

## Millbrook Repeats as State Champions!

The Millbrook High School varsity girls basketball team completed an historic weekend by winning a second consecutive New York State Public High School Athletic Association Class C championship with a 59-45 victory over Randolph at Hudson Valley Community College in Troy on March 19.

"It's surreal. I still can't believe it," said Millbrook senior forward Emily Grasseler. "Our team put in a lot of work these past two seasons and we earned it. We definitely earned it."

The state title was the third since 2018 for the Blazers, and state tournaments were cancelled in 2020 and 2021 due to covid. By winning a second consecutive state title, Millbrook became the first back-to-back Class C state champion since Elmira Notre Dame in 2007, first



repeat state champion from Dutchess County since Our Lady of Lourdes in 2002, and the first Section IX program to win two straight titles since Tuxedo won four in a row, 1982-1985.

With a third state title, Millbrook is second to Lourdes in state championships won by a Dutchess County girls basketball program.

"I don't know how to describe it, you can't put it into words," said Millbrook junior forward Natalie Fox of winning a second straight state title.

In the state championship game, Randolph focused defensively on Grasseler and Fox, both 1,000-plus point scorers in their varsity careers, to force the Blazers to beat them from the perimeter. With Millbrook holding a 34-32 lead, Ella Wilson hit back-to-back three-point field goals to give the Blazers a 40-32 lead with 2 minutes, 18 seconds remaining in the third quarter.

In the fourth quarter, Millbrook led by five points when Grasseler hit a two-pointer, and Hudson Heitmann



followed with a three to give the Blazers a 49-39 advantage with 5:24 left.

Millbrook shot 20 for 39 from the floor and 8 for 13 from three-point range. The Blazers held a 33-18 rebounding advantage. Wilson finished with 19 points, seven rebounds, six assists and three steals. Grasseler contributed 14 points and nine rebounds, and Fox added seven points and 10 rebounds.

Millbrook advanced to the state final with a 70-52 semifinal win over Greenwich in Troy on March 18. The Blazers changed from a 3-2 zone to a 1-3-1 trap zone in the third quarter to outscore Greenwich, 20-5, and take a 57-34 lead into the final quarter.

Fox led the way with 19 points and 20 rebounds, and Grasseler had 18 points and eight rebounds for Millbrook, which shot 30 for 61 from the floor.

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## Elm Students Strike a Pose During Morning Activity



As part of Elm Drive Elementary's monthly Mindfulness and Movement program, students are learning the relaxing and delicate art of yoga in-between their classes. During a February session with instructor Sarah Marandi-Steeves, of Poughkeepsie-based Mindful Yoga with Liz, first grade students tried out different poses before resting to think about what makes them happy.



Marandi-Steeves, who also works as a therapist, finds yoga is a helpful activity for students who have anxiety and stress in a school setting. It helps build teamwork and gives them a break during a busy day.

"It helps with their confidence and skill building," Marandi-Steeves explained. "They just think it's something fun, but they're learning all these skills through that."

While Marandi-Steeves finds fourth and fifth graders take yoga more seriously than first graders, she appreciates that the younger students

do not hold back in sharing their opinion if they are not fond of a pose. "They're very honest," the instructor said. "It's good because it normalizes that that's OK; they don't all have to feel the same."

First grader Harper Benyo's favorite part of the activity was teaming up with classmates on certain poses but for a unique reason. "At the end we said something good about the other person," Benyo said.

Out of all the poses first grader Alice Audet completed, she loved the tree and boat poses best. She found yoga's emphasis on balancing would help her in gymnastics practice.

"It's pretty hard, but I did it anyway," Audet said of the boat pose. "I practiced balancing at home and at gymnastics, so yoga is good for me." The program continues through June.



## Teachers, Staff Spend Day Learning Strategies to Help Students

Throughout the year, Millbrook Central School District staff have professional development days during which they learn a variety of things designed to help them improve in their given area.

In February, a Superintendent's Conference Day was held to focus on helping teachers and those working in classrooms better meet the needs of students.

