

# WESTBURY UFSD

## WINTER 2018 NEWSLETTER

### *From the Desk of the Superintendent*

To the Westbury Schools Community:

In my last newsletter message to the community, I made special mention of the Westbury School District plans to more fully integrate comprehensive 21<sup>st</sup>-century technology into an innovative curriculum and to build future-ready schools that leverage emerging technology and resources to increase student achievement in a standards-based approach. In short, I made special mention of our science, technology, engineering and math components of our District's STEAM program. In this newsletter, I want to draw your attention to the "A"—the arts.

A robust art curriculum—music, painting, chorus, band, orchestra, theater—is an essential component to a school district. These are the disciplines which breathe life and character into our world and help to shape young minds into curious, creative and analytical thinkers. In the past few months, our students have made unbelievable accomplishments in the field of arts, and you'll have the opportunity to read all about them in this newsletter. Whether it's participating in a nationwide Google logo design activity, performing in a rousing concert, or exploring the exciting world of Mexican folk-art sculptures, Westbury students continue to demonstrate time and again that there is simply no limit to their creativity and imagination.

As always, our families are critical to the educational process, and we greatly look forward to having you engage with us. Every step of the way, we want Westbury School families engaged in the conversation. Your input is invaluable, and we can't wait to see the wonderful things we can accomplish when we work together.

Sincerely,

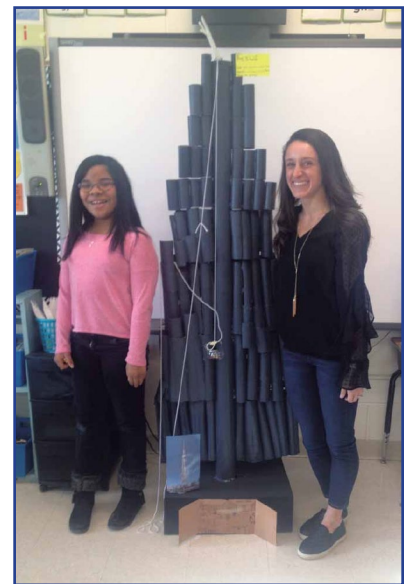
Superintendent Eudes S. Budhai

## BUILDING TOWARD THE FUTURE

### Park Avenue Wins National STEAM Competition

Nicole Christensen's fourth grade class at Park Avenue Elementary School won first place overall at the recent Rozzy STEAM challenge. Over 500 classes across the country entered the contest, tasked with recreating a famous structure or building out of recycled materials. Ms. Christensen's class decided to aim for the top by recreating the Burj Khalifa, the tallest structure in the world, out of empty toilet paper rolls. As an added touch, the students included a string zip line to their creation.

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## Westbury School District Accepts My Brother's Keeper Challenge

According to [mbkalliance.org](http://mbkalliance.org), President Obama launched the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) initiative in 2014 to address persistent opportunity gaps facing boys and young men of color and ensure that all young people can reach their full potential. The My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge seeks to inspire community leaders, and encourage their commitment to ensuring all young people can succeed. The MBK Community Challenge calls on these leaders to convene and identify effective strategies to work towards achieving specific educational and career-focused goals. The Westbury School District accepted this challenge because it perfectly aligns with our mission to provide the highest level of education possible to every single student.



# DISTRICT NEWS BULLETIN

## Senator Elaine Phillips Visits Drexel Avenue



Senator Elaine Phillips visited Westbury School District's Drexel Avenue School on December 19. She read a book to two first grade classes and answered questions about her job for the young students. Senator Phillips also met with Drexel's Student Council to discuss the importance of student government and the possibility of furthering their careers in the future.

Senator Phillips represents the 7<sup>th</sup> district, which covers the northwest portion of Nassau County. This visit from the senator helped students to learn about government, while also encouraging students to become involved in current issues within their classrooms and schools.

"An elected official visiting our school is a big deal for our students," said assistant principal Cheri DeBellis. "They not only look up to Senator Phillips as a leader, but the students are also excited she is recognizing their work."

## Interactive Owl Lesson is a Real Hoot

Westbury Middle School recently organized an interactive biology and zoology lesson, giving students an opportunity to examine the inner workings of an owl's digestive system.

During the classroom activity, students in Ms. Celeste Haller's and Ms. Marie Augustin's science classes watched a series of introductory videos that detailed a typical owl's diet and how they eat. The students then had the unique opportunity to go to the lab to dissect owl pellets. Since owls cannot chew their food, the students were able to identify each of the animals the owls had eaten by analyzing the bones and other remains.



