Community Link

White Plains Public Schools

Unlocking the infinite and unique potential of each student, every day.

WINTER 2024

NEW THIS YEAR: Entrepreneurial Excellence at Highlands

Highlands Middle School students are exploring the world of entrepreneurship in a new half-year business elective called mxINCedu from Uncharted Learning. Participants identify a problem to solve then create a product-based solution, documenting their learning journey in a digital portfolio. This evidence of learning includes a business model canvas, a budget and pricing model, product name and brand identity, a pitch deck, sales goals, and post-pitch reflections. Students are also introduced to the essential roles of an entrepreneurship team. From the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to the Creative Artist, they discover how each has responsibilities and makes decisions that contribute to the start of a new business and bringing a product to market. Along the way, they build their complex analysis and evaluation skills, learn to work collaboratively and discover new interests that can help determine their high school course selection and even future career pursuits. Mentors from the local business community and additional volunteers assist in creating an authentic experience. *"Educating students about entrepreneurship and innovation helps them develop analytical and logic skills that enable them to address any problem,"* said mxINCedu teacher Ina Pascal.

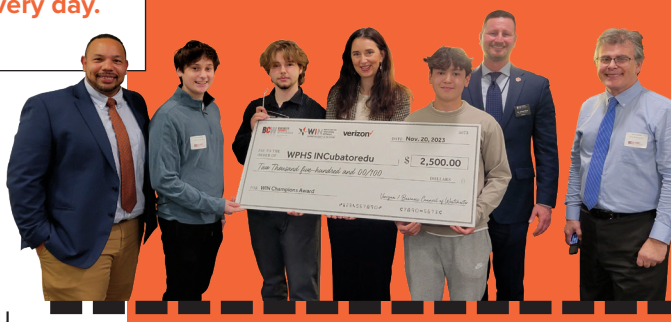
In January, 150 students working in teams pitched 50 different products to an audience of over 300 parents at the Highlands Middle School's first ever Business Fair. Another will be held in June, showcasing innovative products from students in the spring semester mxINCedu course.

"I extend my gratitude to Ina Pascal, who is in her first year of teaching at Highlands, for her hard work and dedication in helping our students prepare for such an amazing event," said Highlands Principal Michael Eaton. *"Additionally, I want to thank Rocco Varuolo, the coordinator of Instructional Technology, Business, and Library Services for the White Plains City School District, for bringing this class and opportunity to our students."* Principal Eaton also shared that he is *"immensely proud of our students and the ideas they developed for their businesses, all of which were intended to benefit others and were carefully thought through, including the marketing and pricing strategies."*





Visit the District's website (whiteplainspublicschools.org), Facebook page (facebook.com/wpschools) and YouTube channel (search WPCSD videos) for the latest information.



▲ *From left: White Plains High School Principal Emerly Martinez, WPHS students Harrison Abolafia and Benjamin Kodzic, Teacher Ashley LeBlanc, WPHS student Luke Psaras, Superintendent Dr. Joseph Ricca, Coordinator of Instructional Technology Rocco Varuolo.*

Award-winning Innovation at WPHS

Last year, we launched a full-year entrepreneurship experience at the High School, and we can now say that it's officially "award-winning!" This fall, our INCubatoredu course received a $2,500 Westchester Innovation Network (WIN) Champions Award from the Business Council of Westchester (BCW). The BCW's WIN initiative convenes thought leaders, planning futurists, innovators, government officials, and local organizations to strengthen the long-term innovation ecosystem in Westchester County. We're #WPProud of our inventive, innovative Tigers!



community



500 Wins for Coach Spencer Mayfield

Longtime White Plains High School Basketball Coach Spencer Mayfield recently won his 500th game — an accomplishment he says really belongs to the players — and celebrated with this team and family at a ceremony before the following home game at the High School. Coach Mayfield shared that the milestone is meaningful to him because it represents the many relationships fostered throughout the years, with student athletes and coaches. Many of those relationships with players last far beyond high school, as alumni often keep in touch, stop by during the summer and attend games. But when asked about the moments that really mean the most to him, it's all about the kids. *"Seeing the happiness on their faces when they accomplish something they didn't expect. When they reach a goal whether it's on the court, off the court or in the classroom."*

"We're certainly fortunate to have a coach of Spencer's caliber," said White Plains Athletic Director Matt Cameron. *"His program isn't just about basketball. Kids become better players, but also better people. They can look in the mirror and see both kinds of growth."* With the District for 31 seasons, Coach Mayfield was inducted into the New York State Basketball Hall of Fame in 2016 and the White Plains High School Athletics Hall of Fame in 2021.

Our Athletes are Scholars!



One hundred fifty six varsity athletes were recognized by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association as scholar athletes for the fall sports season, having maintained a GPA of 90% or above. Eight teams had 75% or more of the members earn this distinction and were named Scholar Athlete Teams: Girls Soccer, Boys Soccer, Field Hockey, Girls Cross Country, Boys Cross Country, Girls Swim & Dive, Girls Tennis, and Volleyball.

