HALDANE HORIZONS

A newsletter of the Haldane Central School District



Junior Class, Washington, DC

MARCH 2026

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2026 PCMEA Elementary All County

Message from Dr. Duffy

Dear Haldane Families,

It is hard to believe April is already here! As we welcome the arrival of spring weather, there is a tangible sense of energy building across our campus. It is a season of growth, and that extends to some exciting structural changes within our district.

Starting this fall, our 5th grade students will officially transition from the elementary school to join the middle school community. This reconfiguration, which is a key goal for the District and Board of Education, is the final step in our K-12 alignment initiative. Our focus remains on enhancing the student experience and ensuring a smooth, supportive transition for our rising 5th graders. Please read on for some FAQs regarding this shift.

We are also finalizing preparations for the upcoming traffic pilot, scheduled to begin on April 13th. Please review the details here to stay informed.

THE HALDANE ESSENTIALS

Critical Thinking
Problem Solving
Communication
Growth Mindset
Emotional Intelligence
Wellness

With Capital Project approval now secured from the NYS Education Department, we are officially in the bidding phase. We look forward to sharing more updates as our campus improvements begin to take shape.

Thank you for all that you do to support our children and school community.

Dr. Gail Duffy
Superintendent of Schools



Haldane 5th Graders to Join Middle School



Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, fifth grade will become part of Haldane Middle School.

What is changing for the 5th grade?

Starting in the 2026-27 school year, 5th grade will move from the elementary school to the middle school. This will create a PreK - Grade 4 elementary school and a Grade 5 - Grade 8 middle school.

Why the new structure?

This change allows us to enhance Haldane Middle School's team teaching. While Haldane's enrollment is lower than in previous years, the creation of a 5th & 6th teaching team and a 7th & 8th teaching team will preserve the middle school model that continues to benefit our students. The change will also expand student access to electives.

How did Haldane plan for this transition?

Haldane administrators and teachers have been exploring a revised structure for several years, which included collaborating with similar schools in the area that have grades 5 through 8 in their middle schools. These insights helped us refine the plan to ensure a smooth transition and a successful program for our 5th graders and all students.

A planning committee of administrators and teachers continues to meet regularly to prepare for these changes in the upcoming school year.

How will the 5th grade schedule be different?

Next year's 5th graders will be on a similar schedule to the middle schoolers, but with specific modifications to meet their needs. For example, they will have fewer class rotations, a dedicated writing class every day in addition to ELA, and core academic blocks to promote interdisciplinary projects.

Will my 5th grader have lunch with 8th graders?

No, 5th and 6th graders will have a separate, dedicated lunch and recess period to ensure they have their own time to eat and play.

How will Haldane celebrate my 4th grader as they end their time in elementary school?

This is an exciting time! We want to ensure that our 4th graders enjoy the same exciting sendoff that Haldane Elementary students have for years. This spring, our 4th graders will participate in Arts Alive, a trip to Lake Compounce, a grade-level activity night, and a 4th and 5th grade picnic.

Most importantly, our 4th graders will have their own Moving Up ceremony in June.

How can I help my child prepare for the transition to middle school?

Haldane Middle School will host a 5th/6th Grade Parent Night on May 7th. Dr. Seelke, your children's team of teachers, and the middle school counselor will share an overview of what to expect as your child moves up to middle school.

West African Dance Celebrates Black History Month

Haldane Elementary's youngest students enjoyed an interactive performance by Diata Diata, a Hudson Valley-based group that shares traditional West African dance, storytelling, and drumming. The event, sponsored by the Haldane Arts Alliance in coordination with the Haldane PTA EDI Committee, had students and teachers on their feet as part of the storytelling.







Photos shared by Diata Diata

Dr. Duffy Shares the Stage with Little Leprechauns



Dr. Duffy joined our elementary students to share her Irish step dancing days and teach them a few moves. The little leprechauns in the audience had many questions!



