



The West Hempstead Educator

Published by The West Hempstead Union Free School District

Winter 2013

Meetings of the Minds



Superintendent John Hogan and Board of Education President James Mariano led a January roundtable conversation with students in grades 5-12 that resulted in a sharing of issues and ideas. It was the third in a series of Board discussions with district groups.



In 2013, the West Hempstead's proactive Board of Education is prospecting for gold -- in the form of initiating in-depth communication sessions with important groups of district stakeholders. In January, the Board of Education invited students in grades 5-12 to join in a "roundtable" conversation focused on making the district even better. Topics ranged from brightening the school environment, exploring solar power, and increasing electives, to "how-to's" on being successful in class or transitioning to another school, to more cafeteria food options for vegetarians.

Kira Bettineschi, Elizabeth Egey, Samra Farooq, Yeritssy Garcia, Malik Jones, Svetlana Lagos, Amanda Lombardo, Darien Lombardo, Sean Mashburn, Dharana Prasad, Jamie Rodriguez, Angela Roth, Natalia Roberts, Josef Schindler, and Paige Smallwood were the students who participated.

Previous groups with whom the board met included teachers and administrators. Parents are up next!

Dear Community Members:

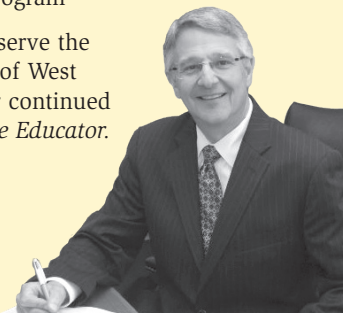
Welcome to the winter edition of *The Educator*. As you know, the school district, much like the city, never sleeps. Inside you will find information pertaining to our students, Board of Education, administrators, faculty members and highlighted programs, activities and events. These include:

- New teachers and Middle School Assistant Principal
- Our student efforts to provide assistance and relief to our neighbors affected by Hurricane Sandy
- The Board-Student Roundtable
- District implementation of Common Core State Standards
- APPR – the new professional evaluation structure
- The district's vocabulary program

As always, it is our pleasure to serve the students and entire community of West Hempstead. Thank you for your continued support of our efforts. Enjoy *The Educator*.

Sincerely,

John J. Hogan
Superintendent of Schools



Important Dates to Save!

More and more residents are becoming involved during the budget planning season. You can be one of them, by attending and participating in upcoming Tuesday meetings held in the High School Video Conference Room at 7:30 p.m.:

March 5 – budget workshop, non-instructional items

March 12 – budget workshop, instructional items

April 16 – adoption of budget

And, the Budget Vote on **May 21**, in the Middle School gym, from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Don't Forget!

West Hempstead's popular annual Family Literacy Night will be held this year on Thursday, February 28 from 6:30 – 8 p.m. at West Hempstead High School. Join in the fun activities!

In 2013, New Staff, Standards, Plans and Pro

Staff Brings Talent and Love of Teaching

Chestnut Street School: Danielle Lazaro, who was raised in a family of teachers and “fell in love with watching children grow,” is teaching kindergarten reading. Lazaro holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Dowling College. She was a classroom teacher and reading specialist for nine years in Lindenhurst. “I want to bring my creativity into the classroom,” says the former dance teacher.

Cornwell Avenue School: Gabriella Simone is a second grade special education teacher who wants her students to know “they have a choice and a voice.” Simone has taught in Hewlett-Woodmere, Valley Stream and at Long Island University. She earned a bachelor’s degree from St. Joseph’s College and her master’s from LIU. Her varied interests include cooking and quilting.

George Washington School: Kristen Barnett, a special education teacher and speech-language pathologist for grades 1-5, served last year at WH Middle School and St. Thomas the Apostle. Giving students “successful means of communication” is an important reason that Barnett became a teacher, earning a B.S. from Molloy College and an M.S. from Adelphi. She is an avid NY Jets fan.

Megan Lupo is teaching second grade. After several years teaching in Valley Stream, Lupo knew she “loved working with children and the impact I could have on their lives and futures.” Her bachelor’s and master’s degrees were awarded by Adelphi University. Lupo performs volunteer work for the Leukemia Lymphoma Society, and enjoys dancing and reading.

West Hempstead Middle School: Claire E. Germino plans to incorporate new technology and “learner-centered and desk-based” techniques as she teaches world languages to grades 6-9. Germino student-taught here and served as a leave replacement in the middle and high schools. She received bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Molloy College, and wants to “share my knowledge of language.”

Jaclyn Klafter wants to inspire her sixth grade English Language Arts students to “learn while having fun.” Klafter, who earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Hofstra, taught middle school reading in Westbury, Plainview and Island Trees before coming to WHMS. This photography, travel and museum enthusiast follows in the footsteps of her mom, a teacher for 40 years.

