

MARCH 2026

"THE QUOTE"



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE WEST IRONDEQUOIT CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

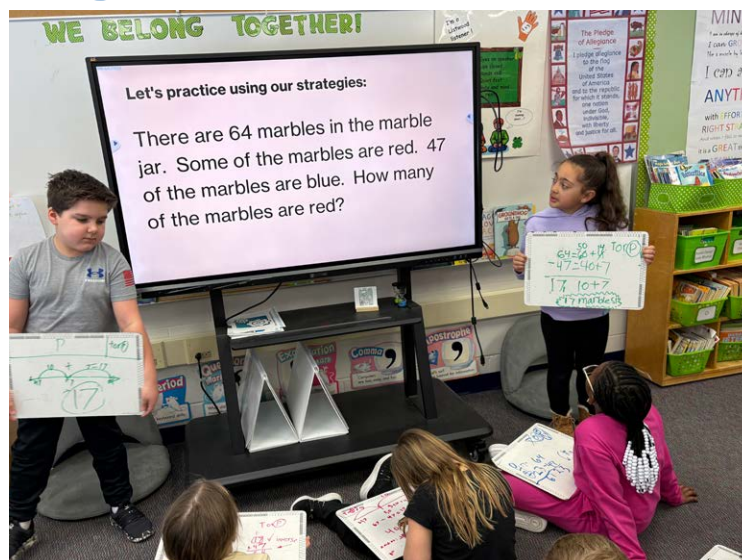
Increasing learning through incremental shifts

West Irondequoit teachers focused on the Science of Learning strategies

West Irondequoit educators have spent this school year focused on strengthening instruction through research-based practices that help all students learn more effectively.

Our district's professional learning has emphasized how the brain acquires and retains new information, and how small, incremental shifts in classroom practice can significantly improve student outcomes. Staff members have learned that our students learn best when new material is presented in small steps and when students have frequent opportunities to process information. All students – not just those who raise their hands – are asked to think and respond during instruction-based practices that help all students learn more effectively.

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Second graders at Listwood School are shown here presenting their work during a mathematics lesson. The use of whiteboards to readily check work is part of an "active processing" strategy to help students learn.

A Message from the Superintendent



Dear West Irondequoit families/residents:

As we reach the midpoint of the school year, I am proud to reflect on the extraordinary learning and growth taking place across our district. Our students keep excelling at remarkable levels, from outstanding achievements in DECA, music, and the performing arts to the meaningful, real-world accomplishments emerging from our career and technical programs. It is inspiring to see so many learners embracing the wide-ranging coursework available to them as they progress through our secondary schools, building on the strong foundations in literacy and numeracy established in our elementary classrooms. Just as encouraging is the visible joy for learning in our schools.

Visiting our schools, I see students who are not only engaged but also thinking deeply to apply their expertise in practical, relevant ways and increasingly taking ownership of their own growth.

This progress reflects the dedication and professionalism of our staff. They continue to refine their craft around core instructional principles, including frequent and purposeful checks of understanding, meaningful opportunities for students to demonstrate and apply learning, and classroom environments that integrate social-emotional development as an essential part of academic success.

Recently, the NYS Education Department has introduced new graduation requirements that will phase in over the next two years, ensuring that all students receive meaningful instruction in financial literacy and climate education (see Page 2 of this newsletter). While these updates formalize important priorities, they also affirm the direction our district has already embraced. Through our strong commitment to place-based and performance-based learning, our teachers and leaders have intentionally designed experiences that connect students to real-world problem solving, local environmental

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Read "The Quote" on your mobile device

New Requirements for Financial Literacy & Climate Education

New York State is introducing new learning requirements to ensure all K-12 students gain essential skills for college, career and life. These updates focus on Personal Finance Education and Climate Education, which will be taught once in each grade band – elementary, middle and high school – over the next several years.

FINANCE EDUCATION

Beginning in 2026-27, districts must teach financial literacy in grades 5-12. In 2027-28, requirements expand to grades K-4. Students will learn budgeting, money management, credit and debt, income, savings and investing. Instruction may be embedded in existing classes or taught as standalone courses. Starting next school year, all 10th graders (and all students moving forward) will be required to take “Financial Literacy: Career & Financial Management” as a half-year course before they graduate.

