



Bulldog

BULLETIN

April/May 2026

Message from the Superintendent

Thank you to the Beacon community for supporting the district's budget this year on May 19!

The budget supports all of our students and staff, and this edition of the Bulldog Bulletin highlights many of the varied programs, field trips, enrichment activities, and extracurricular clubs and teams it funds.

I am deeply appreciative to be able to continue these many programs to support our students! Thank you for your support!

—Matt Landahl

Bulldog Book Bash Rings in Third Year

Families from Beacon's elementary schools came together for the annual



Bulldog Book Bash at Rombout where they participated in literacy-themed activities to promote reading as a key feature of learning.



Activities families partook in included making colorful book-marks with paint, creating their own comic books and writing and illustrating their own books.



Students also brought their favorite teddy bears or stuffed animals for a "sleepover" in the Rombout library complete with a tent and a campfire to keep them warm.

Sargent first grader Miles Berdipello loves to read and had a blast making his own bookmark and painting a reusable bag, his favorite of all the activities. "I painted a rainbow," Berdipello said.

South Avenue third grader Ayla Stryker-Millard had a fun time partaking in just a few of the activities offered. "I liked reading and I made a bag with a tree and my name," Stryker-Millard said.

Trips Highlight Civic Readiness

STUDENTS RECOGNIZED BY NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY



Twenty five students involved in government classes and Beacon High School's mock trial and debate teams trekked up to Albany this spring where New York State Assemblymember Jonathan Jacobson recognized them for their hard work and for proposing projects to the Beacon City Council and the district's Board of Education.

"These students are actively engaged in their school and their community," Jacobson said on the assembly floor.

"In this chamber, students have the opportunity to see how government and democracy function, to understand their place in that process and to be inspired to better the world around them." State Sen. Rolison met briefly to chat with students as well.

Junior Sam Riquelid had never been to the assembly chambers before and appreciated both the architecture and Jacobson recognizing him and his fellow students.

"It was a very nice experience," Riquelid said. "It is interesting to see how they do law and who's actually talking; I've never seen that before."



Junior Caeleb Smith had seen videos of politicians talking in government buildings, but getting to see it in person was a more enriching experience. Being recognized on the assembly floor was another feeling altogether.

"I feel like I gained so much aura from them saying 'Beacon High School students,'" Smith said. "It was interesting to see government firsthand."

STUDENTS ATTEND WOMEN'S LAW CONFERENCE



Several of Beacon High School's bright young women attended the Women in Law Conference where they were introduced to the law field by a panel of women judges, court clerks, attorneys, elected officials, paralegals and more.

Sophomore Luna Yawman has always wanted to be an attorney and appreciated getting the chance to meet with

women in the field who passed on important information to her, including how there is a Women's Bar Association. She encouraged students who go on the trip next year to come prepared with questions.

"Talk to everyone you can and they want questions ... a big part of this is making connections," Yawman said. "It's nice to see women of all ethnicities all coming together as lawyers."

"They said to always keep your options open because most of them went into college for others things that were different than what they came out of college for," junior Emma Velliz said. "It was really good, I got to ask them about how their jobs were."



BCSD Elementary Schools Help Out Animals



The Sargent and Forrestal student councils donated a whole ton of supplies, including pet food, paper towels and heavy duty garbage bags, to the Animal Rescue Foundation (ARF), a local no-kill animal rescue to help out its residents.

The student councils, comprised of fifth graders, often work on projects and initiatives that help their schools, as well as the wider community.

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Sargent trip

"SYRUPY" GOOD TIME



Kindergartners from Sargent learned how to tap maple trees for their sap during an

engaging trip to Sharpe Reservation.

Sharpe Program Coordinator Thomas Grant showed students how to identify and tap maple trees, as well as why smaller maple trees should not be tapped for sap, as they are still growing and need the it to grow.

"The sap is like food for the tree," Grant explained. "We only want to take sap from trees that are a certain size because they are mostly done growing – they don't need as much sap and they also make a lot more sap."



Students had an opportunity to gently tap a spile, or sprout to draw off sap, into a maple tree, saw how the clear sap

is boiled into maple syrup and tasted the finished product. Grant also explained the difference between darker and lighter syrups.

