

Superintendent Update newsletter - Oct. 15

Thursday, Oct 15 at 11:00 AM • **West Irondequoit Central School District**

SUPERINTENDENT FAMILY UPDATE

OCT. 15, 2026



From the Superintendent

Dear Families,

One of my favorite signs of fall happens Thursday as **concert season** begins with the IHS Cabaret. Unfortunately, a Board of Education meeting conflicts with this year's performance, but I hope many of you will go and enjoy it. This student-led event captures so much of what we value in our district: Students at the center, sharing their talents, making decisions, and taking ownership of the experience.

That same commitment was central to our outstanding Superintendent's Conference Day last Friday. Thanks to our instructional team, led by Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Chrissy Miga, staff revisited our NY Inspires/Portrait of a Graduate work, and took a deeper look at our participation in the Performance-Based Learning and Assessment Networks (PLAN) pilot. Through this work, our educators are helping students demonstrate their learning through meaningful projects, real-world problems, and performance-based assessments. We have an opportunity to help inform New York's evolving approach to teaching, learning, and assessment while strengthening what happens in our own classrooms.

Although I missed Friday's learning at home, I was grateful to do some learning of my own. Through a scholarship from the NYS Council of School Superintendents, I joined other school leaders in Panama to experience the kind of service-learning trip available to students. Our days included beach cleanup in the Panama Canal region, testing soil samples for microplastics, and learning about local food systems. We visited an Indigenous village whose community was relocated during the canal's construction, learning about its school, culture, and traditions. We also explored the canal's lock systems and the remarkable science and history behind them. An unexpected earthquake added an extra lesson none of us had anticipated! I'm thankful to our Board of Education and district for supporting this opportunity. I returned with new perspectives and ideas to explore with our staff as we consider similar experiences for students. Connecting classroom learning with service, understanding other cultures, and seeing the larger world, speak directly to the civic readiness and global citizenship we want to develop through our Portrait of a Graduate.

In this edition, you'll learn more about that work, along with efforts moving forward through several district committees. You can also expect a booklet later this month in your mailbox highlighting *Momentum in Motion*, our new five-year **Strategic Plan**. It outlines four major goals and priorities that will guide us over the next five years. We'll pair that with a short video series featuring on how this vision connects curriculum and instruction with thoughtful financial and facilities planning.

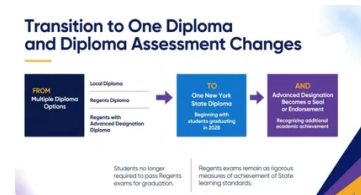
I hope you find time for the fall traditions you enjoy most. Thank you for the warmth, partnership, and care you continue to bring to our schools in every season.

In partnership,
Aaron R. Johnson, Ed.D
Superintendent of School

Curriculum & Instruction

NY Inspires/Portrait of a Graduate

NY Inspires is a multi-year, NYS Department of Education initiative to reimagine graduation and assessment measures in New York State. The most recent major updates are:



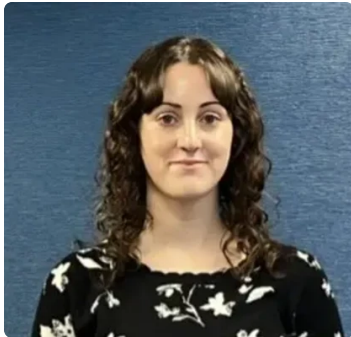
- NY Inspires will establish a single NYS diploma starting in 2027-28 school year, while maintaining current credit requirements for graduation for current 9th, 10th, and 11th graders. Students who are currently working toward an Advanced Regents diploma can earn a seal or endorsement for this on the one NYS diploma.
- Regents exams will continue to be administered, but they will no longer be required for students to earn a diploma starting in 2028. For current seniors, they REMAIN a graduation requirement.
- Schools will use multiple measures of student learning and readiness, including authentic and locally determined assessments, to support graduation decisions.
- The new framework emphasizes the **Portrait of a Graduate**, competency-based learning, and real-world demonstrations of knowledge and skills.

Look for details soon on an **upcoming virtual meeting** led by Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, Chrissy Miga, about NY Inspires/Portrait of a Graduate.

Wellness Fair & Committee Updates

Last Friday's Superintendent Conference Day featured staff-led professional learning, both in person and through sessions staff could complete at their own pace. In addition, Assistant Supt. for Human Resources, Dr. Brenna Farrell, and our district **Wellness Committee** organized a Wellness Fair in the IHS gymnasium. "Thank you to Dr. Farrell and her crew for doing a terrific job, bringing in more than 20 local organizations to support our staff," Superintendent Johnson said. "The physical and mental wellness of our students and staff remains a priority, and opportunities like this help us put that commitment into practice." Two other brief committee updates:

- **DEI:** This year's focus is on supporting Urban-Suburban families and norming practices across all of our school buildings.
 - **Screen Time:** Our committee plans to identify the appropriate amount of purposeful, instructionally aligned screentime across grade-level bands. It also will continue to investigate the use and purpose of AI (artificial intelligence).
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New Community Schools Coordinator!

