

Community Link

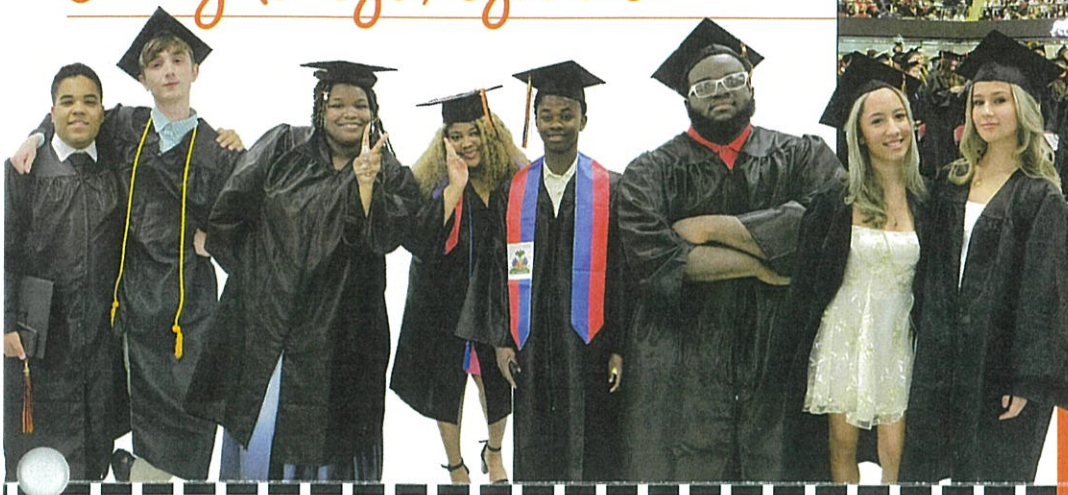
White Plains Public Schools
Unlocking the infinite and unique potential of each student, every day.

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SUMMER 2023

Way to Go, Grads!



School Budget: THANK YOU!

On May 16th, the 2023-2024 School District Budget passed, as did the additional proposition to approve use of Capital Reserve Funds for districtwide facilities improvements. Voters also elected two Board of Education members: incumbent Rosemarie Eller and newcomer Valerie Daniele, who will each serve three-year terms. We thank Assistant Superintendent for Business, Dr. Ann Vaccaro-Teich, for her leadership of the annual budget process, and the community members who took time to attend meetings,

share information, ask questions, and vote.

Your support allows us to provide a rigorous education and a caring school community for every student in our District.

We celebrated the Class of 2023 on June 22 at the County Center and the night's speakers offered congratulations, encouragement and advice as the graduates begin the next chapter of their lives.

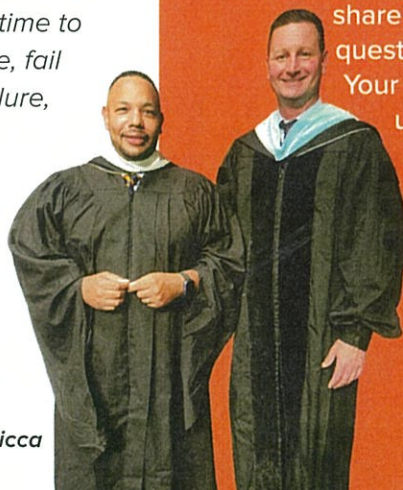
WPHS Principal Emerly Martinez shared that he is a believer in the power of community and the strength that lies within our shared humanity. *"In a world that often emphasizes our differences, it's also essential to remember that beneath that surface, we share an intricate web of commonalities no matter our race, ethnicity and background. We all experience love, loss, joy and pain. We all strive for happiness, success and purpose. When we choose to look at one another through these shared experiences, we build bridges that transcend superficial boundaries."*

