

# InPrint



October 2010 Volume 12.2

The Wappingers Central School District Newsletter



inside

- 1 Letter from the Superintendent
- 3 Letter from the BOE president
- 4 New Appointments
  - WCS D Receives ENERGY STAR Award
  - Gayhead Elementary Wins Grant
- 5 Fourth Grade Summer Institute
  - Van Wyck Junior High Recognized
  - New Staff Listing
- 6 Oak Grove Teacher Recognized
  - RCK Literary Magazine Award
- 7 John Jay - RCK Game Schedule
  - Driver's Ed Program
  - Wappingers Adult Ed Class info
- 8 Fishkill Plains Celebrates Spirit Week
  - News From Vassar/Kinry PTA
- 9 Orchard View Remembers 9-11
- 10 Spotlight on Kathleen Walsh
  - School Bus Safety
  - New look for WCS D Web Site
- 11 One Book, One School VWJHS
  - Student Assistance Program
  - Myers Corners Off to Good Start
- 12 Welcome New Administrative Staff

## Superintendent's Message – October 2010

Dear Residents:



James Parla,  
Superintendent of  
Schools

Summer has ended and once again we find ourselves facing a new school year. This is always a time of renewal and anticipation. We have an opportunity to start fresh, "clean the slate," and perhaps approach things differently. This may be a time for a new beginning, but what does stay constant is our responsibility to educate the children placed in our trust. That's our core purpose and we are ready to welcome our children to our schools. We will continue to provide them with the quality education they require and deserve.

There have been many changes in our administration over the summer. We welcome our new administrators: Marco Pochintesta, Assistant Superintendent for Administration; Kathleen Walsh, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Eleanore DiCioccio, Principal of Orchard View Alternative High School; Sydnie Vasquez, Principal of Myers Corners Elementary School; Bonnie King, Assistant Principal at John Jay High School; Caroline Pidala, Assistant Principal at Roy C. Ketcham High School; and David Seipp, Assistant Coordinator for Physical Education, Health and Athletics. We are currently conducting searches for new principals at John Jay High School and Sheafe Road Elementary School, business manager and director of facilities. More information regarding these wonderful, new administrators is included in this issue of *InPrint* and will be included in future issues.

We will be facing great challenges this year. We

have not experienced any significant relief from the many mandates imposed on us by the state and federal governments. At the same time, we are not getting the level of financial support we require to implement those mandates. Over the past few months, we were hopeful that we would see at least some partial restoration of state aid as the legislature continued to work on the state budget. When the state budget was finally approved, the \$6.1 million cut in funding for our school District remained. I was contacted by the media and asked, "So, now that there will be no restoration of the reduction in state aid, what are you going to do?" I responded, "We will stick to our plan because we built our budget taking into account the full cut in state aid; our plan stands."

And that is important to remember. I know that many people in our educational community felt a great sense of pride when our budget passed by a wide margin this past May. That was a great experience and I thank everyone for supporting our schools. However, we cannot be lulled into a false sense that everything is now fine. It is not. The bud-

*"We will stick to our plan because we built our budget taking into account the full cut in state aid; our plan stands."*

get that was approved contained significant reductions in programs and staff and we are now feeling the effects of that as we begin the new school year. It may sound cliché, but, we do indeed have to "do more with less." Things are going to be a bit tougher than before. The class sizes we are accustomed to will be higher in some cases and services such as the late bus, non-mandated academic intervention services, certain activities and other programs and services will not be available. It's simply not "busi-

*Continued on page 2...*

### Superintendent's Letter

*Continued from page 1...*

ness as usual." All I can do is ask everyone to hang on and do the best that you can. WCSD is made up of amazing people and I am confident that together we will rise to the occasion.

I want to take this opportunity to make a few points about school taxes. The Poughkeepsie Journal just published an article that indicated WCSD's tax rate increased by 15 percent. Please be advised that a tax rate is very different than a tax levy. A tax rate takes into account property assessments and tax ratios that are determined by the individual towns. The tax levy is the total amount to be raised in taxes. The tax levy approved by the Board of Education was exactly as it was presented in our budget, 9.53 percent. Moreover, our estimate of the average school tax increase for homeowners in our school District, \$324, was on target. In fact, in two towns it was lower; E. Fishkill Homestead: \$296; Wappingers Homestead: \$246 and Fishkill Homestead: \$335. Remember, depending on factors such as assessments, some increases will be lower and some higher.

There is some good news regarding resources. I expect that once our independent, annual audit is completed we will see an improvement in our financial condition. Also, a federal bill was passed giving school districts funding to restore teaching positions that were eliminated due to budget cuts. It has been reported that our school District will receive about \$2.8 million to be used over a two year period. However, we do not have final confirmation of that amount nor any details regarding when the funds will arrive or any guidelines regarding implementation. When the particulars are known, I will share them with all of you. Assuming we do get this funding, I plan to recommend to our Board of Education that we use part of it to restore positions and reserve part of it for next year to maintain those positions. After all, we must be mindful that we will be losing our federal Stimulus Funding next year. I also want to mention that New York State

was finally approved for the federal "Race to the Top" initiative. Again, we do not have details about this at this time. Based on the limited information we have, our share may be about \$280,000.

This spring we will see changes in New York State assessments. Revisions will be made in the grade 3 through 8 testing program in English Language Arts and mathematics. Moreover, we all know by now that the state has changed its grading scale for the 2009-2010 tests our students have taken in English language arts and mathematics. These tests are not scored the way typical teacher tests are scored. For example, for a typical test, a student answers correctly 20 of 25 questions and receives a score of 80 percent. In state tests, the number of questions that students answer correctly throughout the state is analyzed, and then the state prepares a table which allows an individual student's results to be labeled as 1 - 4, with 1 being the lowest. The state has made the curve far less generous than previous years with the result being the deflation of student scores all across the state. Because of these changes, it will not be as meaningful to compare scores from the previous year with the same tests last spring. As I wrote in a previous message, the state testing program must be viewed with much skepticism since the same scores can be manipulated to have students pass or fail. We will do our best to explain this to help parents and students understand what the results mean. We must remember that any tests should be used to help our children grow and improve in their learning.