Essential Experiences

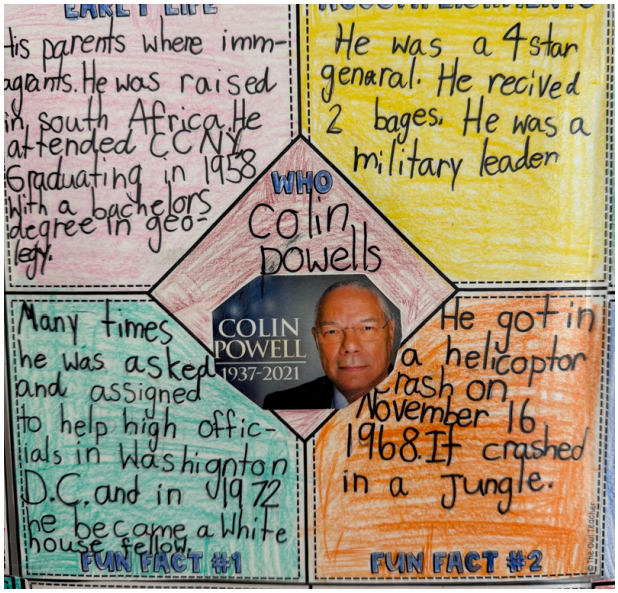
Bringing The Haldane Essentials to life for our students.

Critical Thinking | Problem Solving | Communication | Growth Mindset | Emotional Intelligence | Wellness

3rd Grade Black History Month Quilt



The 3rd graders' Black History Month quilt, highlighting the many individuals they learned about last month, is proudly on display outside of the Elementary Library.



7th Grade Celebrates Pi Day









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What Does Service to Your Country Mean to You?

Congratulations to Orson Wayland, Jack Glotzer, and Lucia McIlwaine, Haldane 7th graders whose essays advanced to the state level of the annual Americanism Essay Contest, sponsored by the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. This year's contest asked students to respond to the thoughtful prompt, "What Does Service to Your Country Mean to You?" Students from grades 5–8 across the country were invited to reflect on what it means to be a good citizen and how people can serve their communities and their nation.

We are incredibly proud of Orson, Jack, and Lucia for demonstrating their deep thinking about service, community, and what it means to contribute to our country. Their essays were written with thoughtfulness, creativity, and meaningful reflection on the responsibilities and values of citizenship.

Best of luck to our student writers as their essays continue on to the next level! National winners will be announced this summer.

ECO Takes 6th Grade to Field and Stream

Scenes from Mr. Wick's 6th grade ECO class' recent expedition. Don't let the shorts fool you - the stream was reported to be numbing!









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Middle School International Day Celebration Draws Crowds

In partnership with HMS World Language teachers and club advisors Cordelia Tanner and Melinda Vilches, the middle school International Club hosted an International Day Celebration last week. The planning was spearheaded by a small group of 6th graders, especially Moon Cutler, who came up with the idea.

The call went out for middle school students to bring in a cultural food or activity to share at the event. Most students chose dishes from their own family's cultures, but a few decided to highlight other interesting places. In total, more than 17 countries from five continents were represented at their extensive buffet.

The club also hosted several activity stations for students to enjoy during the feast: flag bingo, guess-the-country trivia, and crafting stations to make Guatemalan worry dolls and Japanese origami. The students put a lot of work into the event, the turnout was impressive, and the group is already looking forward to next year!











Max Sanders
Class of 2026 Valedictorian



What would you say contributed to your academic success at Haldane?

I would say my drive and work ethic played a big role in my success. I genuinely enjoy studying, so I challenged myself by taking more demanding classes that required extra time and focus. I was also lucky to have an amazing support system of teachers at Haldane who were always willing to help answer questions or let me work in their classrooms when I needed it.

What activities are you involved in at Haldane?

I was the president of the Leo & ROAR Club, vice president of the History Club, manager of the Haldane girls' varsity volleyball team, secretary of Model UN, student body treasurer, and the student representative to the Board of Education. I was also a member of the National Honor Society and participated in several other clubs and activities during my time at Haldane.

Favorite Haldane memory of all time?

When I was in Mrs. Hocker's first grade class, we did a restaurant project where students acted as chefs or waiters and served food to other classes. I remember cooking pizzas in the back of the classroom and bringing them out to my classmates. It was such a fun project, and it's one of the first Haldane memories that still sticks with me.

Best part of senior year so far?

