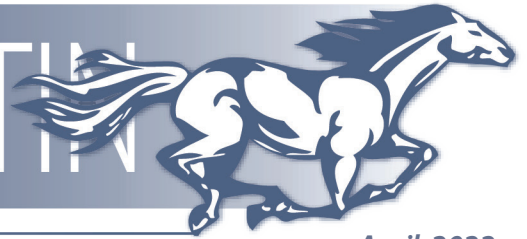
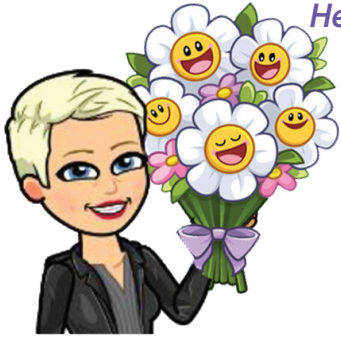


BLAZER BULLETIN



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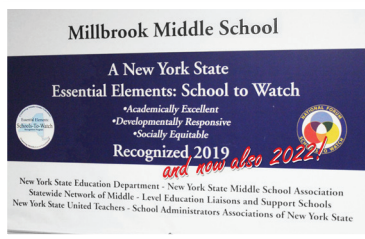
Hello Millbrook families!

*I hope everyone had
a safe and relaxing spring recess.
You all deserved it.*

Laura, Your Proud Superintendent of Schools



Middle School Redesignated School-to-Watch



The New York State Education Department recently recognized Millbrook Middle School as an Essential Elements School to Watch for the second time.

The school first gained the designation in 2019 and Principal Steven Cabello described the process as being similar to a self-audit. Staff look at what services they provide to students and what they are doing to enrich student experiences, to name a few areas examined.

"It was just an idea, like are we a type of school that can be designated for this," Cabello said. "The work went into ensuring that we were."

Cabello stressed that the redesignation is not an award, but rather the school is seen as a model of what middle level instruction should look like.

Once the school receives the designation, staff must continue to advance academics and social emotional learning otherwise the school will lose the designation. It is similar to a restaurant always keeping its standards up and not slacking off just because it received an excellent health rating.

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Teachers, Students Find Benefits of Blending Learning



Teachers are learning how to better integrate technology with in-person learning thanks to a program Dutchess BOCES designed for the district.

Millbrook wanted to help teachers to realize how skills developed for remote instruction could be brought into the classroom to engage students in more rigorous lessons, Terence McKiernan, a Dutchess BOCES staff specialist who provided the training, said.

Victoria Curry, Millbrook's supervisor of data analytics said the district opted to use all of its Educational Resources time this year on the program.

"We want teachers to use technology to facilitate learning experiences and this training gives them time to come together and talk about strategies," Curry said.

The program has three parts: learn, create and share.

Two models of blended learning are being presented:

- Flipped classroom, in which students are given direct instruction at home using technology (video/online tool) then engage more with the content in class. "We've had good feedback from teachers and research shows kids will master material quicker because they get feedback in real time," McKiernan said.
- Station rotation, in which stations are set up in class for students to engage with content using online games, videos etc. and includes a teacher station.

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Alden Place Students Advance to County Science Fair

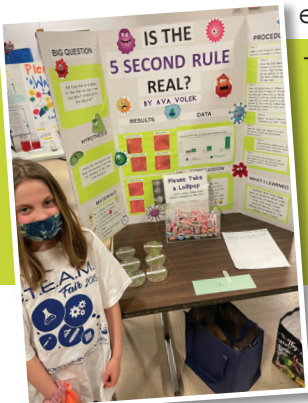
Four Alden Place students took part in the 63rd Dutchess County Regional Science Fair April 2nd after their projects earned awards from judges in the school's fair last month.

