White Plains Public Schools
REAL LIFE LEARNING

Community Link

White Plains Public Schools
Unlocking the infinite and unique potential of each student, every day.

SUMMER 2024

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Congratulations, Graduates!





The White Plains High School Class of 2024 commencement ceremony took place at the Westchester County Center on June 25. Family and friends gathered to celebrate graduates and speakers offered sage words of congratulations and advice.

Valedictorian Ava D'Arcy reminded her classmates that it is often *"the subtle gifts of positivity, empathy and compassion"* that have the most impact. *"These gifts may manifest as the smile you share or the one you bring to someone else's face, the person you sit with and listen to so they know they are not alone, the time you donate to help others in need."*

Dr. Ricca agreed, encouraging graduates to focus on basic ideals like kindness, gratitude, consistency, and a willingness to continue learning.

Salutatorian Nadyia Jones acknowledged the struggles that accompanied the pandemic and reminded her fellow graduates how much this experience helped them learn and gain. *"Despite the social disconnect, technical difficulties and adoption of new teaching styles, students and teachers alike became flexible and inventive to make online school interactive and engaging. This unique experience taught us to be resilient and how to adapt and be creative."*

WPHS Principal Emerly Martinez encouraged students to remember the lessons they learned as White Plains Tigers and to *"embrace challenges, stay curious and always believe in your ability to make a difference"* as they begin the next chapter of their lives.



Valedictorian Ava D'Arcy (right) and Salutatorian Nadyia Jones (left)

White Plains High School Principal Emerly Martinez and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph Ricca

School Budget: THANK YOU!

In May, the 2024-2025 School District Budget passed, as did the additional proposition to create a new Capital Reserve Fund to support future capital projects. Voters also elected three Board of Education members: incumbent Cayne Letizia and new members Craig Mondschein and Jessica Buck. We thank Assistant Superintendent for Business, Dr. Ann Vaccaro-Teich, for her leadership of the annual budget process and the community members who took time to attend meetings, share information, ask questions, and vote.



From the Superintendent

We all agree that our school district must be a safe and supportive environment for all students and community members. As always, we will continue our efforts to make improvements on behalf of our students and families in the upcoming school year. One critical area within which we would like to enlist the support of our parent/guardian community focuses on social media and digital communication. I am sure that we agree that we must all continue to enhance our efforts to support our children in their development as positive digital citizens. The use of social media and online communication devices continues to pose challenges for many students and families in and outside of the WPCSD.

At school, we will continue to explore common sense, age-appropriate approaches to address these ever-present concerns through education and support opportunities. At home, it will be critically important to maintain the same level of expectation for positive behavior/use in order to reduce the possibility of our children engaging in the digital world in an inappropriate manner.

I would like to thank our WPCSD PTA for working closely with me and the WPCSD team to reaffirm our commitment to eradicating online/digital bullying and misbehavior so that digital incidents do not lead to additional challenges for our students at school. In the upcoming academic year, I look forward to continuing these conversations in our ongoing effort to amplify this message. As always, thank you for your support so that we may all come together and protect our Tigers from potential harm both in the real and digital worlds.







Next Stop, High School!

The Highlands Moving Up ceremony at the County Center on June 25 celebrated 573 students who will head to high school in the fall. Principal Michael Eaton congratulated the Class of 2024, 152 of whom were inducted into the National Honor Society, and encouraged them to persevere through whatever challenges come next. *"Remember, perseverance is not just about academic success. It's about building character, developing grit and cultivating a mindset that embraces challenges as opportunities for growth. It's about supporting one another, working together and lifting each other up when times are tough."*

school news

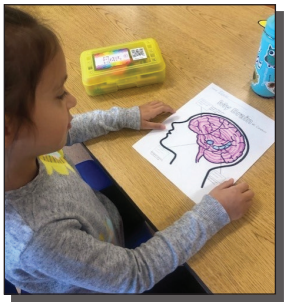
Creativity & Innovation at Highlands Business Fair

One-hundred seventy students from Ina Pascal's 7th grade entrepreneur classes at Highlands presented over 50 products and services – solutions to problems they had defined – at the Business Fair. Parents and faculty who attended the event were introduced to innovative ideas such as "sponge gloves" for easy dishwashing, "easy sheets" for quick bed changes and the "smile savior double-sided double-shine toothbrush."



Minding Social Emotional Health at Ridgeway and Post Road

Elementary students explore the MindUp curriculum with Guidance Counselor Antonietta Viczian to enrich their social emotional learning competencies and to support their academic journey. They learn about the function and importance of the brain as it relates to thoughts, feelings and actions, and practice mindfulness techniques and breathing exercises that encourage self-regulation and effective coping strategies. Elementary learners are excited to cover topics including decision-making, perspective and positive self-talk, to name a few.



