

## DATES TO Remember

**November 17**

Board of Education Meeting  
7:30 pm

**November 26-28**

Schools Closed

**November 27**

HS Marching Band in Macy's  
Thanksgiving Parade

# MARCHING TO THE BEAT OF A *New Year*

School started early for the 115 members of the Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School Marching Band and Color Guard. Their last week of summer vacation was spent practicing and perfecting their performances for their new halftime show, competition field routine for the 2008-2009 season, and participation in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

The theme of this year's program is Sonoran Desert Holiday. "The theme was chosen because it is symbolic of what we think this year will be," stated Band Director John Wevers. "Its theme is adventure as in the old west and holiday because of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade."

At the completion of band camp, parents, band members, alumni, and community residents came together to enjoy the Annual Band Family Barbecue. The highlight of the evening was the band's first performance of the season, providing a sneak preview of their new program.



## COPIAGUE'S NEWEST TEACHERS READY FOR NEW SCHOOL YEAR

While students were enjoying their last days of summer vacation, Copiague's newest teachers spent their remaining summer days becoming better acquainted with the teaching philosophy and mission of the Copiague School District.

For four days, more than 35 new teachers participated in a staff orientation program designed to provide these teachers with insight into the culture of the Copiague Schools, an overview of the technology tools and resources available to professionals, and strategies to ensure a successful school year. "We have a talented and experienced professional staff," stated Board of Education President Brian J. Sales. "Use them as a resource. Working together you will continue to make a difference for our children."

In addition to participating in specialized workshops, the teachers viewed a presentation created by Mr. Sales, and enjoyed a guided school bus tour of the District to better familiarize themselves with the community in which their students live. "Our Board of Education is extremely supportive, and volunteer for one reason – the children – and they make it all happen," stated Superintendent of Schools Mr. Charles Leunig. "There is support everywhere, plus mentors, resources, equipment and professional training. Congratulations, you were selected after a rigorous interview process. Your job, to teach our children to succeed, will be challenging, exciting and rewarding."



## Summer School Success

This year the district's six-week Summer School Program completed another successful session, with 308 elementary-level students and 870 secondary students enrolled in classes, tutorials, and enrichment camps.

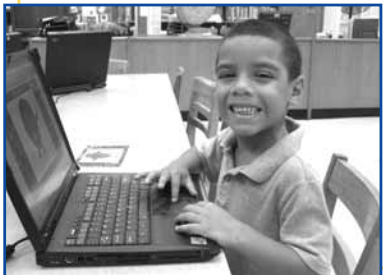
A sure sign of the success of the program: Sixteen students celebrated August graduations because summer school offered them the opportunity to complete their high school requirements.

This year marked the second year in a row that the District offered its student residents prekindergarten summer school and enrichment camps. Enrichment at the elementary level included physical education, music, and

computers. At the end of the summer school, 33% of the English as a Second Language (ESL) prekindergarteners had passed the test which enabled them to exit the ESL program.

The District also offered summer camp opportunities free of charge to students in the District. Three-week academic camps, which consisted of reading and math, were designed to service students in need of support and focused on basic reading and math skills. Two- and four-week enrichment camps of physical education, basketball, technology, band, art, drama, and computers were also available. These camps enabled students to maintain and build upon the academic skills acquired in the classroom and encouraged students to approach the new school year with confidence.

In addition to servicing students' academic needs, the District provided breakfast and lunch opportunities to the students.



## Transition Made Simple

To help acclimate the incoming sixth graders to the middle school, the District continued its yearly tradition of holding a barbecue and orientation for students and parents.

"Welcome to the last step of what we hope was a comprehensive program geared to help ease the transition from elementary school to middle school," stated Middle School Principal Andrew Lagnado. "Today is about the kids, to help them get the layout of the building, practice with their lockers and meet their teachers."

During the orientation, the students and their parents were taken on a tour of the building by their homeroom teacher, given their schedules and locker combinations, and also met with fellow incoming sixth graders. To culminate the event, the PTA helped organize a barbecue during which students and parents were treated to hamburgers and hotdogs as they discussed the events of the day and prepared for the start of school. Also at the orientation this year, a representative of the Copiague Public Library was on hand to sign students up for a library card if they wished.