The students and their projects are:

- Ava Volek - **Is the 5 Second Rule Real?** (1st Place)
- Lydia Duncan - **Popcorn Experiment** (2nd Place)
- Max Stein - **Pokemon vs Heart Rate** (3rd Place)
- Mia Sullivan - **H2O My Plants!** (Honorable Mention)

Alden Place's annual science fair offers students in grades 3-5 an opportunity to participate, but only students in 5th grade and up can advance to the regional fair. Unlike in past years, students were only able to enter as individuals this year. Participants must present their project to the judges - scientists from the Cary Institute who volunteer their time - and answer any questions they have, teacher and adviser Veronica Smith said.

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Ava Volek's project, **Is the 5 Second Rule Real?**, earned her first place in the science fair.



Mia Sullivan's **H2O My Plants** project looked at which plants need the most water.

Alden Place Students Advance to County Science Fair

Once judging is complete, teachers bring their classes to view their projects. Often if a student in the class has their project at the science fair they give their teachers and classmates an informal presentation of their project, Smith said.

Students are free to pick their own topic. Some students do a project based presentation, such as facts about animals, and some are experiment based and follow the scientific method, Smith said. It is up to the judges to determine which type of

presentation was done and there is different judging for each type.

“It was a little scary to talk to the scientists but once I got started I felt fine,” said Volek, who chose her project for a specific reason.

“I chose this project because I’m always picking food up off the ground and eating it and my mom said it had germs on it and I wanted to know if it was true,” she said.

To answer the question, she took bread, cheese, and a lollipop and dropped it on the floor and set a five-second timer.

“I swabbed it and put it in an agar tray which makes bacteria grow faster. Then I labeled all the trays with the different food and then swabbed a control piece of each food and put that in an agar tray too. We watched the bacteria grow and logged it so we could keep track of all the colonies.”

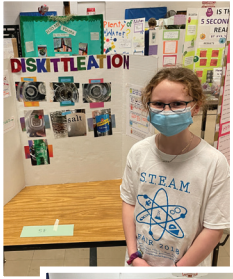
In the end, Volek learned her mother was right. “I learned that the 5 second rule isn’t real and bacteria can grow quickly.”

Some other project examples include:

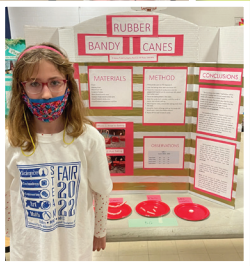
Third Grade - Making Rubber Eggs, The Life of a Three-Toed Sloth, Which Laundry Detergent Works Best? and What Are Essential Oils?

Fourth Grade - Inside the Earth’s Layers, Helium or Air?, What Makes a Crispier Crust Faster - Stone or Pizza Pan?, Is Anybody In There - Does Anything Live in my Frozen Pond?

Fifth Grade - H2O My Plants!, Is the 5 Second Rule Real?, Pokemon vs Heart Rate and Popcorn Experiment.



Diskittleation: Tamzin Doyle's Diskittleation project asked, "What liquid dissolves Skittles the fastest?"



BandyCanes: Daphne Rowland wanted to see the impact of heat on candy canes with her Rubber Bandy Canes project.



New Vestibule Aims to Improve Security at Millbrook High School



Once complete, the vestibule booth at Millbrook High School will provide a place for a greeter to sit and screen people entering the building while controlling access to the main lobby.

Safety and security are top priorities at Millbrook High School and administration is enhancing it with a new vestibule area, expected to be fully functional by the fall.

The vestibule previously housed a second set of doors, but those were removed to make way for a booth where a greeter will sit, helping to prevent any unwanted visitors from entering the building. A greeter currently sits in the school’s lobby.

“They’ll only have access into that initial front door,” Principal Eric Seipp said of visitors. “The secondary doors will be

locked.” Parents can also drop off lunch and other items for their children at the vestibule.

“It’s just so much easier with access to those initial doors,” Seipp said. “A lot can be accomplished in the vestibule area.”

Much of the initial work on the vestibule was completed during winter recess, having a minimal impact on foot traffic.

“It has not really had any impact whatsoever,” Seipp said. “Instead of entering the building on the right, they’re just entering to the left.”