Romy Stim-Fogel enjoyed the trip, particularly seeing the process it takes to make maple syrup.

"I enjoyed learning about how the sap turns into maple syrup," Romi said. "It tasted good."

Junior Tori Diaz noted that the event helps break stigmas and creates understandings between students and police officers and she enjoyed getting to honor the officers in this fashion. The students also asked the officers what were their best days on the job.



BCSD Elementary Schools Help Out Animals

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At Sargent, Orla Zalewski was eager to help so the rescue's pets could get the supplies they needed. It was a personal mission for Zalewski as her dog came from a shelter too.

"When you go to the animal shelter, you're getting a pet that doesn't have a home," Zalewski said.



Melanie Tacury's heart always melts when she sees pets at shelters because she knows they may not always get a forever home. She greatly appreciates the donations people gave.

"People donating really made my heart happy," Tacury said.

Forrestal Student Council members Angel Mora and Edie Lieberman did research on ARF to assure that their address, contact information and

mission were included on the poster advertising the drive. They also researched potential events they could visit to get a feel of how ARF runs. Almost 7-year old Sophie is one of the dogs that benefitted from the donations.



"They take animals, not just sell them," Mora said of ARF. "It feels really good to help."

The students also kept track of inventory they received, including a dog bowl holder and a crate mattress, which they were not expecting to get.

"We got more than we needed," member Lou Manizza-Wingen said. "There are animals out there that need help ... this will definitely help."



SADD Hosts



Beacon High School's Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) club invited police officers from the Beacon City Police Department to the school for coffee and a conversation as part of a yearly event called appropriately "Coffee With A Cop."

While the club tries to host it closer to Law Enforcement Appreciation Day, which is always Jan. 9, schedule changes made it difficult to pin a date down. However, there is an upside, according to SADD Adviser Frances Vakirtzis. "We thought you

should appreciate your law enforcement officers every day," Vakirtzis said. "We ended up in the spring."



"I wanted to know what made their job exciting and fun even when it was the worst day," Diaz said of the officers. "They talked about their lives as being cops and I thought it was fun to learn about."

A highlight of the event was seeing BHS alumni Jonathan Underwood come to this year's event in a suit and tie as he was promoted for police officer to detective. "How cool is it to meet someone who graduated from Beacon, became an officer and is moving up the ranks," Vakirtzis said.

S.T.E.A.M. Fairs Keep Beacon Students' Brains Working

Beacon students kept busy this spring working on unique STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) that were on display at fairs in the schools. Highlighted below are two of them.

Rombout

This year marked the first time Rombout has held a STEAM Fair in the school library with around 30 projects on display for staff and fellow students to see and ask questions about. Assistant Principal Marissa Benson, a former Rombout science teacher, appreciated seeing the variety of projects on display and how interested students were to complete a project, even before it was announced that the winners of the fair would receive gift cards for their efforts.

"We heard a lot of kids walking through the library checking out the projects saying 'I kind of wished I did this,' so hopefully seeing it in action encourages kids to give it a try," Benson said. "It was obviously something they had to do outside of school, so we appreciate their efforts."

Seventh grader Emmett Coleman, who was one of the fair's six winners, impressed everyone with his school utility belt where students could carry just a few items with them on field trips,

in place of a backpack.

He signed up for the fair because he loves coming up with new ideas and inventions and sharing them with people, the latter of which he considers a key skill.

"That's the part that I'm best at



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because a lot of time I say more than what I have on the paper," Coleman said. "The main purpose is that I have fun and try something new."

Sixth grader Victoria Jimenez Bueso was not as concerned about winning as she was about having fun creating her magnetic sensory bottle which showed how magnetic forces are invisible by moving metal particles contained in liquid. She had this advice for students entering the fair next year.



"If you're nervous, don't be nervous," Jimenez Bueso said. "There's always one way to get confidence or another."

Congratulations to the winners in the following categories:

Scientific Design/Experiment
James Barrett

Brynn Harvey
Trinitee White
Innovative Engineering
Hazel Harvey
Emmett Coleman
Kevin Vogrincic

Glenham

Glenham's Science Fair was a two day affair also held this spring which saw families and students move through the school's cafeteria to witness unique projects such as an exploding volcano and a magic magnet train operated solely by magnetic power.