I've loved catching up with friends during senior privileges. If I'm not doing work in the hallway, I'll usually grab Starbucks with friends or head to the gym. Those little breaks during the day have been a great way to recharge and enjoy time with friends.

What are you most excited about for life after Haldane?

I'm excited to begin my new adventures at Brown next year and start my journey toward becoming a neurosurgeon someday. I'm looking forward to meeting new mentors and friends along the way and continuing to work toward making that goal a reality. I'm also excited to explore new ideas in the lab or the classroom that will challenge me and help me grow.

Louisa Schimming
Class of 2026 Salutatorian



What would you say contributed to your academic success at Haldane?

I was never trying to be Salutatorian or anything, I've just always loved learning and I'm interested in basically every subject. I think the teachers at Haldane are really amazing and that's helped me a lot, especially Mr. Hoolan, Mr. Lynch, Ms. Martinez, Ms. Secor, Mr. Sassano, and Ms. Booth.

What activities are you involved in at Haldane?

I'm the Managing Editor of the Haldane Outlook, I'm the editor of the Literary Magazine, and I'm in Art Club and have taken lots of art classes at Haldane! Outside of school I also do ballet and play the violin.

Best part of senior year so far?

Priv, my parking spot, Ceramics period 2 (the best class ever), and AP Lit.

What are you most excited about for life after Haldane?

Never having a class at 7:30 AM again.

Favorite Haldane memory of all time?

The DC trip, taking Creative Writing, and editing the Haldane Outlook!

Les Misérables Cast Makes Haldane History

Congratulations to the cast, crew, directors, and volunteers of the Haldane Drama spring production of Les Misérables. This year's show was the first in Haldane Drama history to sell out all three performances prior to showtimes! By all accounts the skill, energy, and artistic quality of all involved exceeded our audiences' Broadway experiences. Once again, the tireless efforts of Martha Mechalakos, Andrea McCue, Sam Sauer, Damian MacDonald, and our many, many volunteers help our students deliver unmatched performances!

Photos shared by Jim Mechalakos















Essential Experiences

Bringing The Haldane Essentials to life for our students.

Critical Thinking Problem Solving Communication Growth Mindset Emotional Intelligence Wellness

Model UN Heads to Bronxville

Accompanied by advisors Chris Blair and Jeff Sniffen, The Haldane Outlook newspaper staff attended the Columbia University Scholastic Press Association conference for a three-day workshop this month. Through this event, the Columbia Scholastic Press Association offered more than 240 session choices covering writing and editing basics, editorial leadership, and guidance on issues facing student newsrooms today, such as press freedoms, social and political unrest, misinformation, and artificial intelligence. The event drew schools from across the country and provided a unique, top-tier opportunity for our student editors.



The Haldane Outlook

The Haldane Outlook has made impressive strides over the past year and a half, churning out jam-packed newsprint and online versions of their take on local and national news.

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Sixth Grade Civilization Project Opens Gallery

Mr. Sniffen's rite of passage 6th grade civilization project now features an art gallery displaying creative works, animals, and relics from the student-imagined civilizations. As you can see, imaginations ran wild as students explored artistic expression to highlight and symbolize what's most important to the people of their worlds.

