

# ANSONIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS



## ANSONIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

42 Grove Street Ansonia, CT 06401

PH: 203-736-5095

[www.ansoniam.org](http://www.ansoniam.org)



## ANSONIA STRONG

2020 - 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

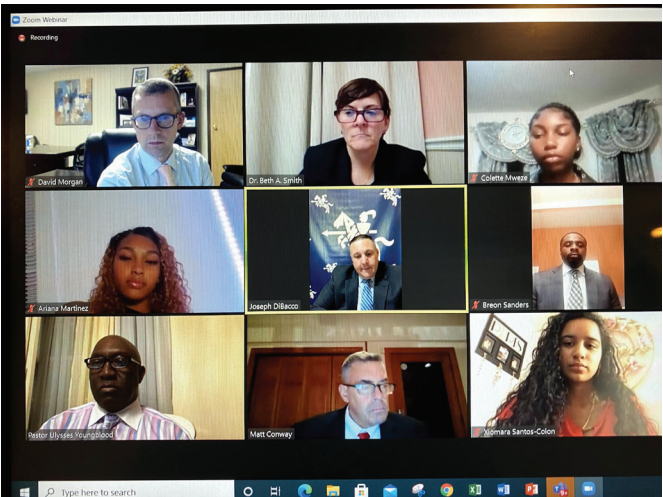




Superintendent Dr. Joseph DiBacco served as the Commencement speaker for the Quinnipiac University School of Education on May 10.



Pre-K students in Ansonia Middle School get their school gardens ready for summer in early June.



On November 19, 2020, valley school districts held the MLK Unity in the Community Committee meeting virtually. In attendance were the superintendents of Ansonia (Dr. Joseph DiBacco), Shelton (Dr. Beth A. Smith), and Derby (Dr. Matt Conway). Each Superintendent brought a student representative from each of their districts. Also, there were moderators, pastors, chair of the committee, and representatives from the valley Chapter of the NAACP. Ansonia's student panelist and President of the NAACP Jr. Club at Ansonia High School, Colette Mweze, was articulate and thoughtful when in her closing remarks said, "believe in yourself. You are capable of doing anything you put in your mind. There is always a rainbow after the storm!"

CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS

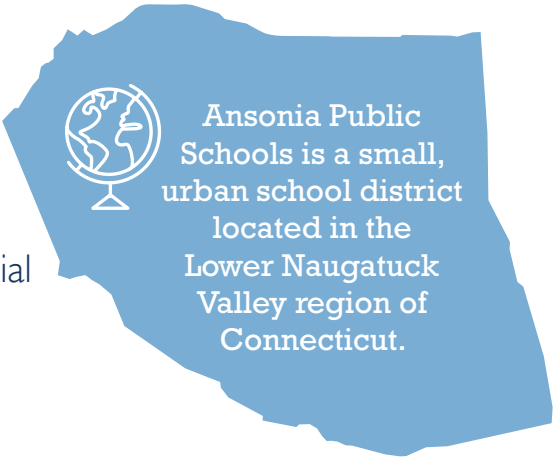
- Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Joseph DiBacco
Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Stephen Bergin
Director of Special Services
Kevin Keating
K-12 Language Arts Coordinator
Bridget Calabrese
K-12 Math/Science Coordinator
John LaRovera
Business Administrator
Joanne Cegan

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

- ANSONIA HIGH SCHOOL
Principal
Paul Giansanti
Assistant Principal
Sara Crooks
Director of Alternative Education and Student Affairs
Tom Brockett
ANSONIA MIDDLE SCHOOL
Principal
Pete Colaccino
Assistant Principal
Steve Marchetti
JOHN C. MEAD SCHOOL
Principal
Amy Cosciello
Assistant Principal
Robert Durand
JOHN G. PRENDERGAST SCHOOL
Principal
Liz Nimons
Assistant Principal
John Coppola

Ansonia Public Schools

The Ansonia Public Schools, consisting of a partnership between the community, parents, and educators, is committed to providing a safe, progressive learning environment that ensures students achieve their maximum individual potential with the confidence to take intellectual risks and become curious, lifelong learners.



OUR MISSION

The mission of Ansonia Public Schools is to successfully prepare students with a sound and intuitive understanding of their own and others social and emotional well-being while developing their individualized capacities to compete in a global society.



OUR VISION

Ansonia Public Schools will be a high-performing district that engages families and partners with our community to prepare all students to be globally competitive in college, career, and life.

ANSONIA STRONG



FAMILIES • SCHOOLS • COMMUNITY

ANSONIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Board Members, Colleagues, and Community Stakeholders:

The 2020-21 school year was the most difficult challenge in the lives of every Superintendent of Schools and, I am sure, in the lives of every parent. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted every facet of our educational system, from the day we opened the school year on Sept. 2, 2020 until our last day on June 14, 2021.

