Community Link

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

FALL 2024

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

Back to School!



The new school year kicked off with messages of gratitude and inspiration for District staff at Superintendent's Conference Day, where Superintendent Dr. Joseph L. Ricca, Board of Education President Rosemarie Eller and union officials welcomed everyone back.

Attendees enjoyed an uplifting keynote presentation from Adam Welcome, an author and podcaster who has served as a Teacher, Assistant Principal, Principal, and Director of Innovation for a district with 35,000 students and has won many accolades as an administrator and influencer. He is passionate about connecting with other educators from across the country and makes it clear that students come first.

He reminded us that everything we do is contagious and that it's important to be positive, creative and innovative. He encouraged us to talk about books and do all we can to get kids to explore different genres and get hooked on reading so they can experience all the joy it brings. Mr. Welcome also shared his thoughts about preparing students for new jobs and opportunities and how to get them to think critically, to collaborate, and to solve problems. What a great kick-off for the new school year!

Everyone was also treated to an extraordinary performance of excerpts from Matilda, Jr., by 7th and 8th graders who had performed the show at Highlands last spring. Our Tigers are incredibly talented!



welcome

high



Having a Field Day – Literally!

The games and competition at Highlands' Field Day have benefits that extend far and long beyond the field. Participating together in fun activities like capture the flag, school trivia, tug of war, the 50-yard dash, an obstacle course, volleyball, kickball, soccer, and basketball fosters collaboration, trust and camaraderie among students. As students cheered for their teammates and shared in the victories (and defeats), they created lasting memories and built important supportive bonds.



GW: Hear Us Roar!

During the first week of school, GW students participated in gradewide community meetings where they talked about how to create a safe and welcoming school environment and learned about the importance of school community through the story "Our School is a Family." GW also unveiled the GW Patriot Tiger Cub, a new mascot designed by Third Grade Teacher Mrs. Velazquez to represent GW Patriots' connection to the White Plains School District tiger.

"Escaping" Eastview

At Eastview's Tiger Fest event, students participated in activities that foster community and encourage collaboration and teamwork. Activities included a Social Studies "Escape Room" for exploring government, geography and world religions, DEAR (Drop Everything and Reset) activities, like art and board games, a community meeting focused on the theme of loyalty and fun recess games like box ball, basketball and volleyball.



Building Community at Rochambeau

Rochambeau Alternative High School kicked off the new year with two fun events. On a first-day field trip to Putnam Northern Westchester BOCES, students participated in an outdoor challenge course designed to promote teamwork, to build community and to promote good attendance throughout the school year. At the first newly instituted "Community Wednesday" event, students enjoyed cold treats from Ice Cream Social and spent time with team members from the White Plains Youth Bureau, experiencing its flight simulator and learning about services and activities available to them through the organization.



Congrats, Graduates!

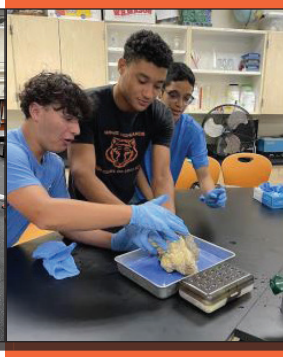
On August 22nd, we were pleased to celebrate 14 seniors who completed their requirements to graduate over the summer! WPHS Principal Emerly Martinez, Rochambeau High School Director Khali Murrell, WPHS Assistant Principal Sara Hall, Board of Education President Rosemarie Eller, and Superintendent Joseph Ricca addressed the graduates, commending their grit and persistence and encouraging them to continue pushing forward in their future endeavors. We are #WPProud of our graduates and can't wait to see what they do next!

White Plains Public Schools
WP
REAL LIFE LEARNING

lights

Summer Sports Academy Expands Academic Offerings





More than 150 WPHS student athletes took advantage of the District's free Summer Sports Academy, participating in a variety of indoor and outdoor speed, strength and injury-prevention training activities. New for 2024, the Academy's academic component, delivered by Evolve Exam Prep and Tutoring, expanded to include hands-on exploration of nutrition, physiology, and myology along with SAT/ACT prep and study and time management skills training. Students enjoyed learning about the "science" behind muscle growth, cardiovascular fitness, reflexes, and more.

Welcome, New Administrators!



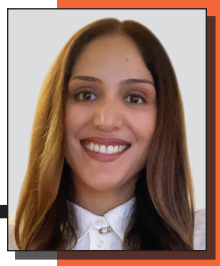


We are pleased to introduce five new administrators – two of whom are new to the District – and to welcome 38 new teaching staff and 20 new civil service members.





