



SCARSDALE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

'Dale Dispatch: District e-Newsletter

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From Dr. Thomas Hagerman

Superintendent of Schools



Approaching The End....

It has been said that, "What feels like the end is often the beginning." And no time is that more apparent than in Scarsdale schools during the month of June, when we are simultaneously finishing out one year, and actively planning for the next.

But before jumping too hastily into a new beginning, I'd like to take the opportunity to recap some of the major highlights of the year, and recognize those responsible for achieving these goals. The following is a brief outline of some of the more compelling work that occurred during the 2018-19 school year:

- Teaching and Learning improvements and enhancements:
 - Elementary Schools: The Next Generation Science Standards, balanced literacy, math resources/materials, and District-wide professional development, including Metamorphosis (elementary math professional development)
 - Middle School: Literacy, Core Advisory program, and classroom libraries
 - High School: English Department study of students' reading habits and an AP/AT audit, surveying alumni as part of the verification process

- K-12:
 - Discussed and revised school-level transitions, particularly from elementary to middle school.
 - Surveyed/audited teachers on math and science project-based learning practices.
 - Streamlined and updated the K-12 Garden Project (aligning the curriculum with Next Gen. Science Standards).
 - Refined a District-wide vision for Wellness.
- In the area of Human Resources, we successfully on-boarded many new teachers and administrators from last Spring's hiring, conducted searches for four administrative positions (Edgewood principal, Fox Meadow principal and assistant principal, Middle School assistant principal) and focused leadership professional development on *Executive Function* as we continue to implement our goal of personalized learning for our students.
- The operations side of the house was equally busy with some of the following as major highlights:
 - Developed, implemented, and passed the 2019-2020 Budget, with an 80% approval rate.
 - Developed and implemented a comprehensive, phased-in air conditioning plan to ensure all students and staff have access to cooled spaces during the day while adhering to our commitment to sustainability.
 - Implemented a Districtwide food service plan for the first time.
 - Implemented several important Safety, Security, and Emergency Management systems and procedures.
- Sustainability efforts at each school and across the District were also a focus this year with an emphasis on recycling, composting, and conservation at all levels.
- Wellness continued to be a focal point, both at the school level and in our Compact Committees' work (buildings and District).
- Comprehensive School Policy review commenced, starting with three of nine tranches (0000 - Mission Statement and Board Governance; 3000 - District Administration; and 1000 - Community Related Policies).
- Collaborative work continued with our supporting partners, including the Scarsdale Schools Education Foundation, Parent Teacher Council, the respective Parent Teacher Associations, and Scarsdale Edgemont Family Counseling.

Of course this work was only made possible by the extraordinary colleagues on my Cabinet and the entire Administrative Team, along with our remarkable and dedicated teachers and support staff.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge the Board of Education and the District Clerk, Honore Adams, for their innumerable contributions over the course of the 2018-19 school year. The only way an organization of this size is able to realize this much progress in one year is through tremendous focus and a lot of hard work.

The end of this school year also brings the end of service for both employees and three of our Board of Education Members. This year, we are saying goodbye to administrators, Scott Houseknecht and Larry Chatzinoff; teachers, Cheryl Higgins, Katherine Krahl, Deborah Krisanda, Lisa Onofri, Stephen Rambone, Linda Rich, Marjorie Ross, Craig Sherman, and Elizabeth Ungar; support staff, George Arthungal, Sam Greenaway, Beth Kaye, Karen Lucente, Sylvia Miller, Gwen Roberts, Sandy Skalaski, Faye Turitz, and Lenny Vento; and teacher aides, Randee Horowitz, Holly Kaitz, and Barbara Vogel. We are also bidding adieu to three retiring Board Members: Nina Ledis Cannon, William Natbony, and Leila Maude.

Individually and collectively, the service of these retiring employees and Board Members have helped to shape the District, and mold the lives of our students. We could not be more grateful for the impact they are leaving behind. On behalf of the District, I would like to thank them for their service,

and wish them health and happiness in the future.

And now we move on to the year ahead!

Warm regards,
Dr. Thomas Hagerman



Summer Curriculum Planning

By Edgar McIntosh, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, and Co-Director, Center for Innovation

"And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees, just as things grow in fast movies, I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer."

-F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby

Scarsdale educators appreciate the slower days of summer and the opportunities to relax, recharge, and hit the reset after a busy year of planning, teaching, and learning. Some are heading to the beaches, others to the mountains; one colleague described this summer as an "off-Disney" year and is looking forward to low-key weekend trips to visit friends and family.

As you drive by our schools in July and August you will most likely spot cars in the parking lots. That is because, even without students filling the classrooms, adult teaching, learning, and collaboration continue. Scarsdale teachers participate in curriculum development and program improvement work throughout the summer.

This important work takes many shapes but generally falls into the three categories of alignment, innovation, and integration.

Not surprisingly, much of the work has to do with curriculum alignment up through the grades and instructional cohesion across the grades. This focus reflects our value on the development of common languages, consistency in differentiated supports, purposefully spiraled curriculum, and research-based instructional practices. Topics range from the planning of early phonics instruction to the coordination of a sixth-grade orientation to the alignment of Advanced Topics course work at the High School.