Kindergartener Soren Gallagher showed off how dry ice is used, with a little parental supervision of course. He had fun and explained the difference between dry and regular ice.



"When it goes in

hot water it makes smoke, but regular ice doesn't, it makes water when it melts," Gallagher explained. "It is really cool."

Second grader Dahlia Roper and her brother Arlo, a pre-kindergartner, did a different kind of science experiment



testing to see how a sticker put on a Kit Kat bar appeals to younger kids, while older people responded less favorably.

"Some people older than second grade said they still wanted it," Dahlia explained regarding a sticker on a Kit Kat. "It goes to show that if you add a product with a sticker on it, kids might not like it, but they're going to pick it anyway."

BOYS & GIRLS BASKETBALL TEAMS INSPIRE YOUNG MINDS



TRACK STARS SCORE

Seniors Mika Sanchez and Kira Sheehan have plenty to celebrate after making their mark at the Adidas Indoor Track & Field

Nationals in Virginia Beach in late March.



Sheehan competed in the highly competitive girls weight

throw where she delivered a strong performance throw of 21 feet and 7 1/2 inches. On the track, Sanchez showcased her speed and endurance in the girls National Elite Girls' 800-meter run where she clocked an impressive time of 2:28.17.

"Competing against some of the best athletes in the country, both Kira and Mika represented their team with determination and pride, turning in performances that highlight their hard work and dedication throughout the season," Modified Cross-Country Coach Grace Roscino said.

The Boys Track team did well too. In early March, Caellum Tripaldi, a member of the Section IX Team, captured the New York State (NYS) and Federation championships



Rombout Students Learn with Creative Activities

Taco Tuesday Game

While the weather was still cool, every day was Taco Tuesday in Karen DeCandia's Spanish class thanks to a very unique activity designed to help students improve their language skills.

The Taco Tuesday activity would begin with DeCandia saying a word in English, which students, working in teams, would then have to determine what it means in Spanish and then color in the taco with the correct word on a worksheet.



Despite its name it was played on different days throughout the week

and some student teams found themselves getting super competitive in order to beat the rival team.

Eighth grader Olivia Spiecker found the game to be fun with the competition aspect helping her learn the words and retain the information better.

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Members of the Bulldog Boys and Girls basketball teams came to South Avenue to read to students in various classrooms. For some students, it felt like an elementary school reunion as they attended South Avenue when they were younger.



Juniors Za'Layni Shand and Hartley Brickman read Jimmy Kimmel's humorous picture book "The Serious Goose" to a group of pre-kindergartners who gave them plenty of hugs and high fives in return. Some of the girls answered basketball questions with some younger students asking for their autographs.

Shand most enjoyed seeing the kids smile as they read the books to them and how they look up to the team.

Brickman remembered when high school students visited Glenham when she was an elementary student so being able to give back in this fashion was thrilling.

"It's really special that the basketball team gets to come here and make the kids laugh and smile," Brickman said. "It's fun interacting with the little kids."

Beacon Students Excel at CTI

Fifty-one Beacon High School (BHS) students were enrolled in Dutchess BOCES' Career & Technical Institute for the 2025-2026 school year with District Superintendent Dr. Matt Landahl praising the partnership between the two schools.

"Our students who do it really value it; it's just a really positive program," Landahl said during an April 28 Board of Education meeting. "Any student who's interested, as long as there's space for them in the program, we try to support that." Here are some instances of Beacon students exceeding expectations while pursuing their trades:

Student Chefs Prepare Dinner for Annual BOE Meeting



Senior Mike Murtaugh and Junior Teana Jennings are part of the Culinary Arts program and often prepare meals for large events on the BOCES campus, including the April 8 annual meeting where administrators presented the 2026-2027 budget to the Board of Education. BOCES District Superintendent Dr. Jodi DeLucia thanked the students and their teachers for their efforts.

