



WINTER 2024

ONTEORA

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



The cast of *Twelfth Night* poses for a photo. Pictured are: (back row) Austin Otis (Grade 8), Yana Bennett (Grade 9), Azarax Tehrani (Grade 9), Lily Spada (Grade 9), and Kylie Becker (Grade 11), and (front row) Brooklyn Foley (Grade 8), Esme Drucquer (Grade 7), Alice Slips (Grade 7), Isabelle Terpening (Grade 7), and Bryon Reznick (Grade 7). The play was presented by the Onteora Middle and High School Drama Club on December 1 and 2.

Onteora's Thespians Bring *Twelfth Night* to the Stage

Onteora Middle and High School student-actors took the stage at the Harry Simon Auditorium on December 1st and 2nd to present two free performances of the classic Shakespearean comedy, *Twelfth Night*.

The talented group, comprising ten actors and eight backstage crew members, began rehearsing in mid-October under the direction of New Genesis Productions Artistic Director Lesley Sawhill and Middle School English teacher Geordarna Constant. The students rehearsed twice a week until Thanksgiving, and then daily until the curtain officially opened on December 1st.

Like all Shakespearean comedies, *Twelfth Night* involves a wedding, mistaken identities, misunderstandings, physical comedy, and a happy ending. The music for the production was carefully selected by the cast with the theme of "crazy love," and both the actors and stage crew members enjoyed bringing this amusing story to life.

"This is my first year doing theater in this school," said Grade 7 student Alice Slips, who took on the role of the witty Olivia. "Being on stage was great because it gave me the chance to be myself...loud and outgoing!"

"The whole cast was really great and supportive," she added. "Many of them helped me with my lines."

Crew member Emma Bodnar, Grade 7, said, "I liked helping backstage. I got to be a part of the quick-change process for the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Message from the Superintendent

I'm hopeful that the Onteora community has been following all of the good things happening in the District this year. We recently held our annual Community Night, and it was incredibly well attended. We are so grateful for all of the support and partnership that this community provides.

BUDGET

We have begun the annual budget process and will share information in as many ways as possible. All budget presentations can be found on the Business Office page of our website and can also be accessed directly from the home page. We will be providing links to our budget presentations on Facebook as well. This year differs from other years because the Governor has proposed a change that would take \$3 million in aid away from Onteora. The final aid will not be determined until the State budget is approved. Unfortunately, that means that we will not have certainty on our revenues until that time. Offsetting a \$3 million loss in State Aid revenue would be the equivalent of a 6.5% increase in the tax levy. This negative impact on the budget is before any of the normal inflationary factors have been included. To accommodate this cut in revenue, we would need to make significant reductions. We anticipate the need to create two budgets simultaneously: one with the reduction in aid, and one that anticipates that our legislators will fight for school districts and have the aid restored.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



CHECK OUT PAGES 6-7
FOR AN UPDATE ON OUR
DISTRICT RESTRUCTURING

Onteora’s Thespians Bring *Twelfth Night* to the Stage

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

characters. I also loved the candy grams (given by supporters of the cast and crew) and being recognized at the end.”

Grade 11 student Izzy Terpening, who played “Viola” or “Cesario,” also enjoyed her experience. “This was my first time having a lead role,” she said. “This inspired my younger cousin to audition next year.”

Ms. Constant stated how proud she is of the cast and crew. “It’s an absolute delight to watch students navigate Shakespeare,” she said. “This was a particularly difficult show because *Twelfth Night* is not as well known. Boy, did they rise to the occasion!”

“I’m proud to be part of such a meaningful experience, and I applaud everyone who was involved in the production,” she added.



Grade 7 students Izzy Terpening as “Viola” or “Casario” and Alice Slips as “Olivia” act out a dramatic scene in *Twelfth Night*, the Shakespearean play presented by the Onteora Middle and High School Drama Club in December.

BENNETT ELEMENTARY STUDENTS SPREAD HOLIDAY CHEER AT THE ULSTER COUNTY SPCA

THIS DECEMBER, GRADE 4 STUDENTS AND TEACHERS AT BENNETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL once again shared their holiday spirit with some of the shelter pets at the Ulster County SPCA.

