

## Banner Season for WPHS Tigers Football



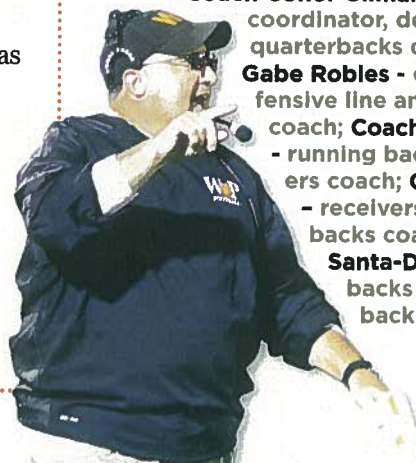
planned incredible practices and team strategies, and made some very critical decisions that won ball games," she said. "Our kids are talented, but more importantly, they're humble, and they work together and really care about each other."

"This team just got along and really enjoyed being with each other every day. They just took it one day at a time, which is what we asked for all along," said Coach Stevens. "They were happy and excited and appreciative of everything that was happening. It was also amazing how the school, administration and community really got behind us as the season progressed."

With 19 seniors on this year's team, next season could be a new challenge, but Coach Stevens remains positive. "We're never going to replace some of the players we have on this team, but hopefully we'll have some of the young players coming up develop quickly into talented players in their own right. And hopefully, we'll have the same kind of camaraderie next year."

**Head Coach Skip Stevens**, named Coach of the Year by the Journal News, MSG Varsity and the league, as well as Section 1 Co-Coach of the Year, says that while it's nice to be honored for his craft, he gives all the credit to the team and his coaching staff:

**Coach Conor Gilmartin** - offensive coordinator, defensive end and quarterbacks coach; **Coach Gabe Robles** - offensive/defensive line and special teams coach; **Coach Paul Scotman** - running back and linebackers coach; **Coach Jim Avery** - receivers and defensive backs coach; **Coach Mark Santa-Donato** - running backs and defensive backs coach



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It was hard work, the right attitude, exceptional teamwork, and the talent and dedication of both players and coaches that led the Tigers from a 1-7 record last year, full of close, well-played games, to an award-winning 8-2 season in 2013. Highlights include the team's first Section title since 1979, and their first trip to the State playoffs since the inception of that contest in 1993.

According to Athletic Director Jen DeSena, the team's success is attributable to several factors. "The coaching staff, led by Skip Stevens, really worked well together,

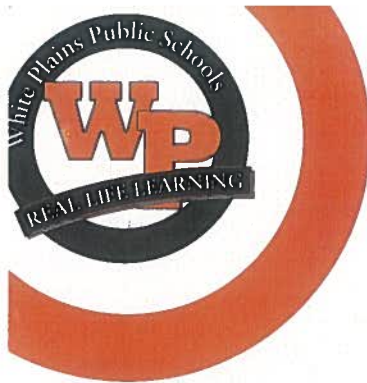
### Update on Superintendent Search

Consultants from School Leadership, LLC reported to the Board of Education at the December 9th meeting on their information-gathering process and the development of specifications for the new Superintendent. Meetings were held with all constituencies and, together with an online survey, input was provided by more than 300 people.

Dr. Charles Fowler presented the summary of qualities expected of candidates and the Board authorized the posting of these specifications and advertising of the position.

The schedule calls for initial candidates to be interviewed in March.





**O, HAD I BUT FOLLOWED THE ARTS!**

*William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night, produced by the WPHS theatre club, Theatre Unlimited (TU), was performed in the WPHS Little Theater in November. Auditions were open to all and students in every grade were represented in the cast.*

*TU produces three plays and a series of student-directed one-act plays every year. Future plays will be in February, May and June.*



**Pictured: Blair Sabol, Anthony Fante, Dylan Calderon, Maeve Kraiger, Rizza Estacio, Damon Amadio**

**Rounding out the cast were: Arielle Hazl, Jan Kaetker, Kasey Levin, Abby Lombino, Esther Ritchin, Alecia Spitz, Jack Steinberg**

## I-Block Gives Literacy Boost to Elementary Students

Students at White Plains elementary schools benefit from I-Block, an innovative initiative designed to improve reading, comprehension and critical thinking skills. For 40 minutes per day, 5 days per cycle, students are grouped with peers who are at the same reading level, and receive enrichment or intervention. The entire school participates in I-Block, so students have the benefit of additional literacy instruction without missing any core curriculum.