The Board of Education and I have toured our buildings and grounds and we praise our custodial, maintenance and clerical staff for doing a good job in getting our schools ready for opening day. However, it is painfully clear that we need to address our deteriorating infrastructure. Our schools are in need of much refurbishment; windows, doors, flooring, ceilings, lighting, electrical and heating systems, fire alarms, lockers, asphalt paving, brick pointing and more. This must be a priority for all of us. We have a responsibility to properly maintain the buildings and grounds in our school District that belong

to our taxpayers. We must ensure that our buildings and grounds are in good condition to serve future generations of students. Work has already commenced to address this concern. Our Facilities and Operations Committee, consisting of administrators, maintenance personnel and Board Members, Mr. John McMahon (Chair), Mrs. Marilyn Shultz and Mr. John Lumia, have been exploring Performance Contracting which may enable us to complete much needed work that can be paid for from the energy savings realized. In addition, the Board of Education has approved an architectural/engineering firm, Tetra Tech, to complete a Building Condition Survey that must be on file with the State Education Department this January. The Building Condition Survey will consist of an analysis of every school in the District and serve as the foundation for updating our five year facilities plan.

I am pleased to report that our summer school program was successful. Five hundred seventeen students participated in grades 7-12. Our passing rate for grades 9-12 was 90 percent. Just as the program was about to commence, the Board of Education decided to open it to 7th grade students who were scheduled to be retained. This was possible because no additional costs would be incurred due to a lower than expected enrollment in grades 8-12. Twenty-two 7th grade students participated in summer school and 100 percent of them passed and were able to be promoted! All of our 8th grade students also passed and moved on to high school. Congratulations to all the students, teachers, staff, Board of Education and especially Mr. Roger DeHay, summer school principal, on a job well done.

Thanks to Mr. Jeff Behnke, our continuing education coordinator, our new driver education program was launched successfully this summer. One hundred forty-seven students participated in the program, with a completion rate of 100 percent. That means that these students will be better drivers and qualify for significant decreases in their car insurance premiums. The cost of the program

*Continued on page 3..*

## 2010-2011: WCSD a world class school district

Dear Parents, Students, and  
Community Members:

Greetings from your Board of Education!

**W**e are all proud of what the Wappingers Central School District (WCSD) has achieved and we are now looking forward to another successful year.

We are proud of every student and what each young mind has accomplished, whether it is in academics, athletics, or the performing arts.

However, behind each young mind are caring parents/guardians, dedicated educators, support staff, and a community that supports them with their tax dollars.

The WCSD community is strong and has a very rich heritage. With this academic year we will continue our path towards maintaining a world class standard. Our community and our taxpayers continue to look to the Board of Education (BOE) to make WCSD synonymous with *World Class School District*. The desire to be a *World Class School District* starts from the top and permeates throughout the district.

We have a very competent and accomplished leadership team in the WCSD BOE. Each board member brings different skills. Some bring local leadership skills, while others have an international perspective. Some have been educated overseas, while others have traveled to foreign lands to acquire knowledge. This diversity at the

BOE level includes diversity of education, diversity of experience, and diversity of thoughts, only to name a few. The BOE recognizes and utilizes these skill sets in their decision-making process.

We at the BOE not only have a local outlook, but a global perspective as well. We are implementing policies so as to give each child the tools, within the limitation of a public school system, to accomplish to the best of his/her potential.

We understand that we all have to work hard to challenge these young minds and enable each child to take on the competition that awaits him/her, not only in the local market place, but also in the national and global arena.

As taxpayers, parents, and community leaders, we look forward to working with each stakeholder on taking on the local, national, and global challenges, and continue our efforts toward making WCSD a *World Class School District*.

WCSD community deserves the best, so please demand more and we will deliver more.

Thank you! With all best wishes for the new school year!

Aziz Ahsan, Esq.  
*President, WCSD Board of Education*  
wcsd.board@wappingersschools.org

### Superintendent's Letter

...Continued from page 2

was \$375 per student, one of the lowest in surrounding areas. We look forward to continuing this program throughout the school year at no cost to the taxpayers.

There are many curriculum and instruction initiatives underway in our school District. I'm not going to write about all of them. I do want to mention just a few. We are going to map our curriculum so that it is consistent throughout the school District in every subject and at every grade level. Curriculum mapping also ensures that we have a curriculum that is in alignment with state standards and assessments. We will also continue

the implementation of Response to Intervention, a federally mandated process for ensuring we are using research-based instructional strategies to meet the needs of our students. There will be an ongoing emphasis on literacy across all content areas, character education, including anti-bullying strategies, and we will do more to heighten the awareness of students regarding substance abuse.

There is so much more to share and I will do so in future messages. I wish all of you a very enjoyable and successful school year!

