

ONTEORA

Summer 2021

LETTER FROM THE INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT

DEAR ONTEORA COMMUNITY,

While we have not received definitive guidance from the State Education Department or the Department of Health for the 2021-2022 school year, we continue to plan and hope for a full return to in-person instruction for all students. After reviewing the results of our student, staff, and parent surveys administered in June, it is clear that all constituents overwhelmingly support this model.

Based on the most recent information from the New York State Education Department, we have determined the following:

- Schools should be open for in-person teaching and learning, and students should be in school (as allowed by public health officials).
- In case of school closures due to a declared public health emergency, schools must be prepared to pivot to remote instruction.
- We will not be able to provide the same remote option for students as we did last year.

While we recognize that in some unique instances a remote-only option may be needed for some students, we, as a district, will not be able to provide an Onteora-specific remote option as we did last year. Therefore, the District has been researching remote-only options and has identified potential partnerships that may be available.

For Grades 7-12, the option the District is exploring is the use of an on-line platform through Ulster BOCES. This learning model is the same as our summer school program in which students work individually. We are exploring

CONTINUED ON
PAGE 3



Shayne Durkin proudly displays her diploma during Onteora's commencement ceremony.

Onteora Graduates Soar Into the Future

ONE HUNDRED AND ONE ONTEORA EAGLES CELEBRATED THEIR SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF HIGH SCHOOL — and the start of their post-graduation flights — during a joyful commencement ceremony held under sunny skies on June 25.

Working collaboratively with the administration, the Class of 2021 was able to experience an in-person graduation ceremony (as well as a senior picnic and a senior prom) despite COVID-19 restrictions. Each student was allowed four tickets to the graduation event, with each family grouping sitting at least six feet apart from one another.

Addressing the socially distanced crowd, Valedictorian Simon Rands said that the District's pivot from in-person classes to distance learning deepened his appreciation for his fellow students. "There is simply no way to replicate online the value of being physically surrounded by bright, diverse, and engaging minds," he said. "As we gradually returned to in-person learning this year, I found myself itching to get back into the classroom — not just because I was absolutely starved for any kind of social interaction, but also because the return to the classroom meant the return of the collaborative learning environment I so deeply missed."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

MORE
High School
Graduation Photos
on pages 4 & 5

On the move:
Nelson DeTufo
(center) was among
the 101 seniors
graduating this year.



Phoenicia Students Celebrate End of Challenging School Year

Phoenicia Elementary School marked the end of a challenge-filled school year with a festive celebration on June 24. Students in Kindergarten through Grade 3 cruised by the school in their family vehicles, many of which had been decorated with balloons, streamers, and messages of thanks. Lining the school's driveway and parking lot were teachers, staff members, and Principal Elizabeth Fallo, who blew bubbles, played music, and waved posters expressing heart-felt sentiments like "We will miss you!" and "We're so proud of you!"



Onteora Welcomes New Administrators

ONTEORA WELCOMED TWO ADMINISTRATORS THIS JULY: Stephanie Laffin has been appointed Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, and Amanda Allison is the District's new Director of Pupil Personnel Services.

Interim Superintendent Marystephanie Corsones is full of praise for her new colleagues. "I am so pleased to have Stephanie and Amanda as new members of our administrative group," she said. "Given the strength of their professional experiences and their commitment to student learning and success, they have both hit the ground running and are effectively collaborating with our team."

Ms. Laffin comes to Onteora after seven and a half years at Ulster BOCES, where her accomplishments included helping school districts integrate New York State Learning Standards in English Language Arts (ELA), Math, Social Studies, and Science into their curriculums. In addition, she supported teaching and learning for English Language Learners through the supervision of the Title III Consortium Grant, co-developed and supervised a regional Virtual Academic Summer School program, oversaw county-wide scoring for State assessments, and helped district and building leaders design professional development experiences for staff.

Ms. Laffin also has 18 years of experience as a High School English teacher and literacy coach. She earned a Master of Arts in English as well as Certificate of Advanced Study (CAS) in School Leadership from SUNY New Paltz, as well as a Bachelor of Arts in English from Roanoke College.

Ms. Laffin expressed excitement over joining Onteora's team of educators. "As I begin my new role here in Onteora, I am truly honored and excited to work with such a talented faculty and staff," she said.

Ms. Allison started her career as a school social worker in Columbia and Putnam Counties. After becoming a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst, she worked extensively with students on the autism spectrum. She was a Special Education administrator for Carmel Central Schools, where she chaired the Committee on Preschool Special Education/Committee on Special Education (CPSE/CSE). Prior to joining Onteora, she served as a principal and an assistant principal for Southern Westchester BOCES K-12 special education programs.

Ms. Allison holds a Bachelor of Science in Human Development from SUNY Binghamton, a master's degree in Social Welfare from SUNY Albany, and a Master of Education in Educational Leadership from Bank Street College. She also earned an advanced certificate in Behavior Analysis from Penn State and an advanced certificate in Autism and Communication Disorders from Brooklyn College. She has also been accepted to Manhattanville College's doctorate program in Educational Leadership (though she has deferred her potential enrollment for a year).

Looking ahead, Ms. Allison has a number of goals. "I am looking forward to continuing to grow and foster the feeling of inclusion at Onteora," she said. In addition to supporting students and staff in the area of social and emotional learning, she aims to support the District's Response to Intervention (RTI)/Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) efforts, which provide students with research-based instruction and interventions based on their individual academic, behavioral, and social needs.



Stephanie Laffin



Amanda Allison

LETTER FROM
THE INTERIM
SUPERINTENDENT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

how we can utilize this same model with additional student support.

For K-6 students, the District is exploring partnering with various BOCES and other districts in the greater region for remote instruction. With this option, a student will be placed into a shared class with students from other participating school districts. It is likely that your child will be taught by a teacher from a different school district. All of the teachers are New York State certified, highly qualified, and experienced teaching in a remote environment.

