

# CommunityLink

Fall 2013

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## GET INVOLVED

The public is welcome to attend regular and special Board of Education meetings.

### Board of Ed:

November 4, 7:30 p.m.  
at Education House

December 9, 7:30 p.m.  
at the High School

### Superintendent Search Forums:

November 18 & 19,  
Time & Location TBA

Check the district's website for this and other information:  
[www.whiteplainspublicschools.org](http://www.whiteplainspublicschools.org)

## Back to School

### Exciting First Day at Church Street Elementary



New Kindergarten teacher Ryan Allen looking forward to using the computer at school



Dmitriy and Olga Golodnikov with daughter Emily



"I'm excited to see all the new faces, big smiles, and how eager they all are," said 5th grade teacher Mrs. Saylor. "I can't wait to get to know all of them!"

### Superintendent's Conference Day Brings Staff Together

District staff gathered for the annual Superintendent's Conference Day to kick off the new school year with encouragement and gratitude from Mayor Tom Roach, members of the Board of Education, Interim Superintendent Tim Connors, Union representatives, and others. Mayor Roach expressed his appreciation for our educators, acknowledging the challenges and changes they face and reminding them of the importance of the person who stands in front of the classroom.

The Ridgeway Choir performed and WPHS junior Raina Kadavil spoke, stating: "I wouldn't be half the person I am today



## Superintendent Search Update

### A letter from Board of Ed President Rosemarie Eller

The Board of Education has initiated the process of selecting a permanent Superintendent. We have appointed a highly experienced educational search firm, School Leadership, LLC, to help us identify the best candidate for our district. Lead Consultant Dr. Charles Fowler, who has held superintendent positions in Connecticut, Long Island, Florida and Illinois, will be assisted by Dr. Edward Shine, former Rye Superintendent, and Nancy Taddiken, retired Edgemont Superintendent. Their work will include meetings with the district and community to gather input for the profile of a new superintendent. Communications will be forthcoming regarding the dates and times. As always, we value your input and look forward to seeing you at these meetings.

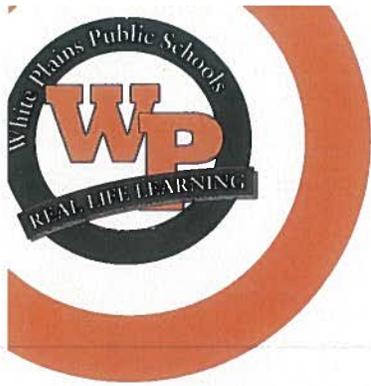
On behalf of the Board of Education, it is our pleasure to welcome all students, parents and staff to what we believe will be another exciting school year full of learning and growth for our students. We are off to a wonderful start, under the leadership of Tim Connors as Interim Superintendent.

without my teachers." After the gathering, teachers went to their respective buildings to participate in staff development programs.

**“By working together and helping one another succeed, the 2013-2014 school year will be a good year for all of us,”** said Interim Superintendent

**Timothy Connors. “Last year was a challenging one. However, if we strive to master our craft and work in support of one another, we will move toward our goal of maximizing every child’s potential to learn.”**





**STAR REGISTRATION  
REMINDER  
NEW IN 2013**

**Attention NYS**

**Homeowners:** New legislation requires all homeowners receiving the Basic STAR exemption to register with the Tax Department in order to receive or continue to receive the exemption in 2014 and beyond. Registration is open until December 31, 2013. For more information, visit [www.tax.ny.gov](http://www.tax.ny.gov), call 518-457-2036 or email: [ORPTS.STAR@tax.ny.gov](mailto:ORPTS.STAR@tax.ny.gov).

## Update: Middle School Redesign

The middle school years are crucial – students begin to imagine a future for themselves and make decisions that impact that future. To ensure we are doing all we can to give them the best education and opportunities for success, WPPS began in 2011 the process of redesigning the middle school experience. Our goal was to help students develop a stronger connection to their teachers and each other, to build their confidence and skills, and better prepare them for the challenges of high school and beyond.

After substantial research, public forums and presentations, transition activities began in the spring, and as of this September, all incoming 6th graders are now attending the Eastview campus, and all 7th and 8th grade students are on the Highlands Campus.

At the center of our redesign program are the “teams,” which means that a team of 4-5 content teachers (English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Special Education) shares the same group of 100-125 students. This structure allows for a smaller, more personalized setting to be created, and enables teachers to have focused conversations among the team regarding student concerns and best practices.