An educational community service project that was first carried out at the school three years ago has become an annual tradition. This year, Grade 4 teachers Adam LaFera, Elizabeth Corsitto, Elizabeth Lefferts, Bill Michella, and Jolie Moorhus raised \$220 on behalf of their students to benefit the local animal welfare organization, and students created cheerful cards with messages of hope for some of its residents.

This year, each class “adopted” one dog and one cat at the shelter to learn about. After reading biographies of each shelter pet, the students composed special messages for them. For instance, when the youngsters learned that one of the cats, Felix, didn’t like to be picked up but loved to be brushed, many wrote that they hoped he would be adopted by a person who would love to brush him. When they learned that a dog named Shanaya loved to play, several expressed their hope that she would find a home with someone who would play with her.

The students worked on the cards together on a shared Google document, practicing how to create and move text boxes, and add images. Many added fun graphics that they thought the animals would like, including images of toys, bones, and brushes.

Clearly everyone enjoyed the experience, but the icing on the cake came on December 8, when one of the SPCA’s residents, Shanaya, came to the school to visit. The students excitedly peppered the dog’s handler, Wendi Nichols Piper, with questions like “How old is she?”, “Does she like other dogs?”, and “Where did she come from?”

In addition, students learned about the many ways that they could help the shelter animals at the SPCA, including donating cleaning supplies, sheets and towels, food, and toys at the drop boxes located in front of the shelter. They even learned about volunteering opportunities to help walk the dogs. Nichols Piper also shared a special request for “training treats,” which would help workers at the SPCA make the dogs more adoptable by training them to develop good behaviors.

Shanaya and Nichols Piper were presented with both the monetary donation and the holiday cards, which were shared with recipients back at the shelter.



Bennett Elementary School Grade 4 students (from left to right) Logan Sauer, Silas Davis, and Crosley Phillips enjoy meeting Shanaya, one of the animals being sheltered by the Ulster County SPCA. The students created holiday cards for several of the shelter’s residents, and their teachers made a donation in their name.

High School Students Exhibit Professionalism and Perseverance at Business-Themed Competition



Onteora High School DECA members attended a regional competition on January 4. Pictured are (from left to right) Tyson Meade (Grade 12), Noah Stern (Grade 12), Griffin Alterio (Grade 12), James Lynch (Grade 12), Anthony Christofora (Grade 9), Linus Driscoll (Grade 12), Jaxon Paynter (Grade 12), and Sean Hallinan (Grade 12).

Onteora High School students interested in learning more about the business world attended the regional DECA competition, which was held on January 4th at Rockland County Community College in Suffern, New York. DECA, formerly known as Distributive Education Clubs of America, aims to help prepare emerging leaders and entrepreneurs for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality, and management.

During the event, Onteora competed among 400 other high school students from 15 different schools. Although Onteora didn't place this year, our students rose to the occasion and exhibited professionalism and perseverance.

The DECA regional competition consists of assessments in areas such as business administration, finance, marketing, and hospitality. Prior to the day of competition, students take a challenging, 100-question online exam. During the in-person competition, they are assigned different role-play situations during which they must solve various problems, and then present their ideas to judges. Test scores are combined with role-play scores and put up against scores of other schools to determine which winners move on to the State level.

Onteora students competed in the following areas:

Griffin Alterio and James Lynch: Financial Services Team Decision Making

Anthony Christofora and Jaxon Paynter: Buying and Merchandising Team Decision Making

Linus Driscoll and Noah Stern: Sports & Entertainment Team Decision Making

Sean Hallinan: Entrepreneurship

Tyson Meade: Business Finance

Congratulations to all Onteora DECA members on your hard work and dedication! We are so proud of you!

Message from the Superintendent

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

TRANSITION UPDATE

Our Middle School principal recently held a meeting for our current fifth-grade parents to discuss the transition for their students and share the plans that have been made to date. We also created an Elementary Transition Committee this year that meets monthly and includes representation from all of our elementary buildings, as well as other departments. This committee shares questions, concerns, and suggestions, and brings information back to each building. We want to ensure that our faculty and staff have a conduit for information as we move through this process. In preparation for the incoming sixth grade, the sixth-grade teachers met with Principal James DiDonna and a classroom design consultant to determine the set-up and furniture choices for these rooms.

