



# COPIAGUE. Connections

Fall | 2014

COPIAGUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS - A GREAT PLACE TO LEARN

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## • SUMMER • • HAPPENINGS •



Over the summer months, the District worked diligently to enhance and expand on the curriculum, affording better learning opportunities for all students. It also hosted its annual enrichment programs for elementary and secondary students and participated in the Summer Meals for Kids Program.

### EXTENDING LEARNING

It was a summer of fun and education as incoming kindergarten through eighth-grade students extended their learning by participating in the District's free summer enrichment programs. The programs provide students with an outlet to explore a variety of creative, unique and innovative classes to equip them with new skills and abilities outside of normal classroom learning. Not only do the courses creatively engage students, but they also support the literacy and mathematics curricula, better preparing students for future careers in the 21st-century workforce. Students are able to investigate new and interesting subject areas, which

cultivate more opportunities for them now and in the future.

At the middle school level, 300 students participated in two-week camps where they could fine-tune their athletic skills, learn new fine-art techniques and participate in various academic activities. Programs included music, drama and art classes; baseball, football and basketball clinics; and a science research program, among other academic-centered programs.

More than 500 elementary students spent a few weeks satisfying their intellectual curiosity by participating in the District's summer enrichment program. Throughout the four-week program, each grade level focused on a specific topic and its different elements. Prekindergarten students learned about bubbles, kindergartners explored water, first-graders studied spiders, and second-graders focused on plants and gardens, while third-, fourth- and fifth-graders investigated weather, rockets and space, respectively. "The program allows us to integrate literature and

mathematics into project-based learning activities," said Summer Enrichment Principal Sarah Rowan. "The daily lessons lead up to a culminating weekly project."

In addition to the enrichment programs, 42 class and 54 tutorial academic sections were offered to students in grades 9-12. Through the academic programs offered, 31 students successfully completed all requirements for graduation in August. Of those 31 students, 27 received a New York State Regents diploma or higher.

### ENHANCING CURRICULUM

This summer, District teachers and administrators worked together to revise different aspects of the curriculum. The summer curriculum writing projects help keep the District on the forefront of education and provide students with the most up-to-date information available. Under the direction of Associate Superintendent Dr. Kathleen Bannon, teachers spent hundreds of hours working together to design, revise and review

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# A Message from the Superintendent

Dear Residents,

Welcome to the Early Fall 2014 Edition of Copiague Connections! Why Early Fall? Since we had such a busy summer period and first couple of months of the school year, you can expect to see both this edition and an edition later in the Fall, when we will report on future events.

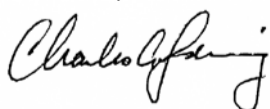
Our school year has gotten off to a great start, with one of the smoothest openings in memory. Many of the usual beginning-of-school-year issues were minimized this year, which is fortunate. In this issue of Copiague Connections, as always, we share the latest highlights on some great activities that occurred before the start of the school year, as well as some things currently underway in our schools, along with some important and newsworthy items.

A sampling of this edition's features includes: our latest group of Advanced Placement Scholars, of which we are very proud; summer curriculum projects; profiles on new staff; our annual service awards ceremony recognizing veteran staff members; and a reminder about our upcoming vote on the district's capital project to address infrastructure and space needs. As has been mentioned in many previous newsletters and public forums, our aging facilities' ongoing infrastructure maintenance needs must be addressed for current and future generations of Copiague children. Our facilities, which were built from the 1920's into the 1960's, must be brought into the 21st century in order to support current educational standards and delivery methods.

In addition, over the last few years our school district has been experiencing enrollment growth averaging approximately 100 students additional per year, which is projected to continue into the future. This will require the district to add space at the elementary level, where our buildings are currently operating at 30% over their capacity. The most cost-effective way to accomplish all of this needed work is through a capital project, which enables the district to leverage available New York State building aid, which cannot be done through the normal budgeting process.

As always, there is lots of goings on in Copiague. I hope you enjoy these Fall days and I look forward to seeing you around the community and in our schools. As has often been said, our schools and our community are one, which makes Copiague the great place that it is and is the reason why **Copiague is A Great Place to Live, Learn and Work!**

Sincerely,



Charles A. Leunig  
Superintendent of Schools



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curriculum documents to ensure they meet the needs of Copiague's students while remaining aligned to the Common Core.

"These upgrades will provide numerous benefits to our students both now and as leaders of tomorrow, creating a more comprehensive educational environment suitable for modern learning standards," said Dr. Bannon.

The 16 projects ranged from a collaboration among the four elementary schools to update the math program to creating a benchmark assessment for eighth-grade English language arts.

