



# Horsemen News

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF THE TARRYTOWNS

## Sleepy Hollow Middle Schooler Attends NYSSMA Winter Conference



SHMS eighth-grader, Dylan Raghavan

The New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) hosted its 87th annual Winter Conference in Rochester, New York from November 30 to December 3. It was one of the largest music educator conferences in the country with more than 150 vendors and colleges exhibiting at the event. The Winter Conference attracted almost 4,000 participants and offered about 190 workshops and showcases.

Approximately 7,000 students audition for the 5 All-State performing groups and less than 600 are selected to participate annually. For the seventh straight year in a row, a Sleepy Hollow student's electronic compositions were featured at the NYSSMA Winter Conference. This year, Sleepy Hollow Middle School (SHMS) eighth-grader, Dylan Raghavan, was selected to have an original composition featured as part of the NYSSMA All-State Electronic Music Showcase. Raghavan presented his composition, *Music*

*Beat Mix*, at the event, which featured 3 days of Professional Development sessions, All-State Ensembles, and performances by ensembles and individuals from across the state.

"I am so excited for Dylan to have this opportunity to share his music and connect with student composers from around the state at the NYSSMA Winter Conference. This will be an amazing chance for him to work alongside and learn from a group of outstanding composers and educators," said Austin Day, Band/Music Technology Teacher. "I am sure this will be a very memorable and inspiring experience for Dylan, and I am eager to hear how his works continue to evolve."

NYSSMA's mission is to advance music education across New York State for its membership and students in member school programs. Approximately 5,000 members belong to NYSSMA.



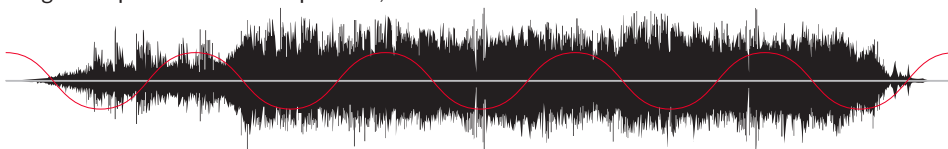
## Sleepy Hollow High School Ranks in 2023-2024 Best High Schools

U.S. News & World Report, recently announced the 2023-2024 Best High Schools, with Sleepy Hollow High School making the list. The rankings evaluate nearly 18,000 public high schools at the national, state, and local levels and showcase the schools whose students demonstrate outstanding outcomes, surpassing the anticipated benchmarks, including achieving high graduation rates.

"Having access to a strong high school program is paramount for students as they face an ever-changing world," says Liana Loewus, managing editor of education at U.S. News. "Making data on our high schools available helps parents ensure their child is in the educational environment that best sets them up to thrive."

Sleepy Hollow High School (SHHS) ranked 120th within New York and #1,185 in the National Rankings. Schools are ranked on their performance on state-required tests, graduation, and how well they prepare students for college.

High School Rank, continued on page 3



# Washington Irving Intermediate School Introduces STEAM

SCIENCE • TECHNOLOGY • ENGINEERING • ART • MATHEMATICS

Meghan Hak, previously the Technology Teacher's Assistant at Washington Irving Intermediate School (WI), has taken on the new position of Computer Science & STEM Teacher. Ms. Hak is introducing STEAM programs based on the NYS Computer Science and Digital Fluency Learning standards for students in grades 3-5.

Ms. Hak has been working with students on topics such as computing, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity & digital citizenship, and exploring the engineering design process, according to their respective grade level. "The lessons are fun, interactive and are a mix of unplugged and device driven activities," Ms. Hak said about the program.



Third graders are currently exploring the Cubelet modular robots, which is a completely unplugged activity. In this particular lesson, the students needed to build a functioning lighthouse model complete with a light that spins when it is dark. The lesson began with a discussion about what a lighthouse is and making connections to the lighthouse at Kingsland Point Park in Sleepy Hollow. The students then built their own lighthouse with the modular blocks, working through various designs with their partner.

