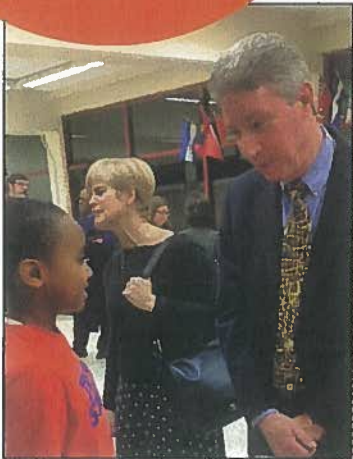




CommunityLink

Winter 2015



Dr. Fried greets a student at January 12th Board reception.

District Appoints New Superintendent

The White Plains Board of Education appointed Dr. Paul F. Fried to a three-year term as Superintendent of Schools at its January 12th meeting. Effective July 1, 2015, Dr. Fried will come to White Plains from Montville Township, New Jersey, where he has been Superintendent for the last five years. Prior to that, he was Superintendent of the Mamaroneck School District from 2005 to 2010 and was a Principal and Assistant Superintendent in Ossining for the previous 19 years.

Dr. Fried emerged as the finalist among 62 candidates in a search conducted this past fall. After initial interviews, the Board expanded the interview team to include representatives from the Civil Service, Teachers and Administrators and Supervisors Associations, the Superintendent's Cabinet, Centro Hispano, and parents.

Board President Rosemarie Eller said, **"We are confident that, as a seasoned superintendent with a background as an educator in Westchester County, Dr. Fried has the experience necessary to succeed in White Plains. We look forward to welcoming him here."**

After being appointed, Dr. Fried said: **"I am very excited to be coming to White Plains and will do everything I can to continue the reputation and tradition for excellence here and move the district forward."** He thanked the Board and community for this opportunity and said he **"looks forward to building strong and trusting relationships so that, together, we can do the very best job of supporting the children of the White Plains Schools."**

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Elementary Enrichment for All

In addition to the Great Books Program in Grades 1-5 and Small Group Enrichment in Grades 3-5, several new elementary enrichment programs are meeting with great enthusiasm.

Math and Visual Reasoning

All five elementary schools now offer whole-class enrichment in Math and Visual Reasoning, designed to engage and challenge students beyond their regular classroom work. According to Jessica O'Donovan, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and

Instruction, the interactive, game-based sessions teach students to think critically and to be more flexible with problem solving, ultimately building the skills and confidence to improve their performance through middle and high school.

Lisa Fillat, Math teacher, and Lauren Berrios, Visual Reasoning teacher, spend 15 days at each

school, twice during the year. They work with every class in one particular grade. At Ridgeway, Ms. Fillat helps first graders build a "toolbox" of math strategies. **"The more tools, or strategies, we have at our disposal, the better chance we have to solve difficult problems,"** Ms. Fillat said.

Third graders at Mamaroneck Avenue School used games to build multiplication fluency. The emphasis isn't on a correct answer, but on process, patterns and problem-solving strategies.

Ms. Berrios's work in Visual Reasoning enrichment teaches students to recognize and understand patterns -- how they're important and how to organize information and communicate it to others. For younger students, activities focus on shapes and what happens as you manipulate them. Third graders districtwide work with Tangram puzzles, manipulating shapes in order to

(cont'd on page 2)

Third graders at MAS enjoying enrichment activities.





Building Robots at

Church Street

Students at Church Street School had the unique opportunity to learn about robotics for the first time this year, in a program spearheaded by teacher Dr. Monique Reilly. Fifteen 4th and 5th grade students met in small groups at lunch-time from September through November, to build a complete robot, using kits purchased by the PTA. In December, Dr. Reilly's and teacher Melissa Tellez's 4th grade classes were guided by two experts from the Blue School in New York City. They built and programmed working robots that could move and speak. **"This was hands-on, discovery learning at its best,"** said Dr. Reilly.