Phoenicia Elementary School has an enthusiastic team that is celebrating the building all year long. The culminating event will be the Phoenicia Farewell Fair on Saturday, June 8. I hope that the community and everyone who has been touched by this building will join in the celebration.

We presented the three designs for the new K-3 playground installation at Bennett Elementary School to staff and students from Grades K-4 (all students who will be at Bennett next year). Students and staff voted on their choice. There was a clear winner, and the equipment has been ordered. (See story on page 6.) We are planning on doing a modified community build event and will provide more information when we have a confirmed delivery date.

Our Social Emotional Learning partners at the Morningside Center are working with the Phoenicia faculty to help students work through the changes to support a positive and exciting transition. This work will begin soon at Bennett as well.

To further support our staff during this transition, we invited them to provide us with their preferred building and work assignment for the 2024-2025 school year. We are working to honor their requests in as many instances as possible.

A muralist has been working with our students on the design of the murals for Bennett and the Middle School. There have been Mural Assemblies for Phoenicia students and Grade 5-6 Bennett students to gather their input and design concepts for the murals and to discuss the process.

COMMUNITY NEWS

It is time to register for Kindergarten in September! This is the time of year when we can start to plan for our incoming cohort of students, and we are excited to welcome them and their families into our schools. If you or anyone you know in the district has an incoming Kindergartener, please encourage them to register for the 2024-2025 school year!

Members of our community are always invited to attend Board meetings, and they are welcome to speak during the Public Be Heard section of the agenda. In addition, Board meetings are live-streamed and recorded for those who may want to watch from their home, as well as for those who may not be able to watch in real time but would like to see the work of the Board.

Victoria McLaren
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

High School Science Olympiad Team Has Strong Season

The Onteora High School (OHS) Science Olympiad team has been hard at work this year. They have been busy studying, building, and preparing to carry out experiments for the twenty-two science, technology, and engineering events that are scheduled for the 2023-2024 school year.

The Olympians meet after school once a week. During their meetings, their coaches, OHS Technology teacher Douglas Sanders and Science teacher Bryan Keenan, help the team members to prepare for study events and to put their engineering plans into action.

This year, there was an exciting lineup of engineering events, including “Flight,” a plane-building and flying challenge; “Air Trajectory,” which involves building and testing an air cannon projectile launcher; and “Wind Power,” which tasks students with designing “blades” for mini-wind turbines. Other events include “Scrambler,” which requires students to launch a car they have built with a falling mass so that the car goes around a bucket and stops at a certain distance before smashing an egg on the front of the car into a wall; and “Robot Tour,” which has students building and programming a robot to autonomously complete a maze in a certain amount of time.



Onteora High School Science Olympiad team members senior Maddie Mills and junior Olivia McHugh competed in the “Towers” event at the Mid-Hudson Regional tournament on February 3.



Onteora High School's Science Olympiad team at the Mid-Hudson Regional tournament on February 3.

“Our team includes a wonderful group of students,” says Coach Keenan. Team members include seniors Virginia Potter, Oscar Espinoza, Jefferson Voelker, Caleb Frank, and Madeline Mills; juniors Lily McNamara, Griffin VanDreason, Melanie Milla, Olivia McHugh, Rylan Reynolds, Cocoro Asada, Lily Pizer, and Vincent Christofora; and sophomores Fiona Green, Shelby Buryk, Finnegan Douma, Connor Geirloff, Lucia McDonagh, Nico Stackpole, and Oskar Baron.

On January 6th, the team competed at the Columbia High School invitational competition and earned medals in the events of Flight, Codebusters, Chemistry Lab, and Robot Tour. At February’s Mid-Hudson Regional tournament, the team also had a strong showing, coming in 12th place out of 35 teams. Earning medals for the Eagles were: Vincent Christofora and Connor Geirloff in Scrambler, Robot Tours, and Air Trajectory; Jefferson Voelker and Virginia Potter in Chemistry Lab; Madeline Mills and Caleb Frank in Ecology; and Jefferson Voelker and Caleb Frank in Flight.

