Community Link

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

WINTER 2025

New Science Curriculum Has Students Engaged and Prepared

Several years ago, an Elementary Science Curriculum Committee comprising 25 teachers across all White Plains elementary schools and grade levels collaborated to recommend a core resource to use to implement the New York State P-12 Science Learning Standards. That resource was the Science 21 curriculum from Putnam-Northern Westcheseter BOCES and we are now in our third year of implementation.

What's changed in the classrooms? Science education now emphasizes hands-on, inquiry-based learning that helps students build scientific literacy and problem-solving skills. *"Students are very engaged and really looking forward to their science classes,"* said Kathy Barpoulis, Ed.D., Director of Elementary Teaching, Learning and Assessment PreK-6. *"When they explore a phenomenon that takes place, they're motivated to investigate, to ask probing questions about why it happened and to make predictions about what will happen next."*

The new curriculum integrates three key dimensions: Science and Engineering Practices, which is how scientists investigate the natural world and how engineers design solutions to problems. Disciplinary Core Ideas, which are the fundamental scientific concepts that span different disciplines; and Crosscutting Concepts, which provide a framework for making connections across the disciplines, exploring things like patterns and cause and effect. Together, these pillars prepare students for future academic pursuits and real-world problem solving.

"Today it is in the practices of science and engineering that our students learn to be curious, creative and analytical, to think critically, to seek out evidence, and to persevere when a problem is complicated or not easily solved," said Dr. Debbie J. Hand, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. *"These foundational skills not only serve well in science but in other subjects as students progress through school and higher education, and into their future careers."*

Right now, kindergarteners and first graders are in their first year of Science 21. They are working on the weather and climate unit, attempting to save an ice cube from melting in the sun. *"This was not only a fun project, but the building blocks for future learning related to conservation, chemistry and engineering,"* said Monica Arismendez, Coordinator of STEM

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



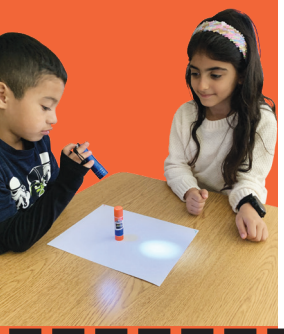
Yes, That's Neil deGrasse Tyson!

Mr. Jones' third-grade class at Mamaroneck Avenue School had the incredible opportunity to host a virtual Q&A session with renowned astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson. Tying into the science curriculum, where they explore patterns in the natural world and encourage students to think critically about the "why" and "how" of phenomena, Dr. Tyson emphasized the importance of a science-based approach to thinking. He shared insights from his own life and career, explaining how curiosity and the willingness to ask questions can lead to groundbreaking discoveries. Dr. Tyson's engaging explanations and stories inspired students to see science not just as a subject, but as a way of understanding the world around them.



New Science Curriculum

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PreK-6. *"It's also a great lesson in cause and effect, a theme they will discuss in other subjects."*

As students move into middle and high school, they will be well-prepared to take advantage of the robust experiences offered at the advanced grade levels, and the new, more flexible science sequences that will be available starting next year.

"Although not every student will pursue a career in science, there is still tremendous benefit for all," said Dr. David Jacob, Director - Math, Science, Engineering and CTE 7-12. He was the primary creator of Science 21 at PNW BOCES before joining the District. He shares his belief that everyone has a place in science. *"We all interact with science and technology every single day. Scientific literacy helps us make important personal and community decisions."*

Drumroll, Please...



During twice-annual Coffee House events, Rochambeau students have the opportunity to showcase their art and talents to a small group in a non-competitive setting. To cultivate a relaxed vibe, each student is welcome to invite one guest. Pictured here, Music Teacher Robert Guilford plays a drum set a student made entirely of paper, cardboard and other found materials.

WPHS Hosts Human Rights Educator



Steven Goldberg, Director of Education at the Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center in White Plains, hosted four assemblies at White Plains High School - one for each grade level - focusing on the critical topics of hate speech, hate symbols, and in what manner they appear or are used today. Students engaged in a follow-up lesson in their Social Studies classes, where they talked more about these issues and their impact on our community and society. This educational initiative aligns with the District's commitment to fostering a safe, inclusive and respectful environment for all students and reinforces the High School's designation as a "No Place for Hate" school, committed to reducing bullying, name-calling and all other expressions of bias.

Teaching Kids to Be Safe Online

To empower students to navigate the online world safely and responsibly, MAS School Resource Officer, Officer Albert, visited classrooms to discuss this important topic. Key points included privacy and protecting personal information online, treating others with kindness and respect, and balancing screen time with other activities, recognizing risks such as cyberbullying, and the importance of speaking to a trusted adult if they encounter anything that makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe.