James Parla  
*Superintendent of Schools*

### WAPPINGERS SCHOOLS

#### Elementary Schools

Brinckerhoff.....	897-6800
Evans.....	298-5240
Fishkill.....	897-6780
Fishkill Plains.....	227-1770
Gayhead.....	227-1756
Kinry Road.....	463-7322
Myers Corners.....	298-5260
Oak Grove.....	298-5280
Sheafe Road.....	298-5290
Vassar Road.....	463-7860

#### Secondary Schools

Van Wyck JHS.....	227-1700
Wappingers JHS.....	298-5200
John Jay HS.....	897-6700
Roy C. Ketcham HS.....	298-5100
Orchard View Alternative HS.....	298-5000

#### WCSD OFFICES 298-5000

167 Myers Corners Road, Suite 200  
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590

#### ADMINISTRATION

<b>Superintendent</b> <b>James Parla</b>
<b>Deputy Superintendent</b> <b>Technology, Testing &amp; Assessments</b> <b>Charles Hill, Ed.D.</b>
<b>Assistant Superintendent</b> <b>Curriculum &amp; Instruction K-12</b> <b>Kathleen Walsh, Ed.D.</b>
<b>Assistant Superintendent</b> <b>Administration</b> <b>Marco Pochintesta</b>
<b>Director/Special Education &amp; Student Services</b> <b>Johanna Hudak</b>
<b>Business Manager</b> <b>Michele Moloney</b>
<b>Director/Human Resources</b> <b>Joanne Sereda</b>

#### BOARD OF EDUCATION

<b>President</b> <b>Aziz Ahsan, Esq.</b>
<b>Vice-President</b> <b>Wendy McNamara</b>
<b>Trustees</b> <b>Lori Jiava</b> <b>John Lumia</b> <b>Mary McGeary</b> <b>John McMahon</b> <b>Ramesh Babu Nandi</b> <b>Marilynn Shultz</b> <b>Versie Walker</b>

#### In Print: WCSD Newsletter

**Editor:** Susan Penney  
**Designer:** Diane Volk-Sommer  
  
Produced in cooperation with the  
Dutchess BOCES  
Public Information Service

### New Appointments as of September 27

Two new administrators were announced at the most recent Board of Education meeting.



Jim Daley  
PRINCIPAL  
SHEAFE ROAD  
ELEMENTARY

Jim Daley, has been working as the sixth grade House Principal at Van Wyck Junior High School for the past

five years. Prior to that he was a teacher and assistant principal in the Poughkeepsie Middle School.



Dwight Bonk  
PRINCIPAL  
JOHN JAY HIGH  
SCHOOL

Dwight Bonk will take his position as Principal at John Jay High School on October 12th. Bonk is the Acting

Principal at Arlington High School. He served respectively as house principal, assistant principal, and social studies teacher at Arlington High School.

He holds a Bachelors of Science in Education from State University of New York College at Buffalo, Masters of Science in Education from State University of New York College at Buffalo, Certificate of Advanced Study from State University of New York College at New Paltz. He holds Graduate Fellowship from the Institute for Educational Leadership, Educational Policy Fellowship Program at Teachers College at Columbia University, and a Doctorate of Education Candidate, Saint John Fisher College at the College of New Rochelle.

## WCSD receives ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year Award

For the past 23 months, the Wappingers Central School District has been implementing a rigorous energy savings program with the guidance of Energy Education, a company that specializes in people-driven energy conservation for school districts, universities, colleges, and large churches. Energy Education provides training and expertise to the District's energy manager, Jill Matera. In 2009 and 2010, WCSD received the ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year award from the United States Environmental Protection Agency.



We determined to undertake this conservation effort because energy costs are rising and our utility costs and the operation of our plant are second only to salaries and benefits in our annual budget.

Energy Education has a national record of reducing energy costs for districts like ours. In fact, they guarantee savings. Our goal was simple, yet challenging: Dramatically reduce our energy consumption and therefore the cost of our utilities without affecting the comfort of our schools and classrooms. I am pleased to report our efforts are succeeding and we are realizing significant financial savings.

Since our conservation program began, our District has saved over \$880,000. That amount is equal to this year's budget for 12,570 textbooks. We have literally cut our energy consumption by 21.5 percent. We have done this by improving the way our equipment runs, following a set of guidelines designed to make everyone aware of how we use energy, and educating students and staff on the benefits of energy conservation. And we expect these savings to grow as we further refine our pro-

gram. But it's more than financial savings. We are helping preserve the environment. According to the EPA, our decrease in energy use is the equivalent of taking 640 cars off our local roads or planting 91, 212 trees in our community.

Our energy conservation program has been so successful we were recently notified that seven schools in the Wappingers Central School District have received the prestigious ENERGY STAR Label from the federal government's ENERGY STAR Program. The Wappingers schools that received the

ENERGY STAR Label include John Jay High School, Roy C. Ketcham High School, Van Wyck Junior High, Myers Corners Elementary, Oak Grove Elementary, Sheafe Road Elementary, and Brinckerhoff Elementary. To be recognized with an ENERGY STAR Label, school buildings must rate in the top 25 percent nationwide for energy efficiency.

We are honored by ENERGY STAR's recognition of our conservation success. Our District's sense of accomplishment is gratifying. Our teachers, staff, school board, and especially our Facilities and Operations Department deserve a lot of credit for committing to this program and making it successful.

Each of you played a role in our success and I ask that you continue to be part of our conservation team.

Our efforts will continue through the future because our taxpayers, teachers, parents, and students deserve to see every dollar possible sent to the classroom.

Jill Matera,  
Energy Educator/Manager

## Gayhead Elementary music department receives grant

Gayhead Elementary School is kicking off the new school year with a little something extra for its students. A \$500 grant from Allstate Insurance Company has been awarded to the Music Department at Gayhead to be used to purchase teaching supplies or materials, which will directly benefit the Gayhead students. Jeanette Heredia-Wilkinson, a Gayhead parent and an Allstate employee, applied for the grant and won. Raymond Wilkinson is a student at Gayhead, and when asked by his mom where at Gayhead he'd like the award to be directed, Ray said he wanted the music teachers to use it to bring an even better music experience to the kids at his school. Many thanks to both Raymond and his mom!