We are excited to welcome Robyn Moutray as the Community Schools Coordinator for Rogers MS and Southlawn elementary. Ms. Moutray brings a wealth of experience in community schools. She worked for several years as the Community Schools Program Manager for Sodus CSD, where she helped expand opportunities for

students through grant development and after-school programming. Ms. Moutray also served as a Grants Project Director and Public Administration Intern for Sodus. Prior to these roles, Ms. Moutray worked for Peaceful Schools as a Community Schools Program Specialist, where she supported youth workforce development programs.

Ms. Moutray earned a Bachelor's degree in Social Work and a Master's degree in Public Administration from The College at Brockport. She is especially excited to return to West Irondequoit, where she attended both Rogers and Southlawn as a student! Ms. Moutray's passion for supporting student success and strengthening schools through collaborative initiatives, along with her deep connection to the community, make her a wonderful addition to our Rogers and Southlawn teams.

Safety & Security Update

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!

We shared a handful of bulletins about this in recent months and now want to thank families and students for making our school grounds safer this fall by following our rules around e-bikes and scooters! We have seen a decreased in these motorized vehicles and a significant increase in students walking their bikes/scooters once stepping onto campus. We appreciate the cooperation!

EMERGENCY RESPONSE SHOUTOUT

We also want to thank our Dake Jr. HS students, staff, administrators, WICSD security team, and law enforcement partners for their calm and professional response during the Oct. 7 evacuation at Dake Jr. HS

Starting with the first phone call received, safety protocols were immediately put into action and the drills we conduct were executed. It all reinforced the importance of preparation, training, and teamwork. We are especially proud of our Dake students for following directions and of our staff for their care, professionalism, and commitment throughout the afternoon.

Capital Project Update: District to study potential of heated sidewalks



While renovations continue inside the Pinegrove Learning Center (PLC), work is also progressing outside! The building is scheduled to welcome three new Pre-K/UPK classes for the 2027-28 school year. Much of the concrete sidewalk work is complete, and the playground behind the building is coming together. The renovation is another key part of **Promise Project 2027**, alongside the new athletic turf complex at our main campus. Located at 154 Pinegrove Ave., next to Helmer Nature Center, the PLC is a former school and senior center. The building was built in 1954. This \$6 million project will modernize the 12,700-square foot building, add a STEAM Lab for district-wide use, and renovate rooms used for HNC animals. There's also an innovative feature beneath the new sidewalks! Piping and lines have been installed under the concrete to support a potential heated sidewalk system that could melt snow and ice without the need for shoveling or plowing. The system would be temperature-activated, and eliminating the need for salt could offer environmental benefits, too.

Once the building opens, the district will need to install the pumps required to complete the system, which we will consider in the near future, but the bulk of the infrastructure will be in place. We would then evaluate for safety, efficiency, effectiveness and potential savings before determining if we should add more in other areas of our district.

Superintendent Shoutout: Evy Kallenty (Episode 6)
West Irondequoit CSD



Watch on

Community input sought for Alumni Halls of Fame!

Our district has started the process of launching three separate Alumni Halls of Fame starting in 2027. Any community members, former students, performers, athletes, current or retired teachers, ex-coaches, other retirees, etc. are invited to join our committee! Next meeting: 3:30 p.m. Nov. 12 at the IHS small cafeteria. The three halls are:

- Alumni of Distinction Hall of Fame
- Alumni Athletic Hall of Fame
- Alumni Visual & Performing Arts Hall of Fame

We are not yet taking nominations. The district is building its processes, criteria, timeline for launch and rollout for each Hall of Fame. To join the committee or if you know someone who'd be interested, please email kelly_santora@westiron.monroe.edu. We will have subcommittees for each Hall.

