

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

Quarterly newsletter of Lyme-Old Lyme Schools
A private school experience in a public school setting

FALL 2023



Board of Education Meetings

Please join the Board of Education for the following meetings:

Nov. 1, Regular BOE Meeting, 6:30 PM

Dec. 6, Regular BOE Meeting, 6:30 PM

Jan. 3, Regular BOE Meeting, 6:30 PM

Meetings are held in the Board of Education Conference Room at Center School, 49 Lyme Street, Old Lyme. Agendas, links to live-streams of meetings, and links to recordings of previous meetings are available at www.region18.org under the "District Information" tab.

Message from the Superintendent & Chair

Dear Members of the
Lyme-Old Lyme Communities,

Another school year has begun and is off to a wonderful start. Our students arrive each morning excited to be in school, hallways are buzzing with activity, athletic fields are full of action, and all of our students are settling into what looks to be a great year.

Please take a few moments to read about the latest happenings in our schools. There is much to be proud of and, for that, we wish to thank the communities of Lyme and Old Lyme for their ongoing support.

Sincerely,
Ian Neviaser
Superintendent of Schools

Steven Wilson
Chair, Board of Education



The Regional School District 18 Board of Education prohibits harassment and discrimination in educational programs, services, or employment on the basis of race, color, religion, ancestry, age, marital status, military or veteran status, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, genetic information, sexual orientation, or past or present physical or mental disability in accordance with Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1991, the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and appropriate state laws.

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Ms. Pinney at Fairy Glen

Mile Creek School Teacher Awarded Fellowship Grant

Ms. Pinney, kindergarten teacher at Mile Creek School, was named a 2023 Fund for Teachers Fellow and the recipient of an accompanying grant. Fund for Teachers is a US-based organization that invests in and funds unique professional development opportunities for educators. Since its origin, they have funded \$35 million in grants to over 9,200 educators to encourage summer experiential learning. Ms. Pinney was one of 396 teachers given a grant this year.

In her application Ms. Pinney described how she wanted to “absorb the siren songs, rich history, folklore and tradition residing in Scotland and Ireland.” She explained she would accomplish this by attending festivals, exploring traditional music, and “rubbing knees with the greats” in order to expose and encourage students to share their own stories, increase engagement and ownership in their learning and help them create magic using their own voices.

“Working in elementary education, I knew that my kindergarten students would benefit from my experience in different methods of storytelling,” explains Ms. Pinney.

For 22 days, Ms. Pinney traveled to several areas in Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Her jam-packed itinerary was filled with diverse and unique learning opportunities. She watched live music, learned to dance along with traditional tunes, played with puppets, took many tours, asked endless questions and was able to see storytelling through a variety of different lenses.

Ms. Pinney was delighted and surprised at how much impromptu, organic conversations with anyone and everyone during her travels informed her understanding of storytelling. Be it talking in the midst of a royal castle, on a train or bus or over curry fries as the sun set, “I truly loved talking with all of the people I met from different countries, backgrounds, places of travel and life experiences. I had some of the best story-forward conversations during these moments.”



Another surprise was a planned trip to the Scottish Mask and Puppet Center in Glasgow. Ms. Pinney’s expectations of the visit were low as the center is closed during the summer. She was pleasantly surprised by a magical day including an exhaustive behind the scenes tour of the facility which included masks, puppets, musical instruments and insight into how they put together productions. She left with two new friends as well as a tutorial on how to create stick and rod puppets which she plans to implement in her classroom and also in the community at large.

“Your perspective of a moment in time can be altered and shifted based on where you are within that experience,” explains Ms. Pinney. “Are you the marionette wielding puppeteer or the delighted audience watching the show with big eyes? Are you eyeing the majestic slopes of a mountainside from afar or in the midst of breathlessly clamoring up the side of it? This learning journey has helped solidify that we should all strive to think about our situations through as many lenses as possible, as many perspectives as possible, in the hope that one will match with another’s experience and create connection . . . that is invaluable.”