## Around The Schools: Honors, Awards and Announcements

### Fourth grade Summer Institute

This summer, we welcomed back our ELA curriculum mapping consultant, Jeanne Tribuzzi. Tribuzzi spent the past four summers with us, mapping out our K-3, ELA skills, adding fourth-grade skills this year. Our WCSSD fourth-grade instructional staff, (reading/AIS teachers, ESL and special education teachers, and teacher assistants) spent time developing what a fourth-grade program should look like, creating a consistent model for Wappingers; what kids should know at the end of fourth grade, unwrapping the



Fourth Grade Summer Institute took place on Aug. 2-6 at Ketcham High School

standards, creating time lines and curriculum maps for ELA. Topics of discussion included literacy in the content area, assessments, benchmarks and standards for achievement, AIS utilization, interventions and classroom management, communicating progress, and report card indicators. It was a highly engaging and productive week that will be followed up throughout the year with WCSSD ELA Coordinator Dana Brown. Brown will continuously revise, build upon and fully implement the summer institute work for the literacy benefit of our Wappingers students.

Dana Brown,  
District Coordinator for English Language Arts K-12/ Social Studies K-6

### Van Wyck Junior High School recognized as a New York State "Essential Elements: Rising School to Watch"

Following an extensive three-month application process in addition to a two-day site visit by representatives of the New York State Education Department, Van Wyck Junior High School officials received notification that their school is being recognized as a New York State "Essential Elements: Rising School to Watch." As David Steiner, Commissioner of the New York State Education Department commented, "This designation is reserved for schools that closely approach the implementation of all 37 of the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform criteria for exemplary middle schools as well as adhere to the Regents Policy Statement on Middle Level Education."

Through faculty, staff and administrators adherence to the Regents Policy Statement on Middle Level Education, the Essential Elements of a Standards Focused Middle Level School, and the National Forum's School-to-Watch criteria, the school has developed an educational program that is a model in New York State. Van Wyck Junior High School closely models the core characteristic of developmental responsiveness, academic excellence, social equity, as well as the organization structure and process vital to the success of young people across the globe.

New York State's Education Commissioner David Steiner, along with Dutchess BOCES District Superintendent John C. Pennoyer, congratulated Principal Steve Shuchat and the exemplary staff at Van Wyck for the hard work and dedication to the children of the WCSSD and its community.

### Welcome New Staff for 2010-2011 (Board Appointments)

#### District Office:

Anne Brino - Internal Claims Officer  
Michelle Strand - Personnel Associate  
Laura Weinert - Account Clerk Typist

#### Evans Elementary School

Maria Rigby - RPN  
Alice Rahema - Teaching Assistant

#### Fishkill Plains Elementary School

Helen Duffy - Teaching Assistant  
Alice Rahema - Teaching Assistant

#### Gayhead Elementary School

Anthony Russo - PE Teacher

#### John Jay High School

Kyle Pogemiller - Music Teacher  
Sharon Dinneny - Teaching Assistant  
Estelle Listner - Teaching Assistant

#### Orchard View Alternative High School

Eleanore DiCioccio - Principal

#### Roy C. Ketcham High School

Mary Beth Rossetti - Library Media Specialist  
Lisa Scaraville - Science Teacher

#### Sheafe Road Elementary School

Angelina Navarra - School Psychologist

#### Van Wyck Jr. High School

Danice-Calud Desir - Music Teacher  
Marlene Delanoy - Teaching Assistant

#### Wappingers Junior High School

Lisa Marcojohn - Health Aide Typist

#### Main Garage

John Burke - Hourly Bus Driver  
Felix Pagan - Hourly Bus Driver  
Edward Wendolski - Hourly Bus Driver

## Oak Grove Elementary teacher receives recognition from White House

The National Medal of Science was established in 1959 by the 86th Congress as a Presidential Award to be given to individuals "deserving of special recognition by reason of their outstanding contributions to knowledge in the physical, biological, mathematical, or engineering sciences." In 1980, Congress augmented the list to include social and behavioral sciences. It is our nation's highest honor for American scientists and engineers.

Since its creation, the National Medal of Science has been awarded to 458 distinguished scientists and engineers whose careers spanned decades of research and development. Nominations are accepted by all sources, but must meet a list of criteria, including three letters of reference. A committee of 12 scientists and engineers is appointed by the president to evaluate the nominees for the award.

As President Obama proclaims his commitment to reforming the nation's struggling education system, he realizes that the work begins as a co-creative process between teachers and students on all levels, especially commencing in the early years. Last spring, Oak Grove teacher Caitlin McCabe and her class were chosen to be highlighted on the White House Web site because of her innovative approach to teaching. McCabe and her fifth-grade class created their own unique Medal of Science Award as a class project in order to promote interest in the sciences and keep

students engaged in learning. McCabe's students researched and learned about many different famous scientists and decided who they thought deserved the National Medal of Science Award, and subsequently drafted a formal nomination. It was prepared and presented as though it was to be submitted to the National Science Foundation (NSF).

McCabe was very excited with the process, and actually contacted and submitted the nominations to the NSF. Mayra Montrose, the program manager at NSF, answered all of the children's nomination letters and presented NSF patches and rulers to each student.

The children in McCabe's classroom chose the top three winners: first place, Ralph Baer (the father of video games); second place, Walt Disney; third place, Hippocrates.

Included on the White House Web site is the lesson plan developed by McCabe, nomination letters written by the children, and Montrose's letters back to the children. For further information please visit: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2010/04/28/room-18-national-medal-science>.

The White House wanted to make her innovative idea accessible to people across America as an example to inspire them to create their own unique concepts.



This photo of Ms. Caitlin McCabe's 2009-2010 fifth grade class at Oak Grove Elementary School shows some of the posters the students created as well as the letters and patches they received from the National Science Foundation.