We recognize that everyone is eager to know more about what the 2021-2022 school year will look like, and we share in that. Once more definitive guidance is received from the State, we will be in a position to finalize plans and share information. In the meantime, we thank you for your continued patience, support, and understanding.

Sincerely,

Marystephanie Corsones
INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT
OF SCHOOLS

WELCOME
BACK!



The first day of
school for students
will be Wednesday,
September 8.

LET THE
LEARNING BEGIN!

WOODSTOCK
GRADE 3 STUDENTS

Cruise Into
Summer



WOODSTOCK'S GRADE 3 STUDENTS received a splashy send-off from teachers and staff on June 24, during a "Cruise-By Moving-Up Caravan" event. Music, laughter, and cheers filled the air as children received their moving-up certificates and a gift bag filled with bubbles, sidewalk chalk, a toy airplane, and other fun items. There was also a bit of barking, courtesy of some of the more enthusiastic canine participants (including Tank, the certified therapy dog owned by Occupational Therapist Michele Darling). Adding to the festive atmosphere were the parents, guardians, and caregivers who decorated their family vehicles with posters, streamers, balloons, and temporary paint. Congratulations and best of luck next fall!



Reading with Chicks!

DID YOU KNOW THAT
BABY CHICKENS MAKE
APPRECIATIVE AUDIENCES
FOR EMERGING READERS?

And that they really enjoy
picnicking with pals?

These are just some of the lessons learned by Phoenicia Elementary School students who raised chicks in their classrooms as part of a learning unit focusing on the life cycle of the chicken.

This spring, Kindergarten and Grade 1 students in Jolie Moorhus's class treated their feathered friends to an outdoor reading session. The chicks, which had been hatched right in the classroom, proved to be excellent listeners – patient, non-judgmental, and quick to offer encouraging chirps.

Meanwhile, students in Elizabeth Granberg's Grade 1 hybrid class took advantage of the balmy spring weather by taking their chicks outside for snack time. "Our remote students were invited to come and join our outside socially distanced fun, and we had one of our remote students come and join us," Miss Granberg reported. "It was great



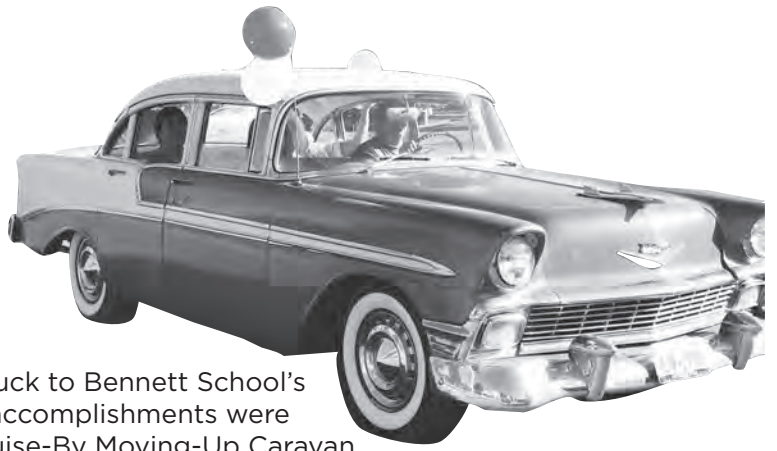
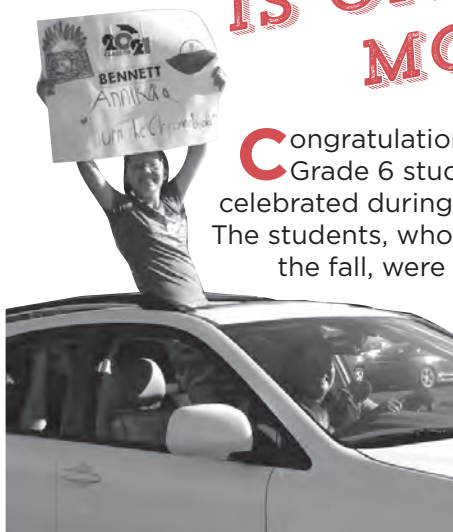
Phoenicia student Domanic Weber (above) reading to an attentive chick.

to meet her in person for the first time. The chicks hung out with all of us, including the remote learners who attended via their computers!"



Students in Miss Granberg's hybrid class enjoying outdoor snack time with chicks.

BENNETT'S CLASS OF 2021 IS ON THE MOVE!



Congratulations and good luck to Bennett School's Grade 6 students, whose accomplishments were celebrated during a June 23 Cruise-By Moving-Up Caravan. The students, who will be heading to Middle School in the fall, were ferried in their family vehicles past cheering staff members, who distributed moving-up certificates, ice cream gift certificates, and a slew of good wishes. There were balloons, bicycles, celebratory signs, and even live music (courtesy of Music teachers Karen McKenna and

Corrine Bouchard). Waving from their cars and trucks, the soon-to-be seventh graders bid a fond farewell to their elementary school days.



Onteora Graduates Soar Into the Future

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Salutatorian Archie Lewis-Harris looked to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* for inspiration. "There's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow," he quoted. "If it be now, 'tis not to come. If it be not to come, it will be now. If it be not now, yet it will come – the readiness is all." Urging his classmates to be ready for the next steps of their journeys, Archie said, "Everything will work out in life, whether it's right now, or awaiting you in the future. All that's left is for you to be ready for it."

Class President Emily Peck said she was grateful for "an almost-normal senior spring," complete with a prom and an ever-increasing number of students returning to their physical classrooms. "Whenever someone new started coming into in-person school, everyone was so excited to see them," she recalled. "Every day felt like a class reunion, and I think we all appreciate each other to a degree that we wouldn't have in a normal senior year."

