FEBRUARY 2026

SUPERINTENDENT NEWSLETTER

"ENGAGE, EQUIP, ELEVATE TOWARD EXCELLENCE."

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Elmsford Community,

This week, we celebrated our 100th day of school on Wednesday, February 25th. We are at a time of the year when the days become longer, and signs of spring begin to emerge. We are not fully in winter anymore, and this in-between season invites us to reflect on what we've accomplished and look ahead with expectation for celebrations to come.

Recently, the New York State Department of Education released our 2024-25 NYS 3-8 ELA and Math results, as well as our graduation rate. Our 95% graduation rate reflects the persistence of our students, the support of their families, and the commitment of our educators to their success.

The overall trend shows significant upward movement in our 3-8 statewide percentile rankings across all tested subjects:

- ELA (All Grades): Increased from a Statewide Percentile of 52 in 2018-19 to 75 in 2024-25.
- Math (All Grades): Increased from a Statewide Percentile of 50 in 2018-19 to 58 in 2024-25.
- Science (All Grades): Increased from a Statewide Percentile of 9 in 2018-19 to 45 in 2024-25.

Our results reflect steady growth and ongoing progress toward ensuring that every student graduates prepared for college, career, and life. These outcomes are a direct result of our faculty and staff's dedication—their daily instructional focus on lifting student learning with targeted supports, and our district's shared commitment to continuous improvement.

In the coming weeks, our community will gather for two exciting drama productions. Grady Elementary School will present The Lion King on March 12 at 7:00 p.m., and Alexander Hamilton High School will perform The Little Mermaid Jr. on March 13 and 14 at 7:00 p.m. Please join us for these musical performances to support and celebrate the incredible talents of our students!

Spring is coming! And may we continue to celebrate how far our students have come and remain confident in what our students will accomplish. Thank you for your continued support and partnership!

Susan Yom
Superintendent of Schools

BUDGET PRESENTATION

Superintendent Susan Yom will present the 2026-2027 proposed budget at the March 11 Board of Education Meeting. The meeting will take place in the AHHS Auditorium at 7 p.m.

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Dixson celebrates all the learning fun they have done in 100 Days of School

One, two . . . 100!

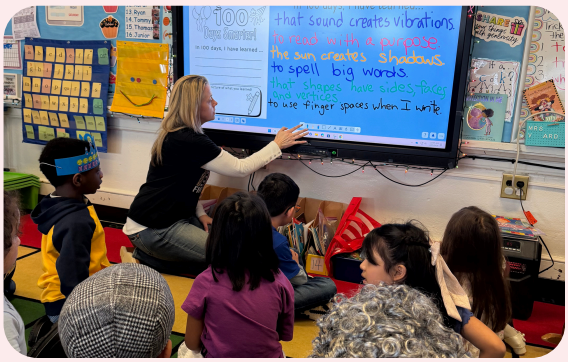
The 100th day of school is a special milestone in the life of a classroom. It marks a meaningful point in the school year — a time to pause and recognize just how far our students have come since that very first day.

The celebration is focussed around the number 100, enabling students to explore important math concepts like counting, grouping, and place value through hands-on, creative activities. Lessons often stretch beyond math into reading, writing, and problem-solving, making the day both purposeful and joyful.

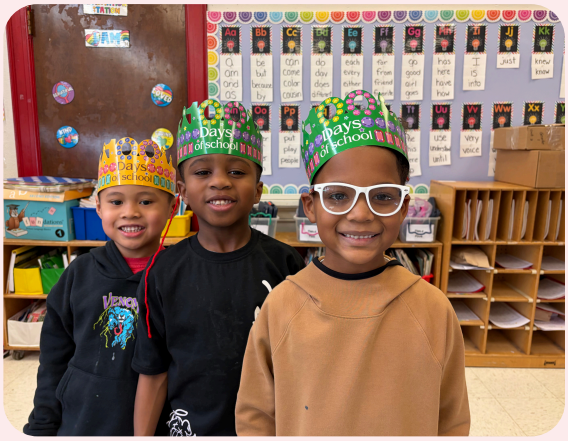
Students also have an opportunity to reflect on how far they have come sine the start of the school year, across several disciplines including, reading, writing and even the friends they've made.

