

Hi

Hello Millbrook Families! I hope you are all doing well and enjoying the beautiful fall colors. As part of our Re-Entry Plan, we have been developing new ways to share information in a more consistent manner. One of these new ways is our *Blazer Bulletin*, a newsletter that will provide you with Millbrook CSD updates, news, shout outs, and more on a bi-weekly basis. Soon, we will be launching a custom mobile app that will be available from iTunes and Google Play AND a new notification system that will allow us to email, call, and text you with only a click of a few buttons! We will have more information on both in the upcoming few weeks. Our goal in enhancing and growing our communication work is to ensure you feel informed, included, and welcomed. I hope you enjoy the first edition of our *Blazer Bulletin*.

Stay well. Onward!! Laura, Your Proud Superintendent of Schools

Students Receive Latest Technology

Students at the Millbrook Middle School came back to school Sept. 9, not for class, but to pick up new supplies, including Chromebooks, for the upcoming year.

Teachers handed out Chromebooks, textbooks, frisbees and some pencils curbside to students and their families who drove up in front of the middle school building, while fun music blasted. Students dropped off their old devices from the prior school year in exchange for the new ones.



"The district's goal is to provide every student with the proper technology needed to successfully kick off remote learning," Middle School Principal Steven Cabello said. Anyone without a device should email the district at helpdesk@millbrookcsd.org.

Cabello and District Director of Technology, Elliot Garcia, helped to organize the event over the summer and they met with the staff to ensure they would be available to help pass out items, the principal said.

"As a team we felt it important that our teachers physically were available to greet their students and meet them as they make the transition to middle school from the elementary school," Cabello said.



"The Chromebooks were acquired using district funds and a systematic manner was created for distribution of the computers to students in sixth and ninth grades," Cabello said. "Students are responsible for the Chromebooks and they will be used during in-person and virtual learning sessions," Cabello said.

The supplies were stocked in the gym for teachers to get together and give to students as they pulled up with their families. Even Cabello helped handing out supplies.

"We were very excited to be outside yesterday meeting our families and their students as they embark on the journey that is middle school," he said.

The event was special for parent Amy Corbin's children: Matthew, who started middle school, and Emily, who started high school.

"It makes it exciting for them because it's so uncertain now," Corbin said.

Corbin is impressed with how the district has handled the situation and are doing everything they can to help students, she said.

"They're great; their communication is great," she said.

On the evening of Sept. 10, staff met with the sixth graders and their parents to also assist in the transition to middle school and distance learning, Cabello said. Virtual classes started Sept. 14.



Facilities Crew Tackle COVID Head-On



The Facilities Office has had a very busy semester so far with cleaning procedures intensified due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

"Cleaning was always thorough pre-COVID, but since March, every surface in the school is being disinfected," Facilities Director Michael Ragusa said.

"Now we disinfect everything," said Ragusa. "We have people doing doorknobs."

Bathrooms are cleaned eight times a day and are checked every hour, Ragusa said, adding that touchless sinks and paper towel dispensers were installed so students and staff avoid touching those surfaces.

He said, "We have a checklist on the bathroom door in every building."

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Facilities Crew Tackle COVID Head-On

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Temperature kiosks were installed at every building in the district where visitors and staff stand in front of them. Ragusa was initially shown the kiosks by one of his vendors, and ultraviolet lights were added for disinfecting purposes.

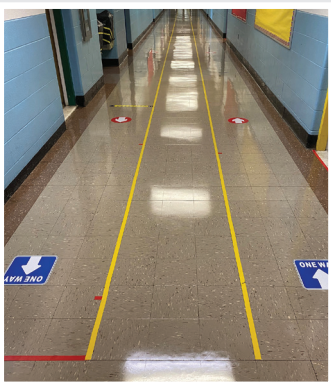
Another laborious task involved moving desks out of the classrooms to comply with social distancing orders. "Normally a classroom has about 26 desks, now they have 11 facing the same way, making it much easier to clean the floors," Ragusa said.

"It doesn't sound like a big deal, but it's easier," Ragusa said. "It cuts the time in half so you can clean other things." Desks were moved to the storage room, while bookshelves had to be taken to another space where teachers can grab their materials from labeled shelves.

"Lines for social distancing were placed on the floor around the bathrooms and outside where the students get off and on the buses," Ragusa said. The Director and his team are learning as they go and have tried

their best to stay ahead of the curve.

"We think we've hit everything that needs to be hit in terms



of social distancing," Ragusa said. "We have kids in the building now and everything seems to be well."

Former Student Joins Facilities Office

If you wander the halls of the Millbrook School District this semester you might see a familiar face beautifying the buildings.

Thomas Mayhar, a 2009 graduate of Millbrook High School, started in January as a custodian – a position others in his family have performed in the past. His grandfather spent 38 years at the district as head custodian and his mother was also a custodian.

Mayhar started as a substitute custodian before becoming full time later this year. Prior to this, he was a part-time bus monitor for First Student.

After graduating high school, Mayhar took classes in BOCES' law enforcement program but discovered it wasn't his cup of tea and began looking for any role that would help him support his fiancé and infant son born in April, he said.

"The only thing that mattered to me was finding something reliable," he said.

Mayhar then thought of Millbrook and asked Facilities Director Michael Ragusa if any roles were available, which there was.

"There was no way I was ever going to turn it down," Mayhar said.

"I was trying to find somewhere to fit in and belong."

Some of Mayhar's responsibilities include cleaning off all desks before classes start the following day, dusting and disinfecting all light switches and mopping floors.

"I make sure the hallways are presentable and nice," he said.

Keeping students and staff healthy, especially amid the COVID-19 pandemic, is a crucial part of the job for Mayhar.

"We do everything to make sure everyone is safe and healthy," he said.

Mayhar enjoys working with his fellow employees and Ragusa, who he described as an amazing boss to work for. "I enjoy it, the people," Mayhar said.



Millbrook Bus Driver Takes on New Role

A long-time bus driver for the District has stepped into a new role within First Student Bus Company. Larry Helweg, who has driven Millbrook students for seven years, accepted the new role of dispatcher this month.

"I just wanted a different opportunity to learn a little bit more," Helweg said. Now he makes drivers' schedules and plans routes for all of the Millbrook buses. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the busing schedule significantly, as students are going to school for in-person classes a few days a week, Helweg said, adding buses can only be filled to 50 percent capacity.

"It's all different now," Helweg said. "You can't have full buses."

Helweg enjoyed driving a bus, which included spending at least two hours each day picking up students and dropping them off. "You spend 15 hours a week with the kids and you grow attached to them," he said.

However, Helweg is appreciative of the new opportunity and is ready for the new responsibilities. "It's exciting to learn new things," he said.

