



Bulldog

BULLETIN

End of Year 2026

Congrats YOU DID IT! 2026 *Class of*

Nearly 200 Beacon High School students are now officially graduates following a heartfelt commencement ceremony at Heritage Financial Park on June 24.

Principal Dr. Corey Dwyer noted that this year's graduates made a lasting impact on the school and the adults in the audience. He encouraged them to carry their high school years with them – not just their diplomas and trophies, but the smaller things that do not appear on a resume.

"Like the hallway conversation that made you five minutes late to class but was totally worth it... The 'A' on the test you thought you had failed and the quiet realization that life went on anyway after the one you actually did fail, the teacher who said one thing that stuck and probably never knew it," Dwyer said. "It can be hard not to feel a little worried, but then I think about what I've seen from all of you over these past four years — the hard work, the care you've shown for one another, the resilience, the joy and I'm reminded that we're in good hands."



Valedictorian Oscar McKible said reaching this milestone was not achieved by him alone, so he made sure to thank BHS teachers and staff, his family, friends and the greater Beacon community for creating an incredibly supportive environment to grow up in. He added that his classmates have proven themselves again and again by overcoming obstacles.



"We might not all know each other very well, even after four years, but if watching all of you grow has taught me anything, it is that you all have the capability to achieve whatever you commit yourself to," McKible said. "As far as I'm concerned, all you need to do is find what makes you happy and pursue it."

Salutatorian Samiha Golden noted how the New York Knicks won this year's NBA Championship despite only having a .4% chance of doing so, comparing how the Class of 2026 overcame COVID and other obstacles to graduate with the highest GPA's Beacon High School has ever seen and how her late grandfather overcame poverty to earn a Ph.D from the University of Chicago. She encouraged the crowd to not let the odds define their outcomes.

"If my grandfather had done that, I would not exist, if we as a class had done that, we would not be sitting here today with these many accomplishments," Golden said. "So keep beating the odds, keep living in that .4% chance."



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Students Receive Special Gifts for End of Year

Sargent “Memory Book” project turns three

Sargent kindergartners and fifth graders, who are both starting a new chapter of their lives come September, collaborated on “Memory Books,” showcasing highlights of the previous school year.



Soon to be first grader Sophia Bosco was nervous

when she first started working on the project, but once she got to know the fifth graders, she felt at ease. She also appreciated how they helped her learn even more than before.

“They helped me write lots of words ... I got to learn all the words,” Bosco said of the fifth graders. “I really liked how they helped me.”

Soon to be sixth grader Tabitha Biracree had fun sharing and making memories with the kindergarten students whom she got to know better by working on this project.

“I liked seeing what their favorite part of kindergarten was,” Biracree said of the younger students. “It was probably a fun experience for them getting to meet the older kids.”

Rombout class gifts felt creations to pre-K students

This year saw Rombout’s Home & Careers class make felt monsters, not just for their final project, but as a unique surprise gift for upcoming kindergartners with the hope of it becoming a yearly tradition.



The elementary students drew up their monsters, which Rombout students took great care in creating so they can last forever.

Home & Careers Teacher Marie Conklin always wanted to collaborate on a project with elementary school students and teachers, so it proved serendipitous when she heard from Glenham’s art teacher Max Hodson about collaborating on this project, which she hopes can be enhanced next year.

“It would be really great to have some sort of art show and meet and greet,” Conklin said. “I can’t wait to see that. Someday I’ll be having these pre-K kids here giving back and making it for the future pre-K students.”

Soon to be ninth grader Yideon Tienzen noted that it was difficult at first to recreate the elementary students’ work with a sewing machine, but remembered the skills she learned in class and applied them to make the monsters. She had fun creating the monsters and shared what she hoped the elementary students got out of the collaboration. “I hope they’re able to see that they can make their creations come true,” Tienzen said. “This activity lets them see their creative sides come to life.”

Meet This Year’s Val & Sal!



Oscar McKible and Samiha Golden, two exceptional Beacon High School seniors were named valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively, for the Class of 2026.

McKible is proud to reach this milestone and will attend Boston University to study health science and zoonotic diseases, which spread naturally between animals and humans, with a goal of going into epidemiology.

“COVID being a part of my life got me into the public health field,” McKible said. “I was already interested in science, that gave me a clear focus for what I wanted to do.”

The tight-knit Beacon community is what McKible will miss most, but looks forward to making new friends at college. He effortlessly balances schoolwork and extracurricular activities by prioritizing what needs to be done first and encourages younger students to not sweat the small stuff.

“As long as you know what you want to do and you have some kind of goal, you don’t have to grind to be the very top of everything,” McKible said. “Don’t overstress things and you’ll be fine.”