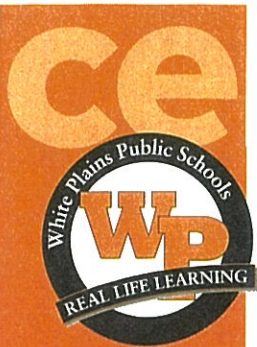
Valedictorian Damien Kemna reminded us that failure is inevitable, and can be a useful tool. *"I urge you to acknowledge failure, set aside some time to reflect, listen to yourself, and understand what went wrong. Fail once, fail twice, fail three times, as long as you get up and learn from each failure, eventually success will follow."* (continued on pg 2)



◀ Valedictorian Damien Kemna (left) and Salutatorian Vinn Nguyen

▶ White Plains High School Principal Emerly Martinez and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph Ricca





WPHS Class of 2023 By the Numbers

WE ARE #WPPROUD!

143 inducted into the National Honor Society

12 inducted into the National Art Honor Society

72 earned the NYS Seal of Biliteracy

101 earned the NYS Seal of Civic Readiness

4 inducted into the Southern Westchester BOCES Chapter of National Technical Honor Society

122 earned Highest Honors with a GPA above 4.0

27 earned Honors with a GPA between 3.75 and 3.99

389 New York State Scholar-Athletes

\$259,375 in local scholarship dollars were awarded to our graduates

2 National Merit Scholarship winners and 6 Finalists

Way to Go Grads *(continued from pg 1)*

Salutatorian Vinn Nguyen echoed this focus on relationships. *"I encourage you to cultivate, cherish and celebrate your friendships and relationships with loved ones even beyond high school because it is in these connections that we can find the strength to overcome any challenges that may lie ahead."*

Superintendent Ricca agreed. *"Perspective matters. How you view what's happening in your life in any given moment makes all the difference. Is it a crisis or is it an opportunity? I suggest that almost everything you will encounter will provide you with an opportunity."* Dr. Ricca also assured the Class of 2023 that they are ready for this next great step. *"You have all the tools necessary to succeed. You just need to keep doing what you've done so far — which is work. Take that drive and that commitment and apply it to your next dream."*



► Off to High School!

Rising freshmen celebrated an important milestone at the Highlands Moving Up Day ceremony at the County Center on June 22, where the program included student greetings in Italian, French, Spanish, Chinese, and English, a video time capsule, student musical performances and more. Principal Michael Eaton congratulated the Class of 2023, 170 of whom were inducted into the National Honor Society, and said: *"As you prepare to embark on a new chapter in your lives, it is important to acknowledge the lessons you have learned during your time at Highlands. You have learned the value of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. You have also learned that success is not just about achieving good grades or winning awards, but also about the effort you put in and the impact you make on others."*

Rochambeau Musician Wins 1st Place



Freshman Kenny Llanos played **base guitar** in the Salvation Army Territorial Salvationist Star Search Talent Display in Hershey, PA, and was then invited to the finals, where he competed against five other

musicians and was awarded first place! Kenny gave up many lunch periods to practice with Rochambeau Technology/Music teacher Dr. Steven Chetcuti. He worked on counting rhythms, playing with feeling, and most of all, playing with confidence. Kenny showed that passion and persistence are a recipe for success. Congratulations, Kenny!

Girls on the Run at Ridgeway

Ridgeway launched a **Girls on the Run team** this year and all of them completed a 5K at the local Legoland in June! This international initiative for girls in third, fourth and fifth grades strengthens social, emotional, physical, and behavioral skills. The research-based curriculum includes understanding ourselves, valuing relationships and teamwork, recognizing how we can shape the world at large, setting and achieving goals (like the culminating 5K event), making new friendships, empowering girls to appreciate the value of healthy habits and participating in community service work. In fact, they raised \$690 for the Maria Fareri Children's Hospital with a lemonade stand. Go girls!



Award-winning WPHS musicians

The **WPHS Symphonic Band and Honors String Ensemble** participated in the NYS School Music Association Majors Festival and won awards for pieces they worked on for several months. The Symphonic Band received a Gold rating and the Honors String Ensemble received a Gold with Distinction! Congratulations to all the students and their teachers, Dr. William Tonissen and Mr. Zachary May.



