



# THE EDGE

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE EDGEMONT SCHOOL DISTRICT

VOLUME 2

ISSUE 4

JUNE 2025



## **"Building Dreams" Update**

Cafeteria construction to launch  
at Edgemont Junior Senior High,  
Greenville

## **Budding Scientists Star at New Fair**

Middle schoolers showcase research  
at Edgemont-pioneered event

## **Books, Digital and Much More**

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Self-reliance and support fortify high  
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## Ideas for an Article? We'd Love to Hear from You!

The Edge is for the Edgemont School District community. Your voice is integral, and we'd welcome your suggestions for stories, features and photography opportunities. Please reach out to [communications@edgemont.org](mailto:communications@edgemont.org). Ideas will be considered by the school district administration and the Board of Education's Communications Committee. **Thank you!**



# EDGEMONT'S NEXT CHAPTER: "BUILDING DREAMS" IMPROVEMENTS AT SCHOOLS KICK OFF



A new frontier for Edgemont schools gets underway this month as construction begins on "Building Dreams," the \$62 million capital-improvement facilities project overwhelmingly approved by voters in 2024.

Construction officially launches on June 30 at Edgemont Junior Senior High School's cafeteria. A groundbreaking ceremony takes place June 27, the same day work begins on Greenville Elementary School's cafeteria upgrades.

"We are excited to start construction on a long-needed project that will provide critical improvements," said Superintendent Dr. Kenneth R. Hamilton. "These projects reflect the priorities we heard from our community and will help ensure that Edgemont remains a place where every student can thrive academically, creatively and personally. We appreciate the community's engagement, input and trust in our vision for the future. Together, we will continue to build a district that not only meets today's needs, but also prepares our students for tomorrow's opportunities."

Behind-the-scenes planning and coordination have been priorities since the community supported the \$62,071,470 capital plan on Oct. 7, 2024. The first round of bonds, \$12,143,481, recently was issued to cover the first phase of construction.

Greenville cafeteria renovations will be complete when students return in September, explained Assistant Superintendent for Business and Administration Bryan Paul. The high school cafeteria and kitchen project will have two phases, Paul said.

- First, steel will be erected as the foundation for the cafeteria expansion. The current window curtain wall enclosing the cafeteria will be removed; a temporary structure will be in place during the 2025-26 school year. "When school opens in September, the cafeteria will be open and available and it will function the same way it does currently," Paul said. "Student walkways and pathways will be redirected based on construction logistics."
- As construction progresses, the high school will provide an alternate approach to food service after Memorial Day 2026. "This will give the construction teams June, July and August of 2026 to do the full kitchen renovation, interior renovation and build out the rest of the space," Paul said. "The hope is that when students return in the fall of 2026, all three schools will have upgraded kitchens and we'll incorporate a food service program for our elementary students."

[more »](#)





Paul is a key voice coordinating the project. Other vital contributors are Director of Facilities Rosario “Ray” Renda and Marina Franco, Facilities’ senior office assistant. Numerous administrators, teachers and staff also are partnering with architects, engineers and designers to refine plans for future construction. “We have to make sure that new designs optimally fit Edgemont’s needs,” Paul said.

Construction updates are regularly posted on a [dedicated “Building Dreams” page](#) at Edgemont.org. The page offers comprehensive details regarding each aspect of the project, as well as financing and approvals granted by the New York State Education Department. The project’s timeline, followed by the scope of work:

## TIMELINE

- **June 27, 2025:** Official groundbreaking ceremony, 10 a.m., Edgemont Junior Senior High School cafeteria. Greenville Elementary School cafeteria work begins.
- **June 30, 2025:** Edgemont Junior Senior High School cafeteria work begins.
- **Fall 2026:** Seely Place cafeteria, STEAM classroom, Greenville STEAM classroom, first phase of district-wide HVAC upgrades and security.
- **Summer 2027:** Edgemont Junior Senior High School baseball/softball/multi-use field, STEAM classroom, second phase of district-wide heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) upgrades and security.
- **Fall/Winter 2027:** Edgemont Junior Senior High School A-Building renovation; Edgemont Junior Senior High School district office renovation.

## CAFETERIA AND KITCHEN RENOVATIONS

- Expand the Edgemont Junior Senior High School cafeteria (approximately 3,800 square feet) and redesign the serving area.
- Repurpose the high school Cafeteria Annex classroom as additional cafeteria space.
- Renovate the Greenville and Seely Place cafeterias and serveries.
- Construct warming kitchens at Greenville and Seely Place to facilitate hot-lunch service.

## AIR CONDITIONING

- Upgrade the ventilation system in the high school and Greenville cafeterias to HVAC-compatible systems.
- Replace the ventilation system in the high school’s A-Building with an HVAC-compatible system, servicing 16 classrooms.
- Replace the ventilation system in the new wing of Seely Place with an HVAC-compatible system that will serve 11 classrooms, the library and the newly renovated cafeteria.

- Based on feasibility and cost, the 94 remaining classrooms district-wide and the Greenville library will be outfitted with a combination of ductless split air conditioning systems and new HVAC-compatible unit ventilators.

## SAFETY AND SECURITY UPGRADES

- Panic buttons with full integration into the building management system.
- Exterior camera upgrades and interior camera installations.
- Upgraded locksets on all classroom doors.
- Installation of bollards in critical areas to restrict vehicle access.
- Construction of junior senior high school security vestibule.
- Replacement of all interior doors at Seely Place.

