process in every classroom, and is critical to effective teaching and learning.

Standardized tests, on the other hand, provide summative and somewhat limited information that represent a single point in time. Although we don't place a lot of value on this for gauging individual student achievement, we recognize that it is important to view results over time and to include this, along with other performance indicators, in evaluating student, program, school, and District performance. Trend data particularly helps to inform our work as we engage in goal-setting and instructional decision-making for the future.

Most of the standardized tests we administer to our students in Scarsdale are required by state mandate. These tests serve a variety of compliance and regulatory purposes. Even so, we understand that they may provide some informative data for our use:

- For teachers, parents, and students: this data can provide insight on students' progress with basic skills and mastery or recall of subject area content.
- For teachers: this data may help to identify students in need of additional support or who have some specific skill deficiencies.
- For administrators and teachers: collective student performance can provide insight on appropriate curriculum and instruction resources, sequencing of instructional units, and other supports that may be needed.
- For the broader school community: this data may demonstrate how Scarsdale students perform relative to students in the region, state, and nation.

Caution must be used when interpreting standardized test scores. They

should not be the sole evaluation of student achievement or an educational program because these tests are concerned only with certain basic skills and abilities and are not intended to measure total achievement for each subject and grade.

In 2013 the Scarsdale Board of Education issued the following statement: "The overemphasis on standardized testing has caused considerable collateral damage in too many schools, including narrowing the curriculum, teaching to the test, reducing love of learning, pushing students out of school, driving excellent teachers out of the profession, and undermining school climate. Therefore, as a District, we believe that the best assessment of a student's achievement is still classroom performance as judged by a teacher who sees the student's work in a variety of situations over the course of a school year."

More information on this topic is available at:
<http://www.scarsdaleschools.org/domain/1038>

A Moveable Feast

By Dr. Bernard Josefsberg, Interim Assistant Superintendent for Human Services and Leadership Development

The Tri-State Consortium is a dynamic learning organization of public school districts that values systems thinking as the foundation for continuous improvement. The Consortium assists its member districts in using quantitative and qualitative data to enhance student performance and to build a rigorous framework for planning, assessment, and systemic change. Collaborating as colleagues and critical friends, Consortium members apply the standards of the Tri-State model to benchmark member districts' progress in advancing teaching and learning.

- Mission Statement, Tri-State Consortium

I first encountered the Tri-State Consortium (of which Scarsdale is a longstanding member) in 1997 as the principal of New Canaan (CT) High School. Its model of school improvement impressed me as a deft use of the systems thinking popularized in Peter Senge's *Fifth Discipline*. I soon realized that the caliber of the Consortium's "colleagues and critical friends" -- more so than its intellectual underpinnings --- was the true benefit of membership. I discovered that I had joined a remarkable educational community that included many of the foremost professionals in the region. Even after I left New Canaan in 2001 for other positions in non-member school districts, I consciously maintained the relationships that I had forged through the Consortium. Their enduring worth was a moveable feast. Little did I know that Scarsdale, years later, would be the beneficiary of such endurance.

At its April 4th meeting, the Scarsdale Board of Education approved the appointment of Andrew (Drew) Patrick as Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Leadership

Development, effective July 1st. I prefaced my introduction of him by telling Board members that I "knew Drew before I met him" -- an allusion to his widespread reputation within the Consortium as a rising educational star. I was excited when Lynne Shain told me that she had encouraged his application to Scarsdale.

In case you missed the announcement:

Mr. Patrick currently is the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction in the Bedford Central School District, a position he has held since 2008. He began his public school career in 1999 as a science teacher at Clarkstown South High School before moving to Bedford in 2002. Between 2004 and 2008, he served as Bedford's Science and Technology Coordinator.

Mr. Patrick earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology-Geology from the University of Rochester, a Masters of Science in Geology from the University of South Carolina, and a Masters in Educational Leadership from the Bank Street College of Education. He is currently enrolled in Manhattanville College, pursuing a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership. His article on "Problems with Percentiles: Student Growth Scores in New York's Teacher Evaluation System" was recently published in the Journal of Scholarship and Practice.

Mr. Patrick emerged from a rigorous selection process in which numerous District stakeholders were able to question him and take his measure. One parent wrote: "Mr. Patrick would be a great asset to Scarsdale. He values collaboration and laid out specific plans for evaluation that were impressive." Another parent described him as "very innovative, honest and practical." A staff member said: "His skills and experience in education are what we need here. He has technology know-how and people experience. His understanding of curriculum makes him a great leader for professional and non-professional staff." A principal noted that he combined a "strong sense of humanity, warmth and intellectual rigor. He's a systems thinker who walks the talk of collaboration. He's a learner who understands the importance of adult human capital." One teacher characterized him as "clearly knowledgeable about multiple aspects of central office operations. He's a researcher who puts students at the center of his thinking." After describing him as "genuine," another teacher noted that "he recognizes the complex nature and factors involved in teaching practice."

These impressions dovetail with the endorsements provided by those who have worked with him. He's "very special and highly respected in the region....one of the top educators I've worked with." Another mentioned that "he's a process-oriented scientist with a calm, confident, and collaborative manner." A third talked about his "sense of humor and intellectual curiosity."

Drew brings an unusually rich set of skills and experiences to Scarsdale that will serve us exceptionally well. During his tenure in Bedford, he established himself as a highly respected educator with the personal integrity needed to earn trust across all stakeholder groups. His imprint in Scarsdale will be deep and enduring.

We are pleased and fortunate to have Drew join the Scarsdale Public Schools.

