



COPIAGUE. Connections

Fall 2012

COPIAGUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS - A GREAT PLACE TO LEARN

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Implementing *New Programs*

The 2012-2013 school year is off to a great start and students and staff have already begun participating in a variety of meaningful learning opportunities. This school year the District has implemented a number of new mandated programs, as well as expanded programs. Below you will find information on four programs that were phased in during September – the Dignity for All Students Act, Response to Intervention, Annual Professional Performance Review and the Wilson Reading Program.

Dignity for All Students Act (DASA)

DASA, also referred to as the Dignity Act, is a comprehensive anti-bullying legislation that is designed to provide students in public schools with an educational environment free of discrimination and harassment. It prohibits harassment and discrimination of students and staff, particularly that which is based on a student's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex. Additionally, it is intended to foster a culture of civility in public school and prevent conduct inconsistent with a school's mission.

In order to align all District policy and procedures to the new law, administrators and teachers updated districtwide definitions of harassment, discrimination and hazing. Additionally, the committee updated the District's Code of Conduct, created the positions of building-level Dignity Act Coordinators, aligned reporting, investigation and resolution procedures, and created instruction in civility, citizenship and character education.

"The District is committed to creating a school environment for our students and staff that is free from all harassment and discriminations," said Assistant Superintendent for Student Services and DASA Committee Chairperson Karen Sheridan. "All of our staff members have been provided with an overview of the new policy and will participate in training during upcoming Superintendent's conference days."

Beginning in July 2013, DASA will also include legislation to protect students from cyberbullying.

Response to Intervention (RTI)

RTI is a general education initiative mandated for students through fourth grade that focuses on increasing academic achievement for students. The first step in the process is an online reading test that assesses each student's reading ability.

"RTI is a proactive, multi-tiered approach that identifies

general education students struggling in academic areas and provides them with systematically applied strategies and targeted instruction at varying levels," explained Associate Superintendent Dr. Kathleen Bannon. In order to assist

a broader range of their students, the District will be testing all students through grade 8. "The test will provide us with valuable information on literacy for all of our middle and elementary students. By pinpointing a student's literacy weaknesses, we will be able to provide them with intervention services that will make them successful readers," said Dr. Bannon.

Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR)

APPR requires school districts to annually evaluate the performance of probationary and tenured teachers providing instructional services, as well as all building principals. The main purpose behind APPR is to improve student achievement through improved teacher and principal performance and ensure that all students are college- and career-ready when they graduate high school. Performance of staff will be evaluated on a 60/40 scale, with 60 percent of a review based on multiple measures of teacher/principal effectiveness, while 40 percent will be based upon measures of student achievement.

Wilson Reading Programs

Wilson Reading programs are research-based programs developed more than 20 years ago that offer a multisensory (use of hands, eyes, ears and voice) approach to instruction, while also offering multitiered reading and spelling programs for elementary, secondary and adult learners. The District has used the Wilson program "Foundations" for students in kindergarten through third grade in whole-class and small-group lessons. Foundations thoroughly teaches the foundational skills of the Common Core State Standards and supports the standards for reading, writing and language. Additionally, it addresses all five areas of reading instruction (phonemic awareness, phonics and word study, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension), with an emphasis on systematic phonics and study of word structure. It also incorporates spelling and handwriting in an integrated approach.

This year, the District is implementing the Wilson Reading System, which is an intensive program for students who are not making sufficient progress in intervention or who may require more intensive instruction. It is a highly structured reading program that directly teaches the structure of the language to students who have been unable to learn with other teaching strategies, or who may require multisensory language instruction. Associate Superintendent Dr. Kathleen Bannon, Special Education Chairperson Bethany Pokorny, and classroom and resource room teachers Nicole Antz, Kerry Insardi, Megan Moore, Stephanie Nosworthy, Jennifer Smith and Jackie Zachmann completed the yearlong training with a certified Wilson instructor.