## DEDICATED STEAM CLASSROOMS

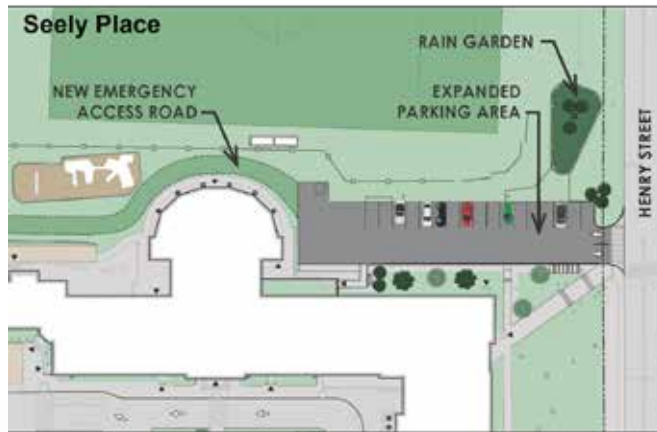
- Renovate the existing junior senior high school’s Large Group Instruction room to create two dedicated STEAM classrooms.
- Relocate an existing junior senior high school art classroom to the lower E-building, creating a STEAM center that houses all STEAM classrooms and the technology department offices.
- Renovate existing Greenville and Seely Place classrooms for STEAM programming.

## BUILDING RENOVATIONS

- Interior renovation of the junior senior high school A-Building.
- Interior renovation of the junior senior high school teacher collaboration space, bathrooms, copy room and office space.
- Repurpose existing classroom space in the junior senior high school Arts Building for district-level departmental office space.
- Interior renovations of the district office.

[more »](#)





### Athletic Field Improvements

- Replace the grass surface at the junior senior high school's Lower Field, which houses baseball and softball diamonds, with an artificial surface and add multiple field-lining options for use by a variety of sports.
- Install dugouts, batting cages and fencing to enhance baseball/softball.
- Resod Greenville's field, update drainage and install a backstop.

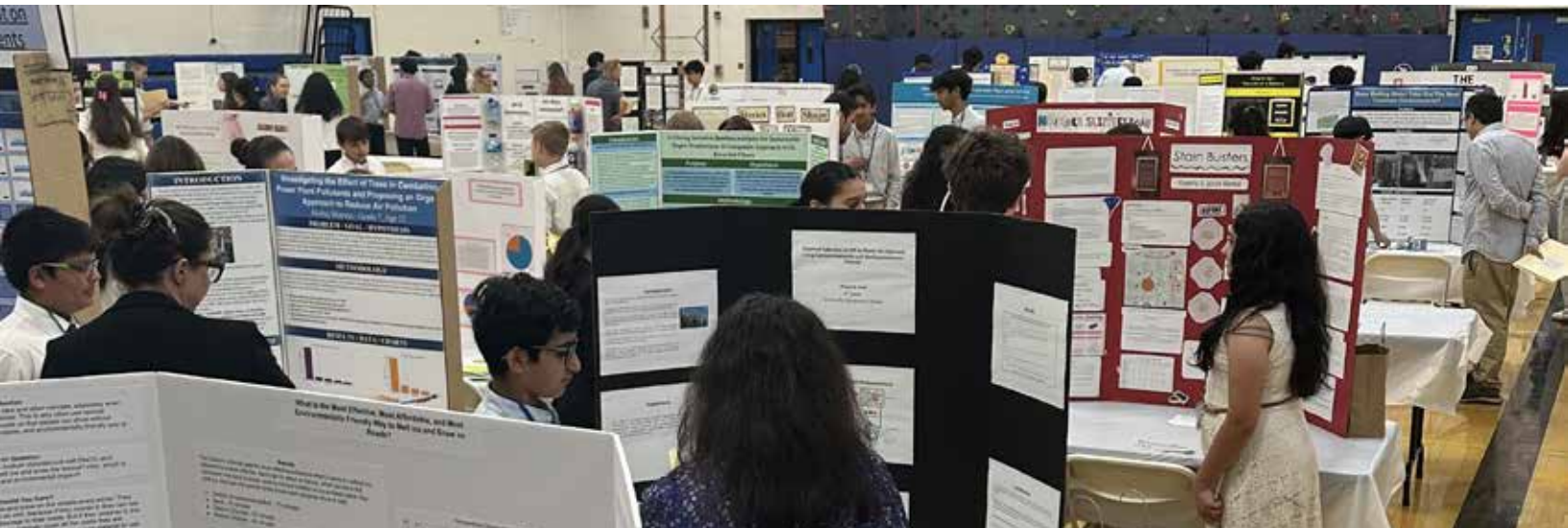
### Emergency Access Improvements

- Formalize and reinforce an emergency vehicle access path behind the B and C buildings at the junior senior high school and behind Seely Place.
- Widen the walkway at the rear of Greenville and reinforce the neighboring surface.
- Expand the Henry Street parking lot at Seely Place; replace the oil tank in that area.





# Innovation, Passion for Science Abound at Regional Middle School Science Fair Pioneerred by Edgemont



Edgemont eighth-grader Anika Shah had an inspiration during an assembly at Edgemont Junior Senior High School on the dangers of vaping.

To explore detriments of e-cigarettes, she assembled an experiment in her home that exposed fruit flies to vegetable glycerine and propylene glycol. Flies that were exposed flew less, had shorter lifespans and produced fewer offspring, with more frequent mutations.

She then shared her strategic, methodical approach as one of 85 participants in the inaugural Westchester Middle School Science and Engineering Fair (WRMSSEF), an Edgemont brainchild and the region's newest science showcase.

"The Science Fair allowed me to share my findings with others and get feedback on my project, which was very useful," Shah said. "I liked my experience at the Science Fair as it was very well thought out and I had a lot of time to present my project."

Shah was one of eight students who earned the Thermo Fisher Junior Innovative Challenge award, representing the top 10% of the competition. The honor nominates them to participate in the Thermo Fisher Scientific Junior Innovative Challenge, the

nation's premier middle school competition on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Shah also won first place in the Medical Health Sciences category.

Students in grades 6-8 from 12 schools throughout Westchester, Putnam and Rockland counties gathered at Edgemont Junior Senior High School on April 26 to present their research to judges and attendees. Edgemont created the fair to offer students opportunities to begin presenting their research at in-person competitions earlier than high school. Previously, the only similar fair available to middle school students was virtual.