As I wrote in my message last year, we remained true to our promise that our focus would remain on students, keeping their safety and health at the forefront of every decision that had to be made throughout the year. The State of Connecticut laid the framework during the Summer of 2020, providing a template for each district to create a Reopening Plan. That plan, which appears on the district website, [www.ansonia.org](http://www.ansonia.org), outlined our district's decision to reopen schools in a hybrid model in September, with the goal of opening fully as long as COVID-positive cases reached low levels. On July 17, 2021, our district hosted a Superintendent's regional meeting with Gov. Ned Lamont, who came to Ansonia High to hear about plans that were being developed, feedback from parents, and needs.

We reported to Gov. Lamont that about 70% of our families planned to send their children to school in person, while 30% chose to keep their children home for remote learning. Last year, when our schools closed in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 outbreak, we provided chromebooks or laptops to every student and teacher in the district. Our district utilized seven planning days prior to the opening of this school year in order to prepare teachers to concurrently provide instruction in person and remotely. New students who needed a chromebook or laptop were provided with one prior to the start of the year.

Our hybrid model had students in Cohort A attending in person classes Mondays and Tuesdays, while students in Cohort B attended in person on Thursdays and Fridays. All other days were remote instruction classes. This model resulted in small, in-person class size. Masks were mandatory for students and staff. Using money from ESSER I, the first federal COVID relief grant, we hired additional part-time staff to clean "high touch points" throughout the schools; had isolation rooms staffed with medical personnel; purchased specialized equipment to disinfect floors; and added technology staff, online programs, and improved wifi in and out of our schools.


As COVID positive cases in our schools and community increased, I had to make the difficult decision to move all students to remote learning in mid-November through mid-January. We reopened on Jan. 19 in a hybrid model and moved to a four day a week, in person model for the PreK through Grade 8 schools on Feb. 1. Ansonia High operated on an early dismissal schedule for the remainder of the year.

We were all heartened when the COVID-19 vaccines were approved and school district personnel were eligible for the vaccine in March. Our district hosted a vaccination clinic for Ansonia schools, Derby schools and Emmett O'Brien on March 6 and on March 27. On April 19, our elementary schools and AMS moved to full, in person, five days a week through the rest of the school year.

I am a great believer in teamwork, and the effort of our staff and our community partners throughout this pandemic has been outstanding. I want to personally thank Griffin Hospital and the Naugatuck Valley Health Department for their expertise and guidance. Griffin provided testing sites throughout the region and the state, and I was thrilled to read about their work in <https://bit.ly/2ZjX174>

The Naugatuck Valley Health Department must have added a hotline for Ansonia, since it felt like we were calling them daily or, at times, several times a day this past school year. They helped us immensely with our response protocols, communications with parents, and with accommodating so many of our staff, students and families when the vaccines became available.

Last year I wrote the question: How special is Ansonia? I can tell you our community partners, which helped keep our children and staff safe, are what makes our community special. I am proud of the work we did together this past year, and I know that we will remain **ANSONIA STRONG** as we continue to safely operate our educational system in a pandemic this coming year. As our year closed out, we opened our largest summer program in recent memory, with more than 270 children in Grades K-5 and 45 middle school students enrolled for in person classes.

Sincerely,  
  
Dr. Joseph DiBacco,  
Superintendent of Schools



Student Demographics



2,276

Enrolled Students  
in Pre-K to Grade 12

This data is based on October 1, 2020  
enrollment which is the date the Connecticut  
State Department of Education uses for  
all state reporting.

PRE-K

Ansonia  
Pre-K Program  
59 Students

GRADES  
PRE-K  
to 6

Mead  
Elementary School  
623 Students

GRADES  
K-6

Prendergast  
Elementary School  
636 Students

GRADES  
7-8

Ansonia  
Middle School  
364 Students

GRADES  
9-12

Ansonia  
High School  
542 Students

O-P

Outplacements  
52 Students

Race Ethnicity  
of Ansonia Students

19.4%  
BLACK



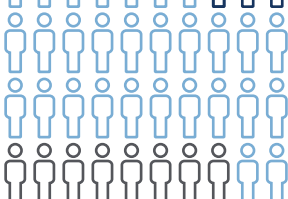
43.4%  
HISPANIC



28.7%  
WHITE



8.5%  
OTHERS



Board of Education

MEMBERS OF THE APS BOARD OF EDUCATION

President, Christopher Phipps  
Member, Fran DiGiorgi  
Member, Tracey DeLibero  
Member, Vinnie Scarlata  
Member, Rich Bshara  
Member, Sharon Voroschack  
Member, Beth LeBerge

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS & ATTENDANCE

In compliance with the Ansonia Board of Aldermen's resolution of January, 1992, requiring an attendance log of meetings, here is a table listing 14 regular and special meetings and board members' attendance records:

DATE	DiGiorgi	DeLibero	Phipps	Scarlata	Bshara	Voroschak	LeBerge
08/14/20 (spec)	P	P	P	A	P	P	A
08/20/20 (spec)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
09/09/20 (reg)	A	A	P	A	P	P	P
10/14/20 (reg)	P	P	P	A	P	A	P
10/23//20 (spec)	P	P	A	A	P	P	A
11/11/20 (reg)	A	P	P	A	P	P	P
12/09/20 (reg)	P	P	P	A	P	P	P
01/13/21 (reg)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
02/10/21 (reg)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
03/10/21 (reg)	A	P	P	A	P	P	P
04/21/21 (reg)	A	P	P	A	P	P	P
05/12/21 (reg)	P	P	P	A	P	P	A
06/16/21 (reg)	P	P	P	A	P	P	P
06/23/21 (spec)	A	P	P	P	P	P	P

ELL, Students with Disabilities, Poverty Percentages



5.7% ENGLISH  
LEARNERS




17.9% STUDENTS WITH  
DISABILITIES




67.8% FREE/REDUCED  
MEALS

\*Ansonia is a CEP (Community Eligibility Provision) district, which allows for all students to receive free breakfast and lunch.