“I love Science Olympiad because it makes learning a collective team effort,” said Captain Jefferson Voelker. The team’s other captain, Caleb Frank, added that “In Science Olympiad, there is a strong culture of investment as you are able to hone and improve your project, knowledge, and skills throughout your high school experience.”

PHOENICIA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SWAG A BIG HIT!

IN DECEMBER, ALL STUDENTS AND STAFF OF PHOENICIA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL received a special T-shirt to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the school as well as their own time there. Designed by PTA parent Christina Signore, the eye-catching black and white shirt features a front that is emblazoned with a beautiful drawing of the school nestled into the nearby mountain, and a back that displays the anniversary dates of the school, 1964-2024. Also on the back is the phrase “Proud to be a Part of It,” a sentiment collectively composed by the newly established Phoenicia Elementary Spirit Committee, which consists of teachers, PTA members, and members of the Board of Education.

“I tried my best to embody in the logo a tribute to our beautiful landscape and history of all those who are a part of the fantastic years of Phoenicia Elementary School,” said Mrs. Signore.

The students love wearing their T-shirts and proudly wore them during a field trip to the Woodstock Playhouse on December 8, as well as for a whole-school photo opportunity that took place later.

No doubt about it—Onteorans are “Proud to be a Part of It!”

By popular demand, we have officially launched our Phoenicia School Spirit Swag Shop! Show your support and pride to be a part of Phoenicia School while sporting one of our special shirts, sweatshirts, drinkware, and more. Visit our shop at: www.PhoeniciaSchoolSpiritSwag.com.



Onteora’s Youngest Learners Are Having a Busy, Productive School Year

Onteora’s youngest learners have had a busy year so far, learning and growing! Students in the Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) program administered by First Steps Early Childhood Education Center have been working on their socialization skills, learning how to be good friends, and how to work together. In addition, they have been practicing their self-help skills and learning how to voice their requests with words.

“Our children are changing and growing so fast,” said First Steps Director Kimberly Johnson. “One of the biggest changes we see in the classrooms is the length of time the children can sit and engage in a book or project.”

With their attention spans ever-growing, the students have been honing their critical thinking skills, as they pose questions and make predictions, engage in 3-D art projects, and spend time outside observing the changes in nature—including watching the pumpkins in the garden grow! In addition, students have been enjoying music and yoga each week, as well as plenty of time on the playground.

Most recently, the students have been using a multisensory program called “Handwriting Without Tears” to help them recognize the shapes and sounds of the alphabet and get their hands ready to write the letters they are learning. “We are excited about this new program, and can already see the benefits of it in our classrooms every day,” said Ms. Johnson.

At Woodland Playhouse, which administers another one of the District’s Pre-Kindergarten programs, learning is also in full swing. According to Director Christina Davis, “There has been a whole lot of thinking happening in the big yard play area!”

After a local family generously built and donated a hand-made “mud kitchen” (an outdoor play kitchen setup where children can pretend to prepare food), the students have been hard at work. Utilizing pots, pans, and buckets, they have been experimenting, measuring, creating, collaborating, and most importantly, playing. The students spent days gathering water to set aside in buckets, with the hope that the water would freeze into ice, sometimes mixing wood chips or stones to create the perfect “cake,” as they would say. To their delight, their efforts did produce ice, and they then worked collaboratively to find the right tool to remove ice from underneath the play structure, as well as from inside a nearby play tire.



Zachary Falkowski, an Onteora student enrolled in the Pre-K program administered by Woodland Playhouse, pours his collected ice out across the table before sorting the pieces and refilling his bucket.

During one exchange, a younger student asked one of our Onteora Pre-K students to help him remove a large, curved piece of ice from a tire. Presented with a problem to solve, the students strategized and were able to figure out that they needed to break the ice to fit it through the hole. They attempted to do so using several tools, such as a wood chip for sawing and a small stone for chopping. Finally, another student modeled what to do, using a large stone to snap a different piece of ice in half. Collectively, the group solved the problem and reached their goal of removing all the ice.

This kind of play allows children to practice their communication and collaboration skills, as well as explore the use of tools and available materials and measurement, explained Ms. Davis. “It also teaches life skills, and the best part is, it is fun!” she said.



Onteora Pre-K student Scarlett Brown (pretending to be a cashier) plays “store” with Arlo Wahosky and Stella Schultis, two of her classmates at the First Steps Early Childhood Education Center.