Golden is happy to be one of the top two students and will attend Yale to double major in ethnicity, race and migration and theater. She chose to study the former major because professors tie lessons to current events and how they can be used outside of college.



“I really like that because I’m interested into going into law and to do social justice work,” Golden explained. “It teaches how you can actually do something about what you’re learning.”

Golden will most miss acting in Beacon Players productions as it was her second home for years. She encouraged

future graduates to find something to motivate them, whether they attend college or not.

“If you don’t have something you’re reaching for then it’s so hard to actually do things,” Golden said. “If you work hard, so many more doors will open up to you in the future.”

Dutchess BOCES Distinguished Graduates

McKible and Golden were also honored at the annual Dutchess BOCES Distinguished Graduate Breakfast at the Villa Borghese on May 21.

District Superintendent Dr. Matt Landahl spoke about how McKible twice qualified for the New York State School Music Association’s Area All-State competition and established the school’s SAT Prep Club.

“Instead of waiting for others to figure that out, he went to his principal and started an SAT Prep Club that wasn’t small ... it turned into something that helped dozens and dozens of students,” Landahl said. “He’s going to bring that problem solving energy and that focus on helping people to all his future endeavors.”



Landahl touted Golden’s numerous accomplishments including serving as President of Student Council and the Tri-M Music Society and being an integral part of the Beacon Players as a performer and leader.

“The roles that she has played have been just tremendously moving, powerful and inspirational,” Landahl said. “It’s just a part of what she’s done at the high school, which is pretty incredible.”

ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS ON TO THEIR NEXT ADVENTURE!

Rombout 8th Grade Moving Up Ceremony

Nearly 200 Rombout eighth graders are now ready to start the 2026-2027 school year across the street from their old stomping grounds following a brisk moving up ceremony June 23 on the Beacon High School football field.



Principal Brian Soltish thanked the families in attendance for raising upstanding students who conduct themselves professionally wherever they go. He hopes the eighth graders take advantage of the opportunities awaiting them at the high school and to think back on their time at Rombout with a smile.

While Regan Laug will miss her most helpful teachers, she is excited to make new friends and join the Students Against Destructive Decisions chapter in high school. She shared these pieces of advice with younger students.

"Don't give up, keep trying and focus on your grades," Laug said. "I learned to be myself and not hold back."

Cole Martin will also miss the teachers at Rombout and is most looking forward to having more responsibilities when he starts high school. "It can train me to be more

responsible later on," Martin said of his unique goal. "I'm excited to go to the high school."



Elementary Moving Up Ceremonies

Held throughout late June, pre-K, kindergarten and fifth grade moving up ceremonies for Forrestal, Glenham, Sargent and South Avenue

students were a celebration of the accomplishments students made during the school year complete with plenty of unique moments.

Forrestal's kindergarten moving up ceremony was held at the Howland Cultural Center on Main Street which its representatives let staff use free of charge for everyone to celebrate. Rather than wear dressy clothes, the students wore red shirts with their class name on it adorned with caricatures of themselves. They also sang a song all about starting first grade to the tune of Taylor Swift's "Shake It Off."

Glenham fifth graders congregated in the Pete and Toshi Seeger Theatre at Beacon High School where they read essays about their favorite field trips and experiences during the school year, sang two numbers and accepted their certificates on stage. The audience was also treated to a slideshow of all of the wonderful activities students participated in.

CONGRATULATIONS TO EVERYONE AND WE'LL SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER!

Beacon Players Veterans Shine Again at Annual Theater Awards



Beacon High School senior Jonah Espinosa and junior Molly Lyons were two of 50 student performers to be nominated for the Roger Rees Award

for Outstanding Performer in a Musical in May.

The awards, named in honor of the late stage actor, recognize distinctive student performances and outstanding achievement in high school music theater programs in the greater New York City area. Proceedings were held at Symphony Space in Manhattan.

This year marks the third time Espinosa was nominated for the award, this time for his lead role in the Beacon Players' spring production of "Jekyll & Hyde." For him, the experience was more about learning from seasoned performers who acted as mentors to him and getting to know his fellow nominees.

"This was the best and most fun group ... there was not any 'Oh, this is a competition' vibe, it was just purely 'Let's have fun together,'" Espinosa said. "This being the third

year it's just like, whatever happens is out of your control; the only thing you can control is how much fun you're having."



Espinosa, who will study at Carnegie Mellon University's acting program, advised younger performers to find who they really are, not just as artists, but as people.

"Being a performer forces you to face who you are so much," Espinosa said. "Once you find one thing that makes you who you are, that transforms you as a performer and carries you."



This was Lyons' second year of being nominated, this time for her role as Jo in the Players' fall production of "Little Women." Lyons did not worry about winning, as she considered just being at the awards an accomplishment, and felt accepted among her fellow nominees, who share a passion for performing.