Lyme-Old Lyme Schools Rank in Top 10 for Connecticut SAT Testing Scores

Lyme-Old Lyme High School students ranked high in SAT testing scores. Results shared by the state show that Lyme-Old Lyme High School's average test scores for the 2022-23 school year ranked in the top ten for both math and English language arts tests, the second year in a row we have achieved this ranking.

Connecticut Schools with the Highest Average Math Score

	School District	Average Score
1	Westport	613
2	New Canaan	611
3	Darien	606
4	Wilton	601
5	Avon	586
6	Lyme-Old Lyme	580
7	Regional Hebron, Andover, Marlborough	576
8	Weston	575
9	Madison	574
10	Guilford	569

Connecticut Schools with the Highest Average ELA Score

	School District	Average Score
1	Wilton	607
2	Westport	602
3	Darien	598
4	New Canaan	597
5	Weston	597
6	Avon	586
7	Lyme-Old Lyme	583
8	Ridgefield	582
9	Easton, Redding	577
10	Farmington	569

Facility Updates

Facilities staff were busy over the summer getting our schools ready for the new year.

Projects completed and in process include:

- Upgrades to the sound system in the auditorium at Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School
- Polishing the commons floor at Lyme-Old Lyme High School
- Initial steps taken to repair the water tank on the main campus
- Expanding irrigation of fields at Lyme-Old Lyme High School
- Sourcing bleachers for the middle field on the main campus and for the turf field

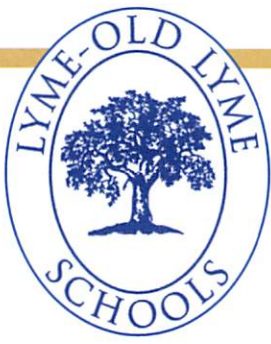


PK-8 Facilities Project Updates

At its September meeting, the PK-8 Building Committee viewed presentations by Silver Petrucelli and Associates, CES Engineering, and Downes Construction regarding the Mile Creek School addition, security vestibule updates, HVAC life cycle operational systems and project budgets and schedules.

Minutes of the building committee, past presentations and additional information can be found on our website at www.region18.org under the District Information tab, followed by the Board of Education tab.





Lyme-Old Lyme Schools
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TEACHER OF THE YEAR



Mrs. Karpuska, kindergarten teacher at Mile Creek School, is Lyme-Old Lyme Schools Teacher of the Year. Mrs. Karpuska is known for her ability to connect with her students and challenge them in fun and effective ways.

Mile Creek School Principal Mrs. Enoch explains that she likes to send new teachers to observe Mrs. Karpuska teaching a group because "her skills simply must be seen to be believed." She has a keen understanding of what each student needs and her fast-paced instruction keeps students engaged. Students are taught to support and encourage one another, and Mrs. Karpuska always has a broad smile on her face.

The level of compassion and empathy established in her classroom is noticed by all. This might explain the many past students that pop in for a quick hug before the start of the school day.

Mrs. Vigen, instructional assistant at Lyme School, is Lyme-Old Lyme Schools Employee of the Year. Mrs. Vigen began her job in the fall of 2020 helping to welcome students back to school amidst numerous Covid restrictions. Her quick smile and ability to comfort both students and parents alike were quickly noticed. These same skills shone through as she was a constant in a kindergarten class that had some unavoidable teacher changes. Mrs. Vigen listened to her students' thoughts and concerns, reassuring them that they have many trusted adults at school to support them.

Mrs. Vigen does anything she can to help her students learn. Kindergarteners study the life cycle of frogs, and Mrs. Vigen has scooped frog eggs out of her pond, bringing in fresh pond water and boiled lettuce each day as a way to bring this lesson to life for her students. When she mistakenly brought in salamander eggs, she noticed it before her students and quietly corrected the situation before anyone noticed!

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