The Wilson "Just Words" program is also being piloted in a few classrooms, as well as in the English Language Learner classes. Just Words is a highly explicit, multisensory decoding and spelling program for students in grades 4-12 who have mild to moderate gaps in their decoding and spelling proficiency but do not require intensive intervention.

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Resident
Copiague School District

A Message from the Superintendent

Dear Residents,

Welcome to the Fall 2012 Edition of Capiague Connections!

Before I focus on the highlights of this latest issue, I would like to bring to your attention that over the last three years, our school district has been experiencing a steady, but manageable growth in our student enrollment, which is unique for the south shore of Long Island, where many other school districts are losing enrollment. During this time, we have seen an increase of approximately 200 students. We believe this trend will continue, perhaps to the point where the district may have to add space. While this is not yet a certainty, the Board of Education and administration have prudently commissioned a demographic and long-range facilities planning study that is designed to gather data that will help us come to a determination. Once this study, estimated to take between three and four months, has been completed, the results will be shared publicly at a Board of Education meeting.

As for this issue of Capiague Connections, as always we have for you the latest highlights on some great activities underway in our schools, along with some important and newsworthy items. Features in this issue include: a detailed breakdown of the District Goals for the 2012-13 school year, some new programs that have been instituted, profiles on new and promoted administrative staff, our annual service awards ceremony recognizing veteran staff members, our latest group of Advanced Placement Scholars, Homecoming and our latest inductees of distinguished alumni into the Hall of Achievement.

Capiague Eagle pride is widespread throughout our community, whether on our athletic fields, at our Tournament of Bands, at the annual Kiwanis Car Show, the Chamber of Commerce International Food Festival, Homecoming and the Hall of Achievement Induction Ceremony, or any of the many other memorable events that occur during the fall season. As I often say, our schools and our community are 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!**

This newsletter also demonstrates that despite the effects of the economy, we remain committed to moving forward with initiatives that will strengthen the educational experience that we provide for the children of Capiague. This has only been made possible through extremely careful and prudent budget planning. As I have stated before, we cannot allow the programs that we value and offer our children; the lifeblood of what we do with kids, to diminish. Please be 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 once again be starting the budgeting process for 2013/14 school year in November.

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.

Sincerely,



Charles A. Leunig
Superintendent of Schools

Recognizing Commitment

During the Capiague School District's annual Staff Orientation Day, held prior to the start of the new school year, 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 J. Andrews worked together to dispense fun historical facts and highlight popular television shows, movies and songs that were famous in 1992, 1987 and 1982. "Capiague is a family and we have one of the highest retention rates of staff anywhere. Today I would like to honor a few individuals and thank them for staying," remarked Mr. Leunig.

Congratulations to the following staff members:

Thirty Years

Denise Raimondi
Barry Besemer
Chris Koenig
Joseph Balvin



Twenty-Five Years

Elizabeth DePaolo
Roseann Bertuzzi
Stacy Bach
Maria Riviello
Denise Cordella
Jean-Marie Fortunato
Mary Nolan
Lynne Groveman
Julie Walter
Lisa Flores



Twenty Years

Diana Murphy
Janet Guzowski
Victoria Miranda
Stephanie Colagiacomo



STAFF WELCOMED BACK AT ORIENTATION DAY

At the end of August, the Capiague School District Board of Education and administration welcomed back all teachers and staff with a special Staff Orientation Day prior to the opening of the 2012-2013 school year. The day began with a continental breakfast and slideshow of staff-submitted photos documenting their summer vacation.

Once the program moved to the auditorium, Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig kicked off the day with welcoming remarks to all staff, as well as highlights from the 2011-2012 school year. A few of the highlights included the District's designation of the Small School Advanced Placement District of the Year by the College Board, an increase to a 93 percent Regents diploma rate for the Class of 2012, and the successful completion of the District's Annual Professional Performance Review plan. The plan is a statewide comprehensive evaluation system designed to measure teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance, student achievement and educator effectiveness. "We believe that our APPR plan will do what it is supposed to do, and that is to provide the students of Capiague with the best education possible," said Mr. Leunig.

