



COPIAGUE. Connections

Fall 2013

COPIAGUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS - A GREAT PLACE TO LEARN

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM Around the District

Over the course of a school year and into the summer months, many exciting activities occur within and around our schools. Many of those events and accomplishments are recognized in numerous ways throughout the District.

“We continue to have all of the ingredients in Copiague: a great school board, staff and environment to work in, and enough supplies, materials and equipment to support our students and provide them with a safe and nurturing school environment,” said Superintendent Charles A. Leunig on Opening Day for the staff.

Below are just a few highlights from the past school year.

Did you know?

- More than 1,200 students (almost 25% of the District’s population) participated in the District’s summer school program, successfully completing enrichment opportunities, remedial classes, camps, and recreational and athletic activities in July and August.
- Following a successful summer school, 25 students graduated in August, with 24 students achieving a Regents diploma.
- Over the summer, Walter G. O’Connell Copiague High School social studies teacher Allison Weller traveled to Korea on a fellowship for American educators from the Korean Society.
- Last year, thanks to the hard work of our English as a Second Language students and staff members, 123 children successfully exited the ESL program.
- Due to the diligence of the high school special education department, the District saw an increase of 12% from June 2012 to June 2013 in students with disabilities graduating with Regents diplomas.
- Long Island Family & Consumer Sciences Professionals named middle school home and careers teachers Christine Barteldt and Karen Kazlauskas Teacher of the Year and Promising New Professional of the Year, respectively, for the 2012-2013 school year.
- Middle School Mathematics Chairperson Dr. Natasha Murray was named one of only three state finalists for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics Teaching based on her contributions to the field of mathematics.
- Through careful financial planning, the technology department has been able to deploy more than 400 new computers and laptops throughout the District.
- Dr. Daniel Leccese, Science Chairperson at the Middle School, was recognized by Covanta Ecotech and the Town of Babylon for his contributions to science education.
- High School Social Studies Chairperson Michelle Penyy was selected to brief the U.S. Congress, along with members of the College Board, on Advanced Placement opportunities for Copiague students. Additionally, she was invited to appear on MSNBC’s Education Nation.
- Middle School Assistant Principal Michael Ferretti was named an Educator of Excellence by the New York State English Council.
- High School Band Director Eric Dobmeier has been appointed a Large School 2 representative for the state in the New York State Field Band Conference.
- Ten athletic teams received the sportsmanship award from Section XI, while six teams were named New York State Scholar-Athlete teams.
- Last year’s musical “In the Heights” was named Best Musical in the Town of Babylon’s BACCA awards program. The musical also received Best Actor in a Musical for David Szabo and Best Choreography.

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Copiague, N.Y. 11726

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To stay updated on District happenings, please visit our website at www.copiague.k12.ny.us or “like” us on Facebook (keyword search: Copiague Public Schools). In the meantime, enjoy the fall edition of the Copiague Connection.

A Message from the Superintendent

Dear Residents,

Welcome to the Fall 2013 Edition of Copiague Connections! Our school year has gotten off to a great start, with many of the usual beginning-of-school-year issues being minimized this year, which is fortunate.

In this issue of Copiague Connections, as always, we share the latest highlights on some great activities underway in our schools, along with some important and newsworthy items. A sampling of this edition's features includes: a new feature entitled "Did you know?" that shares a variety of highlights of student and staff accomplishments recapping last school year; profiles on new and promoted administrative staff; New Teacher Orientation; our annual service awards ceremony recognizing veteran staff members; our latest group of Advanced Placement Scholars; Homecoming and our latest inductees of distinguished alumni into the Hall of Achievement; and a number of others. Copiague Eagle pride was never more evident than during Homecoming, when the District honored Mike Cesare in front of a packed stadium on the occasion of his 50th anniversary as Copiague's sports announcer, which is featured in this issue. As has often been said, our schools and our community are one, which makes Copiague the great place that it is and is the reason why Copiague is A Great Place to Live, Learn and Work!

Another prominent feature in this issue is entitled "Enhancing Opportunities for Students," which points out the District's commitment to moving forward with initiatives that will strengthen the educational experience that we provide for the children of Copiague, despite the effects of the economy. This has only been made possible through extremely careful and prudent budget planning. Please be assured that we continue to strive to maximize our community's precious financial resources on behalf of the children of Copiague. With that in mind, please take note that the Board of Education and administration will once again be starting the budgeting process for 2014/15 school year in December.