West Hempstead High School: Philip J. D’Elia is a veteran social studies teacher who has taught, administrated and written curriculum for the advanced International Baccalaureate Program. D’Elia has taught at Southside and Oceanside High Schools, Lawrence-Woodmere Academy and with the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth. He holds a bachelor’s degree from SUNY Albany and his master’s from Syracuse.

Laurie Hughes is teaching music on the secondary level in WH. Hughes holds a bachelor’s degree in music from SUNY Fredonia, and a master’s from Queens College. She prepared Valley Stream CHSD students for NYSSMA competition, advised Tri-M and conducted a 165-member band. She is a certified EMT.

Meg Shannon wants to “instill a lifelong love of learning in my students,” and became a teacher inspired by seeing the learning process “through my children’s eyes.” Shannon has a



West Hempstead’s newest teachers and their accomplishments add to the district’s bright academic future. From left are, front, Kristin Barnett, Danielle Lazaro, Diana Towers, Jaclyn Klafter; back, John Hogan, Superintendent; Meg Shannon, Clare Germino, Megan Lupo, Gabriella Simone, Ann Peluso, Assistant Superintendent; Rich Cunningham, Deputy Superintendent. Not pictured: Philip J. D’Elia and Laurie Hughes.

bachelor’s degree from St. Mary’s College, and master’s degrees in journalism and education from Northwestern University and Molloy College respectively. She is teaching special education and English.

Dianna Towers is a special education teacher for grades 9-12; previously she taught special education math at the high school. Towers has a bachelor’s degree from Molloy College, and is working on her master’s there. She aims for a doctorate in special education and says, “Teaching has been a passion of mine since I was little.”

Middle School AP Comes from a Dedicated Decade at WHHS

Longtime West Hempstead High School teacher, administrator and coach Joseph Castoro has a new home at West Hempstead Middle School – where he is now the assistant principal.

“Children represent our future,” says Castoro, adding, “Nothing could be more rewarding to me professionally than to play an active role in helping tomorrow’s leaders make choices and set goals for themselves.”

He began that task in 2002 at WHHS, teaching social studies inclusion, honors and Advanced Placement courses, and an elective psychology course for which he wrote the curriculum. He was voted Favorite Teacher from 2006-10, and selected as High School Honoree in 2004. He was a football assistant coach at the middle school and assistant lacrosse coach at the high school. Meanwhile, Castoro amassed many hours of administrative service, developing the high school’s teacher/student mentoring program, and working with the Strategic Planning Committee. Castoro holds a bachelor’s degree from St. Joseph’s College, a master’s from SUNY Stony Brook, and advanced certifications from the College of St. Rose.



Joseph Castoro

Programs Will Enhance Teaching and Learning



At a K-5 grade level meeting with elementary principals and the assistant superintendent in January, teachers had a hands-on experience with Common Core math strategies.

WH Works on Common Core Standards

Emphasis on consistency, clarity, critical content and, ultimately, college and career preparedness marks the new Common Core Standards being implemented in West Hempstead in 2013. This nationwide, state-led effort seeks to establish a single set of clear pre-K through grade 12 educational standards in English language and mathematics – the two disciplines that impact each other. The input of teachers, administrators, parents and students, as well as expert educational research, played a major role in the program's development. The best in national and international teaching and learning principles were incorporated.

Under the new standards, English – reading, writing, listening and speaking – is focused to a greater extent on non-fiction (informational text) – documents, biographies, essays, current events and the like – especially in the higher grades. Mathematics, too, is more research-oriented and analytical, although speed and accuracy are emphasized as well.

Some 45 states have adopted the standards. In West Hempstead, implementation began last year and is ongoing:

- The staff's knowledge has been honed through workshops, courses, institutes, and West Hempstead's popular collegial circles and teacher academy classes.
- Frequent staff collaboration on the district, school, department, and grade levels is part of making teaching and learning consistent.
- WH administrators and teachers have undertaken major curriculum projects that apply the Common Core to all of the academic subjects.
- Texts, literature, software and other materials that support the Standards have been acquired.



New Evaluations Are Productive and Consistent

Working together, a committee of administrators and teachers has created a required Annual Professional Performance Review plan (APPR) for West Hempstead, which received final approval from New York State in January. The plan outlines specific, consistent guidelines and evidence for teacher and principal evaluations based upon such criteria as student test scores, observations, and professional activities. Training relative to the plan is being provided to staff by committee members. One benefit of APPR is the creation of a common language and a common set of expectations for faculty members.

Greek and Latin Boost English Vocabulary

By learning Greek and Latin word roots, students in grades 3-12 are unlocking the definitions of difficult or unknown English words. The classical language roots form ninety percent of multi-syllabic words in English. Building vocabulary in this way allows students to understand more complex texts in all of their subjects. Goals of the new program include improved skills in reading and writing in addition to higher SAT scores.

West Hempstead Going Wireless

Also new in the new year will be a wireless West Hempstead! Work is nearing completion to enable technological mobility in every building in the school district before the end of this school semester.