To provide enrichment during I-Block for students who meet and exceed district benchmarks, teachers across the district use a program called "Great Books." This program provides children with exposure to rich literature, teaches them how to dig deep into text for comprehension, and engages them in shared-inquiry based discussions. Using the Socratic method, readers are

taught how to ask meaningful questions, respectfully present an argument and support their own opinions with text-based evidence. All of these skills are directly aligned with the expectations of the new Common Core learning standards.

**"During I-Block, I'm able to target a small group of students with similar needs and provide them with instruction at their level,"** said Ms. Lauren Vranich, a first-grade teacher at Mamaroneck Avenue School. **"I find that they are very engaged and enthusiastic about the work we do, and I see them growing and progressing. They work very hard and are proud of their successes."**

Students who need additional support spend I-Block with a reading specialist, learning facilitator, special educator, or ESOL teacher. Through very targeted instruction administered in small groups, students get exactly what they need to progress toward the appropriate reading benchmark for their grade level.



## Infinite Campus Gives Students Online Access to Grades

The White Plains School District launched the Infinite Campus portal in 2010-11 for parents to track their children's academic progress in real time.



New for 2013-2014, every student in grades 6-12 also has access to the Infinite Campus portal using the same username and password they have for the computer network at school. Students use the portal to track their schedules, homework grades, quarter/final grades, exams and attendance, and are encouraged to monitor their grades and be more aware of their academic progress.

Students can access the portal via <https://ic.wpcsd.k12.ny.us/campus/portal/wp.jsp> or download a free app for Apple iOS or Droid.

## Exciting New Digital Arts Lab for 8th Graders

White Plains 8th graders now have access to state-of-the-art equipment in a brand new Digital Arts Lab featuring 30 new iMacs and Wacom Bamboo Digital Drawing Tablets. Under the instruction of teacher Brian Wintersteen, students learn to use Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Suite CS4, Corel Painter Essentials 4, Sketchbook Express and iLife Software (iPhoto and iMovie).

Students are able to search the Internet for images of interest, and assemble them into a Personal Postcard (collage), such as below, using Photoshop skills.





## Post Road Elementary Honors Veterans

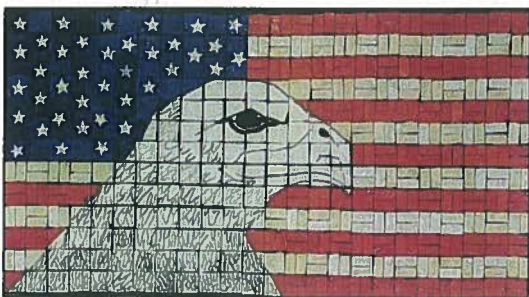


At morning and afternoon celebrations on Veteran's Day, Post Road Elementary's 4th Grade Chorus hosted a lively sing-along and shared the meaning of patriotism with their schoolmates, asking each of them to think about ways to contribute to the community.

Afterward, the entire school joined together in the gym to honor veterans with a connection to the schools with awards, and unveil an 8 x 4.5 foot American Flag mural.



U.S. Marine Corps Veteran Dennis Edwards, Post Road Custodian, receives a recognition award. Other veterans honored at the ceremony include Interim Superintendent Timothy Connors, U.S. Marine Corps; Middle School teacher Mike Sanchez, U.S. Army, and his father, Richard Sanchez, U.S. Navy; Principal Niss's husband, Steven Niss, U.S. Navy; and Mr. Jorge Maldonado, husband of a teacher, U.S. Army.



Under the leadership of art teachers Denise O'Keeffe and Lauren Berrios, every student at Post Road Elementary helped construct the mural, which is made of approximately 450 tiles.

## Helping Children Succeed With Common Core



The Common Core State Standards initiative is designed to provide a single set of clear and consistent standards, from school to school and state to state, in mathematics and literacy (English language arts). Common Core aims to provide clear expectations for what children should know and be able to do when they advance to a particular grade level or graduate from high school; allow parents to support student learning; and help American students keep up with their peers from around the world.