"We started this first walk out in the opening number and tears just started to pour down my face because I was just genuinely so happy," Lyons recalled. "Everyone shares the same passion and I think that's really comforting to know that you can be yourself."

Lyons was mentored by Britney Coleman, whose Broadway credits include "Sunset Boulevard" and "Beautiful: The Carole King Musical." She enjoyed learning from Coleman and the many other Broadway professionals in attendance.

"I love 'Sunset Boulevard,' so when I heard that I was like, 'Whoa!'" Lyons said of Coleman. "The biggest thing they told us was, 'I don't care who wins, you being here with us is the biggest achievement.'"

Beacon Players



SAY *Yes* to the DRESS for Less

from other county high and middle schools, visited the library earlier this spring to pick up donated dresses and suits, for free, ahead of their proms. Slight alterations to outfits were made at the library by volunteers and a dressing room was set up to accommodate an increase in students attending over last year.

Many of the dresses were only worn once, while some still had tags on them. Youth Services Librarian Remy Rudner noted that

Proms can be an expensive endeavor for high school students, so the Howland Public Library on Main Street brought back its Prom Pop-Up Boutique.

Beacon High School students, as well as students



it was wonderful to see outfits be rehomed to students who wore them for their proms. Beacon's senior prom was June 18 at The Grandview.

"If you go to junior prom and then senior prom, that's two outfits right there, and if you can get those for cheaper than what's out there, that's great," Rudner said. "We want everyone to just find an outfit they love."



Rudner and other Howland Library staff are in frequent contact with the Beacon schools' librarians to share about different services and courses students may find useful. Prior to the Beacon Players' spring musical, student performers picked out outfits to wear from the donations the library received. "It's been really nice to have a school district that's been so open and welcoming to the library," Rudner said.



Film Fest Turns Five

Over 100 students from across the Beacon City School District submitted creative and engaging short films for the Fifth Annual Student Film Fest.



Films created by elementary students premiered at Beacon High School's Pete & Toshi Seeger Theater on May 15 while middle and high school films premiered May 18 at The Beacon Movie Theater on Main Street.



The showcase of elementary films felt like a Hollywood movie premiere, complete with a red carpet where students and their families could pose

for pictures against a backdrop and on-camera interviews conducted by members of the Foundation for Beacon Schools.

This year marked the first time Sargent third grader Levon Kleinberg-Hecker submitted a film titled "The Mystery of the Ghost" featuring "Scooby Doo!" characters and a ghost. He made it come to life with toys and puppets and said that while it proved challenging at times, it was a fun experience.

"I have a Playmobil toy and I moved them around," Kleinberg-Hecker explained. "There's also a news break right in the middle."

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Intergenerational Projects Explore Local History

This school year saw Beacon High School (BHS) seniors and Sargent fourth graders collaborate on projects highlighting local history and having tons of fun while doing so.

Local history spotlighted was varied, and included the signal fires ordered by George Washington atop Mount Beacon during the Revolutionary War and the former Beacon High School on Route 52. These projects were not just a chance for the BHS students to earn their New York State Seal of Civic Readiness, it was also a chance to help everyone learn about Beacon's history.

Senior Katrina Skorewicz's collaborative project focused on the history of Yanarella School of Dance, a place that she was more than familiar with as she works there part-time interacting with young kids frequently.



She described her partners as fun and, for the most part, professional. "They're very sweet and very respectful," Skorewicz said of the younger students.

Sargent fourth grader Naomi Peterson drew pictures and filmed interviews about what she and her classmates learned about the history of Mount Beacon. She enjoyed working with and learning from the BHS students and hopes to see more collaborations future.

"They helped us with what we should search for and what we should know about," Peterson said of the BHS students. "It was really fun working with the high schoolers."



BHS Embraces the Digital Defenders Program

This school year saw a team of eight Beacon High School students participate in the Digital Defenders Program, the first of its kind. Organized by Dutchess BOCES, they educate younger students about cybersecurity.

The team, advised by Computer Science and Math Teacher Frances Vakirtzis, worked collaboratively to learn about digital safety, online threats and responsible technology use and applied that knowledge by designing lessons and campaigns for their peers. They even have their own t-shirts with their faces



digitally imposed on the bodies of superhero characters which received rave reviews when they presented at a May faculty meeting.

The students also advocated for the program to Beacon's and BOCES' Boards of Education in June and will present to the New York State School Boards Association in July.

Junior Theodore Concepcion worked on the school board presentations and joined Digital Defenders to learn more about cybersecurity and enhance his public speaking skills. He shared why cybersecurity education is crucial.