Many teachers are working on the development of innovations in their classrooms, grade levels, and schools. These projects include the piloting and exploration of new resources, engaging methodologies, creative tools, and alternate assessments. Some of Scarsdale's most successful work in technology, sustainability, design-thinking, mindset, wellness, and entrepreneurship has emerged from these summer projects, and has been supported, shared, and in several cases scaled up.

Our work on the development and delivery of integrated lessons and units of study reflects real life situations: rarely are we presented with problems that fit into neat academic categories. The skills we have developed in math, science, reading, writing, social studies, technology, world language, social-emotional learning, and the arts are often called upon in various combinations. Several teachers are revising and adapting lessons that integrate two or more content areas. Exciting lessons are planned that will combine robotics and literacy, numeracy and writing, graphic novels and art, engineering and

social studies, inquiry and social justice, and music and art, to name a few.

At the heart of this work is the collaboration between teachers who are engaging across grades, disciplines, schools, and levels. Through the ongoing and collective critical revision of our curriculum, we energize our teaching and improve our outcomes for students. And so, yes, this motivates us to spend a few less days poolside...and a few more days diving into the joys of what we do.

"If you are planning for a year, sow rice. If you are planning for a decade, plant trees. If you are planning for a lifetime, educate people." - Chinese Proverb

Retiring Teachers Leave A Legacy

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



A Scarsdale Education for Tomorrow, or SET 2.0, represents a collection of deeply-held values and approaches that, when realized, creates the foundation for our students to be "effective, independent contributors in a democratic society and an interdependent world."

In thinking about the group of teachers who are retiring this year, I have been imagining what the experience a student might have had throughout her Scarsdale experience if she encountered each of these teachers and leaders across grade levels and schools. Would that student leave Scarsdale High School with the foundation we envision for her? The answer is yes - the educators who are retiring this year and whom we honored at the Board of Education meeting on June 10th collectively embody the SET 2.0 experience.

This imaginary student would have had teachers and leaders who understand the imperative of educating the *whole child*; she would have teachers who believe in the importance of fostering a *love of learning*, and hands-on opportunities to engage in *non-sibi* events. This student would have been challenged through *Interdisciplinary* activities with *global connections*, and to embrace the essential through-lines of *wellness* and *sustainability* by experiencing the garden, and practicing mindfulness as an intentional strategy, among other things. She would have had opportunities to be a maker and doer, a design thinker and problem-solver; a computational thinker, and a collaborator with peers and professionals alike.

The educators we celebrated that night describe the experience of working in Scarsdale as a privilege, full of challenges to be sure, but full of opportunity as well. They seized the opportunities for professional growth that emerged throughout their careers - often finding the right learning opportunity at just the right time to revisit, revise, and reimagine teaching and learning in ways large and small. These educators leveraged those resources to continually ensure that their passion for students and subject remained front and center. They depart having modeled high expectations and a capacity for reinvention for those of us remaining, and for future Scarsdale teachers and leaders. Congratulations, and thank you for your many contributions!

Here is the Honor Roll:

Larry Chatzinoff

Cheryl Higgins

Scott Houseknecht

Katherine Krahl
Deborah Krisanda
Lisa Onofri
Stephen Rambone
Linda Rich
Marjorie Ross
Craig Sherman
Elizabeth Ungar



Sliding Into Summer

By Eric Rauschenbach, Director of Special Education and Student Services

The rising crescendo of student excitement and the haggard look of both teachers and administrators can only mean one thing: summer approaches. Pools, beaches, relaxation, and no homework is on every student's mind. Summer is a vital time for kids to recharge, experience social growth, and play; they are less scheduled (hopefully) and get a chance to direct themselves a bit more than when they are at school.

However, many parents worry about the summer slide, especially in reading, and for students where learning doesn't come as easily. Research is mixed on the summer slide; all studies are in agreement that kids lose some of their achievement in reading over the summer, but the studies range anywhere from 5 to 30 percent of achievement and have conflicting conclusions about what it correlates to. As with most things, the amount of slide that a child will experience is dependent on many factors. Some regression is inevitable, but some simple strategies can keep the summer slide to a minimum.

Each child is different and there is no one size fits all for summer (dare I say it) learning. In most cases, there is no need for formalized programs focused solely on academics. Students do, however, need to continue reading through the summer. Especially on the elementary level, reading skills are not so solidified that students can go for long stretches without practice.

So how do you get kids to read in the summer without making it the defining battle of July and August? Set expectations, but give kids a voice in how to fulfill them. Kids should be reading a few times a week at minimum; however, it really doesn't matter what they read as long as it is on a level that is comfortable for them (summer is not the time for introducing challenging reading.) Traditional books, graphic novels, video game tutorials, mad libs, or anything else that has words is good! One of the most powerful ways to get kids to buy in is by giving them "carte blanche" in the library or bookstore to make their own choices.