Common Core State Standards ask teachers to make 12 major shifts in the way they teach – 6 in English language arts and 6 in mathematics – to focus on real-world application of skills and better prepare children for college and their careers.

For each new expectation, there are things parents can do to help children adjust and succeed.

### What Parents Can Do

#### English Language Arts/Literacy:

- **Supply more non-fiction texts** - including books that explain how things work and why - and read them aloud or together, and discuss
- **Know what is grade-level appropriate** and supply more challenging texts
- **Read together** with children or read the same texts and discuss
- **Demand evidence** in everyday discussions and disagreements, and write "books" together using evidence and details
- **Help increase children's vocabulary** by reading often with young children, including multiple books on the same topic, and singing, talking, and making up silly rhymes and word games

#### Mathematics:

- **Be aware of what your child struggles with** and ensure they receive extra support in those areas
- **Know what the priority work is** at each grade level, spend time with your child to do it, and ask teachers for progress reports on that material
- **Ensure that children know, understand and memorize** basic math facts
- **Ask questions** to see whether your child understands why as well as what the answer is
- **Provide opportunities for children to work on math skills** at home, and ask them to do the math that comes up in daily life



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.



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# KUDOS

COMMUNITY SCHOOL  
NURSE TRAVELS TO  
PHILIPPINES FOR  
DISASTER RELIEF

*Linda Caffrey, an RN, paramedic and School Nurse at Rochambeau School, traveled to the Philippines in November with NY City Medics – a non-profit organization that deploys medical personnel to aid in global disaster relief - to care for people affected by Typhoon Haiyan. She and 14 other medical professionals spent two weeks administering medical care to residents of remote fishing and farming villages. Linda estimates they treated approximately 3,500 people.*



*"I was really happy to be there. The Filipino people are wonderful to work with," said Linda. "I give them so much credit for maintaining a positive attitude in the face of such adversity.*

## WPPS Alum Spotlight: Mike Couzens '07



Just think – you could tune into ESPN while watching a game and hear a White Plains graduate calling plays! Mike Couzens, Class of '07, is the Broadcasting and Media Relations Manager for the Fort

Wayne TinCaps baseball team, where he calls games on radio and television. He has also called college basketball, college football, volleyball and ultimate frisbee for ESPN, the Big Ten Network, ESPN3 and Comcast SportsNet Chicago.

What Mike says about White Plains Schools:

**"One of the great things about White Plains Public Schools was that the student body was a great representation of what the world at-large is like – diverse, talented, multi-lingual and full of unique people."**

Mike's advice for current students:

**"Try everything, even just once, to see if you like it. When I was at Highlands, I was in the school play. I had fun, and although it wasn't something I wanted to pursue long term, I learned that I like to entertain people. When I was at White Plains High School, I wrote for The Orange, and while I didn't want to become a newspaper reporter, I realized that I liked journalism and getting to meet new people, find out about them and ask them questions."**

## WP High School Students Stand Out

### Essay Contest Winner

WPHS Junior Suzanne Savignano's essay, written about the privacy rights of students in public schools, was selected as a winner in a contest sponsored by the New York State Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU). Suzanne won \$100 and was invited to read her essay at the Bill of Rights Day event hosted by the Lower Hudson Valley Chapter of the NYCLU.

### 3rd Place in Business Olympics

The WPHS Business Olympics Team (Daniela Bautista, Christopher Bratkovics, Alisa Choubay, Victoria Cignarella, Robert Lovitch, Gabrielle Mucciolo, Ross Van Doren, Linn Winn) placed 3rd in the Business Olympics on November 15th. Organized by the African American Men of Westchester, the event introduces students to the world of business, teaches them valuable skills in problem solving and how to work collaboratively.



### 2013 Youth of the Year

Mayor Thomas Roach and the White Plains Common Council recently named WPHS senior Brian LaPlaca the 2013 Youth of the Year. Brian, who has a 4.566 GPA and is ranked academically at 22 out of 500 students, is a member of the National Honor Society, an AP Scholar and a National Hispanic Recognition Award winner and will be soon be recognized by Boy Scouts of America as an Eagle Scout.

