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News & Updates

November 19, 2021

Alert: Early Dismissal on Wednesday

Schools will dismiss students 15 minutes early Wednesday as part of a “rapid dismissal” emergency drill mandated by New York State. A rapid dismissal may be required in the event of inclement weather or a school evacuation. Elementary school parents should expect students to be dropped off at bus stops, and arrive home, about 15 minutes early. Bee-Line buses for middle and high school students retain their usual schedules. Schools and district offices are closed on Thanksgiving and Friday.

Wide-Ranging Discussion Highlights Superintendent Jonathan Raymond’s Town Hall

City School District of New Rochelle Superintendent Jonathan Raymond hosted the second of monthly public Town Hall meetings Tuesday, the latest stop in his ongoing Listening and Learning Tour to enhance communication with our community.

Attendees at the New Rochelle Public Library and via Zoom asked questions that prompted discussion on numerous topics. Raymond was joined by Board of Education Vice President Adina Berrios Brooks, and the event was moderated by Mariana Jusufaj, founder of Mujeres en New Rochelle.

Several attendees thanked Raymond for the forum. He said, “I appreciate the opportunity to answer questions and engage in important dialogue and conversation with our school community.”

View the Town Hall by clicking this [link](#). Highlights of the two dozen questions:



COVID-19

- Raymond said he does not support New York State Assembly Bill A8378, which would mandate vaccinations for children attending school. “I’m encouraging parents to get their children vaccinated because we need to do everything we can to keep our children safe and in school,” he said. “But at this point, it’s not something that I believe should be mandated.”
- Brooks agreed that “at this moment, a mandate is not appropriate.”
- Raymond said keeping the school community healthy is a shared responsibility. He said the agreement reached with the school district’s collective-bargaining partners, to require proof of vaccination or weekly testing for employees, has been a crucial COVID safety protocol.

Huguenot Academy

- Raymond understood parents’ concerns that Huguenot Academy students await their move to a new space at Monroe College. “The College did not turn over the space to us until Nov. 1,” he said, “and we’ve been in there ever since, getting the wiring, ventilation, technology, and other elements ready.”
- Raymond reminded attendees that the Academy’s New Rochelle High School space was deemed inadequate several years ago. The urgency to find a new location became immediate due to Hurricane Ida’s extensive flooding at the high school space.
- Raymond said the new space will provide a comfortable environment conducive to learning. “Not everyone will think it’s perfect, but it’s certainly top-notch,” said Raymond.
- A member of the District’s Health and Safety Committee, Robert Cox, reiterated that finding a new home for the Huguenot Academy had been a priority for years, and that the Monroe College partnership represents a strong solution at this time.
- Raymond said the school district has a two-year lease for the Monroe space and will continue exploring options for a permanent home for the Academy.
- Regarding a parent’s suggestion that the name and logo of Huguenot Academy be changed, Raymond recommended that interested students and community members explore alternatives.

Special Education/General Education Alignment

- Raymond explained that the recent merger of the special education and general education divisions “is about ensuring all of our children have access to our full curriculum and all supports.” He added, “We now have faculty and staff working together, without organizational structure getting in the way, to make sure all of our students are educated to the highest standards and given the resources necessary to be successful.”

Wellness and Unfinished Learning

- The school district has added counselors, social workers, and other support to address the social isolation and other impacts of virtual learning during COVID-19. “We are making sure our children have the social and emotional supports they need,” Raymond said.
- The school district seeks to hire more teaching assistants, but has encountered a shortage of candidates.
- Principals are working to create an aligned road map across grade levels to chart the path to high school.

Snow Days

- Snow days, if needed, would be taken from April vacation because snow days were not built into the academic calendar. Raymond said conversations with collective-bargaining partners are underway to avoid this issue going forward.
- Delayed openings are not an option because of busing issues, particularly reliance on Bee-Line buses not controlled by the school district. Middle and high school students use Bee-Line buses.

Transportation

- Weekly meetings with bus vendors continue to advance safe, smooth and on-time transportation for students.
- The district is working with its transportation vendor to ensure working cameras and adherence to seating charts and COVID

2022 Town Hall Meeting Schedule!

Join us at 7 p.m. at the New Rochelle Public Library or via Zoom on the following dates:

Wed., Jan. 19

Wed., Feb. 16

Tues., March 15

Wed., April 20

Tues., May 10

safety protocols.