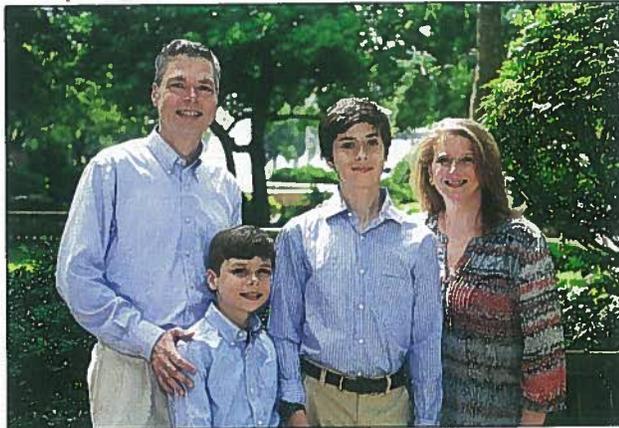
With the school year now well underway, we checked in with our principals to see how the new arrangements are working out:

Eastview Principal Joe Cloherty:

**“ We had a very strong beginning; students were comfortable coming in to the new building and adapted very well. They learned how to navigate in a larger building, read a schedule, and, most importantly, meet and greet and get to know their fellow members of White Plains Class of 2020. Each team has adopted a name and there’s no question they’re building team unity. ”**

Highlands Principal Ernie Spatafore:

**“ The atmosphere in the building is really positive. It’s clear that students are on a team, academically and socially. It’s easier for them to make friends. Support staff can work more closely with students, and we’ve been able to break students up into smaller groups. Teachers meet three times every six days to plan, speak with each other and prepare cross-discipline activities. ”**



Mayor Thomas Roach with children Lawson (a 5th grader at George Washington School) and Henry (a freshman at White Plains High School), and wife Beth.

## Q&A with Mayor Roach

What’s the most exciting thing about the first day of a new school year?

**“ In my neighborhood, we all meet up and take a picture so we have a timeline of the kids as they grow, and then we walk to George Washington together. ”**

What do you appreciate most about the WP school district?

**“ The quality of the district and the teachers is outstanding; the facilities are great and wonderfully maintained... and the programs that are available are tremendous. ”**

What would you say to parents sending kids to school for the first time?

**“ You’re in great hands, and even if you drop off a nervous or tearful child, you will pick up a happy, talkative child at the end of the day. ”**

We hope you enjoy the new WPPS newsletter in color, made possible by advances in cost-effective printing!

## WPPS Alum Spotlight: Rolando Santana

We were so proud to see WPPS class of '92 graduate Rolando Santana, a wonderfully successful fashion designer and business owner, featured in a recent issue of Wag magazine, that we decided to check in with him ourselves!

After completing degrees in International Business at Mercy College and Fashion Design at FIT, Rolando began working at women's clothing design company Spenser Jeremy, where his talent was immediately recognized and he was promoted to dress designer. In 2005 he joined Donna Morgan as Creative Director, and in 2006 was recruited as Vice President of Design with Kellwood Company's Designer Alliance. In 2009, Rolando decided the time was right to launch his own collection, and has been in business for himself since then. See his work at [www.RolandoSantana.com](http://www.RolandoSantana.com).



What Rolando says about White Plains schools:

**“ My White Plains education, especially in the art department, was a huge foundation for my current career in fashion. The diverse art program was one of the strongest I have ever experienced; I took photography, fashion design, pottery, etc., and really loved the variety of classes. ”**

Rolando's advice for current students:

**“ Don't disregard your time in high school. It should be a time to learn and grow a strong foundation for your future. My time in White Plains really taught me that art is as important as any other industry and it shouldn't be disregarded. ”**



## Graduates Inducted into White Plains HS Hall of Fame

In an inspiring ceremony on October 24th, four graduates were inducted into the White Plains High School Hall of Fame. They joined 70 previous honorees who have gone on to do important and amazing work throughout their careers.

Dr. Scott Halstead, '47, an internationally recognized expert on the causes and treatments of dengue fever; M. Howard Davis, '54, Supervisor of Guidance for the White Plains Public Schools Alternative and Adult Education Programs for 30 years; David Corn, '77, Chief of the Washington Bureau for Mother Jones, author, and political commentator; and Sorraya E. Sampson, '84, President and CEO of The Urban League of Westchester County, Inc.



Inductees (left): Sorraya E. Sampson '84, M. Howard Davis '54, Dr. Scott Halstead '47 (David Corn '77 was unable to attend.)

## Seniors Recognized in National Merit Competitions

Congratulations to the 17 White Plains High School seniors who stood out among thousands of competitors nationwide to be acknowledged as scholastic champions!