## Ever-Evolving Curriculum

Over the summer, more than 80 District teachers worked to revise the curriculum of several subject and content areas in grades K-12. Under the direction of Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kathleen Bannon, teachers spent hundreds of hours working together to design, revise, and review curriculum documents.

"Curriculum development is an ever-evolving process that requires ongoing reviews, revisions, and renewals in all content areas," said Dr. Bannon.

This summer, teachers worked on 29 different summer curriculum projects ranging from "Poetry of Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic" at the middle school and Advanced Placement U.S. Government and Politics materials at the high school to "Bridging the Gap – Home School Connection" at the elementary school level.



**Copiague Public Schools**  
A GREAT PLACE TO LEARN

### BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Charles A. Leunig, *Superintendent of Schools*



# Copiague Public Schools

A GREAT PLACE TO LEARN

[www.copiague.k12.ny.us](http://www.copiague.k12.ny.us)

FALL 2008

## Getting to know the *Superintendent*



### 1. What are your top three personal goals as superintendent?

- Having worked in education for 28 years, one of the things I've realized is that learning never stops. When I approach something that is new to me, my nature is to educate myself as thoroughly as possible in a relatively compressed time frame. The variety of positions that I've held over the years have necessitated becoming a quick study. As a new superintendent, there is much to absorb and my goal is to continue learning.
- There are many responsibilities and time demands associated with being a Superintendent of Schools, making for an extremely busy work schedule. An important goal for me is to not lose the connection with our staff that I've built over my years in Copiague. The more in tune I am with our staff, the better I can keep my finger on the pulse of what's happening in our schools.
- Due to our unique situation as a high-need/low-wealth school district, it's important that we keep Copiague on the map and in the consciousness of the Commissioner of Education, the Board of Regents, the New York State Education Department, and our state legislators.

### 2. What are your top three long-term goals for the district?

- Maintaining stability – As we move into very difficult economic times, keeping the district financially stable while trying to balance our budgetary needs and the needs of children with the community's ability to afford it. Also keeping the district stable from a leadership point of view, i.e., smooth leadership transitions when people retire, promoting leadership from within, etc.
- As the community continues to evolve, the schools need to evolve at the same time. The changing demographics of Copiague will require that we be able to adjust continually to successfully meet the needs of the children and families we serve.
- 100% Regents Diploma graduation rate coupled with 100% success on all assessments.

### 3. What district accomplishment are you most proud of?

- Our staff. During my 14 years in Copiague, I have had the opportunity to hire the majority of our current personnel, both on the instructional side of the district as well as our non-instructional support staff. These employees, combined with a very talented and dedicated group of veteran staff, who were here when I arrived, are the backbone of this school district. Educating children is a high stakes, labor-intensive, resource-

driven business. To do the job right, you need the best and the brightest people – people who are dedicated to the cause and are willing to work harder than those who work in schools that don't have the challenges we face. Over the last ten or so years we have built a positive reputation in the educational community on Long Island and across the state, which has resulted in improving our ability to attract talented people to come work in our schools. We want only the very best to work in Copiague to benefit our kids and give our taxpayers the greatest value for the hard-earned tax dollars they are spending on the schools.

### 4. What are the district's biggest strengths/challenges?

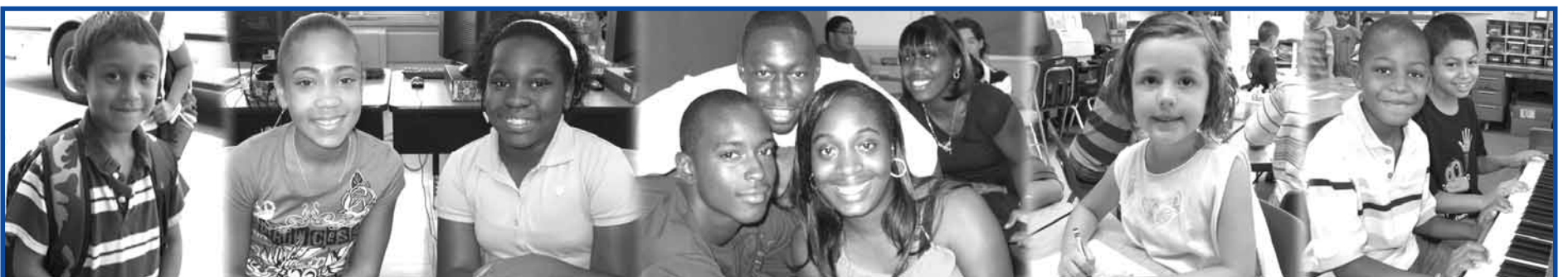
Strengths:

- The Board of Education and our staff. Our Board members are unpaid volunteers who always put children first. They are also very responsive to the needs of our community because they are our community, so to speak. We have quality, caring people at all levels.
- Our comprehensive academic, extracurricular and interscholastic athletic programs for our students – there's something for everyone.
- Our community – Copiague is a great community, and we have a great relationship with the community as a whole and work very hard to be good neighbors. We regularly partner with the Copiague Youth League, Scouts, Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce, Fire Department, Town of Babylon, and other community organizations to help build a stronger Copiague community for our residents and particularly for our youth. Our residents and stakeholders generally feel that the schools are on the right track with measureable yearly improvements in academic results, an increasing Regents Diploma graduation rate, clean, well-maintained buildings and grounds and a genuine concern and dedication for the well-being of their children. This is evidenced by voter approval of our annual operating budget.

Challenges – Copiague will always be a work in progress, but some issues that require both our immediate and long-term focus are:

- If we are ever going to achieve a 100% Regents Diploma rate and 100% on all state assessments, it is imperative that all children are reading on grade level by third grade. We've made good strides in this direction, but we need to intensify our efforts in this area.

*Continued on page 2*



Copiague School District  
Copiague N.Y. 11726

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# Getting to know the Superintendent

*Continued from page 1*

- As the needs of our students and families grow greater, whether they be economic or social needs, language barriers or otherwise, the challenge is to find more ways to reach out and help strengthen their ties to the District, which in turn will contribute to fostering academic success for our children.
- As the economy moves closer to a recession, it is more important than ever to keep our community strong by keeping our schools strong. Although our District is financially sound, tough economic times will invariably force us to make hard decisions. We need to find ways to maintain the great programs we have for kids as our state and country move through this fiscal crisis. Yet we need to remain sensitive to our taxpayers.

Mr. Leunig, a native resident of Long Island, began his career teaching in the Suffield, Connecticut schools. He also served as a teacher and administrator in the Uniondale Public Schools. He joined the

Copiague School District in 1994, serving first as the Director of Personnel until 2002, when he was promoted to Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Administrative Services. In 2006 Mr. Leunig was appointed to the position of Deputy Superintendent.

Mr. Leunig holds a Bachelor's Degree in Education from SUNY - Oswego, a Master's Degree in Education from CUNY - City College of New York, and a Specialist Diploma in Educational Administration and Supervision from CUNY - Queens College.

Mr. Leunig currently resides with his wife, Elizabeth, and their four sons in Wading River.

## Introducing the 2008-2009 Board of Education

During the Board reorganization in July, Brian J. Sales was sworn in for his second consecutive term as President, Laura Gavey as Vice President, Michael Greb as Second Vice President, and Doris Fischer, Henry Johnson, Rosemary Natoli, and Everett E. Newman III as Trustees.



Back Row (l-r) Trustees: Henry Johnson, Doris Fischer, Rosemary Natoli, and Everett E. Newman III; Front Row (l-r): Vice President Laura Gavey, President Brian J. Sales, and 2nd Vice President Michael Greb

## 2008-2009 District Goals

Each year, the Board of Education and administration conduct an analysis of the state of the district and based upon their findings develop goals for the upcoming school year. Remaining fiscally responsible, increasing student achievement, and safety and security are ongoing objectives that all played a prominent role in determining the district's goals for the 2008-2009 school year. A more detailed version of these goals can be found on the district's website at [www.copiague.k12.ny.us](http://www.copiague.k12.ny.us).

