



Winter 2016

# HENDRICK HUDSON SCHOOL DISTRICT SOUNDINGS

BUCHANAN-VERPLANCK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL • FRANK G. LINDSEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL • FURNACE WOODS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
• BLUE MOUNTAIN MIDDLE SCHOOL • HENDRICK HUDSON HIGH SCHOOL

## New Course Brings Real-World Skills to Senior Year

College and career choices are just around the corner for high school seniors, and a number of Hendrick Hudson High School students are embracing a unique opportunity to prepare for those choices: the Senior Internship Experience. While many seniors are focused on college acceptances and counting down the days until graduation, these students are busy polishing their resumes, creating professional networks and gaining real-world job skills as interns at area businesses.

The year-long course, open to all Hendrick Hudson seniors, is designed to help students explore potential career options and obtain the skills necessary to chart a path to the future. Topics covered include, but are not limited to, time management, job search skills, cover letters, interviews and career research. Additionally, the class addresses issues such as sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace, health and safety and diversity awareness.

Internships are the centerpiece of the class, and examples of this year's crop of placements include positions at a veterinary office, a NYC-based radio station, a fashion design firm, an

elementary school and a multimedia production company.

Maura Koch, business teacher and work-based learning coordinator, teaches the class, and while she provides support and guidance every step of the

public, and manage their own time."

In-class discussions help students identify and reflect on the skills they are gaining, such as time management, communication, problem-solving and leadership. The students' "on-the-job

learning" is supported by secondary research into specific industries and careers. "A career 'Plan B' is often a by-product of this research," said Mrs. Koch.

The course additionally sets the stage for students to take advantage of internship experiences while at college. "The students are obtaining skills that will serve them well as they pursue these types of opportunities during their college years," said Mrs. Koch.

Senior Julia Kornfeld describes the program as "beyond helpful in many ways." Kornfeld, who is pursuing a teaching internship at the District's Frank G. Lindsey Elementary School feels that the program "provides real-life experience and has been very helpful during the college application process. The class helps students develop their resumes and gain valuable interview experience."



*Senior Frank Pisano works at his internship at Croton Animal Hospital, as part of the high school's Senior Internship Experience.*

way, students find they become highly self-directed during their internship experiences. "While working at their internships, the students develop their own individualized learning style, as they observe and study a particular career or industry," said Mrs. Koch. "They are on their own, involved in the day-to-day activities of the workplace, and must learn to make situational decisions, communicate with professionals and the

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# Understanding the Dignity for All Students Act

A high school student has started avoiding the cafeteria during lunch period. A middle school student refuses to take the school bus. A third grader has seemingly lost her appetite, though she isn't ill. Scenarios such as these could indicate that a student is experiencing a form of bullying at school, and Lynn Rafalik, Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services, wants parents and teachers to be mindful of such clues. And she wants students who are feeling victimized to know that they have somewhere to turn.



*Lynn Rafalik, Hendrick Hudson's Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services.*

Rafalik is the face of the Dignity for All Students Act (The Dignity Act) within the District, and she is on a mission to help the school community understand what the law means and how it is designed to help.

The Dignity Act, which took effect in New York State in 2012, seeks to provide students with a safe and supportive environment, free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function. It was amended again in 2013 to include cyberbullying.

Along with Rafalik, principals at the District's five school buildings serve as Dignity Act coordinators. All five administrators have gone through extensive training both here in the District and via professional development programs at Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES.

"I want students to understand that they can and should come forward and speak to one of our DASA coordinators if they feel they are being bullied," said Rafalik. "If a parent or guardian suspects bullying, they should also feel comfortable reaching out to us." They can always call us or obtain a Dignity Act Reporting Form from our website and send it to us.

The term "bullying" gets a lot of attention these days, but what is it, exactly? According to Rafalik, bullying can take many forms, such as teasing, name-calling, physical abuse or online harassment. It can be among students or between a staff member and a student. An important distinction, Rafalik explained, is that the behavior needs to be repeated over time, be intentional and involve an imbalance of power to be considered bullying under the Dignity Act.