## RCK Odyssey Literary Magazine wins award

RCK Odyssey Literary Magazine has been named a "Gold Medalist" magazine by the Columbia Scholastic Press Association, which conducts an annual contest to recognize superior efforts in literary magazines, yearbooks, and school newspapers. Last year, *Odyssey* expanded its efforts and produced three literary magazines instead of one. The first issue, *The Other Side*, solicited material via a writing and art contest. The second issue, *The Gold Issue*, represented the best works, both academic and creative, submitted for class assignments. Each English teacher from RCK selected his or her two

best pieces for publication in the magazine. The final issue, *Journey*, was comprised of pieces submitted by students. Student editors Jackie Victoria and Larry Barette made the final issue into a show piece. The Odyssey Literary Magazine's Advisor is Teresa Sutton, RCK English teacher.

Congratulations to English teachers and students at Roy C. Ketcham High School for winning the Gold Medalist distinction.

## High School Athletics

### John Jay-RCK Games for the Fall 2010

**10/7** Boys JV Soccer  
@ John Jay 4:30 p.m.

**10/8** Field Hockey  
@ John Jay Varsity- 4:15 p.m.,  
JV- 5:45 p.m.

**10/14** Boys JV Soccer  
@ RCK 4:30 p.m.

**10/15** Girls JV Soccer  
@ John Jay 4:15 p.m.

Girls Varsity Soccer  
@ RCK 4:15 p.m.

Girls Swimming  
@ Mt. St. Mary's College  
3:30 p.m.

Volleyball @ RCK Varsity-  
4 p.m., JV- 5:30 p.m.

**10/16** Football- JV Game  
@ John Jay 9:30 a.m.

Football- Varsity Game  
@ RCK 1:30 p.m.

**\*\*\*All games subject to change. For up to date info please visit the Athletics Web page.\*\*\***

**REMINDER:** There are no late buses this year. Parents are responsible for arranging transportation from practices and all after-school activities.

For the most current athletic schedules and directions to athletic events please visit:

[www.wappingersschools.org](http://www.wappingersschools.org)

Click on "Athletics" under "Quick Links."

## WCSD Continuing Education

# Wappingers Community School

**Jeffrey Behnke, Coordinator 298-5000 ext. 130**

**Kathy Theiller, Secretary 298-5000 ext. 137**

## DACE BROCHURE NOW ON THE WEB

The DACE brochure will no longer appear in printed form. Beginning with FALL 2010, all course offerings for adult education programs in Dutchess County can be found on the new DACE Web site: [DutchessContinuingEd.org](http://DutchessContinuingEd.org).

**DACE Web site: [DutchessContinuingEd.org](http://DutchessContinuingEd.org).**

## New driver's education program a tremendous success

Wappingers Central School District is offering a driver's education program again after a 30-year respite. Jeff Behnke, coordinator of the WCSD Drivers Education Department, said the course was originally cut years ago due to budget constraints. However, on February 22, 2010, the NYS Department of Motor Vehicles issued mandatory requirements for students who wish to obtain their senior driver's license at the age of 17. Behnke and Superintendent of Schools James Parla thought it was the right time to revive the program for convenience to students and parents. The District has contracted with the American Driving Academy (ADA) of Hopewell Junction to provide the in-car portion of the program to its students.

Two driver's education sessions were offered during the summer that proved to be successful. A 16-week fall session began on September 10. The fee for a full session is \$375, which includes a 90-minute classroom lecture and a 90-minute driving experience for each class session. All students must reside within the Wappingers School District boundaries, be at least 16 years of age, and have a NYS learner's permit. Attendance for all sessions is mandatory in order to be eligible for the senior license. Behnke remarks, "We are very excited to offer this program to our high school students. Initially, 48-hours of instruction may seem like a large commitment but the benefits to the students who learn to drive properly will not only save them money but could be life-saving as well."

New York State is one of the 46 states that has adopted a three-stage Graduated Driver's License (GDL) law. You may read about specific requirements at <http://www.nydmv.state.ny.us/youngerdriver/gradLicense.htm>.

Young, inexperienced drivers, particularly 16-to 17-year-olds, die too often in fatal crashes, in large part because of immaturity and inexperience. Three-stage GDL laws reduce these factors by reducing high-risk exposure for young drivers. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration analysis, GDL laws have helped reduce crashes for this age group anywhere between 20 and 40 percent.

Ongoing classes will be offered, with a new session planned for early February 2011. Information will be posted on the WCSD Web site at the end of November. A course application, as well as additional information, is available at [www.wappingersschools.org](http://www.wappingersschools.org) by clicking on the "Driver's Education" link on the left. This course does not result in high school credit.

# Fishkill Plains PTA held School Spirit Week

Fishkill Plains PTA sponsored School Spirit Week, which took place September 27 - October 1. The "Kick-off Kickball Game" was planned for the evening of the 27th, but due to rain was held on October 1. Three teachers volunteered to help coordinate the teams.

Last spring the PTA held a teacher wiffle ball game on the evening of the budget vote. That game generated such a great response from both students and parents, and therefore we thought this would be a great way to boost enthusiasm for our school spirit week. Teachers played against teachers with our students and staff cheering them on! A big "thank you" to all the teachers whose participation made this event a huge success!

Early in September each classroom teacher received a banner kit. This kit consisted of materials that the teachers and their students used to create a "Spirit Banner" to represent their individual class. During School Spirit Week, the banners were collected and displayed in our all purpose room.

There was a different theme for each day of the week.

**Monday:** School spirit/School colors day

**Tuesday:** Crazy hair day

**Wednesday:** Mix-match day

**Thursday:** Pajama day

**Friday:** Hawaiian day

On Friday, October 1st, we completed out our School Spirit Week with an ice cream social, and the beautiful, creative banners were on display for children and parents to see.