- Maintain and Increase Student Achievement K-12
- Maintain and Enhance the Quality Fiscal Operations of the District
- Recruitment/Staffing/Training - Opportunities, Support, Leadership
- Maintain and Improve School Safety and Security
- Increase the Effective Use of Technology throughout the School District

## Celebrating Successes & Starting a New School Year

While students attending school in the Copiague School District were enjoying their last day of summer, the district's administration and staff returned to attend the Annual Staff Orientation Day.

Board of Education President Brian J. Sales, along with Board Trustees Doris Fischer, Rosemary Natoli, and Everett E. Newman III, were on hand to welcome the new and returning staff. "We have a very talented staff assembled here today and by working together as a team, we will continue to make great things happen in Copiague," stated Mr. Sales. "Our results at the end of last year were outstanding, with increased test scores districtwide. Additionally, students graduating with a Regents diploma set a new school record. We believe that "All Children Can Learn," and the Copiague community is counting on us to prepare our children for the future."



Superintendent of Schools Mr. Charles A. Leunig, during his first Conference Day as Superintendent, shared the many successes and accomplishments of the students and staff that occurred during the 2007-2008 school year. "My belief is that all of these successes - whether on the field or in the classroom - will breed additional successes for Copiague students," said Mr. Leunig.

Continuing on the theme of success, Dr. Kathleen Bannon, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, gave a brief PowerPoint presentation on "Enhancing Success Through Data."

A Superintendent's Conference Day tradition was continued as Mr. Leunig and new Executive Director of Human Resources Todd Andrews recognized members of the staff who have achieved a milestone in their service to the school district.

This year the District recognized those staff members who have served the Copiague students for twenty years or more. Mr. Leunig led everyone in attendance down memory lane as he shared important events in history, songs, TV shows, and movies that were most popular over the past 40 years.

In addition to receiving applause and recognition from their colleagues, each person celebrating an anniversary received a token of appreciation from the school district.

### Twenty Years:

- Nickie Fradelos - Assistant Cook, Middle School
- Carole Geackel - Assistant Cook, High School
- Roseann Libretto - Elementary Teacher, Susan E. Wiley
- Camille McGrath - Clerk Typist, Deauville Gardens
- Valarie Williams - Speech Teacher, Susan E. Wiley

### Twenty-Five Years:

- Rose Anne Fuss - Math Teacher, High School
- Kathleen Hadler - Elementary Teacher, Great Neck Road
- Gerard Kelly - District, Groundskeeper

### Thirty Years:

- Michael Beck - Custodial Worker, Susan E. Wiley
- Michael Dervin - Science Chairperson, High School

### Thirty-Five Years:

- Loretta Barbetti - Science Teacher, Middle School
- Warren Bender - Art Teacher, High School
- Theodore Bristol - Assistant Principal, High School
- Susanne LaPorte - Guidance Counselor, Middle School
- Joan Rebholz - Clerk Typist, High School

### Forty Years

- Linda Quatela - Elementary Teacher, Great Neck Road

# District Welcomes New Administrators



## Joseph M. Agosta – *Great Neck Road Principal*

Following a two-year hiatus from the district, during which he was serving as an Assistant Principal in the South Huntington School District, Joseph M. Agosta returns to Great Neck Road as Principal.

Mr. Agosta began his teaching career as a second-grade teacher at the Great Neck Road Elementary School in the fall of 1997. Throughout the next nine years, he had the opportunity to teach second, fourth and fifth grade. During that time he was highly involved with the Shared Decision-Making Team, from which he spearheaded and implemented the Character Education Program. In the fall of 2005, following his participation in the District's Leadership Academy, Mr. Agosta began a full-time administrative internship at Great Neck Road while serving in the role of Assistant Principal.

"It is an honor for me to once again be serving the Great Neck Road community," stated Mr. Agosta. "As principal, I will focus my efforts on the academic, social, and emotional development of our children."

Mr. Agosta received his Bachelor of Arts Degree from Long Island University - Southampton Campus, where he was the Valedictorian. He holds a Master of Arts from SUNY Stony Brook and numerous credentials including an Advanced Graduate Certificate in Educational Computing and NYS School Administrator and Supervisor Certification.