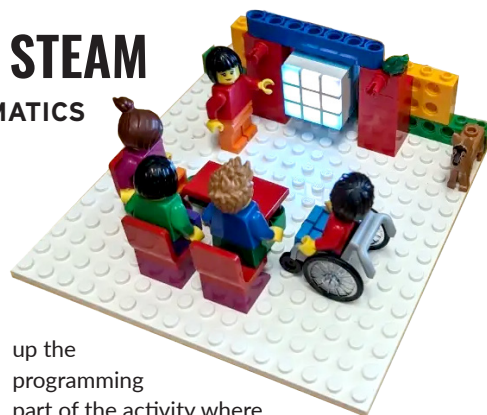
"It is a fun activity that at first the students are unsure of because they don't know

what they are 'supposed' to do. As they explore, become more comfortable with the materials and share ideas with each other, it is impossible not to feel their excitement as they create a functional lighthouse model and show it off," Ms. Hak said.

Fourth grade students have been working in groups on activities in the Lego Quirky Creations unit that focuses on improving the school environment. One group created a classroom setting where the LED light acts as the interactive board and they have it light up in line with audio they recorded into their program. Another group created a moving fan that uses two motors that allow the fan to roll around on its own while also spinning the fan blades.

"After getting used to the build and program aspects of the Lego program, it is really fun to see what the students create on their own when the only parameter is to create something for the school environment," said Ms. Hak in awe of her students' hard work. "The students have really enjoyed these lessons and have had a great introduction to block coding by having to create programs that would allow their Lego builds to work."

Meanwhile, fifth grade students are working with the Micro:bits and the Finch robots to have their Finches joust (knock a ping pong ball off the top of a cup). The students set



up the programming part of the activity where they have to figure out the distance from the starting point to where the cup is and then program their Finch robot to move forward and spin. The second part is building the lance for the Finch and then testing whether the program they created knocks the ping pong ball off the cup. This project uses the engineering design process and allows students to create and debug their own code through trial and error. "It has been a really fun project where the students are able to test and improve their creations in real time," said Ms. Hak. "It was challenging for them, but you could see the success they felt on their faces when they finally programmed their Finch to move in the way they wanted it to."

These STEAM projects are just the beginning. Students will continue to build on what they learn through The New York State K12 Computer Science and Digital Fluency Learning Standards, which were adopted by the Board of Regents in December 2020. These standards focus on five key concepts: Impacts of Computing, Computational Thinking, Networks & System Design, Cybersecurity, and Digital Literacy.

## WCC to Partner with TUFSD to offer Automatic Admission

SUNY Westchester Community College (WCC) is in talks with Tarrytown Union Free School District (TUFSD) to begin an auto-admissions program for all eligible students. Sleepy Hollow High School (SHHS) graduates should be able to take advantage of this partnership as early as the Fall 2024 term.

SUNY Westchester's Viking VIP (Valued, Informed, and on a Pathway to Success) program allows eligible students to be automatically admitted into WCC. This program provides numerous advantages such as priority appointments with academic and financial aid counselors. Students will have the option to attend classes at the main campus in Valhalla or at SUNY WCC Extension Centers.

Since SHHS will be able to electronically submit student data to WCC, students will not need to submit an admissions application. The goal of the auto-admissions program is to help alleviate much of the stress that high school students face when applying for colleges, such as the application process and the accompanying fee.

"Many of these students may be first-generation college attendees," stated Gloria De La Paz, Director of Admissions at Westchester Community College. "For many of these students, even that \$50 fee could be a barrier. This whole program is about removing barriers."



The initiative also gives all hardworking SHHS students the chance to continue their educational career once they graduate.

On the average, 54 SHHS students chose to attend WCC per year, over the past five years.

"This initiative provides students a unique option in pursuing their college education. It's a wonderful program that will aid in their future success," said Dr. Raymond Sanchez, Superintendent of Tarrytown Union Free School District. "We are excited to partner with WCC to ensure SHHS students have access to this opportunity."



# Wasteless Horsemen Initiative Launched at John Paulding

Since April 2023 the Tarrytown Union Free School District (TUFSD) has been taking strides in sustainability by focusing on the environmental impact of its campuses. The Wasteless Horsemen initiative, a pilot program that gives students a hands-on lesson in zero waste practices, has launched at John Paulding School (JP). Later this year, the program will be introduced to W.L. Morse School and will slowly make its way throughout TUFSD.

Kirsten Bourne came on board with the District as an environmental education consultant last spring and has been working hard ever since to create lessons that will last a lifetime for the students of TUFSD. Ms. Bourne, who is no stranger to environmental conservation, previously worked as a Cooking & Gardening teacher at a sustainability-focused bilingual elementary school in Washington, D.C. before moving to Sleepy Hollow. She is currently a member of the mayor-appointed Sustainable Sleepy Hollow Environmental Committee and has led garden and trail-based lessons in the Peabody Preserve. Ms. Bourne has also worked with sustainable food businesses, a food bank, and other community nonprofits.