Planning for the Work Ahead

By Stuart Matthey, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Facilities



Although the District is still a few months away from summer, planning for the projects approved by voters in December 2014 is already in full swing.

Project specifications are receiving their final reviews by the State Education Department and will then be competitively bid before work commences very soon after our students leave for the summer.

In the meantime, logistics teams have been established in each of the buildings where work will be undertaken. Each building team consists of the building principal, impacted teacher(s), and the head custodian, as well as John Trenholm, Facilities Director, and representatives from Savin, the District's construction management firm.

The focus of each team is to work collaboratively in establishing responsibilities and schedules involved in preparing each building for the work to come. In addition, as much of the construction will continue into the fall, the logistics teams are focusing on how to best manage student and traffic flow in order to minimize impact on the instructional day.

In order to assist in familiarizing yourself with the entire project, I have listed below tentative construction periods, from start time through substantial completion, at each of our affected buildings.

HIGH SCHOOL

Fitness Center:	June 27, 2016 - December 30, 2016
Design Lab:	June 27, 2016 - August 18, 2017
Learning Commons:	June 27, 2016 - August 18, 2017

HEATHCOTE

Multi-purpose, Occupational & Physical Therapy Spaces:	June 27, 2016 - July 21, 2017
---	-------------------------------

EDGEWOOD

Library Reconstruction & Office Relocation:	June 27, 2016 - June 16, 2017
--	-------------------------------

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Music/Multi-purpose Space:	June 27, 2016 - December 16, 2016
----------------------------	-----------------------------------

High School Special Education: Learning Resource Center

By Eric Rauschenbach, Director of Special Education and Student Services

The Learning Resource Center is the heart of High School special education services. It functions as a home base, work space, and escape for almost all of the 170-plus classified students at Scarsdale High School. The faculty provides support in content, time management, executive functioning and study strategies on a daily basis. This year there have been some exciting happenings along with the tried and true programs that make up our usual year.

One of the new programs was our first-ever 9th Grade LRC Parents Night. LRC teachers met with many 9th grade parents to talk about the transition, and the role that the LRC plays in their child's journey through SHS. Its success ensured that this will be an annual event.

The Learning Resources Center, in conjunction with the Counseling Department, also hosted its annual College Information Night for Students with Learning Differences. Our own professional staff and the Director of Special Services for St. Thomas Aquinas College spoke and answered questions about the skills needed for college readiness, changes in disability law when students leave high school, and the types of services available in college.

Professional learning is a priority: this year the Special Education Department's focus centered on transitions and executive functioning. Transitioning students from High School to the "real world" has always been a major priority; this year we have looked at ways of supporting student self-determination in the process. The more we can give students agency in their post-high school choices, the more they can develop the self-advocacy skills that will help them in later life. Our faculty members have attended conferences and seminars to get the latest information on post-secondary programs and universities for students with disabilities, strategies to help students participate in their CSE process, and options for students who have cognitive challenges.

Executive functioning is another area that many of our students find challenging. Given changing technology, some of the strategies that we have taught for many years are starting to become dated. To address this issue, one of our faculty members has undertaken an in-depth study of executive functioning strategies as her three-year assessment topic. The benefits of her research are already reaching many students in the LRC.

Finally, the LRC is in its second year of providing general homework help after school four days a week. This program has been met with enthusiasm and continues to grow in popularity. The department has also started

holding more subject-specific review sessions to capitalize on students' willingness to seek out extra help.

Our students also participate in a number of programs that allow them to play the part of mentor and teacher for younger students in the District. Project Eye to Eye brings our students into the elementary schools to talk with fourth and fifth graders about disabilities and their own experiences. The Middle School mentoring program arranges for some of our most successful High School students to mentor Middle School students with disabilities, and share their wisdom and "tricks of the trade."

The High School LRC is a place that provides invaluable services to our students and is constantly seeking to improve its practices. Our students have earned a great deal of success, in part from the wonderful support the LRC faculty provides.



Full STEAM Ahead!

By Jerry Crisci, Director of Instructional Technology and Innovation

Science + Technology + Engineering + Art + Mathematics = STEAM, a combination of disciplines that will help our students forge ahead in the 21st century..

The Technology Team has been working with several teacher groups to create a K-12 STEAM articulation - a list of course offerings and opportunities that support students at all levels. This document will describe opportunities for all students to engage in activities that involve science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics.

For example, at the elementary level, science helping teacher Jennifer Kiley has been working to adapt and revise science units to make them compatible with the Next Generation Science Standards. Ms. Kiley is planning to work with teachers this summer to help pilot new units that promote applied science and pre-engineering. Computer teacher Peter McKenna, along with Ms. Kiley and math helping teacher Nancy Pavia, is leading an initiative to look at the use of robots and "physical computing" - enabling students to write computer code that interacts with a real object. Computer teachers are also reviewing current practices and new options for teaching coding to all students, beginning in the primary grades.

In the Middle School, students have coding experiences via a sixth grade technology quarterly unit. Technology Education teachers in the Related

Arts program provide experiences to all sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students through projects that involve programming circuits, 3D printing, and model bridge building and engineering design. The seventh and eighth grade science program also features STEAM units that are designed to help students develop critical thinking skills.

At the High School, students have the opportunity to take computer programming courses that offer instruction on a variety of levels. High School art classes also teach students important elements of design that support the STEAM program, including 3D animation and architecture. A new STEAM teacher will be hired for the 2016-17 school year to teach courses in pre-engineering and further develop course offerings and opportunities.

The new STEAM articulation will be shared with the Board of Education and the community at the May 4th Board meeting.



[SIGN UP FOR EMAILS](#)

[SHARE THIS EMAIL](#)

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