Also welcoming the staff back was Board of Education President Michael L. Greb. "Capiague is very unique. Our student body is made up of a diverse blend of children from various countries and cultures. For that we, as well as the students, are very fortunate," remarked Mr. Greb. Continuing, he wished the staff a great start to the school year, advising, "Do what you do best – educate our children, the children of Capiague."

Following the introduction of the newest staff members in each building and the presentation of staff service awards, Associate Superintendent Dr. Kathleen Bannon presented "As Our World Changes, Capiague Changes with It." The PowerPoint presentation was an overview of the new unfunded mandates for the 2012-2013 school year focusing on Common Core, Response to Intervention, APPR and the Dignity for All Students Act. Dr. Bannon also discussed New York State's No Child Left Behind Waiver and what it means for Capiague, including the new accountability designations.

As the program concluded, the staff returned to their individual buildings to prepare for the first day of school.



Promotions & Appointments

DR. KATHLEEN BANNON - ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT

With more than 25 years of educational experience, 14 of which have been spent in the Copiague School District, Dr. Kathleen Bannon has been promoted to Associate Superintendent. Prior to this appointment, Dr. Bannon served for seven years as the District's Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, a role in which she was responsible for ensuring that the district focused on quality teaching and learning at every level, from pre-kindergarten through high school.



In her new position, Dr. Bannon will be responsible for planning, managing and evaluating all K-12 curriculum and instruction initiatives, as well as for the improvement of instruction and both short- and long-range planning for continued student academic success and articulation of academic programs throughout the district. Additionally, she is responsible for supervising principals and program supervisors in the development, implementation and evaluation of curriculum, instructional programs, technology planning and implementation.

"Dr. Bannon is a valuable member of the Copiague family," said Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig. "She works hard to make sure that all Copiague students continue to raise their academic achievements."

Dr. Bannon holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in comparative history from SUNY Old Westbury, a Master of Science degree 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.

KAREN SHERIDAN - ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR STUDENT SERVICES

Karen Sheridan has been a member of the Copiague School District family since 2001, when she joined the staff as the Coordinator of Special Education. After many successful years as the District's Executive Director of Student Services, she has been promoted to Assistant Superintendent for Student Services. Mrs. Sheridan began her career in education 22 years ago as a special education teacher. She holds a bachelor's degree in special education N-12/elementary N-6 from Radford University, and a master's degree in education, a school district administrator certificate and a school administrator and supervisor certificate from Stony Brook University.



"Mrs. Sheridan is an advocate for all Copiague students," remarked Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig. "She goes above and beyond to ensure that our students receive the services they need to get the best possible education."

As the Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, Mrs. Sheridan is responsible for planning, managing and evaluating programs of attendance and registration, guidance, special education, health services, psychological services, speech services, homebound instruction and social services. Additionally, she coordinates the activities of the District committees on special education and preschool special education, works with principals, assistant principals and other professional staff members in the implementation of programs, and develops parental support for school programs through involvement and meetings, as well as through cooperation with the PTA Council and relevant committees of the PTA.

COREY SWINSON - DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY

The District is pleased to announce that, upon the recommendation of the superintendent of schools, Corey Swinson has been appointed by the Board of Education as the District's new Director of School Safety and Security. Mr. Swinson joins Copiague from the Bay Shore School District, where he was the Director of School Security for 10 years. Prior to beginning his career in school safety, Mr. Swinson worked in personal protection and played professional football in the NFL for the St. Louis Rams, Miami Dolphins and San Francisco 49ers.



Mr. Swinson is pursuing a bachelor's degree in community and human services from the State University of New York - Empire State College.

JOSEPH BUCCELLO - DEAUVILLE GARDENS EAST SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

When the Board of Education made the decision to create two new elementary schools in place of Deauville Gardens Elementary School, it didn't have to look any further for a new principal than Joseph Buccello. A resident of the Copiague School District, Mr. Buccello served as assistant principal for two years at Deauville Gardens and prior to that taught elementary school for 10 years in the Levittown and Rockville Centre school districts.