## New COVID Relief Grants

The ESSER I and II grants are multi-year grants, and a third ESSER grant will provide funding through 2024.















### Ansonia Public Schools received \$5.67 MILLION

The COVID Relief Grants focused on Health, Safety and Instructional needs of Ansonia children. Funds have been used to purchase PPE; cleaning equipment and supplies; hire health, technology, and part-time custodial staff; and greatly enhance the district's technology hardware and software.

## Expenditures

The expenditures outlined below are based on a carefully crafted budget which starts with educational and operational needs identified by building administrators, curriculum coordinators and department heads. Meetings are held and budget requests are examined before the Superintendent brings a budget to the Ansonia Board of Education. The final budget amount is set by the Ansonia Board of Aldermen in late spring, and the Board of Education votes to adopt a detailed budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

2020-2021 Expenditures: \$31,606,676

	SALARIES	\$14,829,852	46.92%
	BENEFITS	\$4,703,291	14.88%
	INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT	\$54,192	0.17%
	PURCHASE PROF/TECH SVCS	\$1,611,520	5.10%
	UTILITIES	\$714,929	2.26%
	REPAIRS/ MAINTENANCE	\$712,408	2.25%
	TRANSPORTATION	\$2,036,742	6.44%
	TUITION	\$4,088,201	12.93%
	INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPLIES	\$433,992	1.37%
	NON INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPLIES	\$544,538	1.72%
	EQUIPMENT	\$465,235	1.47%
	CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS	\$1,411,776	4.47%

## Sikorsky hosts Women In Engineering Event at AMS

ANSONIA –Via Zoom, Ansonia Middle School students heard from engineers about the numerous careers available at Sikorsky Lockheed Martin, but it was building a model of the F-22 Raptor that really got their attention. The Raptor project was part of a Women in Engineering Event held on Feb. 23 and hosted by Sikorsky.

Held in person for 60 female students attending school in person, Women in Engineering met a goal of Ansonia Public Schools: Introducing students to careers in STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. John LaRovera, the district's Math and Science administrator, arranged for the two-day program. The first, a Career Day, was held Jan. 25 with a keynote speech by Sikorsky leaders about what it's like to be a leader in engineering, followed by breakout rooms for a 30-minute "speed mentoring" discussions with early-career professionals talking about their career journey.

For the second portion of the program, students heard about the theory behind fixed wing and rotor craft flight, then built model gliders of Lockheed's F-22 Raptor. A news reporter from WTNH Channel 8 filmed the program and conducted several interviews as part of a segment for "What's Right With Schools." That segment aired the evening of Feb. 25 and can be viewed here: <https://bit.ly/2ZrSoz8>

This type of event was eye opening for them.

– John LaRovera, Math + Science administrator

In his interview with WTNH, LaRovera was asked about the importance of this type of program for students living in a pandemic. "Children are resilient, and they adapt well," LaRovera said, noting that the program was led virtually via Zoom. "This type of event was eye opening for them."


The Women in Engineering Program was just one of several STEM-related initiatives of the district. There are plans to repurpose the schools' media centers to serve as "makerspaces," in which students can learn about STEM with hands on activity centers. LaRovera said they will be establishing a robotics program at the middle school and high school in the near future. All of these activities directly connect and lead into the career pathway programs and career and technical education classes at Ansonia High.

Eighth grader Alleyanna Figueroa spoke with WTNH about the experience. "I was glad to be able to participate in a program that was just for women," she said, noting that she is very interested in STEM fields. She said her uncle is an engineer, and she wasn't aware of what he actually does, but now, she has some basic information. She is interested in learning more. "There will be hundreds of thousands of jobs – some of which haven't been created yet – that will be available in STEM fields," LaRovera noted. "Many of these jobs in the past traditionally have been filled by males, but the trend is that anyone and everybody can pursue these careers. You can have a high profile job, regardless of gender."


AMS Principal Pete Colaccino said the feedback he received was very positive, especially about the model glider project. Some students found that, during the construction phase, issues arose and their gliders were not air worthy. Others took their gliders into the hallway and flew their planes. Colaccino said they used some of the new language they had learned, such as "the plane is flying nose heavy."


"I hope that the students make the connection and learn that the opportunities are endless, if they want to pursue a career in a non-traditional role," Colaccino said. "They heard from plenty of females who are in the field."

