

# C COPIAGUE Connections

Fall 2011

COPIAGUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS - A GREAT PLACE TO LEARN

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## Highlights & Happenings

The 2011-2012 school year is off to a productive start in the Copiague School District. Despite numerous program cuts throughout New York State, the District continues to offer its students all educational and extracurricular programs. "We believe that affording our students all opportunities for success today will lead to success in the future," stated Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig. "However, we are conscious of our community and the strain they may be facing due to the current economic climate, so we do everything within our constraints to operate under a fiscally responsible budget."

To that end, this past summer the District began utilizing its transportation routing software and Student Management System to create bus stops and bus passes for students. "The routing software has allowed our transportation to become even more efficient, resulting in a cost savings for the District," said Mr. Leunig. Also this summer, the new cafeteria line was installed using funds from the cafeteria budget, which is independent of the District's general budget.

Many exciting things are happening within each of the school buildings. Below are just a few highlights from around the District occurring this fall.

### WALTER G. O'CONNELL COPIAGUE HIGH SCHOOL

Expanding on the Districtwide College Day initiative, the High School continued to increase its support of students who are interested in pursuing higher education. Since September, the High School has hosted a mini college day, attended by 121 colleges and universities, as well as provided transportation to the College Fair at Suffolk County Community College (SCCC) for 70 students. Additionally, seniors and freshmen, along with their parents, benefited from separate college nights where they received advice on financial aid, saving for post-secondary education, and how to choose the right college. Evenings tailored to the sophomore and junior classes will be held later this year.



DEAUVILLE GARDENS

The High School also began its on-site admissions program, in which eight seniors have already passed the preliminary requirements for Five Towns College. "This year's seniors have had the highest number of early acceptance applications submitted in our school's history," remarked High School Principal Jeanette Altruda. Opportunities to gain college credit while still in high school have also been expanded by offering SCCC credit in statistics, pre-calculus, and theoretical and practical astronomy. In addition, enrollment in the Advanced Placement courses is at a record high.

### COPIAGUE MIDDLE SCHOOL

It is the mission of the Copiague Middle School faculty and staff to create an educational atmosphere in which every student is provided with the opportunity to realize his or her full potential as student, athlete, artist, musician, and individual through personal attention and encouragement. With school back in session, the members of the Builders Club have begun doing what they do best – raising awareness for community service. In their first activity of the year, the students collected school supplies such as notebooks, pens and folders, which they packed into book bags before donating them to students within the District. They sent the remaining book bags and supplies upstate to Plattsburgh, where Hurricane Irene left significant damage.

Additionally, the club raised more than \$1,500 for breast cancer research during their ninth year of participation in the American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk.

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## Help Sponsor College Day

In an effort to get students and their parents excited about higher learning and the prospect of attending college, the Copiague School District is continuing its Kindergarten through grade 12 College Planning Initiative – The Road to College. To help support the initiative, the District is selling sponsorship bricks. If you'd like to help sponsor the Initiative please visit the website at [www.copiague.k12.ny.us](http://www.copiague.k12.ny.us) for more information.

# A Message from the Superintendent

Dear Residents,

Welcome to the Fall 2011 Edition of Capiague Connections! As you read this, we are a little more than two months into our new school year. The leaves have begun to fall and the temperature outside is starting to drop, which makes this a great opportunity to relax inside for a bit and absorb the latest highlights about some of the wonderful activities that are underway, experiences that Capiague students are having, and some important and newsworthy items occurring in our schools.

As is the case each year, our Buildings and Grounds staff did an outstanding job getting the buildings into shape for the new school year. This year Capiague Eagle spirit is rampant throughout our community, whether it is on the athletic fields, our Tournament of Bands, at the annual Kiwanis Car Show, the Chamber of Commerce International Food Festival, Homecoming, or any of the many other events that occur during the fall season. Our schools and our community inexorably intertwined, which makes Capiague the great place that it is and is the reason why Capiague is: **A Great Place to Live, Learn and Work!**

Features in this issue include profiles of new staff members, our service awards ceremony recognizing veteran staff members, Road to College activities (which grows every year!), Homecoming and our latest inductees of distinguished alumni into the Hall of Achievement, summer curriculum projects, and a variety of awards and recognitions, including our latest group of AP Scholars.