The project is in its early stages and has only been discussed at Board of Education

meetings, but more information will be shared with the community as work progresses.

“We’re expecting to do that over the course of the summer,” the principal said.

Senior Sabrina Mongon recently noticed the vestibule’s booth and believes having security before entering the main lobby is a good idea. “It’s something really beneficial,” Mongon said. “That initial safety protocol might lessen stress on students.”

Senior Erika Zhunio first noticed the changes after coming back from winter break. She appreciates the school taking student safety seriously.

“They’re putting our safety first, which I think is great,” Zhunio said.

A new security vestibule is also scheduled to be built at Elm Drive Elementary School.



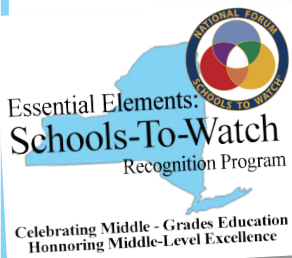
Seniors Erika Zhunio and Sabrina Mongon agree that the new vestibule will help with school security.

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Middle School Redesignated School-to-Watch

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“It’s truly a testament to those that are doing work – the teachers in the classrooms that don’t settle for yesterday’s effort,” the principal said. “They’re always getting better.”

Schools seeking the designation must reapply for redesignation every three years.

At the end of March, Cabello joined numerous members of the school community, including Superintendent Laura Mitchell and Deputy Superintendent Caroline Hernandez-Pidala for a virtual meeting with the state redesignation committee to give them a full scope of what the school does on a daily basis.

The state determined the middle school earned the redesignation in April.

“I’m hopeful they’ll see that everything on paper they accepted is happening in real action,” Cabello said, prior to the meeting, and they did.

Only one other school in Dutchess, Ulster and Orange counties has earned the designation - Van Wyck Junior High School in Wappingers.

Teachers, Students Find Benefits of Blending Learning

Cont’d from page 1...

“Each station engages students with material in a slightly different way, so you increase the chance you are presenting it to the student in a way that will engage them. It also guarantees that the teacher has at least 10 minutes with each student,” McKiernan said.

Samantha Holsborg, who teaches 9th and 10th grade English and K-12 ENL and social studies teacher Georgia Herring, enjoyed the training and its results.

Herring flipped a lesson on how Supreme Court nominees are chosen. She gave students in her AP government class two days to watch a video clip from the show, “West Wing,” during which the president was vetting a candidate and then answer some questions.

“I have a class of 26 and they all did it ahead of time. In class, we then broke into groups and talked about the characteristics of a Supreme Court justice,” she said.

Coincidentally, Associate Justice Stephen Breyer resigned during this time and Herring showed a video clip in class of what President Joseph Biden was looking for in a nominee.

“They were engaged and had a nice debate because they had to prioritize the 16 characteristics,” she said.

Herring said based on feedback from students she would shorten the time between students watching the video and the discussion time to one day in the future.

“The training helped. I’m always open to new ideas,” Herring said. She was a bit skeptical at first as she had tried flipped classroom lessons, but they did not have all of the parameters laid out during this training.

Holsborg used the station rotation model for a lesson on organizing an essay with the stations set as follows:

- Introduction
- Body
- Conclusion
- Teacher draft review

“When students are in one of the areas, they are able to navigate to another in no particular order so the class moves smoothly,” she said. Another tip from training is making a technology station.

“The technology station could be a grammar byte, where I use my own creation or IXL (platform) and can use it to teach a lesson and collect data while utilizing technology,” Holsborg said. IXL is an online, individualized learning, diagnostic and analytic platform with content for math, ELA, science, Spanish and social studies.



Students in Georgia Herring’s class discuss characteristics of a Supreme Court justice as part of a flipped classroom lesson.

Station rotation keeps students on task, moving around and interacting.

“Each station is about 10 minutes and the average attention span is about seven minutes so it really is very interactive and gives them differentiation,” she said.

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