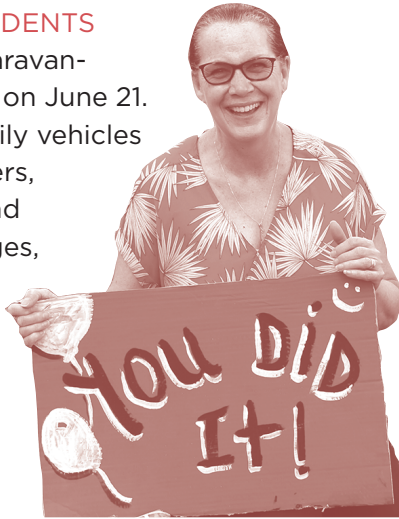
The many challenges posed by COVID-19, Emily continued, made them stronger and more appreciative of each other. "We may have lost our senior year, but we have so many incredible experiences ahead of us," she concluded. "So here's to our future!"



Middle School Students Are On Their Way to High School!

CELEBRATING THEIR HARD-EARNED
PROMOTION TO HIGH SCHOOL,
MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

participated in a car caravan-style moving-up event on June 21. Students, riding in family vehicles decked out with banners, balloons, streamers, and congratulatory messages, traveled along the bus lane located in front of the school. Looking on were cheering teachers and staff members, who waved signs, rang bells, and in some cases danced to the celebratory music. At the end of the route, Middle School Principal Jennifer O'Connor handed the students their moving-up certificates as well as two carnations. According to a longstanding school tradition, the red flower was theirs to keep, while the white one was intended to be presented to a family member, friend, or staff member who had helped them to succeed. Best of luck to our Middle School "graduates"!



SENIOR LUNCHEON: A MEAL TO REMEMBER!

Celebrating the approaching end to their high school careers, Grade 12 students enjoyed their Senior Luncheon on June 10. Before the lunch, which took place on the football field and track under sunny skies, Principal Lance Edelman acknowledged the generous senior scholarships awards that were provided by the community and held a class meeting to go over important graduation-related information. After devouring a delicious meal prepared by the Onteora Food Service staff, the seniors tossed Frisbees, hit baseballs, signed yearbooks, hurled water balloons, and shared memories. Later in the afternoon, a number of athletes picked up awards during a special ceremony. Each senior athlete received a Class of 2021 T-shirt and an 8 x 10 photograph of all of this year's senior athletes, compliments of Onteora's Athletic Booster Club, and ice cream, donated by parent Helen Loizou.

Congratulations to the Class of 2021!

Lucciana Robertson
and Sonny Luchmee
checking out their
yearbook during the
senior picnic.



Students Sharpen Academic and Social Skills at Summer Academy

THIS SUMMER, 65 ONTEORA STUDENTS GAVE UP SOME OF THEIR WELL-EARNED VACATION TIME to attend Onteora’s Summer Academy, which took place at Bennett Elementary School.

The Academy, which was open to students in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 6, ran for four weeks, from July 12 to August 6. Classes were held from 8:30-11:30 AM, Monday through Friday.

While other youngsters might have been swimming, fishing, or hanging out at the playground, Academy attendees could be found honing their academic and social skills. One July morning, for example, Pre-K students were building Lego towers and playing a counting game, while Kindergarten and Grade 2 students were learning about the life cycle of a Luna moth, and Grade 6 students were discussing the motives of a particular literary character.

“We provided support that some of our students needed, primarily in literacy and math,” said Bennett Co-Principal Linda Sella, who led the Academy alongside her fellow co-principal, Gabriel Buono. Some of the students, she noted, had not attended



Summer Academy teacher Jacob Millman plays a math game with students Louie Burke (left) and James Spindler (right), who will be entering Grade 2 in September.

school in-person at all last year, while some were new to the District, and others had had their in-person schooling periodically interrupted by COVID-related school closures. As a result, they may have needed academic support to be able to hit the ground running in September.

Mr. Buono was thrilled that the District was able to offer the extra help to students who needed it this summer. “I’m elated that we were able to offer this in-person service after a year and a half of dealing with the pandemic,” he said. “There are so many lessons students were learning besides academic ones,” he added. “We also helped them socially and emotionally. It was so important for them to learn how to collaborate and coordinate their efforts with their peers.”

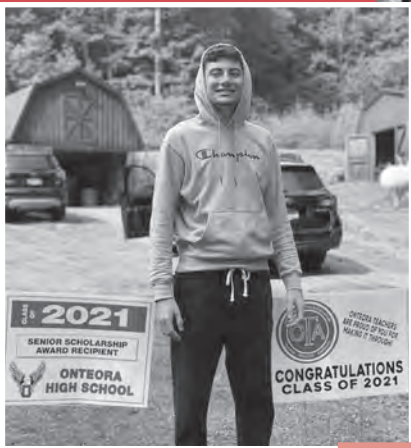
Speaking about the Summer Academy staff, Mr. Buono said, “Their commitment to their craft and love for the children was displayed every day. I saw a true partnership between the teachers, students, and parents. We were proud to be here.”



Summer Academy teacher Jolie Moorhus shows a Luna moth cocoon to student Owen Reese, who will be entering Grade 3 in the fall.

SENIORS HONORED WITH SIGNS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AWARDS

Working collaboratively, High School administrators, the Onteora Teacher Association, and our School Resource Officer arranged for lawn signs honoring Onteora’s Class of 2021. Teachers delivered the congratulatory signs to the homes of our graduating seniors. Senior scholarship and award recipients were provided with an additional sign. The names of the award recipients have been posted on the High School’s website.



This year’s scholarship award recipients included Alexander Smith (above).



Teachers Erica Boyer (left) and Valerie Stewart (right) delivering congratulatory lawn signs to senior Maxwell Mielcarek (center).