And finally, I would like to bring to your attention to an item that focuses on an issue that is picking up steam in our school district: aging buildings and a lack of space due to growing enrollment. As I have mentioned previously, over the last three-four years, our school district has experienced an enrollment increase of approximately 300 students, which is unique for the south shore of Long Island, where many other school districts are losing enrollment. We engaged a consultant last spring to study this issue and we now have data that shows that we will continue growing by approximately 500 students over the next several years. In response to these needs, the Board of Education recently created an advisory Space and Facilities Committee to work on this issue and in the end, help develop a capital project for the community to vote on that will address both space and ongoing facilities maintenance needs to keep our aging building infrastructure in good shape for current and future generations of Copiague children.

As you can see, there are lots of goings on in Copiague. I hope you enjoy the remaining days of fall and the upcoming holidays and I look forward to seeing you around the community and in our schools.



Charles A. Leunig
Superintendent of Schools

Staff Welcomed Back at Conference Day

As students in the District enjoyed their last remaining days of summer break, the District's staff returned to Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School on Sept. 3 to participate in the annual Superintendent's Conference Day. The purpose of the conference was to highlight the successes of the previous school year, welcome new staff, honor those who have served in the District for 20 years or more, and prepare for the year ahead.

Addressing the staff on behalf of the entire Board of Education, Board President Michael Greb stated, "I know there are going to be challenges and obstacles that we are going to need to handle this year, but I have the utmost confidence that we will again forge through and give the children of Copiague the best education on Long Island." Superintendent of Schools Charles Leunig also welcomed the staff, summarized last year's many student and staff achievements, and acknowledged the work of those who ensured the District's facilities were prepared for the start of a new school year.

Following the presentation of the staff service awards, Associate Superintendent Dr. Kathleen Bannon spoke to the faculty regarding the New York State assessment results, the District's history of performance on these tests and the numerous changes made to the exams by the state over the years.

HONORING STAFF SERVICE

A longstanding Copiague tradition, held during the District's Superintendent's Conference Day, is the recognition and appreciation of staff members who have achieved a milestone in their service to the District.

This year, the District recognized those who have served for 20 years or more. Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig and Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Todd Andrews led everyone down memory lane as they shared the most popular songs, TV shows, movies and celebrities during the past 35 years.

Each person celebrating an anniversary received a token of appreciation from the school district. "Your dedication and commitment to the success of the students in the Copiague School District is commendable," Mr. Leunig said.

Congratulations to the following staff members:

35 Years

Michael Beck – Susan E. Wiley custodial worker

30 Years

Rose Ann Fuss – Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School math teacher

(Scott) Gerard Kelly – Districtwide groundskeeper

25 Years

Nickie Fradelos – Great Neck Road cook manager

Carole Geackel – Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School assistant cook

Valarie Williams – Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School speech teacher

20 Years

Mary Alice Dunn – Susan E. Wiley elementary teacher

Ann Marie Pisarello – Great Neck Road nurse

Margaret Hothan – Deauville Gardens assistant cook

Rose Ann LaRocca – Susan E. Wiley food service worker

Marie DeBlasio – Copiague Middle School social studies teacher



35 years: Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Todd Andrews, Michael Beck and Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig.



30 years: Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Todd Andrews, Rose Ann Fuss and Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig.



25 years: Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Todd Andrews, Nickie Fradelos, Valarie Williams, Carole Geackel and Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig.



20 years: Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Todd Andrews, Marie DeBlasio, Mary Alice Dunn, Ann Marie Pisarello, Margaret Hothan and Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig.



TODD J. ANDREWS

Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources

Entering his sixth year in Copiague and his 18th in public education, Todd J. Andrews has been promoted by the Board of Education to the position of Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources. Mr.



Andrews previously served as the Executive Director in Copiague. He has also taught high school English and was an Academic Dean of Students, as well as an Assistant Principal.

"In the four districts that I have had the fortune to work in, none compares to Copiague when it comes to the cohesiveness of our staff, the stability of our Board and the trust our community puts in us every day," said Mr. Andrews. "It's a privilege to work in a District that puts kids first."

As Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Andrews develops and maintains appropriate procedures for recruitment, selection, assignment, evaluation and termination of personnel; assists in the final decision regarding employment; plans, develops and administers staff recordkeeping programs and procedures concerning certification, seniority, longevity, tenure, benefits and attendance; establishes and maintains working relationships with governmental agencies and community organizations; oversees assignment, supervision and professional development of all teaching assistants and teacher aides; and works with Central Office administrators and building administrators in assessing and implementing professional staff development, among many other responsibilities.