Dr. Joseph DiBacco, Superintendent, and Steve Bergin, Assistant Superintendent, said they thoroughly enjoyed the program on Tuesday. They worked as a team to build a glider, but they aren't fully disclosing whether their craft is air worthy. "Let's just say it was a learning experience," Dr. DiBacco said. "But it was a lot of fun to see the students enjoying themselves!"




The classroom of students begin to assemble their gliders, with step by step instruction provided by a Sikorsky engineer.





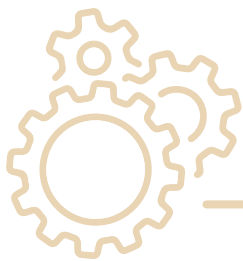
John LaRovera, Ansonia's math and science administrator, assists eighth grader Madison Crockett with the construction of a model F-22 Raptor as part of a Women in Engineering program on Feb. 23.



A student examines her finished model of the F-22 Raptor.

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4 Ansonia Public Schools



# The Workplace brings new opportunity for Ansonia students

Ansonia High School students who are interested in starting a career in Connecticut's growing manufacturing sector will get an extra helping hand from a new \$1.9 million grant program awarded to The Workplace in Bridgeport. That grant, which is for four years, will provide professional and occupational skills training to prepare students for jobs or apprenticeships in the manufacturing sector.

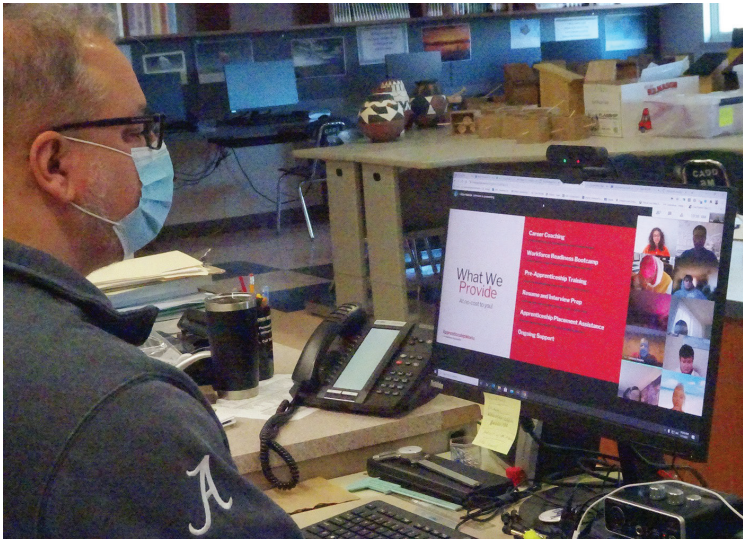
The Youth Apprenticeship Readiness Grant, open to youth who are between the ages of 16-24, will build on the success of the AHS manufacturing pathway program, which offers students coursework in Solidworks and Blueprint Reading while earning college credit from Housatonic Community College's Advanced Manufacturing Program. Participants who enroll in The WorkPlace's program will have access to additional services, such as a "Work Readiness Bootcamp," which The WorkPlace is developing in collaboration with area manufacturing companies.

"This grant will expand upon the great work already being done at Ansonia High School to prepare young adults for employment in manufacturing," said Sarah Lewis, the director of the program at The Workplace. "Manufacturing has a long history in the Naugatuck Valley. It's no secret that manufacturers need access to highly-skilled young workers as a large portion of the current workforce reaches retirement age."

Lewis has been meeting with employers to learn about the barriers that preclude companies from hiring and retaining young workers. "In addition to occupational skills, everyone we spoke with has said that young candidates often lack soft [professional] skills, such as communication skills, teamwork, work ethic, promptness, and even coming to work in the proper attire." That is one type of training that The Workplace planned to offer later in the year to AHS students, after school or in the evening.

Part of their work will be to promote manufacturing career awareness and educate students on the many opportunities in the industry. "Manufacturing is no longer dirty, dark, and dangerous," Lewis said. It has transitioned into "a dynamic industry with new technologies. There are immense growth opportunities; in addition, you can also earn a great living."

About 30 AHS students participated in an initial panel presentation in December. On Jan. 7, two members of The Workplace spoke virtually with Sal Calcasola's



Sal Calcasola, a technology education teacher at AHS, listens in on a presentation by The Workplace on Jan. 7

SolidWorks class. The eight students in attendance that day heard about the supports they would receive, such as technology and transportation assistance once they begin their apprenticeships. One student expressed an interest in aerospace engineering. Lorenzo Brooks, a caseworker who served as a guest speaker, told the students that he worked for Sikorsky for seven years. "To be an engineer, you'll benefit from knowing everything about the product [you are working on]. An apprenticeship allows you to earn while you learn. It's a great way to gain a solid foundation before continuing your engineering studies."

Lewis credited Dennis Proto, the district's College and Career Outreach Advisor, and Dr. Joseph DiBacco, Superintendent, with advocating for Ansonia and sharing news about the incredible growth in career tracks at AHS. "Ansonia stood out. The high school has the manufacturing career track already, so there is a group of students already interested in the field. They are already exposing students at a young age to the manufacturing field and the many, many opportunities that are available. It's a perfect marriage!"