Eastview Chorus Honors MLK Jr.

At a celebration to honor the life and legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. at Calvary Baptist Church in January, the Eastview Chorus presented the beloved African American spiritual Go Down Moses and an energetic performance of Never Give Up by the world renowned composer Rollo Dilworth. Directed by Eastview Music Teacher Matthew Hommez and accompanied on piano by WPHS Music Teacher Gary Casity, the chorus students received a warm welcome from White Plains community members and enjoyed participating in this special program.

White Plains Public Schools
WP
REAL LIFE LEARNING

The Inventors Among Us





Resourceful seventh graders taking "Intro to Entrepreneurship" with Teacher Ina Pascal were proud to showcase their inventions at the Highlands Business Fair. Projects included a Double Drink Water Bottle that allows users to carry two different beverages, Pocket Everywhere, a portable clothing pocket created with heavy-duty magnets, and Midnight Minis, jars of pre-mixed cookie ingredients great for when you just want a quick homemade treat. First, second and third place winners were presented with certificates and medals.

WPHS Grads Well Prepared for Civic Engagement

The Seal of Civic Readiness, awarded by the NYS Education Department, recognizes students who have built strong civic knowledge and skills. They complete a hands-on project related to civics or social justice and understand the value of community involvement. To make this achievement more accessible, the requirements to earn the seal are now seamlessly integrated into standard high school coursework. *"In addition, the Seal of Civic Readiness can help students qualify for a Regents diploma and serves as a standout credential on college and job applications,"* said Emory Davis, Coordinator of Social Studies 7-12. *"We're excited to see more students on-track to earn the Seal this year with the help of Social Studies Teacher Jawanda Weston."*

Athletics Hall of Fame



Ten exceptional alumni, recognized for their athletic achievements, sportsmanship and community contributions, were inducted into the White Plains High School Athletics Hall of Fame: Devon Austin '05, Markus Austin '01, David Doherty '92, Kaylin Gilmartin-Donohue Fitzsimons '08, Patricia Gilmartin (Coach), Ra'Shad James '08, Ryan McGee '10, Kelly O'Neil Childs '04, George Rainey '64 (posthumous recognition), and Jason Rhodes '88.

White Plains High School Hall of Fame

Four distinguished individuals were inducted into the White Plains High School Hall of Fame, an honor bestowed upon alumni who have distinguished themselves in their chosen careers and/or have had a significant positive impact on the lives of others. They are: Sandra Galef '58, member of the New York State Assembly for 30 years; Shawn Bryant '81, Managing Director at Deloitte Consulting; Larry Rogowsky '90, Tony Award winning Broadway producer, and Mara Gay '04, member of The New York Times Editorial Board. The honorees met with students during the day before the Induction Ceremony attended by County Executive George Latimer, White Plains Mayor Tom Roach, State Senator Shelley Mayer school administrators, teachers, students, family and friends. Congratulations!



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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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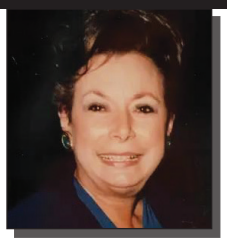
www.whiteplainspublicschools.org



Board President Rosemarie Eller Honored

At a special event to recognize outstanding community leaders who have made extraordinary impacts throughout Westchester County, White Plains Board of Education President Rosemarie Eller was recently honored by the National Council of Negro Women Inc., Westchester Section, in partnership with the Westchester County Board of Legislators. A member of the Board of Education since 2005 and President since 2010, she has been active on various Board committees and serves as its liaison to the White Plains Youth Bureau.

In Memoriam: Ann Edwards



The White Plains School District joins with the wider community in mourning the passing of Ann Edwards on February 28th. The consummate community servant, among her many activities Ann was PTA President in several schools and served as an elected member of the White Plains Board of Education from 1983 to 1987. She also was a founding member of the Friends of Public Education in 1996 and a staunch supporter of Tiger Fans.

Second only to her family, which always came first, Ann worked hard for many White Plains organizations which will miss her wise counsel and positive spirit. Most notably, she was a Vice President and a member of the Board of Directors of White Plains Hospital, President and a 35-year member of the White Plains Beautification Foundation and active in the YMCA, the Rotary Club, United Way, and many other organizations.

Ann is survived by her daughter Diane and son Donald, both WPHS graduates, and five grandchildren. Ann will be missed greatly.

Not Just Athletes, But Scholars!



One hundred sixty seven 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. Nine out of 10 teams had 75% or more of the members earn this distinction and were named Scholar Athlete Teams! And special congratulations to the Girls Swim Relay Team (pictured) for making it all the way to the State championships!

athletes

Design: Jill Singer Graphics • Writing: Hillary Millman