

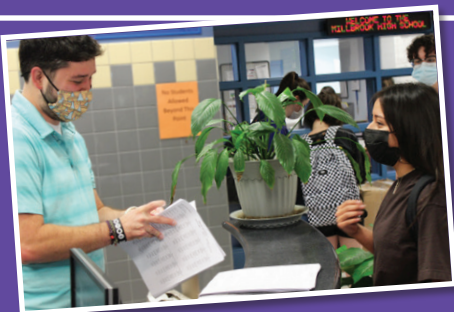
Hello Millbrook families!

October is National Principals Month! It is a perfect time to thank our principals for their hard work and leadership in support of their students, families, teachers, staff, and buildings overall. We are so fortunate to have such committed and caring leaders who work tirelessly in providing a safe, healthy, rigorous, and welcome environment for all students!

Thank you, Mr. Setaro (Elm), Mr. Libka (Alden), Mr. Cabello (MS), Mr. Seipp (HS) - you all rock!!

Laura, Your Proud Superintendent of Schools

Students & Staff Ready for 2021-22 year



Students across the Millbrook School District started their first day of classes for the 2021-2022 school year ready for anything thrown their way.

High school student Delaney Foss started her senior year excited because she misses taking part in various clubs such as Mock Trial and Model UN with other students. "I'm super involved so I like to be in-person," Foss said. "I'm excited to see all the new people and see everyone I haven't seen in a while."

Brianna Salmon started sixth grade this year and is most looking forward to be able to take a variety of classes, such as art, in different rooms throughout the building. "We can go around and switch classes every single time the bell rings," Salmon said.

For Salmon, in-person learning is the way to go. "It's way better, I focus more," she said.



Having all the students back for classes has been a delight for Millbrook Middle School Counselor Kelly Mahoney to witness. She wants to ensure all students are emotionally and socially healthy for the new year.

"It's good to return to some sense of normalcy," Mahoney said. "Everyone seems really happy to be here."

New Faces Join MCSD Team

Millbrook Central School District welcomes 10 new teachers this year to our schools. All participated in a new teacher orientation prior to the start of school.



Giselle Aldarondo
Alden Place ES

Giselle Aldarondo grew up speaking Spanish and English

in Dutchess County. Born in Poughkeepsie, she was raised in Fishkill, Beacon, and Wappingers Falls. She took that experience and now brings it to her students as a new English as a New Language instructor. "I always enjoyed learning about different languages and cultures," she said.

Aldarondo served in the Navy and said she loved the structure and discipline she gained there.

"I am thankful for the experience gained but am so happy working with children and pursuing my true passion, working with language learners. While I've always felt driven to be an ENL teacher, the joy I feel from facilitating the growth and development of the students in Millbrook only reaffirmed my passion."



Elena Byassee
Elm & Alden ES, MMS

A recent graduate of Westminster Choir College in New Jersey, Elena Byassee is used to small schools as her alma mater had a graduating class about as big as Millbrook's. She begins her career as an elementary music teacher.

"This year in my classroom, your children can expect to participate in a wide variety of music making activities that address learning how to sing, read, and play music from different cultures all over the world," she said. Some of her favorite musical activities include singing songs while playing her ukulele, playing with hand chimes and boom-whackers, and having fun with some musical games. "I can't wait to make wonderful music with your children this school year!"



Kelly Eaton
Elm Drive ES

Kelly Eaton moved to Millbrook two years ago and heard "nothing but amazing

things about the district from our neighbors," so when she saw an opening she jumped at the chance to apply.

"I love the idea of a close-knit work community," she said.

As an academic intervention services (AIS) teacher, Eaton will focus on remedial reading. She has 11 years of classroom experience, the last six of which were in the Bronx. Eaton said she plans to use her positive energy and experience to help students any way she can.

"I am their biggest fan. I look forward to helping them, cheering them on and being a part of their happy years in school."

Fate of gazebo lies with survey

Community members are being asked to weigh-in on what should be done with the gazebo that sits, unused and in disrepair, on the Elm Drive Elementary School campus.

“It has been taped off with orange barriers because we are worried about safety,” Superintendent Laura Mitchell said.

There are several options available since, though dating to the 1920s, the gazebo is not eligible for the State/ National Register of Historic Places.