Dr. DiBacco said he heard during the summer that Ansonia High was selected as one of the new partners. "I saw our name listed during a presentation [at The Workplace], he said. "It was such welcome news, especially in light of the ongoing pandemic, knowing that we would be adding yet another great program for Ansonia High students."

Paul Giansanti, principal of AHS, is looking forward to seeing the program in action. "They will be giving our students the opportunity to learn on the job, and they will also be providing the supports that our students need," he said. "They want to get young adults into the workforce, and we are so glad to know that our Ansonia students will be able benefit from this."

For more information about this grant program, go to <https://bit.ly/3Ef873j>



# Financial Report

## Grant Funding

Ansonia Public Schools is a Priority School District and an Alliance School District in the State of Connecticut. These designations are for districts with high need, and grants are awarded to these districts for data-driven school improvement programs. Detailed applications outlining those plans are required for nearly all of the grants, as well as follow-up reporting.

The chart provides an overview of three categories of grants awarded to Ansonia during the 2020-21 year, totaling more than \$13.4 million, in the following three categories: Entitlement Grants, new COVID Relief grants, and Competitive grants.

Entitlements	
Title I – Improving Basic Programs	\$966,741
Title IIA – Teachers	\$109,648
Title III Part A	\$15,325
Title IV Part A – Student Support	\$68,907
IDEA Section 611	\$627,432
IDEA Section 619	\$7,740
Alliance District Grant	\$2,906,760
Alliance Carry Forward Grant	\$179,510
Alliance District General Improvements	\$477,600
School Readiness Summer 2020 Program	\$169,436
School Readiness School Year Program	\$929,235
Quality Enhancement Program	\$6,447
Priority School District	\$840,238
Extended School Hours	\$43,238
PSD Summer School	\$50,029
TEAM Program	\$6,452
Carl Perkins Grant	\$49,483
Bilingual Education	\$3,789
State Open Choice Grant	\$9,000
Magnet School Transportation	\$1,300

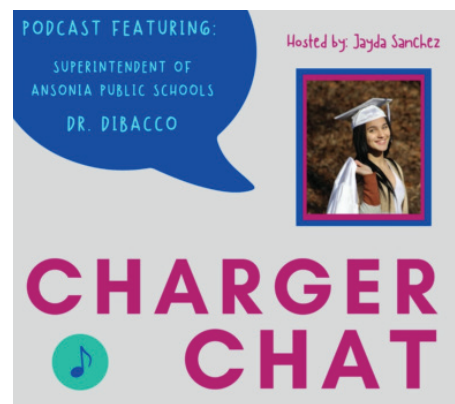
NEW COVID Relief Grants	
ESSER I	\$792,378
Coronavirus Relief Grant	\$1,371,712
ESSER II	\$3,221,082
ESSER II - Set- Aside	\$291,970

Competitive	
21st Century Community Learning Center	\$130,000
Smart Start Operations	\$76,700
Perkins Special Populations	\$20,025
Perkins Supplemental Grant	\$26,808
Middle School Financial Literacy	\$15,000
Lockheed Martin Technology Grant	\$10,000
FAFSA	\$3,000

Total Grant Funds: \$13,426,985

# ANSONIA HIGH SCHOOL

## Creating Podcasts



Music technology students used Podcasts to interview Central Office and AHS staff.

## Teacher of the Year



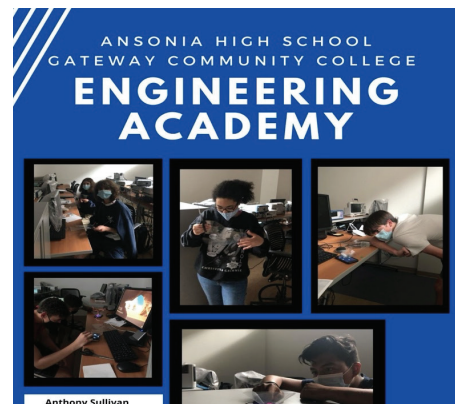
Ansonia Teacher of the Year  
Karen Phipps

## Sikorsky Career Classroom



In June 2021, a team of teachers, counselors, and administrators from Ansonia High School spent a week at various SIK - Lockheed Martin locations to gain a deeper understanding of the different roles and responsibilities the company has to offer.

## Gateway CC Engineering Academy



Ten (10) Ansonia High School students participated in a two-week Engineering summer program at Gateway Community College. This program was provided to students at no-cost.