UNIVERSAL PRE-KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION IS OPEN

IT’S TIME TO REGISTER YOUR CHILD FOR UNIVERSAL PRE-KINDERGARTEN (UPK)! In order to be eligible for the program, children must be four years of age on or before December 1, 2024.

The District’s online UPK registration system is now open. To register online, parents or guardians should go to www.onteora.k12.ny.us and click on “Registration & Displaced Families.” The link for online registration is in the middle of the page. Please be sure to choose the 2024-2025 school year.

Once your child is completely registered, their name will be placed in the lottery, which will be carried out in May.

If you have any questions, you may contact Margaret Harkin, Secretary to the Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Personnel Services, at mharkin@onteora.k12.ny.us.

Students at Bennett and Phoenicia Elementary Schools Participate in District Planning

Parents, teachers, administrators—and especially students—at the Onteora Central School District have been preparing for the upcoming changes in building configurations that will take place next year with the closing of Phoenicia Elementary School and the expansion of Onteora Middle School to include Grades 6-8. With two student-driven projects well in motion, the enthusiasm is growing through a nurturing and inclusive approach.

All students who are transitioning to a new school building next year have been involved in the decision-making process for newly planned murals to be created at Bennett Elementary School and Onteora Middle School. In addition, current Grade K-3 students at Phoenicia Elementary School have helped select a brand-new playground for Bennett Elementary, which will be their new school.

“We want to support and empower our students during this transition,” said Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Stephanie Laffin, “and giving those students who are moving to new schools several choices and making them a part of the process has fostered a sense of excitement for the future.”

Earlier this winter, the District consulted with Parkitects, a company based in Central New York, to begin planning an additional playground structure at Bennett Elementary, designed specifically for the new K-3 students. Three different design possibilities were shared with Grade 4 teachers at Bennett and all of Phoenicia Elementary’s current K-3 students, who then voted on which design they preferred.

The new structure is accessible for all, incorporates sensory elements into its design, and is geared especially toward their age group. Utilizing the democratic process in making this decision was an important part of putting students in the forefront of the planning process, said Ms. Laffin, adding, “Students have a sense of control in planning for their future.” Construction of the new playground is slated for this spring.

Phoenicia Elementary Grade 2 student Jade Ryan holds up the design she created of an eagle flying over the region’s mountain range, representing “Bravery, Strength, and Courage.” Her drawing, as well as those of her classmates, will be utilized by local artist Joe Pimental for a mural slated for Bennett Elementary School, where all Phoenicia students will be attending next school year.



Bennett Elementary School Grade 5 student Eva Harrigfeld shows off her design ideas depicting concepts like “Unity,” “Friendship,” “Explore,” and “Imagination.” She and other Grade 5 and 6 students, who are moving into the expanded Middle School next school year, will be participating in painting a mural there this spring with local muralist and teaching artist Joe Pimental.

In addition, in January, every student who will be moving to a new school building next school year had the opportunity to meet with popular regional muralist Joe Pimental to discuss potential designs for murals. At Bennett Elementary School, there will be two new murals, one by the playground outside, which will feature the District’s mascot and local bird, the eagle, and another inside by the gymnasium. Students in Kindergarten through Grade 3 at Phoenicia Elementary School, under the direction of Art teacher Danielle Payette, were given word clusters created by a team from Phoenicia to contemplate and present visually. Mr. Pimental will incorporate the students’ drawings into a blueprint for the murals, and the children will help with the mural painting, too!

Grade 3 student Hayla Scism, as well as Kindergarten student Charlie Benjamin, chose to draw lions as a symbol of strength, bravery, and courage. “A lion must be both brave and strong,” said Hayla. “He looks out for everyone because he is the protector of his pride.” Jade Ryan, a Grade 2 student, decided to incorporate images of nature, inspired by her current school, the Onteora school district, and our region’s mountains and streams. In addition, she drew an eagle, which she said demonstrated strength.

