

Copiague Connections

Issued by the Copiague Board of Education as an information service to taxpayers and parents



Copiague Public Schools

A GREAT PLACE TO LEARN

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WINTER 2008

Dinner, *Dancing*, & Dessert

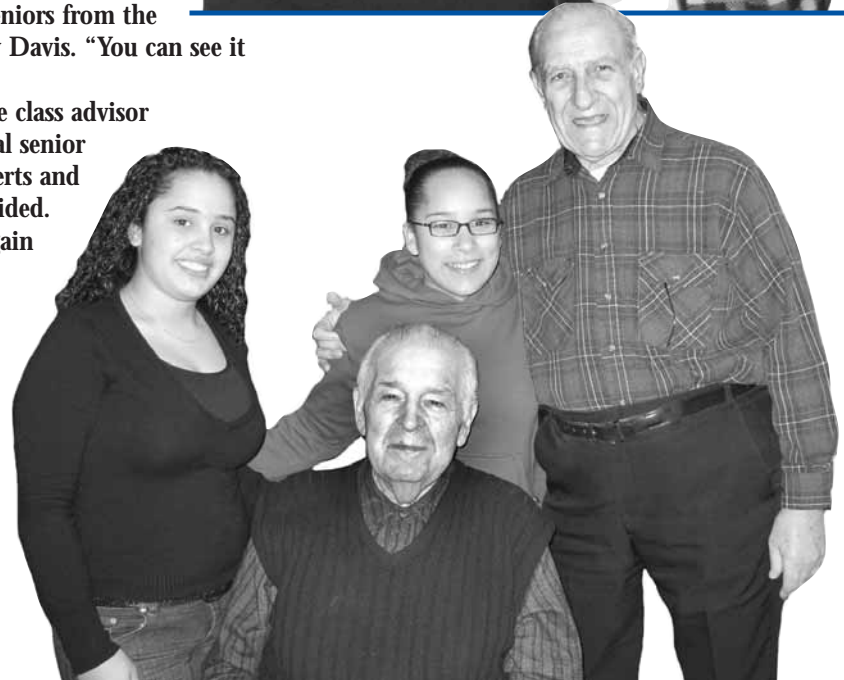
Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School continued its yearly tradition of hosting a Senior-to-Senior Dinner/Dance in the school cafeteria for local senior citizens and twelfth-grade students. Weeks of preparations by administrators, teachers, students, and staff went into making this an unforgettable event for the more than 300 local senior citizen residents in attendance, as well as the high school seniors. The Senior-to-Senior Dinner/Dance provides an opportunity for the District and the senior class to thank its senior citizens for their continued support.

"It's wonderful for the seniors in our school to get acquainted with the seniors from the community, dance, and have a great time," stated high school senior Tiffany Davis. "You can see it on everyone's face that they're having a great time."

Added senior class co-advisor Deirdre Whiston, "As an art teacher and the class advisor it was wonderful to see the senior class share the night dancing with the local senior citizens. The class decorated the cafeteria, served the food, brought the desserts and hired the DJ, while local merchants donated some of the food that was provided. Having taught many of the students in the senior class in sixth grade and again in the high school, it was a great experience as an educator to see how they have grown up into positive contributors to the Copiague community."

During the dinner, everyone in attendance was treated to a rousing performance from the Madrigal Choir. Under the direction of Larry Wurtzel, the students performed selections from their winter concert program and led the guests in a sing-along of seasonal favorites including "Silver Bells" and "Feliz Navidad." The Step Team also performed for the crowd.

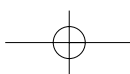
"This is my first year here - my granddaughter Paige is a senior," stated local resident John Fairchild. "I definitely plan on returning next year."



Copiague School District
Copiague, N.Y. 11726

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A MESSAGE from your Superintendent

Dear Residents

At their regular meeting on January 28, the Board of Education accepted my letter of resignation for the purpose of retirement, effective June 30, 2008. The thirteen years that I have served as your Superintendent of Schools have been the most satisfying of my thirty-six-year career in public education. Together we have changed every fiber of this patchwork quilt that makes up our educational world.