Successful strategies often involve routine. Set times or a regular activity are easier to maintain than trying to fit it in ad hoc. For my family, summer involves trips to our cabin most weekends, and our expectation is that there will be no electronics in the car: we read instead (all of us, except the driver!) The rule includes any trips we take while we are there (everything is at least 20 minutes away.) It may not seem like a lot, but it adds up. While this works for us, there are many other ways to do it. Early morning or bedtime routines are really powerful, especially if you incentivize a little later bedtime in the summer with 20 minutes of daily reading (they don't need to read right before bed either.)

However, the most effective way to get your kids reading in the summer is to model the behavior. While summer slide research is fairly divergent, research that correlates student reading achievement to parental reading habits is incontrovertible.

Below are a couple of links to summer reading ideas. Happy beach reading!!

<https://growingbookbybook.com/summer-reading-ideas/>

<https://imaginationsoup.net/free-summer-reading-programs-kids/>

Summer Work on Facilities and Bond Projects

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



As the school year winds down, construction and renovation work gears up, particularly on the 2018 Bond Projects, with many completing the bid and contract award process this spring.

At Greenacres, swiftly following that last dismissal bell, crews will come in and start on interior renovations, and staging the area along Huntington Avenue where the addition will be constructed. In preparation, the Greenacres Construction Safety Committee has been reviewing renovation and construction staging plans and providing guidance with regard to such concerns as student drop off and pick up procedures.

A total of 11 classrooms will be renovated this summer, including new flooring and ceiling work; those classrooms will be ready for the start of school in September. Protective fencing will be installed around the addition construction site and the construction staging area across the street, which will partially cover the asphalt playing area (a necessary compromise in the interest of overall safety). External work on the addition construction will continue throughout the 2019-2020 school year, and is scheduled for completion by late August 2020. Also during summer 2020, the remaining classrooms and other spaces scheduled for renovation will be completed.

Other 2018 Bond projects that will be undertaken and completed during this coming summer include elementary school security vestibules and security cameras, roof replacement at Heathcote, and replacement of two boilers at the High School.

Several other capital improvement projects funded by the school budget that won approval in May are also scheduled to be undertaken this summer. Those include repairing the field access stairway and exterior painting at Fox Meadow; replacement of water heaters at the Middle School's Fountain and Popham houses; and an additional egress door in the Middle School Band Room and HVAC upgrade in the Orchestra Room to remedy the humidity level that has been affecting instrument performance.

In addition, the first phase of the District-wide effort to implement cooling solutions will get underway: air conditioning will be installed in the Fox Meadow and Quaker Ridge libraries, and in the Heathcote pod areas.

And of course, there's the usual maintenance and deep cleaning that takes place every summer. See you in September!



Emergency Mass Communications Now Including Text Messages

By Rachel Moseley, Director of Information Technology

I am pleased to announce that we have made modifications to our emergency mass-communication system (Blackboard Connect) to allow sending of text messages to staff, parents, and high school students.

We have been using Blackboard Connect to send phone and email messages for many years. Just as in the past, we will continue to use Blackboard Connect exclusively for urgent communication, such as messages related to school closings and delays, early dismissals, or security-related concerns. The only change is that going forward, we will send these messages by phone, email, and also by text. Please note that text messages have to be less than 140 characters long. For standard messages, a text might say "Scarsdale Public Schools will be closed today. Please refer to the email from the District for details." In less common situations, the text might simply say "Please refer to your email for a message from the District."

In order for parents or high school students to receive text messages, we need to have the cell phone numbers on record, AND those numbers need to be in the respective Cell Phone fields in our student information system. Please take a few minutes to verify your family members' cell phone numbers via the Campus Portal at www.scarsdaleschools.org/ParentPortal. In the Campus Portal, click Family Members in the left-hand menu to verify and update numbers.

For technical support, you may contact the District's IT Data Services team by email at parentportal@scarsdaleschools.org or by phone at (914) 721-2407.

A Vision For Elementary Libraries

*By Jerry Crisci, Director of Instructional Technology and Innovation, and
Co-Director of the Center for Innovation*



This school year, I was given the additional responsibility of working with our Elementary School Librarians, to help them create a vision that honors their work and outlines a blueprint for the future. The elementary technologies team and the elementary librarians have been collaborating for several years, so it made sense to combine these teams into a Technology and Library Team.

Our new Technology Plan states that "Librarians support the seamless integration of information technology into the development of lifelong learning. The program is aligned with the information fluency standards for student learning developed by the American Association of School Libraries (AASL) and the AASL Standards Framework for Learning."

An important part of our vision is a validation of the role of librarians in a world with increasing digital resources. While students have access to personal and school-owned devices, as well as access to online resources that are not curated by their teacher or school librarian, it is imperative that students

learn to use these resources appropriately, and become critical purveyors of information. This takes a considerable amount of planning with teachers and time to work with students on technology aspects and final projects.

Finally, librarians help students to understand the importance of using reliable sources, including subscription databases that are hosted on each school library's website. These databases contain high quality information that has been vetted and edited by educators and content experts. Students are provided with 24/7 access to these resources via our elementary library websites.

As the increase in technology impacts our consumption of information, the Technology and Library team are looking forward to continuing our work in this important domain.



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