Jessica Lacalamita,  
Fishkill Plains PTA President

# News from Vassar/ Kinry PTA

**O**n August 26, the Vassar/Kinry PTA hosted the Newcomers Picnic, welcoming new families to Vassar Road School. Students got a chance to meet teachers, see their classroom and make new friends before the start of the school year. On the first day of school, when kindergartners attended for an hour to get used to the classroom and take a trial bus ride, PTA also made them feel at home by providing a snack and juice and giving parents a poem to remind them of the special day.

The entire Kinry Road School population were treated to snow cones on Friday, September 17, compliments of the Vassar/Kinry PTA. The snow cones were given to students as a "welcome back" gift from the PTA and the kids loved it!

Vassar Road School will have its annual Grandparent's Breakfast on October 27 and 28. This popular event, hosted by the PTA, has drawn well over 300 people for the past several years and is one of the highlights of the school year. Students join their grandparents or "special friends" for breakfast in the school cafeteria for a hot meal supplied by the kitchen staff and served by PTA volunteers. After eating, the students can show the grandparents their classrooms before starting the school day! At the same time, our PTA holds its Scholastic Book Fair so grandparents can purchase books for the children, which also helps support the PTA.

On another note, I'd like to announce that the Vassar/Kinry PTA newsletter, WildKat News, has been selected as the "Best Newsletter" in the Taconic Region! Congratulations to our Editor, Liz Vilato. The WildKat News has been submitted for review at the National PTA Meetings to be held this October.

Laura Reilly, President, Vassar/Kinry PTA

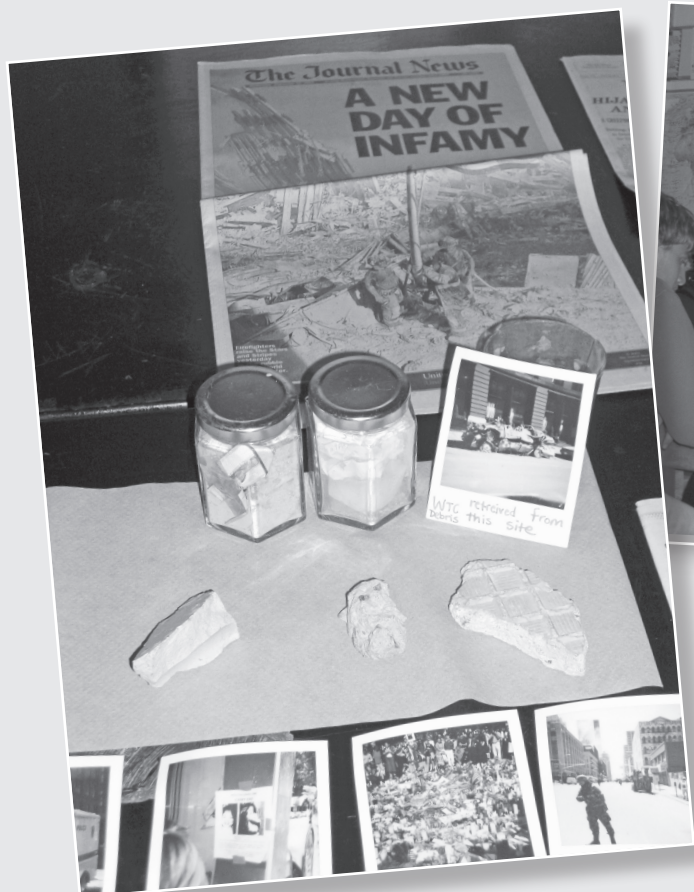


## Important District announcement regarding Megan's Law

"... From time to time local law enforcement officials will notify the District when an individual with a history of sex offenses against a child is being paroled or released into the community. Upon written request to the principal, notification will be provided by the principal to the community members who have made the request of the fact that such an individual has been paroled or released into the community. Requests for particulars about the individual being released will be referred, at the request of local law enforcement, to the hotline number or the Web site provided . . ."  
1-800-262-3257 ([www.criminaljustice.state.ny.us/nsor/index/htm](http://www.criminaljustice.state.ny.us/nsor/index/htm))



## Orchard View Remembers 9-11

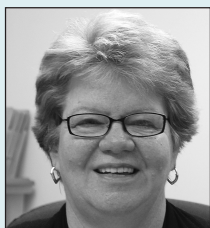


Orchard View Alternative High School vows to never forget 9/11. On Friday, September 10, 2010, much of the school day at Orchard View was centered on the observance of the ninth anniversary of the terrorist attacks on America. The day began with a full assembly in which Principal DiCioccio and social studies teacher James Phelan, addressed the students with some words of remembrance for all who lost their lives nine years ago. Principal DiCioccio led the school in the Pledge of Allegiance, and Phelan's remarks included a memorable concept "... as the years go by, our incoming students will have little to no memory of the attacks. For us who lived through 9/11, we have the obligation of keeping the memory alive indefinitely." Then Phelan presided over a moment of silence. Later

in the day, Phelan hosted class groups in his room to watch *Witness to 9/11*, a famous documentary that was filmed by the French Naudet brothers who were at the World Trade Center that fateful morning. The observances continued the following day when Nicholas Perino, science teacher at Orchard View, brought in some artifacts from 9/11 to show staff and students. These artifacts included several newspapers from 9/11 and the following days, pieces of concrete and an office paper from "7 World Trade Center", obtained when Perino visited Ground Zero on September 16, 2001. Hopefully, this type of observance will always be part of the beginning of the school year. We must never forget.

By Nicholas Perino

## Spotlight on Kathleen Walsh, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction K-12



Kathleen Walsh, Ed.D.

