



KINGSTON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

BUDGET ISSUE

2024

KCSD ANNOUNCES TOP STUDENTS



Salutatorian Jerry Chen Valedictorian Peter Dong

The Kingston City School District (KCSD) is proud to announce that Peter Dong is the valedictorian and Jerry Chen is the salutatorian of the Class of 2024. These outstanding students have excelled academically and worked together to enrich science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) opportunities for their fellow students at Kingston High School (KHS).

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Dong and Chen Earn Amazon Future Engineer Scholarships

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Proposed KCSD Budget Meets Tax Cap, Includes Votes on Propositions for Building Repair Fund and Warehouse Lease Renewal

Kingston City School District (KCSD) voters will head to the polls on Tuesday, May 21, to decide on the proposed \$231,562,000 budget for the 2024-2025 school year, which meets the requirements of the New York State Tax Levy Limit calculation. The district has consecutively proposed budgets that are either at or below the tax levy limit since it was implemented in 2012.

The proposed budget, which represents an increase of \$12,021,110 over the current year, maintains all existing programs while accounting for contractual obligations and key investments in areas such as special education, English as a New Language (ENL) support, and mental health supports. “The district is fortunate to be able to maintain our current programs and staff levels,” said Superintendent Dr. Paul J. Padalino. “Our teachers work tirelessly to support our students at every level, providing high-quality instruction and creating a nurturing learning environment.”

This budget also maintains programs that were put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic, including those that support social-emotional learning and supports that had previously been funded by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

Expiring Federal Funds and State Aid Cuts Contribute to Budget Pressure

A significant factor in this year’s budget development has been the expiration of funding from the ARPA. These funds had previously supported important positions and initiatives. The proposed budget will absorb these positions to maintain continuity in

additional student support services, such as Response to Intervention (RTI) math and reading, social workers, and guidance counselor positions.

In developing this year’s budget, the district also had to anticipate and plan for changes in State Aid. The enacted NYS budget provides approximately \$650,000 less in Foundation Aid than the district would have received under the previous law. This reduction is due to a change in how the Consumer Price Index (CPI), a measure of inflation, is now calculated.

In addition, the district has made significant strides in improving our school designations, a testament to the hard work and dedication of our students, staff, and community. While this progress has led to a loss of state funding to support school improvement initiatives, it represents a positive development that reflects the district’s commitment to academic excellence and additional support for our students. The district also faces a reduction in Federal Title 1 grant funding caused by demographic changes. However, we remain steadfast in our mission to provide the necessary resources and support for our students and staff, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to succeed.

Proposed Tax Levy at Allowable Limit of 3.26%

The proposed tax levy increase of 3.26% meets the allowable limit under the New York State tax cap formula. The tax cap calculation is influenced by several key factors, including the prior year’s levy, the tax base growth factor, the CPI, and Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) payments. Despite these constraints, the Board of Education remains committed to balancing student needs with taxpayer concerns.

To help offset the reduction in Foundation Aid, the district has increased its use of Appropriated Fund Balance and will also utilize funds from the Tax Reduction Reserve as revenues to decrease the tax levy needed to balance the budget.

Key Investments in the Proposed Budget

1. Maintaining enhanced instructional and social-emotional supports funded with stimulus funds, such as RTI math and reading, additional social workers, and guidance counselor positions.
2. Improving district-wide safety by placing front desk monitors in each building and additional security guards in both middle schools.
3. Supporting ENL students and families through additional ENL teachers and bilingual family workers.

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Friends of a Feather: Myer Elementary School Students Soar into Bird Education

Students at Myer Elementary School learned all about birds and their ecosystems during an in-school field trip facilitated by Kingston Parks and Recreation in January.

During the first half of the trip, students participated in an engaging presentation about birds, ranging from familiar local songbirds to exotic tropical species.

Next, the young learners participated in a creative, hands-on workshop, crafting bird feeders out of materials like pinecones, orange slices, and Cheerios. Once finished with their projects, the students installed the feeders around the school grounds. They then used binoculars to observe some of the feathered friends they had just learned about. The new feeding stations were a hit!



Chambers Elementary Students Race to Reading Victory with Kentucky Derby Celebration!

This past March, the students at Chambers Elementary School embarked on an exciting literary journey with the “Read Across America Challenge.” Each week, they explored a different region of the United States through books. As the students met their reading goals, they got to celebrate with a special activity themed around that area of the country.

The second week of the challenge was Southeast Week, and as the students



hit their collective reading target, they were rewarded with a “Kentucky Derby” celebration! The young learners made festive derby hats while the teachers and staff went above and beyond creating their own derby “horses”—with entries ranging from a bicycle outfitted with a horse head, to a shopping cart-turned-steed, to a group of teachers huddled under a blanket with a teacher riding on top acting as the jockey. The makeshift equestrians raced around the school loop, boosted by the loud cheers of the students. Students and staff alike had a blast, and the reading journey continued all month long!

Curriculum Character Visits Elementary Schools to Lift Literary Achievements!

A special guest recently made the rounds at all of the district’s elementary schools—Plory, the literary leader

from Planet Crescent! Dr. Alissa Oliveto, assistant superintendent for curriculum, instruction, assessment and data, pictured here at Crosby Elementary School, donned a full alien mascot costume to surprise students in their classrooms.