Our teachers and staff go out of their way to ensure the day is celebrated with style and a great sense of fun!

















Award-winning IVECA participants ready to take on real world challenges

On the eve of a trip to the United Nations, several members of the AHHS IVECA, or Intercultural Virtual Exchange of Classroom Activities (IVECA) Program gathered during the February 4 Board of Education Meeting. Their hard work was being recognized.

IVECA is a non-profit organization facilitating online collaborative learning for students in K-12. The group promotes global citizenship and sustainable development which often reflect initiatives from the United Nations.

Several members of the group, including Adibah Hossain and Victoria Ponce were recipients of the IVECA Global Citizenship Award. Fellow IVECA members were presented with certifications of completion for the program that ran from October through December.

Participation in IVECA enables students to research an issue, develop solutions while collaborating with fellow students, possibly from around the world. The group then travels to the U.N., where they present their work.

"I am so excited to share the news about students' participation in IVECA" Superintendent Susan Yom said.

"Working on this program with Ms. Watson was truly a life changing experience for us," said IVECA member Anita Gregorious.

Anita explained that last year the AHHS IVECA group were given the opportunity to present their research at the United Nations where they sat on a panel consisting of delegates, professors, college students and other global leaders to discuss environmental sustainability in our world and communities but to also share the opportunities they their school has offered them, such as the GREEN, Interact Clubs and IVECA.



"We are excited to continue this work with our new classmates, new ideas and a new South Korean school," she said, referring to their peers in South Korea that they collaborated with last year. "We are so proud to represent you and the entire Alexander Hamilton High School community."

"We were the winners of the global citizenship award from IVECA. We devised a plan to further develop sustainable communities in this world," said Victoria.

This year the group worked on U.N. Goal #11, which focuses on making communities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. They decided to combat the issue through education.

"Major issues around sustainability are a lack of awareness," Adibah said.

"Elmsford has already developed programs around sustainability such as Reduce, Reuse and Recycle and Regeneron, both advocate for our youth and future generations."

"We are so appreciative of every opportunity you can possibly give us," IVECA staff advisor Ms. Watson said.

"These kids are our stars, they are the ones that volunteer and give extra time to their community, give extra time to each other. They are exceptional, if there is anyone you want to build your community on, it is them."





Taking the initiative, students form group to learn financial literacy

The returns have been impressive, in a matter of weeks the $100,000 that had been invested in the stock market went up considerably. Everyone should be so lucky.

While making financial investments may involve a bit of luck, learning about the market and its complexities is a better way to make serious financial gains.

After taking a Financial Economics course at AHHS, senior Angel Hidalgo caught the investment bug. He and more than a dozen classmates decided they did not want their learning to end when the class ended. They took the initiative to create an informal group to keep the learning going.

"We're a bunch of students interested in learning about finances," Angel said.

Initially the group followed the outlines offered by the Stock Market Game, a simulation where students can invest a virtual $100,000 in the New York Stock Exchange and NASDAQ while keeping track of their investment's performance.

Angel said in this simulation his portfolio earned $162,000 in three months.

After gaining some experience and confidence, the group formally joined the game and now compete with other groups across the state for a 10-week period. The goal of the game is to promote financial literacy.

"We started out in the top 100 in the region and we keep climbing the ranks," Angel said.

Angel has always been interested in finances and is planning to study finance and business management, preferably at Syracuse University, his top choice for college.

"I tell everyone I want to be a hedge-fund manager," he said with a laugh.

In the class Angel took, basic financial details about credit, APR, mortgage rates, investing, funds, bond and commodities were covered.

Social Studies teacher Ryan Mathews explained he teaches a one-semester Personal Finance class to seniors, a required graduation class. In it, he said, "we start the course with major economic concepts, free market; supply and demand; profit motive, etc. and then we concentrate more specifically on personal finance. The units we focus on are budgeting, banking, credit, investing and taxes."

Mr. Mathews said the financial course has much more impact on students' lives as they mature.