Building Community at GW



Each month, George Washington School hosts community meetings where grade levels get together to practice mindfulness strategies, check in using the "zones of regulation," discuss monthly awareness topics and participate in an interactive read-aloud from the school's diversity library. In January, students practiced triangle breathing and uplifting self-talk by repeating the phrase "I can handle it," set goals for the new year, and explored the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Reading Together = Reading More



Students, families and staff had a wonderful time at the Church Street Family Reading night in January, where White Plains Mayor Tom Roach and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph Ricca were there to kick off the festivities. In February, participants in the "Church Street Read-A-Thon" pledged to read every day of the month in order to promote a love of reading and being read to, and to hopefully develop a very positive lifelong habit!

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sharing

What's with the Weather?



Fourth graders in Sasha Growick's class at Ridgeway learned about different types of extreme weather, such as tornadoes, tsunamis, blizzards and floods. Working in groups, they read about and studied their topic, created PowerPoint projects and presented to the class. It was a great lesson in collaboration.

Creating Chess Champs





Eastview's popular new Chess Club, hosted by the National Scholastic Chess Foundation, is off to a terrific start! Students meet once a week for 10 weeks to learn game strategy from a professional Grand Master and a National Master. Three students – Graham Rutberg, Nathan Vargas and Kyle Kolawole – recently competed in a National Student Chess Foundation tournament at Bronxville Middle School, where Graham (right) came in 1st place, winning four out of four rounds. As a team, Eastview won the 2nd place trophy! Chess is one of nearly 30 after school club/team activities available to Eastview students.

Ready for "Reality" at Rochambeau



Upperclassmen at Rochambeau practiced making real-world financial decisions during the school's first Reality Fair in December. Participants identified their career of interest, received a correlating budget sheet and set about visiting a variety of booths that represent potential expenses/decisions, including housing, healthcare, transportation, cell phone, charitable giving, pet ownership, banking, credit cards, and children. Along with school staff, several members of the community hosted booths. Many thanks to Nick Wolfe, Stacy Braun, Monica Davis, Alex West, and Jason Cantave.

Buddy Up at MAS





Students at MAS are enjoying the new schoolwide "Buddy Up" initiative designed to encourage them to create new friendships and to build a kind and caring school community. Each class is matched with another from a different grade to learn, play and collaborate by participating in various activities throughout the year. Recently, students worked together on goal setting, creating a new year's resolution while decorating artwork for display. Buddies also worked together to learn about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I have a Dream" speech and to create a project where they shared their own hopes and dreams for the world.

An Evening of the Arts





Post Road hosted a community-themed Evening of the Arts in December, its own version of the District's citywide spring art show. Every student in grades three through five had a piece of artwork on display. The event also featured a family art-making station. Students were excited to show off their projects!

Dr. Joseph L. Ricca
Superintendent of Schools

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The mission of the White Plains City School District is to educate and inspire all students, while nurturing their dreams, so they learn continually, think critically, pursue their aspirations and contribute to a diverse and dynamic world.

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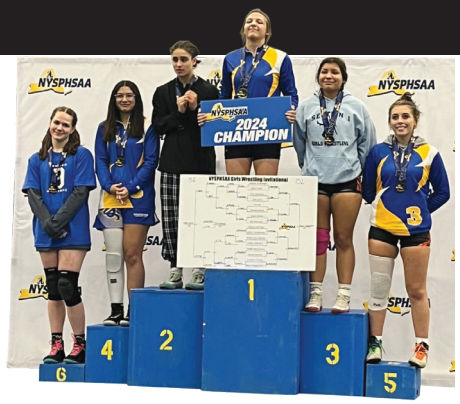
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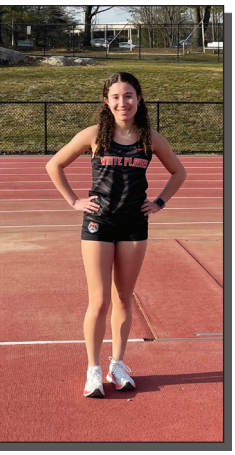
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Winning in Winter



Congratulations to Senior Lauren Garcia (above)**,** who finished third at the NYSPHSAA Girls Wrestling Invitational in Syracuse and **Senior Julia Beckman** (left), who placed 3rd in the girls 1500m race walk at the Westchester County Track and Field Meet.



Save the date: School Budget Vote — Tuesday, May 21, 2024

New Leaders Appointed Within District



Monica Arismendez was appointed Coordinator of STEM PreK-6. A White Plains High School graduate, Ms. Arismendez began as a third grade teacher here in 2017 and then became a STEM Enrichment teacher in 2018. She has also served as Assistant Principal of the Elementary Summer School since 2023.



Xavier Hernandez-Delgado was appointed Director of Facilities & Operations replacing Frank Stefanelli who retired. He had been serving as Assistant Director for the last three years and has over 18 years of experience in management of residential and commercial projects with proficiency in educational and hospitality environments.



Noah Miller was appointed Chief Information Officer, replacing Ron Velez who retired. For the past 10 years he has been Coordinator of Network Support and Network Administrator at Lower Hudson Regional Information Center of Southern Westchester BOCES.

New Turf Field

Work is progressing to reconstruct field #12 at the High School, under the direction of Director of Facilities Xavier Hernandez-Delgado. With synthetic turf and an efficient new drainage system, this play and practice area will no longer be out of commission after heavy rain. It will also feature enhanced lighting, broadcast capabilities and a digital scoreboard visible from two directions. The project is on track for completion by early summer.

Design: Jill Singer Graphics • Writing: Hillary Millman