Strategic Plan Promotes Academic Excellence

West Hempstead's Strategic Plan serves as a framework upon which academic excellence is being built day-by-day. The current Plan runs through 2014, and focuses on a long list of goals and activities through the lens of across-the-board student achievement.

In this issue of *The Educator*, for example, the curriculum writing and staff development around the Common Core Standards mentioned are part of an action plan detailed in the Strategic Plan. Staff collaboration up, down and through the grades will make sure that students moving from grade to grade have a continuing learning pathway in every subject from kindergarten to grade 12. That, too, is a precept in the Plan.

The expanded "Highlights" in this issue are part of a Strategic Plan goal that student and staff achievement here should be recognized and celebrated. The district shares specific examples of excellence with parents, community and beyond through its website and local/regional media.

Finally, the extensive educational technology section of the Strategic Plan is leading to thoughtful acquisition and application of hardware and software that will assist staff and students along a track of excellence individually and as a district.

If you suspect that your child has an educational disability, call the Director of Pupil Personnel Services at 516-390-3242.

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Photos by Steve Orlando

West Hempstead Highlights



Outstanding students

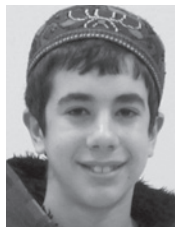


Peri Rhiannon Finkelstein

Young artist **Peri Rhiannon Finkelstein**, a seventh grader at the Middle School, is competing in the national Scholastic Art and Writing Awards contest. With her collage, "How Strangers See Me and How I See Myself," Peri addresses the issues that a young woman like herself faces as an individual in a wheelchair — but one who is not defined by her physical disabilities. She realizes that many other middle school-age children are faced with issues in their own lives and might draw from her situation. Peri dreams of being a fashion designer or artist.

Members of the **High School Key Club** worked tirelessly through the first semester of the school year to help others in need. The students collected clothing, blankets, personal hygiene items, and food for families in the West Hempstead and Island Park communities who suffered losses during Hurricane Sandy. They also assembled and delivered holiday food baskets for families in both communities in November and again in December.

In January, West Hempstead Middle School Students competed in the annual National Geographic Geography Bee. Nineteen class winners answered difficult United States and World geography questions until finally **Ezra Muskat** emerged the winner. Congratulations to Ezra on his victory, and all the competitors on a wonderful and fun afternoon.



Ezra Muskat

WHHS students **SaraJo Weinstein** and **Terry Oh** were honored by the Nassau Zone of New York State's AHPERD (Alliance for Health, Physical Education and Dance) at a dinner at Crest Hollow Country Club. The two earned the prestigious honor by demonstrating their physical prowess, personal and social responsibility, and leadership.



Courtney Sills

Courtney Sills of the girls varsity soccer team earned All-County honors and was named to the All-State fifth team. She will play at the University of Scranton in the fall. It's the second year that a member of the team won All-County honors.

The **girls varsity tennis team** finished with a league record of 10-0 and the team was crowned conference IVB champions.

The boys varsity volleyball team played in the county championship game. **Erik Finkelstein**, **Chris McEvoy** and **Tom Wood** were recognized with All-County honors.

The varsity football team had a league record of 7-1 and played in the second round of the county championship at Hofstra. All-County honors went to **Tayvon Hall**, **Michael Petrizzo**, **Daniel Njoku**, and **Enrique McFarlene**.

Accomplished staff

Michelle Lambo, Social Studies teacher at the middle school and high school, was honored by the March of Dimes with the Golden Apple Award for her dedication to the success of students. The award was presented at a dinner at the Fox Hollow Inn attended by WH teachers, administrators, parents and board members.

Lisa McCarthy, ESL teacher at the high school, received a \$500 grant to use iPads in the classroom.



Pictured above are members of the social studies department, from left, Joseph Castoro, Michelle Lambo, Neil Testa and Margaret Santarelli.

Angel Christodoulou, high school art teacher, will present *Digital Art: Community Connections* at the 2013 National Convention of Education in the Arts in Texas.

Joe Castoro, former Social Studies teacher and new assistant principal at the middle school, presented *Changing the Conversation*, at the Long Island Council for Social Studies conference. The presentation focused on technology and its evolving role in education.

Barbara Stern, librarian at the high school, received a \$500 grant to expand the Common Core collection in the high school library.

Terry Ganley, principal of George Washington School, is an adjunct faculty member at Adelphi University and is teaching *Social Studies and Critical Literacy in Childhood Education*. The course highlights multicultural, equity, and ethical issues.

Kathleen O'Farrell, Director of English Language Arts, was selected by her peers to serve on the executive board of the Long Island Language Arts Council.

Tony Cali, principal of Cornwell Avenue School, was invited to serve on an Elementary Scheduling Panel by Nassau BOCES. The panel members shared strategies used for scheduling at the elementary level with colleagues from throughout the county.