



COPIAGUE. Connections

Spring 2014

COPIAGUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS - A GREAT PLACE TO LEARN

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BOARD DAY AT School

Periodically, members of the Copiague School District Board of Education spend a day traveling throughout the district, visiting selected classrooms and observing lessons covering a broad range of topics during a special "Board Day at School." This year, Board Vice President Brian J. Sales and trustees Doris Fischer, Rosemary Natoli and Everett E. Newman III observed student arrival and dismissal procedures, and hallway passing periods. They also spent approximately 20 minutes immersed in classroom activities with students in grades K-12.

"This day gives us an opportunity to see what is happening within the classrooms and helps us to make decisions going forward," said Mrs. Fischer. Added Mr. Sales, "At our Board meetings, we hear many well-prepared presentations, but this day gives us the chance to see those presentations in action. Seeing the interaction between the students and teachers is something you can't get in a presentation."

The day began at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School, where the Board members had the opportunity to observe advanced placement, bilingual and

inclusion classes. "It's rewarding to see students and teachers working together on the programs and initiatives that we've helped put in place over the last few years," said Mrs. Natoli. "Seeing our students excel on all different academic levels is great."

Throughout the rest of the day, the Board members, who traveled with Associate Superintendent Dr. Kathleen Bannon and Assistant Superintendent for Student Services Karen Sheridan, visited various classes and specials, including physical education and art, at Deauville Gardens East, Deauville Gardens West, Great Neck Road, Susan E. Wiley and Copiague Middle School.



"This day gives us an opportunity to see what is happening within the classrooms..."

- Mrs. Fischer

"Having been a member of the Board for more than 20 years, it is interesting to see the evolution of education," said Mr. Newman. "To observe students and staff solving complicated problems and learning to read utilizing technology that wasn't even an option 20 years ago is outstanding."



Copiague School District
Copiague, N.Y. 11726

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Resident
Copiague School District

A Message from the Superintendent

Dear Residents,

Welcome to the Spring 2014 edition of Copiague Connections. As you work your way through the pages of our latest edition, you will find that our students, staff and Board of Education members have been hard at work, as usual. When this issue arrives in your mailbox, we will be in the early weeks of the fourth quarter of the school year – the home stretch to June 26 and high school graduation!

The cover feature of this spring's newsletter focuses on our Board of Education Day at School event, which was held in March. As has been their practice over the years, Board members spent the day in classrooms, seeing and hearing education in progress. There is also a feature on our annual Community Summit Breakfast, where more than 200 people were on hand to hear about the state of our schools as well as the status of the state budget, which directly affects our school budgeting. This year's summit, which presented some new ideas, resulted in very positive feedback from attendees.

We have a number of other items that highlight students, staff members and Board of Education members who received honors and recognition for their various efforts and achievements. The balance of the newsletter provides information about some fun and enriching programs that have been taking place throughout our schools, such as Fun with Fitness and Hoops for Heart. As usual, the common thread through all of these features is our highly motivated students who excel at the variety of activities the Copiague Schools offer as a result of the generosity and support of the Copiague school community.

In closing, please know that we have been working on two important initiatives that will be completed before the end of the school year. Our Space and Facilities Planning Committee has been meeting for a good portion of the year to come up with a scope of work to present to the Board of Education that will address our space and infrastructure needs. Also, and of more immediate importance, your Board of Education and administration have been working for the past several months on building next year's school budget and will have completed the budget-building process shortly before you receive this newsletter. As has been the case each year, the Board is determined to present the community with a comprehensive, fiscally sound budget that builds upon the fiscal discipline of recent budgets, but also continues to preserve all current academic programs and extracurricular activities for students to the greatest extent possible. As a reminder, the school budget vote will be on Tuesday, May 20.

I hope you enjoy the spring weather as we begin winding down the school year. We have much to be proud of in the Copiague Schools!

Sincerely,



Charles A. Leunig
Superintendent of Schools

STATE OF THE COPIAGUE SCHOOLS

The Copiague School District hosted its annual Community Summit, "Believing and Achieving," on March 1. Welcoming more than 200 community members, as well as local legislators, superintendents and Board of Education presidents from surrounding communities, the Copiague Board of Education and administration delivered a state of the district report, focusing on the district's finances and aging infrastructure.

