

# CommunityLink

Spring 2016

Responsive Classroom	2
Budget & Election Update	2
College & Career Day	3
Bridge Building	3
Girls Who Code	3
Willy Wonka	3
Digital Citizenship	4

**“ We’re glad that the Commissioner came to White Plains and connected with a variety of members of the educational community and also that Regent Johnson will be able to take these messages back to her colleagues in Albany,”** said Superintendent Fried.

## New York State Education Commissioner Visits White Plains

Our district was pleased to host New York State Commissioner of Education MaryEllen Elia at White Plains High School (WPHS) on March 14th for a series of meetings with White Plains students and administrators, and teachers and parents from throughout Westchester, Putnam and Rockland Counties. The Commissioner, who was joined by Regent Judith Johnson, first had lunch with seniors from the school’s Service Learning Class. (Ms. Johnson was WP Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction from 1990-97.) Also at the lunch were WP School Board President Rosemarie Eller, Vice President Charlie Norris, Superintendent Dr. Paul Fried, WPHS Principal Ellen Doherty, teachers Samantha Gerhardt and Rebecca Fahey and Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES Superintendent James Langlois.

The students shared highlights of their work in the community, including advocacy and the creation of college scholarships for women incarcerated at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility and a luncheon to recognize the efforts of the WPHS custodial staff. When asked by the Commissioner how these experiences will affect them beyond gradua-



WPHS students talk with Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia

tion, students cited a broadened perspective surrounding topical issues, better public speaking and leadership skills, the ability to work together, and the ability to share ideas or disagree without offending one another. The group also discussed the possibility of expanding student assessments beyond standardized tests and considering projects and portfolios as methods to demonstrate knowledge.

Student testing and teacher evaluations, and whether they should be linked, were among the primary topics discussed throughout the day by the various constituencies. Later in the afternoon, school board representatives discussed financial challenges with the Commissioner, including State aid restoration, gap elimination and the tax cap.

## WPHS Coach Mayfield Scores Hall of Fame Recognition

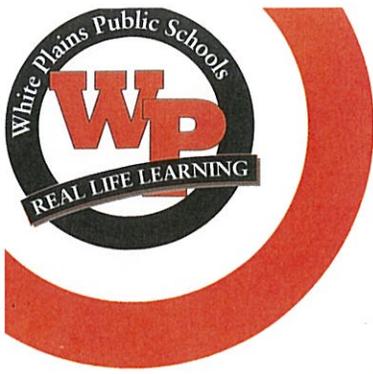
Spencer Mayfield, a physical education teacher and head basketball coach at White Plains High School for 23 years, was inducted into the New York State Basketball Hall of Fame in March. The school’s all-time winningest basketball coach, Coach Mayfield led White Plains to its first State Championship in 1994 and has celebrated many section, league and tournament championships.

**“ This is not something you accomplish by yourself,”** said Coach Mayfield. **“ It makes me reflect upon every administrator, teacher, coach, player, family member and friend who has impacted the program at WPHS.”**

Mayfield’s players have gone on to play for the NBA, European Professional League and many exceptional university teams, and some have come back to contribute as assistant and volunteer coaches, mentors and summer workout participants. After two decades, he says the important things haven’t changed much. “Kids want and need structure and look forward to being a part of something bigger than themselves.”

**“ Spencer is a role model, a mentor to many of our students, a master teacher and an integral part of the high school,”** said WPHS Principal Ellen Doherty. **“ Distinguished as he is as a basketball coach, he is equally so as a teacher and beloved member of our faculty.”**





Mornings meetings at Post Road (right) and MAS (below)



## Responsive Classroom Helps Students Succeed

Teachers, staff and students in the district's elementary schools are empowered by the "Responsive Classroom" learning approach, where equal value is placed on social/emotional development and academics. This focus on the "whole child" eliminates discipline-related distractions from learning and promotes a sense of personal responsibility.

Adults model appropriate behavior at all times and use very specific, shared language to explain why certain behaviors are required – from speaking in a quiet voice in the hallway and how to hold a door for someone, to keeping their hands to themselves – so students always understand exactly what's expected of them. Emphasis is placed on developing self-control, staying focused and being organized. Morning meetings and daily discussions with peers foster a sense of community in each classroom and school.