- * Fully renovate/restore the gazebo in its current style at a cost of \$53,000
- * Demolish and remove the gazebo and concrete replacing it with grass at a cost of \$7,800.



If the replacement option is chosen, Mitchell said the district would likely look to get a larger gazebo so it can be used as an outdoor learning space.

“We didn’t want to just take it down without talking with the community as it has been here for a number of years,” Mitchell said.

A survey with the options was mailed to district residents. The survey has stirred some interest in some community members who are conversing with the board and superintendent about the possibility of restoring it.



Staff spends summer growing to help students

Millbrook Central School District administrators and teachers spent a good portion of their summer in professional development to make this year better for students.

“It was easily 100 hours throughout the district to get ready for a stronger educational system for our students to return to - and that doesn’t include any time individuals may have spent on their own,” Deputy Superintendent Caroline Hernandez Pidala said.

Among the training areas were social emotional learning and strategies, co-teaching models, trauma and resilience, early literacy strategies and identifying child neglect and abuse.

Collaborative & Proactive Solutions

Administrators spent time learning the Ross Green Collaborative and Proactive Solutions method of helping children.

The training indicated that “kids will behave when they have the skills to navigate life’s challenges and meet the demands of the task before them,” Pidala said. “If they are struggling, we can help them to develop the lagging skills.”

Teachers will receive training on this during the school year.

“The goal is to give students more skills so they can respond appropriately.”

Yale Ruler

The Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence is bringing the Yale Ruler and Mood Meter to Millbrook students and staff.

“The ruler speaks to students’ ability to recognize and manage their emotions so they can be in better control,” Pidala said.



As part of the program, Mark Brackett developed the Mood Meter, a tool to help students identify how they’re feeling and then make a decision about whether they want to stay there or shift to another feeling. Brackett is the founder and director of the center.



“Students are given a toolbox - so they can take a walk, write in a journal, listen to calming music,” Pidala said, which helps them deal with their feelings.

The kickoff for the program was Sept. 21 with the goal of having additional training and for the district to be able to get initial assessments of the student body at large, classrooms and individual students.

“We want to keep a pulse on the feelings and allow students to realize feelings are normal and can change. It is really empowering.”

Orton-Gillingham Classroom Educator

This program focuses on early literacy. According to the OGA website it is “a direct, explicit,

multisensory, structured, sequential, diagnostic, and prescriptive way to teach literacy.”

It was initially developed as a way to help students with dyslexia.

“Twenty-four teachers underwent the training so that all students can benefit from it,” Pidala said.

Other training

Professional development was also offered in co-teaching models, something that is used in general education classrooms that have students with disabilities. “It is important for them to collaborate in that work,” Pidala said.

Staff also participated in Trauma and Resilience training through Ramapo for Children to help them identify trauma students might have experienced and develop supports to help them.

Educational Elements, a consulting company, also offered training in K-Shaped Education Recovery, to help the district ‘bounce’ forward into the 2021-22 school year.

Pidala said it showed that some of the sustained behavior from before is likely to return to the pre-crisis stage but that there will also be transformative behavior which may come back and some behaviors may disappear altogether.

“Some things will never be the same, and that is OK,” she said.



New Faces Join MCSD Team *con't...*



Samantha Hale
Elm Drive ES

This year marks the first year year Samantha Hale will have her very own classroom, having come from the Enlarged City School District of Middletown where she completed two leave replacements for first grade. "I wanted to be a part of a smaller school district where everyone is supportive of one another," she said.

Hale knew since she was five years old that she wanted to be a teacher.

"I never gave up hope that I would become a teacher and here I am!," she said, adding, "I want students to know that they are capable of doing anything that they set their mind to."

She is a pre-K teacher at Elm Drive Elementary School.

I would like the parents and community to know that I am very excited to be a part of the Millbrook family and I can't wait to see what the rest of the school year brings!



Sabrina Laurino
Millbrook Middle School

Sabrino Laurino actually joined the district in February as a sixth grade science teacher, coming from the Hyde Park Central School District.

"I have always thought of Millbrook as a prestigious district, so when I was given the opportunity to interview here I was very excited."