## Todd Andrews – *Executive Director of Human Resources*

After months of conducting interviews and reviewing numerous resumes, the Board of Education has appointed Mr. Todd Andrews as the new Executive Director of Human Resources. Mr. Andrews joins the district from the Northport School District, where he served as an assistant principal at Northport High School.

"I'm looking forward to working with the many fine, welcoming people I've already had the chance to meet and getting to know all those I've not had the chance to meet yet," stated Mr. Andrews. "It's clear that the Copiague community takes tremendous pride in its school district and I'm very happy to be a part of that vision."

Mr. Andrews brings with him many years of secondary educational experience. He has taught high school English, and has been a Dean of Students and an Assistant Principal. As Executive Director of Human Resources, Mr. Andrews will be responsible for the hiring of all district staff and personnel.

Mr. Andrews holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English Literature from Loyola College in Maryland, a Master of Science in Secondary Education from Hofstra University, and a Professional Diploma in Educational Leadership and Administration from Long Island University - C.W. Post Campus. He also has numerous educational certifications, including New York State School Administrator and Supervisor and New York State School District Administrator.



## Mary Klein – *Coordinator of Guidance, K-12*

With more than fifteen years teaching experience and nine years as an administrator, Mary Klein is welcomed to the District as the new Coordinator of Guidance, K-12. Working out of the high school guidance suites, Ms. Klein will oversee the entire guidance department, beginning at the elementary schools and going through the college application process at the high school.

Ms. Klein received a Bachelor of Science in Speech Communication Disorders from Long Island University - C.W. Post Campus, a Masters Degree from Adelphi University in Speech/Language Pathology, a Professional Diploma from Queens College, and is in the process of receiving her Doctorate in Educational Leadership from St. John's University.

Ms. Klein joins the District from Uniondale, where she spent nine years as the Director of Pupil Personnel Services/Committee on Special Education, and prior to that was a teacher of the speech and hearing handicapped, as well as a member of the CSE.

"I am looking forward to working with a superior team of professionals to meet the individual needs of the diverse students in this district," stated Ms. Klein. "With this team, Copiague Public Schools will have the opportunity to increase graduation rates, Regents diploma rates and college acceptances."



## Eric Leibowitz – *Coordinator of Mathematics*

With five years experience as a math teacher at the middle school, two years as summer school principal, and one year as the middle school Mathematics Chairperson under his belt, Eric Leibowitz has been promoted to Coordinator of Mathematics.

During his tenure as Mathematics Chairperson, Mr. Leibowitz developed a "March to March" plan of action for all mathematics assessment preparation, and worked collaboratively with the ESL and special education departments to determine a mathematics curriculum for the English language learners and students with disabilities. Prior to entering the District, he was a math teacher at Intermediate School 364 in Brooklyn.

"I am looking forward to collaborating with the outstanding educators in Copiague on a larger scale," said Mr. Leibowitz. "Together we will strive to keep our positive momentum going to help our District reach the highest levels of achievement in mathematics."

Mr. Leibowitz received his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from SUNY Brockport and his Master of Arts in Secondary Education: Mathematics from Adelphi University. He also received a Professional Certificate from the College of St. Rose in Educational Leadership and Administration.



## Bethany Pokorny – *Coordinator of Special Education*

Bethany Pokorny has been promoted to Coordinator of Special Education following five years as a special education teacher at the high school.

During her tenure as a special education teacher, Ms. Pokorny was responsible for planning and differentiating instruction for English and Social Studies grades 9 – 12, implementing and overseeing the behavior management system, and developing and supporting Individualized Education Programs (IEP) and post educational goals for students. In addition to her teaching duties, she has been the varsity cheerleading coach, coach of the step team, and a class advisor. She also completed participation in the District's Leadership Academy Program, which mentors future administrators.

"I look forward to being a part of the continued growth and success of Copiague," stated Ms. Pokorny. "I am eager to build upon programs that meet the needs of our students and encourage academic success."

Ms. Pokorny received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Middle Grades Education in English and Social Studies from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and her Master of Science in Special Education from Nazareth College in Rochester, NY. She holds certifications in numerous areas, including New York State Special Education, K-12, and New York State School District Leader.