Senior Alissa Kolarick posing with lawn signs announcing her impending graduation as a scholarship award recipient.

Woodstock Students Go Camping!

ONE DAY IN EARLY JUNE, THE WOODSTOCK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CAMPUS WAS TRANSFORMED INTO A BUSTLING SUMMER CAMP, complete with tents, flashlights, camp-inspired crafts and games, and even that quintessential camp treat, s'mores.

According to Reading teacher Nicole Polocco, the seeds for the transformation were planted by two Grade 1 students, who had independently shared their wish to go on a camping trip with their classmates. Loving the idea, she and fellow Reading teacher Andrew Vail and Grade 1 teacher Cassie Kothe began brainstorming how they could organize a camping "field trip" for the entire school – without ever leaving school grounds.

The teachers had many questions, Mrs. Polocco reported. "We asked ourselves, how could we add a fire? Tenting? Backpacking? Arts and crafts?" she recalled. "Was there a way to make a regular school day into a day at camp? Could we work on literacy, science, and math at the same time?"

In the end, the teachers created a number of learning stations, each of which focused on a different aspect of camping.

Creating and running the "camp" was truly a group effort, said Mrs. Polocco. At the Read Aloud Station, for example, PTA officer/school monitor Ashley Bishop set up a tent and read camping stories to the children. At the Fireside Chat Station, hosted by Speech teacher

Jacqueline Hanzl, Special Education teacher Melissa Thongs created a fire from a fan, red lights, fake flames, logs, sticks, and rocks. Ms. Hanzl encouraged the students to gather around the fire, sharing their own

camping stories and playing games, including one that asked the children to think of something they would bring camping that started with the first letter of their names.

Art teachers Falyn Dutcher and Roberta Ziemba helped students create "name" bracelets out of beads, while Physical Education teachers Sonja Rothe and Chris Kasprzyk organized kickball games for each class.

"We also provided every classroom with a cardboard pizza box so classes could build their own solar ovens," Mrs. Polocco recalled. "The students were given a plate of s'mores to see if the sun would melt them!"

Principal Scott Richards helped purchase drawstring bags to make "backpacks," which were filled with flashlights, bubbles, magnifying glasses, and camping-themed books.

(The books were ordered by Mr. Vail with help from Elizabeth Potter and Christina Davis from the Phoenicia Library). Mr. Richards also help purchase craft materials, so the students could make their own set of binoculars and a canteen. Kari Becker, a school monitor, assisted teachers and students with these hands-on projects.

It was a camping trip to remember. In the words of Grade 1 student Kiernan Hunt, "This was the best day ever!"



ONTEORA STUDENTS RAISE AWARENESS OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

During the month of May (Mental Health Awareness Month), members of Onteora's chapter of Students Against Destructive Decisions (S.A.D.D.) sold green ribbons and stickers with positive words on them to raise money for Mentor Me of Ulster County.

According to Health teacher/S.A.D.D. Advisor Rebecca Scherer, "Mentor Me of Ulster County's mission is to match at-risk youth with inspiring mentors focused on whole-person wellness and supportive relationships." This mission, she adds, ties directly into S.A.D.D.'s efforts to provide positive opportunities for students to become involved in their community. Thanks to those who supported the fund-raiser, S.A.D.D. was able to present this worthy program with a check for \$130!

Pictured (back row, from left to right) are Ms. Scherer, S.A.D.D. Treasurer Semfora Loizou, Stephanie Kressler, Founder of Mentor Me of Ulster County, and (front row) some of the young people involved in the Mentor Me program.



NON DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT NON DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT The Onteora Central School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, weight, national origin, creed, religion, religious practice, ethnic group, political affiliation, gender (including gender identity, expression, or nonconformity to stereotypical notions of masculinity and femininity), marital status, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, or other legally protected status in access to programs and/or employment provided by the District. Inquiries to the District concerning discrimination or harassment based on sex or sexual orientation may be referred to the Title IX/Title VI Compliance Officer, Stephanie Laffin, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, at: slaffin@onteora.k12.ny.us. Inquiries regarding discrimination can also be made to the United States Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, 32 Old Slip, 26th Floor, New York, NY 10005, (646) 428-3900, ocr.newyork@ed.gov.

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INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Marystephanie Corsones

NEWSLETTER EDITING & DESIGN

Ulster BOCES Community Relations



This publication was printed on recycled paper

To Postal Customer

INTRAMURAL SOCCER PROGRAM HELPED
KEEP MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS MOVING



ONTEORA MARKED THE CONCLUSION OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL INTRAMURAL SOCCER PROGRAM on June 3 with help from the Onteora Athletic Booster Club, which donated celebratory ice cream sandwiches and special T-shirts.

The program was intended as a way for Middle School students to stay active and fit through soccer in lieu of modified sports.

During the course of the program, the participants met four days a week after school under the supervision of staff members Rebecca Scherer, Brooke Harrington, Carol Beesmer, Jen Brueckner, and Annie Gallin and Coach Carsten Warnes. Also contributing to the program’s success were School Lunch Manager Christine Downs, Athletic Secretary Leah Smith, Director of Facilities Kyle Harjes, and School Nurse Karen Hansen, as well as the supportive parents and enthusiastic student athletes.