What you'll be seeing in this newsletter also demonstrates that despite the effects of the economy, we are still able to move forward with initiatives that will strengthen the educational experience that we provide for the children of Capiague. This is only possible through extremely careful and prudent budget planning. As I have stated before, we cannot allow the positive and important programs that we value and offer our children; the lifeblood of what we do with kids, to diminish. More so this year than ever before, this remains a great challenge to accomplish during this time of economic distress. But remain assured that we continue to strive to maximize our community's precious financial resources on behalf of the children of Capiague. With that in mind, please take note that the Board of Education and administration will be starting the budgeting process for next year earlier than ever. Included on the back page of this newsletter are dates for Budget Work Sessions/Long Range Planning Sessions beginning in late November instead of March, which is when the process started in previous years.

I hope you enjoy the remaining days of fall and the upcoming holidays and hope to see you around the community and in our schools.



Charles A. Leunig  
Superintendent of Schools



TWENTY YEARS



TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

## STAFF HONORED FOR SERVICE

During the Capiague School District's Annual Superintendent's Conference Day, the District recognized the professionalism, commitment, and dedication of staff members who have served the Capiague community for 20, 25, and 30 years.

Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig and Executive Director of Human Resources Todd Andrews brought those in attendance back in time as they shared the news of the year and names of songs, movies, and television shows that were popular in 1991, 1986, and 1981.

Congratulations to the following staff members:

### TWENTY YEARS

**Jean Anziano,**  
Susan E. Wiley Teacher  
**Jeanne Beth DeMott,**  
Great Neck Road Teacher  
**Elaine Remstein,**  
Great Neck Road Teacher

### TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

**Ben Bonaventura,**  
Capiague Middle School  
Assistant Principal

**Ellen Drape,**  
Capiague Middle School  
Teacher  
**Linda LaSusa,**  
Capiague Middle School  
Teacher  
**Patricia Robinson,**  
Great Neck Road Cafeteria Aide  
**Flo Tortorici,**  
Capiague Middle School  
Clerk Typist  
**Rosette Verriotto,**  
Central Office  
School Attendance Aide

### THIRTY YEARS

**Christine Sayevich,**  
Capiague Middle School  
Clerk Typist  
**Rita Soukup,**  
Central Office  
Principal Stenographer  
**Donna Thaler,**  
Susan E. Wiley Nurse  
**Rosanne Wilson,**  
Walter G. O'Connell Capiague  
High School Teacher



THIRTY YEARS

## A New School Year Begins

Staff members in the Capiague School District gathered on September 1 for the District's annual Superintendent's Conference Day. The morning, which began with coffee, tea, and breakfast, gave the staff members an opportunity to reconnect following the summer recess. Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig opened the day with welcoming remarks. He was joined by Board of Education President Michael Greb, First Vice President Doris Fischer, and Trustee Laura Gavey.

In his message, Mr. Greb thanked the staff for their hard work and commitment to ensuring the success of Capiague's students, adding, "I ask that you continue to do as you've done in the past - provide the best education for the children who come through our doors."

During the morning, Mr. Leunig shared the many successes and accomplishments of the students and staff that occurred during the 2010-2011 school year and honored staff members who have worked in the District for 20, 25, and 30 years. Following the service presentations, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kathleen Bannon gave a brief PowerPoint presentation on student academic results from the previous year and what to expect for the upcoming school year.

The Board of Education and District administration would like to recognize the work completed by the maintenance, custodial, and clerical staff during the summer months in preparation for the opening day of school.

Through the long, hot days of summer, the maintenance and custodial department completed all interior renovations and cleaning of all of the District's buildings on schedule, while the clerical staff prepared all documents necessary for the first days of school, ensuring a great start to what is sure to be a promising new academic year.