CLIMATE EDUCATION

Climate instruction becomes required in grades 5-12 starting in 2027-28 and in grades K-4 in 2028-29. Students will learn about climate causes, impacts, and solutions with West Irondequoit embedding these topics into existing curriculum. [W](#)



Starting with the Class of 2029 (next fall's sophomores), taking the Career & Financial Management course at IHS will be a graduation requirement to fulfill new NYS standards for teaching financial literacy. Thankfully, IHS is well-positioned to do so because its Business Education Department has been recognized nationally for teaching excellence for more than a dozen consecutive years. Most of the students in the picture above took CFM. They were pictured last fall for collecting more than 1,000 pounds of food for the Irondequoit Community Cupboard, one layer of a promotional campaign for DECA, Irondequoit High School's award-winning business club.

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Students are eligible for our full-day kindergarten program in September 2026 if they will be 5 years of age on or before Dec. 1, 2026. **The deadline to register a child for the 2026-27 school year is April 1st.** Letters with information were mailed home and emailed to families with eligible children in February. Our parent/guardian orientations happened in late February and early March. Registration information can be found on our website at westirondequoit.org. Click on “Parents/Students” then “Registration” then the “Kindergarten” button. Children attending private, parochial, charter schools or homeschool still must be registered. Questions? Call the Registrar's Office at (585) 336-6743.

Quote Notes

PROMISE PROJECT UNDERWAY SOON!

Work on the R.I.S.E. Capital Project wraps up this month and our district and construction partners are excited to break ground this spring on the Promise Project 2027. Like the R.I.S.E., the Promise Project was passed by district voters (Dec. 10, 2024) at no additional taxpayer cost.

The two layers of this project are the renovation and modernization of the Pinegrove Learning Center, 154 Pinegrove Ave., to add three more classrooms and expand our PreK/UPK program. It'll also freshen up Helmer Nature Center rooms in the building. The second aspect will change the look at our main campus with the addition of multi-purpose turf fields behind IHS and Dake Jr. HS. It also includes two new multi-use grass athletic fields at Iroquois Middle School.

Follow the progress via westirondequoit.org (click on Capital Projects).

FOOD SERVICE & ADDITIONAL INCOME-BASED BENEFITS

Thanks to our district's participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program, all students are receiving free meals this year. If you wish for your child(ren) to be considered for additional state or federal income-based benefits based, parents/guardians must complete the Income Eligibility Survey (one per household). Your participation will also provide data to NYS to ensure our district receives all state aid for which we are eligible. Applications can be found at westirondequoit.org – click on Departments, then Food Services and Meal Applications.

SUBMIT ALL TRANSPORTATION FORMS ONLINE

April 1 is the deadline for all Private, Parochial & Charter School families for the 2026-27 school year. Even if you don't plan to use our transportation, you must fill out the form. A digital version is available at westirondequoit.org; click “Departments” and “Transportation.” We emailed our families about this in February. You can submit ALL transportation forms online at our site, including opting out of the bus at any time.

Increasing learning *Continued from cover*

Much of the research and ideas behind this work was gathered by a team of our staff that attended the Learning and the Brain Conference in April 2025. This conference is an opportunity for educators to come together from around the world. They share and dig into the latest research regarding cognitive science, psychology, and education to bridge the gap between research and practice.

“We really focused on high-leverage, low-cost instructional practices that benefit every student, regardless of background or individual circumstances,” said West Irondequoit Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, Mrs. Chrissy Miga.

The first place information from the conference was turnkeyed was at our district’s Summer Leadership Retreat last July 2025. During the retreat, administrators and teacher leaders explored the key principles behind the Science of Learning and planned how to bring the work to their buildings. Since then, teachers across all schools have engaged in ongoing professional development through faculty meetings, collaborative discussions, and turnkey sessions.

Throughout the year, faculty meetings and professional development have centered on several key areas:

- Direct instruction
- The social nature of learning
- R.I.G.O.R. (Relationships, Instruction, Goals, Organization, Relevance)
- Purposeful small-group instruction

These topics have helped educators design lessons that include short bursts of teaching followed by active processing – such as choral responses, turn and talks, quick writing or drawing tasks, and the use of mini-whiteboards to check every student’s understanding. This work is grounded in evidence that students learn more when they frequently retrieve information and when teachers routinely check the thinking of all learners.