An educator for three years, Laurino wants students to know that she enjoys building relationships with them.

"I think it is important to get to know them and cater to their strengths and build an inviting classroom community," she said.

A self-proclaimed 'people person,' Laurino is excited to have school returning to in-person instruction.

"I love chatting and getting to know new families and members of the Millbrook community."



Zander Meisner
Millbrook Middle/High School

Zander Meisner wants to uplift the Millbrook community with music.

"I absolutely can't wait to teach the Millbrook kids in a post-pandemic world; we've all been deprived of uplifting concerts and community music making," said the vocal music instructor.

Having come to Millbrook from teaching chorus at a high school in Westchester, Meisner said he intends, "to bring back the love and excitement that goes with singing together again."

He has been teaching some form of music for more than 15 years, but has been doing so in a school setting for about five years.

One thing you may want to know about Meisner is that before becoming a teacher, he performed in Broadway musicals and toured the world doing it.



Amanda Pasquale
Alden Place ES

Millbrook is quite a change for Amanda Pasquale, who spent the last six years as a special education teacher in the South Bronx.

"Millbrook is such a beautiful place and the thought of working for such a small school district was very appealing to me," she said.

Though she is starting her seventh year teaching, it isn't her first career, having first worked at a mortgage company. "I knew deep down in my heart that I wanted to work with kids," she said.

So, she began her education career as a New York City teaching fellow - teaching all day, going to school at night and studying to pass exams.

"I want my students to know that you can achieve anything you put your mind to... You just have to believe in yourself just like I believe in you."



Amy Quinn
Millbrook Middle School

Teaching is Amy Quinn's passion - she's been doing it for 14 years.

Before joining Millbrook as a special education teacher, Quinn was a third grade special education teacher in the Greenwood Lake Union Free School District in Orange County.

"I want my students to know that I am here for them and I want the best for them," she said, adding that she brings energy and enthusiasm to the classroom each day.

She approaches her classroom with the goal of teaching students the same way she wants her children taught "with understanding, compassion and motivation."



New Faces Join MCSD Team *con't...*



Alessandra Suriano
Elm Drive ES

There's nothing like living your dream, and that is what Alessandra Suriano does each day she enters the classroom.

"I remember being in the first grade and coming home and telling my mom that I can't wait to be a teacher like Mrs. Smith (my first grade teacher) when I grow up," Suriano said. "Every day I feel lucky that my dream came true!"

Born and raised in Hopewell Junction, Suriano went to college in upstate New York and is happy to have found work in a community close to where she grew up.

"There is such a deep sense of community not only in the schools but also throughout the town. Millbrook already feels like home," she said.

Suriano has been teaching since 2017, coming to Millbrook from the Universal pre-K program in Hyde Park Central School District.



Kerianne Trautmann
Elm Drive ES

Originally from Hyde Park, Kerianne Trautmann is excited to return to the Hudson Valley after teaching in Florida for six years.

Trautmann attended State University of New York schools for her graduate and undergraduate degrees, earning certifications in Early Childhood, Childhood and Special Education.

While working toward her master's degree she had the opportunity to teach in Broward and Palm Beach school districts, where she worked with students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

"I cannot wait to foster excitement and a joy for learning that can continue with students as they progress throughout their years in the district," she said.

Trautmann is a kindergarten co-teacher at Elm Drive Elementary. "My passion truly resides in bolstering up not only students' academic achievements, but also their social emotional wellbeing and sense of community."

Trautmann said she looks forward to the "tight knit and personal experience" in Millbrook as her former district had more than 100 elementary schools.



Jenna Wilson
Millbrook High School

Growing up in the Millbrook area, Jenna Wilson got excited when she saw the job posting for a biology teacher in the district.

"I love how it's a smaller district and that I already have family members who attend the schools," said Wilson, who came from Bishop Dunn Memorial School in Newburgh.

"I want the students to know that I am looking forward to being their living environment teacher and working on fun lab experiments together."

Wilson has been an educator for a year, but this is her first year as a teacher.

"I would like the parents and community to know I have a passion for biology and I'm so excited to teach their children about it and be a member of the Millbrook district."



School Board Appreciation Week

Thank you to our dedicated Board of Education Members who give their time and service to our district!