### National Merit Semifinalists:

Max A. Golden and Claire M. Nataro

### National Merit Commended

**Students:** Louisa C. Abbott, Shamus C. Cardon, Theodore M. Chomiak, Arielle K. Hazi, Sarah A. Lumelsky, Rachel Y. Okun, Vivekanand Tatineni and Samuel L. Woehr

### National Achievement Semifinalist:

Ayan S. Waite

### National Achievement Outstanding

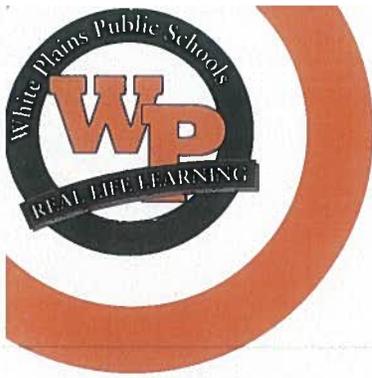
**Participant:** Najah A. Banks

### National Hispanic Recognition Scholars:

Brian Laplaca, Kiara R. Barone, David Laguna, Germain Meza and Amanda Soyk



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



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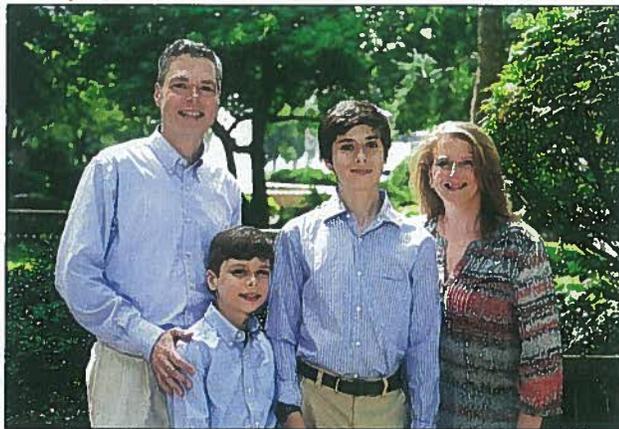
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White Plains Public Schools  
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White Plains, NY 10605

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White Plains, NY

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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Peter Bassano  
Sheryl Brady  
James F. Hricay  
Rose Lovitch  
Randy Stein

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

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Studies indicate that student athletes have higher point averages and standardized test scores, better attendance, lower dropout rates, and a better chance of going to college. They are also less likely to use drugs or smoke cigarettes.

*We're proud to have more than 1,000 student athletes participating on our White Plains Public Schools interscholastic teams each year.*

**Sports Spotlight: Cross Country**

The 63 students on the Division 1 WPHS Cross Country Team can be seen running along the streets of White Plains every day after school, racking up hundreds of miles each year in preparation for 14 competitive meets, including an annual overnight trip to Vermont for the Woods Trail Run.

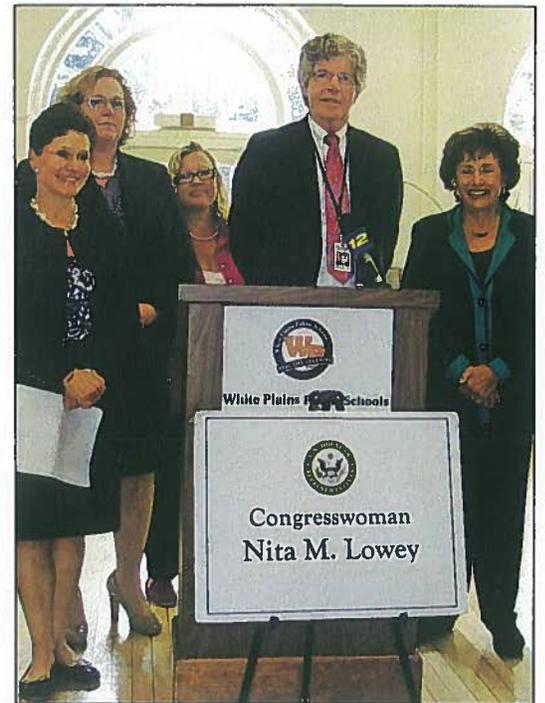
**“Over the years I have had dozens of parents of freshmen say that having their son or daughter being part of the cross country team is a great way to allow their child to become indoctrinated into the school, as instantly, they meet a group of students, further developing social skills,”** said Coach Singleton, who has coached thousands of students in a 38-year career. **“Also, they learn to work with others to form a team, becoming a part of the whole.”**

**Education House Hosts Press Conference**

Congresswoman Nita Lowey held a press conference on September 16th at the White Plains Public Schools Central Office, where she was joined by local school board members, school superintendents, and representatives from parent and teacher organizations to talk about the impact of federal budget cuts on students and teachers in our area, and to call on Congress to reach an agreement that would better support local schools.



Senior Captains on the White Plains High School Cross Country team, with boys coach Fred Singleton (left) and girls coach Carlos Agudelo (right).



Design: Jill Singer Graphics • Writing: Hillary Millman