IMPORTANT
FALL DATES

- SEPT 2:** Superintendent’s Conference Day
(No school for students)
- SEPT 3:** Superintendent’s Conference Day
(No school for students)
- SEPT 6:** Labor Day
(Schools and offices closed)
- SEPT 7:** Rosh Hashanah
(Schools and offices closed)
- SEPT 8:** First Day of School for Students
- SEPT 16:** Yom Kippur
(Schools and offices closed)
- OCT 1:** Superintendent’s Conference Day
(No school for students)
- OCT 11:** Indigenous People’s Day
(Schools and offices closed)
- NOV 2:** Parent-Teacher Conferences:
Elementary, 4:30-7:30 PM;
Secondary, 3-5 PM & 6-7:30 PM
- NOV 3:** Parent-Teacher Conference Day:
Elementary and Secondary, 10 AM-3 PM.
(No school for students)
- NOV 4:** Emergency Evacuation Day
(Students dismissed 15 minutes early)
- NOV 11:** Veterans Day
(Schools and offices closed)
- NOV 24-26:** Thanksgiving Recess
(Schools and offices closed Nov 25 & 26;
Offices open on Nov 24)

USEFUL
DISTRICT
INFORMATION

www.onteora.k12.ny.us

DISTRICT OFFICE..... 845-657-6383

Interim Superintendent
Marystephanie Corsones657-6383 x1010

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Stephanie Laffin657-6383 x1023

District Clerk
Fern Amster657-6383 x1010

Interim Superintendent for Business
Dr. Don Gottlieb657-6383 x1030

Director of Pupil Personnel Services
Amanda Allison657-3320

Universal Pre-Kindergarten
Amanda Allison657-3320

Director of Transportation
Nicole Sommer657-2537

School Lunch Manager
Christine Downs657-6383 x2181

Director of Facilities
Kyle Harjes657-6384

HIGH SCHOOL • 657-2373
Principal, Lance Edelman
Asst. Principal, Dieter Schimmelpfennig

MIDDLE SCHOOL • 657-2373
Principal, Jennifer O’Connor

BENNETT ELEMENTARY • 657-2354
Co-principals, Gabriel Buono and Linda Sella

PHOENICIA ELEMENTARY • 688-5580
Principal, Elizabeth Fallo

WOODSTOCK ELEMENTARY • 679-2316
Principal, Scott Richards

IMPORTANT NOTICES

REQUIRED NOTIFICATION FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS/COMMUNITY MEMBERS
2021-2022

TOBACCO-FREE, SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

In accordance with the Goals 2000 Educate America Act, §1043 (Non-Smoking Policy for Children Services), and the New York State Public Health Law, §1399-0, smoking, vaping, use of electronic cigarettes, or the use of tobacco related products by any student, employee, or visitor is prohibited in all school buildings, within 100 feet of entrances, exits, outdoor grounds of school property boundaries, and vehicles, owned or leased, contracted for Use of School Facilities and utilized during school hours.

Furthermore, no smoking, vaping, or use of e-cigarettes shall be permitted at any time within any indoor facility owned, operated, leased, or contracted by the School District for educational or library service for students K-12, unless legally excepted.

The existence of a tobacco-free environment for the benefit of all who occupy School District property will depend upon the thoughtfulness, consideration, and cooperation of all school personnel, students, visitors, and guests. We invite the cooperation and understanding of all individuals in assuming responsibility for keeping our School District premises tobacco-free. Further information can be found in Tobacco-Free, Smoke-Free Environment Policy #5640.

DISTRICT POLICIES & NOTIFICATIONS

The Onteora Central School District hereby advises its occupants that it has been inspected for asbestos by accredited inspectors pursuant to regulation 40 CFR Part 763.84-paragraph "C"

of the AHERA Regulations. The results of this inspection are on file in a management plan located in each building's Principal's Office, and in the Administrative Office in Boiceville, NY. The results are available upon request at these locations. Copies of all District Policies are available in all District School Buildings.

Non Discrimination Statement

The Onteora Central School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, weight, national origin, creed, religion, religious practice, ethnic group, political affiliation, gender (including gender identity, expression, or nonconformity to stereotypical notions of masculinity and femininity), marital status, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, or other legally protected status in access to programs and/or employment provided by the District and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

Inquiries to the District concerning discrimination or harassment may be referred to the Title IX/Title VI Compliance Officer, Stephanie Laffin, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, Onteora Central School District, PO Box 300, Boiceville, NY 12412, 845-657-6383 ext. 1023, slaffin@onteora.k12.ny.us. Inquiries regarding discrimination or harassment can also be made to the United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 32 Old Slip, 26th Floor, New York, NY 10005, 646-428-3800, ocr.newyork@ed.gov.

DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT

In accordance with the Dignity for all Students Act, the Onteora Central School District recognizes its responsibility to protect students from unlawful harassment, discrimination, and bullying. The Dignity Act Coordinators are:

- Woodstock Elementary:
Scott Richards, 845-679-2316
- Phoenicia Elementary:
Elizabeth Fallo, 845-688-5580
- Bennett Elementary:
Gabriel Buono, 845-657-2354
- Middle School:
Dieter Schimmelpfennig,
845-657-2373
- High School:
Dieter Schimmelpfennig,
845-657-2373

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT/ SECTION 504

The Onteora Central School District does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, access to, or operation of its educational programs, services, or activities.

Parents who suspect their child has a disability or have additional questions, complaints, or requests for information concerning the Americans with Disabilities Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act should contact the District's designated Section 504/ADA Compliance Officer, Amanda Allison, at: Department of Pupil Personnel Services, PO Box 300, Boiceville, NY 12412, 845-657-3320, aallison@onteora.k12.ny.us.

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HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT

Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the Onteora Central School District must identify children and youth in homeless situations and provide appropriate services such as immediate enrollment in school, free and reduced lunch, and transportation.

If you feel you and/or your family is/are homeless, please contact Amanda Allison, the Homeless Liaison, at 845-657-3320. To the extent possible, all information will be kept confidential.

TITLE IX

The Onteora Central School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or the activities which it operates. Sexual harassment of employees and students is illegal, and the District will strive to safeguard the rights of all employees and students within the District and to provide an environment that is free from sexual harassment.

Any District employee or student who believes that they have been subjected to, told about, or witnessed sexual harassment should communicate the alleged misconduct in accordance with the Sexual Harassment Regulations. The District will ensure that an investigation is promptly commenced by appropriate individuals.

