

CommunityLink

Fall 2014

BACK TO SCHOOL

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Interim Superintendent Timothy Connors addresses attendees at opening day gathering.

Inspiration and Encouragement at Superintendent's Conference Day

Superintendent Timothy Connors hosted the annual opening Conference Day at the High School on September 2. Staff, administrators and Board members gathered for breakfast in the cafeteria before heading to the auditorium to hear remarks from various district representatives.

After the High School marching band kicked off the festivities, student leader Melissa Preudhomme spoke, recognizing and thanking her teachers and school staff for believing that every student **"has the ability to be brilliant"** and pushing them **"to do bigger things."** White Plains Mayor Thomas Roach expressed his appreciation as well, telling the teachers that **"no one in this city has a more important job than you."** Mr. Connors encouraged everyone to work together and to have a positive mindset that will enable all of us to educate and inspire all students.



White Plains Board of Education President Rosemarie Eller and Vice President Charlie Norris



Student speaker Melissa Preudhomme with Dante Wells who led the Pledge of Allegiance



Richard Dillon, Coordinator of Social Studies, K-12; Sara Hall, High School Special Education Social Studies Teacher; Lucy Roman, Coordinator of Business Education, Instructional Technology and Library Media Centers

An Exciting First Day at GW Elementary

Back to school at GW means new backpacks, new friends and big smiles. Looking forward to the upcoming school year, Principal Laura Mungin called on parents to be active partners in their children's success.



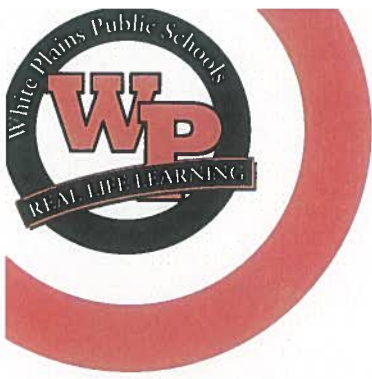
New to the district, Sabrina is looking forward to meeting new friends in the third grade.



First grader Kevin can't wait to get into the library. He's hoping to find books about cars, trains, dragons and dinosaurs.



Fifth grader Angelica, left, pictured with Kindergartener Makayla and 2nd grader Camila, is excited to meet her new teacher.



GET INVOLVED

The public is welcome to attend all Board of Education meetings.

November 10

7:30pm at Education House

December 8

7:30pm at the High School

Check the district website for updates: www.wpcsd.k12.ny.us/page/32

Parents Encouraged to Track Students' Progress Online

District parents of students in grades 6-12 are encouraged to track their academic progress – including attendance, schedules, immunizations, state exams, progress reports and report cards – in real time, using the Infinite Campus Portal.

To do so from a computer, go to www.whiteplainspublicschools.org/k12portal.

- For detailed instructions, click the "Quick Reference Guide."
- If you need help, or need a reminder of your password or activation key, click the link at the top of the page.
- If you know your username and password, click "Login here" and enter your information on the following page to proceed.

The Infinite Campus Portal is also available via a free app for Apple iOS or Droid.

- Download and launch the app
- Enter the district ID: VYPJSS
- Select "Go"
- Enter your username and password
- Select "Go/Sign In"

Superintendent Search Update

Dr. Lenora Boehlert was appointed by the Board at its September 15th meeting, in a consultant contract, to conduct a search for a new Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Boehlert is a former administrator in the district, having served as Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources for eight years. She is now a consultant for various school districts and a professor at Manhattanville College.

Dr. Boehlert is developing a schedule and placing advertisements in appropriate media. The plan calls for candidate interviews in December and January, with a new Superintendent to be named in February and a starting date of July 1st.

Board President Rosemarie Eller thanked Interim Superintendent Timothy Connors for his willingness to stay on for the current school year. She said the Board anticipates a successful search, enabling the district to move forward.