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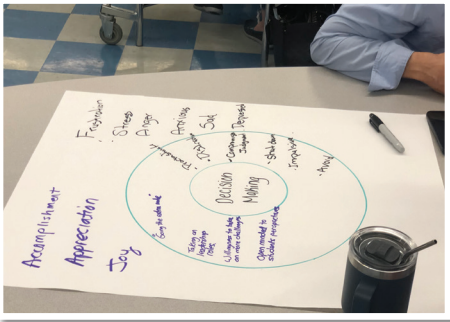
# Teachers, Staff Spend Day Learning Strategies to Help Students

There were three main areas of focus:

## Applied Behavioral Analysis

Teachers, teacher assistants, support para-professionals and monitors participated in a session offered by Behavior Analyst Sheri Lauro from Intervention Associates in Carmel, New York, in which they learned how to work together and collect data about student behavior to help them make adjustments.

“We want to look at whether or not they are providing too much information (to students), asking students to do too much and help (staff) navigate their day,” Lauro said.



The session also provided some techniques to help deal with behavior issues. Lauro stressed that those in authority need to find the reason behind the challenging behavior so they can try to prevent triggering such behavior.

For example, a child that feels overwhelmed by being handed a packet of work may shut down or act out. So, if the teacher, assistant or aide is aware of that, a better option may be to instead present one sheet with a few problems on it, have the student work through those, praise the action and then present another sheet.

“For some kids, just sit down and talk about what works for them,” Lauro said after the training. “Some students may not want to see a checklist because it is overwhelming for them to it all day long. Does the child prefer to sit at a table, on the floor, on a yoga mat?”

## Yale RULER

Supervisor of Student Services Samantha Holsborg worked with elementary and secondary school teachers on the RULER (recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing, and regulating) approach to social and emotional learning.



This evidence-based K-12 curriculum helps teachers look at those emotional intelligence skills and helps them evaluate students.

Teachers followed the next steps of the RULER implementation timeline shared



## State Champs continued from page 1...

Beth Bosan added 15 points, five assists and four steals, and Heitmann contributed 10 points, two rebounds, three assists and two steals.

The Blazers finished the season at 21-3 overall. “We have such a great group of girls,” said Millbrook coach Adam Peek. “They’re all student-athletes. They’re all honor roll students. They’re all going to college, It’s really nice to see them with smiles on their faces.”

## Cheerleading



The varsity coed cheerleading team has swung back into action post pandemic, led by new first year head coach Aaliyah Cottman. She welcomed a team of 18 cheerleaders including seniors Isabella Darnell, Holly Davidson, Kaitlyn Muller and Harleigh Pickles, who serve as team captains.

The team hit its stride by participating in three Section 9 cheerleading meets and cheering at home varsity basketball games.

With every team she coaches, Cottman always tells her students, their parents and athletic directors that building up students’ confidence and developing strong athletes while preparing them for their future is the vision of successfully coaching a cheerleading team.

“I’ve had the pleasure of coaching these young athletes this winter season and building a foundation for the future teams.”

Cottman is especially proud of the senior captains for their positivity in practice and mentoring the younger students.

“They all come to practice dedicated, motivated, and excited to assist me with building the Blazer cheer program,” Cottman said. “I know this team will do amazing and continue to set the bar high for Millbrook’s Cheer Program.”

## Boys Basketball

The Blazer boys’ basketball team has been competitive all season with second year head coach Brian Laffin at the helm. As a surprise team in the division, it was in competition for the MHAL Division 4 Championship going into the final weekend of the regular season. Team captains Branden Alexander and John Connolly showed great leadership as the team progressed to win their division in the league and participated in the Mid-Hudson Athletic League Championships.

The team was defeated by Pine Plains in the 1<sup>st</sup> round of sectional play.

Congratulations on a very successful season!

## Indoor Track and Field

Head coach Darren Sullivan is impressed with his athletes’ improvement as the season progresses.

In the division meet, Nolan Kozera is the Boys 55m Division VI Champion and the Boys 300m Division VI Champion. His times were 6.85 and 37.58 respectively.