Cutting Edge Advancements in Music Instruction

Innovative ideas introduced by Music Teacher and Jazz Ensemble Director Tim Veeder have greatly improved music instruction at the Highlands Middle School this year. With funding from the middle school redesign grant, Mr. Veeder and the District Technology staff created an instrumental music lab using equipment initially purchased for keyboard lessons. As far as we can determine, White Plains is the first district in the country to do this!

"A music lab with individual stations is the perfect solution to the challenge for a teacher to spend one-on-one time with each student during group lessons. It allows every student to be fully engaged for the entire class period," said Mr. Veeder.

Small group music lessons now take place in independent practice stations using

Group Education Controller software, which allows teachers to monitor and interact with all of the students separately, along with the Silent Brass system, which minimizes interference from other instruments. Now, each student can follow his own music, play at her own pace and receive individualized, constructive feedback from teachers. Sound-proof panels will soon be installed, making cubicles that will further enhance the ability to concentrate without distraction.

"The students absolutely love it," according to Mr. Veeder. **"They appreciate getting a more personalized lesson and they're always excited about opportunities to use cool technology. For the first time, I'm inundated with requests for extra lessons!"**



Enrichment for All (cont'd from page 1) improve spatial skills and, ultimately, mathematical thinking.

Students are so excited about the enrichment games that both teachers feel a bit like celebrities when they are at the schools. **"Kids can't wait for us to get into their classrooms. We love to see that kind of enthusiasm and pride in learning, especially when it translates into strategies for success that could last through high school and beyond,"** said Ms. Fillat. Enrichment doesn't end when these teachers leave. Through these activities the regular teachers discover more about how each student learns and some have added enrichment stations in their classrooms. The Parent Teacher Association in every elementary school ordered \$300 worth of the enrichment games and teaching assistants spent Election Day learning to facilitate them. Now, on inclement weather days, students have a new option for indoor recess.

Learning Through Chess

A suggestion from the PTA, enthusiastically received by an excited team of teachers, spurred the implementation of a chess program for all 2nd graders at Mamaroneck Avenue School (MAS) this year. According

to Ms. O'Donovan, research shows the game promotes many positive skills, including collaboration, problem solving, critical thinking, perseverance and focus.

"We're eager to see if there is an impact in terms of classroom academic performance and we already know it's great socially. Anyone can play and enjoy each other's company, whether they're 6 or 60," said MAS Principal Eileen McGuire.

Through a non-profit organization called First Move, students follow a curriculum delivered online by Wendi, The Chess Lady. Every six days, the entire second grade, including the 5 team teachers, log in at the same time and play chess for 40 minutes. **"When you go into the rooms and watch the students play, you can see how seriously they take it, and also that they're having fun. They also enjoy seeing their teachers learn along with them. It's really a team effort in every sense,"** said Ms. McGuire.

Eventually, the students may be able to play each other on their own, participate in tournaments, or form a chess club. It's also possible the program will expand to third grade.

Post Road Celebrates 100 Years



Former Post Road Principals Laura Havis (left) and Teresa Niss (right) celebrate Post Road's 100th Anniversary with current Principal Jessie Ossorio

Post Road Elementary School, which opened its doors in 1914 with just eight rooms, celebrated its 100th Anniversary recently with a variety of projects and events. After many expansions and renovations through the years, a new state-of-the-art, "green" structure was completed in 2009 and became the school's new home.

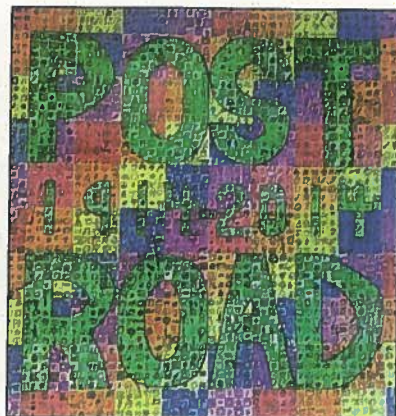
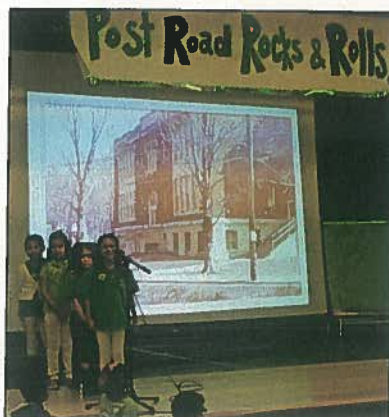
"We knew we wanted to incorporate the history of our school and White Plains in celebrating this milestone, and include all of the people who have helped shape our school and continue to make it great today. We celebrated internally first – with current students and staff – and then opened our doors to the wider community," said Post Road Principal Jesimae Ossorio.