A main focus of the summit was the Gap Elimination Adjustment. Formerly known as the Deficit Reduction Assessment, the GEA legislation was first introduced for the 2010-11 fiscal year as a way to help New York State close its then \$10 billion budget deficit. Under the legislation, a portion of the funding shortfall at the state level is divided among all school districts throughout the state and reflected as a reduction in school district state aid. Since the GEA was introduced, Copiague has lost more than \$16 million in state aid and expects to lose another \$4.5 million for the 2014-15 school year.

"Could you imagine what we could do with \$4.5 million?" asked Board President Michael Greb. "There is a major push throughout the state to eliminate the GEA. What we need is all of the organizations here today to help get the word out to our legislators that we need to eliminate the GEA."

Added Superintendent of Schools

Charles A. Leunig, "We are receiving \$900 less per student in state aid, and that doesn't include our growing enrollment. When you factor in our increasing student population, add another \$400 less per student in state aid. However, while our fiscal situation becomes more precarious by the day, educationally, the state of the Copiague schools is still solvent and our children are in great hands."

To help further educate attendees on the GEA, the district invited Dr. Richard G. Timbs, Executive Director of the State School Finance Consortium, to present his findings on the GEA and fiscal inequities occurring throughout the state.

Also during the summit, audience members were introduced to the Class of 2014 top 10 and enjoyed performances by Eric Dobmeier's Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School jazz band, high school senior Duvanny Banegas and Susan E. Wiley Elementary School second-grade students in Diana Daniels' class. They also watched a video compiled by Executive Director of Technology Todd Harris and Technology Trainer Dennis Pettas and participated in a world café facilitated by National Leadership Development Consultant Dr. Ray Jorgensen. To conclude the event, attendees exited through the gymnasium, where a student and community expo was set up to provide a glimpse of the exciting offerings within the schools and community.

Recognized for Leadership

Board of Education members throughout New York State qualify for recognition by participating in varied New York School Boards Association Board developmental activities.

During the Jan. 27 Board meeting, Board President Michael L. Greb was presented with a New York School Boards Association Board Excellence Award. Mr. Greb was honored for his participation in NYSSBA's leadership development opportunities totaling 150 points. At the March 10 meeting, Vice President Brian J. Sales, Second Vice President Laura Gavey and Trustees Doris Fischer, Rosemary Natoli and Everett E. Newman III were each presented with Board Mastery Awards. The five Copiague members were honored for their participation in NYSSBA's leadership development opportunities totaling 250 points.



Fun with Fitness

March was a month filled with evenings of physical fitness fun, as the four elementary schools in the district spotlighted their physical education programs. The annual Spotlight on Fitness nights gave the kindergarten through fifth-grade students an opportunity to highlight what they have been learning in class, and in some cases, invite their parents and families to participate in the activities.



Deauville Gardens East, Deauville Gardens West and Susan E. Wiley hosted two nights of fun, where students showcased their skills in a wide range of areas including jump rope, basketball and other cardio-related activities. At Great Neck Road, it was a family affair, as parents joined their children in various activities. With the assistance of instructors from Big Al's Family Fitness, GNR families enjoyed an evening of aerobic activity. Great Neck Road also included delicious and nutritious samples of health foods from Muscle Maker Grill.



Hoops for Heart

Copiague Middle School students took the first steps in overcoming heart disease by participating in the American Heart Association's Hoops for Heart program. The program promotes physical activity and heart health through basketball activities.

Coordinated by Physical Education Teacher Steve Rebholz for the fifth consecutive year, students who donated money to the cause participated in a basketball-themed obstacle course. "This year, we coordinated the program to be the culminating activity of our basketball unit," said Mr. Rebholz. "It's something fun and different for the kids and promotes a great cause."

Eighth-grader Arvin Alvarez said, "We're having a good time and it's nice to help people in need."

Through their fundraising efforts, the school collected more than \$1,300 for the American Heart Association.



A Bear of a Tale



In an effort to teach her sixth-graders an important lesson on community service, Copiague Middle School Home and Careers Teacher Karen Kazlauskas had her students make stuffed bears to donate to a local senior center. As part of their unit on sewing, the students spent weeks learning how to sew a button and thread a needle, as well as the difference between a cross-stitch and a backstitch, in order to create their bears.