Plory congratulated the eager learners on their outstanding work with the i-Ready curriculum, a program that supports each student and creates a path of personalized reading instruction for every learner. The costumed extraterrestrial brought smiles, high fives, and plenty of hugs as she encouraged the children to keep up their good work. Students were over the moon to receive motivating praise from their alien friend.

Her visit left both students and staff energized to continue reaching for reading milestones.

Meagher Pre-Kindergarten Students Build STEM Skills With “Building Buddies”

For the culminating activity of their Building Science unit, Meagher Pre-Kindergarten students teamed up with family members or friends as “building buddies” to construct multi-dimensional structures using boxes, recycled materials, and colorful additions like pipe cleaners, straws, and bottle caps.

Not only did this hands-on project allow students to apply concrete concepts like balance, shapes, and structural integrity, but it also fostered teamwork and creativity!

The young learners worked alongside their “building buddies,” exploring engineering principles as they designed and assembled their creative structures. This engaging activity provided a fun, interactive way for students to put their learning into practice while developing STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) skills.





JFK Elementary Celebrates Student Government Leaders

On the first school day of each month, John F. Kennedy Elementary School Principal Melissa Jamieson holds a school-wide morning meeting to celebrate student accomplishments and introduce the school's monthly theme.

At the February 1 gathering, she introduced some very special guests—28 student government members from several grades. At this particular meeting, families were invited to attend to celebrate this new class of young civic leaders!



Blender Bike Engages Edson Students in Healthy Habits

Students at Harry L. Edson Elementary School were thrilled to take a ride on the school's new Blender Bike! This stationary bike has a blender attached to the back that whips up smoothies, powered by pedaling.

During the special debut event, students eagerly took turns hopping on the seat to pedal up a storm, blending their own fresh strawberry and banana smoothies.

The Blender Bike was made possible thanks to a "Creating Healthy Schools and Communities" grant from the New York State Department of Health. The grant's goals include increasing access to nutritious foods and physical activity opportunities.

The new Blender Bike teaches students about the importance of wellness and sustainable energy in a hands-on, active, and tasty way!

Graves Elementary School Students Become Doctors for a Day

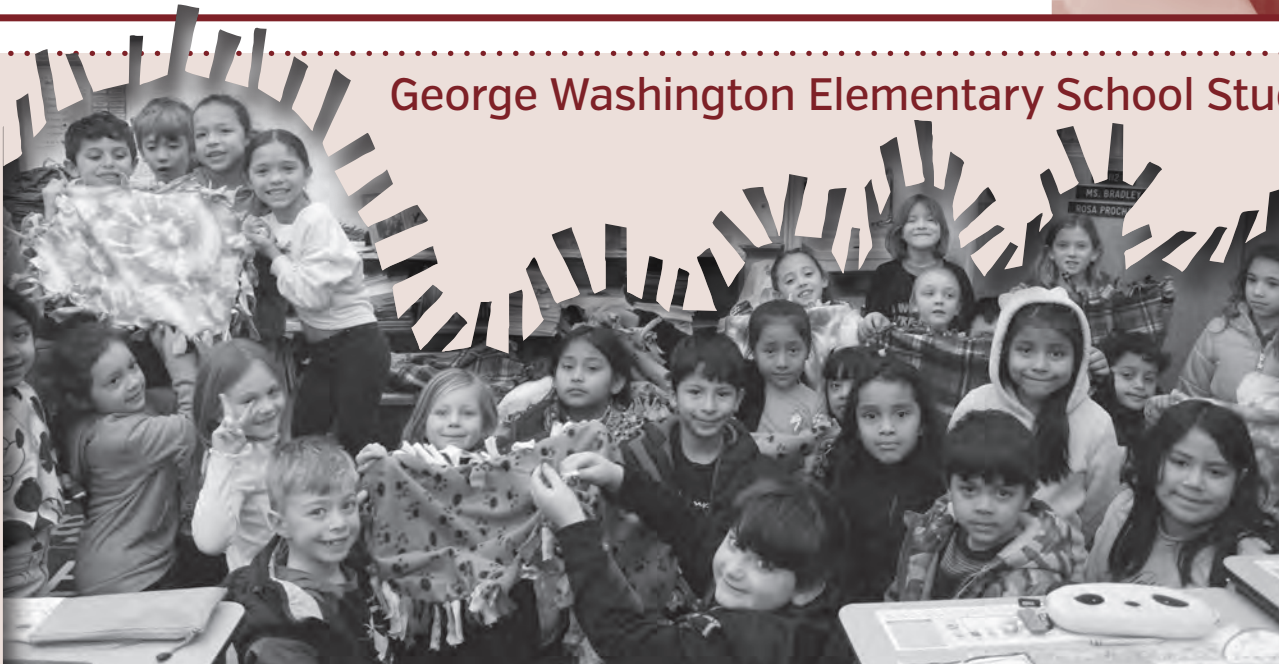
Recently at Robert Graves Elementary School, students in Dana Fitzgerald's Grade 2 class took on a new role—doctors! Their classroom was transformed into a medical facility, complete with badges, scrubs, masks, and gloves. The students learned how to properly "suit up" before rotating through various hands-on activity stations with medical themes.