## A Special Thank You



# New Staff & Administrators Welcomed



**Karla Cangelosi, *Great Neck Road Elementary School Assistant Principal***

Karla Cangelosi has been a member of the Great Neck Road family since 1999, when she joined the District as a classroom teacher. In 2006, Ms. Cangelosi became a reading teacher, a position in which she evaluated students with reading difficulties. Additionally, she has been a districtwide primary balanced literacy lead coach and has acted as the District's universal pre-kindergarten liaison. During the 2010-2011 school year, Ms. Cangelosi worked as an administrative intern and was Acting Assistant Principal at Great Neck Road, before being promoted to part-time Assistant Principal.

"As Assistant Principal, I am looking forward to having a far-reaching impact on our students," said Ms. Cangelosi.

Ms. Cangelosi holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Dowling College, a master's degree in reading from Long Island University, C.W. Post Campus, and an educational leadership certificate from the State University of New York at Stony Brook.



**Ken Craft, *Susan E. Wiley Elementary School Assistant Principal***

Ken Craft joins the Copiague School District as Susan E. Wiley Assistant Principal following seven years in Florida as an elementary teacher and administrator. A native of Long Island, Mr. Craft began his educational career working for the Huntington and Northport School Districts. Prior to his experience in education, he led a successful career working in the private sector.

"I am very excited to be part of the Copiague Schools family and look forward to the opportunity of contributing to its strong community relations throughout the District," said Mr. Craft. "As a new member to the school community, my primary goal is to support our efforts in improving the social and academic environment for all of our students, teachers, and parents. Susan E. Wiley Elementary has welcomed me with open arms, and I will work to ensure that the community's children have a safe, productive, and fun learning experience at school."

Mr. Craft received his bachelor's degree from the State University of New York at Oswego, his master's degree in elementary education from Dowling College, and an educational leadership certificate from Florida Atlantic University.



**Michael Ferretti, *Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School English Chairperson***

Michael Ferretti was hired in the fall of 2007 as an English teacher at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School following many successful years working in the private sector. Mr. Ferretti graduated from St. John's University with a bachelor's degree in English and a minor in business. He received his master's degree in secondary education from Molloy College and his administrative degree from Dowling College.

"I have spent my entire career in education in Copiague, with no plans to ever leave," said Mr. Ferretti. "I am looking forward to a collaborative effort between the English Department staff and myself that will recreate our curriculum so that it better suits the needs of our students and emphasizes a progression in writing."



**Christopher Gaudio, *Copiague Middle School English Chairperson***

Christopher Gaudio has spent his entire educational career in the Copiague School District. He began his career in Copiague as a student teacher in 1995 before being hired full-time as an English teacher in the Middle School in 1996. Following 15 years as a Middle School English teacher, Mr. Gaudio has been promoted to middle school English Chairperson.

"I look forward to working with my fellow department members and administration in order to create a curriculum that is challenging and engaging for our students and will allow them to reach their fullest potential," he remarked.

Mr. Gaudio holds a bachelor's degree in English from the University at Albany, State University of New York, a master's degree in teaching English from the State University of New York at Stony Brook, and a School Building Leader license from the College of Saint Rose.



**Bradley Reminick, *Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School Assistant Principal***

Following 12 years as a seventh-grade social studies teacher at J. Taylor Finley Middle School in the Huntington School District, Bradley Reminick is welcomed to the Copiague School District as the newest Assistant Principal at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School.

"I am thankful for the opportunity Copiague has given me," stated Mr. Reminick. "I look forward to working with our student body and supporting the great staff and administration we have here at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School."

Mr. Reminick received his bachelor's degree in social studies Grades 7-12 from the State University of New York College at Cortland, his master's degree in liberal studies from the State University of New York at Stony Brook, and his Master of Science in School Building Leader from Touro College.



## New Teachers Orientation

Despite weather-related issues caused by Tropical Storm Irene that shortened New Teachers Orientation, the new teachers in the District were able to attend an abbreviated but comprehensive one-day orientation. The program was designed to acquaint the new staff members with the District's philosophy on education, the most effective way to plan for the first few weeks of school, and District technology. It also helped them become familiar with the Copiague community by offering a bus tour of the District. According to Executive Director of Human Resources Todd Andrews, the new staff members received all of the information from the original three-day orientation throughout the following weeks.