At Bennett Elementary School, students in Grades 5 and 6 examined what the concepts of “Community, Inspire, Explore, Imagination, Believe, Friendship, Create, Unity, and Perseverance” mean to them and rendered their ideas into drawings that will be incorporated into the mural slated for the expanded Grades 6-8 Middle School. Grade 5 student Odin Wright drew a hopeful message that depicted a situation of bullying that unexpectedly turned into friendship. “They got to know each other and became friends,” he said. Grade 6 student Kahlan Liverani’s drawing conveyed messages of “community” and “welcoming,” she explained. Kahlan drew a large, colorfully accented heart, which depicted different types of people and preferences. The heart had a Band-Aid, representing the fact that “A lot of people struggle with depression and anxiety, but there is hope,” she said. “There are people who can help.”

“We are so excited for the students to be creating these new features in the buildings that will provide them with ownership of the space where they are going to be learning and growing,” said Superintendent Victoria McLaren.

Corner

Board

In January, the Board of Education was briefed that if Governor Hochul's current proposed State budget is approved, our District could lose \$6 million in State aid over the next two years.

In quick response, members of the Legislative Committee, Trustee Cindy Bishop and Trustee Sarah Hemingway Lynch, traveled to Albany to meet directly with our legislators and their staff. Assembly Member Sarahana Shrestha (D), Senator Michelle Hinchey (D), and Senator Peter Oberacker (R) all shared our concerns and committed to rejecting the Governor's budget proposal. They will actively fight against any elimination of the Save Harmless provision. Senator Oberacker even went as far to say that he was sorry that our school district has to manage the implications of the Governor's budget. He said there was broad opposition from both the Assembly and the Senate and both Democrats and Republicans at a recent budget hearing. They plan to offer a counterproposal by the end of February/early March in an effort to negotiate before the State budget deadline of April 1.

Meanwhile, the Onteora Central School District budget needs to be prepared, and is scheduled to be voted on by the Board on April 17. While this is an election year, and the legislators are motivated to meet the April 1 deadline, we must prepare for the possibility that it will be delayed. Therefore, the Board is expecting administrators to provide two versions of a proposed budget: one that accounts for the Governor's budget cuts, and one that does not.

Get involved! You can join the Board in elevating your concerns to policymakers by visiting www.onteora.k12.ny.us and finding tools needed to contact our legislators' offices.

The Facilities Committee, chaired by Trustee Valerie Storey, has been working to make sure capital plans approved by the voters in 2023 begin in 2024. This summer, asbestos abatement and tile replacement will take place at our elementary schools. Exterior work and roof work are being planned for the Middle/High School. Exterior doors are being replaced at Woodstock, and Phoenicia and Woodstock will receive new unit ventilators in many rooms to improve airflow. The roof in the Middle-High School is on the list. Our Facilities Committee work is multi-layered. The Committee maintains a rolling plan of capital work to be completed to maintain our facilities, and receives monthly updates on the status of work in progress—work that is designed and has been submitted to the New York State Education

Department, work that is in the design phase, and work that is planned for the future. As always, the safety of our staff and students is our priority. Work at Phoenicia, which is part of our district-wide capital project planning process and was included in the plan several years ago, remains part of the project in an effort to better prepare the building for prospective occupants. If community members would like to speak with someone directly regarding the status of capital projects, they can email Assistant Superintendent Monica LaClair at mclair@onteora.k12.ny.us.

Finally, our Board of Education Trustees were delighted to tour the Ulster BOCES facilities in Port Ewen, Rifton, Saugerties, and the site leased at SUNY Ulster. Approximately 26 percent of OCSD juniors and seniors enroll in BOCES programs. The innovative public-private partnerships that drive so many successful long-term placements for students in the career and technical programs were inspiring. We were welcomed with enthusiasm by students learning in fields that ranged from HVAC technician training, to culinary arts, to cybersecurity and robotics. We were fortunate to be able to observe a combined team of students and faculty engaged in a lively roundtable sprint, which involved ideating, prototyping, and designing U/X (User Experience) for a website. In a subsequent meeting, we were briefed on the proposal before the BOCES Board to lease a new space in the iPark 87 building in Kingston, ready-built with state-of-the-art facilities for these growing programs.

DO YOU WANT TO RECEIVE NEWS AND UPDATES FROM ONTEORA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT?