Dr. Kathleen Walsh comes to the WCSD with a number of years of educational experience under her belt. She began her teaching career in a private school with eight years experience teaching grades 4 - 8. She then moved into the NYC school system where she worked as a teacher, staff developer, assistant principal, and principal. Her assignment before WCSD was as principal of Memorial Junior High School in the Valley Stream section of Long Island. Walsh also taught education classes on the undergraduate and graduate level at Brooklyn College and St. John's University.

During her first month at WCSD, she had the opportunity to meet with the administrative team, building principals, support staff members, and some parents. Her impression of the community is that it is a caring one, committed to the education of all students and dedicated to making the District a *World Class School District*. She is very excited to have the opportunity to work with such high caliber of professionals and to help strengthen and highlight the talent found in the WCSD schools.

Walsh is honored to be part of an administrative team that truly has the best interest of all students at heart. She looks forward to being actively involved in all aspects of the WCSD learning community and sharing her skills and talents for the good of the District.

## New look for the WCSD Web site

Over the summer the Wappingers Central School District Web site ([www.wappingersschools.org](http://www.wappingersschools.org)) underwent a renovation to improve its functionality for users of the site as well as those who update it regularly.

The new look was designed to combine the school colors of our two high schools, Roy C. Ketcham and John Jay. Each Wappingers school and each department will have pages with similar layouts but each will be able to customize their own pages to best meet the needs and interests of their parents, students and staff.

This project was undertaken to improve consistency between pages, to provide more Web pages to more groups and to increase options available to teachers, many of whom use Web pages to interact with their students outside the classroom.

Some highlights of the new look include the *Parent Portal*, which can be found under the "Parent" heading at the top of the home page. The *Parent Portal* is the District's way of providing parents and guardians with secure online access to information about their child such as emergency contacts, daily attendance, schedules, progress reports, and report cards. This year *Parent Portal* will only be available to parents and guardians of students in grades 6-12. Parents and guardians of students in grades K-5 will begin having access at the start of the 2011-2012 school year. For more information on how to get an account, parents and guardians should visit the *Parent Portal* Web page under the "Parent" heading at [www.wappingersschools.org](http://www.wappingersschools.org).

The new Web site has been up and running since August 16, 2010, but managing its content will be an on-going process. Stay tuned to [www.wappingersschools.org](http://www.wappingersschools.org) to see daily information updates.

## School bus rules and safety tips

As your professional school transportation provider, we want to make sure that your child's trip to and from school is safe and enjoyable. We all play a role in achieving this goal. In order to get your child to school safely, on-time, and ready to learn, it is important that your child understands the school bus safety rules. Please discuss the rules listed below with your child.

- Stay in your seat
- Keep noise level down
- Keep head, hands and feet inside the bus
- Don't throw things inside the bus or out of the windows
- No eating or drinking on the bus
- Keep the bus clean
- No smoking or tobacco use on the bus
- Don't be destructive; respect your bus and the property of fellow students
- Be courteous
- Cooperate with the bus driver
- Remember the "I See You, You See Me Rule"—As students enter or exit a bus they must move to and/or from a safe distance (15 feet away from the bus). It is important that the driver can always keep students in sight.
- Students must approach the bus in the "safety zone" (the area in a direct visual line to the door).
- Do not try to get anything you left on the bus after you have already exited. We will do our best to ensure that personal property is returned
- Do not try to pick up anything dropped underneath the bus – property can be replaced, children cannot!
- Always follow the driver's directions about crossing the street. Be alert—look both ways!
- Always walk in front of the bus!

If you have any questions about school transportation please feel free to call us at 845-298-5225.

## Van Wyck JHS Initiates a One Book, One School Program

An anti-bullying initiative is underway in many schools throughout the country. With the increased need to improve literacy skills nationwide on the forefront of education and to promote the anti-bullying initiative, I decided that it would be a great idea to incorporate reading a fiction book about bullying as a *One Book, One School Program*. I approached my Principal, Steve Shuchat, with the idea and he was interested in moving forward with it. I also approached Cassie Horton, reading specialist at WJHS, with the idea and WJHS will initiate the program as well.

The notion of the *One Book Program* was originally created as a *One Book One Community Program* by public librarians to increase literacy community-wide within generally urban areas. The idea of the program is to engage community members of all ages to read one chosen literary selection. With the *One Book One School Program*, we are engaging all students, faculty, staff and administrators in a school community to read. All levels of "readers" will share their own personal insights as to what they gathered from the book. With the act of bul-

lying being such a huge issue, it made sense to make a literary selection that would incorporate this topic.

The book chosen is called *Egghead* by Caroline Pignat. The book describes several 9th graders as the protagonists: Will (the bullied), Shane (the bully) Katie (the nice girl who tries to befriend Will), and Devan (an unwilling part of Shane's bullyboy team). The teens are struggling to deal with life in general, how not to be a bystander to bullying, how to stand up for your friends, and how to deal with rage that can be all consuming.

Each ELA teacher in the building will be given a copy of the book and will read the book aloud to students during the first part of ELA classes. Students will discuss the book in class and then will share their ideas with other classes on the Van Wyck JHS *One Book One School* wiki. Once everyone has read the book, Van Wyck and WJHS will videoconference. An author videoconference is also planned.

Aileen Basuljevic, *School Librarian*  
Van Wyck Junior High School

## Orchard View Adds Student Assistance Program

Orchard View Alternative School has added the Student Assistance Program to its array of support services for the 2010-2011 school year. The service will be available at the school on Monday of each week. Tara Prockter is the Student Assistance Counselor assigned to Orchard View for this program. Prockter also assists Wappingers Junior High School on Tuesday morning and Roy C. Ketcham High School on Wednesday through Friday of each week.