"A lot of planning went into this," said Ms. Bourne. "I wake up at 4:30 a.m. and the wheels are turning."

During the planning phase, Ms. Bourne met with the head custodian in order to ensure proper bins and signage for the program were obtained. Every classroom and the cafeteria now have a color coded bin system which consists of white for liquids, blue for recyclable materials, brown for compost, green for paper, and gray for all



trash that can't be sorted. The bins are each labeled with bilingual, picture-based signage to assist all students as they learn to sort.

Currently, students are practicing how to "Sort it Out" during lunch and in their classroom. With the help of a song and a dance that

explain how to properly recycle, students learn how to navigate the waste bins and can share that knowledge with the next group of students.

"I borrowed it from resources shared by New York City's Department of Education, and adopted the lyrics to fit the food service implements of our district before teaching it to the kindergarteners this Fall," said Ms. Bourne.

Ms. Bourne is also providing fun hands-on lessons to every class that allow students to engage in the experiential lessons and the students are becoming proficient sorters as they dispose of their waste. "I taught the first couple of classes about John Paulding's "pets", the worms that will help turn food scraps into nutrient-rich compost for gardens," said Ms. Bourne. "The kindergarteners had a ball investigating red wiggler worms to determine what kind of food scraps they were helping to decompose as we discussed what happens to our food scraps after we toss them in the brown bin."

Soon a new waste management system will be installed and will provide wraparound learning for students and staff. This will provide sustainable habits to be forged and practiced in the schools. TUFSD also has plans to install a dishwasher that will be used for reusable trays and cutlery to help further the initiative.

Since the program launched the trash created by kindergarteners at lunch has decreased from an average 99 lbs per day to just 7 lbs per day. JP is now producing an average of 57 lbs of food scraps per day in the lunchroom, which will be turned into nutrient-rich compost for gardens.

## High School Rank, continued from page 1

"Our faculty, staff and community members are constantly striving to create a positive and productive educational experience for all of our students. Their efforts, combined with our wonderful student body, have paved the way for accolades like this one," said Dr. Deborah Brand, Principal of Sleepy Hollow High School. "We are proud that our compassionate and thoughtful approach to

education has produced measurable results as well as amazing alumni."

The highest ranked public schools are those whose students achieved exceptional scores on state assessments for math, reading, and science. These schools also had strong underserved student performance, college readiness and curriculum breadth, as well as graduation rates.

*The Best High Schools rankings are available exclusively on USNews.com and include data on a variety of factors, such as enrollment, student diversity, participation in free and reduced-price lunch programs, in addition to graduation rates and the results of state assessments. U.S. News worked with RTI International, a global research firm, to implement the comprehensive ranking methodology.*

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Horsemen News is produced by  
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## Public Schools of the Tarrytowns Holds Beloved Annual Rose Ceremony

Sleepy Hollow High School (SHHS) seniors and W.L. Morse first-graders gathered on Harold "Doc" Rasbeck Field on October 11 to take part in a cherished tradition, the Annual Rose Ceremony. For the 33rd year, seniors welcomed first-graders into the Public Schools of the Tarrytowns by presenting them with a rose and a T-shirt. The Sleepy Hollow High School Chorus sang a beautiful rendition of "Child of Tomorrow" for students and parents who attended this touching ceremony.

This unique custom creates a bond between the graduating class and those beginning their educational journey. "The Rose Ceremony is a wonderful tradition that demonstrates the deep caring and community that exists in our school district," said W.L. Morse Principal Torrance Walley. As the seniors reflect on their time in the district, the first-graders are given a glimpse into what their future holds.

"The rose ceremony is a wonderful tradition that allows our students to deeply reflect on the totality of their experiences in our district," said SHHS Principal Dr. Deborah Brand about this beloved custom. "Seniors are fortunate to have this unique rite of passage so early in their final year in the district. While connecting them with their classmates and younger peers, it helps them to create a more meaningful and purposeful final year in the district. We hope the day was memorable for the students and their families."

While 2035 may seem like a lifetime away for the first-graders, for the graduating class of 2024, time has passed with lightning speed. In the spring, the same group of students will gather once again. This time the first-graders will present a rose to the seniors as they wish them well on their journey.