"As the principal, one of my main goals is to continue to improve all facets of our students' educational experience," said Mr. Buccello. "I plan on continuing to develop a positive and collaborative environment that emphasizes communication between staff, parents and students. By sharing information and insight, we can work efficiently to provide students with every opportunity to maximize their growth. In addition, an environment where everyone works together openly and selflessly creates a positive and caring atmosphere. Deauville Gardens East will be a place where students are comfortable and that they enjoy coming to."

He earned his bachelor's degree in elementary education from Long Island University, C.W. Post, his master's degree in instructional technology from the New York Institute of Technology and his certificate in educational leadership from Stony Brook University.

NEWEST TEACHERS WELCOMED

For two days during the last week of August, the Copiague School District hosted 15 of its newest employees at its annual New Teacher Orientation.



During the two-day orientation, the teachers participated in workshops, received training on district technology and security, took a bus tour of the district and listened as administrators presented information on the culture of Copiague schools, the needs of the student body and how to ensure a successful school year during the first few weeks of school.

To begin the orientation, Board of Education President Michael L. Greb, Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig and Executive Director of Human Resources Todd J. Andrews welcomed the new teachers.

"The goal over the next two days is to introduce you to what we do here and how we do it," said Mr. Andrews. Continuing with the welcome, Mr. Leunig stated, "We have all of the ingredients for success in Copiague - a kid-centric Board of Education, supportive administration and a supportive, collegial work environment."

To complete the orientation, the newest teachers spent time at their assigned buildings discussing best practices with seasoned teachers.

STEPHANIE VALEIKO - COPIAGUE MIDDLE SCHOOL ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Following the retirement of Copiague Middle School Assistant Principal Benjamin Bonaventura, the Board of Education appointed Stephanie Valeiko to the position. Mrs. Valeiko has worked in the District for almost 15 years as a guidance counselor, chairperson of middle school guidance and middle school dean of students. Prior to Copiague she worked for Providence College as a graduate assistant serving the Education and Public Service Departments at the college level and in the Pawtucket School Department under a Learn and Serve America grant.



"In my new role as assistant principal, I would like to reinforce the presence of teamwork between the middle school families and the staff to improve the academic performance of our students," said Mrs. Valeiko.

She holds a bachelor's degree from Providence College, with dual certification in special education and elementary education; a master's degree from Providence College in guidance and counseling; and a School Building Administrator certificate from the College of St. Rose.



Eagle Pride Soars at Homecoming



Homecoming 2012 kicked off with the Walter G. O'Connell Capiague High School student body showing its school spirit and pride at the annual pep rally. Blue and white were the colors of the day on Friday, September 28 as the marching band, cheerleaders and steppers performed and the members of the fall varsity sports teams were announced. Leading up to their pep rally, the students participated in spirit week activities where they dressed as twins, showed their patriotism and wore "crazy" color combinations on Mix-and-Match Day.

On Saturday, September 29, Capiague spirit was in full effect as proud students, staff, community members, family and friends celebrated the District's annual homecoming day festivities. Kicking off the morning was a parade down Great Neck Road led by members of the Board of Education and administration, which then proceeded onto the Walter Reese Football Field to honor this year's grand marshals, the O'Connell brothers: Walter, Francis, Joe, Chris and Patrick.

Following the parade, it was on to the fair, where a

carnavalesque atmosphere provided music for dancing, games and food that everyone could enjoy leading up to the kickoff of the football game. Despite a well-attended and hard-fought game, the Eagles were unsuccessful in their bid to beat Smithtown West.

During halftime, the award-winning marching band entertained the audience, and members of the homecoming court were announced. This year's court included seniors Amer Islam and Dejah Singletary as king and queen, and juniors Jordan Capozzi and Danesa Collado, sophomores Anthony Vega and Mariahelena Ruiz and freshmen Christian Rojas and Sage Cofone as princes and princesses.