During the orientation, Board of Education President Michael Greb welcomed the 21 new staff members. "The Copiague Board of Education has one main goal, and that is to educate the students of Copiague. They are our number one priority. Welcome to our District."



# Community Gathers for Homecoming

Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School's Homecoming 2011 kicked off with the High School student body showing school spirit and pride at their annual pep rally. Blue and white were the colors of the day on Wednesday as the High School students participated in a cheering competition and the members of the fall varsity sports teams were announced.

The spirit continued into the weekend with a homecoming fair and parade. The streets were lined with parents, friends, and neighbors as Grand Marshal Larry Wurtzel, who retired in June after an illustrious 40-year career in the District, led the parade from Great Neck Road Elementary School to the Walter Reese Football Field at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School. Members of the freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior classes designed floats, while the cheerleaders, step team, and marching band entertained the crowd with their talents. The fair brought together students and members of the community, providing them with the opportunity to sample different foods, play games of skill and chance, and enjoy the spirit-filled day.

To cap off the fair and parade, the varsity football game was held on the High School football field, where the Eagles took on the Walt Whitman Warriors. The Eagles played with heart and courage, despite a loss to Walt Whitman.

During the halftime show, the Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School Marching Band treated the crowd to rousing performances. The homecoming court was also announced during halftime. This year's king and queen were seniors Kevin Salas and Dana Randazzo. Joining the king and queen were freshmen Nicolette Giordano and Joel Nunez, sophomores Mimi Swenton and Carlos Portillo, and juniors Tshay Williams and Isaiah Stewart.

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While Homecoming 2011 is officially over, the spirit and memories of the day will continue throughout the school year.





Continued from Page 1

### DEAUVILLE GARDENS

Kindergarten teachers at Deauville received training in the Wolf Trap Early Childhood STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Learning Through the Arts Program, a one-week residency program that infuses STEM learning into pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classrooms using arts-based learning approaches. The program provides professional development for classroom teachers while helping children learn through active participation in arts-infused experiences that are grounded in proven and developmentally appropriate best practices.

These experiences correlate the elements of dance, drama, and music with pre-K and kindergarten outcome standards in math, science, and principles of engineering (problem solving, designing/building) and include the fundamental principles of scientific discovery: observation, description, problem solving and exploration of possibilities, collaboration, and cooperation. The program was offered to the school through its partnership with Northrup Grumman.

### GREAT NECK ROAD

To continue its tradition of welcoming students back to school and getting them excited about learning, Great Neck Road held an Educational Pep Rally. Each day, students and staff participated in activities that commemorated education while promoting school and community pride.

A schoolwide team-building activity kicked off the week with a series of physical activities that promoted teamwork, trust, and cooperation. Other highlights from the week included a song and dance extravaganza about reading, a free book distribution, and special performances by members of the Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School drum line and step team.

"Educational Pep Rally Week helps celebrate education and generates enthusiasm for learning," noted Principal Joseph Agosta.

### SUSAN E. WILEY

Now in its second year, the Recycling Club at Susan E. Wiley has already hit the ground running. The club is composed of fifth graders who encourage their fellow students to "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and be Responsible when it comes to the environment," further explaining that their goal is to "help the environment and have fun at the same time."

As part of the schoolwide recycling program, the students in grades K-5 will recycle their plastic water bottles used during lunchtime and donate the monies collected to a charity of their choice. Throughout the year, the fifth graders will act as ambassadors of the program for all students, participate in projects using recycled materials, and be responsible for returning bottles collected in school for a refund.



## Alumni Honored at Induction Ceremony

The culmination of the District's Homecoming 2011 was the induction of this year's distinguished alumni into the Copiague Hall of Achievement. This annual event is held to acknowledge and recognize former graduates who, through their own success and contributions to society, serve as role models to students throughout the Copiague School District.