WRMSSEF organizers held an awards ceremony May 1 in Edgemont High's auditorium to honor students in a host of categories. Winners included Shah and three other Edgemont Junior High School students:

- Tanishqa Balasubramanian, who won the Katherine Johnson Award – Engineering/Computer Science and Robotics and the Lemelson Award, an honor with a \$100 prize offered in partnership with the Society for Science and the Lemelson Foundation. The award honors a researcher whose invention represents a promising solution to a real-world problem.

[more »](#)





- Joseph Gojka, who won the Kareen Nasr Award, an honor with a \$50 prize named for a WRMSSEF co-founder. The award recognizes a recipient who “has shown creativity, scientific rigor and a drive to address pressing environmental challenges.”
- Qinshi Qiu, who won third place in the Energy, Sustainability category.

Westchester schools’ vibrant science research scene is capped each year by the Regeneron Westchester Science and Engineering Fair (WESEF), the largest regional fair of its kind in the United States.

The new WRMSSEF fair, a younger complement, is sponsored by Regeneron, Broadcom, the Society for Science and the Nature Center of Greenburgh. WRMSSEF is fully endorsed by WESEF founder Michael Blueglass.

The WRMSSEF awards ceremony celebrated middle school scientists’ sophistication and resourcefulness.

“Tonight is a celebration of curiosity, creativity and courage,” said Talia Dardis, Edgemont Junior Senior High School’s science research teacher and one of four co-founders of the fair. “Every student here took an idea and turned it into something real, something that challenged them, excited them, and hopefully ignited the passion for discovery.”

“I really loved the way that no two projects were even remotely similar,” said Balasubramanian, a seventh grader who won her award with a 3D-printed bionic hand. Balasubramanian, who saw diverse projects ranging from mathematics to how to create “the perfect marshmallow,” marveled at “how many different ideas go through middle schoolers’ heads and seeing what they actually can accomplish.”

Balasubramanian said her idea emerged as she watched astronaut Sunita “Sun” Williams on a spacewalk and thought, “What if she got hit with a piece of space debris?”





Reasoning that a robotic hand could perform such tasks more safely, she fitted the artificial limb with elastic pieces and fishing line to serve as joints and tendons. She also added sensors that responded to others on a human hand. The artificial hand picked up even imperceptible movements. Balasubramanian said she plans to adjust the coding to increase the minimum level of motion that triggers action in the robotic limb.

"I love space and flying," she said. "If I were able to work on a plane or a rocket that ended up making history, that would be a dream come true for me."

The other WRMSSEF co-founders were MaryRose Joseph, assistant principal at Edgemont Junior Senior High School; Dolya Fleck, former Edgemont Board of Education trustee; and Edgemont Junior Senior High School student Kareem Nasr, two-year Student Science Research president.

At the awards ceremony, Edgemont Superintendent Dr. Kenneth R. Hamilton congratulated students for showing the creativity and innovation to explore their curiosity and for their "willingness to share your gifts and talents with the rest of Westchester."

"We also want to thank the teachers who stand behind them and beside them to guide them through their exploration as they explore their talents and their



gifts, and give them the confidence to participate in fairs like this," he said.

Several honors included monetary prizes. In addition to the Lemelson and Kareem Nasr awards, they included the \$250 Broadcom Coding for Commitment Award and the \$100 Environmental Sciences Award, sponsored by the Nature Center at Greenburgh.

Visiting participants enjoyed the fair and awards ceremony as much as the Edgemont students.

"These kids put in a lot of energy and a lot of time," said Dr. Stefano Cascapera, who co-founded the Science Club at Hommocks Middle School in the Mamaroneck district. "It's a great effort to expose young men and women to opportunities that they otherwise wouldn't have."

Hommocks eighth grader Michal Vaculin won the top award, Best in Show, and earned a Thermo Fisher spot with his predictive air-quality monitor. "It was a really well put-together event," he said.

Learn more at [wrmssef.org](http://wrmssef.org).







# You're Invited

Help Advance Edgemont's Communications with the Community

The Edgemont School District invites you to contribute your voice and insights to an important initiative.

Edgemont values every opportunity to embrace insights from the community. The district is considering strategies to advance its communications approaches to further fortify its community ties. As part of this effort, we are creating a Community Communications Advisory Board and we are seeking volunteers from all corners of Edgemont. Committee members will meet with district leadership and members of the Board of Education to discuss current outreach, strategize refined techniques and suggest innovations.

**Interested?** We welcome your inquiry! Please email [communications@edgemont.org](mailto:communications@edgemont.org) to learn more by June 30, 2025. Please briefly include your evaluation of current district communications, initial ideas and any relevant credentials or information.

**Thank you!** We look forward to reviewing your application!

Dr. Kenneth R. Hamilton, Superintendent  
Jennifer DeMarrais, President, Board of Education



[edgemont.org](http://edgemont.org)

## Your Input, Experiences and Strategies Can Make a Difference

Please consider applying to join the Edgemont School District's new Community Communications Advisory Board. Just email [communications@edgemont.org](mailto:communications@edgemont.org) and share your brief thoughts on how Edgemont can embrace new frontiers of communications with our community.

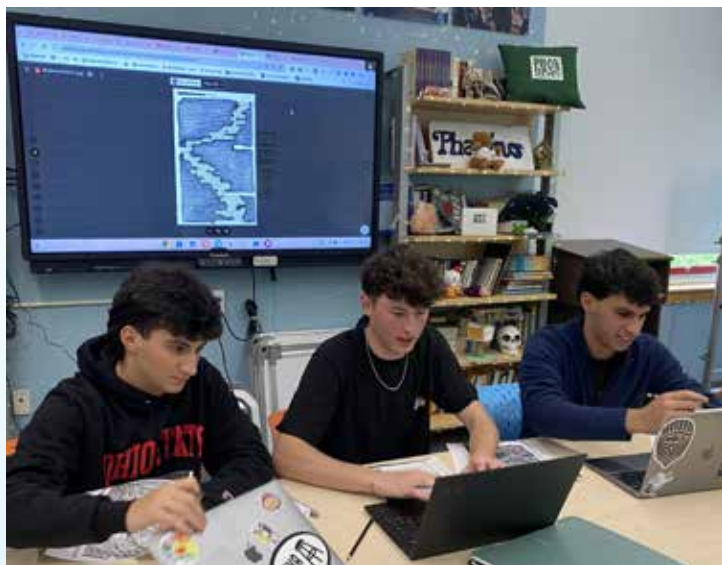
**Thank you!** We look forward to reviewing your application!