## ENRICHING MEALS

The District believes that one of the most important ways we can help our children

perform to the best of their abilities in the classroom is to provide them with a well-balanced diet. To that end, the Food Service Department provides nutritious meals for breakfast and lunch at both the elementary and secondary levels. To ensure students continued receiving proper nutrition during the summer months, the District participated in a free summer lunch program sponsored by the federal government. In addition to the two summer school sites (Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School and Deauville Gardens), the District opened Copiague Middle School and Great Neck Road Elementary School, as well as collaborated with four local organizations, to provide nutritious meals for all children 18 years and younger for six weeks.

## BOE 101: Workshop Scheduled for Nov. 24

Interested in running for the Board of Education? Curious as to what is involved in this elected volunteer position? The Board will be discussing these and many other questions including the responsibilities of this very important position. All residents are invited to learn more about the dedicated commitment it takes to be a Board member on Monday, Nov. 24 at 7:30 p.m. in the middle school cafeteria.

## BOND VOTE: Scheduled for Nov. 13

Following recommendations of the Space and Facilities Advisory Committee and receiving feedback from the members of the community, the Board of Education unanimously approved moving forward with the "A Brighter Future Begins Today" bond referendum.

Aimed at repairing and renovating aging building infrastructure, addressing issues of enrollment growth and the need for additional instructional and support space, and capitalizing on high state building aid, the full project totals \$69.4 million. By combining the projects into a bond, the District is able to receive 75.2 percent reimbursement of the cost in New York State building aid for the term of the bond, significantly reducing the cost to Copiague's taxpayers.

Residents will have the chance to vote on this proposal on Thursday, Nov. 13 at Great Neck Road Elementary School from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Additional information on the proposed bond may be found on the District's website, [www.copiague.k12.ny.us](http://www.copiague.k12.ny.us).





# Emerging Math Leader

In addition to being chosen as a master teacher by New York State, middle school math chairperson Dr. Natasha Murray has been recognized as an Emerging Leader by PDK International.

PDK International is a global education association that brings together top leaders, thinkers and doers to collaborate and inspire one another. Every year, it recognizes a new class of PDK Emerging Leaders. Dr. Murray will be recognized as the latest of these "education change agents" at an upcoming event this December alongside 25 others.

During the event, she and others will gather in Washington, D.C. to meet with federal education policymakers, and share their best practices with each other. "We need to redefine what it means to be 'good' at mathematics in an effort to promote the development of stronger mathematical knowledge and skills for all students," Dr. Murray said. "All students have the ability to develop and enhance their mathematical skills not only for success in school, but to enrich their everyday lives."

Added William J. Bushaw, PDK

International's chief executive officer,



"Recognizing the achievements and commitment of these young leaders is vital to PDK's vision of cultivating tomorrow's great educators. These inspiring individuals will provide a very bright future for the field of education."

The District congratulates Dr. Murray on her latest achievement.

## HELLO my name is

### DEVON GALLAGHER



Devon Gallagher joins the staff at Great Neck Road Elementary School as a part-time Library Media Specialist. Mrs. Gallagher holds a Bachelor of Art in English from Wesleyan University and a Master of Library Science from LIU Post. She has spent many years working as a librarian in public schools across Long Island and currently works part-time as a children's librarian at both the Garden City and Levittown public libraries.

## HELLO my name is

### LORI MACCARRONE



Deauville Gardens West Elementary School has welcomed Lori Maccarrone as a part-time Guidance Counselor. Ms. Maccarrone joins DGW following eight years as a counselor at P.S. 363 The Neighborhood School in Manhattan. She received her master's in school counseling from the New York Institute of Technology.

## HELLO my name is

### BRIAN PROCHILO



Joining the staff of Copiague Middle School as a part-time Technology Teacher is Brian Prochilo. Mr. Prochilo attended SUNY Oswego, where he received his bachelor's in technology education. Prior to joining the middle school staff, he worked as a leave replacement at BOCES teaching building trades and at Oldfield Middle School in the Harborfields School District teaching technology.

## Dedicated Service Honored

Continuing its tradition of recognizing years of dedicated service to the District, Copiague honored staff members who have served the school district for 20, 25, 30 and 35 years. Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig and Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Todd Andrews led everyone down memory lane as they shared songs, TV shows, movies and celebrities that were most popular during 1994, 1989, 1984 and 1979. Each person celebrating an anniversary received a token of appreciation from the school district.



### Honored during the ceremony were:

#### 35 Years

Rose Marie Bell, GNR Teacher  
Stephanie Lanfranchi, MS Teacher

#### 30 Years

Peter Cesare, Director of Athletics  
Karen Swenson, SEW Teacher

#### 25 Years

Melody Cesare, MS Teacher  
Karen Coyle, DGE Teacher  
James Konen, HS Teacher  
Stephen Rebholz, HS/MS Teacher  
Sarah Rowan, MS Teacher  
Nancy Schneider, HS Teaching Assistant  
Michele Smith, MS Clerk Typist

#### 20 Years

Maria Barrera, MS Cafeteria Aide  
Francine Buchheim, MS Teacher  
Rose Clark, SEW Teacher  
Laura Guire, MS Teacher  
Lisa Korsch, HS Teaching Assistant  
Matthew Miles, HS Teacher  
Mary Ellen Ruppert, Superintendent's Secretary  
Tara Wilson, GNR Teacher



# Academic Scholars:

## 50 EARN AP AWARDS

In recognition of their exceptional achievement on the college-level Advanced Placement exams, 50 students at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School have earned the designation of AP Scholar by the College Board. 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.