**“ Every morning our students make eye contact and greet each other. In the afternoon, we have a Closing Circle where they can discuss the day and its challenges or problems, and provide one another with feedback,”** explains Post Road Principal Jessie Ossorio. **“ By engaging in this way, they have become accountable to each other. They see one another as people and begin to care about each other more.”**

Students at Post Road are also given periods of quiet time each day when transitioning from lunch/recess to afternoon academics, so they can center themselves and get ready for what's next. Between activities, teachers will sometimes use a one-minute "energizer"



activity to keep students engaged and alert. Part of the Responsive Classroom mantra at Mamaroneck Avenue School is "If you break it, you fix it." Kids understand that even if they have a rough morning or something doesn't go quite right, that doesn't mean they can't recover, change their attitude or behavior and make it a great day.

**“ Building relationships and building community is one of our core values,”** said MAS Principal Eileen McGuire. **“It's a big world out there, and we're giving kids the tools they'll need to get along, solve problems and negotiate a variety of situations throughout life.”**

With these techniques in place, our elementary students demonstrate increased respect for each other and staff. The need for disciplinary referrals has decreased dramatically and has been eliminated altogether in some cases. With additional training planned for this summer, all five elementary schools will use Responsive Classroom in the 2016-2017 school year. In addition, we are in the early stages of bringing these practices to the middle school level.

### BUDGET VOTE

Mark Your Calendar  
Tuesday, May 17,  
2016  
Noon - 9:00 PM

### Budget and Election Update

Following three public Board meetings and two community forums, the White Plains School District's 2016-2017 budget process is almost complete. Once again, our district will remain within property tax cap limitations, thanks to careful long-term financial planning. The tax cap, based on CPI, is only a 0.12% increase, which will result in a very minimal tax increase over last year.

Positive State aid numbers are helping to offset the small increase in property tax and the district will also realize savings due to a decrease in pension costs. The budget stands at \$208,550,000 which is an increase of 1.34%

over last year. The increase in the school tax rate is 0.30%.

For more information about the budget, visit [www.whiteplainspublicschools.org/Page/16593](http://www.whiteplainspublicschools.org/Page/16593) or call 422-2071.

In addition to the budget vote, the ballot will include a proposition authorizing the establishment of a Capital Reserve Fund of \$25 million with a term of 10 years, to be used for facilities and site improvement, plus the election of two Board Members for three-year terms. Two seats will be open and as of printing time, candidates were incumbents Sheryl Brady and Charlie Norris.

## College and Career Day at Ridgeway

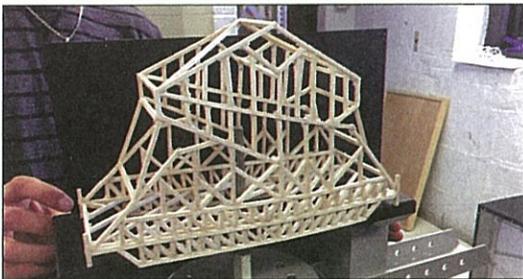
Students at Ridgeway School are already thinking about their paths to college and the connection between college and career, thanks to an exciting College and Career Day. To get started, each child took a career interest survey. Morning announcements throughout the week were tied to the theme of college and career and staff wore attire from their alma maters. Each class invited one or two parents to make a presentation about their particular careers. Class activities included a discussion and a writing reflection on the topic of “*what I want to be when I grow up,*” accompanied by an illustration.



Students at Ridgeway display banners that highlight the year they will graduate from college.

## Bridge Building at Highlands

Engineering studies are hands-on at Highlands Middle School, where 8th graders designed and built a model bridge that fought the effects of racking, compression and tension when weight was added. Materials consisted of balsa wood and glue. Pictured is an elaborate bridge created by Yadira de Jesus Tacuri. “**Her craftsmanship, aesthetic design and strength were outstanding,**” according to Technology Education Teacher Tom Hauser.



## Girls Who Code at Eastview

In partnership with MasterCard Corporation, 20 Eastview 6th grade girls are taking advantage of an exciting opportunity designed to introduce girls to computer programming and possible career pathways in science and technology. The program, facilitated by White Plains teachers Dana Pompa and Lauren Berrios and members of the MasterCard staff, includes 20 afterschool sessions. Girls Who Code is a national nonprofit organization working to close the gender gap in the technology and engineering sectors.