One station, called "Suffix Stitching," had students attaching suffixes to root words to build their vocabularies. Another focused on mastering time-telling skills, essential for doctors scheduling surgeries and check-ups. These activities reinforced reading, writing, vocabulary, and math concepts in a fun, real-world way through role-play.

As the student-doctors progressed through the action-packed sessions, they compiled their work into official binders to review and study. By letting students "become doctors" for the day, the immersive activities helped bring language arts, math, and other subjects to life in an engaging way.



George Washington Elementary School Students Support Animals in Need



Deanne Bradley's and Siobhan Murphy's Grade 1 classes at George Washington Elementary School partnered up on a special service project to support the Ulster County SPCA animal shelter.

The students worked diligently to hand-make more than 40 cozy fleece blankets for the shelter animals. They also collected food, toys, and other pet supplies through donations from the community.

Once the students' collection efforts were complete, Bradley and Murphy brought the handcrafted blankets and donated goods to the shelter to be put into immediate use caring for the animals.

Their hard work and generosity made a meaningful impact on our four-legged friends in need.

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2024-2025 by the qualified voters of the Kingston City School District, Ulster County, New York, will be held at Edson Elementary, George Washington Elementary, J.F. Kennedy Elementary, Myer Elementary, Robert Graves Elementary, Chambers Elementary, and Crosby Elementary Schools in said district on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 between the hours of 7:00 AM and 8:00 PM, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

School District Budget Notice

OVERALL BUDGET PROPOSAL	Budget Adopted for the 2023-2024 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2024-2025 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2024-2025 School Year*
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$219,540,208	\$231,562,000	\$227,852,000
Increase/Decrease for the 2024-2025 School Year		\$12,021,792	\$8,311,792
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		5.48%	3.79%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		4.12%	
A. Proposed Tax Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$113,885,220	\$117,595,198	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	\$0	\$0	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **	\$0	\$0	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	\$0	\$0	
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$113,885,220	\$117,595,198	\$113,885,220
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$3,274,802	\$3,929,005	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$110,913,543	\$113,666,193	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$110,610,418	\$113,666,193	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$303,125	\$0	
Administrative Component	\$16,129,025	\$17,957,583	\$16,740,286
Program Component	\$179,730,601	\$189,248,728	\$186,756,025
Capital Component	\$23,680,582	\$24,355,689	\$24,355,689

*Statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2024-25 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law. The contingency budget would require the reduction or elimination of extracurricular activities, athletic activities, and elective classes. In addition, to reach the contingency budget, it may be necessary to eliminate all American Rescue Plan positions and increase class sizes.

** Separate Propositions that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount: (Tax Levy associated with educational or transportation services propositions are not eligible for exclusion and may affect voter approval requirements)

Description	Amount
Funding of Repair Reserve -- Funded from reserves and Unassigned Fund Balance. No budgetary impact.	\$0

Basic STAR Exemption Impact

Under the Budget Proposed for 2024-2025 School Year

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings¹

\$550

¹ The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by Section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.

Ballot

Proposition 1 2024-25 Budget:

Shall the Board of Education of the Kingston City School District, Ulster County, New York, be authorized to expend the sums of money which will be required for school district purposes for the 2024-2025 School Year, in the total amount of \$231,562,000.00 [the Budget], and to levy the necessary sum against the taxable real property in the School District?

Proposition 2 Extension of Lease Agreement:

Shall the Board of Education of the Kingston City School District be authorized to continue to lease approximately 28,000 square feet of the premises located at 918 Ulster Avenue, Kingston, New York, for use as a warehouse and maintenance facility, for an additional period of five (5) years [July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2029]?

Proposition 3 Funding of Repair Reserve:

Shall the Board of Education of the Kingston City School District fund the repair reserve fund established by the Board of Education pursuant to the provisions of Section 6-d of the General Municipal Law, by transferring up to \$5,000,000 from existing reserve funds and/or unappropriated, unassigned fund balance available as of June 30th of the 2023-24 and 2024-25 fiscal years, to the repair reserve fund?

Election of Board of Education Trustees:

Vote for any three (3) candidates. Three (3) members for 3-year terms, from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2027.

Candidate names are listed in the order they will appear on the ballot.

- Herbert A. Lamb
- Anthony Fitzpatrick
- Marystephanie Corsones
- Scott E. Denny

**Write-In Candidates are permitted.

Continued from page 1

Proposed School Budget

- Providing instructional coaches to support staff and faculty in leveraging technology to support students, including the district's 1:1 Chromebook initiative.
- Continuing support for the district's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) through the continued work of the Director of DEI and the Director of Diversity, Recruitment, Retention & Equity positions.
- Continuing support for district programming, such as i-Ready (K-8 math assessment and curriculum) and literacy initiatives.

Padalino commented on the budget, saying, "The proposed budget reflects the district's commitment to providing our students with the resources and support they need to thrive, while also being mindful of the financial impact on our community."