This year's celebration represented fifteen years of excellence as the Copiague School District recognized five distinguished alumni for their outstanding achievements and services to humanity, increasing the number of Hall of Achievement members to 77. Members of the 2011 Induction Class included Edward J. Bedrick (Class of 1972), Muataz Jaber, MD (Class of 1972), Robert D. LiMandri (Class of 1983), Dr. Raina Murnak (Class of 1997), and Deborah (Debbie) Tekosky (Class of 1971). To read about the inductees' accomplishments, please visit the District's website at [www.copiague.k12.ny.us](http://www.copiague.k12.ny.us) and click on the alumni page.

The evening concluded with the unveiling of the wall that holds the Hall of Achievement plaques, prominently displayed in the main hallway of Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School. The goal of the District's Hall of Achievement is to introduce positive role models to the school community. Such models by their very nature will inspire students to adopt high aspirations.

## KEEPING CURRICULUM CURRENT

This summer, in order to keep Copiague at the forefront of education and give all students a chance at success beyond high school, the District worked on a total of 34 curriculum projects.

"Every project that our staff works on fills a need for our District and our students," stated Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig.

At the October 4 Board of Education meeting, four projects were highlighted for the Board and the community. Middle School Art Teacher Maria Ostrofsky presented her 8:1:1 Art Expression project. This program, also known as art therapy, will foster healthy communication and expression, promote the integration of physical, emotional, cognitive, and social functioning, enhance self-awareness, and facilitate positive change. Ms. Ostrofsky will plan and implement individual art therapy treatment plans, provide counseling, and work cooperatively with the students' teachers.

Also at the Middle School, Guidance Chairperson Stephanie Valeiko, Guidance Counselor Francesca Spinelli, and Social Worker Nicole Burke have created a social and emotional learning group. Students identified with social and emotional needs, or who may be socially or academically at-risk, meet in small groups that are led by counselors, a social worker or the school psychologist for 30 minutes each week. The aim of this program is to help build relationships and assist students with creating organizational and behavioral goals, as well as to build study skills. The program has been designed to last for 20 weeks.

*The aim of this program is to help build relationships and assist students with creating organizational and behavioral goals...*

To target students who are new to the District as well as to the country, a group of ESL and Native Language Arts teachers worked on creating a SIFE (Students with Interrupted Formal Education) program, focusing on ELA and math. The goal of the program is to identify students who meet the standards of interrupted formal education and provide them with the tools they missed at the elementary level in literacy and mathematics. This program is provided as part of the morning extra-help program and teaches the students strategies to interpret, analyze, and answer questions on the assessments.

Additionally, ESL teachers worked on creating benchmark exams for the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test, which will help determine the skills that need the most focus within the classroom. The benchmark exams will also encourage collaboration between the ESL and ELA teachers, which will help to increase student achievement.



# Awards & Recognitions

## Blast Off to Space Camp!

Through a partnership between Northrup Grumman and the Copiague School District, Copiague Middle School science teacher Monica Csorny and eighth grader Whesley De Los Santos spent a week in Huntsville, Alabama at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center.

During their all-expense-paid educational trip, Mrs. Csorny and Whesley interacted with teachers and students from all across the country. Mrs. Csorny participated in workshops, where she created objects such as a hot air balloon and rockets, took part in astronaut simulations, including use of the 1/6 Gravity Chair that simulated the feeling of walking on the moon, and listened to various guest speakers, including former astronauts.



"This program far exceeded my expectations," said Mrs. Csorny. "It is very inspiring and it filled me with pride for our space program and technology." Mrs. Csorny will incorporate many of the ideas and experiences she learned at Space Camp into her classroom lessons.

Whesley also trained like an astronaut by utilizing the 1/6 Gravity Chair, participating in simulated takeoff and landing exercises, and tumbling and spinning in the Multi-Axis Trainer. "This was a life-changing experience for me," remarked the eighth grader. "You don't get to do this stuff every day. It was really great."

According to the U.S. Space & Rocket Center's website, "This educational program couples classroom instruction with hands-on activities and teaches teamwork, decision-making, and leadership."



## Award-Winning Student-Musicians

As a result of their outstanding scores during the statewide New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) solo festivals that took place last spring, six Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School students have been selected to participate in the

NYSCAME/SCMEA All-County Music Festival, and two students were selected to All-State music ensembles.