"I'm looking forward to helping the District continue to recruit and retain great talent in both the instructional and non-instructional staff," said Mr. Andrews. "Schools are a 'people' business, so we must find and keep the best and most qualified people we can to support students. That has only become more important as we face an ever-challenging state aid picture. We have to do more with reduced resources and fewer people, so those people have to be outstanding and dedicated to helping kids achieve."

Mr. Andrews holds a Bachelor of Arts in English literature from Loyola University, a master's in secondary education with a concentration in English from Hofstra University, and a professional diploma in educational leadership and administration from LIU Post.

TODD HARRIS

Executive Director of Technology

With more than 28 years of experience in educational technology support, 10 of which have been in the Copiague School District, Todd Harris has been promoted to Executive Director of Technology. In his previous role as Director of Technology, Mr. Harris was responsible for all things technological, from managing the District's phone system to overseeing all technology initiatives.



"I look forward to continuing my work of supporting and putting into place systems that make a difference to our students and staff members, as well as finding ways to deliver services at lower costs given the current financial challenges," said Mr. Harris. "My goals are to continue to improve network and system reliability and redundancy, implement systems that support students and staff members in their work, and continue to save money in the area of technology acquisitions and support."

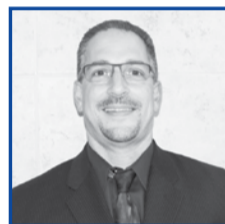
Under Mr. Harris's leadership, the District has been able to utilize technology in order to create a "school without walls" for its students through global communication via videoconferences; provide opportunities for active, cooperative, individualized and interdisciplinary learning; and prepare students to function in a technological world. Additionally, Mr. Harris manages the District's network infrastructure, evaluates and recommends hardware deployment, and ensures best pricing is obtained for the District on all planned acquisitions in line with purchasing requirements.

Mr. Harris received his bachelor's degree in music production and engineering from Berklee College of Music. He holds a Master of Arts in common branches and reading and a certificate in school district administration. He has also taught in the school administration graduate program at Queens College and as an adjunct at NYIT.

MICHAEL FERRETTI

Middle School Assistant Principal

Following six years as a member of the English department at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School – first as a teacher and then as the Department Chair – Michael Ferretti has been appointed Assistant Principal of Copiague Middle School.



When he first joined Copiague, Mr. Ferretti worked as a leave replacement at the middle school teaching eighth-graders. His career in education began after 18 successful years as a business owner with members of his family. He received his bachelor's degree in English from St. John's University, his master's degree in adolescent education from Molloy College and his Professional Certificate in Educational Leadership from Dowling College.

"I look forward to being part of an administrative team that strives to help our students become more responsible in their decision-making process and ultimately become productive members of society," said Mr. Ferretti. "This philosophy is what I stand by and what I believe is the responsibility of every educator."

DANIELLE GRANDIN

Elementary Special Education Coordinator

In an effort to best serve all of its students, the Copiague School District employs an Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, as well as elementary and secondary coordinators for special education. This year, Danielle Grandin has been appointed the Elementary Special Education Coordinator.



"I am looking forward to building relationships with faculty, staff and families as we join forces to build academic skills, social skills and life skills in our students with disabilities," said Mrs. Grandin.

Mrs. Grandin earned her bachelor's degree in elementary education at Buffalo State College and her master's degree in literacy and special education at Dowling College. After spending time as both a general education and special education teacher at the elementary and secondary levels, she decided to pursue school administration and graduated from Stony Brook University with certification as a school district administrator. In addition to her experiences in the classroom, Mrs. Grandin has also served as an Administrative Assistant at the building level and a Chairperson for Special Education.

MICHELLE PENNY

Social Studies Department Chair

A teacher at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School for the last 10 years, Michelle Penny has been promoted to Social Studies Chairperson, responsible for overseeing all secondary social studies education.



Ms. Penny holds a bachelor's degree in economics and a master's in social studies from Stony Brook University. As a member of the Copiague Public School District, she has received many honors, including admission into the Leadership Academy, which led to her earning a postgraduate degree in educational leadership, also from Stony Brook University. Over the course of her career, Ms. Penny has attended and presented at numerous national conferences, including the College Board's Annual AP Conference and conferences for the National Council for History Education and the New York State Council for the Social Studies.