A Contingency Budget Would Require Approximately \$3.7 Million in Program Cuts

Should the proposed budget not be approved, the district has the option to place it or a modified version to voters a second time. If it fails a second time, or if the district opts not to hold a second vote, NYS law requires adoption of a contingency budget where spending is set at a predetermined level. Should this be the case for the 2024-2025 school year, eliminations would amount to \$3.71 million. This would involve reducing or eliminating non-mandated programs and services, including extracurricular activities, athletic activities, and elective classes. Furthermore, reaching the contingency budget might necessitate eliminating all positions previously funded by the ARPA and increasing class sizes.

Additional Propositions on the Ballot

In addition to the budget proposition, voters will also consider two additional propositions:

Proposition 2: Extension of Lease Agreement for Use as Warehouse and Maintenance Facility

The second proposition seeks voter approval for the renewal of the district's five-year lease on the warehouse located on Ulster Avenue. This facility has long served as the center of operations for the Facilities Department, housing offices, inventory, and parts for plumbing and electrical work. It also functions as the central shipping location for the district. The warehouse is approximately 28,000 square feet in size. By law, school districts are required to seek voter approval for renewal of such leases.

Proposition 3: Funding of Repair Reserve Fund

The third proposition asks voters to fund a new Repair Reserve. This specific reserve, as allowed by the State, enables the district to set aside funds for non-recurring repairs without impacting the general fund budget. It also allows the district to conduct repairs as needed. Although voters approved our capital project in 2023,

Proposed School Budget

repairs may be required before work begins in the buildings. The Repair Reserve will provide a means to address these issues quickly and efficiently, without affecting the budget. The district plans to fund this reserve over time, using existing reserves and unassigned fund balances. At this time, the voters are being asked to approve up to \$5 million, without increasing the tax levy. The exact amount of any funds transferred in any given year would be determined once the district closes its books at the end of each fiscal year and a determination is made about available funds. If approved, this reserve provides the financial resources for the district to handle future repairs in a timely manner, even as the capital project progresses.

School Board Elections

Three seats on the KCSD Board of Education, currently held by Robin Jacobowitz, Rose Desanges-Belfort, and Priscilla Lowe, are open for election this year as the incumbents have chosen not to run again. Voters will be asked to vote for three candidates. Details on the candidates are posted on the district website at www.kingstoncityschools.org/budget.

Voter Information

The school budget vote will take place on Tuesday, May 21, 2024. Polls will be open from 7 AM to 8 PM

at the seven elementary schools across the district. Qualified voters, including those registered with the Ulster County Board of Elections and those who have registered with the district, are eligible to cast ballots.

Please note that Ulster County and the City of Kingston have made changes to their voting districts, effective this year. To ensure a smooth voting experience, voters are encouraged to verify their polling locations by visiting the following link and entering their basic information:

Scan QR code



<https://vip.ntsteamed.com/Home/Index>

Absentee and Early Mail Voting Options

To obtain an Absentee or Early Mail Ballot, an eligible voter must first fill out an application, which can be printed from the district's website, picked up from the District Clerk, or requested by mailing a letter to the District Clerk. Please note, the "Application for Absentee Ballot" requires an applicant to provide a qualifying reason.

Completed applications may be returned to the District Clerk in person or sent by mail. Upon receipt of a completed application, a ballot will be issued. If the voter is requesting to have a ballot sent to them by mail, applications must reach the District Clerk by May 14. If the voter is collecting their ballot in person, applications must be received by May 20.

Completed ballots must be received by the District Clerk by the strict deadline of 5 PM on Tuesday, May 21.

For More Information:

Voting, Absentee and Early Mail Ballot, and Board of Education Election Questions:

Karen Seery, District Clerk

Phone: (845) 943-3003

Email: kseery@kingstoncityschools.org

District Budget Questions:

Sharifa Carbon, Assistant Superintendent for Business

Phone: (845) 943-3040

Email: scarbon@kingstoncityschools.org

Online Resources:

Visit www.kingstoncityschools.org/budget for:

- Budget presentations
- Board of Education candidate bios
- Additional information about the budget and Board of Education vote

Kingston High School and Mount Academy Unite on the Basketball Court

The spirit of unity and inclusion has taken center court this season, as basketball players from Kingston High School (KHS) and Mount Academy joined forces for a Unified Basketball Team. Unified Sports, an official New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) program, brings together athletes of all abilities through the power of sports. During each game, the Kingston and Mount students showcase their skills and sportsmanship, inspired by the principle that training and playing together fosters lasting bonds.

This program demonstrates the positive impact Unified Sports has on promoting understanding and acceptance. We commend all the participating students for embodying the true spirit of unity and leaving a lasting impression on everyone in attendance.

Through initiatives like this, our school community continues to nurture an environment of inclusivity, where every student feels valued and empowered to reach their full potential, both on and off the court.



KHS and Mount Academy students play Newburgh in a Unified Basketball match.