Inquiries to the District concerning the application of Title IX and its implementing regulations may be referred to the Title IX Compliance Officer, Stephanie Laffin, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, Onteora Central School District, PO Box 300, Boiceville, NY 12412, 845-657-6383 ext. 1023, slaffin@onteora.k12.ny.us.

Inquiries can also be made to the United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 32 Old Slip, 26th Floor, New York, NY 10005, 646-428-3800, ocr.newyork@ed.gov.

CHILD FIND NOTIFICATION

Parents who suspect their children (ages 3 and older) may have a disability which would affect their ability to access school programs can contact the Onteora Central School District’s Committee on Special Education to arrange for evaluations.

Call the Pupil Personnel Offices at 845-657-3320 for more information and to schedule an appointment.

PESTICIDE NOTIFICATION

New York State Education Law Section 409-H requires all public and non-public elementary and secondary schools to provide written notification to all persons in parental relation, faculty, staff, and students regarding the potential use of pesticides periodically throughout the school year.

The Onteora Central School District is required to maintain a list of persons in parental relation, faculty, staff, and students who wish to receive 48-hour prior written notification of certain pesticide applications.

The following pesticide applications are not subject to prior notification requirements:

- A school remains unoccupied for a continuous 72 hours following an application;
- Anti-microbial products;
- Non-volatile rodenticides in tamper resistant bait stations in areas inaccessible to children;
- Non-volatile insecticidal baits in tamper resistant bait stations in areas inaccessible to children;
- Silica gels and other non-volatile ready-to-use pastes, foams, or gels in areas inaccessible to children;
- Boric acid and disodium octaborate tetrahydrate;
- The application of EPA designated exempt materials under 40 CFR 152.25;
- The use of aerosol products with a directed spray in containers of 18 fluid ounces or less when used to protect individuals from an imminent threat from stinging and biting insects, including venomous spiders, bees, wasps, and hornets;

▪ In the event of an emergency application necessary to protect against an imminent threat to human health, a good faith effort will be made to supply written notification to those on the 48-hour prior notification list.

If you have any questions about New York State Pesticide Notification, or would like to request a form, please contact Don Gottlieb at 845-657-6383 ext. 1030.

FREE AND REDUCED MEAL PROGRAM

No matter where they get it, at home or school, it’s clear that adequate, healthy meals are great for all children. Starting the day with a healthy breakfast, followed by a nutritious lunch, is a key factor to learning, increased student attention, better behavior, and higher achievement.

Students from households that meet Federal income guidelines are eligible for free or reduced price meals while at school. Through this program, it is possible for all children to enjoy a nutritious breakfast and lunch each school day.

Besides the obvious benefits to children, the free and reduced meal program also benefits the District by providing per meal cash reimbursements to the school from the Federal government. In addition, many Federal and State grants are based upon District demographic profiles, including the percent of students receiving free or reduced lunch. Thus, identifying families in need of assistance and encouraging their participation in the program can lead to free or low-cost meals to children and increased grant funding to support important District educational programs; a win/win situation.

To apply for free or reduced price meals, families are encouraged to complete an Application for Free or Reduced Meals or submit a Direct Certification letter from the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. Applications will be sent home with students in September. Families may also access the application from the District website

by visiting www.onteorak12.ny.us. They are also available in each of the school buildings throughout the District, or upon request, can be mailed to interested families. Incomplete applications cannot be approved, so be sure to fill out all required information. If you need assistance completing the form, please contact the School Lunch Manager, Christine Downs, at 845-657-2373 ext. 2181. The District will notify you when a decision on your application has been made.

Families may apply for benefits at any time during the school year. Perhaps you are not eligible now, but during the school year your family circumstances change (such as unemployment, a decrease in household income, or an increase in family size); you may apply then.

If you are approved to receive this benefit for your children, the school may ask you at any time during the school year to verify your eligibility. Should you be selected for verification, you will be notified, in writing.

For more information on the free and reduced lunch program, including income requirements, please contact Christine Downs, School Lunch Manager, at 845-657-2373 ext. 2181.

MEAL CHARGE POLICY

For the 2021-2022 school year, all meals will be free for all students. There will be a charge for any item besides the meal. However, if you qualify for Free/Reduced Lunch, please complete the application (available at <https://www.onteorak12.ny.us/departments/food-services>), as you may qualify for other benefits besides meals.

The goal of the Onteora Central School District is to provide student access to nutritious no- or low-cost meals each school day and to ensure that a pupil whose parent/guardian has unpaid school meal fees is not shamed or treated differently than a pupil whose parent/guardian does not have unpaid meal fees.

The intent of this policy is to establish procedures to address unpaid meal charges throughout the Onteora Central School District in a way that does not stigmatize, distress, or embarrass students. The provisions of this policy pertain to

regular priced school breakfast and lunch meals only.

The Onteora Central School District provides this policy as a courtesy to those students in the event that they forget or lose their lunch money. Charging of items outside of the reimbursable meals (a la carte items, adult meals, etc.) is expressly prohibited.

- Free Meal Benefit – Free eligible students will be allowed to receive a free breakfast and lunch each day. A la carte purchases must be paid/prepaid.
- Reduced Meal Benefit – Reduced eligible students will be allowed to receive a breakfast and lunch at no cost daily. A la carte items or other similar items must be paid/prepaid.
- Full Pay Students – Although we do not know whether we will be able to continue offering free meals to students next year (after the 2021-2022 school year), the District does have a policy that will help students in hardship situations.
- Parents/Guardians are responsible for payment on items other than meals to the food service program. Discreet notices of deficit balances will be sent to parents/guardians at regular intervals during the school year.
- Students/Parents/Guardians may pay for meals in advance via the Parent Portal or with a check payable to Onteora CSD Food Service. Further details are available on our webpage at onteorak12.ny.us. Funds should be maintained in accounts to minimize the possibility that a child may be without meal money on any given day. Any remaining funds for a particular student may/will be carried over to the next school year.
- Refunds for withdrawn and graduating students; a written or e-mailed request for a refund of any money remaining in their account must be submitted. Students who are graduating at the end of the year will automatically be refunded any balance over \$10.00 unless they have a sibling and then it will automatically be transferred to a sibling's account.