Edgemont School District  
300 White Oak Lane  
Scarsdale, NY 10583



# Phaedrus Students Build Self-Reliance In A Supportive Community



The global spotlight on Ukraine piqued Edgemont High School senior Alina Baimatova's interest. But her focus was not on the latest developments in the Eastern European nation. Instead, her imagination was captured by a 1986 disaster – the explosion of a reactor at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.

Her research into the reactor meltdown and the resulting fallout, which leaves radiation levels elevated to this day, is Baimatova's final project with Phaedrus, an Edgemont Junior Senior High School program that develops a student's self-motivation in individual and group activities.

"I wanted to connect my project to today's nuclear power plants and the safety protocols put in place," she said. After the accident, nuclear plants incorporated more safety features such as containment domes, she said.

In doing her research, Baimatova spoke to several experts, including a nuclear chemist who visited Chernobyl. Talking with such a first-hand source is a recommended component of a Phaedrus final project, in which students are free to choose a topic that fascinates them.

With 28 students this year, Phaedrus is a "small, supportive, personalized community" that advances a strong sense of self-reliance.



"It's on yourself to make sure that you're putting in the effort," said student Harley Pfeffer.

The program, open to juniors and seniors by application, constitutes half of the participants' school day and fulfills requirements for English and social studies. During the other half of the day, students take classes in math, science and foreign language as well as electives in Edgemont High's more traditional setting.

Phaedrus, also known as A-School, has been benefiting students for more than 40 years. It incorporates internships, community service, weekly guest speakers or trips, journaling, intensive research, public speaking and presentation opportunities, and other activities.

In a recent class led by teacher Pamela Raines, who runs the program with colleague Cory Karpf, pairs of students delivered presentations on various aspects of the 1970s, including an exploration of rock music by Daniel Geller-Circujano and Troy Meilman.

[more »](#)





“Rock music gave voice to the youth during times of change,” Geller-Circujano said.

In Karpf’s class, groups of three led discussions on a short story they chose from an anthology.

“Everyone had their own unique ideas to contribute,” said junior Zach Dennison, whose group chose the story *Wild Plums* by Grace Stone Coates.

Team activities and mutual support among students foster deep connections.

“Everyone here is so close, I feel like I know them on a personal level,” Dennison said. He added that the supportive community “allows you to push your academic strength.”

The closer relationships with peers and adults develop in a comfortable setting where students refer to teachers Karpf and Raines by first names.

“We think of them not just as teachers but as guides and mentors,” said junior Daisy Rodnick.

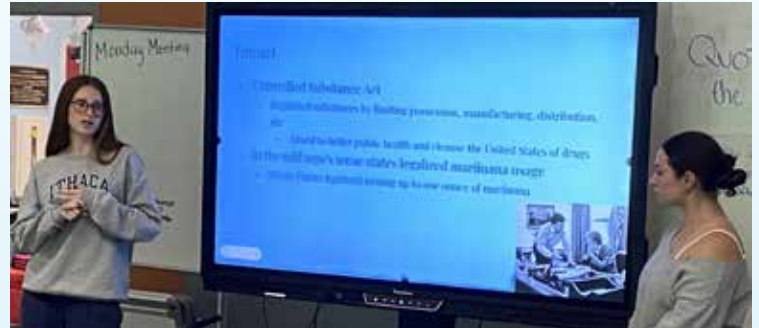
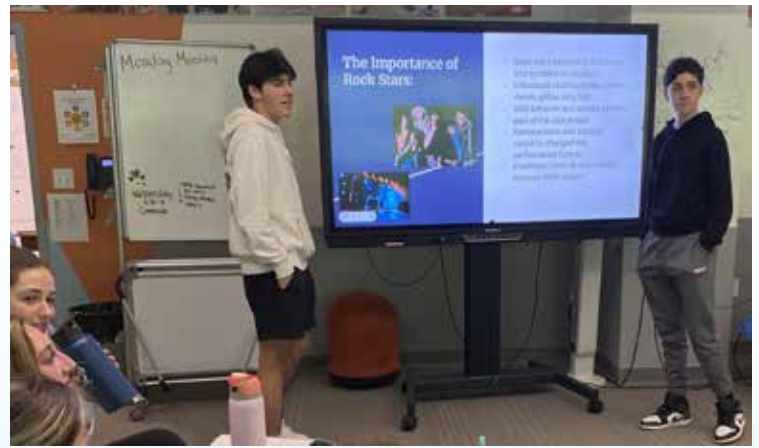
Phaedrus annually culminates in an end-of-year ceremony to celebrate graduating seniors. This year, it was held June 12.

No grades are given in Phaedrus. Instead, Karpf and Raines provide a detailed written assessment of each student’s performance. Many colleges welcome the assessments and consider them more insightful than a letter or number grade. The program boasts student placements in dozens of colleges, including Ivy League schools, Johns Hopkins University, University of Colorado Boulder, Tufts University, Tulane University and Amherst College.

For the final project, each student chooses a topic to research extensively and delivers a presentation to the class on what they discovered. This year’s projects – including Baimatova’s exploration of Chernobyl – reflect a wide range of interests deeply embedded in culture and modern history: The impacts of social media. The use of the Fifth Amendment right to remain silent. Cryptocurrency. Hurricane Katrina. The dark side of a child star’s life.

Students also take on leadership roles, such as community service supervisor, a position that Pfeffer holds.

“I had to make sure all 28 students had three hours of community service,” he said.



On Wednesdays, the program welcomes a guest speaker to talk about a range of topics – the Peace Corps, firefighting and genetic counseling have been examples – or takes a trip to a regional destination such as the Bronx Zoo or the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Fridays are devoted to internships, another important provision of the program. Students land the internships, visiting local businesses, emailing or cold-calling companies or organizations and offering their services. Some gain not only real-world experience, but job offers. Baimatova’s internship at the Honest Art painting studio in Ardsley led to a summer job. Junior Ruby Kaufman, working with fourth graders at Seely Place Elementary School, has gained several babysitting gigs.