Capping off the day's events was the District's annual Hall of Achievement Induction. This year, five members were inducted for their contributions to society. The Hall of Achievement Class of 2012 featured: Annemarie Conlon, Ph.D. (1977), Derrick Davis (1996), Michael B. Falzarano (1969), Sharon A. Fattoruso (1962) and Regina V. Sharpe (1989).

Alumni Inducted into HALL OF ACHIEVEMENT

Every year for over 15 years, the Capiague School District hosts an induction ceremony for its Hall of Achievement. The induction, which serves as the culmination of the District's homecoming celebration, recognizes graduates of Capiague High School who have succeeded in their lives and careers, or who may have distinguished themselves by virtue of their contributions to community and society. The primary goal of the Hall of Achievement is to build a sense of pride for all Capiague graduates – past, present and future.

In celebration of the 16th year of the Hall of Achievement, five alumni were inducted into the Hall on September 29. This year's inductees were Annemarie Conlon, Ph.D. (Class of 1977), Derrick Davis (Class of 1996), Michael B. Falzarano (Class of 1969), Sharon A. Fattoruso (Class of 1962) and Regina V. Sharpe (Class of 1989). With the induction of these five outstanding individuals, the Hall of Achievement boasts 82 alumni.

"The goal of the Hall of Achievement is to introduce positive role models to our school community," stated Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig. "Such models, by their very nature, inspire students to adopt high aspirations."

As a special treat this year, inductee Derrick Davis performed with the Madrigal Choir, singing "O Sifuni Mungu." Following the Madrigal performance, the audience was introduced to each inductee by the person who had nominated them for the special honor. Each inductee was then presented with a plaque commemorating their induction and spoke a few words about what the induction and Capiague meant to them.

The evening concluded with the unveiling of the wall that holds the Hall of Achievement plaques, which are prominently displayed in the main hallway of Walter G. O'Connell Capiague High School. For more information on each inductee, please visit the alumni page of the District website, www.capiague.k12.ny.us.



Making Their Mark

Copague fifth-graders are choosing to make their mark on the world this year. Students in Jennifer Wolford's class at Susan E. Wiley Elementary School celebrated International Dot Day on September 15 by expressing themselves and how they plan to make a difference in the world.

To prepare for their culminating project, the students read Peter Reynolds' "The Dot," which encourages people to "make a mark and see where it takes you." They also videoconferenced with Mr. Reynolds, who told the students to visualize the person they want to be and make it happen. Additionally, the students held class discussions, participated in interactive writing projects and created their own "dot" art projects that allowed them to express to their classmates how they were choosing to matter.

Fifth-grader Brandon Parbhoo said he wants to make his mark on the world by joining the armed forces when he is old enough. In the meantime, he plans to let people know that "whatever you want to do, you can do it if you try and you can choose to matter."



Celebrating Education

The Great Neck Road Elementary School continued its fifth annual Educational Pep Rally Week with all students participating in a schoolwide team-building activity.

Physical education teachers Bill Bennett and Rachel Cone guided students and staff through a series of physical outdoor activities, all promoting teamwork, cooperation and trust. Activities included first-graders arranging themselves in height order through nonverbal communication, fourth-graders connecting themselves from cone to cone in "the longest line" and second-graders participating in an over-the-top ball pass.

Prior to the start of the physical activities, Assistant Principal Karla Cangelosi addressed all students and staff, stressing the importance of determination, a theme that would be carried out throughout the week.

Additional events included performances by the Walter G. O'Connell Copague High School Copague Step Team and an anti-bullying presentation by the high school's Hip-Hop Club.



Meet the Principal

To help ease the transition of a new school year, new school and a new principal, the fourth-graders in Jessica Zimmer and Jessica Percevejo's class at Deauville Gardens East School worked as a class to interview Principal Joseph Buccello.

In preparation for writing their "Meet the New Principal" stories, the students read famous biographies, then brainstormed questions and grouped them into categories such as overall favorites, health and job. During the 30-minute interview with Mr. Buccello, the students learned that his favorite food is pizza, his favorite school subject when he was their age was science and, if he won \$1 million, he would donate half to charity and spread the rest among his family.

