



Message from the Interim Superintendent



I wanted to officially introduce myself to the Millbrook Community. I am honored to have been appointed as the Interim Superintendent to serve this great School District for the 2022 - 2023 school year.

Though I started in Millbrook in 2015 as the Millbrook High School Principal, I have most recently served as the

Deputy Superintendent of Schools with my primary areas of responsibility being Curriculum, Instruction and Pupil Personnel Services.

During my time in the district, I have witnessed a commitment to excellence and observed some of the best educators and support staff in the field. I am privileged to work beside them each day and look forward to their collaboration in offering the very best programming for our students.

As a school community, we are fortunate to have really amazing students and that is a testament to the parents who entrust their children to our care each day. The home school connection is invaluable to our success as an organization and I look forward to your continued partnership in the coming school year.

Even with the district's many strengths, this transition of leadership presents an opportunity for positive change and continuous improvement. My leadership team and I are

looking forward to the work ahead with enthusiasm and a reinvigorated spirit. We will work to maintain a rigorous learning environment for students to grow intellectually, emotionally and socially.

As I begin my time in this role, I will focus on several areas including, but not limited to:

- Culture
- Organizational excellence
- Community connections
- Academic achievement

As a reminder, the District has embarked on a Strategic Planning journey and there will be opportunities for community input into shaping the mission, vision and values of the District for the future. I encourage everyone to participate in this process as we look forward to building the very best Millbrook yet.

My door is always open and I plan to host frequent opportunities to connect in the near future. Please feel free to contact me if I may be of assistance to you or your family in any way.

Caroline Hernandez Pidala
Interim Superintendent

Meal Changes for 2022-23; (Applications Required)

With the COVID-19 restrictions easing nationally and statewide, school meals are no longer free for everyone. Instead, families are encouraged to submit a free or reduced lunch application for consideration.

All meals follow U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines and deliver a well-rounded, nutritious meal that meets federal guidelines.



"If a student takes everything offered they will get a science-based menu that meets requirements for calories, minerals and more," Nancy Padrone of Silver Spoons Nutrition, a consultant hired by the district to help prepare for the new year, said. And, meals are still a bargain for families at the prices set by the Board of Education:

- Millbrook High School: \$3.50 lunch, \$2 breakfast
- Millbrook Middle School: \$3.25 lunch, \$1.75 breakfast
- Alden Place/Elm Drive: \$3 lunch, \$1.75 breakfast

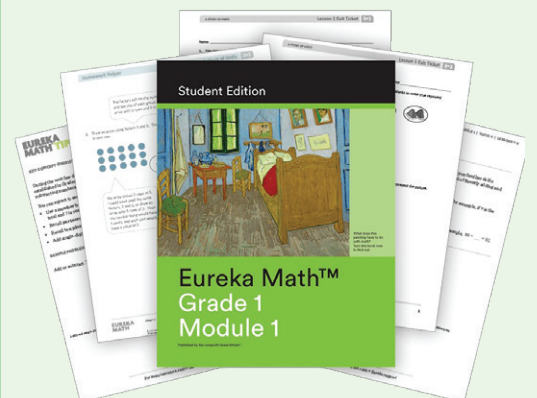
"It would be difficult for a family to produce the nutritional value of the meals we create on their own for less," said Padrone, who is a registered dietitian.

Parents are encouraged to submit applications as soon as possible. Everyone approved - be it for free or reduced lunch, will receive a free meal, she said, explaining that because the district is reimbursed by New York State for the cost difference, those families who are approved for reduced pricing also get a free meal.

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It's a "Eureka" moment

All Millbrook Central School District grades are switching to a more rigorous and comprehensive arithmetic curriculum called Eureka Math for the 2022-23 school year. The curriculum is widely seen as one of the best nationwide.



Millbrook administration chose Eureka because of its good reputation as being a curriculum created by teachers that is in tune with current educational needs. They also needed a program that vertically aligned the learning practices from kindergarten through 12th grade.