"What I am looking forward to most as a new administrator is working collaboratively with teachers in order to create opportunities for every student so that they will become active citizens who are also lifelong learners," Ms. Penny said.

New Teachers Welcomed

Prior to the start of the school year, the District hosted 16 of its newest employees at its annual New Teacher Orientation. During the two-day event, teachers were trained on District technology and school safety. They also participated in a bus tour of the District and engaged in a variety of learning-centered workshops.

To kick off the orientation, Board of Education President Michael L. Greb and Vice President Brian J. Sales, Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig and Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Todd Andrews welcomed teachers, offered words of encouragement for a new school year and provided insight into the culture of the District.

Mr. Greb said a united effort between teachers and administrators will result in positive experiences for students. "You guys have the greatest jobs," he told the teachers. "You will have the support of amazing people."

Mr. Leunig, who spoke about the leadership and dedication of administrators and teachers, said he remains confident that students will continue to grow and learn based on effective teaching practices. "We are unique; we are special; our kids are special," he said. "What goes on in the classroom is the most important thing here."

Mr. Leunig encouraged new teachers to always consider the needs of students. "Any decision you make, base it on those kids," he said. "We want you to work hard, and we want you to enjoy this."

The orientation concluded with new teachers spending time discussing best practices with seasoned teachers.





Celebrating Homecoming

Throughout the week of Oct. 15, Eagle pride soared through the halls of Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School as students, staff and administrators prepared for Homecoming 2013. Emblazoned in blue and white, the student body excitedly participated in the Friday afternoon pep rally that culminated their spirit week activities.

Spirits remained high on Saturday as Board of Education President Michael L. Greb, Vice President Brian J. Sales and Trustees Doris Fischer, Rosemary Natoli and Everett E. Newman III joined Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig and other district administrators to lead the homecoming parade down Great Neck Road to the high school football field, where a carnival-like fair was set up for community residents to enjoy. The afternoon continued as the varsity football team took on Middle Country's Newfield High School. Despite their best efforts, the Eagles

were unable to defeat the Wolverines.

During halftime, attendees enjoyed performances by the marching band, cheerleaders and steppers, as well as a surprise celebration honoring Mike Cesare for his 50 years announcing football games. The 2013 homecoming court was also announced during halftime, with seniors Cho Connor and Mariah Tavares named king and queen. Rounding out the court were juniors Kevin Roberts and Grace Cirola, sophomores DeAndre Harris and Mackenzie Boyle, and freshmen Franklin Tejada and Brionna Silva.

Concluding the festivities was an evening celebration honoring three alumni and inducting them into the Hall of Achievement. This year's inductees are Dr. Jame'l Hodges (Class of 1992), Mark A. Rosenberg (Class of 1990) and Marina Katherine Tsakis Skea (Class of 1973).





Alumni Inducted

In an effort to recognize graduates of Copiague High School who have succeeded in their careers and lives, as well as those who have distinguished themselves by virtue of their contributions to community and society, the Board of Education created the Hall of Achievement. Each year, to conclude the District's homecoming festivities, inductees are celebrated at a special evening ceremony.

This year's inductees are Dr. Jame'l Hodges (Class of 1992), Mark A. Rosenberg (Class of 1990) and Marina Katherine Tsakis Skea (Class of 1973). With the induction of the three newest members, the Hall now boasts 85 members.

"Copiague – a very diverse community with people from around the world; Copiague – a school district where over 4,000 pass through the hallways each year; Copiague – a place where the school district won national honors for Advanced Placement; Copiague – a town and school district that produced so many graduates that went on to do amazing things throughout the town, the country and the world," said Board of Education President Michael L. Greb. "Tonight, we have many of those alumni present. I am humbled by your presence."

The goal of the District's Hall of Achievement is to introduce positive role models to the school community. By their very nature, inductees to the Hall inspire students to adopt high aspirations. To read about the many accomplishments of this year's inductees, please visit the alumni page of the District's website at www.copiague.k12.ny.us.



Honoring "The Voice of Copiague"



Spanning across six decades, totaling 50 years, Copiague resident Mike Cesare has been volunteering his time as official announcer for the Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School football and basketball games. In celebration of his service to the children of Copiague, the Board of Education unanimously passed a resolution to rename the press box in his honor and surprised Mr. Cesare with the recognition during halftime of the 2013 homecoming football game.