Alessandra Altruda, salutatorian of the Class of 2014, was named a National AP Scholar. National AP Scholars must receive an average grade of at least 4 on all AP exams taken, and grades of 4 or higher on eight or more of these exams.

Fifteen qualified as AP Scholars with Distinction for earning an average of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken, and grades of 3 or higher on five or more exams. The AP Scholars with Distinction are: Class of 2015 members Melanie Barreiro, Thomas Clark, Christopher Dundon, Michael Hararah, William Hernandez, Natalie Korba, Kristen Stedman and Nicolette Vasseur; and Class of 2014 members Alessandra Altruda, Stephanie Fischer, Lindsay Griffiths, Krystal Howell, Janiece Morgan, Mimi Swenton and Zachary Wilson.

Ivette Fuentes, Sarah Langan and Gabriela Rivera, all members of the Class of 2015, were recognized as AP Scholars with Honor, which is granted to students who receive 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. Class of 2014 students Ervin Gonzales and Ashley Simon were also named AP Scholars with Honor.

Rounding out the list of scholars, 30 students were named AP Scholars by receiving scores of 3 or higher on three or more AP exams. The AP Scholars are: Class of 2015 members Bryan Bena, Leslie Contreras, Anthony Del Vecchio, William Estevez, Jesus Flamenco, Olivia Johnson, Dorota Narewska, Joseph Pearson, Montell Robinson, Carlos Saravia, David Szabo and Mehreen Zahid; and Class of 2014 members Krislee Acevedo, Joseph Amoroso, Barbara Chelchowski, Ashley Collado, Angelica Colman, Isabel Colon, Brian Dilone, Kiana Estevez, Avery Hodges, Heather Konko, Andrew Marino, Maria Nunez, Justin Peters, Dianne Sessions, Abigail Trautwig, Cheyenne Wilson, Quinton Woelk and Veronica Zieba.

The District extends its congratulations to all students.



## A Medley of Honors

Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School is proud to announce the selection of multiple students for national, state and county-level music honors.

Senior David Szabo has been selected as a member of the National Association for Music Education All-National Mixed Chorus. The NAFME All-National Honor Ensembles represent the top performing high school musicians in the United States. In October of 2014, the ensemble performed in Nashville, Tenn. under the baton of leaders in the field of music education.



Five student-musicians were selected for the New York State School Music Association All-State Festival based upon their performances at last year's NYSSMA Solo Festival. The All-State ensembles, which are directed by renowned guest conductors, will perform in one of three concerts at the Eastman Theatre in Rochester on Dec. 6 and 7 during the annual NYSSMA Winter Conference.

The District extends its congratulations to David Grinthal (All-State), Victoria Grinthal (All-State alternate), Vinny Pensabene (All-State), Steven Szabo (All-State Piano Showcase alternate) and Richard Taveras (All-State alternate).

For the New York State Council of Administrators of Music Education's annual All-County concert on Nov. 21, 12 choral students were selected to lend their voices to the choir. Chosen to perform with the mixed chorus were: Marcia Aracena, Gabriella Dattolo, David Grinthal, Kasandra Hanson, Tiffany Holland, Eduardo Ortega, Vinny Pensabene, Erik Sattler, David Szabo, Richard Taveras and Jeffrey Yanes. Victoria Grinthal was selected to sing with the All-County Women's Chorus.

## STOCKING UP ON SUPPLIES



For the fourth year in a row, the District continued its involvement with the United Way of Long Island's Stuff-a-Bus campaign. Partnering with the United Way and the Make It Count Foundation – which was founded by Jonathan Reese, son of former Copiague teacher and football coach Walter Reese – the District was the recipient of generously donated notebooks, backpacks, pens, art supplies and other school supplies ready to be distributed to students.

"For 33 years, I was part of the Copiague family," said Walter Reese. "This town is a special place, and it was very important for my son and I to give back to the community that gave us so much. This is just a small way in which I can maintain my connection to the Copiague family despite my retirement."

Members of the Middle School Builders Club, along with their adviser, Maria Ostrofsky, helped unload the boxes and volunteered their time to sort through the donations and package them for distribution.

"We are very grateful to the United Way and Make It Count foundations for their continued support of the Copiague Schools and its students," said Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig.

### BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Mr. Charles A. Leunig, **Superintendent of Schools**