There are specific signs of distress that a student experiencing bullying may display, and parents and school staff alike need to be vigilant in remaining mindful of them. For example, the student may withdraw from his or her usual activities, as well as family and friends. Grades may slip. There may be difficulty eating or sleeping. "It takes a whole village to help counter bullying," said Rafalik. "It's not only counselors and support staff, but also teachers and parents who need to be tuned into our students' emotional and social well-being." The following link includes a list of signs that a child may be experiencing bullying: [www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/warning-signs/index.html](http://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/warning-signs/index.html)

"Whether an incident is founded or unfounded, we will investigate it," said Rafalik. "If it is founded, we will address both the victim and the bully and develop

supportive care plans, which are basically action plans, for both students."

The District is taking a multi-pronged approach to preventing and remedying bullying incidents, including educating staff at all levels in the Dignity Act's fine points and strongly encouraging students to reach out if they feel they are being bullied. The Pupil Personnel Services Department continually works to identify at-risk students, and weekly meetings with instructional support staff are held at all five schools to discuss students and provide additional opportunities to pinpoint any potential problems.

"Our administrators, teachers, and staff work hard each day to provide a safe and supportive environment for our students. We want students to know that they have trusted adults to talk to if they are feeling bullied."

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[www.henhudschools.org](http://www.henhudschools.org)



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# Districtwide Curriculum Review Takes Shape

A written, fully articulated K-12 curriculum is the hallmark of a high-performing district, and this fall Hendrick Hudson embarked on a multi-year curriculum review. This effort symbolizes the District's commitment to its students in providing curriculum, instruction and assessment that is rigorous, relevant and aligned to standards and 21st Century skills.

"This work, which is powerful and purposeful professional development, is occurring in K-5, 6-8, 9-12 and special area teams," said Dr. Margaret Ruller, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction. "To support our teachers, administrators have partnered with different departments to provide guidance with the process, respond to questions and needs, and work alongside colleagues to meet the District's goals."

At the K-5 level, grade-level teams have been meeting with Dr. Ruller for full-day sessions focused on developing ELA curriculum. Teachers are shaping their units of study and crafting performance tasks that measure the outcomes they have identified for each unit.

At the 6-12 level, teachers are currently working in 6-8 and 9-12 teams, each partnered with an administrator. The goals for this year are to compare units that are already written with the expectations of new standards and revising and/or writing new units based on that gap analysis.

The next phase of the work will be crafting formative and summative assessments/performance tasks that measure the expected outcomes of instruction.

The final phase of the work will involve sharing teacher resources, selecting suggested texts, videos and/or websites and designing learning experiences that reflect the "backwards design model" (i.e., if this is where students need to



*A recent curriculum-mapping workshop held at Blue Mountain Middle School.*

be at the end of the unit of study, how can we plan our instruction so that all students can meet with success?). Differentiated opportunities will be shared in the written unit of study to assist teachers in their instructional planning.

"The first grade teachers were happy to have the opportunity to have a discussion about the curriculum we will be teaching," said Janet Ho, a first grade teacher at Furnace Woods who has been closely involved in the curriculum audit. "We are looking forward to continuing this work as the year progresses."

"When the third grade teachers came together to begin our curriculum mapping, we determined what components of our current lessons had value for students, which expanded into a conversation about new ways to engage our students and develop their skills to be 'thinkers,' said Buchanan-Verplanck third-grade teacher Cathy Holzman. "One area that will meet these needs is 'C3 (College, Career and Civic Life) Inquiries.' The third grade students have completed the C3 Inquiry unit on Geography, resulting in their understanding of the impact where you live in the world has on your life. Together, the third grade team compiled a Launch Unit that we will all teach this coming September."

"Throughout the multi-year project,

there will be opportunities for the K-12 teams to come together and share their work in an effort to build a cohesive learning experience for our students, from kindergarten entrance through high school graduation," said Dr. Ruller. "We look forward to keeping our community informed about our progress along the way."

"When we were working on the profile of who would succeed Alice Gottlieb (who retired in June 2015), consensus was strong that we needed someone with relevant experience in building a system of consistent curriculum across schools and content areas," said Superintendent Joseph Hochreiter.

"The process of reviewing what we teach is vitally important to our system," he continued. "It is our internal checks-and-balances, and it confirms that we're teaching the most important content to students and creates a level of reliability that when students progress through our system, they've been exposed to and taught what's vitally important. I have participated in a few of the curriculum review meetings, and I commend the staff for their energetic participation and involvement, our administrators for leading the process and being committed to this important work, and Dr. Ruller for creating the urgency and providing an environment in which this collaboration can take place."