The students began by tracing their patterns on felt, then backstitched and stuffed their bears, individualizing their creations with buttons as accessories. The finished bears were donated to seniors living at the Dominican Village in Amityville. "The students were really excited to donate their projects," said Mrs. Kazlauskas. "It's important to teach them community connections and have them build relationships within the community."



MS ROBOTICS TAKE FIRST

On Feb. 1, the Copiague Middle School Robotics Club participated in the First Lego League Qualifying Tournament. Competing against 36 other teams, the team of Jackson Bright, Osa Eghafona, Shane Bishop-Espinosa, Adonai Forrester, Max Hamoy, James Holland, Brandon Lugo, Dominic Tavitian and William Wagner earned a first-place trophy for research in a research project.

The team, along with their adviser Stephen Phillips, defended their title on March 2 at the 10th annual Long Island Regional Championship at Longwood High School. They placed first in the Innovation category for creating an emergency supply delivery system to be used in the event of a disaster. They also successfully met the challenge of presenting the vision and procedure for their project.

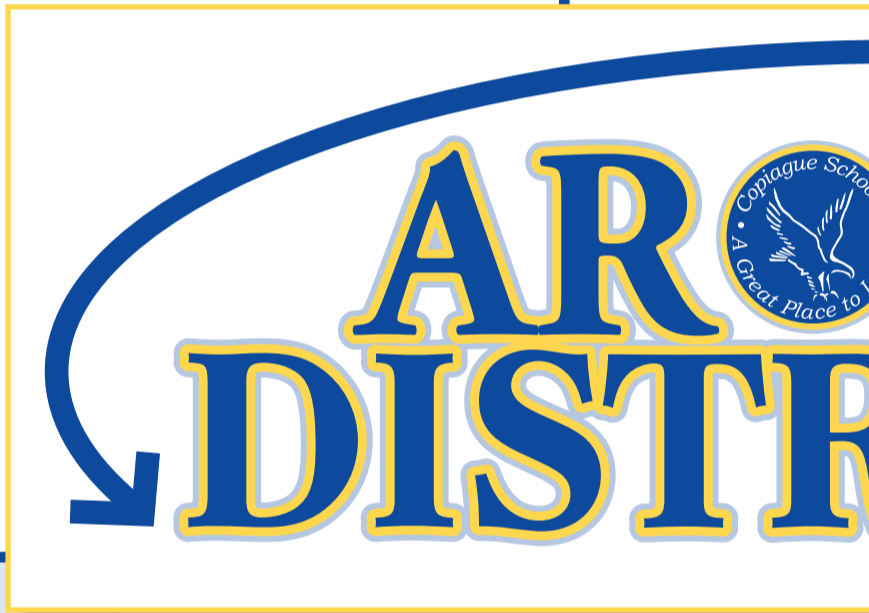
This year's project required students to innovate a solution that would help society better cope with natural disasters. Copiague's team developed the inexpensive, fast and efficient First Aid Delivery System, which can deliver many different types of first aid-related services to stranded victims who are waiting for rescue. For their project, the team performed research on the Internet, in magazines and photos, and by speaking with professionals in local rescue units and the military, as well as Superstorm Sandy victims.

"Their research included many STEM topics, such as the science behind natural disasters, the problems associated with them, the math behind triangular geometry, GPS, laser range finders, design and engineering of a new invention, existing solutions, patents, trademarks and marketing," said Mr. Phillips.



Nati

Walter G. O'Connell, a senior at Copiague High School, has been named a winner of the 2014 National Achievement Scholarship Program. The National Achievement Scholarship Program exists specifically to honor academically talented Black American students and is conducted by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. Her award is being underwritten by NMSC and provides a payment of \$2,500.



Be Fearless



Walter G. O'Connell, Copiague High School senior Veronica Zieba was one of 10 students nationwide to win a Be Fearless Scholarship Award. Sponsored by the National Society of High School Scholars Foundation, Veronica, ranked 10th in her class, was awarded a \$500 scholarship for demonstrating outstanding leadership, scholarship and commitment to her community.

Legislator

Rachel Korba, an eighth-grader at Copiague Middle School, won the "Be Fearless Day" essay contest sponsored by the Suffolk County government offices as an honorary legislator. She will be working with Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory.