"The culinary program is one of two programs where students are often asked to step up and join us in the evening to attend different events," DeLucia said. "We almost always see our amazing culinary students and the ones who volunteer are really the cream of the crop."

Jennings, whose favorite dish to make is penne ala vodka, was honored to cook and serve for the many staff in attendance, adding that the most important thing she has learned at both BHS and BOCES is not to doubt her skills.



Murtaugh was happy to provide dinner for the administrators and appreciated DeLucia's kudos. He credits BOCES for improving his grades and Guidance Counselor Michelle Santiago for helping him adjust when he started at both BHS and CTI.

"It's just special to come here, this is not something everyone gets to experience," Murtaugh said. "I feel really privileged to cook food for them to eat that they love."

Senior Presents Design to Industry Professionals

Michael Ramos, a second-year student in the Graphic Arts and Design program, had a chance to present his box design for BjornQorn, an organic popcorn brand, for Viking Packaging employees to review during a field trip to the company's headquarters in New Paltz this April.



It was challenging to come up with a design at first, but Ramos soon realized he could make a simple, yet unique design for the spicy popcorn flavor. His final design featured the company logo, some text and a popcorn-themed joke across an orange backdrop. He appreciated the opportunity to present to Viking staff at their office, as opposed to doing it in the classroom, and receiving nice comments on his work.

"I was very happy hearing that a simple design could be nice like that," Ramos said. "I think it's really cool to talk to actual businesspeople and present something like this."

Junior inducted into National Technical Honor Society

Junior Tabitha Smith-White, who studies in the Careers in Animal Science program, was one of 20 CTI students to be inducted in the National Technical Honor Society during an April 30 ceremony. To be considered, Smith-White completed an application with a writing prompt, provided community service hours and recommendation letters from teachers and job supervisors and maintained an overall career technical education average of 93 or above.

It was an honor for Smith-White to receive this distinction for the work she has done and predicts it will be helpful when applying for college scholarships.



"It will also be really good on my resume and especially for college," Smith-White said. "It's a surprise, but I feel pretty good about it."

Smith-White was described during the ceremony as an innovator who always pushes the limits of curiosity and she feels strongly that having an honor society for students who study trades is vital.

Rombout Students Learn with Creative Activities

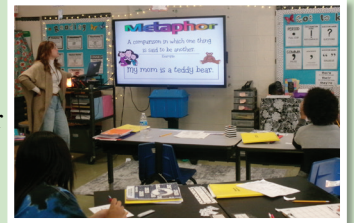
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She had never had a taco before, but may have to try one after participating in this activity.

"We can really remember it by being competitive," Spiecker said. "We can memorize what we put down or pointed at."

Figurative Language Scavenger Hunt

To help her sixth grade class expand their vocabulary, Michelle Eraca



devised a scavenger hunt themed around figurative language, referring to words and phrases to imply something that goes beyond their literal definition.

During one class, Eraca's students walked around her classroom and in the nearby hallway to lockers decked out with phrases such as "The test was as easy as pie," to determine whether they were a simile, the comparison of two things using like or as; metaphor, a comparison of which one thing is said to be another; onomatopoeia, a word imitating the sound it represents; or personification, giving human characteristics to non-living things.

"The stars winked at me ... Humans can wink, can stars wink? No," Eraca said describing what personification is. "Figurative language uses words or phrases where the words don't mean exactly what they said."



The students, including Dominic Lide, were encouraged by Eraca

to take their time when participating. Lide found that he learned more about figurative language with this method.

"At first it was hard, but then I got the hang of it," Lide said. "It was fun."

Emma Kostro enjoyed the assignment and plans to use words she learned to enhance her writing.

"It's easier than sitting down, moving around is more fun," Kostro said of the activity.

Beacon Students Show a Little



PLANETARY LOVE!

Forrestal Students' Art Reflects on Ways to Make a More Sustainable Future

Forrestal students submitted thoughtful and creative artwork inspired by a goal put forth by the New York Senate to build awareness around recycling and waste reduction for its Earth Day Poster Contest Celebration.

"I am proud of your work and that of your classmates and encourage you to continue to study and learn more about the serious challenges that face our environment," State Sen. Michelle Hinchey said in a statement.

