

CommunityLink

April 2015

Many interesting questions were asked and answered:

Does a cookie's color affect its taste?

How does gravity affect water?

How much energy does it take to dribble a basketball?

How much sugar is in your drink?

Why do Arctic Ocean animals need blubber?

Elementary Science and STEM Fairs

Throughout February and March, district elementary schools, in partnership with their Parent Teacher Associations, held Science and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) fairs, giving students the opportunity to explore a variety of exciting topics and share their research and discoveries with classmates, teachers, staff, administrators, and special guests, during daytime and evening presentations.



At **George Washington Elementary's 2nd annual STEM Fair**, more than 120 students from the 3rd, 4th and 5th grades put together projects. During the judging process, each student enjoyed the opportunity to have the undivided attention of the adult they presented to. Preparation was a critical component, and a great learning experience, as students used note

cards and got the chance to hone their public speaking skills.

Projects were research-, experiment- or demonstration-based, and they educated attendees about many topics, like: how the Grand Canyon was formed, the sugar content of food, how to make batteries out of common items like a coin or a lemon, how roller coasters work, and determining the age and type of trees by examining the stumps.

Mamaroneck Avenue School's 4th/5th Grade Science Fair in March was the

culminating event of the school's first ever "Science Month," during which all MAS students participated in STEM-related activities, lessons, and enrichment. These included a "Meet the Scientist Day," a visit to the Mad Science experiment booth to explore chemical reactions, science in the library, morning messages geared towards science, and increased classroom focus on a variety of topics. At the fair, 112 students participated with 97 projects.

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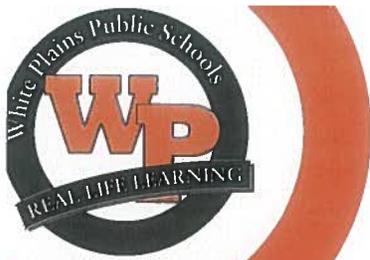
Budget and Election Update

The White Plains School District's 2015-2016 budget process is almost complete, following three public budget presentations to the Board of Education, and two community budget forums in January and March. The budget vote will take place on May 19th, from 12 -9 PM.

According to Superintendent of Schools, Timothy P. Connors, "Our district is well-positioned as a result of fiscally sound management by our administrators, the Finance/Audit Committee,

and the Board of Education. Stakeholders have come together to develop a budget that is responsive to the needs of students and programs. Cooperation with the unions has enabled us to recognize some savings in benefits, while the creation of Restricted Funds (formerly called Reserves) has allowed us to remain within the tax cap since it was established, and has eliminated the need for cuts in our

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Budget and Election Update

(cont'd from page 1)

operational budget. These factors allow us to provide for students' needs and maintain our high level of education.”

“ As part of the annual budget process, we carefully review our expenditure budget to see if we can find ways to better utilize each and every dollar,” said Assistant Superintendent for Business, Fred Seiler.

“ Preparing this year's budget has been challenging, but we worked together with our administrators to identify the key program priorities to provide a quality educational experience to our students.”

For more information, including questions/answers, handouts and summaries from each of the budget meetings, visit the “All

About the Budget” page on the district website, at www.wpcsd.k12.ny.us/Page/16593, or call 422-2071.

Along with the budget vote, three Board of Education seats will also be filled. Terms are three years, from July 1st, 2015, and candidates must submit petitions, available from the District Clerk, by April 29th. Registration, for qualified voters who are new to the City, or those who are not registered to vote in general elections, will take place on Saturday, May 2nd, Noon to 5 P.M., at Mamaroneck Avenue School, Nosband Avenue. A resident who has moved within White Plains during the last year may also change his/her voting address at that time.

Absentee ballots will be available by application to the District Clerk, for any voter who will not be in White Plains during the hours of the election.

For additional information, please call 422-2071.



VALENTINES FOR VETERANS

Highlands students created more than 1,200 Valentine's Day cards for local Veterans as part of Assemblyman David Buchwald's second annual “Valentines for Vets” program. The student organization at Highlands organized the event and distributed the cards for decoration. Students wrote many heartfelt sentiments, thanking the veterans for their service and referring to them as heroes.



Science and Stem (cont'd from page 1)

More than 80 students in grades 3-5 participated in the Post Road Science Fair, where the learning went far beyond each individual project, to include the poise, composure and presentation skills necessary for each child to share their discoveries with fellow classmates and the community.

Nearly 50 projects were displayed, covering a wide variety of topics, including air pressure, DNA, earth's tides, hovercrafts,

pollution, the solar system, tornados and quicksand.



Services to English Language Learners

The state has passed a number of new amendments to the Commissioner's Regulations Part 154 for implementation beginning in 2015-16 in order to “ensure equal educational opportunities for English Language Learners (ELL).”

In order to comply with the new regulations, we will need to implement two key changes in the area of program and scheduling:

- English Language Learners at all levels of English proficiency must be placed into an integrated English Language Arts setting for at least one period per day. This is already in place K-5 and will require some adjustment in grades 6-12. Students at the beginner and intermediate levels will also receive a stand-alone “English as a New

Language (ENL)” period of instruction.