Career Exploration at GW



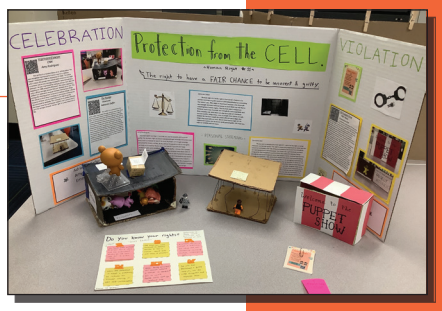
As part of a literacy unit on Jobs in Our Community, 2nd grade Dual Language students at George Washington Elementary explored and researched various professions. Family members actively participated in this learning experience by showcasing their expertise and answering students' research questions. Students, very engaged and demonstrating their rigorous questioning skills, gained insight into a wide range of professions, including a police officer, mechanic, taxi driver, veterinarian, and preschool teacher.

Tiger Fest Debuts at Eastview

Tiger Fest, a new event hosted twice this year at Eastview, allows students to engage in various activities that promote unity and cooperation. In the spring, the day started with a performance from the Greater Westchester Youth Orchestra, which featured three Eastview musicians. *Bravo* Giles Aikman, Mina Auletta and Marco Ciacci! Afterward, students participated in various activities including a "Math Warrior" course, chess, yoga and meditation, a cooperative physical education activity, group coloring, and more. At the end of the day, everyone gathered in the auditorium to discuss the importance of teamwork and community.



Research Skills on Display at Highlands



To develop and practice research skills, Highlands Middle School students in Critical Literacy Classes works in groups to select a specific human right from the Declaration of Human Rights and create a museum display that showcases a current related issue or event. Students learned how to create a research question to develop keywords and to evaluate online sources of information, including how to check for bias and ensure sources are accurate and balanced. By exploring how the human right they've chosen is both "celebrated" and "violated", students practiced their research skills in an authentic way and raised awareness about a topic they feel is important. Each student produced one 3D artifact out of found or recycled materials to represent an article they read and presented their work to teachers and peers while the museum was on display in the Library Media Center.



Congratulations to the Softball Team – Section 1 Finalists! – as well as our four individual Section 1 Champions: Callum Markowitz (tennis), Logan McCormick (high jump), Julia Beckman (racewalk), and Isabella Mcguire (shotput and discus). We're also proud that this spring, WPHS had 108 individual Scholar Athletes and all eight of our teams were Scholar Athlete Teams: Softball, Baseball, Girls Track & Field, Boys Track & Field, Boys Tennis, Golf, Girls Lacrosse, and Boys Lacrosse.



Mamaroneck Avenue Elementary students were proud to show off their talent and creativity at the District's Citywide Art Show Reception at the White Plains Public Library!

Spelling and Math Prowess Tested at Church Street



Students in grades 2-5 participated in a schoolwide spelling bee and the school's first Spanish-language spelling bee at Church Street School. Also new this year, there was a math competition for grades 3-5, where each grade competed amongst themselves. Math Specialist Patricia Della Penna created questions using Kahoot and students used their iPads to answer. Both events gave students the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and courage, and most importantly, their ability to encourage and support each other!

Dr. Joseph L. Ricca
Superintendent of Schools

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Cayne Letizia, *Vice President*
Sheryl Brady
Jessica Buck
Valerie Daniele
Craig Mondschein
Charlie Norris

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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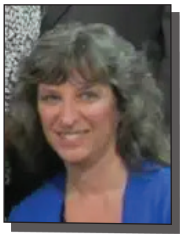
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Saluting James Hricay and Rose Lovitch

"We are very grateful for James' and Rose's longtime service on the Board of Education," said Board President Rosemarie Eller. *"All of us learn from each other, and we've certainly learned from them. We appreciate their invaluable contributions and their dedication to the students and staff of the White Plains School District."*





Thank You for Your Service

The Board of Education honored 35 retirees and 31 twenty-five-year staff members at its June meeting. We are proud to recognize these professionals who have dedicated their lives to teaching, coaching, supporting, nurturing, and caring for our students.

RETIREES
Joseph Boykin
Paul Bratcher
Brent Brown
Vilma Caban-Vazquez
Donna Centone
Michael DiStefano
Margaret Doty
McSheller Edwards
Miguel Gamoneda
Patricia Gilmartin
Luis A. Gonzalez
Evelyn Gonzalez-Smith
Sharon Grahame
Deana Guarino
Carmen King
Alexandra Klemstine
Franco Lombardo
Andrea Manigault-Adelakun
Kathy Marji
Lamont McCormick
Linda Moretti
Sungho Pak
Laura Pizzella
Adrienne Pollack
Janneth Ponce-Doyle
Monique Reilly
Dennis Scullion
Yarina Sencion
Lisa Sherman
Clare Smith
Maria Spista
Frank Stefanelli
Karen Sullivan
Denise Tomici
Jose Torres

25 YEARS OF SERVICE
Annette Adamiak
David Bergen
Elsa Bracero
Laura Crowley
Lorraine DiMarco
John Donnelly
Guerlande Dormeus
Tina Edwards
Maureen Fargo
David Ferrell
Jacqueline Forbes-Machado
Joseph Havis
Eugenia Inzero
Diana Jackette
Albert Laporte
Gaetana Mariani
Alberto Minotta
Lauren Mohr
Ryan Mulcahy
Kusumlata Negi
Angela Novielli
Eileen O'Leary
Walter Ortega
Nicole Reis English
Larry Roberts
Jason Skinner
Irene Spiconardi
Denise Tomici
Janet Wiggins
Mark Wolstencroft
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