Cannabis in the Community

- Raymond agreed with parents’ concerns about the sale of recreational cannabis in New Rochelle. “I don’t want it sold anywhere near our kids,” he said, urging parents to have open, honest conversations with children about drug use.

Cookie Ambassador! Albert Leonard
Student a New Face of the Girl Scouts



Albert Leonard Middle School sixth-grader Milan Smith is the epitome of a well-rounded student. In addition to being diligent about schoolwork, she’s involved in softball, lacrosse, basketball, and Girl Scouts.

And now, she is one of the new faces of the Girl Scouts of America.

The Girl Scouts held auditions for brand ambassadors in late spring of 2021, as they were looking to find a new, diverse group of girls to reflect the organization’s can-do, community-centric, female-empowering spirit.

Milan, who loves being a Girl Scout, was eager to participate. She recalls when she was on her way to lacrosse try-outs and learned she would see her face in print and online materials, representing an organization near and dear to her.

“It felt nice because being a Girl Scout represents my truth,” said Milan, 11. “It provides new opportunities, fun trips, and experiences to bond with my troop.” Milan said that a bonus was getting to be one of the first to try the new Girl Scout Adventurefuls cookie – an indulgent, brownie-inspired treat with caramel-flavored crème and a hint of sea salt.

Albert Leonard Middle School Principal Camille Edwards-Thomas is delighted by Milan's honor. “The Girl Scouts’ mission is to cultivate smart, strong girls and young women. It’s exciting to see such a vast representation of young girls representing that mission, and especially exciting that Milan – one of our own students – is included,” she said.

LaThell Smith, Milan’s mother, is proud of her daughter’s ambition and drive, and feels that Milan embodies the spirit of the Girl Scouts. “Milan is photogenic, and her smile and personality brighten up any room,” she said. “She brings so much joy to our family and to everyone around her.”

Milan, who loves Albert Leonard Middle School, hopes to continue modeling for print, and is interested in expanding her portfolio to include TV and online commercials. Some of her work for the Girl Scouts can be seen [here](#) and [here](#).

Parents, Guardians: Social Media Vigilance Requested

A letter from Superintendent Jonathan Raymond:

Dear City School District of New Rochelle Family:

The City School District of New Rochelle learned Tuesday about a social media threat to commit violence at Albert Leonard Middle School. The New Rochelle Police Department quickly was alerted. An investigation determined that the threat was not credible, and thankfully, school activities proceeded normally.



Our school district takes immediate action to respond to any threat, real or perceived, because nothing is more important than the safety and health of our school district community. This includes the children you entrust to us, as well as our families, faculty, and staff.

That level of caring inspires my letter to you today. We are requesting our community’s assistance in providing important guidance and education about social media, as well as vigilance in monitoring our youths’ social media activity.

Some social media posts can cause extreme worry, and they have broad impact. Children have access to a world online that did not exist a few years ago. I know that, even for parents and guardians, this ever-transforming and expanding world can be complex to navigate. As such, we ask that you please:

- Discuss with your child the consequences of posting inappropriate content or threats on social media. It is important to emphasize that everything on social media can quickly become public, even if shared only with one other person.
- Alert your child’s school and law enforcement if you or your children see a post of potential concern.
- Monitor your child’s online and social media behavior and have open, positive conversations with them.

Thank you for your support and continued efforts to keep all of our children safe online and at school.

Jonathan P. Raymond
Superintendent



Schools Joining Saturday's
Thanksgiving Parade

Essential workers will be honored at the 57th Annual Thanksgiving Parade on Saturday, Nov. 20, starting at 10 a.m. New Rochelle schools will be part of the parade. Essential workers' selfless

Big Parade Traverses Trinity City!



At Trinity Elementary School, Thanksgiving is more than an important festival and moment to share gratitude. It’s also an opportunity to emphasize reading, math, and engineering skills

contributions and service to the community have proven crucial as the City of New Rochelle has navigated the COVID-19 pandemic.

The parade route will run along North Avenue, from Eastchester Road to Bonnefoy Place. Parade goers will enjoy several big balloons this year, as well as marching bands, vintage cars, firetrucks, dancers, and singers. Learn more at NewRoChamber.org or NewRochelleNY.com

COVID-19 Vaccinations for Ages 5-11 at Montefiore



Montefiore New Rochelle Hospital is now offering COVID-19 vaccinations for children ages 5-11. Registration is required, as is completion of a consent form. Click on the flyer for details.