“I like the opportunities you can take advantage of,” said senior Ethan Klein. He interned in marketing last year, and this year is doing community outreach for the Scarsdale Business Alliance.

“I’ve learned about so many more of the businesses,” he said. “It was definitely eye-opening.”

All Phaedrus students take to heart that their success directly relates to their hard work.

“You have to rely on yourself and push yourself,” Rodnick said.



# MORE THAN JUST BOOKS



## The Vital Role of Edgemont's Libraries in a Digital Age

For fifth graders Sahana Sawant, Kira Boykoff, Jillian Hemli and Kate Sohn, there's nothing better than curling up in a comfy chair at the Greenville Elementary School library with a good book in hand. "I just love discovering new books," says Kira. "It feels like there's always something new to learn," adds Jillian.

The role of the school library and librarian has evolved from curating collections and supporting student learning to guiding students through both physical and digital worlds. Today's librarians are information and research specialists, helping students build critical thinking skills, explore online resources and navigate technology to seek thoughtful answers.

In an age where information is just a Google search away, the role of the school library might seem less vital than it once was. But the Edgemont School District's three libraries are more crucial than ever. Far from being relics of a pre-digital era, Edgemont's libraries are dynamic hubs of learning, hands-on and digital literacy, strategic research and student support.

For Seely Place Elementary School librarian Caroline Piazza, earning tenure this year was more than a milestone. It was a recognition of her daily impact. "I like to focus on literature first," she says. "The kids really do love to read physical books." Piazza thoughtfully integrates contemporary digital instruction, including coding, media literacy and digital citizenship, with tactile, hands-on experiences to foster comprehensive learning and engagement.

Using tools like a document-imaging camera and a Promethean board (an interactive, touch-screen whiteboard that allows for collaborative writing, drawing and exploring digital lessons), Piazza brings story time to life. Her lessons often alternate between reading, interactive presentations and skill-building workshops focused on topics such as website structure and online news credibility.

Perhaps the most important lesson Piazza seeks to instill is about mindset: "First and foremost, the library brings joy, a joy of learning, of reading and of research," she says.

That joy is echoed by students. Seely Place fifth grader Ajay Mandava credits Piazza with sparking his love of fantasy books when he was in first grade. "I used to not read at all," he says. "But Ms. Piazza really inspired my love for reading." Fourth grader Helena Jung agrees. "I love the library especially because of Ms. Piazza," she says. Helena, a self-described selective reader, is captivated by graphic novels.

Greenville Elementary School librarian Melanie Gomez has spent nine years customizing her approach to meet students' embrace of learning. "Every 40 minutes, I get a fresh group of kids," she says. "From the littles to the bigs, it's just nice to see everyone."

Gomez builds her library program around a flexible three-lesson cycle that rotates every six days:

[more »](#)





digital citizenship, a reading or literacy skill aligned with classroom instruction and a curriculum-tied exploration, often related to history or science. She frequently collaborates with teachers to support ongoing lessons, whether it's sourcing books on Colonial America or guiding students through online research databases like Britannica.

While she values digital tools, Gomez is mindful of their limitations. "There's so much technology, and students have no control over it outside the library," she says. "Here, at least, they can have a choice." For her, the library is a sanctuary — a place where students can reset, explore and take a break from the fast-paced school day. "There's something calming about just coming in and looking at a book," she adds.

Gomez also helps organize author visits as a springboard for writing and connection. Recent guests included Jack Gantos and Lauren Tarshis, and Gomez ensured students prepped with excerpts, author biographies and questions. "We go deeper. It's not just about the visit; it's about engaging with the author's journey."

At Edgemont Junior Senior High School, library experiences rooted during elementary grades rev up. Veteran librarian Robert Brewster cultivates a multifaceted environment that functions not just as a quiet reading nook, but as a central academic hub for the school's more than 900 students. Each day, more than 500 students pass through its doors.

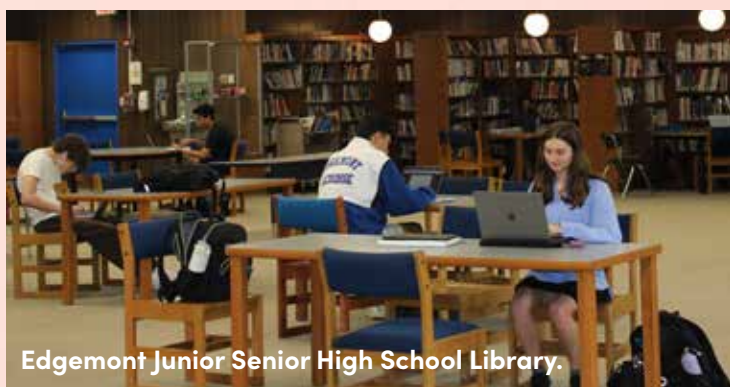
"The library is the heart of the building," Brewster says. "It's the social hub, the academic hub, the learning hub. When kids aren't in class, they're often here — studying, reading or working with friends."

Brewster emphasizes the importance of teaching students how to navigate the digital landscape with discernment. The library subscribes to more than 25 curated databases, selected for their academic integrity and age-appropriate content. From general research platforms to specialized tools like JSTOR, a digital library of scholarly journals, books, images and primary sources, students learn to evaluate information, understand sources and use citation formats like MLA and APA. They carry these essential skills into college and beyond.

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*"Technology will continue to evolve, but the heart of what we do — helping students become thoughtful, literate, curious people — hasn't changed. And it never will."*

**-Edgemont Junior Senior High School Librarian Robert Brewster**



Edgemont Junior Senior High School Library.



Seely Place Library.



From left, fifth grader Ajay Mandava and librarian Caroline Piazza at Seely Place.

[more »](#)







Edgemont Junior Senior High Library.