# Mulling over Microbes at Buchanan-Verplanck

Courtney Williams, a staff scientist at Regeneron and a Buchanan-Verplanck parent, recently paid a visit to Mr. Pynn's kindergarten classroom to teach a lesson in microbes, the world's tiniest living organisms. As the students discovered, they are everywhere!



*Students in Jeff Pynn's kindergarten class at Buchanan-Verplanck Elementary School learned about microbes with a hands-on activity.*

Ms. Williams first read the students a book called *Tiny Creatures: The World of Microbes*. After learning a little bit about the microscopic subject matter, the class eagerly moved on to the hands-on portion of the visit: two experiments about microorganisms that, according to Ms. Williams, "live all over us and on every surface we touch."

In the first experiment, students used petri dishes, or plates, to collect samples from around the classroom to see which area of the room had the most germs. Each student came up with a hypothesis about which surface they thought would reveal the most microbes.

In the second experiment, the students took a rotten banana and placed it in an empty water bottle. The water bottle was covered with a balloon so that students could see if the banana would emit a gas and inflate the balloon (it did!).

Ms. Williams returned to the classroom a week later to check the students' plates and prove or disprove their hypotheses. Looking at the microbe colonies under a microscope, the students

were able to compare shapes, colors and textures.

What did the young scientists think about their introduction to the world of microbes? "I liked it because we got to see germs," said Dylan McCarthy. "It was pretty cool to see all the living microbes," said classmate Ella Henderson. "I had fun looking in the microscope!" chimed in Jayden Pizzella.

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## New and Improved Science and Technology Spaces at BMMS

The district's facilities and operations and maintenance department recently renovated a science classroom and technology lab at Blue Mountain Middle School, bringing some sixties-era spaces into the 21st century.



*Part of the new Technology Lab at Blue Mountain Middle School, housed in the former wood shop.*

With new cabinetry, ceiling and flooring, Elyse Lyon's sixth grade science classes now meet in a light and bright classroom. "The cabinets and flooring are much lighter in color than the originals," said Anthony Merlini, Director of School Facilities, Operations and Maintenance, who oversaw the renovation. "Additionally, the original fluorescent lights have been replaced with modern LED lighting, and hot water lines, a new eye wash station and accessible sinks were installed." Mr. Merlini said he hopes to do similar renovations

to the rest of the school's sixth and seventh grade science classrooms.

Another important upgrade has taken place in the school's former wood shop, a large space that has been transformed into a Technology/Production Lab. The space is now divided into two distinct areas, one for computer-based design and one for hands-on production (think robotics, model rockets, etc.).

"Transforming a wood shop built in 1969 into a 21st century technology lab is indicative of the direction our school is taking," said Principal John Owens. "Our students now have well-appointed spaces in which to explore many different STEM topics, which will hopefully ignite an interest in the world of technology and engineering as they move on to high school and beyond."



# Keeping Student Athletes at the Top of Their Game

A soccer player collides with another during a game and falls to the ground. A softball player slides into home plate and crashes into the catcher. A basketball player goes up for a layup and rolls his ankle on the way down.

Scenarios such as these are a regular occurrence in the world of high school sports, and a typical response is a quick assessment by a coach, the hasty application of an ice pack and, depending on the severity of the injury, a trip to the emergency room or the family physician.

While risk of injury is an unavoidable element of school sports, Hendrick Hudson athletes have a unique advantage: the district has a full-time certified athletic trainer, Meg Greiner, on the sideline at most home games, where she assesses and treats injuries on the spot and makes informed recommendations for follow up.

The title “athletic trainer” is a bit of a misnomer, as many assume it is akin to a personal trainer or conditioning trainer. Athletic trainers are actually highly trained healthcare professionals who assist athletes with preventative and emergency care, intervention and rehabilitation of injuries.

Although it isn’t mandatory for athletic trainers to attend high school sporting

events (except for football, where a healthcare provider must be present), having an athletic trainer on-site provides a valuable layer of protection for the district’s student athletes. “Coaches are certified in CPR and first aid, but they can’t do it all,” said Mrs. Greiner. “Having an athletic trainer on-site is important to keep kids safe on the field or court.”

“The Hendrick Hudson School District has made a commitment to have a full-time athletic trainer in Meg Greiner,” said Athletic Director Tom Baker. “To say she is a tremendous asset to the district would be an understatement. Meg deeply cares about the student-athletes and is one of the premier athletic trainers in the area.”