COLORS OF

Four students in the district had their art pieces displayed in the exhibit of American Art's "Colors of Long Island" exhibit at the Long Island Museum from March 1 through April 27.

The district congratulates fourth-grader Zaiba I. Wiley, E. Wiley Elementary School, along with their art teacher, Mrs. E. Wiley, sixth-graders Alexis Jakubowski and Brandon Park.



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Pictured from left: Zachary Wilson, Nicolette Vasseur, Ashley Simon, Isabel Colon, Kiana Estevez, Katarina Junge, William Hernandez and DECA adviser Louise Curci. Missing: Alessandra Altruda

DECA Takes Gold

The Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School Distributive Education Club of America, under the guidance of adviser Louise Curci, represented the district in the State Career Conference in March. The Copiague chapter of DECA won two first-place trophies, five gold medals and one fourth-place trophy, along with a chapter community service award and a membership increase award. Student Isabel Colon was also inducted into the DECA Honor Society.

The district congratulates the following winners:

Isabel Colon:

first-place trophy in Wholesale Selling

Ashley Simon:

first-place trophy in Public Speaking

Kiana Estevez:

fourth-place trophy in Job Interview

Alessandra Altruda:

gold medal winner in Decision Making Human Resources

Zachary Wilson:

gold medal winner in Decision Making Human Resources

Nicolette Vasseur:

gold medal winner in Decision Making Marketing

William Hernandez:

gold medal winner in Business Services Marketing

Katarina Junge:

gold medal winner in Broadcast Advertising

OUND RICT *the*

for a Day

le School, was the winner of the "Legislator for a government offices. In her essay, Rachel wrote about daily basis. She will get to spend one day in the legislator for a day with the Suffolk County Legislative

LONG ISLAND

s selected for inclusion in the Long Island Museum. The pieces were on display at the Stony Brook

ismael and second-grader Zuzanna Obrycki of Susan teacher Jeanne Scudlo, and Copiague Middle School hoo and their art teacher Maria Ostrofsky.

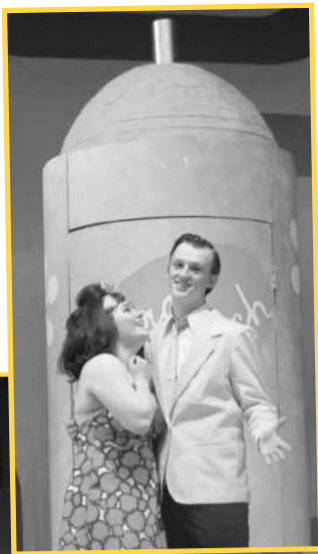


Welcome to the '60s!

For three performances in March, Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School's Copiague Playhouse presented "Hairspray."

Set in the 1960s, "Hairspray" tells the story of Tracy Turnblad's dream to be a featured performer on the dance television show "The Corny Collins Show." Once her dream is realized, Tracy launches a campaign to racially integrate the show. Leading an outstanding cast of performers was Victoria Grinthal as Tracy Turnblad. Working alongside Victoria were David Szabo as Tracy's love interest Link Larkin, Stephanie Fischer as Tracy's best friend Penny Pingleton, Gabrielle Clement and Jeffrey Yanes as Tracy's parents, and Junilson Nuñez, Arianna Espinal, Marcia Aracena, Lindsay Griffiths and Marcus Beazer as Corny Collins, Velma von Tussle, Amber von Tussle, Motormouth Maybelle and Seaweed.

Gina Occhiogrosso directed the musical and received support from Assistant Director Michelle Budion, Choreographer Sylvia Walsh, Costume Designer Meredith Wanzer, Set Designer Lauren Lefkowitz and Pit Orchestra Conductor Eric Dobmeier.



MUSICAL MOMENTS

Based upon their performances at last year's New York State School Music Association Solo Evaluation Festivals, as well as recommendations by their school music teachers, 22 students in grades 5-10 from the Copiague School District were selected to perform in the Suffolk County Music Educators Association All-County Festivals. The students were selected to participate from hundreds of applicants representing districts across Suffolk.