"Most of them will not need to know who Otto von Bismarck was," he joked, "But they are all going to pay taxes, deal with credit card companies and establish budgets. I'm hopeful that the things we cover in personal finance will stick with them as they enter their job/career and it helps them make their money 'grow' so they can live the lives they want."

Fellow group member senior Chandy Alexander is currently taking the Financial Economics class with Kevin Budzynski.

"It's been a fantastic experience," he said of the class, adding that he is planning to be a dual major in Economics and Politics, on a pre-law track.

"I've found that 'Mr. Bud' has a way of presenting the material that is both fun and engaging. He's been great at answering my more advanced questions and helping me see how these concepts apply to the real world," he said.

For Chandy, when he heard his track teammate was planning to start the group, he jumped at the opportunity to participate in order to deepen his understanding of investing and finance.

"I knew it would be a huge asset for my future academic and career goals," he said.

The group, which Angel hopes will eventually become a formal club, further discussed what students learned.

"It helps boost financial literacy and gives you a head start," he said.

Chandy agreed.

"I think it's crucial because many teenagers lack foundational knowledge about how the stock market works or how to manage investments," he said. "These are skills that impact almost every aspect of adult life. Understanding these institutions early on doesn't just provide us with financial security; it empowers us to make informed decisions that can lead to long-term stability and success."

While students were informally playing the game individually, Angel said he made a rooky mistake. He took the virtual $100,000 along with an additional loaned $100,000, not realizing he'd have to pay it back. He continued investing before realizing he was in debt.

Angel, however, was not deterred, lesson learned.

"The healthy competition is definitely a highlight," Chandy said of the game. "It gives us a great incentive to stay engaged and do well. I also really enjoy the environment — everyone is

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Throughout Black History Month, celebrated in February, students engaged in special assemblies celebrating historical figures and culture and acknowledging the many contributions in this country.













AHHS

AHHS students shared music, original poetry and a fashion show.







GRADY

The Grady Black History Month celebrated Black artists—singers, song writers and poets. Led by Band Director Michael Webb, the celebration was interactive, as students were invited to sing along with some popular tunes from celebrated artists such as Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong.

DIXSON

Through music, dance, and historical context, students at Dixson recently took part in a meaningful and high-energy Black History Month celebration. Led by music teacher Christopher Funke, the program introduced students to influential Black historical figures and musical traditions, while also inviting them to actively engage through movement and dance!












Finances, continued from page 3

constantly discussing the latest financial and stock market news. Sometimes it feels like we're right there on Wall Street."

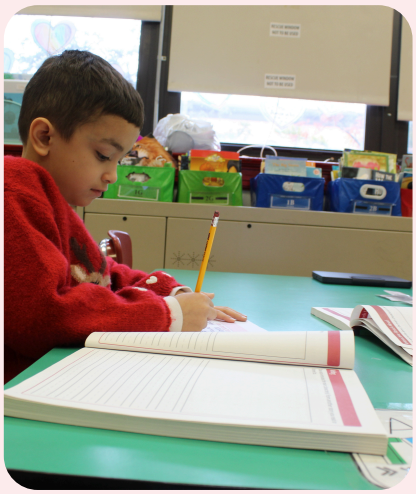
Typically, participants follow about 20 companies, keeping an eye on how the stock does over time. They will then change their portfolios based on what they are seeing the company do.

"I'm hopeful that the students in this club have fun and learn a little about ways that they can use the money they have to increase their wealth," said Mr. Mathews. "They are gambling on companies. It is important for them to see that while they might have success, it is equally possible to have a loss. Hopefully, they pick up some strategies and experience to help them in the future. If the students keep interest in this stuff, this club might become a permanent fixture here at Hamilton."



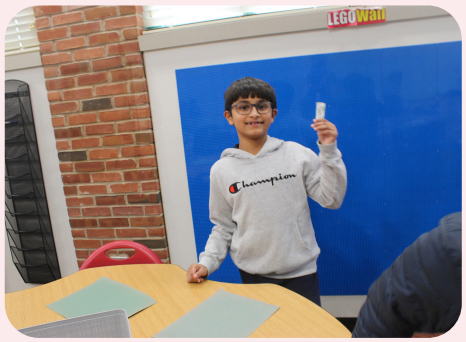


Kindergartners at Dixson studied several different types of species before creating their own books on Zoology based on the animals they had researched. Once complete, they had an opportunity to color their creations and read what they had written out loud!