I am so very proud of Copiague Public Schools and what we have accomplished over the last decade. Working alongside many outstanding educators, support staff and administrators and with a Board of Education that truly cares about children and seeks the best for their education, we have stayed true to our vision of making Copiague a "Great Place to Learn, Work and Live." Together, our efforts have resulted in higher student achievement, an improved educational environment, and a commitment to the belief that every child has a right to a well-rounded, quality education.

This is why I find this moment in my life so bittersweet, for I truly love my job. Copiague Schools will always hold a special place in my heart as I have enjoyed every minute of my

time as the leader of this district. There is still much to be done, and the future of education has never been more exciting than it is right now. Our district is well poised for these challenges and will continue to move forward.

As I look forward to my retirement, I take with me many wonderful memories of my years in education. In my heart I know that our school district is in a good place, and the future will only be brighter as you build upon the foundation that together we have constructed. Thank you for all your support these many years.



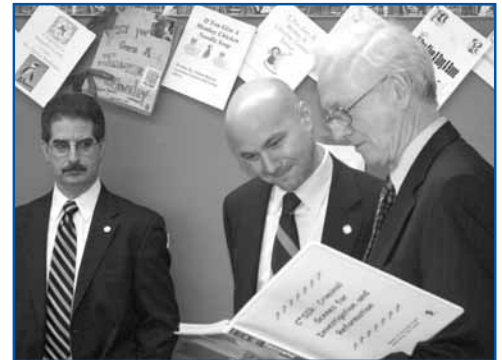
William R. Bolton, Ed.D.

STATE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION *Visits District*

Seeing is believing, and that's exactly what Richard Mills, New York State Commissioner of Education, did during his recent visit to the Copiague School District. "We've always talked about the smart strategies used by the Copiague School District," stated Commissioner Mills. "So I decided to visit and see for myself."

During his visit, Commissioner Mills met with Board of Education President Brian J. Sales, Superintendent of Schools Dr. William R. Bolton and central administrators to discuss the strategies and initiatives the district has implemented in order to provide a quality education for all students. Extensive and ongoing professional development and curriculum writing, technology integrated into the classroom instruction, along with increased

staffing and reduced class sizes have contributed to the district's steady rate of improvement. Among its many achievements over the past several years, the district is most proud of the significant increase in students graduating with a Regents Diploma, with 90% of students continuing their education by attending two- and four-year colleges.



Commissioner Mills also noted the district's stability in its leadership. "You seem to always be thinking ahead to what could happen and how to be prepared," stated Commissioner Mills during his tour of the Copiague Middle School. While touring the school, the Commissioner visited several classrooms to observe students and teachers at work and also stopped to enjoy a concert rehearsal being conducted on the auditorium stage.

"We work as a team," stated Board of Education President Brian J. Sales. "The Board of Education, Superintendent of Schools, administration, staff, and parents all work together for the good of our children. We are also very fortunate to have a supportive community."



BUILDING Character

Character education teaches core values, enabling students to develop knowledge and life skills for enhancing ethical and responsible behavior. A new three-year grant from the New York State Department of Education has allowed the district to expand its Character Education Program throughout each building.

"The Character Education Grant is being used to infuse the teaching of civic values, citizenship responsibilities, positive character traits, and cross-cultural understandings to students in the classroom," stated Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kathleen Bannon. "Each building is receiving a portion of the grant for programs that they developed based upon the unique needs of their students."

At Deauville Gardens, the funds are being utilized for development of a kindergarten social skills curriculum, exploration of character education through the use of assemblies and storybook characters, and an after-school art club that designs banners

depicting monthly character traits. In addition, the existing teacher-student program is being expanded, and a home-school connection is being forged through a series of parent workshops.

Great Neck Road students are Building New Ideals in Character Education in the "B.-N.I.C.E." program, which is a recess project focused on bully awareness and conflict resolution. Students work with social worker Lissette Persico and participate in discussions and activities focusing on respect, fairness, caring, trustworthiness, responsibility, and citizenship.