Richard Dillon
Social Studies
Coordinator,
K-12



Chad Gleason
Assistant
Principal,
Highlands
Middle School



Albert Laporte
Teacher on
Assignment,
Math 6-12



Suzanne Lasser
Assistant
Principal,
Post Road
School



Jesimae Ossorio
Principal,
Post Road
School



Lisa Panaro
Director
of English
Language
Learners
and LOTE
Programs, K-12

New Administrators & Staff

Five familiar faces in the district have moved into administrative positions, and a newcomer, Chad Gleason, has joined the team as an Assistant Principal at Highlands Middle School.

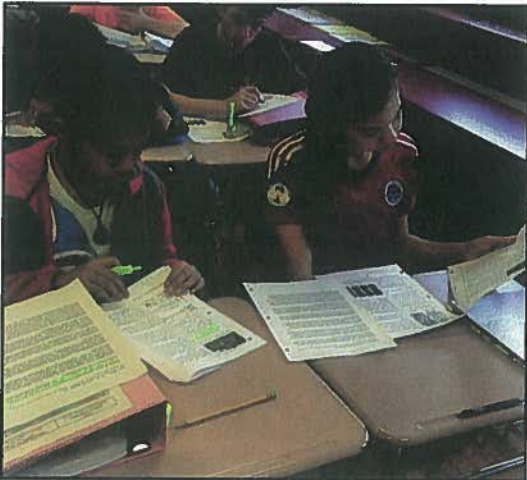
"From the conversations I have had with the faculty, the work I have observed in classrooms, and the support I have seen from members of our community, it is clear that Highlands is a wonderful place to learn, grow and work. It is an honor to be joining

such a hardworking and thoughtful group of educators," said Mr. Gleason, who came to White Plains from New York City, where he worked as a Social Studies department chair and grade team leader at School of the Future and an Assistant Principal at Frederick Douglas Academy IV.

Forty-two new teachers and 25 non-certified staff have also joined the district for the 2014-2015 school year. A warm welcome to all of them!

Growth Mindset in White Plains Schools

When District administrators gathered at their annual retreat in August, Superintendent Timothy Connors asked them to read the book *"Mindset: The New Psychology of Success,"* by Carol Dweck. With an emphasis on a positive attitude and openness to ongoing learning, the book was well-received by faculty and staff and several of the schools are incorporating its lessons.



In Rosana Lopez's 7th grade Spanish class, students were asked to read an article about brain growth and how they can actually make themselves more intelligent with practice. "They were able to compare the language acquisition of children to their own process of learning a foreign language. They now realize that it is possible, and that if they practice, they will reach language fluency in a second language," said Mrs. Lopez.

Dweck writes about the difference between a fixed and a growth mindset, and how effort matters in terms of intelligence and academic ability, just as much as in athletics or other endeavors. Rather than assuming a student's abilities are fixed and unchangeable, she explains that success and achievement are the result of practice and effort.

At Highlands Middle School, the growth mindset has been embraced by administrators, teachers and staff, according to Principal Ernest Spatafore. "Kids take perceptions about themselves very seriously, and the subtle messages that are sent have a profound impact. The best message we can give them is that they can perform at whatever level they strive for. We are and want our students to be truly optimistic. They should never assume they can't do something. We're trying to really challenge them and send a message that if they work hard toward a goal, they can absolutely achieve it."

Construction Upgrades at District Buildings

In order to ensure the safety of our students, numerous maintenance projects were completed over the summer. These include a new set of outdoor stairs at Eastview and an upgraded electronic entry and security system at Highlands.

In addition to those maintenance projects, the Capital Project to maintain and upgrade school district facilities is progressing. After receiving a delayed official approval from the State Education Department for the building permit, we are in the process of continuing with additional work. Ridgeway Elementary School roof replacement is ex-

pected to be completed in early November, weather permitting. Church Street had new walls and doors installed in six classrooms surrounding its Media Center. Several of the elementary schools had some restroom renovations and updates to the heating systems. Various window projects and air conditioning installation in auditoriums are to be scheduled during the school year with minimal impact on student learning. The major part of the Capital Project renovations will begin this coming winter and next spring, all intended to provide an excellent learning environment for our students.