## BOARD OF EDUCATION INVITES LOCAL YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIP TEAMS TO MEETING

The Board of Education recently opened its meeting by recognizing the Westbury Youth Soccer Club for their accomplishments. These young soccer stars are part of a three-year-old organization that has been very successful on and off the field.



Several of the club's teams have won first place in their divisions, including the U11 White Dragons, U13 Green Dragons, and U15 Red Dragons. The boys U16 Golden Dragons showcased their skills to all of Long Island by winning the Spring LI Cup. Off the field, club president Carolina Guardado noted that in addition to teaching the kids—both boys and girls who range in age from 4 to 16—how to play soccer, the coaches instill positive values to the athletes. "It's important to teach kids not just techniques in how to play soccer, but to teach moral character," said Guardado.

A sport like soccer brings children of the Westbury community together by instilling core values such as teamwork and leadership. It is the mission of the Youth Soccer Club to teach dedication, determination and other values that will be an asset to the children that can be used in the real-world. The club thanked the Board of Education for their continued support.

*Some photos in this newsletter are courtesy of*

**The  
Westbury  
Times**

# DISTRICT NEWS BULLETIN

## Electrify Your Strings! Westbury Students Perform Electrifying Concert

Band, chorus and orchestra students in the Westbury Public School District sure know how to put on a show! Last year, our supremely talented student-musicians took part in a rousing, rock-themed concert as part of the renowned Electrify Your Strings musical education program. Students from both Westbury Middle School and Westbury High School rehearsed diligently to deliver an unforgettable and energizing concert to their fans—families, friends and the entire Westbury community.

The Electrify Your Strings program, part of the Mark Wood Music Foundation, seeks to invigorate students, music teachers and local communities through empowering and upbeat rock anthems. Through the hours of rehearsal, this program taught participating students hard work, time management and the importance of community engagement.



## Students Design Google Doodles During Coding Lesson

Even if you didn't know it was called a Doodle, you probably see a Google Doodle many times a week. It's a creative alteration to the Google logo. Fourth- and fifth-graders at Park Avenue School recently had the chance to take a stab at creating their very own Google Doodles. Students from Todd Teeter's fifth-grade STEAM class and from Monica Daza's fourth grade bilingual class created artwork for the logos using a coding program. Sponsored by Google CS First, the school computer lab received a \$100 gift card from Donors Choose. "I was amazed at how quickly they picked up the language and the creativity and individuality of each student," said Milagros Santiago, a Park Avenue teacher who helped out on the project. "They took what they were learning about in STEAM, and integrated things they were passionate about. I was in awe of the creativity that came from each student and how they attacked this in a different way."



**WESTBURY UNION FREE  
SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
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Old Westbury, New York 11568

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## DONKEYS WITH BUTTERFLY WINGS...

...That's exactly what Pedro Linares, a Mexican artist, saw in a dream while falling very ill in the mid-1930's. He saw donkeys and many other distorted animals shouting the word "alebrijes." This led to the inception of his now famous papier-mâché creatures, known as alebrijes—Mexican folk art sculptures of fantastical creatures.

Under the guidance of Westbury Middle School's art teachers, eighth grade students learned of the intricacies and historical contexts behind alebrijes. With this knowledge, students utilized these influences to inspire their own original pieces of art. Using paper, tape, aluminum foil and wire, students constructed a framework for the sculptures. Students then coated the sculptures in plaster wrapping and painted the alebrijes with acrylic bright colored paints, creating elaborate patterns.

The Westbury School District continues to offer students opportunities that combine in-classroom learning of different cultures with outlets for students to express their creativity and artistic abilities. The sculptures are currently on display throughout Westbury Middle School.



## *Building Toward the Future*

*Continued from front page*

According to one of the students, Audrey Moran, the zip line was added so that people could see all of the sights of Dubai. In addition to building the world's tallest tower, the students aimed even higher, entering themselves in the grades 6-8 category. Yep, you read that right. This class of ambitious students felt confident in their learned skillset to compete in a higher division. "I felt that for the rigor of our classroom, the sixth to eighth grade level was the most appropriate," said Ms. Christensen.

However it was not just the 1st place finish that this class was most proud of, it was the teamwork they demonstrated that got them there.

"I know that they put a lot of hard work and dedication into the process," Ms. Christensen said. "I was excited they won, but the best part was hearing the discussions and how they worked together. That's what I was most proud of."

As the winning team, the group received five classroom sets of Bloxels—a platform that allows students to build their own video games.