- School districts must offer sufficient bilingual programming where 20 or more students speak the same language in the same grade, districtwide. A committee of stakeholders will be assembled, including teachers, parents, administrators and Board members, to explore the various options to expand our exemplary Dual Language program. Superintendent Connors will also request a one-year waiver from the New York State Education Department to will allow for comprehensive planning.

Overall, we are fortunate to have strong infrastructure in place to meet the new regulations.

Cultural Celebrations

International Day at Eastview

Hundreds of Eastview Middle School students and their families, teachers, staff, and administrators joined enjoyed a Mardi Gras/Carnaval-themed multicultural celebration in January, led by all of the school's language teachers. The annual event celebrates the many different cultures represented in the school and brings the learning of languages to life. **“Students come away with a different perspective about who they sit next to in school,”** said Spanish Teacher Judith Plant. **“They begin to recognize the rich diversity their school environment has to offer and see the value of language outside the classroom.”**

Event attendees brought fruit, snacks and traditional dishes to share to a pot-luck style gathering in the gymnasium, and then moved to the auditorium to enjoy a variety of performances. There were dances from several countries, video interviews of Eastview students talking about their experienc-

es living abroad, and video pen-pal exchanges. Many children dressed in traditional clothing that represented their country or culture. **“White Plains is a great district to work in because it truly is multicultural in many ways,”** said French Teacher Amy Von Sauer. **“We’re teaching French in the classroom, but a lot of what we do is about learning to be open to new cultures.”**

Ridgeway’s Global Dinner

Ridgeway Elementary School hosted its annual Global Dinner in March, sponsored by the PTA and all of the families of the school community, who donated food for an evening of music, laughter and delicious edibles from all over the world. The event, attended by more than 300 people, relates to the school’s theme of Global Understanding, which empowers students with the necessary skills to succeed in our increasingly diverse world. **“Our Global Dinner is an opportunity to celebrate the richness of the various cultures represented in our school,”** said Ridgeway Principal Tashia Brown.

Awards to Board Members



Board of Education members Rosemarie

Eller and Sheryl Brady (*shown right*) were presented with Achievement Awards from the New York State School Boards Association for their participation in leadership development training activities.

Shakespeare Competition

White Plains High School student Esther Ritchin performed in the regional competition semifinals of the National Shakespeare Competition on February 25th, at the New York Public Library in Manhattan. Previously, she came in first in the initial contest at the high school, where Juan Hernandez was first runner up and Anargiros Passalar was the second runner up. The English-Speaking Union of the United States sponsors this competition for students across the country and provides teachers with a performance-based program for the study of English Language Arts and Shakespeare. Students read, analyze, perform and recite Shakespearean monologues and sonnets. Approximately 2,000 teachers and 15,000 students participate each year.

Science Award Winners

Two White Plains High School students from the school’s Science Research Program received awards and recognition at the Westchester-Rockland Junior Science and Humanities Symposium in February. Junior Aneri Suthar placed third in the Display category for her proposed research, entitled *“Chemically Induced Drought Resistance in Food-Bearing Plants through the Use of Phenolic Compounds.”* Senior Rizza Estacio placed fourth in the Speaker category for her research, entitled *“A Functional Analysis of the Sodium Multivitamin Transporter.”* Rizza went on to present at the Upstate New York Juniors Science and Humanities Symposium in March, where she competed with 500 students from 41 high schools from throughout the Capital District and Westchester, Putnam and Rockland counties. She won third place.



Are you, or do you know, a White Plains Public Schools graduate with a success story to share? Please email hillary@inbetterwords.com to let us know!

KUDOS



Board of Ed Achievement Award winners Rosemarie Eller and Cheryl Brady

Science award winners Aneri and Rizza with Science Research Program teacher Kimberly Fleming.



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The mission of the White Plains City School District is to educate and inspire all students, while nurturing their dreams, so they learn continually, think critically, pursue their aspirations and contribute to a diverse and dynamic world.

Timothy P. Connors
Superintendent of Schools

Board of Education
Rosemarie Eller, *President*
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Sheryl Brady
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Rose Lovitch
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www.whiteplainspublicschools.org

FREE BOOKS AT UPCOMING BOOK FAIR

The White Plains PTA Council will host a districtwide book fair at Eastview Middle School on Saturday, May 2nd from 10 am to 1 pm, where free books will be given out to students and families.

Winter Weather Inspires Creative Fitness Fun
Taking advantage of the impressive snowfall, all of the White Plains High School sophomore physical education classes, as well as seniors in the Adventure Sports class, had the opportunity to experience snowshoeing this winter. For most of the students, it was their first experience with this sport.



Carnegie Hall! Tourist on the street: *How do you get to Carnegie Hall?* Helpful NYer: *Practice! Practice! Practice!* OR be a member of the White Plains High School Choir! The group performed on the stage at Carnegie Hall in a concert with choirs from around the country on Saturday, March 21st! Students began learning their music in January and were part of rehearsals for two days prior to the concert. This culminated in a performance with choirs from California, Florida and New Jersey. White Plains students also auditioned for and received solo spots in the concert. Director of the White Plains High School Choir is Penelope Cruz.

Art Honor Students as Mentors

White Plains High School students who are members of the National Art Honor Society visited the Head Start preschool program near the school in March to mentor students there. They developed and taught age-appropriate art lessons for two- and three-year-old children. Advisor to the group is Art Teacher Michael Chiariello.



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