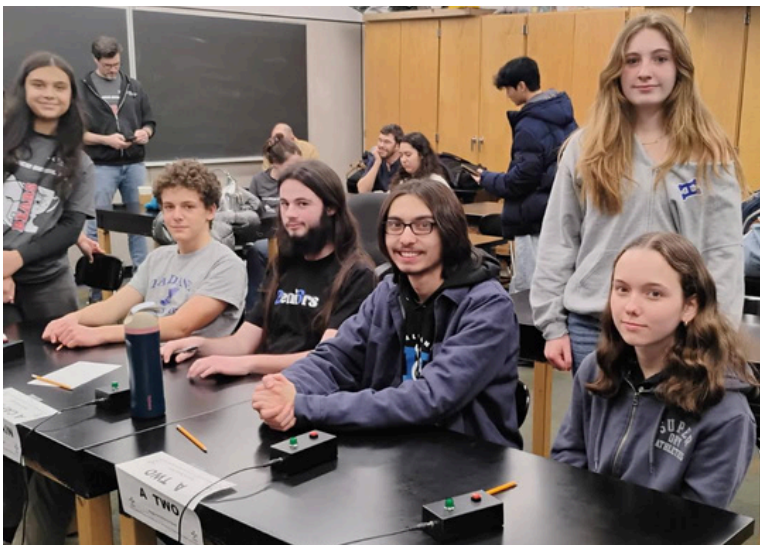








Strong Progress in Year Two of The National Science Bowl



Haldane's high school Science Bowl team returned to the regional competition at Hunter College High School. Students particpated in round robin competitions against top high schools from New York City, Westchester, Putnam, Orange, and Broome counties. This year, the Haldane team made it to the quarterfinal round. Congrats!

APRIL & MAY 2026

THU 4/9 — Frost Valley Mandatory Parent Meeting 6:00PM Band Room

FRI 4/10 — High School World Language Immersion

TUE 4/14 — PTA and Booster Club Public Meetings

WED 4/15 — SAT Day

THU 4/23 — High School Rock-a-Pella 7:00PM Auditorium

THU 4/30 — High School Spring Concert 7:00PM Auditorium

THU 5/7 — Pre-K Parent Orientation 6:00PM ES Room 117

THU 5/7 — Incoming 5th/6th Grade Parent Orientation 6:30PM Auditorium

TUE 5/12 — PTA and Booster Club Public Meetings

TUE 5/12 — Middle School Spring Concert 7:00PM Auditorium

WED 5/13 — Kindergarten Get-to-Know You #1 9:00AM

WED 5/13 - FRI 5/15 — 8th Grade Frost Valley Trip

MON 5/18 — High School Academic Awards 7:00PM Auditorium

TUE 5/19 — School Budget VOTE 7AM - 9PM ES Library

THU 5/21 — Sophomores to Camp Herlich

THU 5/21 — Arts Alliance Awards 7:00PM Auditorium

FRI 5/22 — Pre-K Meet the Teacher 9:00AM ES Room 117

MON 5/25 — SCHOOL CLOSED Memorial Day

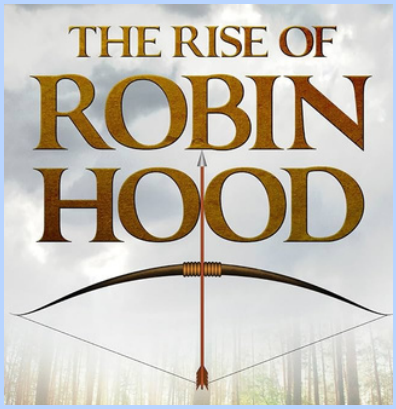
WED 5/27 — Middle School to Renegades Stadium

THU 5/28 — Kindergarten Get-to-Know You #2 9:00AM

THU 5/28 — Senior Dinner

Middle School Play

April 17 and 18



REMINDER: TRAFFIC PILOT STARTS APRIL 13

Traffic Pilot Goals:

- Improve safety during student arrival and dismissal by separating cars, buses, and pedestrians on campus
- Allow emergency vehicles to quickly access school buildings during these busy times

Watch Traffic Pilot Video

Traffic Pilot: Car Route



During Student Arrival & Dismissal:

- Families will only be permitted to enter the back of campus via Cedar Street*
- Families will drop off/pick up students at the sidewalk along the playground backtop
- Families will exit campus via upper Craigside Drive, continuing on Mountain Ave. to Locust Ridge or Fishkill Ave.

Cars will not be permitted to enter campus via Route 9D during student arrival/dismissal. This will be strictly enforced during the pilot.

Traffic Pilot: Bus Route



During Student Arrival & Dismissal:

- Only buses will enter campus via Morris Avenue/Route 9D
- Buses will drop off/pick up elementary and middle school students at the flagpole in front of the Main Building
- Buses will drop off/pick up high school students in front of the High School building
- Buses will exit campus via Morris Avenue/Route 9D

Feedback?

If you notice areas for improvement during the pilot, please share them with us. You will also find additional details on this page.

Get & Give Info Here

Congrats to this year's 2026 PCMEA Elementary All County Festival particpants!







Haldane 2026-2027 budget presentations are available here.

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