This fall, the high school received the National Athletic Trainers’ Association’s Safe Sports School award, which recognizes secondary schools that provide safe environments for student athletes. “We were very honored to receive this recognition,” said Mr. Baker. “It demonstrates our drive to keep our student athletes safe during physical

education classes, team practices and games.”

While attending sporting events for a living may sound like a dream job to some, the position is demanding, including long days and six-day work weeks. Mrs. Greiner can be found working at after school games, as well as weekend



*Hendrick Hudson High School's Athletic Trainer, Meg Greiner, in the athletic training room at the school.*

and evening tournaments, and she stays until the last game is finished. She credits a solid support network, including a “very understanding husband and helpful parents” with allowing her to balance her chosen field with other demands, such as raising a son, Michael, an eighth grader at Blue Mountain Middle School.

On a typical day, Mrs. Greiner arrives at the high school around noon to get organized for the day’s events, manage scheduling issues and complete any required paperwork. Students pop in periodically to ask her about injuries or other concerns, but her day really shifts into high gear after the last school bell rings. That’s when student athletes show up for taping and injury evaluations and when she packs up her equipment bag with first aid and emergency supplies and begins her appointed rounds, cycling among games at multiple locations on campus.

While at the games, Mrs. Greiner must remain hyper-observant, as she is responsible for the safety of not only Hendrick Hudson’s athletes, but also the visiting team, the officials and the fans.

“The most important aspect of my job is to develop relationships with the students so they can trust me,” said Mrs. Greiner. “The kids come to understand that my job is not to coach – I am here to keep them safe and enable them to keep playing the sports they love.”



*The National Athletic Trainers’ Association named Hendrick Hudson High School a Safe Sports School (pictured: the varsity girls basketball team).*

# Encouraging the Joy of Reading at Furnace Woods

Furnace Woods students are turning the page on a brand new reading initiative called “Reading Is a Hoot!”

The initiative grew out of a committee formed by teacher Keli O’Dell, in which teachers brainstormed ideas for engaging students in more independent reading. “We wanted to come up with a way to inspire students to read and help develop a real love of reading,” said Ms. O’Dell. The group devised a reading log for students to keep track of the number of minutes they spend reading each day, both in and out of school. The logs will be collected and tallied each month, and there will be rewards for the class with the most minutes, as well as incentives for students as they reach various reading milestones.

Last month, the school held a schoolwide assembly to kick off



*The entire Furnace Woods student body attended an assembly kicking off Reading Is a Hoot!*

the Reading Is a Hoot! initiative. The entire student body came together to watch a music video created by Ms. O’Dell and featuring Furnace Woods students and staff enthusiastically reading to the infectious Pharrell Williams song *Happy*.

The assembly concluded with every member of the audience reading independently for five minutes. “You could have heard a pin drop during that time,” said Ms. O’Dell. “Students were overheard saying that they wanted to keep reading, as they returned to their classrooms.”

“We are looking forward to counting the students’ reading minutes at the end of each month to see how much time we have all spent in the company of a good book,” said Furnace Woods Principal Cynthia Kramer.

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# Hearts in the Right Place at Frank G. Lindsey

A snowy whiteout couldn’t stop Frank G. Lindsey students and staff from “going red” just before the winter break. The school’s annual Go Red for Women’s Health fundraiser took place the week of February 1st, including the sale of raffles to support the American Heart Association. However, the culminating schoolwide assembly was snowed out when a huge blizzard blanketed the region and closed school.

“The event was rescheduled and the students were as enthusiastic as ever,” said speech teacher and event co-coordinator Susan Burke-James. Walking through the school on February 11, the new assembly date, the halls were a sea of red, with almost everybody dressed in the color that has become synonymous with women’s heart health.

It may have been cold outside, but the school gym was full of warmth, as the entire school community gathered to celebrate another successful Go Red campaign. Accompanied by the school’s string ensemble,

students and staff raised their collective voice to sing a rousing rendition of *You Gotta Have Heart*, the classic tune from *Damn Yankees*. Enthusiasm bubbled over as Superintendent Joseph Hochreiter announced the raffle drawing winners, with students winning movie passes and pizza lunches.



*Frank G. Lindsey students and staff came together to celebrate their Go Red for Women’s Health fundraising efforts.*

A new element of this year’s Go Red campaign was the creation of five grade-level-created paintings, coordinated by art teachers Kristen Dini and Jessica Nash, to be auctioned off at the school’s Apple of My Eye dance. Every Frank G. Lindsey student had a hand in the creation of the vibrant and beautiful paintings inspired by pop artist Jim Dine.