Fourth graders Azhar Kasem and Lily Nguyen designed a poster featuring the earth donning sunglasses with the phrase "Earth Rocks!" as well as mini magazines about saving the earth and the bees. In her magazine, Kasem encouraged people to stop littering and help prevent global warming. She shared

what she hope readers took away from them.

"I hope people understand the message and also help clean the earth," Kasem said. "I didn't really care if I won or



not, I just wanted to spread the message of saving the earth."

Fourth grader Samara Lunsford used recycled paper for her poster featuring the earth with the words "Earth Day" above it. Lunsford underscored the importance of people not littering.

"I was somewhere once and I saw somebody litter, so I went over to where they put it, picked it up and put it in the garbage," Lunsford recalled. "You shouldn't put it on the ground because it's just easy to find a garbage can and put it in."

BCSD Field Trip Roundup Sargent Students Keep on Their Toes at Ballet Arts

Timothée Chalamet once said that no one cares about ballet anymore, but Sargent kindergartners in Randi Speedling's class beg to differ. They visited Ballet Arts Studio on Teller Avenue in mid-April to learn ballet basics and unique dances that let their imaginations run wild.

Ballet Arts' Artistic Director Katie Bissinger started off by reading Giles Andea's "Giraffes Can't Dance," centered on Gerald, a giraffe who gets confidence to become a wonderful dancer. She then explained about different kinds of dancing footwear, including tap shoes that keep the rhythm going.

"When a dancer wears these kind of shoes it magically turns them into a drummer ...the floor is like one big drum and these shoes are my drumsticks," Bissinger said of tap shoes. "When I want to make a song with my feet, I either choose to use my toes or my heels and I can make a whole song." Bissinger showed the students how to balance beanbags on their heads, had them improvise dance moves depending on the type of music being played, and perfected curtsying/bowing as a way to say thank you. Kobe Clark's favorite part of the trip was doing an exercise requiring him and his classmates to stretch their legs and put their chins to the ground.

"I liked it best because I could do it," Clark said. "It was cool."

Forrestal Kindergartners Meet Beacon's Own Chocolatier

Forrestal students in Jessica White's class were in a world of pure imagination when they made their own chocolate creations at Håkan Chocolatier on Main Street in early May. An airport-style flap display welcomed the Forrestal crew to Håkan before they donned chef hats and aprons to make candy bars, using either milk, white, dark or a combination of all three chocolates. They topped off their creations with numerous sweet treats from crushed Oreos to one candy that is close to shop owner Håkan Mårtensson's heart. "Of course you need Swedish Fish, when you're a Swedish place," Mårtensson said, referencing his homeland.

Mårtensson has a child in Forrestal who is not in White's class, but he readily agreed to have her students visit. White praised Mårtensson's generosity as he offered all chaperones complimentary coffees and kindly delivered the students' chocolate bars to Forrestal once they cooled. "You can tell he thought through the whole process from beginning to end," White said of Mårtensson. "It's so lovely when you have community members that are generously invested in our schools and making sure that all our students get an opportunity to learn something new."

Rombout Students Plant Seeds To Germinate

Students in Rombout's Environmental Club spent this Earth Day planting seeds that will soon become watermelon, cucumbers, spaghetti squash and mint, to name a few, as well as making posters to encourage people to donate gently used textiles to the organization, USAgain.

Science Teacher and Club Adviser Jeanette Lynch informed students that USAgain plants a tree every time one of its donation boxes gets filled with clothes, shoes and household textiles. So far, 120,000 trees have been planted. She explained how spring cleaning is the perfect time to donate.

"You're doing your spring cleaning in your closets, anything you're going to get rid of bring them to Rombout Middle School and the Environmental Club will get them reused and recycled," Lynch said. "It provides communities with a convenient and eco-friendly option to rid themselves of excess clothing."

Environmental Club President Carlos Gonzalez, a seventh grader, said being in the club is a perfect opportunity to step away from screens, while also promoting the idea of respecting the environment. He explained the importance of USAgain's mission. "It's so people can recycle and make new things," Gonzalez said. "It can help others because sometimes some people don't have a lot of things, like other people do."