"On behalf of the Board of Education and our entire community of Copiague, I am honored to announce that from here on in, the press box shall be named 'Mike Cesare's Eagles Nest,'" said Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig during the brief ceremony. Added Walter O'Connell, who proposed the original idea to Mr. Leunig, "There are some people who give a lot back to the Copiague community and students and ask for nothing in return, and Mike is one of those people. He's a good man and deserves everything. He is the voice of the Eagles."

"This gives me so much joy," said Mr. Cesare of the surprise. "People ask me why I do this and why I do it for free. I do it because I love the kids' enthusiasm. At events like homecoming, the kids come back and make a point to stop by and say hello and give me a hug, and you just can't beat that. I feel like I have 10,000 kids!"



Advanced Scholars

Fifty members of the Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School Classes of 2013 and 2014 have earned Advanced Placement Scholar Awards in recognition of their exceptional achievement on AP examinations taken last spring. The College Board's Advanced Placement Program provides motivated and academically prepared students with the opportunity to take rigorous college-level courses while still in high school, and to earn college credit, advanced placement or both for successful performance on the AP exams.

Fourteen students were named AP Scholars of Distinction for receiving an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken and scores of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams. The District congratulates Class of 2013 graduates: David Bunn, Aleksandra Czarnecka, Jose Escobar, Robert Gioia, Grace Hall, Daria Kaczorowska, Stewart Pena-Feliz*, John Romano*, Kayla Rosario and Tshay Williams*; and members of the Class of 2014: Alessandra Altruda, Stephanie Fischer, Janiece Morgan and Zachary Wilson.

The designation of AP Scholar with Honor was given to seven students who received an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP exams taken and scores of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams. Congratulations to Class of 2013 graduate Joshua Outsen and Class of 2014 members Barbara Chelchowski, Ashley Collado, Lindsay Griffiths, Krystal Howell, Ashley Simon and Quinton Woelk.

By earning a score of 3 or higher on three or more AP exams, 29 students were recognized as AP Scholars. Congratulations to Class of 2013 graduates: Ashley Arquer, Crisaldy Brito, Christopher Carlisle, Michael Cesare, Emily Clark, Aleah Daleus, Austin Fournie, Myra Gonzales, Wendy Gonzalez, Kevin Gutierrez, Katerin Guzman, Monashiir Haughton, Manowara Matubber, Janice Mayard, Ashley Mirabile, Kenneth Paragna, Jessica Pearson, Samantha Perez, Bryon Ramirez, Natalina Sagliocca, Madison Swenton, Lizbelle Taveras and Caitlin Zowak; and members of the Class of 2014: Joseph Amorosino, Scott Bottega, Isabel Colon, Kiana Estevez, Avery Hodges and Mimi Swenton.

*Stewart Pena-Feliz, John Romano and Tshay Williams were also given the distinction of being named National AP Scholars, as they received an average score of at least 4 on all AP exams taken and scores of 4 or higher on eight or more of these exams.



National Achievement Semifinalist

Lindsay Griffiths, a senior at Walter G. O'Connell High School, has been named a semifinalist in the 2014 National Achievement Scholarship Program, an academic competition established in 1964 to provide recognition for outstanding Black American high school students. Of the more than 160,000 students who entered the program, only 1,600 were named semifinalists.



As a semifinalist, Lindsay has a chance to continue on in the competition to win one of approximately 700 scholarships. She was named a semifinalist based on her high achievement on the 2012 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, which served as an initial screening for program entrants.

In addition to being a National Achievement semifinalist, Lindsay was also named a Commended Student in the 2014 National Merit Scholarship Program, also based on her PSAT scores. Although she does not continue on in the competition, Lindsay placed among the top five percent of the more than 1.5 million students who entered the 2014 competition.



Honored for Math and Science

Due to his outstanding achievements in mathematics and science, Zachary Wilson, a senior at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School, has been awarded the Rensselaer Medal and the \$60,000 scholarship that accompanies it from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Throughout his high school career, Zachary has demonstrated scientific excellence both in the classroom and in science competitions. Within the last three years, Zachary and his research partner have entered and won numerous science research competitions and have developed processes that can help solve the earth's energy crisis.

"Through a lot of hard work and dedication, I know that I have the potential to revolutionize the way the world works, and I intend to do so," stated Zachary.