Susan E. Wiley Elementary School is using an after-school program for targeted students in grades 3-5 that focuses on enhancement of self-esteem and improvement of social, emotional, and academic well-being. The goal of the program is to provide students with the necessary tools to feel successful and become problem solvers. Their time after school is spent completing homework and art projects,

as well as participation in structured gym time.

At the Middle School an extended-day service-learning program is offered for a group of targeted students. Guidance Counselor Stephanie Valeiko leads "The Esteem Team" to promote character, civility, and citizenship on Friday afternoons. Six teachers and 70 students are currently working on a school beautification project to be located between the J-Wing of the middle school and central administration offices.

The High School is using the grant to expand The Legacy Group, Renaissance Program, Reconnecting Youth, and Students of Unified Leaders (S.O.U.L.), and other initiatives. Each group works to provide opportunities for success for its members.

"The development of character education in our schools is important because it assists us in nurturing ethical, responsible, and caring young people by modeling and teaching good character," said Dr. Bannon.

Holidays Made Warm

Throughout the month of December, students in the district's three elementary schools got into the holiday spirit and learned the value of giving back by working together to make the holidays a little brighter for a few of their fellow students. The students at Deauville Gardens, Great Neck Road, and Susan E. Wiley participated in a mitten tree project, which donates hats, scarves, and mittens/gloves to those less fortunate.



Spreading the *Holiday Spirit*

Members of the Copiague Middle School Chamber Choir took time out of their schedule to spread a little holiday cheer by visiting local senior citizen centers. The students, under the direction of Gina Occhiogrosso, sang numerous Christmas carols, folk songs, and even a jazz number, including "Up on the Housetop," "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," and "Please, Christmas, Don't Be Late."



IN THE *SPiRiT* OF GIVING

Getting into the holiday spirit and teaching students the value of giving back, the Deauville Gardens Elementary School held its annual one-day Thanksgiving food drive. Students, teachers, parents, and staff members brought in hundreds of cans and boxes of nonperishable food on Friday, November 16, which was then donated to the Full Gospel Church on Great Neck Road in Copiague, just in time for Thanksgiving.



Madrigal Choir Serenades Board Members

At the December 17 Board of Education meeting, members of the Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School Madrigal Choir, under the direction of Larry Wurtzel, gave a special performance for the Board of Education and administration. The special choir sang songs from their winter concert repertoire, as well as a show-stopping rendition of the "Hallelujah" Chorus from *The Messiah* by George Frederic Handel.

COPIAGUE KIDS CARE

Just in time for the holiday season, students in the Liberty Partnership Program at Copiague Middle School decorated baby onesies and caps for children with cancer. Approximately ten students participated in the decoration and brought the caps and onesies, along with coloring books, word search books, and crayons, to the Ronald McDonald House in New Hyde Park.



While the students were at the Ronald McDonald House, they received a tour and learned about the services provided. The advisors for the Liberty Partnership Program are technology teacher Stephen Philips and librarian Kristina Holzweiss.

Giving Back

This holiday season, members of the Copiague Middle School Builder's Club got into the giving spirit. The Builder's Club collected new unwrapped toys for the John Theissen Foundation; these toys went to underprivileged and hospitalized children on Long Island. The students also organized an ornament sale, with the proceeds going to the Make-a-Wish Foundation.



Dates to REMEMBER

February 11
Board of Education Meeting 7:30 p.m.

February 14
HS POPS Concert

February 18-22
Winter Recess - Schools Closed

February 26
HS African-American Student Organization
Black History
Month Celebration

March 3
Board of Education Meeting 7:30 p.m.

March 3-7
Grades 3, 4, & 5
Mathematics Assessments

March 4
HS Winter Sports Awards

March 6-12
Grades 6, 7, & 8
Mathematics Assessments

March 17
Board of Education Meeting 7:30 p.m.

March 20-25
Easter Recess - Schools Closed

Did You Know...

that Alexandria Rengifo, 2007 Salutatorian and current Harvard University freshman, and her mother were featured in the November 2007 edition of *Family Circle* Magazine? Alexandria and her mother, Adriana



Marquez, were the winners of the First Annual Family Circle/Wilhelmina Model Mother-Daughter Search and received a five-year \$20,000 modeling contract with Wilhelmina, among other prizes.