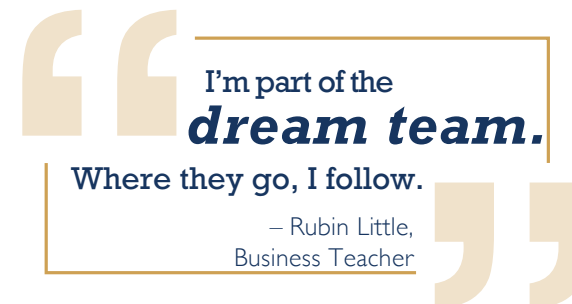
Karen Phipps, a Master Teacher at AHS, is Ansonia's Teacher of the Year for the 2020-21 year. A teacher for 22 years, Mrs. Phipps is a second generation teacher whose passion for the field shines through her work in securing grant money for the school district, serving on district-level committees, and collaborating with the community to expand the opportunities for Ansonia students. When asked what her message is to students, teachers and parents, Mrs. Phipps replied, "My message is simple ... to show you deeply care for one another. My advice is to focus on compassion, attitude, resilience and effort."



## Diverse Background for New Ansonia Teacher



Rubin Little has brought a little something extra to his style of teaching: a wealth of experience as a financial advisor and consultant in financial planning. He also has a few years in law enforcement under his belt, having started his working career as a State Trooper. But last year, as he joined the staff at Ansonia Middle School, he knew he was finally home.



This summer, he used his knowledge of finances, and with a little help, successfully completed a \$15,000 state grant application for a new Personal Finance program at AMS.

"I'm about 30 years late to the game," he said with a big smile, explaining that he was told many years ago that he was in the wrong field, that he was born to be a teacher. At the time, Little had already left the State Police and was working at Yale as an accountant in the Department of Pediatrics. "I was teaching [the staff] how to do something. I used the story of Alice in Wonderland to teach the class. Everyone stopped going to the other teachers and wanted to be in my class."

After a brief stint working as an assistant teacher in New Haven, Little said his path was "derailed" when he received an offer to work for American Express. He began a long career in the field of finance, but always remembered his dream of teaching. That's where Little's wife stepped in. In a random circumstance more than two years ago, she met Dr. DiBacco, who was then the Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Ansonia. They talked about education, and Mrs. Little spoke about her husband who always wanted to go into education. She gave her husband's phone number to Dr. DiBacco, who made the call.

"After we talked for a while, he told me he agreed with my wife, that I belonged in the classroom,"



AMS Principal Pete Colaccino (left) and Business teacher Rubin Little, at the new bench in front of Ansonia Middle School.

Little recalled. "He said he would be happy to help me any way he could."

Several months later, Little enrolled in the Alternate Route to Teacher Certification (ARC) program, and he met with a panel of people. "I was told that there were 10 schools that would want to hire me. I told them, I already have a school to go to. I am going to go with Joe DiBacco."

The rest is history. Little was interviewed by Pete Colaccino, who was the new principal of AMS, Assistant Principal Steve Marchetti, and former math specialist Jess Bedosky. "You don't find teachers with this type of experience," Colaccino said of Little's business background. "It's a total win. I just love the work he is doing."

Little's smile just lights up the room, especially when he talks about his students in Ansonia. "We have some beautiful kids here in Ansonia," he said, noting that he wants to open the world to them. He start with the new personal finance class, with the grant purchasing chromebooks, textbooks and other educational material.

"I'm part of the dream team," he said of his supervisors and Dr. DiBacco. "Where they go, I follow."

DiBacco said Little is the type of person who brings a great skillset to the classroom from a non-traditional field. "We look for unique talents, and Rubin fits the bill. We are grateful that he has chosen Ansonia Public Schools."



# FREE LITTLE LIBRARIES OPEN

ANSONIA — Making a community of readers by building Little Libraries for each school finally became a reality on May 20, 2021, thanks to the Technology Education students at Ansonia High School. The students, who helped build the wooden shelving units complete with shingled roofs, visited the four schools with new and “gently used” books to put into the sharing libraries.

Eight students enrolled in the Technology Education class, taught by Salvatore Calcasola, were greeted by smiling faces and enthusiasm at Mead School, Prendergast School, and the Ansonia Middle School. Students from each of the K-8 schools helped their older peers line the shelves with books donated by AHS staff and students.

The project originated with retired AHS teacher, Ed Nicefaro, during the 2019-2020 school year. However, the sudden school closures in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic halted the project. Mr. Calcasola and his students were more than eager to complete the project, while the district’s Maintenance Department installed the Little Libraries.

AHS Principal Paul Giansanti spoke about the importance of a project that engaged AHS students in a hands-on project that makes an immediate and long-lasting connection with the community. “This is a great project, which also encourages and fosters a love of reading,” he said.

Dr. Joseph DiBacco, Superintendent of Schools, lauded the students on their work. “I love the fact that it is all student generated: built by students to help the next generation of student readers,” he said. “It’s a perfect example of how our students care and support one another.”

The Little Libraries are located at the front of these schools: Ansonia High School, 20 Pulaski Highway; Ansonia Middle School, 115 Howard Avenue; John G. Prendergast School, 59 Finney Street; and John C. Mead School, 75 Ford Street. A fifth unit is in front of the Robert E. Zuraw Administrative Building, the district’s Central Office at 42 Grove Street. Students and members of the Ansonia community are encouraged to take a book or donate a book. The Little Libraries are open every day.