"A person's online actions become a part of their digital footprint forever, no matter how young they are," Concepcion said. "Early cybersecurity education is essential to ensuring their long-term online safety because it is at young ages that they are most vulnerable to making a mistake." ...continued on page 5

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BHS and Sargent students collaborated to produce films showcasing local history.

Sargent's Sawyer Kimmel had a blast putting together pictures and doing on-camera interviews for a film about George Washington's connection to Beacon. He gave high praise to his high school collaborators.

"It's cool because we work with the high school," Kimmel said. "They're good helpers."

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Seniors Go Back to Where It All Started

Every year graduating seniors, in their caps and gowns, return to their former elementary schools and Rombout to be cheered on by crowds of students, teachers and staff as they pass.

The students spent part of the morning of June 12 participating in this annual tradition where they caught up with teachers they had when they were younger. Others felt nostalgic seeing their old athletic pictures outside Rombout's gym or their class photos from fifth grade.

Alex Young described being back at Forrestal as a surreal, yet fun experience, especially since he recalls previously cheering for the older kids in the hallways. "Every year we had that happen, so it feels weird being on the other side of it," Young said. "It feels like this place is half the size when I was younger."

Isabella Galbo enjoyed talking with and hugging teachers she used to have both at South Avenue and Rombout and seeing how the schools changed. "It's nice you can see all the teachers you had and see how the school changed one last time," Galbo said of the experience.

Ceremonies Celebrate Student Athletes' Success

Student athletes from across Beacon's numerous teams were honored for their efforts on and off the field during the school year at the annual Varsity Athletic Awards Ceremony on June 4.

Athletics Director Mike Carofano said the ceremony is a chance to celebrate the dedication, leadership and accomplishments of the students who are committed to excellence, sportsmanship and personal growth. "This evening is about recognizing the countless hours of practice, the sacrifices made, lessons learned and the pride these athletes have brought to our school community," Carofano said. "You have represented our school with pride, demonstrated resilience through challenges and exemplified what it means to be part of a team."

Carofano also thanked families for supporting the athletic programs and beloved Athletics Secretary Claire Vigna for assisting families and coaches and helping resolve issues before they arise.

"Ms. Vigna's organization, professionalism and tireless work ethic keeps our athletic department operating each and every day," Carofano said. "We are incredibly grateful for all that she does for our student athletes and the athletic programs ... you are truly the best."



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Junior Isaac McKible wants to promote safe media consumption to younger kids as the world becomes more digital."

"Cybersecurity isn't only about keeping your information safe, but also practicing digital courtesy and practicing media literacy," McKible said. "As AI advances and a larger proportion of internet media is AI generated it is vital to educate students about how to stay safe from biases, and stay impartial."

Vakirtzis finds that her students love the program's philosophy as they enjoy computer programming and spending time together.

"This is the easiest group to advise because they're all very self-motivated," Vakirtzis said. "They are pioneers of this program that will be used for years to come."

District Superintendent Dr. Matt Landahl praised the students for doing this important work and passing on their knowledge to younger generations.

"As someone who, I feel like half the phishing scams are people pretending to be me, I thank you," Landahl said. "Students really listen to other students a lot more than sometimes they listen to us and so I think that's a really powerful part of this."



Senior Athletes Continue Their Legacy at College

Congratulations to the following senior athletes who committed to continue their athletic career at the college level following a June 2 signing ceremony.



- Jahcier Ballard, will play basketball at SUNY Orange.
- James Bouchard III, will play baseball at Mount Saint Mary College.
- Diego Dickinson Case Leal, will run track and field at City College of New York.
- Kayden Durkin, will play baseball at Mount Saint Mary College.
- Tye Elias, will play soccer and run track at Regis College.
- Chloe Goessl, will run cross country and track at Stony Brook University.
- Dylan Hetrick, will play soccer at Paul Smith's College.
- Jaden Jones, will play football at Hudson Valley Community College.
- Ryan Landisi, will play baseball at SUNY Plattsburgh.
- Jayden Mihalchik will run track and field at the University of Kansas.
- Jalen Morton, will play lacrosse at Mount Saint Mary College.
- Amaya Paulin, will play softball at SUNY Ulster.
- Elijah Rupp, will wrestle at SUNY Oneonta.
- Mika Sanchez, will run track and field at Ithaca College.
- Zachary Schetter, will play baseball at Wilkes University.
- Kira Sheehan, will run track and field at Manhattanville University.
- Noah Spiak, will run track and field at Manhattan University.
- Aiden Spiecker, will play soccer at King's College.
- Clive Stewart, will play soccer at SUNY Ulster.
- Michai Thompson, will play basketball at Utica College.
- Alexander Young, will play baseball at SUNY Plattsburgh.