Students prepared for the festival with their school music teachers and then participated in rehearsals that culminated in a series of concerts in March. The students had the opportunity to perform under the leadership of highly skilled conductors from the college music community and professional music industry.

The district congratulates the following students:

Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School

Gabriela Datola, Alto
David Grinthal, Tenor
Victoria Grinthal, Soprano
Kassandra Hanson, Alto
Tiffany Holland, Trumpet/Cornet
Steven Szabo, Mallets

Copiague Middle School

Priscilla Bisono, Children's Voice
Ladrea Buffaloe, Children's Voice
DeAnna Duryea, Trumpet/Cornet
Aaron Eng, Trombone
Nicholas Favichia, Alto
Jaime Kister, Bb Clarinet
Rachel Korba, Soprano
Cecilia Libertella, Flute

Jillian Payne, Soprano
Donna Rivera, Flute
Andrew Szabo, Trumpet/Cornet

Deauville Gardens East Elementary School

Josephine Jean-Baptiste, Alto Sax

Deauville Gardens West Elementary School

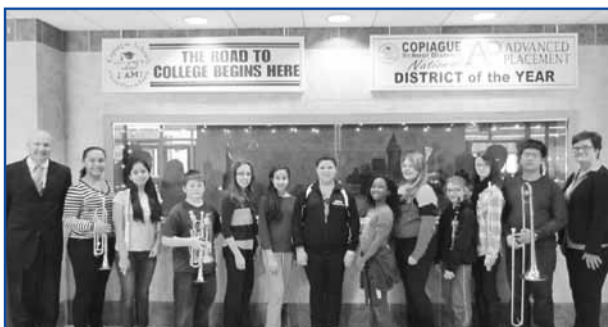
Gabriela Genao, Bb Clarinet

Great Neck Road Elementary School

Delia Exantus, Alto Sax

Susan E. Wiley Elementary School

Andrzej Bubilo, Baritone/Euph
Zuri Milliner, Baritone/Euph



Winter Sports Awards

In early March, the Booster Club at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School sponsored an awards dinner to honor the hard work and dedication of the student-athletes. The winter sports awards dinner recognized members of girls and boys bowling, wrestling, girls and boys winter track, cheerleading, the step team and girls and boys basketball.

Throughout the night, coaches sang the praises of the students' commitment both on the field and in the classroom. Individual honors were given to the most valuable and improved players on the team, as well as a special coaches' award presented to the student who went above and beyond for the entire team throughout the season.

A Golden Eagle award was also given to a student on each team who had the highest cumulative grade point average. The recipients of the Golden Eagle award were: Alessandra Altruda (girls winter track), Jade Dickenson (step team), Ihnacins Grady (girls basketball) Michael Hararah (wrestling), Avery Hodges (boys bowling), Jenna Langan (cheerleading), Timara Jennings (girls bowling), Steven Szabo (boys basketball) and Zachary Wilson (boys winter track).



HS Track Stars Take States

Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School athletes Nickeela Austin and Aaron McFadden participated in the New York State Track and Field State Championship the weekend of March 1. Nickeela ran a 200-meter leg of the intersectional relay, placing first in both the NY Federation (public and private schools) and NYSPHSAA races, while Aaron placed third in the federation and second in the NYSPHSAA for the 55-meter high hurdles. With his third-place finish, Aaron is now ranked No. 35 in the nation.



WINTER ALL-STARS

SPORT	NAME	AWARD
Boys Basketball	Prince-Charles Hickson	All-League; All-Conference
Boys Basketball	Andre Morgan	All-League; All-League Academic
Boys Basketball	Kevin Roberts	All-League; All-Conference
Boys Winter Track	Andy Hernandez	All-League 1000m
Boys Winter Track	Turner Kelly	All-League; League Champ Shotput
Boys Winter Track	Andrew Marino	League Champ 1000m
Boys Winter Track	Aaron McFadden	All-League, League Champ 55H; League Champ 300m; Large School Champ 55H; All-County 55H; LI Champ 55H
Boys Winter Track	Steven Mosher	All-League 1600m
Boys Winter Track	Marcus Weeks	All-League Triple Jump
Boys Winter Track	Zack Wilson	All-League High Jump
Girls Basketball	Ihnacins Grady	All-League; All- Conference; All-County
Girls Basketball	Mikaiya Moore	All-League; All- Conference; All-County
Girls Basketball	Emilyae Ward	All-League
Girls Bowling	Justine Schaefer	All-League
Girls Bowling	Diamond Hunter	All-League
Girls Winter Track	Nickeela Austin	All-League; All-County; All-State
Wrestling	Brett Connor	All-League
Wrestling	Rashaad Harry	All-League
Wrestling	Mike Illicete	All-League
Wrestling	Stephen Illicete	All-League
Wrestling	Edwin Ortez	All-League
Wrestling	Vincent Pensabene	All-League
Wrestling	Erick Rosado	All-League
Wrestling	Kenny Taveras	All-League