ELECTION DISTRICTS & VOTING PLACES

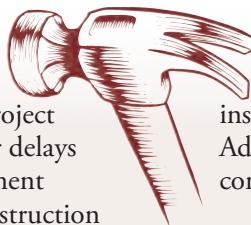
NO. 1	Ward 1 Districts 1, 2 & 3	EDSON ELEMENTARY 116 Merilina Ave. Kingston, NY
	Ward 2 Districts 1 & 2	
	Town of Ulster Districts 1, 6 & 13	
NO. 2	Ward 3 Districts 1, 2, 3	GEORGE WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY 67 Wall Street Kingston, NY
	Ward 4 Districts 1 & 2	
	Ward 5 Districts 1 & 2	
	Ward 9 District 1	
NO. 3	Ward 7 Districts 1, 2 & 3	J. F. KENNEDY ELEMENTARY 107 Gross Street Kingston, NY
	Ward 8 Districts 1, 2 & 3	
	Ward 9 Districts 2 & 3	
	Town of Ulster Districts 3 & 12	
NO. 4	Town of Hurley Districts 2, 4, 6 & 8	MYER ELEMENTARY 231 Millbrook Ave. Hurley, NY
	Town of Rosendale Districts 1, 4 & 5	
	Town of Ulster District 4	
	Town of Marletown District 5	
NO. 5	Town of Esopus Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7	ROBERT GRAVES ELEMENTARY 345 Mountain View Ave. Port Ewen, NY
	Town of Rosendale Districts 2 & 3	
NO. 6	Ward 2 Districts 3 & 4	CHAMBERS ELEMENTARY 945 Morton Blvd. Kingston, NY
	Ward 5 District 3	
	Ward 6 Districts 1, 2 & 3	
	Town of Ulster Districts 5, 8 & 10	
NO. 7	Town of Kingston District 1	CROSBY ELEMENTARY 767 Neighborhood Road Lake Katrine, NY
	Town of Saugerties Districts 5, 10 & 12	
	Town of Ulster Districts 2, 7, 9, 11 & 14	
	Town of Woodstock Districts 3 & 6	

Visit New York State Board of Elections' polling place search at <https://vic.ntsdata.com/home/ulster> to confirm your election district based on your home address.

Capital Project Update

The Kingston City School District voter approved 2023 Capital Project continues to move forward steadily. While there have been minor delays in the approval process due to the New York State Education Department (NYSED), the project remains on track for implementation, with construction on Phase One anticipated to begin in late summer. This timing has been strategically chosen to coincide with the school break, ensuring minimal disruption to the educational environment.

Phase One of the project focuses on the replacement of original single-pane windows at Edson Elementary and Bailey Middle Schools. These windows will be upgraded to modern, energy-efficient alternatives, providing improved thermal



insulation and helping to reduce heating and cooling costs for the schools. Additionally, air conditioning will be installed in classrooms at Edson and Bailey, contributing to a more comfortable learning environment.

The phased approach to the project's implementation is designed to optimize local resources, account for construction market trends, and minimize disruption to the learning environment during the school year. Phase Two work, which addresses the remaining projects at Edson and Bailey, will be submitted for NYSED approval in August and is expected to receive approval in time for work to be completed next summer.



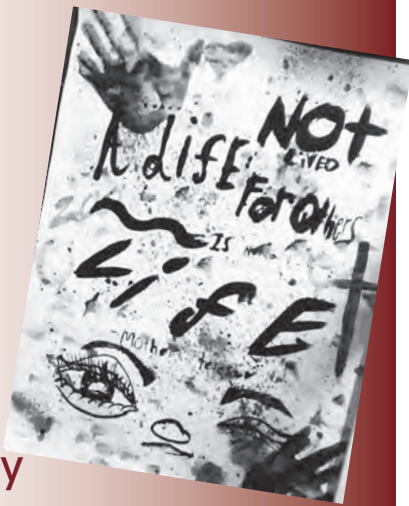
Miller Social Studies Students Advocate for Local Change

Grade 8 Social Studies classes at M. Clifford Miller Middle School recently showcased their civic engagement by developing and presenting “New Deal”-style programs aimed at addressing key community concerns right here in Kingston and Ulster County.

Local elected officials and community leaders engaged directly with the students’ policy proposals during a special forum. The Miller cafeteria was transformed, with students on hand to share their ideas through digital and poster presentations they had designed themselves.

From affordable housing solutions, to increased access to childcare, to enhanced safety and security measures, these young civic leaders advocated for positive local changes. They made thoughtful cases directly to community decision-makers.

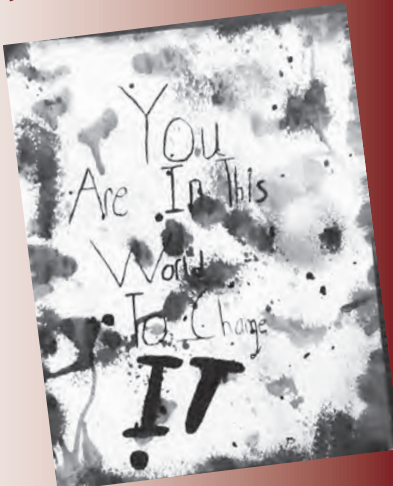
The district is proud of these students for taking initiative as engaged citizens. Their deeply considered proposals demonstrated a commitment to improving the community around them. We look forward with hope that some of their fresh ideas may inspire real policy changes!