- Unclaimed Funds must be requested within one school year. Unclaimed funds will then become the property of the Onteora Central School District Food Service Program.
- Balances Owed collection will follow the policies and procedures set by the school.

Please note that for the 2021-2022 school year, all students are eligible for free meals, but that any items purchased beyond those eligible meals are subject to this policy.

Non Discrimination Statement

This statement explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly. In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider.

Fair Hearing

If you do not agree with the school's decision on your application or the result of verification, you may wish to discuss it with the school. You also have the right to a fair hearing. This can be done by calling or writing the following official: Don Gottlieb, Interim Superintendent for Business, 845-657-6383 ext. 1030.

Meal Service to Children with Disabilities

Federal regulations require schools and institutions to serve meals at no extra charge to children with a disability which may restrict their diet. A student with a disability is defined in 7 CFR Part 15b.3 of Federal regulations, as one who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities. Major life activities are defined to include functions such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking,

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breathing, learning, and working. You must request the special meals from the school and provide the school with medical certification from a medical doctor.

If you believe your child needs substitutions because of a disability, please get in touch with us for further information, as there is specific information that the medical certification must contain.

Confidentiality

The United States Department of Agriculture has approved the release of students’ names and eligibility status, without parent/guardian consent, to persons directly connected with the administration or enforcement of Federal education programs such as Title I and the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), which are United States Department of Education programs used to determine areas such as the allocation of funds to schools, to evaluate socioeconomic status of the school’s attendance area, and to assess educational progress. Information may also be released to State health or State education programs administered by the State agency or local education agency, provided the State or local education agency administers the program, and Federal, State, or local nutrition programs similar to the National School Lunch Program.

Additionally, all information contained in the free and reduced price application may be released to persons directly connected with the administration or enforcement of programs authorized under the National School Lunch Act (NSLA) or Child Nutrition Act (CNA), including the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, the Special Milk Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC); the Comptroller General of the United States for audit purposes; and Federal, State, or local law enforcement officials investigating alleged violation of the programs under the NSLA or CNA. The disclosure of eligibility information not specifically authorized by the NSLA requires a written consent statement from the parent/guardian.

ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS

**Policy #7240
Student Records**

The School District shall comply with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). Under its provisions, “parents/guardians and noncustodial parent(s), whose rights are not limited by court order or formal agreement, of a student under eighteen (18), or a student who is eighteen (18) years of age or older or who is attending an institution of post-secondary education, have a right to inspect and review any and all educational records maintained by the School District” and files on students, and to insure the confidentiality of such records with respect to third parties.

Access to Student Records

Under FERPA, unless otherwise exempted in accordance with law and regulation, the District may release personally identifiable information contained in student records only if it has received a “signed and dated written consent” from a parent or eligible student. Signed and dated written consent may include a record and signature in electronic form provided that such signature:

- a) Identifies and authenticates a particular person as the source of the electronic consent; and
- b) Indicates such person’s approval of the information contained in the electronic consent.

**Health and Safety
Emergency Exception**

School districts must balance the need to protect students’ personally identifiable information with the need to address issues of school safety and emergency preparedness.

Under FERPA, if an educational agency or institution determines that there is an articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of a student or other individuals, it may disclose information from education records, without consent, to any person whose knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health and safety of the student or other individuals during

the period of the health or safety emergency. School districts may release information from records to appropriate parties including, but not limited to, parents, law enforcement officials, and medical personnel.

A school district’s determination that there is an articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of a student or other individuals shall be based upon a totality of the circumstances, including the information available at the time the determination is made.

The school district must record the articulable and significant threat that formed the basis for the disclosure and maintain this record for as long as the student’s education records are maintained.

Disclosures to Parents of Eligible Students

Even after a student has become an “eligible student” under FERPA (which is defined as a student who is eighteen [18] years of age or older or who is attending an institution of post-secondary education), an educational agency or institution may disclose education records to an eligible student’s parents without the student’s consent:

- a) If the student is claimed as a dependent for Federal income tax purposes by either parent;
- b) In connection with a health or safety emergency;
- c) If the disclosure falls within any other exception to the consent requirements under FERPA or its Regulations, such as the disclosure of directory information or in compliance with a court order or lawfully issued subpoena.

Challenge to Student Records

Parents/guardians of a student under the age of eighteen (18), or an eligible student shall have an opportunity for a hearing to challenge the content of the school records, which they believe to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of students.

However, parents/guardians or an eligible student do not have the right to correct, delete, or expunge grades, an individual’s opinion, or other substantive decisions of the

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District that appear in a student’s record. After the hearing, the District shall determine whether correction or deletion of any such inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise inappropriate data is necessary.

Education Records

The term “education records” is defined as all records, files, documents, and other materials containing information directly related to a student and maintained by the education agency or institution, or by a person acting for such agency or institution (34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 99.3). This includes all records regardless of medium, including, but not limited to, handwriting, videotape or audiotape, electronic or computer files, film, print, microfilm, and microfiche.

In addition, for students who attend a public school district, all records pertaining to services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are considered “education records” under FERPA. As such, they are subject to the confidentiality provisions of both Acts.

Personal notes made by teachers or other staff, on the other hand, are not considered education records if they are:

- a) Kept in the sole possession of the maker;
- b) Not accessible or revealed to any other person except a temporary substitute; and
- c) Used only as a memory aid.