Dilara Altuner, Ramon Carcamo, Trevor Coady, Matthew Edlind, Cassandra Riggio, and John Romano have been selected to represent the District at the 2011 All-County Conference. Cassandra was accepted to the band group and Dilara, Ramon, Trevor, Matthew, and John were invited to participate in the mixed choir.

Additionally, Ramon Carcamo has been selected to participate in the 2011 All-State Music Conference, while Cassandra Riggio was chosen as an alternate to the concert band.



## Spreading a Message Through Art

### Student Wins State Prize in Knights of Columbus Poster Contest

Daniel Apolinario, an eighth-grade student at Copiague Middle School, has been awarded the state prize in the 12-17 age group for his poster submission into the Knights of Columbus-sponsored Alcohol and Drug Abuse Awareness Poster Contest. The purpose of the contest is to promote local awareness among young people of the major societal problems of alcohol and drug abuse, and to generate ideas nationally and internationally for the Knights of Columbus substance abuse awareness posters and literature.

"As a charitable organization in the community, our most important responsibility is to spread information and increase public awareness of the dangers of substance abuse," remarked Grand Knight Bob Waidler from the Our Lady of the Assumption council of the Knights of Columbus at the September 19 Copiague Board of Education meeting.



## HONORED FOR SCHOLARSHIP

The College Board's Advanced Placement Program (AP) 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.

The College Board recognizes several levels of achievement based on students' performance on AP Exams. At Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School, three seniors qualified for the AP Scholar with Honor Award by earning an average of at least 3.25 on all AP Exams taken, and grades of 3 or higher on four or more exams. These students are:

Amanda Haran (12<sup>th</sup> Grade)  
Gregory Lane (12<sup>th</sup> Grade)  
William A. Marmol (12<sup>th</sup> Grade)

Eight of our seniors qualified for the AP Scholar Award by completing three or more AP Exams with grades of 3 or higher. The AP Scholars are:

Shannon Blackler (12<sup>th</sup> Grade)  
Christian T. Hodges (12<sup>th</sup> Grade)  
Sarah C. Jordan (12<sup>th</sup> Grade)  
Diane Lam (12<sup>th</sup> Grade)  
Jessica N. Murphy (12<sup>th</sup> Grade)  
Nicole J. Perez (12<sup>th</sup> Grade)  
Cassandra G. Riggio (12<sup>th</sup> Grade)  
Ashley N. Smith (12<sup>th</sup> Grade)

## Outstanding Youth

Congratulations to Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School Senior Nicholas LoCascio for being selected by Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy to receive the 2011 County Executive Youth Achievement Award. The award is given to a select group of high school seniors in Suffolk County who have demonstrated leadership, courage, and model citizenship in all aspects of life.

"Nick is a young man who encompasses the reason we share such pride in Copiague," remarked Jeanette Altruda, High School Principal. "Through perseverance, hard work and dedication, he has stepped away from the difficulties of life, difficulties that may have defined him otherwise, to lead by example. He is a respectful, kind, and modest individual who has served as a model and mentor to fellow teammates and peers."



## New Expanded Budget Calendar

As you are more than aware, our state and nation are suffering from an unprecedented economic situation. Considering the economic challenges that our residents have been facing, the Copiague Public Schools has worked hard over the past two years to reduce certain expenditures and present them at or below current levels wherever possible as we built our annual budgets. This has resulted in a net budget increase over the past two years of only 1.24 percent. Our priority has been to present budgets that are manageable to our taxpayers in the absence of real growth in government aid, limit growth in expenditures, and maintain core instructional programs to enable students to continue obtaining higher levels of achievement.

As we begin to build a budget for the 2012-2013 school year, we will continue our efforts at cost containment. However, the recently enacted cap on the property tax levy increase will significantly impact the budget building process. The net effect will be that our revenue stream can no longer keep pace with our expenses, resulting in a budget deficit, or hole, that needs to be filled. Due to the restrictive nature of the cap on the tax levy, eliminating the deficit to balance the budget could result in program reductions, modifications and potential eliminations, with reductions in staffing likely making up a significant portion of this looming deficit.

