



Highlights

A Publication of the Harrison Central School District

Sara McSweeney, Nasia Meimeteas Named as Regeneron Scholars



Harrison High School Seniors, Sara McSweeney and Nasia Meimeteas were named Regeneron Scholars, among 300 student scholars across the nation. The Regeneron Science and Talent Search is the nation's oldest and most prestigious science and math competition for high school seniors. Their work was selected among 1,993 applications from 659 high schools in 49 states, Washington, DC, Puerto Rico, Guam and eight countries. Scholars were chosen based on their exceptional research skills, commitment to academics, innovative thinking and promise as scientists.

Sara and Nasia conducted their research over the past three years as part of the high school's Science Research Program. To be considered for the Regeneron competition, students conduct an original research project, where data is collected and analyzed. In addition, the students complete and submit a comprehensive application which explains the reasoning behind their study, academic background and interest in science.

Students in the Science Research Program have the opportunity to invite experts to become mentors, who typically possess PhDs in the field of the student's interest. Science Research teachers, Allison Blunt and Randy Gunnell support students in the outreach process. Mentors volunteer to guide students throughout their research process.



Harrison High School was named as one of America's Best STEM High Schools by Newsweek. Harrison ranked in the top 10% of the 5,000 high schools in the country, based on the list developed by Newsweek in conjunction with STEM.org Educational Research.

Nasia conducted her research under the mentorship of Professor Chris Stout at Oregon State University. Nasia's research is titled: *Predicting the Relationship between Marriage and Discussion of Women's Issues in Congressional Representatives: A Multiplicative Interaction Model Approach*

Sara's research was conducted with the guidance of mentor, Professor Jill Farrant at the University of Capetown in South Africa. Sara was invited to join Professor Farrant at her laboratory to conduct the research first-hand. Sara's research is entitled, *Increasing the Desiccation Tolerance of Eragrostis tef through Exogenous Application of Absciscic Acid to Ensure Food Security*.

As Regeneron Scholars, Sara and Nasia will advance to the next level of competition and their work could be recognized as one of 40 Regeneron Finalists.

The Regeneron Science Talent Search provides students a national stage to present original research and celebrates the hard work and novel discoveries of young scientists who are bringing a fresh perspective to significant global challenges. The Science Talent Search is a way to help reward and celebrate the best and brightest young minds and encourage them to pursue careers in STEM as a way to positively impact the world.

9th Grade Seminar: Creating A Path for Students as Writers



This year, every Harrison High School first year student is enrolled in a new class: Freshman Writing Seminar. The seminar is taught by a team of 9th grade English teachers and is designed to prepare students to develop strategies to write across disciplines and genres. The course emphasizes creative, technical, and research-based writing. Throughout the course, students will examine the rules of standard written English and learn to adapt these rules to develop a personal style.

Developed by a team of teachers who worked with instructional experts, the Freshman Writing Seminar is a reflection of the districts' commitment to continually improving instruction and opportunities for student learning. After a comprehensive audit of the district's curriculum, the course was designed based on research about effective writing instruction, meets New York State standards, and provides students with the skills necessary to be successful in the IB Middle Years and Diploma programs, and for success in college and career.

The course includes both collaborative and independent work, and is designed to develop student voice and agency by engaging them in the writing process – idea exploration, finding inspiration, drafting, editing, self-revision, self-editing, peer review and reflection. Each step of the process is approached with purpose, focus, and teacher guidance. Students are encouraged to take risks in their writing and have opportunities to practice various writing techniques. Instruction includes lessons that demonstrate the writing process from initial idea, through final draft -- developing voice and point of view, as well as the proper use of mechanics including grammar and sentence structure. The ultimate goal is for students to develop confidence in their writing skills, understand how to improve their own writing, and have the tools to make their written work more effective across disciplines.

The 9th grade English teachers and Director of English Language Arts presented the program's initial progress to the Board of Education at the January 22nd meeting. Superintendent of Schools, Louis Wool introduced the presentation explaining, "this course expands the mission of equity and access at the high school, because every 9th grade student is enrolled in the writing seminar and receives rigorous writing instruction." The writing class is taught by the same teacher students have for ELA, which provides the opportunity for teachers to gain a deeper understanding of students' abilities and adapt a more personalized approach of support for their writing.



Middle Years Program at LMK Engages Students



In preparation for the final approval to become an IB Middle Years Program, faculty and administrators continue to evaluate and align curriculum to meet both New York State and IB MYP standards. This has been an exciting and interesting process for the Harrison faculty, who are committed to providing all students with a rigorous and engaging learning experience.

The 8th grade social studies teachers Steve Goodstein, Jeff Jakubowski, Greg Sullivan, and Tess Fox collaborated with Marlene Colonna, District Director of Social Studies, to align their curriculum. The team recently presented how they aligned the World War II unit with MYP standards at the LMK faculty meeting. The process of sharing and soliciting feedback from colleagues demonstrates the Harrison learning community's dedication to maximize the impact of the MYP curriculum on student learning.