Vaccination Clinics Move to Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla

New York State COVID-19 vaccination efforts for ages 12 and older will transition from the Westchester County Center to Westchester Medical Center, the flagship of the Westchester Medical Center Health Network, beginning today, Friday, Nov. 19. Also, vaccination for children ages 5 to 11 is available at WMCHHealth's Maria Fareri Children's Hospital. Westchester Medical Center and Maria Fareri Children's Hospital are at 100 Woods Road, Valhalla. Click [here](#) to learn more.

SICK? PLEASE STAY HOME!



As a reminder, if a student is sick, he or she should not be sent to school.

This recommendation seeks to safeguard everyone's health in a school setting.

Thank you.

Upcoming Events

- Monday, Nov. 22:** New Rochelle High School Report Cards issued
- Monday, Nov. 22 - Tuesday, Nov. 23:** New Rochelle High School Senior Portraits, all day, at the high school
- Tuesday, Nov. 23:** Board of Education Meeting, 6 p.m., Daniel Webster Elementary School
- Wednesday, Nov. 24:** All schools will dismiss students 15 minutes earlier than usual. Please see the alert at the top of this Newsletter.
- Thursday, Nov. 25 - Friday, Nov. 26:** Thanksgiving Recess. Schools and offices closed.

More News to Know

Concert: A program of festive songs will be performed by the New Rochelle Public Library's "Sing Your Heart Out" chorus Saturday, Nov. 20 from 3 p.m. -

- and have a parade!

First, teachers read the story "Balloons Over Broadway" by Melissa Sweet to their classes. This book tells the story of Tony Sarg, the puppeteer behind the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade. Then, kindergarteners and first-graders used the engineering-design process to design and create balloon floats. They marched in the parade with their balloons on Friday.

Students in grades 2-5 used math to create cityscapes that decorated school hallways for the parade. For example, third-graders used multiplication arrays to make the windows on their city buildings. Fourth-graders used two-digit by one-digit arrays to make their windows and calculate the area and perimeter of their buildings.

With those preparatory lessons complete, the parade kicked off, forming a caravan through the halls. Principal Michael Hilderbrand led the parade, using a megaphone and playing music along the way, making for a festive, important lesson.

Special thanks to kindergarten teacher Yesenia Sanchez, who launched this parade last year and was an integral contributor to this year's parade. Her innovation has proven to be a great curriculum approach that also brings joy to students.



Big Bookmarks Drive Reading at Davis

It's Readathon Month at George M. Davis Jr. Elementary School!

Students are reading, accumulating minutes toward the school goal, and having fun. During the first week of the Readathon last week, each class created a life-sized bookmark to capture the class' love for reading.

The bookmarks in the photo features student thoughts and quotes on common themes from the books read in that class. The bookmarks are proudly displayed outside of each room in the hallway.



The first two photos depict third-graders in teacher Madelyn Castagna's class doing the morning announcements in the principal's office. Each morning, a class provides the Pledge of Allegiance, and, during Readathon, shares inspiring quotes from a book they've read and important messages for the school. Castagna's class chose "Our Class is a Family" by Shannon Olsen because they see their class as a small family and community that sticks together, embraces differences, and is journeying through third grade as a single group.

Update: Bee-Line High School Buses

The City School District of New Rochelle continues to proactively take action on issues regarding bus transportation



of students. The school district advises New Rochelle High School students who use Bee-Line buses to follow these steps to ensure they board the proper bus after school:

- Buses sometimes have the same route number. It's important for students to know the last stop on their bus route, and to look for the bus displaying that information at the front of the bus before boarding the bus. A list of each Bee-Line high school bus route and its bus stops can be found [here](#).
- Students can ask the Bee-Line bus driver to confirm the bus route or that a particular stop is part of the route. Comprehensive information about busing and transportation is available on the City School District of New Rochelle website. Visit <https://www.nred.org/page/transportation> and <https://www.nred.org/browse/240840>

District leaders continue to engage in daily conversations with transportation vendors to implement improvements, seek solutions and ensure that each student's transportation is safe, smooth and on time.

4 p.m. All ages will enjoy the blend of music celebrating the spirit of Thanksgiving. Singers are age 55 and older, under the direction of music aficionado Robert Puleo. The free concert, made possible by the Lillian Robbins-Rick Englander Memorial Fund, will be held in The Ossie Davis Theater at the Library, 1 Library Plaza. Donations are gratefully accepted.