Alfonso Delgado, Assistant Principal at Highlands Middle School, joined the WPCSD from the North Bronx School of Empowerment, where he served as Assistant Principal. **Dr. David Jacob**, Director of Math, Science, Engineering, Career & Technical Education Grades 7-12, served as the Regional Science Coordinator and Science 21 Coordinator at Putnam Northern Westchester BOCES before coming to White Plains. **Khali Murrell**, Director of Rochambeau High School, was a House Administrator at White Plains High School, and before that, a Senior Administrative Dean at Walt Whitman High School in South Huntington, NY. **Laura Sileo**, Interim House Administrator at White Plains High School, has served as a School Social Worker there since 2019. **Cesilie Vega**, House Administrator at White Plains High School, has been with the District since 2019, serving as a Social Studies teacher at the High School.



New Board of Education Members

White Plains residents **Jessica Buck** and **Craig Mondschein** were elected to the Board of Education in May and began their three-year terms on July 1. Both have been active within the District for many years and we're pleased to welcome them to the Board and to work with them in this new capacity!



Jessica served as President of PTA Council prior to joining the Board of Education and has held multiple chair positions on the PTA at the local and regional levels. She led large-scale events like the Halloween Spooktacular and Silent Auction/Dinner Dance at Ridgeway, as well as book fairs, the 5th Grade Committee and the Health and Wellness Committee and most recently founded the Highlands 8th Grade Fundraising Committee Booster Club. Jessica is a marketing consultant and earned an MBA from Cornell University's Johnson Graduate School of Management with a concentration in Brand Management/Marketing and a B.S. in Business Administration from SUNY Albany. Jessica, whose son attends White Plains High School, serves on the Board's Special Needs Committee and as liaison to the PTA.



Craig Mondschein served on the White Plains Schools Finance / Audit Committee as a community member from 2017 to 2024 and will now serve on that committee as a Board member. Craig is the Senior Treasury Director at Tishman Speyer. He earned his Bachelor of Arts at the University of Rochester and his Master of Business Administration at the William E. Simon Graduate School at the University of Rochester. Two of his children are graduates of White Plains schools.

Dr. Joseph L. Ricca
Superintendent of Schools

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Rosemarie Eller, *President*
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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Encouraging Future Educators

We were thrilled to welcome Senator Shelley B. Mayer and Assembly members Amy Paulin and Chris Burdick to our June Board of Education meeting to celebrate the successful first year of our Educator Pathways Program and to thank them for their incredible support. We are also immensely grateful to Westchester Community College (WCC) and Pace University for their partnership.

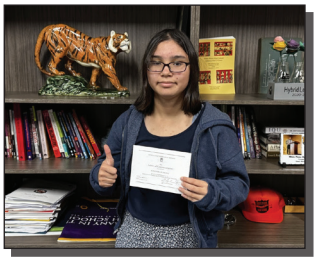
This innovative initiative, designed to encourage high school students to consider and to explore a career in education, enables WPHS students to take up to six courses toward a Teaching Assistant certification and/or an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education.

After graduating high school, students in this program can attend WCC during the summer or fall to complete the remaining courses to become a NYS-certified Teaching Assistant and then to join the workforce while they pursue their college degree. If they so choose, they can complete their Associates Degree in Early Childhood Education at WCC, or transfer to Pace University or to a four-year SUNY to complete their Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education. We hope to see some of these future leaders return to the WPCSD as teachers!



High School Students Earn National Recognition





Three White Plains High School seniors were named Commended Students in the 2024 National Merit Scholarship Program for their exceptional academic promise based on the results of the 2023 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Congratulations to Ryan Chung, Asa Hamlin and Alexandra Lee-Renert.

The College Board National Recognition Program honors outstanding high school juniors and seniors for their exceptional academic achievements, particularly among underrepresented minority groups who have excelled in challenging courses, such as Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) and have demonstrated a strong commitment to their communities. Congratulations to **Jurgen Escalante, Karen Gallegos, Christian Garcia, Henry Ginter, Adrian Juarez, Noah Lee, Justin Lopez, Aurora Ludewig, Erick Menjura, Genesis Oquendo, Jane Rajasingh, Marisol Ramirez Holguin, Kayla Rhett, Tyler Tan, Andros Yevenes** and **Joseph Zeigler.**



Design: Jill Singer Graphics • Writing: Hillary Millman