The Rensselaer Medal is presented annually to recognize the superlative academic achievement of young men and women, and to motivate students toward careers in science, engineering and technology. If he chooses to attend RPI, Zachary will receive his official medal during an Honors Convocation program in the fall. Currently, he plans to study astrophysics in his college years and pursue a career as an astronaut.



Stocking Up on School Supplies

To guarantee their students are prepared with the necessary school supplies for the upcoming school year, the Copiague School District continued its involvement with



the United Way Foundation and Make It Count organization. For the third consecutive year, representatives from United Way and Make It Count visited the District with a full-sized school bus filled with notebooks, backpacks, pens, art supplies and other school supplies ready to be donated to the Copiague students.

Members of the Copiague Middle School Builders Club, along with their adviser Maria Ostrofsky, helped unload the boxes and volunteered their time to sort through the donations and package them for distribution. Also on hand for the donation were Board of Education President Michael L. Greb and Trustee Everett E. Newman III, Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig, Associate Superintendent Dr. Kathleen Bannon, and Middle School Principal Andrew Lagnado and Assistant Principals Michael Ferretti and Stephanie Valeiko.

"These two organizations do a great thing for our students," said Mr. Greb. Added Mr. Leunig, "We couldn't do what we do without their help."

Making Music

Studies have shown the multiple ways in which music education benefits children. In Copiague, beginning in third grade, students are able to study an instrument or join the school choir. The students work with their music teachers to hone their craft and perform concerts every winter and spring for family and friends. The District invites community residents to visit our schools during the concerts to hear the vocal and instrumental stylings of our students. Below is a list of the upcoming winter concerts. All concerts begin at 7 p.m.

Dec. 4

Deauville Gardens Band and Chorus
at Copiague Middle School

Dec. 10

Susan E. Wiley Band and Chorus
at Copiague Middle School

Dec. 11

Great Neck Road Band, Chorus and Small Ensembles
at Great Neck Road

Dec. 12

Middle School Band and Jazz Band
at Copiague Middle School

Dec. 17

High School Chorus, Concert Choir and Madrigal Singers at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School

Dec. 18

Middle School Chorus and Chamber Singers
at Copiague Middle School

Dec. 19

High School Band, Wind Ensemble and Jazz Band
at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School

Soul Skaters

For the past three years, students in the Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School Soul Skater Club have traveled to skate parks in Northport and Bethpage to practice their skills while the local skate park at Copiague's Tanner Park remained closed by the Town of Babylon due to unsafe conditions. In an effort to have the Town reopen the Copiague park, members of the group wrote letters to Town Supervisor Rich Schaffer and, in May, Soul Skater advisers Damin Gomes and Joseph Mannix met with Town officials and successfully petitioned for the repairing and reopening of the park.

On Oct. 2, the club and its advisers, along with Mr. Schaffer, Deputy Supervisor Tony Martinez, Councilwoman Jackie Gordon, Town Clerk Carol Quirk, Receiver of Taxes Corinne DiSomma, Suffolk County Legislator DuWayne Gregory, Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig and High School Principal Jeanette Altruda, participated in the official grand reopening and ribbon-cutting of the park. During the brief ceremony, the Town officials deputized the students in an effort to empower them to maintain a positive and safe environment at the skate park.

"It was great that the Town deputized the kids," said Mr. Mannix. "They now have the responsibility to make sure the park is clean and to look after it."



Singing Their Way to All-State

Three talented student-musicians from Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School have been selected to perform in the prestigious New York State School Music Association All-State concerts, with three additional students chosen as alternates. The New York All-State bands, choruses, orchestras and jazz ensembles are honors groups comprised of the top students from school music departments across the state. The eight groups will be directed by renowned guest conductors and perform in one of three concerts at the Eastman Theater during the annual NYSSMA Winter Conference on Dec. 7 and 8.

The District congratulates the following Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School students:

Duvanny Banegas – Alto I, Mixed Chorus
Natalie Korba – Soprano I, Mixed Chorus
David Szabo – Tenor II, Mixed Chorus
Stephanie Fischer – Soprano I, Alternate
Natasha McCombs – Soprano I, Alternate
Janiece Morgan – Alto I, Alternate

The students will prepare for the concert under the direction of high school Choral Director Gina Occhiogrosso.



All-County Musicians

The Fine Arts Department is proud to announce that out of the thousands of students who auditioned for the NYSCAME/SCMEA All-County Festival this year, nine Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School student-musicians have been accepted to perform in the prestigious festival.