Miller Students’ Artwork Celebrating Dr. King’s Legacy Featured in State Exhibit

In December, students in Patty Tyrol’s Art class at M. Clifford Miller Middle School worked on a project inspired by the profound words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. We’re proud to announce that these art pieces have been featured in a beautiful online exhibit celebrating Dr. King!

Each year, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) invites schools from throughout the State to submit student artwork and essays reflecting Dr. King’s message of equality and social justice. The Miller students embraced this opportunity to study Dr. King’s philosophy and the civil rights movement, gaining inspiration for their art. Responding to the exhibit’s call for artwork illustrating Dr. King’s Six Principles and Steps of Nonviolence, the students offered vibrant and creative interpretations of his teachings.



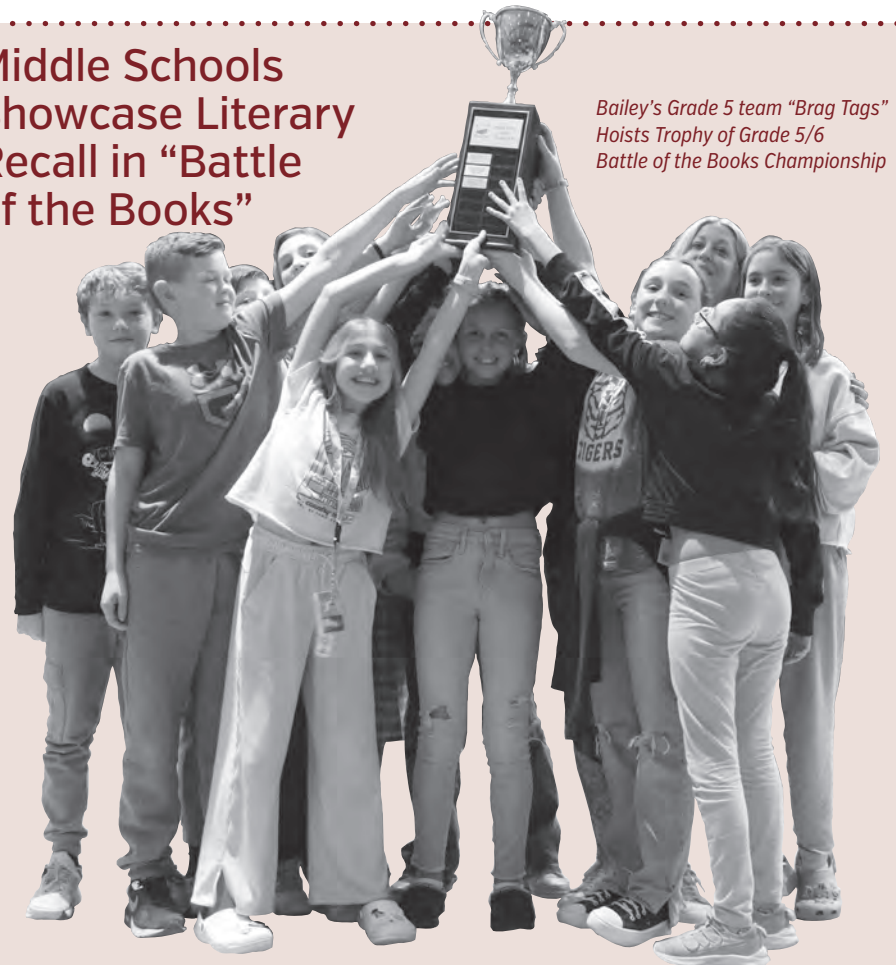
A Magical Learning Adventure at Bailey Middle School!

Kristen Diedhiou’s Grade 5 class was transported into a world of pure creativity this March. The students had spent time dreaming up their very own mythology to bring to life through an interactive role-playing experience! When students arrived at their class, their classroom had been transformed into a magical island in peril—its power being drained by an evil wizard! That’s when the festivities began. The Queen of Magic herself appeared, making a thunderous entrance. She helped guide the students to use the magic of teamwork to break the wizard’s spell. What followed was a journey through imagination and problem-solving. The class split into character roles they had envisioned, donning homemade costumes and props. Their unique story and universe unfolded through improvisation and quick thinking. Riddles were solved, mythical beings came alive, and the evil wizard’s nefarious plans were eventually thwarted—all through the incredible ingenuity of these young myth masters. It was an epic adventure that had jaws dropping with every twist and turn. The teachers were pivotal in bringing this engaging lesson to life!



Middle Schools Showcase Literary Recall in “Battle of the Books”

Bailey’s Grade 5 team “Brag Tags” Hoists Trophy of Grade 5/6 Battle of the Books Championship



Teams at M. Clifford Miller and J. Watson Bailey Middle School concluded their epic “Battle of the Books” literary face-off on March 12 in the Bailey auditorium. The competition was intense!

In the first round, Bailey’s Grade 5 team “Brag Tags” secured a narrow overtime victory against Miller’s Grade 6 team. The second round saw Bailey’s Grade 7 “Literary Legends” team take the lead in another close match-up with Miller’s Grade 7 team.

