



# COPIAGUE. Connections

Winter 2015

COPIAGUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS - A GREAT PLACE TO LEARN

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

### *Superintendent Announces Retirement; Successor Announced*

During their Jan. 12 meeting, the Board of Education accepted the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig, effective Aug. 31, 2015, while simultaneously appointing Associate Superintendent Dr. Kathleen Bannon as his successor.

Board of Education President Brian J. Sales said, "On behalf of the entire Board and administration, we thank Mr. Leunig for his many years of service to the District and for his tireless efforts on the part of the students, staff and community of Copiague. Under his leadership, we were able to continue to raise the bar on student achievement and have laid a strong foundation of success on which we will continue to build for the future of our district."

During his seven years as superintendent, the District's Regents Diploma rate rose to 93%; the Advanced Placement Program was nationally recognized by the College Board three times in the last five years, including being named Small School District of the Year in 2012; and student academic, athletic and extracurricular programs were expanded, with the inclusion of a science research program at the high school and middle school.

Mr. Leunig joined the Copiague School District in 1994, serving as the Director of Personnel, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Administrative Services, and Deputy Superintendent before being named Superintendent of Schools.

"Since the Board handed the trust of the District over to me in 2008, I have done my very best to continue building on the foundation put in place before me," said Mr. Leunig in his letter to the Board announcing his retirement. "I will take with me many fond memories of this special place and the people who have passed through our doors. I am

confident that Copiague will continue to thrive, defy the odds and make children's lives better well into the future."

The Board of Education considered their options regarding the selection of the next superintendent, carefully analyzing the professional qualities and personal characteristics that would be ideal to lead Copiague into the future. Following many internal discussions, the Board decided the clear candidate was already serving the District, and unanimously voted to appoint Dr. Bannon to the position of Superintendent of Schools, effective Sept. 1, 2015. By appointing Dr. Bannon, who has worked closely with Mr. Leunig in her role as a central administrator, the Board continues to ensure the stability of the District.

"Dr. Bannon brings with her a wealth of educational knowledge and experience, as well as a familiarity of the Copiague schools and community, that will create a seamless leadership transition and serve our district well for years to come," said Mr. Sales. "We are fortunate to find such an exceptional candidate within the ranks of our current administration. We congratulate Dr. Bannon on her appointment and look forward to working closely with her during these challenging times for education in New York."

Dr. Bannon began her teaching career in the Brentwood School District, working 11 years as a classroom teacher at North Elementary School. She joined Copiague in 1998 as an Administrative Assistant to the Principal at Deauville Gardens Elementary School. Following a year as an elementary school principal in the Valley Stream UFSD 13, Dr. Bannon returned to Copiague in 2001 to serve as Principal of Great Neck Road



"The Board takes great pride in our ability to hire from within to fill leadership positions with the District. We are fortunate to once again find an exceptional candidate within the ranks of our current administration to lead our District into the future. We thank Mr. Leunig for his years of service and tireless efforts and look forward to working closely with Dr. Bannon."

- Brian J. Sales, Board President

Elementary until her promotion to Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction in 2005. She was appointed to Associate Superintendent in 2012.

Dr. Bannon holds a Bachelor of Arts in comparative history from SUNY Old Westbury, a Master of Science in elementary education from Dowling College, a professional diploma in educational administration from Dowling, and a doctorate in educational administration from St. John's University.

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Copiague, N.Y. 11726

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On the Road to  
College and Career  
...see inside

# On the Road to College and Career

According to the District's mission statement, "It is our responsibility, in partnership with parents and the community, to enable every student to reach high levels of individual academic achievement, to acquire the sophisticated skills necessary for life and work, and to become informed, concerned citizens of a rapidly changing, interdependent society."

Recognizing the importance of providing its students with information on higher education and career opportunities, the District hosts an annual College and Career Day in January. The special daylong College and Career Day is a vehicle used to complement the District's daily curriculum, in which teachers incorporate opportunities for postsecondary success. With months of preparation, each of the District's six schools incorporated college and career themes into their daily instruction with the goal of exciting students about the prospect of attending college and selecting a career path.

Upon graduation from the high school, whether a student plans to enroll in college or enter the workforce, district administrators, teachers and support staff are working to ensure that every student discovers the road right for their future. "No matter which road our students choose to travel, they will be offered the skills needed to be successful on their chosen path," said Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig.

CSD 1

## Elementary School

From the moment kindergartners enter their elementary school in September, they are being prepared for their futures. Throughout their six years in elementary school, students are being led down a path that will transform them into successful adults.