According to veteran LMK social studies teacher Steve Goodstein, "My colleagues are the best sources of feedback. I am excited by the chance to work together to figure out the best way to engage students, and then being part of watching them grow."

The World War II unit exemplifies how MYP impacts curriculum. The unit is designed to emphasize the contextualization of history and possible connections to modern day society, a shift from the traditional focus on chronology to a broader conceptual understanding of material. For example, instead of memorizing dates and facts, students were asked to consider deeper questions about the war: How did the conflict happen? Could it have been prevented? When is force appropriate? Students reflected on factual data and historical events to form their own unique perspectives. This approach encourages deeper reflection as students contemplate the broader impact of historical events and interpret the curriculum in a way that is meaningful to them.

Teachers describe an enthusiasm for learning and increase in student engagement with the MYP approach. Teachers also are excited by the opportunity to be innovative and respond to evolving student interests. LMK Principal Scott Fried observes, "MYP is a true interdisciplinary approach in all subject areas and considers all student perspectives and backgrounds."

Preparation for MYP will continue to be part of ongoing professional development, subject area and grade level planning, and team meetings to ensure a smooth and meaningful implementation of MYP.

Middle Years Program Approval Moves Forward

The Harrison Central School District is currently in the last year of the Candidacy Phase for bringing the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Program (MYP) to the District in grades 6-10. The District anticipates full implementation of MYP in the 2020-21 academic year, and eagerly awaits the verification visit from IB representatives. Professional development for faculty and administrators and curriculum has been aligned with MYP standards. MYP is designed around eight subject groups: Language Acquisition, Language and Literature, Individuals and Societies, Sciences, Mathematics, Arts, Physical and Health Education, and Design, and "offers students opportunities to develop their potential, to explore their own learning preferences, to take appropriate risks, and to reflect on, and develop, a strong sense of personal identity." (IB MYP: From Principles into Practice, 2014)

Senior Ava Zinman Ranked #1 Debate Team Success Continues



This season, the Harrison High School Debate Team has had exceptional success. The team has won 7 tournaments (two of which were co-championships), earned 7 top speaker awards, received 5 bids to the Tournament of Champions, and had the National Speech & Debate Association's #1-ranked Lincoln-Douglas debater in the country for the third time in the team's history.

Senior Ava Zinman, currently ranked #1 by the NSDA, has had an outstanding season. Her accomplishments so far this year include winning Princeton University's national championship, the Apple Valley Round Robin in Minnesota, and Byram Hills's tournament. Ava was top speaker at Greenhill's national championship in Texas, had a 7-0 preliminary round record at Bronx Science's national championship, and has been in elimination rounds of Apple Valley (Minnesota), the Glenbrooks (Illinois), and multiple other tournaments this season.

Junior Giovanni Cutri also has had an outstanding record this year. So far, he has earned three bids to the Tournament of Champions, having won Newark Science's tournament and reached quarterfinals (the top 8) at Bronx and Lexington. Gio has been top speaker at two major tournaments (Ridge and Lexington), and has reached elimination rounds at numerous tournaments this season.

Juniors Molly Ryan, Rebecca Anderson, Sonali Nicola, and Anthony Kang, as well as sophomores Ali Ahmad, Mai Blaustein, and Lizzie Murno, have also won awards at many tournaments this year. In the novice division, freshman Jessie Pein has been a tournament's top novice speaker three times; freshmen Yui Ikeda, Thomas Berg, James Cox, and Sophie Bande, as well as sophomore Annie Chen, have been top-placing novices all season.

HHS Students Advance to State DECA Competition



Student participation in the business competition club, DECA, continues to grow at Harrison High School and on across New York State. As the number of student competitors increases and competition intensifies, students from HHS continue to succeed at high levels. Nearly 400 students participated in the Region 3 competition, which includes Westchester, Rockland, Orange, Ulster, and Albany Counties.

Of the 24 HHS students who attended the Region 3 competition, 17 received awards and advanced to the New York State competition. The individual contests require a written exam as well as live-action role-play in front of a panel of judges. Those scores are compiled, and the students who finish in the top five of the Regional competition move on to the New York State competition.

In addition to those who succeeded at the Division 3 competition, 41 additional students have written research papers, business plans, and conducted analyses on various business topics to already qualify for the New York State DECA competition, where they will defend their papers to judges.

DECA club President Zach Greif observed, "The DECA Regionals event allowed our DECA members to demonstrate their business knowledge and compete with other individuals from multiple counties. Our club had a successful outing as our members were able to place and receive acknowledgment for their hard work and understanding of business concepts."

In total, 57 students will compete at the State competition to be held in Rochester, New York in February.