Ansonia High School students watch as Mead first graders Oliva Surreira and Israel Ruiz put books into the Little Library outside Mead School on May 20.



A photo from Ansonia Middle School:



A photo from Prendergast School:

## Our Year at a Glance

### ANSONIA MIDDLE SCHOOL

#### Pre Promotion Ceremony



Group of 8th graders posing for a group photo, prior to their promotion.

#### International Pie Day



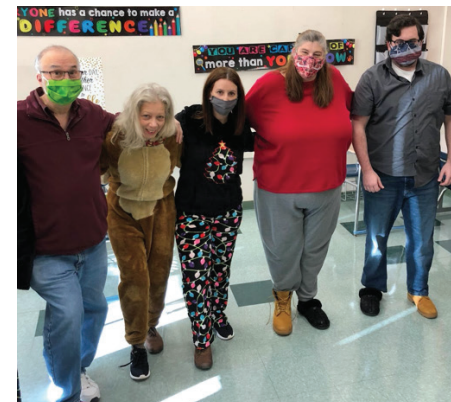
Math teachers showing their love of math! 3.14159265358979323846264338327950

#### Sikorsky Lockheed Martin Event



Supt. Dr. Joseph DiBacco & Asst. Supt. Stephen Bergin building a jet.

#### Team Building Event



During the holidays, team teachers participated in a competition to find out which team showed the most spirit and competitiveness.

#### Breast Cancer Awareness



Ansonia Middle School teachers go Pink by displaying their support for Breast Cancer Awareness.

Women in Engineering (WIE) Day is one of Sikorsky Lockheed Martin's signature events whose mission is to raise the profile of women in engineering and focus on the amazing career opportunities available to girls in the industry. Students in grade 8 at Ansonia Middle School were chosen as this year's school to represent this event and build model fighter jets! Turn to Page 4 for a feature story and more photos about this special event!

Many of the activities featured at **Mead & Prendergast** were coordinated by **Dorca Rodriguez**, the district's Family Engagement Coordinator, with funds from the Title I Grant.



## PRENDERGAST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

*Virtual  
Beardsley Zoo*

*Earth Day  
April 22, 2021*

*Scavenger Hunt  
Family Night*



Nearly 80 students and their family members met with a team of animal care experts from Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo in Bridgeport on Feb. 17 and had the opportunity to meet three different zoo animals. Students learned about what the animals ate, their sleeping habits, and how they spent their days. Participants were given a behind the scenes tour of the Zoo's commissary kitchen. Principal Liz Nimons reported that it was a very popular program, with the students asking many questions during a live Q&A, including find out about their favorite animals!



In celebration of National Earth Day, students were given the opportunity to build their own mini-greenhouse and plant seeds for marigolds. Families were provided with soil, cups, seeds and other supplies in advance of the program. The virtual activity opened with ELA specialist Kate Engeldrum's reading of "Earth Day, Every Day" and the song, "Recycle" by Jack Hartman. Mrs. Nimons and Mr. Coppola modeled the construction of the greenhouse, while families assisted their children at home. Students learned that marigolds are cheerful, easy-to-grow plants with carnation-like flowers and that they like full sun or partial shade. Parents appreciated the step by step instructions!



The final family event of the year was held in person outside of the school in early June. This scavenger hunt activity was designed to bring Prendergast families and students together for a fun and engaging team-building event. Students were given a number and had to find the correct stone in the playground. The stone had a letter on it, and students had to "crack the code" to find the right stone. Every student who participated received a pet rock project to take home, and the families were provided with pizza and refreshments.



## Promotion and Graduation Ceremonies



A picture from the live feed of the 11 a.m. ceremony features the Red Team eighth graders at Ansonia Middle School June 11.

Ceremonies were held in-person and virtually to honor 186 eighth graders at AMS on June 11 and 103 seniors from AHS on June 12.

AMS held two separate promotion ceremonies on June 11 in the Richard Nicolari Auditorium at AMS, while AHS held its graduation ceremony for the Class of 2021 on Jarvis Field on June 12.

The Valedictorians of the eighth grade teams from AHS are **Maria Dominguez** (Green Team) and **Kyle Speck** (Red Team). The top 10 graduates of the Class of 2021 appear on the next page.



## Promotion and Graduation Ceremonies

# Top 10 Graduates

of **2021**

Ansonia High School

**2 TOP TEN**

Advice to Underclassmen

High school is not all about achievement and performance - it's about priority and preparation. In this brief period before you go off to college or go job hunting, find something that you love doing and try to get into it as much as you can. You can walk into high school loving mathematics and leave it in search of a major in political science - that's how much it matters.

The University of Connecticut  
Computer Science / Cybersecurity

**Joshua Pintacasi**

Ansonia High School

**3 TOP TEN**

Favorite Memory

Throughout all four years, being in chorus had to have been my favorite. It presented so many memories, and I made so many friends. Favorite class forever!

The University of Connecticut  
Fine Arts

**Kylee Nimons**

Ansonia High School

**4 TOP TEN**

Advice to Underclassmen

Stay focused on your schoolwork, and stay true to who you are. Surround yourself by people who support you, and respect your choices no matter what.