- At Deauville Gardens East, Deauville Gardens West, Great Neck Road and Susan E. Wiley, teachers have imbedded college and career readiness themes into their daily instruction. For example, during a fifth-grade English language arts block, students read about how Milton S. Hershey and H. B. Reese, as entrepreneurs, built their empire. The students not only engaged their ELA skills, but also discussed entrepreneurship and how it ties into college and career readiness.
- The four schools help foster student growth by offering an array of extracurricular activities that focus on career readiness. Students at the elementary level are provided with different after-school programs that allow them to explore various vocations, including journalism and government opportunities, as well as careers in the arts through dance and drama clubs.
- Recognizing the road to a student's success begins with a strong collaboration between home and school, the elementary schools offer various programs for parents and guardians. These programs are geared toward providing parents and guardians with the proper tools to help their children flourish in academics.

CSD 2

## Middle School

Once the seeds of success are laid at the elementary school, the foundation is built upon at the middle school level, where students are provided with a more in-depth career study. When students enter the middle school in sixth grade, they continue exploring the vast opportunities for their future that will eventually lead them on the road to graduation and a career.

- In addition to the courses and curricula directly related to college and career readiness, including the Science Research Program, home and careers, robotics and modern technology, classroom teachers and advisors have various strategies for implementing college and career discussions within their programs.
  - In seventh-grade science, teachers are preparing students for the rapidly expanding STEM employment opportunities by following the new Core Curriculum guidelines for research, innovation, public speaking and writing. Students are asked to consult in experimental design, brainstorming and critical thinking to develop better reasoning skills for any challenges ahead.
  - In the Library Links program, students are working on coding and researching various career fields that use computer coding.
  - During their unit on scatter plots, eighth-grade mathematics classes discuss the different types of association that occur with the amount of years one spends in school and the income one earns.
  - When focusing on a community service project, the Builders Club invites guest speakers affiliated with the cause, creating a human connection for the students. During the visit, the speaker will discuss their individual role within the organization, as well as the roles of all those working behind the scenes attending to the daily tasks needed to keep the organization running smoothly.
- Starting in the sixth grade, students with disabilities are being prepared for their future, whether they are destined for college, vocational school or the workforce.
  - The process for planning transition begins in the sixth grade with a series of questionnaires called Level I Assessments, where students, teachers and parents reflect annually on personal skills and goals in the areas of employment, education and community living. For special education teachers, this questionnaire provides a platform for conversation about appropriate goal-setting and begins the process for transition.
  - Starting in the sixth grade, students slotted for a Career Development and Occupational Studies Credential or Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential are enrolled in a special class of 12 students with a teacher and a teaching assistant, known as a 12:1:1 program. In this program, students are provided a well-rounded curriculum that includes a combination of academics and life skills.

CSD 3

## High School

The high school offers a diverse selection of courses designed to not only help students fulfill graduation requirements, but also assist them in developing a career vision through the exploration of courses that are challenging, interesting and rigorous. When students enter the high school, they arrive knowing the next four years of their lives will be challenging, yet ultimately rewarding.

Below is just a sampling of the opportunities offered to students at the high school to help them prepare for their future.

### • GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT

- The Guidance Department has a vision for all students to take rigorous, challenging coursework during their four years. To help students plan for their future, the Guidance Department works with students and parents beginning in their freshman year.
- Through Guidance Direct, an interactive online college and career planning resource, students can find colleges and scholarships that meet their needs and preferences, review detailed profiles on thousands of colleges and scholarships, take a validated career interest assessment, identify career-related interest areas, discover careers that match their interests, and research in-depth reports on hundreds of occupations.
- The college and career room, located within the Guidance Department, assists students in developing a plan of action related to postsecondary planning.

### • TRANSITION SERVICES

- At the high school, in addition to being enrolled in courses required for graduation, special education students participate in a curriculum that covers money management, pre-vocational skills and personal health awareness, as well as off-campus activities such as travel training and community exploration. Starting in 11th grade, students participate in BOCES vocational training.
- Beginning in September 2014, the District partnered with Abilities Inc. to provide transition services in the community. Students have taken part in off-site training such as traveling on the public bus and train, using a kiosk to complete job applications at the mall, navigating retail department stores, and exploring entrepreneurship at a local bakery and job responsibilities at a pet store. In November, students began job shadowing at Burlington Coat Factory, where they have been learning skills such as customer service, stocking, tagging, organizing, and displaying clothing and household items.
- In addition to transitional planning, the District acts as a clearinghouse of information, able to provide students and parents with direction on what is available to them, including services provided by New York State Adult Career and Continuing Education Services -Vocational Rehabilitation and Office of Persons with Developmental Disabilities.

### • BOCES PARTNERSHIP

- In addition to its in-house postsecondary initiatives, the District partners with BOCES' Wilson Tech Program to offer hands-on career and vocational training and Nassau BOCES Long Island High School for the Arts.
- The occupational and technical programs offered at the Wilson Tech facilities provide Copiague students with the opportunity to explore a career and learn marketable job skills.
- The Long Island High School for the Arts is an individualized course of study. Students who participate receive a specialized academic study in their art form with professionals through workshops, classroom experiences, small-group instruction and ensemble work.