The festivities began in an exciting assembly in November, with a show by 3rd graders, titled "Post Road Rocks and Rolls," that had the entire school standing and singing along. Students played the roles of adults, detailing the history of the school and the community. Afterward, a mural that each student helped create was unveiled on stage and later installed in the hallway outside the main office, where it will hang permanently.

In December, 100 friends of Post Road School, including graduates, current and former staff and retirees, gathered for an evening of celebration. Two former principals, Teresa Niss and Laura Havis, were recognized, and Mayor Thomas Roach presented a proclamation declaring December 9th "Post Road Day." Other honored guests included members of the Board of Education, Superintendent Tim Connors and Bryant Roman from Congresswoman Nita Lowey's office, who presented a Congressional proclamation.

According to Principal Ossorio, the highlight of the evening were the guided tours of the school, led by 5th grade students who trained to be proud ambassadors and docents. Each grade level had produced a project related to the Anniversary and the guides showed this work to guests.

Ms. Ossorio said: **"The entire spirit of the evening was one of pride: in our**



school, our history, and our students."

Winter Arts Festival

Nearly 400 6th grade Eastview students shared the joy of music with parents, staff and other guests at the school's winter concert in early December. The orchestra, led by Director William Tonissen, the chorus led by Director Matthew Hommez and Accompanist Hyemin Kang, and the band, led by Director Laura Mazziotti, all delivered joyful, festive performances.



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

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High School Students Win Business Competition

A team of eight students, under the leadership of Business Education Teacher Anna Burns, took first place in the Business Olympics at Morgan Stanley in November, sponsored by the African American Men of Westchester. Alisa Choubay, Samarsha Drysdale, Matthew Garrison, Robert Lovitch, Frank Marte, Jessica Simpson, Victoria Torres and Ross Van Doren competed against 17 other high school teams and were honored at a dinner reception where they were awarded a trophy to display at the school. Each student received a tablet and a medal.



Business Olympics winners with members of the African American Men of Westchester

National Title for Academic Team

White Plains High School's Academic Team defeated Yorktown (Va.) and Pingry (NJ) and all other schools to capture its first ever national title in the December Quiznet competition. Participants were Captain Esther Ritchin, Jacob Brady, Angelica Duque, Leo Fisher, Danielle Herman, Seth Jaffe, Max Kratzok, Noah Lichtblau, Drew Smiley and Phillip Tortoriello. Advisor to the group is Les Roby.

High Honors for Phys Ed Teacher

Laura Owen, Physical Education Teacher at White Plains High School for the past 13

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years, was named 2014 Secondary Physical Education Teacher of the Year by the New York State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (NYS AHPERD). The award, presented at the organization's annual conference in November, recognized her dedication to professional excellence, demonstrated leadership and exemplary work.



WPHS Senior Headed to Merchant Marine Academy

WPHS senior Nick Wadden was nominated to the United States Merchant Marine Academy by Congresswoman Nita M. Lowey. In her letter about Nick, Lowey said that his **“academic excellence and extracurricular activities demonstrate tremendous leadership potential,”** and that he is a **“future leader of the United States of America.”**



Chess Champ

WPHS 11th grader Joshua Colas recently won his third national title at the 2014 National K-12 Chess Championship in Orlando, Florida, a tournament he also won when he was in 7th and 10th grades. He has been named by the United States Chess Federation to the Scholastic All-American Chess Team each year since 2009, and has already received a full college scholarship to the nation's top chess college, Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri.