Following the question-and-answer session, the students worked together to compare their notes and were then responsible for outlining their own story and constructing a biography detailing the information they had learned about Mr. Buccello.



Fire Safety

On Thursday, October 11, members of the Copague Fire Department visited the Deauville Gardens West Elementary School to teach the students about the importance of fire safety and prevention. During the interactive assembly program, students were afforded the opportunity to ask the firefighters questions about safety and about the gear they wear during a fire. In addition to the schoolwide program, the kindergarten students took a field trip to the Copague Fire House, where they received a guided tour. The visits were in recognition of October as National Fire Prevention Month.



Stocking Up on Supplies

For the second consecutive year, students in the District are flush with new notebooks, backpacks, lunch boxes and other school supplies thanks to a donation from the United Way and Make It Count organizations. Coordinated between Copague Middle School Principal Andrew Lagnado, Builders Club adviser Maria Ostrofsky and retired Copague teacher Walter Reese, members of the Builders Club unloaded a full-size school bus filled with the supplies outside of the district offices. The members of the club also organized the boxes and filled backpacks with the donated supplies. The filled backpacks were donated to students within the six district schools.

"We're very excited about this donation of school supplies," said Mr. Lagnado. "We are very grateful to United Way and the Make It Count Foundation for their generosity."



Going Green

Tracy Wenzler, a chemistry teacher at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School, spent a week this summer going green. Ms. Wenzler received a full scholarship from the National Grid Foundation to attend a weeklong program offered by Molloy College's Sustainability Institute to learn how to teach green subjects in her chemistry classes. As one of only 45 teachers from Long Island and city schools, Ms. Wenzler learned about global warming and its local challenges, clean energy solutions on Long Island and reducing toxins in the daily environment.



Throughout the week, the chemistry teacher participated in inquiry-based learning, through which she created her own green cleaner using zero chemicals, and visited local organizations that focused on cleaning up the community or promoted green living. "There are so many local organizations that could be a fabulous resource for our students," said Ms. Wenzler. "Sophia Garden, a community-supported organic agriculture farm located at the Dominican Village in Amityville, is right in our backyard. The director of the program offered to come speak with my students, and I also passed along the information to the advisor of our own organic garden club here at the high school. It is great that I not only get to share the information I learned with my students, but with my colleagues as well."

Ms. Wenzler also participated in research and debates on topics ranging from the plastic bag dilemma to oil drilling. Additionally, the group of teachers toured a local Toyota dealership to learn about the automobile company's hybrid car. She plans to incorporate the information learned at Toyota into a lesson when her students are learning about hydrogen cells.

Star Educator

Clare Nugent, an earth science and science research teacher at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School, was selected as one of only 20 educators nationwide to participate in the prestigious Siemens Teachers as Researchers (STARs) fellowship program at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, a U.S. Department of Energy Office of Science national laboratory.



According to Siemens, the two-week STARs fellowship is designed to empower teachers to bring the excitement of authentic research into their classrooms and inspire students to pursue science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education. During the program, Ms. Nugent worked alongside the nation's top scientists on short-term projects that focused on the most current and innovative scientific research happening today. Specifically, Ms. Nugent worked on a paleontological dig, where she was responsible for digging up a woolly mammoth bone, taking samples and performing experiments to figure out where the bone came from – whether it was native to the area or was brought in by the elements.

"It was such an honor to be chosen for this program," said Ms. Nugent. "It was absolutely mind-blowing to work in a lab with world-class scientists working on cutting-edge research, as well as a wonderful opportunity to network with science teachers from across the country and seeing what they're doing in their classrooms."

Through her participation in the program, Ms. Nugent received a grant that allowed her to purchase materials she will use with her students to do a science experiment related to her work in the STARs lab. Additionally, Ms. Nugent is working with Great Neck Road Principal Joseph Agosta to create a Science Day at Copiague. The program will be held during the District's College Day and will introduce elementary students to STEM careers. "Science Day will be geared toward getting students excited about opportunities related to STEM and thinking about careers they may not have known existed."