Women in Sports Honored

To commemorate National Girls and Women in Sports Day, the Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School Booster Club presented a plaque to Sheila Scales, longtime Copiague resident and supporter of Copiague athletics, for her many years of dedicated service and contributions to the young women of the Copiague community. National Girls and Women in Sports Day is celebrated in all 50 states as a way of honoring the achievements and encouraging participation of girls and women in sports. Pictured with Mrs. Scales are Pete Cesare, Director of Athletics and Physical Education, Varsity Girls Basketball Coach Carole Olsen and the girls varsity basketball team.



Recognizing Outstanding Students

Members of the Board of Education, administration, staff, parents and friends gathered in the Copiague Middle School auditorium to celebrate and honor outstanding students throughout the district who lead by example at the Student Recognition Awards Ceremony.

This tradition, conducted twice a year, was started by the Board of Education to honor students who make unique contributions to their school community or have succeeded despite personal challenges. Twenty-one students were recognized and presented with a certificate of achievement by Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig.

The district congratulates the following award recipients:

Deauville Gardens East

Alicia Lin

Deauville Gardens West

Keyla Nunez

DaVeyah Williams

Great Neck Road

Jason Anthony

Stephanie Campos

Nicky Pena Hernandez

Susan E. Wiley

Sumaykira Almonte

Arlin Alvarez Almonte

Copiague Middle School

Brittany Faustin

Jaime Gubisch

Leslie Fuentes Iglesias

Tatiana Leftenant

Janasia Miller

Brenda Reyes



Walter G. O'Connell

Copiague High School

Lesly Decastro

Isabella Dusanenko

Jessi Garcia

Axel Pineda

Ashley Simon

Mimi Swenton

Zach Wilson

VOTER REGISTRATION

It is important that you play an active role in deciding how your child will be educated. Continuous voter registration is available in the office of the District Clerk from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, when school is in session, for both the Copiague School District and Copiague Public Memorial Library. For more information, contact the District Clerk at 842-4015. Residents who have voted or registered at any Annual or Special School District meeting or election held within the last four (4) years, or have voted at a general election or been registered with the Board of Elections of Suffolk County within the last four (4) years, are eligible to vote. The last day to register for this vote is Tuesday, May 13, 2014.

If you would like to register to vote, you must:

- Be a citizen of the United States
- Be 18 years of age or over
- Be a resident of the Copiague School District for at least 30 days prior to the voting date.

Absentee Ballots

Applications for absentee ballots are available at the Office of the District Clerk and must be completed and returned at least seven days before the election if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter, or the day before the election if the ballot is to be delivered personally to the voter.

**BUDGET VOTE
AND BOARD
ELECTION
MAY 20, 2014**



Messages of Awareness

For the fourth consecutive year, the Copiague School District teamed up with the Knights of Columbus to sponsor a substance abuse art poster contest for ages 8-14. With more than 50 entries, Copiague Middle School students Natalia Kacala (anti-alcohol) and Arlene Taveras (anti-drug) were the winners in the 12-14 age group, while middle school student Joanna Hernandez (anti-drug) and Susan E. Wiley Elementary School student Dylan Orsini (anti-alcohol) were the winners in the 8-11 age group. These students each received a \$50 savings bond and a certificate from the Knights of Columbus. Additionally, Deauville Gardens West Elementary School student Liliana Febo received honorable mention.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Michael L. Greb, *President*

Brian J. Sales, *Vice President* Laura Gavey, *2nd Vice President*
Doris Fischer Henry Johnson Rosemary Natoli Everett E. Newman III

Mr. Charles A. Leunig, *Superintendent of Schools*