Since last fall, students on the Grade 5-6 and Grade 7-8 teams had been reading selected books, guided by teacher coaches who helped them prepare to answer questions based on their reading.

The final competition, meticulously judged by district librarians, featured questions that tested the competitors’ knowledge of the selected books. All teams displayed an impressive grasp of the literary works, down to minor details.

KHS Coach Steve Garner Inducted into New York State Basketball Hall of Fame

Steve Garner, the longtime Girls Varsity Basketball coach and Band director at Kingston High School (KHS), was inducted into the New York State (NYS) Basketball Hall of Fame on March 17 at the Cool Insuring Arena in Glens Falls. Garner, along with 10 others, was honored at the ceremony, which was attended by district staff, family, and colleagues.

With an impressive record of 447 wins and 283 losses over his 35-year coaching career, Garner ranks 35th in all-time wins for NYS high school Girls Basketball coaches. His consistency and winning strategies led his KHS Section IX teams to seven AA titles and three consecutive Final Four appearances (2007-2009).

Garner's success extended beyond the court, as he skillfully balanced his roles as a coach, Band director, and Music teacher. He credited the seasonal cycle and support from his wife, fellow KHS teacher Karen Garner, for keeping him energized and maintaining a crucial family balance throughout his long career.

The Kingston City School District extends its heartfelt appreciation to Garner for his dedicated service, outstanding achievements, and the positive impact he has made on countless student-athletes throughout his tenure.



Kingston's Ulster BOCES Students Shine at State SkillsUSA Competition



Kingston High School seniors Marla McCain and Rodolfo Alarcon, both enrolled in career and technical programs at Ulster BOCES, demonstrated their exceptional skills through SkillsUSA, placing at the New York State Championship, securing impressive victories and gaining valuable experience in their chosen fields.

Fashion Design Prodigy

McCain won first place in the fashion design category for the second consecutive year. At this year's State competition, McCain once again proved her prowess in fashion design, adapting her designs to the circus theme and incorporating advanced techniques such as zipper flies, sewn buttons, and pattern manipulation. Her comprehensive 20-page portfolio showcased her original design process and artistic talent through meticulously detailed sketches.

Crime Scene Investigation Excellence

Alarcon, along with two Ulster BOCES students, achieved an amazing second-place finish in the Crime Scene Investigation competition. The team excelled in a written examination on crime scene techniques and a practical test, where they had just one hour to identify and process all evidence, including blood splatters and potential manifestos. Alarcon cites their success as fueled by effective communication and attention to detail, skills honed through classes with Jason Young at Ulster BOCES.

Ulster BOCES: Building Confidence and Fostering Talent

Both students credit their involvement with SkillsUSA and the support from Ulster BOCES for boosting their confidence and helping them cultivate their unique abilities. Alarcon's success has inspired him to pursue a career in criminal justice, starting with an associate's degree at Columbia-Greene Community College before earning a bachelor's degree. McCain's achievements have made her realize that her talents can compete anywhere, leading her to study fashion with a particular interest in technical fashion construction at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT).



Kingston High School Winter Athletics Receive NYSPHSAA Scholar-Athlete Recognition

Kudos to the Kingston High School Winter Varsity teams that achieved New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) Scholar-Athlete recognition! In order to be recognized as a NYSPHSAA Scholar-Athlete Team, 75% of the team needed to earn a grade point average (GPA) of 90 or better. We appreciate our athletes' dedication to both their sports and their studies! Congratulations to the following teams:

Girls Indoor Track and Field
Boys Indoor Track and Field

Girls Basketball
Boys Alpine Skiing

Girls Alpine Skiing
Girls Bowling

Gymnastics
Boys Swimming & Diving

KHS Musical Theatrics Brings Split-Personality Classic Tale to Life with *Jekyll & Hyde*



Kingston High School's Musical Theatrics troupe delivered a monstrously entertaining production of *Jekyll & Hyde* this spring. Under the direction of Jackie Geraci (the Grade 5 and 6 Band teacher at Bailey Middle School), the classic tale of dual personalities took the stage with searing performances by the talented student actors.



We can't go without a special shout-out to the show's production crew, whose intricate sets evoked the moody atmosphere of Victorian England, setting just the right tone for this twisty psychological thriller. From the haunting musical numbers to the gripping portrayal of Dr. Jekyll's descent into madness, the show kept audiences on the edge of their seats. KHS Musical Theatrics once again provided an enthralling theatrical experience for Kingston families and the community.



KCSD ANNOUNCES TOP STUDENTS

Dong and Chen Earn Amazon Future Engineer Scholarships

Valedictorian Peter Dong and salutatorian Jerry Chen have once again demonstrated their shared excellence by being named recipients of the prestigious Amazon Future Engineer Scholarship. This highly competitive scholarship, awarded to only 400 students nationwide, provides tuition support for college and a guaranteed paid programming internship at Amazon.

Dong and Chen's selection as scholarship recipients is a testament to their hard work, dedication, and passion for STEM education. The KCSD can't wait to see the ways they continue to shape the future.

Dong, the son of Yan Qing Dong and Qi Tao Dong of Kingston, leads his class with a weighted grade point average (GPA) of 103.389. In addition to being recognized as a National Merit Scholar, Dong is an accomplished musician, playing violin in the school orchestra and serving as a drum major and section leader in the marching band.