String Ensemble



Symphonic Band

Essay Contest Winners

"As you are learning to be a 'Digital Citizen' in the 21st century, what are your major challenges?" This was the question posed to entrants in the White Plains Democratic City Committee's 2023 Essay Contest. Four of the five winners, all of whom received their awards from Senator Shelley Mayer at a special luncheon, were from White Plains High School! In the essays, students had to discuss how they are able to distinguish accurate versus false information, using examples. Congratulations to Nuala Stanghellini, Nurashau Blount, Lily Onorato and Brandon Reyes!

Senator Mayer also presented New York State Senate Youth Leadership Awards to Lance Anthony and Lexi Labis in recognition of their excellence in the classroom, athletics and extracurricular or community activities.



▲ Essay contest winners with their family members, State Senator Shelley Mayer and Essay Committee Chair Ellen Berger. Photo courtesy of WPHS PTA.



Scholar Athletes

One hundred and thirteen varsity athletes were recognized by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association as scholar athletes for the spring sports season, having maintained a GPA of 90% or above. Eight teams had 75% or more of the members earn this distinction and were named Scholar Athlete Teams: Softball, Baseball, Girls' Track & Field, Boys' Track & Field, Boys' Tennis, Golf, Girls' Lacrosse and Boys' Lacrosse.



Dr. Joseph L. Ricca
Superintendent of Schools

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The mission of the White Plains City School District is to educate and inspire all students, while nurturing their dreams, so they learn continually, think critically, pursue their aspirations and contribute to a diverse and dynamic world.

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THANK YOU, Dr. Stein



After 15 years of service, Dr. Randy Stein retired from the Board of Education as of June

30th, where she was a valued member of the Finance/Audit and Special Education committees. "We will greatly miss Dr. Stein's presence," said Board President Rosemarie Eller. "There is no doubt that her dedication and commitment helped make White Plains the outstanding school district that it is." Dr. Stein also retired from her 31-year medical practice as an endocrinologist in White Plains. We wish her all the best!

Thank You for Your Service

The Board of Education honored 31 retirees and 32 twenty-five-year staff members at its June meeting. Assistant Superintendent for Business Scott Pepper congratulated and thanked retirees for their many years of dedicated service to the students of White Plains.

RETIREES

Robert Baddeley
Carmen V. Calderon
Eric Chen
Cynthia Demeo
Richard Dillon
Michael Ferder
Patricia Galluzzo
Maxine Gentry
Sonia Gordon
Patricia Hogan
Richard Logan
Magda Martas
Melanie Monteleone
Marcia Mosley
Elizabeth Napp
Carla Nelson

Kathy Nissinoff
Eleanor Pizzarello
Maria Rodriguez
Howard Rubenstein
Ana Maria Salazar
Luz Savarese
Lucia Scala
Dennis Scullion
Mark Stanton
Michael Stevens
Shari Streichler
Kathleen Tabb
Lorraine Trovato-Cantori
Pablo Valedon
Ronald Velez

25 YEARS OF SERVICE

Jennifer Amabile
Maddalena Andrade
Diana Arboleda
Jaynean Austin
Debora Bannister
Steffany Cabrera
Litin Chu
Kathleen Contrata
Raymond Drach, Jr.
Kristin C. Dwyer
Patricia Falcone-Cortino
David Ferrell
Jacqueline Forbes-Machado
Daniel Furry
Marcel Galligani
Pricilla M. Garito

Angela M. Legramandi
Richard Manorqui
Joanne Murphy
Vincenza Persampieri
Ahailya B. Persaud
Ybelize Pilarte
Dana Quigley
Elizabeth S. Ramos
Howard Rubenstein
Gloria Salerno
Marlena A. Simmons
Alyson Stone
Jose Torres
Robin L. Turner
Bincy Varughese
Katie Young