Members of our community who do not have students currently enrolled—we want to keep in touch with you! You can sign up for our email list here: <https://www.onteora.k12.ny.us/maillinglist> or use the QR code below.



BOARD OF EDUCATION

Cindy Bishop, President
Valerie Storey, Vice President
Meghann Reimondo, Trustee
Sarah Hemingway-Lynch, Trustee
Clark Goodrich, Trustee
Emily Mitchell-Marell, Trustee
Caroline Jerome, Trustee

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Victoria McLaren

NEWSLETTER EDITING & DESIGN

Ulster BOCES Community Relations

 This publication was printed on recycled paper

To Postal Customer

**STUDENTS WITH GOOD BEHAVIOR
ENJOY A “FANCY LUNCH”**

**WOODSTOCK
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS WHO WERE
“CAUGHT DOING
GOOD”** were treated
to a “Fancy Lunch”
before the Thanksgiving
holiday. This new
initiative was created to
recognize students who
demonstrate exemplary
behavior during lunch.

This first group of
Grade 2 and 3 students
exhibited adherence
to school-wide expectations, which include being
safe, respectful, and responsible. During their elegant
lunchtime experience, they dined at a special table,
complete with a fancy tablecloth, plates, and glassware,
as well as seasonal decorations, personalized place cards,
and even tea lights.

The diners also enjoyed calming music as they sat back
and relaxed, while their teachers either served them cafeteria
food or unpacked the lunches they had brought from home.
There was even a host station, where the students were
checked in, as well as a coat rack where they could hang up
their personal items while they dined. How fancy!

Congratulations again to these students, and to all
who serve as excellent role models for their classmates!



Woodstock Elementary School
Grade 2 and 3 students enjoy a “Fancy
Lunch” after being “caught doing
something good.” Pictured are (on left)
Aaron Dean and Willa Hernandez and
(on the right) Rowan Mahlkuch-Manuel
and May Kan Tun.

**KINDERGARTEN
REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!**

IT’S TIME TO REGISTER YOUR CHILD
FOR KINDERGARTEN IF THEY ARE
ELIGIBLE. The District’s online
Kindergarten registration system is now
open. Children who turn five on or before
December 1, 2024 are eligible to attend
Kindergarten beginning in September
2024.

To register online, parents or guardians
should go to www.onteora.k12.ny.us
and click on “Registration & Displaced
Families.” The link for online registration
is in the middle of the page. Please be
sure to choose the 2024-2025 school
year. Current Universal Pre-Kindergarten
(UPK) parents will be mailed information
and do not need to complete the online
form again.

Once your child is completely
registered, you will be contacted with an
appointment for Kindergarten screening.
Screening will take place during the week
of June 3-6, 2024.

If you have any questions you may
contact Sharon Wood, Onteora’s District
Registrar, by calling 845-657-6383, ext. 1023
or emailing swood@onteora.k12.ny.us.

**USEFUL
DISTRICT
INFORMATION**

DISTRICT OFFICE
845-657-6383
www.onteora.k12.ny.us

Superintendent

Victoria McLaren 845-657-8851

**Assistant Superintendent for
Curriculum and Instruction**

Stephanie Laffin 845-657-8851

Assistant Superintendent for Business

Monica LaClair 845-657-8499

**Assistant Superintendent for Pupil
Personnel Services**

Amanda Allison 845-657-3320

Director of Special Education

Carol Grima 845-657-3320

**Interim Director of Health, Physical
Education, and Athletics**

Jonnah O'Donnell 845-657-2373

Director of Transportation

Nicole Sommer 845-657-2537

Director of Food Service

Christine Downs .. 845-657-6383 x2181

Director of Facilities

Kyle Harjes 845-657-6384

District Clerk

Amanda Gates 845-657-6383 x1030

HIGH SCHOOL • 845-657-2373

Principal, Lance Edelman
Asst. Principal, Dieter Schimmelpfennig

MIDDLE SCHOOL • 845-657-2373

Principal, James DiDonna

BENNETT ELEMENTARY • 845-657-2354

Principal, Gabriel Buono

PHOENICIA ELEMENTARY • 845-688-5580

Principal, Elizabeth Fallo

WOODSTOCK ELEMENTARY • 845-679-2316

Principal, Scott Richards