Edgemont freshman  
Riley Padilla.



Greenville Library.



From left, fourth grader Helena Jung,  
librarian Caroline Piazza and fourth  
grader Hannah Goldman at Seely Place.



From left, fifth graders Sahana Sawant, Kira Boykoff,  
Jillian Hemli and Kate Sohn at Greenville's library.

Freshman Riley Padilla sees the library as a critical part of her academic life. "It has a good variety of books and textbooks that help with homework," she says. "It's also a quieter place to study and have study sessions with my friends."

Parent Rod Burns agrees. "As the parent of a senior, I've seen how valuable the library has been in supporting her learning, giving her access to a variety of materials beyond just online resources to help with her essays," he says. "It's also been a wonderful tool for my third grader, who loves being able to physically pick out books that spark his interest and excitement for reading."

All three libraries share a commitment to fostering a lifelong love of reading, supporting academic growth and building the skills students need to succeed in and out of the classroom.

As Brewster puts it: "Technology will continue to evolve, but the heart of what we do — helping students become thoughtful, literate, curious people — hasn't changed. And it never will."





Dr. Kenneth R. Hamilton



# ON THE EDGE

## PODCAST



## Go “On The Edge” with Dr. Hamilton’s Informative Podcasts

“On the Edge with Superintendent Dr. Kenneth R. Hamilton,” a podcast launched last fall, takes you inside the world of Edgemont education.

Dr. Hamilton recently hosted an engaging interview with Board of Education President Jennifer DeMarrais and Board member Heather Stern. They explain the Board of Education’s role and their commitment to stellar education, while offering thoughts on their leadership approaches.

### Previous episodes have featured:

- Director of Pupil Personnel Services Jennifer Del Conte and Assistant Director of Pupil Personnel Services Edward Stickles. Their wide-ranging discussion explained the nuanced world of providing support for children requiring special education services.
- Edgemont High School Spanish teacher Jedd Chesterson, Greenville Elementary School fifth-grade teacher Hannah Ottman and Kim Kilcoyne, art teacher at Seely Place Elementary School. They offered compelling insights on post-Covid education, technology in the classroom and the opportunities artificial intelligence may present.
- Dr. Felipe Orozco, who joined Edgemont this school year as Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.

All podcasts are archived at [Edgemont.org/community/superintendent-podcast](https://edgemont.org/community/superintendent-podcast) and are viewable at all times. Dr. Hamilton welcomes your questions and feedback as part of his Ask The Superintendent feature. Please upload your thoughts [here](#). Your overall feedback is welcome as well; just email [jmasci@edgemont.org](mailto:jmasci@edgemont.org). **Thank you!**



# New Voices: Students to Join Board of Education

Edgemont students have long been supported and empowered by the school district. Now those voices will have another forum to showcase their perspectives: The Edgemont Board of Education.

The Board, starting July 1, 2025, will include two students as ex officio members. They will participate in public meetings and sit with the seven other Board members, joining discussions and affording the student members hands-on experiences to broaden their insights and strengthen their future opportunities for civic engagement.

The action comes after New York State [enacted a 2024 law](#), proposed by State Sen. Shelley Mayer of Westchester County, to add at least one student member. An Edgemont committee led by Superintendent Dr. Kenneth R. Hamilton is now reviewing applications from rising juniors and seniors who were asked to address four questions. Selections will be announced in June.

Dr. Hamilton looks forward to students' participation. "Edgemont students are known for their dynamic, strategic thinking," he said. "Having students on our dedicated Board of Education positions them to share crucial first-hand context from their classrooms, educational experiences and lives."

Board of Education President Jennifer DeMarrais agreed. "We believe this will give students a voice in the operation of our schools and we anticipate that they will bring important and meaningful perspectives that will only strengthen Board decisions," she said.

Per New York State law, student Board members will serve one year and must have lived in the district for one year. They are not eligible to vote on Board matters or participate in Board executive sessions or other non-public proceedings.

Student attendance at Board meetings in July and August is optional, and the district will provide an orientation and training. Prior to the new law, districts were permitted to appoint an ex-officio student member, but voter approval via a referendum was required.

The Board of Education [passed a resolution](#) April 22 officially enabling students to join the Board. The resolution outlines these benefits of student participation on the Board:

- Provide students with an opportunity to express their voices, take ownership of their education, and impact Board decisions.
- Provide for the Board and students a vehicle through which they may exchange information and learn from one another.
- Provide an opportunity for students to gain experience with governance and leadership.
- Broaden the base of information available to those ultimately responsible for educational decision-making.
- Develop an environment that encourages inclusion, understanding, trust and respect.

Additional framework:

- Ex officio student members will sit with Board members at all public meetings and hearings. They may participate in training opportunities at the discretion of the Board, but will not be required to participate in mandatory training for elected or appointed Board members.
- Ex officio student members may request to participate in meetings remotely, and may be excused to leave meetings early, upon the approval of the Board President.
- Students will not be considered a "member" of the Board to help establish a quorum for conducting business.
- Students will not see or discuss documents or information regarding district personnel, collective bargaining negotiations, individual student records or other confidential matters.

"We look forward to our students' vibrant, savvy perspectives," Dr. Hamilton said.

## About the Board of Education

The Edgemont Board of Education serves as a vital liaison between the community and the schools. Its responsibilities include shaping general policies, hiring personnel, planning capital building programs, and preparing an annual budget for community approval. The Board is dedicated to maintaining a transparent, collaborative process that fosters trust and engagement with all stakeholders. Board meetings are on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. in the Edgemont High School Large Group Instruction room. You also can watch live or on demand via [YouTube](#). Learn more about the Board [here](#).





# Blueprints to Breakthroughs: A STEAM-Focused Challenge in Action



Seely Place Elementary School sixth grader Jaxon Gong transformed a simple idea into a functioning arcade game built entirely from recycled materials. "I got to create something that I really thought could be a fun game," Gong said, "and it allowed people to see what was in my imagination."