## Transition Fair

To help navigate the process of postsecondary options for students within the special education program, the District hosts a Special Education Transition Fair, where local colleges and vocational schools, as well as private and community agencies, come together to explain the ins and outs of transition and the services they can provide to assist in the process. This year's Transition Fair will be held at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School on March 25 from 6-9 p.m. It is recommended that students and parents of students in grades six and beyond attend.



# Jeanette Altruda Promoted to Assistant Superintendent

During a special meeting of the Board of Education, the Board unanimously approved the appointment of Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School Principal Jeanette Altruda as the new Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. Mrs. Altruda will replace Dr. Kathleen Bannon, who has been appointed Superintendent of Schools effective Sept. 1, 2015.

This newest appointment is part of the District's ongoing succession plan that the Board of Education and retiring Superintendent Charles A. Leunig have been finalizing since he

initially broached the subject of his retirement with the Board more than a year and a half ago. This planning is designed to provide stability for the District moving forward.

"When the discussion turned to replacing Dr. Bannon, the Board, Dr. Bannon and I all felt that the right person was already in our midst," said Mr. Leunig. "Mrs. Altruda brings to the position a depth and breadth of background and experience with respect to curriculum and instruction, and as High School Principal has worked very closely with Dr. Bannon, me and the other members of the

Central Office administrative team."

In addition to her five years as principal of the high school, Mrs. Altruda has worked in Copiague as an assistant principal, districtwide technology trainer and secondary special education teacher. Prior to joining Copiague, she began her educational career as a teacher at the Martin DePorres School. She holds a bachelor's degree in special education from SUNY Geneseo, a master's degree in instructional



technology from NYIT, and a master's degree in school district administration from Stony Brook University. She is currently enrolled in the St. John's University Doctoral Program.

## JOE AGOSTA NAMED HS PRINCIPAL



Continuing the District's administration succession plan, Joseph Agosta, currently the Principal at Great Neck Road Elementary School, has been appointed as the new Principal of Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School effective for the 2015-16 school year. Mr. Agosta replaces Jeanette Altruda, who has been named the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.

"We are extremely fortunate to have an experienced educational professional already in our schools who is well qualified to fill the role as high

school principal," said Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig. "During his years in Copiague, Mr. Agosta has demonstrated his commitment and dedication to the success of all of our students."

Apart from a two-year hiatus from the District, Mr. Agosta has spent his entire educational career as a member of the Great Neck Road family. Mr. Agosta began his teaching career at Great Neck Road in 1997, where he spent nine years teaching second, fourth and fifth grades. Following two years as Assistant Principal in the

South Huntington School District, Mr. Agosta returned to Copiague in 2008 and has served as Principal of Great Neck Road since that time.

Mr. Agosta received his Bachelor of Arts from Long Island University, Southampton Campus where he was the valedictorian. He holds a Master of Arts in liberal studies from Stony Brook University and numerous certifications, including an Advanced Graduate Certificate in Educational Computing and NYS School Administrator and Supervisor.

## Karla Cangelosi Appointed GNR Principal

A member of the Great Neck Road family for more than 15 years, Karla Cangelosi has been selected to succeed Joseph Agosta as Principal of Great Neck Road Elementary School beginning in September 2015.

"Ms. Cangelosi's appointment as Principal of Great Neck Road completes the administration succession plan the Board of Education and I have been working to create for the last two years," said Superintendent Charles A. Leunig. "She brings to the job a balance of

instructional and administrative experience that complements our educational program. In addition to her vast knowledge and experience in education, her familiarity with students, staff and families will insure a seamless leadership transition."

Ms. Cangelosi began her educational career in Copiague in 1999 as a classroom teacher before being appointed as a reading teacher, a position in which she evaluated students with reading difficulties. Additionally, she has been a primary

balanced literacy staff developer, an administrative intern, and was Acting Assistant Principal at Great Neck Road, before being promoted to her current position as Assistant Principal. She also currently serves as the District's Universal Pre-Kindergarten liaison.

Ms. Cangelosi holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Dowling College, a master's degree in reading from LIU Post, and an educational leadership certificate from Stony Brook University.



### TRANSPORTATION REMINDER

All requests for transportation to private and parochial schools for the 2015-16 school year must be made in writing no later than April 1, 2015 using a Transportation Request Form, which can be obtained at the Copiague Administrative Building or at the school your child will be attending. Required information includes the student's name, grade, address, telephone number, date of birth, and the name and address of the private or parochial school for which transportation is requested.

Requests should be submitted to Copiague Public Schools, c/o Transportation Office, 2650 Great Neck Road, Copiague, NY 11726. If your child is new to the District, you must register at Student Services, as textbooks can be withheld without this registration.

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