## Willy Wonka at Highlands

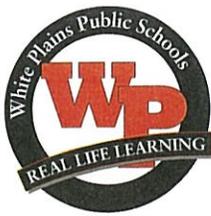
Highlands students performed “Willy Wonka Junior” as their Spring Musical. In addition to the 65-member cast and crew, several classes worked together to create chocolates that were sold at intermission. Mr. King’s Technology Class developed possible designs for the chocolate and printed prototypes on the school’s 3D printers. Once students decided on a design, it was transferred to a vacuum mold, which Ms. Dalto’s Home and Careers Class used to produce the actual candy. Several other students came up with suggestions for a name and a tagline. The school voted on “*Pure Imagination Chocolate.*” Mr. Wintersteen’s Digital Art Class designed the labels and Ms. Nelson’s

science class developed “*cool facts about chocolate*” that were included on the packaging. Students made video commercials to advertise the chocolate and one of Ms. Simmons math classes priced it, taking into account the cost of materials and expected profit, which helped pay for the cost of the production.

The musical was directed by Jennifer Irlen and Library Media Specialist Christine Ciofalo facilitated the chocolate project.



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

Non-Profit Org.  
US Postage Paid  
Permit #47  
White Plains, NY  
ECRWSS

Dr. Paul R. Fried  
*Superintendent of Schools*

**Board of Education**

Rosemarie Eller, *President*  
Charlie Norris, *Vice President*  
Sheryl Brady  
James F. Hricay  
Cayne Letizia  
Rose Lovitch  
Randy Stein

Postal Patron

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

**PTA Free Book Celebration**

**10,000 books** will be given away for free!

Saturday, May 7th  
10 am - 12 pm  
Rain or shine  
Eastview Middle School

## Eastview's Digital Citizenship



Eastview Middle School has been recognized by Common Sense, the national nonprofit organization dedicated to helping kids and families thrive in a world of digital media and technology, as a Digital Citizen Certified School – one of only six in New York State.

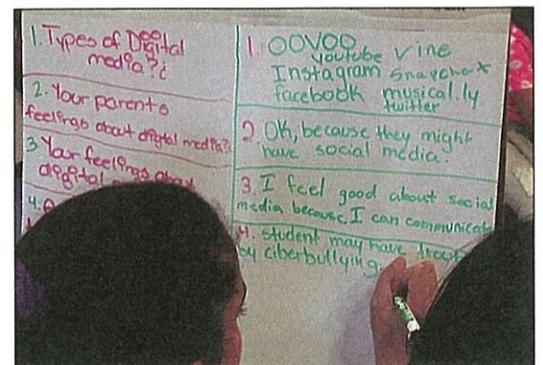
Digital media and technology are evolving at a dizzying pace, both unlocking extraordinary opportunities and posing real risks for young people. Students are using the immense power of the Internet and mobile technology to explore, connect, create, and learn in ways never before imagined, both in and out of the classroom. But issues that emerge from this 24/7 “connected culture,” such as cyberbullying, privacy lapses and uncertainty about which information to trust online, are surfacing both in schools and at home.

Eastview has demonstrated its commitment to taking a whole-community approach to preparing its students to use digital media in positive ways, while limiting risk.

Utilizing the curriculum from Common Sense, students have participated in various activities that focus on their digital media lives and online safety strategies. For instance, they used EClickers, iPads, Apple TV and chart paper to document their thinking and values related to questions such as:

- How should you handle inappropriate online talk?
- What does it mean to be a positive digital citizen?
- What are the opportunities we come across when connecting with others online?
- What are the pitfalls we come across when connecting with others online?

**“We’re honored to be recognized as a Common Sense Digital Citizenship Certified School,”** said Laura Frautenberg, Computer Teacher at Eastview. **“By preparing our students to use technology safely and responsibly, we are providing them unlimited opportunities to maximize and personalize their learning.”**



The Board of Education of the White Plains City School District does not discriminate in the educational programs and activities which it operates as per the requirements of the Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you are aware of a child who might have a disability that may require special education services or accommodations in order to access our educational and/or extracurricular programs contact:

Susan LeCointe-Dorsett,  
Director of Special Education Services, at 422-2037 or [susanlecointedorsett@wpcsd.k12.ny.us](mailto:susanlecointedorsett@wpcsd.k12.ny.us).

Design: Jill Singer Graphics • Writing: Hillary Millman