Programs for Children and Teens:
Aspiring yogis ages 4-8 are invited to drop in for Yoga Kids on Saturday from 11 - 11:30 a.m. On Monday from 4:30-5:30 p.m. join the Family Art Studio. On Tuesday at 4:30 p.m., the Graphic Novel Appreciation Society for ages 7-12 meets to celebrate comic-book characters. Toddlers will build literacy, motor and social at Toddler Time on Mondays from 11-11:30 a.m., and babies will have a blast at Baby Rhyme Time Wednesdays from 11-11:30 a.m. Teens are invited Monday at 3 p.m. for Game & Watch, where they can play on the PS4 or Nintendo Switch, and Wednesday at 3 p.m. for Arts & Crafts Day, when teens can paint in the style of legendary artist Bob Ross. Learn more at NRPL.org.

The school district also is working with the vendors to ensure that COVID-19 safeguards are in place and observed on all buses. This is because your child's well-being is our utmost priority.

For information regarding Bee-Line routes, call (914) 813-7777. You also can call the district's Office of Transportation at (914) 576-4230 or email Transportation@nredlearn.org. For information on First Mile Square buses, call (914) 423-7777. For information regarding First Student, call (914) 668-2700.

Students, Families: Please Complete Survey

The City School District of New Rochelle values your feedback. Students in grades 3 through 12, and families, should have received a request via email to complete a survey on perceptions of the school district and the district's effectiveness.

Insights will help formulate or augment strategies to continue to provide high-quality, rigorous learning experiences for the whole child – academically, socially and emotionally. The district has partnered with Panorama Education to conduct the survey.

Replies will be kept confidential; codes to reply are on each school's website. Deadline is Nov. 24. For more information, call (914) 576-4206.

Pride and Music Mark Reception for Latino-Migration Exhibit

An evening of culture, history, informative presentations, and live music highlighted a reception Thursday celebrating "A History of Opportunity, Service, & Success: Latino Migration to New Rochelle." The reception, at the Donald Baughman Museum of Arts & Culture, drew over 150 attendees.

The exhibit, at New Rochelle High School until Dec. 1, is being presented by the school's Social Studies Department with the support of the New Rochelle Fund for Educational Excellence. It has been curated by Social Studies & Business Chairperson Gustavo Barbosa, and teachers Jarohan Garcia and Francisco Sandoval.



According to student Barbara Meda, "What started with one Mexican immigrant, Antonio Valencia Barajas, has currently blossomed into more than 23,000 Latino residents in New Rochelle. This exhibition serves as a memorial for our ancestors who made a home out of a new and foreign place. It is also a celebration of a new generation of immigrants and the prominent Latino culture in New Rochelle."

Student Alejandro Valdovinos added: "Fue un placer mostrarles el increíble viaje que atravesó Antonio Valencia Barajas no solo para él, sino para todos los inmigrantes latinos para los cuales construyó un camino para crear el New Rochelle de hoy." ("It was a pleasure to show you the incredible journey that Antonio Valencia Barajas went through not only for himself, but for all the Latino immigrants for whom he built a

path to create the New Rochelle of today.")

During Thursday's ceremony, a dozen New Rochelle High School graduates and children of immigrants were recognized for their accomplishments and contributions to our community. "Their service and success are a credit to the many opportunities that our city and school district has to offer. New Rochelle continues to be a community where the dreams of generations of immigrants become a reality," Barbosa said.

Webster Fifth-Graders Create Wax Museum to Bring History to Life

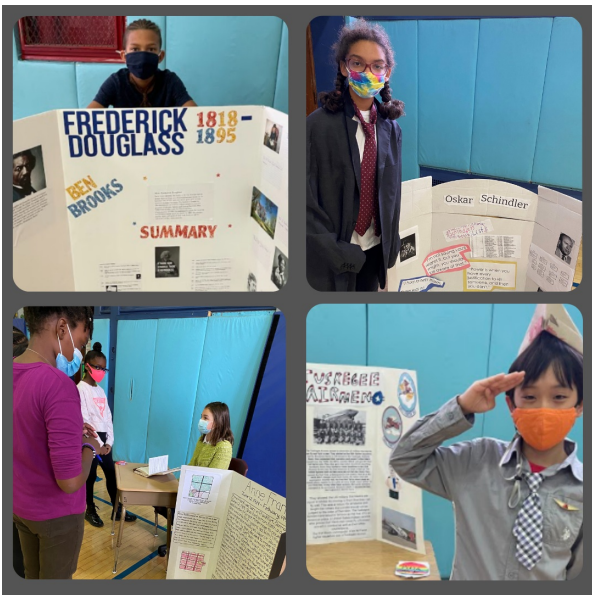
For fifth-graders at Daniel Webster Elementary School, history has become contemporary.