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New Teachers Get Acquainted with Millbrook

Fifteen new teachers started in Millbrook Central School District classrooms this month, having learned all about the ins and outs of the district during a two day orientation from Aug. 29 to 30.

Interim Superintendent Caroline Hernandez Pidala described the orientation as an induction program to help get new teachers familiar with the district and expectations. They learned about the technology used in school and were introduced to members of the business and human resources offices, among other topics.

“Whenever possible, we like to have their mentors in attendance to welcome them into our school community and give them a calming perspective,” Hernandez Pidala said.

The district saw many retirements during the previous school year leading to the larger than usual number of teacher hires.

“We will absolutely miss our veterans who have moved on, but new hires are always an opportunity for growth and change,” Hernandez Pidala said. “We only need one right fit for each job and I am certain we found them.”

New hires also participated in a Back to School Kickoff program on Sept. 6 taught by district administrators which



Assistant Superintendent Elliot Garcia explains to the new hires about safe technology practices on school computers.

covered school safety training, curriculum changes and the Dignity for All Students Act.

However, there was room for some fun.

“There’s a scavenger hunt to help the new staff get familiar with the district,” Hernandez Pidala said.



New Millbrook teachers Katie Wimmers and Kimberly Guley take notes during the new teacher orientation.

Katie Wimmers, who now teaches music to Elm and Alden Elementary students, is already familiar with the area after having grown up there and has received a warm welcome. She most looks forward to getting to know students and staff at both schools.

“I love the community,” Wimmers said. “It’s been really cool to have the hopes of playing a big role through six years of these kids’ lives.”

Millbrook Middle School’s 7th graders now have Kimberly Guley as their new English language arts teacher who returned to teaching after spending time away to raise her child. Guley is excited to help students write better, introduce them to new novels and encourage progressive thinking.

“I’m looking forward to all that,” Guley said. “I love the district, I’ve heard really good things about it.”

Hernandez Pidala advises all new hires to enjoy every minute of the day with their students because the time goes by fast.

“Before you know it you will be starting your 20th year wondering where the time has gone,” she said.

MILLBROOK STUDENT HELPS NATIONAL PARK SERVICE WITH PILOT PROGRAM

Millbrook senior Nathan Rubbo spent three weeks this summer learning basic archeology skills and helping the National Park Service with a pilot program. His experience and input will also help develop training for future volunteers.

Rubbo was one of nine students in the park service’s Urban Archeology Corps (UAC), established to help it monitor and identify threats to archaeological resources. Students conducted field work at four historical sites. They learned about cultural resources, site management and preservation in the national parks, received instruction on basic excavation techniques and used the new skills in field work to monitor and document archaeological site conditions and disturbances.

“The goal is to bring underrepresented youth without a great deal of experience with national parks into our parks,” said Claire Horn, who works at the Public Archaeology Facility at Binghamton University. The UAC is partnering with Binghamton on the project.

On July 19, the UAC students were at the Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site seeking evidence of the original rose arbor that led from the garden to FDR’s home, Jacob Bouffard, a Binghamton University graduate student said.

Students carefully created a square hole that at first was only 10 centimeters deep

and then got deeper as the day wore on. They were looking for post molds, a dark circular stain that could indicate that is where a wooden post had been located. Bouffard, fellow B.U. student Kristin Clyne-Lehmann, and Rachel Bowen, a National Park Service archaeologist, oversaw the work, offered suggestions, techniques and encouragement.

The work reinforced skills learned such as measuring, geometry, writing and following directions. Students also toured a variety of historic sites.

By day’s end, they had found what they were looking for and that information was submitted to NPS.

Rubbo said he applied to the program because entering his senior year, he wanted to explore different career opportunities and to do something besides his job at a local grocery store.

“I always liked history and so far I’ve enjoyed doing the field work,” he said. “I didn’t think it would be impactful, but each year they keep records and see progress. It’s more serious than I thought.”

The students traveled to the Martin Van Buren National Historical Site where they were tasked with exploring the trash middens (piles of decomposed trash)



to see if they could locate non-Native American items from the historical period.