Teacher in Space

For five days this past summer, Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School chemistry teacher Joseph Vanasco participated in a suborbital flight experimental design program at NASA's Ames Research Center in Mountain View, California. During his time participating in the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) program, Mr. Vanasco designed experiments, listened to presentations on how accessible space flight is becoming, participated in discussions on new opportunities happening in science, rode a Zeppelin and received unrestricted access to the high-level industrial research labs.



"This was the best workshop that I've ever attended," said Mr. Vanasco. "It was really exciting to see what I'm teaching my kids in class used every day in a research laboratory. It was really inspiring and I cannot wait to use the knowledge I gained here in my classroom."

While at Ames, Mr. Vanasco was tasked with designing simple chemical and biological experiments that would have the ability to fly near zero gravity. Additionally, his team needed to work with the Federal Aviation Administration to make sure their experiment met all constraints for weight and size and criteria for tracking and communication with the actual device while it was in the air. They also needed to receive clearance from the FAA for their flight path.

"The entire experience was really fantastic," Mr. Vanasco reflected. "I was able to get great pictures of the scientists using the same symbols and mathematical formulas I teach my students. The chemistry doesn't change even when the experiment is more involved."

Safe and Secure

In the Copiague School District, one of the top priorities of the Board of Education and administration is to provide a safe and secure learning environment for the students and staff members. To achieve that security, the District employs a Director of School Safety and Security (read more about Corey Swinson on page 3) who is responsible for overseeing 18 full-time and 22 part-time and per diem security personnel. Each member of the school security team has a background in law enforcement, has participated in a state-certified security course and has completed 16 hours of in-service training. Additionally, each team member is certified in CPR, first aid and verbal judo (capable of diffusing a situation without force) and trained to administer the automated external defibrillator.



District Goals 2012-2013

Every summer, the Board of Education and administration gather together to review the state of the schools and prepare a set of goals they wish to achieve for the upcoming school year. The Copiague School District's goals for the 2012-2013 school year are:

Maintain and Increase Student Achievement K-12

- Implement all aspects of the newly mandated Teacher and Principal APPR plans. Provide staff development as necessary; review and adjust Plans as necessary.
- Commence the integration of the new Common Core Standards into all instructional areas. Provide staff development as necessary.
- Implement Response to Intervention (RTI) procedures/programs to focus on the identification of at-risk elementary students and provide interventions.
- Monitor implementation and opening of new school at Deauville Gardens.
- Develop a multi-year plan for the growth of the districts' fine arts program based on best practices that are aligned with the vision of readying our students for college and careers.

Maintain and Enhance the Quality Fiscal and Support Operations of the District

- Maintain financial stability through prudent monitoring of budgeted expenses and forecasted revenues to ensure that adequate reserves are replenished. Continue to review costs to identify areas to reduce expenditures.
- Review and update multi-year strategic plan and financial model to illustrate and forecast the potential impact of the newly enacted tax levy cap on school district finances as the District moves forward.
- Continue to seek new sources of revenue including grants and greater collaboration with the regional BOCES. Continue to explore the feasibility of and potential implementation of alternative staff benefit plans in partnership with our employee groups.
- Monitor and adjust, as necessary, bus transportation and routing as related to change to single arrival/dismissal at elementary schools.
- Continue to monitor facilities needs; where possible, perform facilities improvement projects as necessary in cost-effective ways.

Recruitment/Staffing/Training

- Pursue all available training opportunities for administrators and supervisors to ensure they become appropriately certified as evaluators and lead evaluators in accordance with new mandated APPR Plans.
- Continue to support smooth leadership transitions and provide mentoring as necessary.
- As a result of retirement incentives that have been implemented, plan for anticipated position turnover in all affected areas. Continue to recruit additional bilingual-Spanish-certified and noninstructional staff to meet the needs of our growing Spanish-speaking population.