Quinnipiac University  
Political Science

**Lisa Marie Shehada**

Ansonia High School

**5 TOP TEN**

Advice to Underclassmen

It is important to always work hard and stay focused. High school goes by fast, so be sure to enjoy your time while it lasts, have fun, and aim for success.

Southern Connecticut State University  
Early Childhood Education

**Tessa Peluso**

Ansonia High School

**6 TOP TEN**

Favorite Memory

My favorite AHS memory is completing the Goldfish Respiration Lab in Ms. Cruz's AP Biology class with my lab partner, Kristo P. At the end of our lab, we were allowed to take our goldfish home with parental consent!

The University of Connecticut  
Biological Sciences

**Madison Jankauskas**

Ansonia High School

**7 TOP TEN**

Advice to Underclassmen

Work hard your freshman year. It will definitely pay off in the years to come. Also, make sure you enjoy your time in high school while you can. It really does go by fast. Make memories, join clubs, and try out for the sports team even if you're nervous. Never forget who you are and always be kind to others. You never know what people go home to.

Southern Connecticut State University  
Nursing

**Julia Fraulo**

Ansonia High School

**8 TOP TEN**

Advice to Underclassmen

Find your balance. High school goes by quickly. Enjoy the time you have before adulthood, make memories, laugh, go to football games even if you feel too tired, play sports, join clubs, be a PART of your class. It will make your high school experience memorable. But don't forget to focus on your academics as they will ultimately shape your future.

Southern Connecticut State University  
Health Sciences

**Gabriella Gjoni**

Ansonia High School

**9 TOP TEN**

Advice to Underclassmen

Do not be afraid of doing new things. Get involved as much as possible in regards to school events, clubs, sports. Your grades should be your top priority, don't let your assignments pile up until they become too overwhelming. Take things slow and never rush. Of course, there are going to be times when you will fail, but just brush it off and keep going. If a certain situation won't matter to you in a week, month, or year - let it go, it's just unnecessary stress. You should try to enjoy your four years of high school any way you can. These four years really do fly by, so make the most of this time.

Housatonic Community College  
Business

**Abigail Magarin**

Ansonia High School

**10 TOP TEN**

Advice to Underclassmen

Don't underestimate yourself! Be confident and always try your best.

Gateway Community College  
Early Childhood Education

**Monica Wojcik**

## Our Year at a Glance

### MEAD SCHOOL

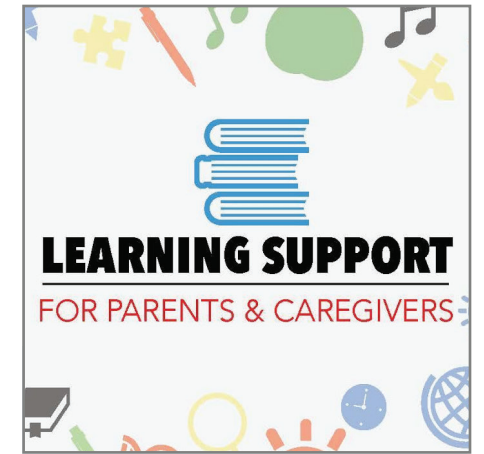
#### Virtual Valentine's Day



#### Dr. Seuss & Space



#### Supporting Parents during Remote Learning - 3/9/21



The Mead School team planned several virtual events for students and parents this year. Art teacher Ashley Preneta led a student/parent paint night on Feb. 11 in conjunction with Valentine's Day, as art is a therapeutic – and fun – activity. Each family was provided with a supply of paint, brushes, stencils and canvases, and parents/guardians were asked to pick up their supplies days prior to the event. Two sessions were held, which accommodated most working schedules. A total of 80 people participated, and parents provided extremely positive feedback, noting that they were able to participate in an activity with their child that was safe and the end product could be displayed in their home. After the event, parents requested another similar activity, and we held another activity – constructing a sun catcher – in May.

To kick off the month of March, Mead School hosted two age-appropriate virtual programs that focused on Dr. Seuss for Grades PreK-Grade 2 and space for Grades 3-6. A total of 100 students and parents participated. The first program was a music concert celebrating one of Dr. Seuss's best-known stories: Green Eggs and Ham. The show engaged children with songs, comedy, bubbles, and music technology. The program provided a sensory experience for children on the Autism Spectrum. The Cosmos for Kids space program was a techno space-dance party for kids. Each song included dancing, music technology, and information about our universe delivered with a thumping beat. Children and their parents were able to meet aliens from outer space, sing about the solar system, participate in a rap battle with the sun, and learn the difference between revolution and rotation.

Since March 2020, parents and guardians been navigating new models of in-person and remote learning during the pandemic. In order to address questions from parents about screen time, issues such as learning loss, instructional time with teachers, and keeping students motivated, Mead hosted a virtual meeting on March 9 to provide answers to these common questions. Mead families were also included in an invitation to participate in a twilight academic support program, in which certified teachers and interventionists led math and ELA lessons in small groups over a 10 week period in February, March and April.