BOND UPDATE

Phase I of the Excel/Bond has been completed. This past summer the entire roofs of both the High School and Great Neck Road Elementary School were replaced. The construction was done with advanced materials and will provide the district with a warranty for the new roofs against leaks for 25 years.

At this time the district is starting the bidding process for Phase II. Work on Phase II of the Excel/Bond will commence at the end of the school year and will include replacing the roofs at Deauville Gardens Elementary School, Susan E. Wiley Elementary School, and the Middle School. The district will replace windows and install a new hot water heater at Susan E. Wiley Elementary School. The science labs at the Middle School and High School will have new environmentally friendly waste disposal tanks.

Golden Eagle

Jonathan Morgan, a senior wide receiver and outside linebacker for the Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School Eagles, was named to Suffolk County's prestigious "Golden 11" – the best scholar-athlete football players in the county – by the Executive Board of the National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame. Jonathan is the first student in Copiague history to receive this prestigious honor.

The "Golden 11" is comprised of the top eleven players throughout the county based on their ability on the field and achievement in the classroom. Each "Golden 11" member receives a \$500 scholarship award toward the college of their choice.

"You have exemplified excellence not only on the athletic field, but also in the classroom and in your community," stated Leonard Genova, President of the National Football Foundation Hall of Fame in a letter to Jonathan. "You truly are a role model and embody all that is right about scholastic sports."

Jonathan is ranked 18th in his class out of 348 students, has received a full scholarship to SUNY Albany, and is being looked at by Stony Brook University, Sacred Heart University, Bucknell University, and Marist College.



Fall Sports Wrap-Up

Congratulations to the following students for being recognized during the fall sports season.

Sport	Name	Award
Cross-Country	Henry Reyes	All-League
Field Hockey	Ting Chen	All-Division
Field Hockey	Marissa Farina	All-Division
Field Hockey	Annelise Muscietta	All-Division
Football	Jelani Arthur	All-Division 1 st Team
Football	Elijah Butts	All-Division 1 st Team
Football	Steven James	All-Division 2 nd Team
Football	Kurt Kronenberg	All-Division 1 st Team
Football	Jonathan Morgan	All-County, Golden Eleven Award Winner, All-Division, Nominated for Best Receiver Award
Football	Christopher Nelson	All-Division 2 nd Team
Football	Daniel Steigart	All-Division 2 nd Team
Football	Dwayne Stewart	All-County, All-Division, Boomer Esiason Award Finalist
Boys Soccer	Mateusz Anilowski	All-League
Boys Soccer	Joe Pulido	All-Conference
Boys Soccer	Mike Raimondi	Academic All-County
Girls Soccer	Stephanie Amodeo	All-Conference
Girls Soccer	Paige Fox	All-League
Girls Soccer	Shaana Headley	All-County
Girls Soccer	Vanessa Pandalas	All-League
Girls Soccer	Wendy Reyes	All-League
Girls Soccer	Kelly Williams	All-Conference
Volleyball	Dominique Cunningham	All-League

IN THE ZONE

A combination of physical education achievement, solid academics, outstanding character, and leadership in a variety of activities has earned Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School seniors Jonathan Morgan and Zaneta Wykowska awards from the Suffolk Zone of the New York State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance.

The Suffolk Zone honors only one senior male and female student from each high school. To be eligible, students must have earned at least a 90 average in physical education class and a minimum 3.0 overall grade point average in all classes prior to the senior year, demonstrate outstanding character, show leadership skills in both physical education class and general schoolwide activities, and serve as role models for other students.

Jonathan is an exceptional athlete and student. He excels on and off the field in all that he does. Jonathan possesses a very strong work ethic and prefers to lead with actions rather than words and when it comes down to it, his teammates can always rely on him. Jonathan has maintained a 100 average in physical education throughout high school and he plans to continue in athletics and study mechanical engineering when he enters college.

Zaneta is an active member in both school activities and in the community. In everything she does, Zaneta gives her all and strives for excellence and achievement. Her enthusiasm, dedication and ability to think outside of the box have enabled her to become a leader among her peers. Zaneta would like to attend Duke University or New York University to study medicine.



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