Rocco Popovic placed 4<sup>th</sup> in shot put and 5<sup>th</sup> in weight throw, Kaden Daley placed 5<sup>th</sup> in the 55m, Jose Vasquez placed 5<sup>th</sup> in the 1600m and Caden Murphy placed 5<sup>th</sup> in long jump and 8<sup>th</sup> in the 600m. Overall, despite some athletes being out with injuries, the team placed 4<sup>th</sup> in the division. The whole team did really well, each of them got at least one personal best. The team competed at the sectional meet on February 10 at West Point’s Indoor Track and Field Facility and Kozera qualified to run in the 3400 meter intersectional relay at the state championship.

with them in December. Activities, modules, and discussions were all components of the training.

“I continuously meet with each building RULER team to discuss the Year 1 rollout, supporting teachers with the curriculum and following the RULER implementation timeline,” Holsborg said.

## Digital Fluency

Now that students have returned in-person to classrooms, Supervisor of Digital Fluency and Data Privacy Evan Kirsch’s session focused on how teachers can bring the

digital products used during the pandemic into the classroom.

Kirsch wants to make sure that teachers are not only aware of the software and tools available but how to best use them to deliver instruction and to help them understand how tech-savvy their students are or are not.

“There are five components to the standards and most teachers have been exposed to them but within those are substandards,” he explained, adding that teachers will do a gap analysis by grade “so the district can see what has been done, what we need to do and how do we get there.” ✨



# District Looking for Teaching Interns

*Looking to get experience in the education field?  
Do you desire to be part of a close-knit family unit?  
Then Millbrook is the school district for you.*

District staff, including Executive Director of Instruction and Community Relations Dr. Amy Watkins, connected with representatives from Marist College, Mount Saint Mary College and SUNY New Paltz earlier in the school year to see if there was interest from students to serve in an internship role and the colleges are onboard with the idea.

Students enrolled in a teacher preparation program, who can come from any college, will receive an internship certificate that is signed off by their respective college which allows them to get a higher rate of pay at \$125 a day to substitute versus the typical \$100 a day for a non-certified substitute.

"You get to put it on your resume, but it's really about the real world experience of it," Watkins said. "It's a step further than your student teaching."

Depending on their respective college's requirements, student candidates need to be available between three to four days a week during school hours where they will be exposed to various grade levels, content and teacher styles. Benefits of this program include interns being assigned to a mentor to learn from, doing mock job interviews and sitting in on the district's professional development days.

"We would have the consistency of having the same person in our buildings and have the ability to build a relationship with them," Watkins explained. "That is the family atmosphere we're trying to build with the program."

The program is beneficial to interns, who gain valuable experience, and to the district, which would have more educators available to support students' learning if their classroom teacher is out. Watkins is hopeful to have at least one participant in each of the district's four schools.

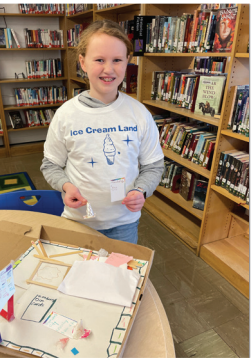
"Whether it's illness or professional development, you want to have someone that you know in the classroom whenever you can," Watkins said. "It's a win-win all around."

If you're interested in applying click on the link [here](#).



*Millbrook Central School District is looking for passionate and qualified interns to student teach like Maggie Curtin, shown here.*

## Millbrook Honors its Community Partners



Millbrook Central School District's Parent Teacher Organization and the Millbrook Educational Foundation, or MEF, an independent

fundraising organization, provide support and supplemental resources to the district's educational programs throughout the year.

We are grateful for all the work their members do to help support our students.



MEF typically gives about \$25,000 a school year to various initiatives such as providing a year-end barbecue for students and staff, providing funding to families who cannot afford to send their children on school trips, getting a rowing hybrid machine for the Millbrook High School gym and makerspace technology for the school libraries, among others.

Much of the funding comes from local families who have included the foundation in their estate planning.

"The mission is to provide the students with enhanced learning opportunities and scholarships," MEF Chair Christina Myers said.

"Whatever is not funded through the school district, we try to support."

Scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,000 are given every year to graduating seniors, including a good character scholarship and one funded by the Morona family. "Guidance counselors are great for finding students that fit the criteria," Myers said.

Myers finds that there has been more of a need for her organization's funds as students have been unable to fundraise during COVID-19. During the 2020-2021 school year, only \$4,000 was distributed for Owl Video Conferencing to assist with remote learning.

