



# SUPERINTENDENT'S *Brief*



**SUPERINTENDENT ANIBAL SOLER, JR.**

Good afternoon,

TGIF! We made it to the weekend.

I'll begin today by highlighting that February is Black History Month. While this is an important month of recognizing and celebrating the achievements and history of African Americans, it also serves as a time to pause and remember their long journey including the sacrifice, struggle suffering, oppression, discrimination, racism and more. It's important to pay attention and to continue to recognize where racism persists especially in our own corners. Take the opportunity to raise your voice. Let's also continue to learn, listen, pay attention to, and applaud those who are creating change.

The Oneida Students for Anti-Racism (OSAR) are a great example of young people advocating, standing up for what is right, and making sure their voices are heard. On February 1, OSAR held their 2nd annual Black Lives Matter flag raising ceremony. The ceremony included performances from students and a group discussion about the meaning of the day. Last year this group of students gave a presentation to the Board of Education about why this is important and asked permission to fly the Black Lives Matter



Flag throughout the month of February.  
Check out the video of the celebration  
they held earlier this week.

At Wednesday's Board of Education meeting, we did a few things a little different. The first one was unplanned but so perfect. Earlier in the day, I was at the OSAR celebration and was completely moved by a performance of "Stand Up," sung by OSAR ambassadors Rain and Serenity. I invited them to sing at the Board of Education meeting. After all, it was the kickoff of Black History Month and I was sure they would "wow" everyone. I was not disappointed. They were absolutely incredible and brought everyone to their feet. Their beautiful voices and passion moved everyone who was in attendance the same way I was moved earlier in the day. With each day, I become even more impressed and proud of our students. They are nothing short of incredible.



We also did something else a little different. Before the business meeting started, we held an employee recognition celebration. Each school leader nominated an employee that they feel best represents the *Student and Graduate Success* pillar of our Strategic Plan. The nominees read

their submissions aloud at the meeting and presented the employee with a certificate of recognition. I wish to congratulate each of them.



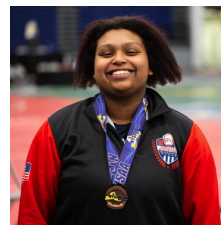
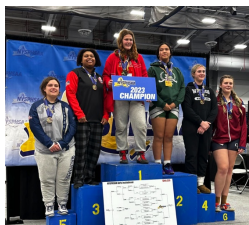
You can learn more about each of them [here](#). Thank you to Shannon Tahoe, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Professional Learning, and the human resources team for coordinating this celebration. Thank you to the nominees for bringing these amazing members of your teams forward. And, thank you to those who stood out and were recognized for your commitment, hard work, engagement, and dedication to our students and families. I am proud of all of you. We know there are many, many more members of our team who deserve to be in the limelight. Maybe your turn is next as we do plan to hold more of these celebrations. #studentandgraduatesuccess #passionatepeople

Jeff Russo, District Director of Climate and Safety provided an [overview](#) of the development and work of the safety team at the board meeting as well. He spoke about the collaboration with Schenectady Police Department and how things are going with the Community Engagement Officers (CEOs). Mr. Russo also spoke proudly about the growth of his team, the members and their roles, how they are warmly known as the "Red Shirts," and the ways they make a difference. They are kind, warm, engaging, visible and they clearly care for our students. Many were in attendance at the meeting.

I can't stress enough the importance of students being in school every day. We continue to work on exploring ways to improve attendance with engagement, incentives and celebrations. I want to give a huge shout out to Keane Elementary School where they have a "Never Been Absent (N.B.A)" club and monthly celebration. In January, **78** Keane students had perfect attendance. That's worth celebrating. Thank you to Principal Kerri Messler and the team at Keane who continue to work at improving attendance. Click [here](#) to learn more about the N.B.A. initiative and what it means at Keane. Let's keep it going Keane Dragons.

We came together for our monthly meeting with principals on Wednesday. We spoke about climate and culture, school communication with families, curriculum items and grading. While they don't enjoy being away from their schools, each of our principals show up ready to engage, problem-solve and do great work together. It's important that they get this time together to hear about any changes, address common issues, share best practices and work as thought partners.. They all have the common goal of ensuring that the students in their respective schools have what they need to be academically successful.

Last weekend the Niskayuna-Schenectady Girls Wrestling team competed at the first ever NYS Invitational. Three Schenectady girls, Maryann Persad, Anecia Singh, and Brianna Newton, competed in the tournament. Congratulations to Brianna who took 3rd place in her class, making her 3rd in NYS for girls wrestling. This is amazing accomplishment. Way to go girls!



I'm still looking for a few more members for the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council. If you know a student who might be interested, please click [here](#) for more

information.

This is a final reminder that STEAM Camp registration will close on Friday, February 10 at 4 p.m. There are still openings. If you would like your child to attend, click [here](#) to register. The camp will run during Winter Recess on February 21 through February 24. Click [here](#) for other details.

We know that parents of 3 and 4 year olds are wondering when the Pre-K lottery application will be available. You have some time. The application will be available in April. We will post it and push it out to you. You can find information on the application and lottery process and a registration checklist [here](#).

Report cards went home with elementary students and were mailed home to secondary students yesterday. I encourage any parent who has questions or concerns about their child's progress to please contact your child's teacher. We are partners and in this work together.

Tonight is Senior Night at the Boys Basketball Game against Averill Park at 6 p.m. Please come by and support our seniors.

Thank you to all for all that you do. Have a great weekend. Stay warm, relax, and enjoy.