Gong joined fellow sixth graders from Seely Place and Greenville Elementary in the Global Cardboard Challenge, a STEAM-based initiative that required students to apply principles of science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics. Students developed original concepts, drafted blueprints and engineered their designs into fully operational games.

The challenge emphasized innovation, strategic thinking and hands-on problem-solving – skills that mirror demands of the modern world. STEAM is a curriculum priority in Edgemont. Schools nationwide are increasingly adopting STEAM education to cultivate analytical thinking, creativity and problem-solving abilities, equipping students with the interdisciplinary skills necessary for success in the 21st century workforce.

The Global Cardboard Challenge began in 2012 as a movement inspired by the viral documentary Caine's Arcade, which highlighted a young boy's homemade arcade crafted from cardboard.

"Now in its 12th year at Seely Place, Arcade Day is a celebration of student creativity, teamwork and the Seely spirit that brings learning to life," said Eve Feuerstein, Seely Place principal.

Sixth-grade science teachers Lindsay Lugo at Seely Place and Maureen Adams at Greenville used the challenge to introduce the engineering design process in a meaningful, engaging way. While much planning occurred in class, the games were constructed at home, requiring students to collaborate, revise plans and work through real-world constraints.

"Our first Arcade Day at Greenville was absolutely wonderful," said Adams. "The sixth graders truly impressed everyone with the games they created. They demonstrated a strong understanding of the engineering process while having fun."

"Using the design process, they planned, designed and built arcade games entirely out of recycled materials," Lugo said. "Arcade Day brought the school community together, with second through fifth graders and families invited to try out the games."

"The thing I liked most was actually seeing it come to life," said Seely Place sixth grade student Nora Huang.

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"My partner, Phoebe Stratigos-Simon, and I had planned for months what it was going to look like, and that drawing on paper was becoming a reality."

"We had some limits, but besides those, we had a lot of independence," added Stratigos-Simon. "That made it fun to brainstorm and create." (Watch Nora and Phoebe explain their project in [this video](#).)

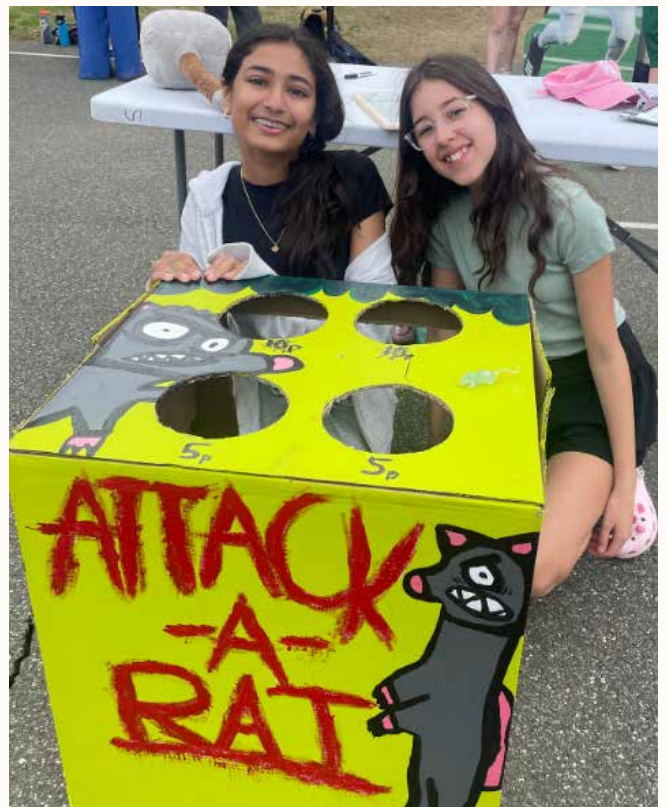
Students stepped into the role of engineers, exploring ideas, making decisions and solving problems through hands-on work.

"Watching our sixth graders bring their creativity and problem-solving skills to life through the Cardboard Challenge is truly a highlight of the school year," said Greenville Principal Marisa Ferrara. "Arcade Day is a joyful celebration of innovation, teamwork and hands-on learning that makes me so proud of our students."

STEAM education thrives on interdisciplinary connections. During the challenge, students explored how math drives measurement, how physics shapes structure and motion and how the arts enhance visual appeal and functionality. This hands-on integration lays a strong foundation for deeper scientific and technical learning in the years ahead.

For many students, the challenge marks their first real test in managing time, collaborating creatively and adapting through trial and error. These experiences build critical life skills that stretch well beyond the classroom and into future academic and professional paths.

In addition, students leave with a sense of accomplishment. "The thing I liked the most... is that when I was finished, I was proud of myself," said Seely Place sixth grade student Tyler Pomponio.







From left, Isabella Pacia, Jordan Fisher and Eliza Press on Sports Signing Day.

Photo by Anna Leung.

## Sports Achievement and Spirit – and a Record-Breaking Pole Vault – Power Panther Pride

When Edgemont Junior Senior High School pole vaulter Sophia Kumar soared 11 feet over the bar on April 29 at Rye High School, she crushed her school's record by a full 2 feet and clinched the league championship.

"The most intense feelings happen just after I leave the ground and just after I clear a bar," Kumar said. "I never hear anything when I'm on the runway. It's like the world resumes once I've cleared and there's this rush of confidence for the next bar."

As a junior, Kumar still has a year to even further sharpen her performance. Her vault topped a record that stood since 2015 – and she surpassed her competitors in the April tournament by even more. The second-place girls pole vaulter cleared only 7 feet.

On May 16, Kumar defended her girls pole vault championship, becoming the Westchester County champion for the second year.

Her record-breaking vault was a highlight of the Spring Track League 2D Championship, held April 28 and 29 in Rye and Pelham. The tournament was a high point for Panther athletics, which fields 61 teams in 31 sports. In the track and field league championship, eight Edgemont athletes finished first in individual



Lacrosse goalie Chase Harrison.

[more »](#)



events. Another 11 Panthers finished second and eight finished third.

“Each year, we’ve been getting better and better as far as athletes and coaching – and building the community,” Edgemont Head Track and Field Coach Camisha McKenzie said.