As a concerned Copiague Schools Community member, we share all of this with you to assist you in your understanding of the situation currently facing the district. With this in mind, this year we will begin the budgeting process earlier than ever before and weave into the process our planning for the future. To that end the district will host a series of budget and planning workshops; we invite you to attend and offer your input, suggestions and questions. Time will be devoted during these meetings to providing a picture of where we've been as a school district and where we are now, and discussing how to preserve as much as we can for our students moving forward. Additionally, we hope to provide a full explanation of the new tax levy cap and its implications as we work through the budget process.

Below you will find a schedule of these meeting dates, all of which will be held in the Copiague Middle School Cafeteria and begin at 7:30 pm. For the most updated information, please visit the district's website at [www.copiague.k12.ny.us](http://www.copiague.k12.ny.us).

Be assured that despite all the obstacles in front of us, we will do everything in our power to assist our students and continue to make Copiague "A Great Place to Learn, Live, and Work."

November 21

December 19

January 23

February 13

March 7

March 19

April 2

April 16

May 7 - Public Hearing

May 15 - Budget/Trustee Vote

Great Neck Road School

10 am – 10 pm



## EXCEL UPDATE

In January of 2007, the Copiague Community approved a Capital Improvement Bond worth more than \$11 million dollars. By combining state aid with EXCEL (Expanding our Children's Education and Learning) aid, the District was able to fund the cost of much-needed building repairs districtwide without any net increase in school district taxes.

Since the approval, the roofs at all five buildings have been replaced, a new hot water heater was installed at Susan E. Wiley Elementary School, and all remaining original windows were replaced. The High School and Middle School each

installed new acid waste tanks, while the High School also received reconstruction of the structural floor and exterior masonry. Great Neck Road Elementary School also had its exterior masonry reconstructed and old classroom ceilings were replaced.

Additionally, through favorable bids and careful management of the funds entrusted to the District by the community, additional projects not originally included in the scope of work were completed. A few of the projects that were completed include ceiling tile replacement and lighting at the High School, and new doors and historically correct windows at Great Neck Road (pictured at left).

## Celebrating Service



Every year, New York State reserves one week in October to recognize the dedication of school board members. School Board Recognition Week serves as an opportunity for faculty members, students, and community residents to acknowledge and thank their Board of Education members.

To celebrate School Board Recognition Week, members of the Copiague Middle School Chamber Chorus entertained the crowd by performing two musical numbers prior to the October 24 Board meeting. Under the direction of Marc Levenson, the students sang "Once Upon a Time" from the Broadway musical Brooklyn and Journey's "Don't Stop Believing."

During the ceremony honoring the Board, Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig praised the Board for their commitment to the Copiague students. "Our Board dedicates countless hours to serving the students and community of Copiague. Not only do they volunteer their time for our District, but they're also each actively involved with numerous community organizations. We are privileged to have, in my opinion, the best Board of Education, whose sole focus is to provide best opportunities for our students."

To thank the Board, members of the PTA Council, Copiague Teachers Association, Copiague Principals Association, Copiague Supervisory Association, Copiague Clerical Association, and the Copiague Teacher Aides and Teaching Assistants donated funds to various charities, local organizations, and scholarships in the name of each Board member.

## HONORING A FRIEND

On Wednesday, October 12, members of the Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School track team and their coach, George Schroeder, led fellow students and staff members on a three-mile run/walk in memory and honor of Christopher Urban, their friend and teammate. Christopher passed away suddenly one year ago from an unknown cerebral arteriovenous malformation, also known as AVM.

"Chris was a three-season runner and in his junior year when he was suddenly taken away from us," remarked Coach Schroeder. "This run/walk will be a tribute and testimony to his unwavering spirit of determination which has since guided our team. His mantra, and now ours, 'Hard work beats talent, when talent doesn't work hard,' not only is emblazoned upon our team shirts, but also upon our hearts and minds, especially when running and racing."

The students began and finished their run at the High School, making a stop at the home of Christopher's parents, who joined the students and staff on the final quarter mile.

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

Michael Greb, *President*

Doris Fischer, *Vice President*    Rosemary Natoli, *2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President*

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