Ridgeway roof



Eastview stairs



Highlands security

Many thanks

to The Foundation for Public Education in White Plains for grants awarded to teachers and staff for student projects. During the 2013-14 school year, more than \$25,000 was awarded for school programs not otherwise funded by the district's budget. To date, over \$270,000 in grant money has been donated to the White Plains Public Schools by the Foundation.

Grants include ballroom dancing at every elementary school, playwriting at Eastview, several artists-in-residence, an American Revolution reenactor and a choreographer at Highlands, an Innocence Project speaker at Rochambeau, author Roberto Quesado at the Latin American Symposium and 20 academic college scholarships at the High School.

The Foundation for Public Education in White Plains is a not-for-profit 501c3 organization. For more information about the Foundation and how you can participate, visit: <http://www.wpcsd.k12.ny.us/page/170>.

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.



White Plains Public Schools
5 Homeside Lane
White Plains, NY 10605

Timothy P. Connors
Superintendent of Schools

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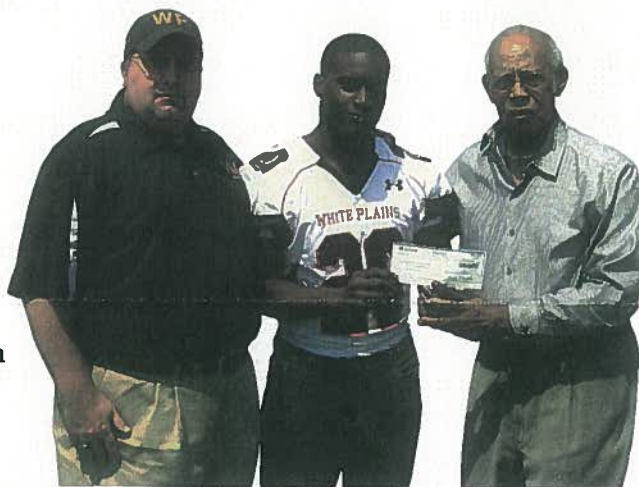
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Art Monk Scholarship Award Winner

Daniel Bonner, a linebacker on the White Plains High School Tigers 2014 Section 1 Championship Team, was the recipient of the 17th Annual Art Monk Scholarship Award. This is presented each year to a Tigers player who performs well not only on the field, but who excels academically and gives back to the community. Bonner, who volunteered with the Tigers Youth Football Program and achieved a 3.1 GPA during his senior year, was presented with a trophy and a check for \$1,000. He is currently attending Monroe College.



Pictured: Head Coach Skip Stevens, Daniel Bonner and former WPHS Principal Dan Woodard, who presents the Art Monk Award each year. Photo by Albert Coqueran.

KUDOS

DISTRICT NEWSLETTER WINS STATEWIDE AWARD

“Community Link” has been recognized by the New York School Public Relations Association with an Honor Award in the Community Newsletter

category of its 35th Annual Communication Awards. The association sponsors this competition statewide to recognize and celebrate outstanding achievement in educational communications. The White Plains newsletter is designed by Jill Singer Graphics and written by Hillary Millman, of In Better Words. District Clerk Michele Schoenfeld oversees the project.



Graduate Samantha Mendoza-Fuentes with her parents

15 Students Graduate After Summer School

On August 25th, 15 students celebrated the completion of their graduation requirements at a ceremony in the High School Media Center. In total, 473 middle and high school students, 60 of whom were from schools outside the district, attended summer school in White Plains. The middle schoolers built on the past year's skills and strategies, while high school students all attended to earn credits toward graduation.

Design: Jill Singer Graphics • Writing: Hillary Millman