First graders in Ms. Amoriello's class at Dixson studied story characters by reading a "Magic Tree House" book and discussing the traits of the characters "Annie" and "Jack." After watching the author read from the story, students identified what revealed each character's personality and then wrote about the traits of a character they created themselves!

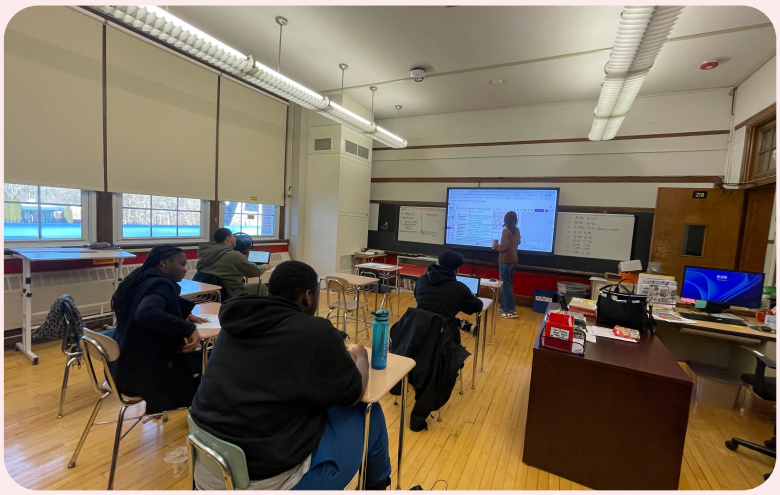


A group of Grady third graders had a fun and challenging time during a STREAM exercise in problem solving: When you don't have a Band-Aid to cover a cut, what can you do? Students enjoyed an active activity, walking around a table to music, before coming to a stop and looking at an item on the table that had been covered up. Students had to decide if the surprise item, such as a cotton ball or clothes pin, would be helpful in developing the Band-Aid! There was a lot of creative thinking going on!





Spanish 3 students at AHHS in Mr. Brown's class review their latest work!




AHHS Juniors in "U.S History 11," recently discussed the post-Civil War Era in class, looking closely at the policies of Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson. This course covers "the origin and development of the United States government, the changing nature of American society from 1865 -1920, eras of prosperity and depression between 1917-1940, the age of global crisis, and 1950 to the present."

Thank you!

School Resource Officer Day was celebrated on February 15 and we wanted to give a big shout out to "Officer Chris" and "Officer Dom," for helping to keep our students and staff safe and for their efforts in fostering a positive learning environment!





ADVANCING!

No. 1 Alexander Hamilton HS Girls Varsity Basketball beat Woodslands 79-52 during the Section 1, Class B Quarterfinals! Next up, Briarcliff HS on Tuesday, March 3, at 6:30 p.m. at the Westchester County Center!







Way to go Jaya Oliva! She recently scored her 1500th Varsity career point!





During the Winter Break, the Village of Elmsford hosted a special President's Day Basketball Clinic. Our AHHS Varsity Boys and Girls Basketball team members and coaches were on hand to lead the drills and show aspiring players how its done!





UPCOMING EVENTS

March 11, Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., AHHS Auditorium
March 12, Grady Drama Performance, 6:30 p.m.
March 13, Staff Development Day, ½ Day for Students
March 13-14, AHHS Musical, "The Little Mermaid," 7 p.m.

Thank you!

Between February 22-23, winter walloped the area with two feet of snow! In light of the Blizzard of 2026, the district shut down for two days, allowing time for the Village roads, and school building campuses to be cleared. The EUFSD offers a huge thank you and shout-out to our incredible maintenance and facilities crew, who worked around the clock clearing driveways and sidewalks to get our buildings ready for students and staff to return. They were treated to a well-deserved thank-you lunch and earned some much needed rest!
We're also grateful to our vendors for keeping our parking lots clear, and to Mayor Robert Williams and the Village of Elmsford crews for lending a hand and helping us dig out!