Elsewhere in Edgemont’s sports program this school year, swimmer Yuchen Wei, a sophomore, qualified for the state meet, finishing sixth in the 100-yard butterfly in the Section 1 championship. Wrestlers Gus Parsons (190 lbs.) and Jordan Fisher (170 lbs.) emerged as section champions and competed at the state level.

Several lacrosse players reached milestones. Junior goalie Annabelle Pragay passed 300 career saves on the girls team. Boys team goalie Chase Harrison, another junior, reached the 200-save mark for the season against North Salem on May 12 and reached 265 by season’s end. Senior Penelope Kraus and junior Addison Kaplan both reached 100 career goals on the girls team and junior David Rosen reached the same milestone on the boys squad.

“It was so exhilarating to finally get my 100th goal,” Kaplan said. “I felt like all my hard work throughout the past few years had paid off and I am so happy that I could share the moment with my friends.”

Harrison said he is “really proud of how far we have come as a team and personally how far I’ve come, especially considering this is only my second season playing goalie. I 100% wouldn’t be making the saves I have been if my coach Sebastian (Gomez) hadn’t cared as much as he did and hadn’t put in as much effort as he has into helping me and my team get better.”

Gomez brought invaluable experience to the lacrosse team – not only as a coach but as an international player for Team Colombia – when he became head coach this year.

“Our team has meshed together significantly since the beginning of the season,” Gomez said. “We’ve endured really tough times together and truly have gotten better as a unit. We have more kids scoring along with our primary scorers through their leadership, and defensively we have strong leadership backing the goal.”

Edgemont Junior Senior High School also held a signing day, when three seniors committed to colleges:

- Isabella Pacia, Soccer: Kings College
- Eliza Press, Soccer: Union College
- Jordan Fisher, Wrestling: Hunter College.

The athletics department and student athletes celebrated the spring achievements at its last awards night dinner for the year on June 5 in the San Marco Gymnasium at Edgemont Junior Senior High School.

Edgemont’s embrace of sports extends beyond the scoreboard. Superintendent Dr. Kenneth R. Hamilton has prioritized enhancing athletics as a core focus since arriving in 2022. Success on the field blends with fostering athletes’ drive, self-discipline and camaraderie ingrained in competitive sports. In his first year, Dr. Hamilton assembled and led an ad hoc committee on athletics that brought together parents, faculty and administrators and incorporated student voices. In meetings from January to October 2023, the committee brainstormed and formulated strategies for advancing the program.

“We continue to find success in our athletics program through the support the students offer each another, in the teamwork that marks their practices and games, and in their dedication to their team, sportsmanship, their school and community,” Dr. Hamilton said.

Edgemont student athletes proclaimed the benefits of joining an athletic team.

“Being an Edgemont athlete has been such a great experience,” said Kaplan, who plays field hockey and basketball in addition to lacrosse. “It has helped me manage my time between athletics and school, which is such a great skill to have since I will be doing this in college as well. I have made my closest friends through sports and they are all equally hard working and caring.”

Parsons said Edgemont’s size, smaller than many other districts, helps foster closer relationships among teams. “It’s more of a tight-knit community,” he said.

The school year began with a new team, boys volleyball, which has become increasingly popular both regionally and nationally in recent years.

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The year also kicked off with a renewed gleam on the floors of the gymnasiums at both elementary schools, which were renovated with support from Edgemont Hoops and the E Club booster organization.

The athletics program continues to evolve. When school reopens in September, the district will add junior varsity and modified teams for boys volleyball, as well as boys and girls fencing.

"Our sports program continues to evolve and provide students with opportunities to grow as confident, capable young adults," said Athletic Director Anthony DeRosa. "As we near the end of this year, we are eager to celebrate our athletes' achievements while continuing to guide and encourage students as they strive to achieve their maximum potential."

## SPRING PERFORMANCES UPLIFT, ENTERTAIN AND SHOWCASE TALENTS



Spring music and theatrical performances in Edgemont are beloved traditions that spotlight burgeoning talent while being a vital gateway for students to cultivate passions and talents. Please enjoy these photos, a sampling of performances that included "Mamma Mia!" at Edgemont Junior Senior High School as well as spring orchestra, band, chorus and chamber music concerts at Seely Place and Greenville Elementary Schools. All were venues for singing, playing, performing, acting and displaying artistic gifts for enthusiastic audiences.

[more »](#)









# Calendar of Events

*The Edgemont School District calendar of events and activities is chock full of opportunities for students and families. To aid planning, we respectfully offer these reminders. Thank you for your support of our schools. Please visit the full calendar at [Edgemont.org](https://www.edgemont.org) for potential schedule changes.*

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## JUNE

June 13-20: Finals/Regents Testing, Edgemont Junior Senior High School

June 19: Juneteenth, schools closed

June 20: Grade 6 to Camp, Seely Place Elementary School

June 23: Sixth Grade Moving Up Ceremony, Greenville Elementary School, 9 a.m.

June 24: Kindergarten Picnic, Greenville Elementary School

June 24: Sixth Grade Moving Up Ceremony, Seely Place Elementary School, 9 a.m.

June 24: Board of Education meeting, Edgemont Junior Senior High School Large Group Instruction (LGI) Room or via [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7p.m.), 7 p.m.

June 25-27: Early Dismissal, Greenville Elementary School

June 25-26: Early Dismissal, Seely Place Elementary School

June 25: Senior Bonfire, Edgemont Junior Senior High School, 8 p.m.

June 26: Class of 2025 Graduation, Edgemont Junior Senior High School, 6:30 p.m.

June 27: Last Day of School, Greenville Elementary School

June 27: Last Day of School, 11 a.m. dismissal, Seely Place Elementary School

June 27: Quarter 4 report cards posted, Edgemont Junior Senior High School

June 27: "Building Dreams" capital improvement project ceremonial groundbreaking, Edgemont Junior Senior High School cafeteria, 10 a.m.

June 30: Summer recess; enjoy a happy, healthy summer!

## SEPTEMBER

Sept. 2: Schools open