Maintain and Improve School Safety and Security

- Ensure smooth transition of new leadership in the area of school safety and security without sacrificing the quality and level of school safety. Provide mentoring and training as necessary.
- Review findings, assess and, where appropriate, implement recommendations from the School Safety Audit Report commissioned during the 2011-2012 school year.
- Continue to aggressively pursue the removal of nonresident students who are enrolled in our district.
- Continue to fine-tune emergency drills and simulations to strengthen the response phase of the district's Emergency Management Plan.
- Review staffing levels and associated costs with an eye toward increasing efficiency and cost containment without sacrificing safety or security.

Improve the Health and Wellness of Students

- Commence full implementation of Dignity for All Students initiative including appropriate staff development.
- Enhance opportunities for appropriate behavior intervention and improved emotional health for students.
- Remain attentive to the ongoing needs of our students regarding food offerings, allergy monitoring, wellness and obesity awareness.
- Track procedures focusing on data collection for immunizations, patterns of illness and allergies.
- Continue to design and offer age-appropriate substance abuse awareness initiatives for parents/guardians and students.

Increase the Effective Use of Technology Throughout the School District

- Where appropriate, expand application of SharePoint and other available data systems to share data, enhance workgroup capabilities and reduce paper consumption throughout the district.
- Upgrade elementary wireless infrastructure.
- Replace districtwide telecommunications system.
- Commence upgrade of districtwide video surveillance system.
- Set up new data center at the high school.
- Enhance network redundancy.

Enhance Relationships with Parents and Community

- Expand opportunities for parental engagement in school and district events.
- Continue to develop Legislative Breakfast into annual Community Summit event.

Scholars Recognized

Forty-four current students and members of the Class of 2012 at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School have earned Advanced Placement Scholar Awards in recognition of their exceptional achievement on AP examinations taken last spring. The College Board's Advanced Placement Program provides motivated and academically prepared students with the opportunity to take rigorous college-level courses while still in high school, and to earn college credit, advanced placement or both for successful performance on the AP exams.

Seven students were named AP Scholars of Distinction for receiving an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams. Congratulations to:

Grace Hall	Stewart Pena-Feliz	Tshay Williams
Christian Hodges	John Romano	
William Marmol	Kayla Rosario	

The recognition of being named an AP Scholar with Honor was given to six students who received an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams. Congratulations to:

David Bunn	Robert Gioia	Gregory Lane
Jose Escobar	Katerin Guzman	Jessica Pearson

By earning a score of 3 or higher on three or more AP exams, 31 students were recognized as AP Scholars. Congratulations to:

Dilara Altuner	Amer Islam	Byron Ramirez
Ashley Arquer	Roxana Jimenez	Asia Reszel
Shannon Blackler	Sarah Jordan	Cassandra Riggio
Dylan Cain	Diane Lam	Kristopher Ruiz
Emily Clark	Nayquana Mask	Natalina Sagliocca
Aleksandra Czarnecka	Manowara Matubber	Beatrice Samel
Austin Fournier	Janice Mayard	Ashley Smith
Regine Garrett	Anthony Melek	Lizbelle Taveras
Laury Gomez Pena	Jessica Murphy	Caitlin Zowak
Keiana Hanson	Alison Nahrevar	
Amanda Haran	Samantha Perez	



No Friend Left Behind

At the end of the 2011-2012 school year, members of the Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School Student Organization of Unified Leaders (SOUL) attended the Long Island Youth Summit at Dowling College. The summit brought together more than 250 high school students for a day of interactive workshops with experts in the fields of government, business/economy, environmental preservation, community and nonprofit activism and education. At the summit, SOUL members were the recipients of the Most Innovative Award for their program "No Friend Left Behind."

"SOUL is a student organization that seeks to alter the cultural environment at the high school," said advisor Jaime Suarez. "We seek to involve students in the district's efforts to improve student academic achievement levels."

Guided by the slogan "No Friend Left Behind," SOUL works to create an ongoing set of student-driven extracurricular activities and programs that aim to increase the general student body's concern for their academic progress. "Peer group pressure is alive and well, and the students involved in SOUL consciously try to be a positive peer group," remarked Mr. Suarez.



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