Selection to NYSCAME/SCMEA All-County performing organizations is extremely competitive and is based on a student's rating at the New York State School Music Association Solo Festival each spring. The students will partake in the All-County concert on Friday, Nov. 22 at Hauppauge High School.

The District congratulates the following students on being selected to the Division IV NYSCAME All-County Ensembles.

Mixed Chorus

Marcia Aracena, Alto 2
Duvanny Banegas, Alto 1 (Soprano 2)
Stephanie Fischer, Soprano 1
Lindsay Griffiths, Alto 1
Natalie Korba, Soprano 1
Natasha McCombs, Soprano 1

Janiece Morgan, Alto 1
David Szabo, Tenor 2
Jeffrey Yanes, Tenor 2

Concert Band

David Szabo, Trumpet 2/Cornet 1



Dates to Remember

NOVEMBER 18

Board of Education Meeting
7:30 p.m.

NOVEMBER 26

MS and Elementary Early
Dismissal and Afternoon Parent/
Teacher Conferences

NOVEMBER 26

Elementary Evening
Parent/Teacher Conferences

NOVEMBER 27

Elementary Early Dismissal and
Afternoon Parent/Teacher
Conferences

NOVEMBER 28-29

Thanksgiving Recess

DECEMBER 2

Board of Education Meeting
7:30 p.m.

Enhancing Opportunities for Students

Over the last few years, despite the difficult economic climate, the District has been able to enhance and expand educational opportunities for its students. Through the prudent application of grant funding and careful financial planning, students in grades K-12 are being afforded the chance to excel academically and build upon their character through additional extracurricular opportunities.

At the elementary and middle school levels, the District has implemented the mandated Response to Intervention through the introduction of research-based literacy programs such as Foundations, Read 180 and Wilson Group. "Through the RTI process, we found these were valuable programs put in place to support our at-risk students for literacy," said Associate Superintendent Dr. Kathleen Bannon.

Through the use of title grants, the District has been able to increase the number of extended day clubs at each elementary school and the middle school. At any given time, staff members are advising students on health, art

and community service through the Fit Club, Recycling Club, and Home and Careers Club.

At the middle school, STEM initiative classes have been expanded with the implementation of a seventh- and eighth-grade science research class and robotics class. Both classes feed into classes that are also offered at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School.

Additionally, the District has continued its successful volunteer mentor program, which begins at each elementary school, at the middle school and high school.

At the high school, courses have been added in each department to enhance electives geared toward student interests. The District has also begun offering statistics and pre-calculus courses through Suffolk County Community College, which allow students to gain college credits in the same way Advanced Placement courses do.

"We are doing more with less and trying to continue to move forward in providing opportunities for our student body," said Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig.

Technology UPDATE

With the ever-evolving and rapidly changing world of technology and the uses of technology in education always expanding, the District strives to stay abreast of the latest trends. To ensure all students and staff are prepared with the tools needed for success, the District is constantly updating its technology.

According to Executive Director of Technology Todd Harris, the District recently replaced its email system with a virtualized redundant system, set up redundant fiber network pathways between all buildings and added a second Internet connection.

All of these projects will result in less downtime for District technology in the case of a major outage within the area. Additionally, the District installed a new computer lab in the Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School library, replaced 100 laptops on laptop carts, and replaced all personal computers in the secondary computer labs at Great Neck Road and Deauville Gardens East and West.

Currently, the technology department is working with the security department to install a centrally managed access control system as well as additional video surveillance cameras.

Space & Facilities Committee

In the Winter 2013 edition of the Copiague Connection, we included an article on the District's long-range analysis and planning study conducted by Western Suffolk BOCES. The article included information on the District's growing enrollment and what effects it may have on the future of the District. Through the study, it was stated that while the District's facilities are being used



effectively, all buildings are currently at or above capacity. In addition, the District's buildings and grounds infrastructure is aging. Our newest building, the high school, is 45 years old, while our oldest building, Great Neck Road, is approaching 90 years. The latest Building Condition survey, which is mandated by the state, has indicated that certain building systems, such as plumbing, heating, etc. are antiquated and in need of replacement.

To follow up on the study and the Building Condition Survey, the District has convened a Space and Facilities Advisory Committee, which held its first meeting on Oct. 28. The members of the committee are reviewing the District's current facilities and infrastructure condition and projected enrollment growth to determine future facility space and maintenance options to meet those needs. The committee, comprised of stakeholders representing the schools and the community, will report its findings and recommendations to the Board of Education in the spring.

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