For Rubbo, archeology likely won’t be a career choice, but the exposure to the various historical sites made him think that he might be interested in becoming an architect.

Students’ end projects will be used to help NPS staff design a volunteer archaeological monitoring framework for use in parks throughout the North Atlantic Appalachian region.

And, since it is a paid internship, the students received \$15 an hour for up to 120 hours of work.

“If people have a spirit of volunteerism and want to help the parks, the Visitor Activities Management Process (VAMP) program provides an easily understood and fun way to help the parks,” Clyne-Lehmann said.

Meal Changes for 2022-23;

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The application may also help the family with other aspects of their child's education. If the district is permitted to share information from the application with other entities, fees for taking the ACT exam or even applying to certain colleges may be waived or reduced, she said.

The importance of eating a proper meal can't be emphasized enough.

"Our staff is looking forward to serving students again and they know how important breakfast and lunch are for students to learn. A hungry child can't learn," Padrone said.

For the first day of school, pizza - the clear student favorite - was on the menu. But, there will be some different menu items in the fall.

"The fall menu for October and November will feature some seasonal produce so we can make use of what is being harvested in New York State so we can use local institutions," Padrone said.



And, while COVID restrictions have eased, some of the supply chain issues still remain, so some menu items may not be available as indicated. For example, currently chicken and turkey are in short supply, she said.

Students will be able to have a say in what is offered as Padrone is developing a way to collect feedback, be it through a survey or a focus group.

"Besides meeting nutritional needs we want to offer what students like because if it is not eaten, it has no value," she said, adding that the staff is also looking to do some scratch cooking with items the students enjoy.

New administrators join Millbrook team

Dr. Amy Watkins, executive director of instruction and community relations and Alicia O'Connell, Elm Drive principal. "We are so excited about our new Blazer administrators," Interim Superintendent Caroline Hernandez Pidala said.

Watkins joins the district from Wappingers Central School District. "She has worked to develop so many intriguing programs in her time there that we would love to have replicated in the MCSD. From career pathways programming to supports for pre-K through 12th grade counseling programs, her resume speaks for itself," Hernandez Pidala said. "She also has significant experience in branding, public relations and community outreach. During the pandemic, many of the threads that bound the school community together were stressed. We look forward to building those relationships again through communication and collaboration with our community members."

Millbrook Central School District welcomes two new administrators for the 2022-23 school year:

O'Connell comes to Millbrook from the Poughkeepsie City School District where she is the MTSS (Mutli-Tiered Systems of Support) coordinator districtwide, helping to establish and maintain academic and behavioral interventions as part of the PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) program which helps students reach their potential.

"This is a three tiered model applied to academics, behavior and attendance and supports student success and growth. We look forward to her continuing the work that was started here over the past few years," Hernandez Pidala said. "It is even more important to focus on this intervention system now in a post pandemic world where so many students have needs to be addressed."

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"It has quite a bit of merit in comparison to others that might be sourced from publishers," former Millbrook Data Analytics Supervisor Victoria Curry said. "It's a good next step for Millbrook."

The lessons can be tailored to any class with a menu of options to fit their needs, which will make students stronger mathematicians and teachers stronger practitioners.

Daily lessons feature math problems in order of their difficulty. For students who struggle in math, they can break into a smaller group and focus on less difficult problems, while more accelerated students can tackle harder ones.

"There is built-in differentiation to every single lesson," Curry explained. "You as the teacher can offer problems that are even easier than problem number one and even more challenging than problem five."

Eureka also boasts a superb online component which provides a gap analysis, identifying the difference between current knowledge and skill and the desired best practice. Parents will also have access to a digital workbook called Homework Help which shows them the way to solve a problem.

"There's a lot of resources out there for teachers," Curry said. "It will be far more rigorous and deliver points of scaffolding for all the teachers to engage with."

Millbrook Middle School Principal Steven Cabello finds that Eureka sets a new standard for rigor, coherence and focus in the classroom for students to gain a deeper understanding of math, while making it more enjoyable.

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