For six weeks, teacher Sarah Chickery's students enriched their reading lessons by participating in book clubs focused on influential people throughout history. Students engaged in weekly book talks to deepen their understanding of a topic, and used text structures to develop larger ideas and concepts.

Through these book clubs, students became experts. They read supplementary material to enhance their knowledge of the person and time period they learned about. To cap off the lesson, students created a "wax museum," preparing speeches and dressing up as the historical figure inspired by the time period they studied. In addition, students created a tri-fold display board highlighting the person's life and their impact.

Webster's Wax Museum of Historical Figures was inspired by these books:

- "My Survival: A Girl on Schindler's List," a memoir by Rena Finder
- "Port Chicago 50," by Steve Sheinkin
- "The Greatest: Muhammad Ali," by Walter Dean Myers
- "Two Miserable Presidents," by Steve Sheinkin
- "Child of the Dream," a memoir by Sharon Robinson.



Huguenot Sports Legends Washington and Rice Join Hall of Fame



Ray Rice (left) and Kent Washington

The Westchester Sports Hall of Fame's induction ceremony and dinner Wednesday in New Rochelle was a fitting setting.

Two of the five inductees are New Rochelle High School graduates: Kent Washington (Class of 1973) and Ray Rice (Class of 2005).



Washington had a superb high school and college basketball career. A high school All-Conference and All-Section selection, he played at Southampton College on Long Island, where he scored 1,082 points and left as the school's career-assists leader. He then played professional basketball in Europe, becoming the first American to play behind the Iron Curtain in Poland. He played four and a half seasons in Poland with two teams and was an MVP in 1980. Following his professional career, he coached women's basketball in Sweden and at Mercy College in Westchester.

Rice was a member of the Huguenots' 2003 New York State championship football team. During his three-year varsity career, New Rochelle lost only three games. At Rutgers University, Rice led the team to a 12th place national ranking, its highest in school history. After Rice's junior year, he was drafted by the Baltimore Ravens, where he played on the Super Bowl championship team culminating the 2012 season. He was named to three Pro Bowls in his career, and is now involved in youth football in Baltimore and Westchester. Congratulations to both men on outstanding careers.

Middle School Sports Update

The modified ice hockey team, which is combined between Albert Leonard and Isaac Young Middle Schools, will begin their season Monday with practice from 8:55 p.m. to 10:10 p.m. at the Ice Hutch. On Nov. 29, the remainder of the middle school winter sports teams begin. Register your student on FamilyID and submit a sports physical examination form dated Nov. 1, 2020 or later. The links to FamilyID:

- Albert Leonard Middle School: <https://www.familyid.com/programs/alms-modified-winter-2021-2022-athletics-registration>
- Isaac Young Middle School: <https://www.familyid.com/programs/ieyms-modified-winter-2021-2022-athletics-registration>

Winter sports offered at Albert Leonard Middle School are Boys' Basketball, Girls' Basketball, and Wrestling. Winter sports at Isaac E. Young Middle School are Boys' Basketball, Girls' Basketball and Wrestling. Combined teams with athletes from both schools are Ice Hockey and Cheerleading.

New Rochelle High School Sports Update

Senior class girls will put their football skills on display in a PowderPuff flag football game at McKenna Field at 1:30 p.m. Sunday. It is a fundraiser for the senior class. Admission (donation) is \$2 for students and \$5 for adults. Please come out and support the girls and the Senior Class!

Congratulations to the Junior Varsity Cheerleading Team, which won first place in Class A's Senior Spirit Showdown at Hendrick Hudson High School last Saturday. The win was a great way to conclude the fall season.



Congratulations to Abi Salov, who signed a National Letter of Intent to play women's lacrosse at Fairleigh Dickinson University. She will be part of FDU's inaugural season next school year for the Knights, who compete in Division I and are a member of the Northeast Conference. Salov has provided valuable contributions to New Rochelle High School Girls' Lacrosse Team over the past three years and looks forward to her senior season.

For questions regarding high school athletics, please call the Athletics Department at (914) 576-4586.