Chen, the son of Xue Jing Chen and Feng Cai Chen of Hurley, earned his rank as salutatorian with a weighted GPA of 103.085. Chen is a dedicated member of the marching band, playing alto saxophone and serving as a section leader.



Dong and Chen have collaborated to promote STEM education and engagement through their work with the Science Olympiad team and Computer

Science Club. They have received numerous accolades for their academic and musical achievements, including being named AP Scholars with Distinction and earning spots in New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) Area All-State ensembles. They currently serve as co-captains of the Varsity Boys Tennis team.

Dong has committed to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where he plans to study computer science and explore Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications and modeling. Chen will also attend MIT, following in the footsteps of his two older siblings, both former KHS valedictorians. He intends to focus on the Course 6-9 Computation and Cognition program, with the goal of developing computer models to study sleep.

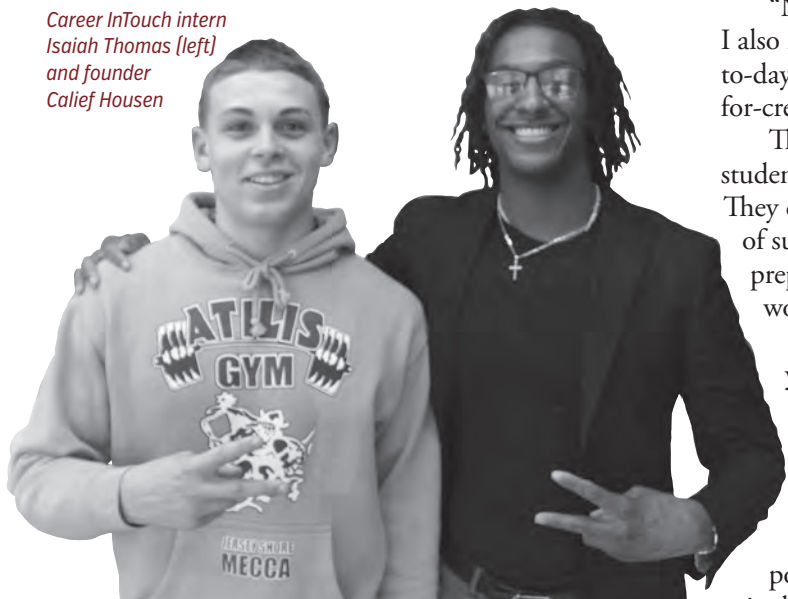
Dr. Rachael Scorca, principal of KHS, commended Dong and Chen for their perseverance and grace in balancing their rigorous academic work with extracurricular activities and leadership roles that enriched the lives of the students around them. Her advice to the graduating seniors is to "Lean into mistakes, which help you learn. Lean into your support groups. Also spend time on things that bring you joy and passion."

Career InTouch Program Uplifts District Youth

By launching the non-profit youth enrichment program Career InTouch, founder Calief Housen is sharing his personal experiences to provide mentorship in the Kingston City School District (KCSD). Housen, a 2019 KCSD graduate, takes an approach that is grounded in his own lived experiences to inspire transformation among current students.

"The work we're doing is shared experience, shared lived experience," Housen explained. As he benefited from support during his own KCSD journey, he wanted to create a structured, supportive environment to help ensure that this kind of mentorship continues for today's youth.

Career InTouch intern Isaiah Thomas (left) and founder Calief Housen



Career InTouch's multifaceted approach includes mentorship aimed at developing so-called "soft skills" (like the ability to work as a team, communicate effectively, and maintain a schedule), a focus on academic discipline and engagement, and an entrepreneurship component teaching transferable business abilities. The core of this approach is the I.M.I. (Informational, Motivational, and Inspirational) program at M. Clifford Miller and J. Watson Bailey Middle Schools. The I.M.I. program provides more than 45 students with support from mentors, like Kingston High School senior Isaiah Thomas, who understand their mentees' perspectives.

"Not only do I get to mentor kids coming up, but I also learn how to run a business being involved day-to-day with Calief," said Thomas, who joined through a for-credit internship.

The weekly I.M.I. meetings provide a safe space for students to discuss issues like mental health and self-care. They cheer each other on and learn the importance of support systems. As Housen often says, "Proper preparation prevents poor performance." In other words, building good routines is key.

The program, which completed its first full year in February 2024, has grown to 47 students across the district, and there are plans to expand further next year. A "sister" program developed by Calief's own sister is also in the works.

Bailey Principal Deb Fitzgerald is a fan of the I.M.I. program, which she believes has had a positive impact on her students. "He [Calief] has single-handedly given these students a purpose," she said. "These students not only want to be in school; they are role models."

By guiding students through personal transformation using powerful mentor support systems, Career InTouch sparks mindset shifts. "I was once that student," Housen said, referring to the youngsters being mentored by the I.M.I. program. "Now I'm empowered to lead by example...continuing the support I had from this district."

For many students, having mentors who grew up in the same community has been transformative. The program is helping put students on the path to high school graduation and future success.



May Day Celebration