Susan Feeney is the Student Assistance Counselor at Van Wyck Junior High School on Monday (all day) as well as Tuesday morning. Feeney will be at John Jay High School on Wednesday through Friday of each week.

Student Assistance is based upon the *Project Success Model*, which is recognized by the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (NYS OASAS) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) as an evidence-based research intervention for at-risk youth.

The Student Assistance Program is sponsored by the Council on Addiction Prevention and Education of Dutchess County, Inc. (CAPE). CAPE is an OASAS accredited prevention education and counseling agency. The Wappingers Central School District and CAPE have been partners in prevention since 1987.

For further information regarding this and other prevention programs, as well as information and referral for substance related issues contact CAPE at 845-471-0194. To reach Feeney and Prockter, please see the contact information below.

Susan Feeney LMHC, CASAC-T,  
Student Assistance Counselor  
John Jay High School: 845-897-6700  
Van Wyck Junior High School: 845-227-1700

Tara Prockter LCSW-R,  
Student Assistance Counselor  
Roy C. Ketcham High School: 845-298-5100  
Wappingers Junior High School: 845-298-5200  
Orchard View Alternative School: 845-298-5000

## Myers Corners Elementary School off to a good start

Myers Corners Elementary got off to a wonderful beginning under the direction of new principal Sydnie Vasquez. One of the highlights of the new year was welcoming a new crop of kindergarten students to the Myers Corners family. Over the summer students came in for a picnic to become familiar with the school. The new kindergartners played on the playground, sat down and enjoyed lunch with their new friends and got to meet their teachers.

Vasquez read a story to the students titled "The Bucket Filler." The book encourages good character development, something very important at Myers Corners Elementary School. It was a wonderful day and it was extremely helpful in transitioning these new students into the school.

Thanks to supportive parents and the picnic that was held over the summer, the first day of school went smoothly for the new students.

## Welcome New Wappingers CSD Staff!



Dr. Kathleen Walsh  
ASSISTANT  
SUPERINTENDENT -  
CURRICULUM

**Kathleen Walsh, Ed.D.**, is honored and thrilled to be WCSD's new Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. She comes to the District with a strong background in education spanning time with the NYC school system as well as serving on Long Island. She worked as a classroom teacher, librarian, assistant principal and principal of both a high school and middle school. Walsh holds a Bachelor of Arts in Child Study from St. Joseph's College, a Master of Science in Education

from webpage University, a Professional Diploma in School District Administration from the College of New Rochelle, an MLS from St. John's University as well as a Doctorate in Education from St. John's. She is very excited about working with the talented staff of the WCSD and becoming an active member of the community.



Marco Pochintesta  
ASSISTANT  
SUPERINTENDENT -  
ADMINISTRATION

**Marco Pochintesta** was Principal of John Jay Senior High School prior to his new post. He has held this position for two years. Expected transition date to new position as Assistant Superintendent for Administration is October 1. Pochintesta worked in the Arlington Central School District as a house principal from 2005 until 2008. Prior to that, he worked in schools in NYC for 17 years as a teacher, assistant principal, and principal. Education: BA Fordham University; MA Lehman

College; MS College of New Rochelle; currently enrolled in the Doctoral Program in Education at Manhattanville College.



David Seipp  
ASSISTANT  
COORDINATOR -  
ATHLETICS

**David Seipp** is the new Assistant Coordinator for Physical Education and Interscholastic Athletics. He is a graduate of the Wappingers School District. Prior to returning home to Wappingers, he served as the Physical Education, Health, and Director of Athletics at Our Lady of Lourdes High School. He also coached several varsity teams over the past ten years at Lourdes. Seipp is eager to represent Wappingers Central School District in Section 1, where he has been a member of the

Sportsmanship Committee on which he hopes to continue. Sportsmanship is something that Seipp holds in high priority. He believes that this is where we can have the greatest impact on developing the character of our future.



Caroline Pidala  
SECONDARY  
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL  
RCK HIGH SCHOOL

**Caroline Pidala** is very excited to be the new Assistant Principal at Roy C. Ketcham High School. For the past six years, she served the Wappingers Community as a health teacher at Van Wyck Junior High School and taught at Orchard View Alternative High School. Prior to her work in the Wappingers Central School District, she worked in Pelham Union Free School District teaching health. Her teaching experience began at John F. Kennedy High School in Bronx, NY, where she fell in love with the profession. She holds a Bachelors of Science in Health Education from the College of Mount St. Vincent, a Master of Science in Literacy Education for Grades 5-12, and a Master of Science in School Leadership and Administration.

**Bonnie King** is honored to serve as the Assistant Principal of



Bonnie King  
SECONDARY  
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL  
JJ HIGH SCHOOL

Grade 10 at John Jay High School. Prior to this position, she was the teacher in charge of the music and art departments at JJHS and taught choral music, music theory courses, and the music workshop from 2006-2010. King has been a teacher in the WCSD since 1999, working at Sheafe Road Elementary school and Wappinger's Junior High School. Education: Bachelors Degree in Music Education and Performance, Ithaca College, 1998; Masters Degree in Arts Administration, New York University, 2006; Certificate in School Building Leadership, College of St. Rose, 2010.

**Sydney Vasquez** is honored and excited to serve as the new



Sydney Vasquez  
ELEMENTARY  
PRINCIPAL  
MYERS CORNERS

Principal of Myers Corners Elementary School. For the past ten years, she has served as an Assistant Principal at Roy C. Ketcham Senior High School. Prior to her work in the Wappingers Central School District, she served as a School Social Worker in the Hyde Park Central School District. She holds a Bachelors Degree in Social Work from Ramapo College of NJ, Masters Degree in Social Work from Fordham University, and a Certificate of

Advanced Study in Educational Administration and Supervision from State University of New York at New Paltz.