“Frank G. Lindsey comes together as a caring community, and every child takes part in the school’s annual Go Red fundraiser,” said music teacher and event co-

chair Susan Feldman. “Whether it is singing, playing a string instrument, creating artwork or purchasing a raffle, each and every student takes ownership of this very important cause.”



# PLTW Biomed Students Present Innovations in Diabetes Management

Students in Jeanine Hall's Principles of Biomedical Sciences class, the first course in the Project Lead the Way Biomedical Science program, were recently presented with a hypothetical scenario: a woman has died unexpectedly, and diabetes is the suspected cause. Her family has established a grant to fund innovation in the area of diabetes treatment and management. The students task? To come up with innovative diabetes management solutions and present them before a panel of judges. The top innovators would receive the (fictional) Hen Hud People's Choice Grant for Diabetic Innovation of the Year.

Student teams delivered, presenting innovations such as: "insulin sheets" that dissolve on the tongue and come in a variety of flavors; a blood thinner in the form of flavored drops that can be mixed into a beverage; a special camera that can identify glucose levels in the blood, eliminating the need for painful finger pricks; and a necklace that identifies and manages the wearer's glucose levels.

During "Shark Tank"- style presentations, the students emphasized items that are discreet and don't call attention

to the fact that the user has diabetes. Additionally, many of the proposed products were complemented by mobile device apps, making monitoring and treating the disease even easier.

"The Diabetic Innovation activity culminated weeks' worth of work on diabetes, ranging from the biology of the disease to the humanistic aspect," said Mrs. Hall. "It gave students the opportunity to invent a new way to improve life for diabetics by applying significant content knowledge. The skills integrated into the lessons spoke true to the college and career-ready initiatives of the District."

The winners of the People's Choice Grants were: Nadine Salameh, Sophie Brown and Jessica Goldman for Think INSIDE the Box, a customized box of insulin management tools; Sarina



Students in Jeanine Hall's Principles of Biomedical Sciences class presented their innovative diabetes management tool, Insulin Sheets, to fellow classmates and a number of "judges."

Abraham, Christina Alaio and Supriya Baskaran for The Right Track, a shoe sole that tracks glucose levels; and Sophia Barberan, Yash Rijal and Buu-Hac Nguyen for Insulin Sheets, described above.

"The diabetes project really helped work all of our collaborative, creative, and public speaking skills," said student and grant winner Jessica Goldman. "These are skills that we will need throughout the rest of our lives."

## Course Brings Real-World Skills to Senior Year

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Fellow senior Ariana Kingwood added, "The internship class provides real-world experience so students can see if they are actually interested in the field they plan on pursuing. My experience has been amazing, working with a design team in the Garment District of New York City."

According to Mrs. Koch, the skills and experience the students gain through the class will serve them well into the future. "Upon graduation, they will be equipped with a plan for achieving both their education and career goals."



Senior Julia Kornfeld is working in Marisa Ditre's kindergarten class at Frank G. Lindsey for her Senior Internship Experience.

# Mulling over Microbes at Buchanan-Verplanck

♦ Continued from page 4

“I wasn’t at all surprised that Mr. Pynn’s students made great scientists,” said Ms. Williams. “They were full of terrific questions and were eager to do the experiments.”

Ms. Williams said she hoped to get the students excited about science and exploring the world around them. “I wanted to plant the seed that doing science means asking questions about things we don’t understand and doing experiments to answer those questions.”

Mr. Pynn’s class will proudly display the results from its experiments at the school’s Science Expo on March 10.



A student in Mr. Pynn’s kindergarten class at Buchanan-Verplanck gets a close up look at microbes during a recent class activity.

## HENDRICK HUDSON SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

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## HENDRICK HUDSON MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Hendrick Hudson School District, a dynamic, innovative, and supportive educational community, is to ensure each student is an engaged, passionate learner who achieves his or her maximum potential and contributes to society. This is accomplished in a system characterized by:



- ♦ A culture of the highest expectations for all;
- ♦ A rigorous, articulated curriculum;
- ♦ Diverse, effective instructional strategies and resources;
- ♦ An educational environment that is challenging, creative, exploratory, accessible, and nurturing; and
- ♦ A fully engaged, supportive community.