The entire class, not just students with their hands raised, are asked to think and respond during instruction to help all students learn more effectively.



Elementary students are shown here using whiteboards to enhance learning.

Active participation techniques ensure every student is actively engaged every couple of minutes during instruction. This approach of employing active participation techniques supports the transfer of new information from short-term to long-term memory. It also increases equity by giving all students – not just the confident hand-raisers – consistent opportunities to think, respond, and succeed. This is just one example of the incremental shifts teachers have been putting into action to best support students.

As a result of these focus areas, families may notice more intentional routines in classrooms, such as clear learning goals, opportunities for guided practice, checks for understanding, and lessons that build on what students already know. These shifts help ensure that every child is supported, challenged, and given meaningful opportunities to grow.

West Irondequoit’s commitment to this shared learning reflects our belief that when educators continually deepen their understanding of how learning works, students benefit every day. 

Superintendent’s Message *Continued from cover*

stewardship and responsible decision-making. Because of this groundwork, we are building from a position of strength and preparing our students with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in an ever-changing world.

Together, these efforts reflect our shared commitment as educators, families, and community partners to ensure that every student is supported in achieving their peak performance.

In partnership,

Aaron R. Johnson, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools

IHS MUSICAL IS MARCH 19-22

The Irondequoit HS spring musical is “The Hello Girls” with performances March 19-22! It chronicles the story of America’s first women soldiers set against the backdrop of World War I. This thrilling musical follows the journey of a group of courageous women who served as bilingual telephone operators on the front lines, playing a crucial role in helping turn the tide of the war. Buy tickets at westironpa.ludus.com/index.php or scan the code below.

- Thursday, March 19-21 at 7 p.m.
- Sunday, March 22, 2 p.m.



"THE QUOTE"



West Irondequoit CSD
321 List Avenue
Rochester, NY 14617
Phone: 585-342-5500

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Bree Hunley, Student Representative
Richard Maulfair III, Student Representative

Newsletter Editor
Mr. Jeff DiVeronica

Annual District Vote & Election

Tuesday, May 19, 2026
6 a.m. – 9 p.m.

Vote location:
St. Paul Blvd. Fire Dept.
433 Cooper Rd.

WICPTSA Candidates' Night:
Monday, May 11

This event is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Monday, May 11th in the small cafeteria at Irondequoit High School. It will be recorded and available on the district YouTube channel. There are two Board of Education positions up for election this year. Candidates' nominating petitions are due to the district clerk by 5 p.m. April 20.

Budget Hearing:
Thursday, May 7, 7 p.m.

The Board of Education will hold a Budget Hearing to share details of the proposed budget. Additional presentations may be scheduled. Go to westirondequoit.org or call 585-336-3067 for updates. We expect there will be time to ask questions at the Budget Hearing.

Absentee Ballots

Absentee ballots are available for those who qualify. Contact District Clerk Jenna Lustig at 585-336-2983 or jenna_lustig@westiron.monroe.edu. Or visit westirondequoit.org.

Rogers & Southlawn: Growing Together as Community Schools

This September started an exciting new chapter for Rogers Middle School and Southlawn elementary as they officially became "Community Schools." At the heart of every community school is a warm and simple belief: Schools thrive when they reflect the strengths, needs and hopes of the families they serve. By strengthening our connection with parents/guardians, caregivers, students and community partners, schools become welcoming hubs where children feel supported, inspired and truly known.

Over the last few months, both schools focused on something essential: Listening. Families shared their voices through surveys, focus groups and informal conversations, offering honest insight into what their children love about school and where they could use extra support. This early relationship-building is laying the groundwork for a strong, shared path forward.

Across both schools, families expressed similar hopes. Many would love to see more opportunities for students to build friendships and social confidence, opportunities to collaborate, play and learn from one another. Parents/guardians also shared a desire for classrooms that blend hands-on, creative learning with thoughtful, purposeful use of technology. Clear communication between home and school emerged as another important theme. Families are also excited about growing partnerships with local organizations that can bring new experiences, resources and enrichment to students.

The next step in this Community School journey will bring everyone even closer together. In the coming months, students, families, teachers, and staff will join in creating specific strategies and action steps to bring these priorities to life. By continuing to listen and plan side-by-side, Rogers and Southlawn are building school communities where every child feels supported and every family feels connected – where everyone has a voice in shaping their school and future. 🗣️