Records created and maintained by a law enforcement unit for law enforcement purposes are also excluded.

Release of Information

Among other exemptions in accordance with law and regulation, the District may disclose any and all educational records, including disciplinary records and records that were created as a result of a student receiving special education services under Part B of IDEA, to another school or postsecondary institution at which the student seeks or intends to enroll. Parental consent is not required for transferring education records; however, the student’s annual

FERPA notification indicates that such disclosures have been made, unless expressly prohibited by law or regulation. In the absence of information about disclosures in the annual FERPA notification, school officials must make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent about the disclosure, unless the parent initiated the disclosure.

Additionally, upon request, schools must provide a copy of the information disclosed and an opportunity for a hearing. The District may also disclose any and all educational records to other school officials within the District who have been determined to have legitimate educational interests. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill their professional responsibility. A school official is a person who has a legitimate education interest in a student record who is employed by the District as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a member of the Board of Education; a person or company with whom the District has contracted to perform a special task (such as attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official performing their tasks.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 United States Code (USC) Section 1232(g)

34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 99

NOTE: Refer also to Policy #7643 – Transfer Students with Disabilities

Student Directory Information

This District designates the following items, in accordance with Policy 7242, as directory information, and may disclose any of these items without prior written consent, unless notified to the contrary, in writing, by the parent/guardian or eligible student by the end of the first thirty (30) days of the school year: name; address; telephone listing; date and place of birth; major field of study; grade level; student identification

number; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; weight and height (if members of athletic teams); dates of attendance; honors, degrees and awards received; electronic mail address; photograph; and the name of the educational agency or institution most recently previously attended by the student. The District will not release a student’s Social Security number.

The District must disclose to military recruiters, upon request, the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of high school students. The District must also notify parents/guardians of their right and the right of their child to request that the District not release such information without the prior written parental consent. Therefore, if you, as a parent/guardian of a high school student, or a high school student, wish to exercise your option to withhold your consent to the release of the above information to military recruiters and/or institutions of higher learning, you must complete, sign, date, and return the form provided by the High School Main Office, or send a letter to that effect to the attention of the High School Principal by the date specified.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THIRD PARTY SURVEYS

Parents shall have the right, upon request, to inspect U.S. Department of Education and third party surveys before they are distributed and administered by the District to students, and shall also have the right to opt their child out of participation in such surveys.

In the event that a third party survey contains any of the following types of information (listed below), then the District will protect the privacy of the student in the event of administration of such a survey, by allowing parents to inspect the survey prior to administration and by advising the students that their responses should contain no personally identifiable information. The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply to any survey administered to a student in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

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1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent;
2. Mental and psychological problems of the student or the student’s family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized, privileged, or analogous relationships such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent;
8. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in the program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

INSPECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Parents shall have the right to inspect, upon request, instructional materials used as part of the educational curriculum for students. The request should be made in writing and directed to Marystephanie Corsones, Interim Superintendent. The response will be provided within a reasonable period of time from the date of receipt of the request. Instructional materials include material provided to a student regardless of format, including printed or representational materials, and materials in electronic or digital formats (such as materials accessible through the Internet). The term does not include academic tests or academic assessments.

MANDATED ASSESSMENTS

Parents may request information regarding student participation in any mandated State or local assessments by contacting the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction at 845-657-6383 ext. 1023. Such information shall be provided within two (2) weeks of the request.

CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE

The Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) operates the following toll-free telephone number: 1-800-342-3720 to receive reports of child abuse or maltreatment.

Further information can be found on the OCFS website: <http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/cps/>.

LÍNEA DIRECTA DE ABUSO INFANTIL

La Oficina de Servicios para Niños y Familias (OCFS por sus siglas en inglés) opera el siguiente número de teléfono gratuito: 1-800-342-3720 para recibir reportes de abuso o maltrato infantil. Puede encontrar más información en el sitio web de OCFS: <http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/cps/>.

PARTICIPATION IN GRADUATION

Students who have earned a Career Development and Occupational Studies Commencement Credential (CDOS) or Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential (SACC) by the time their ninth grade cohort reaches graduation may, but are not required to, participate in that graduation ceremony and related activities. For more information on the District’s policy and regulations regarding graduation participation, please visit: www.onteorak12.ny.us/graduation.

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION REGARDING PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF TEACHERS

Federal law requires that all parents in a Title I school be notified and given the opportunity to request information about the professional qualifications of classroom teachers instructing their child. If you are interested in this information, you may send your request to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, who will provide a response in a timely manner.

USEFUL DISTRICT CONTACT INFORMATION

www.onteorak12.ny.us

DISTRICT OFFICE.....845-657-6383

Interim Superintendent
Marystephanie Corsones657-6383 x1010

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Stephanie Laffin..... 657-6383 x1023

District Clerk
Fern Amster 657-6383 x1010

Interim Superintendent for Business
Dr. Don Gottlieb..... 657-6383 x1030

Director of Pupil Personnel Services
Amanda Allison657-3320

Universal Pre-Kindergarten
Amanda Allison.....657-3320

Director of Transportation
Nicole Sommer 657-2537

School Lunch Manager
Christine Downs.....657-6383 x2181

Director of Facilities
Kyle Harjes 657-6384

HIGH SCHOOL • 657-2373
Principal, Lance Edelman
Asst. Principal, Dieter Schimmelpfennig

MIDDLE SCHOOL • 657-2373
Principal, Jennifer O'Connor

BENNETT ELEMENTARY • 657-2354
Co-principals, Gabriel Buono and Linda Sella

PHOENICIA ELEMENTARY • 688-5580
Principal, Elizabeth Fallo

WOODSTOCK ELEMENTARY • 679-2316
Principal, Scott Richards