"In 2022, we saw a big increase in asks," Myers said. "There's been more of a need since COVID."

Some of MEF's future plans include erecting yard signs for graduating seniors, which was brought back by popular demand, using \$7,500 towards early education and literacy and bringing back its in-person Taste of Millbrook event on Sept. 23 at the Millbrook Winery.

"The community has asked us to bring it back," Myers said. "It's going to be wonderful."

MEF plans to partner with students from Dutchess BOCES' Culinary program to prepare and serve refreshments, as well as students from MHS' Honor Society and art classes to create centerpieces.

"We're looking to partner with students," Myers said. "I'm excited to work with them."

The organization recently provided a T-shirt grant to allow lunch clubs to make their own shirts. A trio of sixth graders took advantage of it and created a common design to make matching shirts.



### Parent Teacher Organization

The PTO's mission is to enrich children's educational experience in the district.

"The PTO also aims to encourage parent involvement and provide a vehicle for parents to support their children's education through fundraising and volunteer efforts," PTO President Loredana Ingenito said.





# District Plans November Capital Project Vote Ties it to Strategic Plan

*While the security vestibule at Millbrook High School is slated for completion over spring break, Millbrook Central School District is planning a November referendum for a capital project to update Millbrook schools and look to the future.*



Work at the high school was slated for completion last school year, but due to COVID and delays in getting materials completion of the vestibule was delayed.

The capital project vote and its scope will be tied to the district's strategic plan, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Personnel Elliot Garcia said.

Initially discussed for a May vote, the decision was made to move the vote to November to allow time for all the pre-referendum work including budget and debt analysis.

"We want to keep our debt service as level as possible," Garcia said, explaining that they are looking at how much debt the district can afford to borrow now and going forward, with considerations being made regarding expiring debt, so that the impact on residents can be kept to a minimum.

In 2022, the district hired a firm to conduct building condition surveys similar to what New York State requires of districts every five years. Millbrook's next state-required surveys are due in 2024 based on staggered dates assigned by the state. Millbrook did its own survey in 2022 to ensure that the planning for the capital project took into account current conditions vs. those recorded in the last State survey from 2015. It identified about \$41.7 million in needed work.

"Most of our buildings are approaching 60 years in age and many building envelopes and systems need to be addressed," Garcia said.

However, putting forth a capital project before completing the strategic plan didn't make sense because it could result in work being done twice.

"Why think about tearing a building open and redesigning it if we are not sure what the functionality and priority of the building would be based on the strategic plan? We wanted to understand what the future vision is for the district and then recast our facilities around that vision," Garcia said.

Whatever emerges for the capital project, it will likely be done in multiple phases and may require more than one referendum.

"We want to vote on the work when we plan to do the work because we don't know what inflation will look like," he said, in speaking about how future projects may be planned and packaged.

Garcia said the district is also looking into other revenue sources for the capital work such as grants for sustainability and conservation-related projects that may help offset some of the costs and therefore increase the scope of what the district is able to do.

"We didn't want to rush into this project. We want to do it right." Officials hope to have the scope of the project defined by the end of this school year and plan to share the plans with the community as students head back to school in September.

"We've put a high value on the district's strategic plan so be as involved as you can in that process. The more voices we have contributing to the vision the better."

## Mark your calendars!

# VOTE

**May 16, 2023**  
**12 noon - 9pm**

**The Annual Budget Vote** of the Millbrook Central School District will be held on Tuesday, May 17, 2022 between the hours of 12:00 PM (noon) and 9:00 PM in the Millbrook Middle School Auditorium.

### Applications for Absentee Ballots

Applications for absentee ballots for the School District Election and Vote may be obtained at the Office of the School District Clerk in the Millbrook Middle School, 43 Alden Place, Millbrook, NY, on weekdays when school is in session between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. The application must be received by the School District Clerk no more than thirty (30) and at least seven (7) days prior to the election if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter or the day before the election, if the ballot will be personally picked up by the voter or the voter's designated agent as set forth in the application, at the District Office. Absentee Ballots must be received by the District Clerk at the District Administrative Office, not later than 5:00 p.m. on the day of the election and vote, May 16, 2023.

## Voting Location: Millbrook Middle School Auditorium

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