OCTOBER WELLNESS CALENDAR



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
For more information on adolescent and youth substance use please visit: https://opa.hhs.gov/adolescent-health/substance-use-adolescence https://oasas.ny.gov/treatment/youth-and-young-adults https://drugfree.org/prevention-and-early-action/ For support at school, please reach out to your counselor or Mrs. Corcimiglia				1 Intention Setting Choose a wellness goal that you can work to achieve over the next month	2 Get Active Find a way to get active. Go for a walk, stretch, and play a sport you enjoy.	3 Fall Festival Helmer's Nature Center 1-3pm
4 Create Use an artistic way to express yourself- paint, draw, color, or write.	5 Clean Give your space a refresh. The area around us impacts our thoughts and mood.	6 Read Find a book, magazine, or article to read. Choose something that interests you.	7 Mantra Create a mantra that can ground you throughout your day.	8 Farmers Market Enjoy the Fall Festival. Irondequoit Town Hall 4pm	9 Movie Under the Stars Jumanji (2017) Irondequoit Town Hall Gazebo 7:30pm	10 Nature is Calling Get outside! Go for a hike, ride your bike, or take a mindful moment in nature.
11 Fuel Your Body Try a new healthy food, cook a new recipe, make a more mindful decision on how you fuel your body.	12 Indigenous People's Day West Irondequoit sits on the homelands of the Onondowa'ga (Seneca) of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.	13 Library Explore the Irondequoit Public Library. Borrow a book, attend an event, or try a new club/group.	14 Wake Up Routine Challenge yourself to not look at your phone or screens for at least 30 minutes after you wake up.	15 Take a Break Spend 5 minutes mid-morning or midafternoon to take a break. Go outside, stretch, or focus on your breathing.	16 Spooktacular Get your ticket for the Seneca Park Zoo's seasonal event! Doors open at 5:30pm	17 Volunteer Take some time to give back. Choose an option that's meaningful to you.
18 Pet Therapy Spend some time with animals; they've been shown to decrease stress!	19 Yay List Take time at the end of the day to list all of your 'yay' moments.	20 Unwind Take some time to relax, however you enjoy. Read a book, watch tv, take a bath.	21 Breathing Practice Try a new breathing technique. Box breathing, Rainbow Breaths, Blow Bubbles.	22 Owl Prowl Helmer Nature Center 6:30-8:30pm	23 Trunk or Treat Irondequoit Community Center 5:30-7:30pm	24 Family Game Night Spend time with your family playing your favorite game or trying out a new one.
25 Re-Charge Challenge yourself to go to bed 30 minutes early. Extra sleep can set you up for a positive week ahead.	26 Take the Pledge Support Red Ribbon Week by taking the pledge to be drug-free. www.redribbon.org/pledge	27 Support Identify a support person and take some time to connect with them today.	28 Grounding Try a new grounding skill. Hand trace, power hug, focus on an object, or A-B-C around the room.	29 Positive Affirmations Create a positive self-affirmation. Display it somewhere you will see it every day.	30 Smile Smile or say hello to more people today. Your positivity is contagious.	31 Halloween Go for a walk with family and friends!

Wellness Month!

Have you seen our social media videos about our district Wellness Calendar?

Throughout October, we'll share highlights from schools across our district that show how wellness is woven into the everyday experiences of our students and staff! From building healthy habits to supporting mental health and making positive choices, wellness is an important part of creating schools where everyone can thrive. Access the Wellness page and read more here:

https://bit.ly/WI_Wellness



IHS CABARET

This Thursday | 7 p.m. Large Cafeteria



Theme: Circus

Featuring songs from *The Greatest Showman*, *Pippin* & more!

Admission: \$3 students | \$5 adults | \$10 families



District Highlights

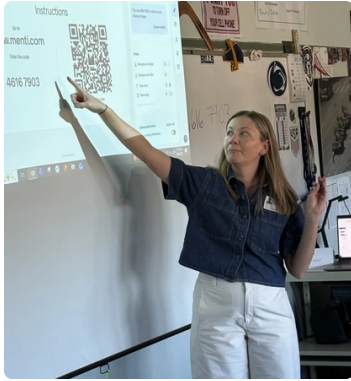
Foundation announces grants

The West Irondequoit Foundation, a non-profit that benefits our district, announced four grants it will fund for the 2026-27 school year. Its President, Mr. John Loury, presented a ceremonial check donation of \$45,050 at Thursday's Board of the Education meeting. Grants are:

- Adaptive 12:1:1 Classroom Environment (Grades 7-8)
- Post Secondary Program Van Transport
- Cameras for IAAP, Photo and AP Art and Design (Grades 9-12)
- The Future Ready Center (Grades 9-12)

Read more about each [here](#). Its next fund-raising event, done in conjunction with the West Irondequoit Alumni Association, is the third annual All-Alumni Reunion Fundraiser at 6 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 28. To learn more about the Foundation or make a donation online, visit westirondequoitfoundation.com.





Impacting I-Town's future!

Members of Colliers Engineering and Design group visited IHS today as part of their work with the Town of Irondequoit to plan how best to spend the \$4.5 million grant the town was awarded from New York State's "NY Forward initiative." IHS students from the DECA business club, IHS Student Council, and sections of Participation in Government classes participated in focus groups to provide their insight into how they hope the town spends this

money to support the economic development of the Titus-Cooper-Hudson area, which is walking distance from IHS. Ideas mentioned included more sit-down restaurants, apartments, a mixed-use retail shopping area and movie theatre, just to name a few. One of the two Colliers Engineering representatives was 2009 IHS graduate, Kiernan Playford! To learn more about project, go to irondequoitforward.com.

Playing for Team USA

IHS teammates Lucy Whipple and Ellie Bottiglier represented USA Lacrosse in last weekend's Rivalry Challenge 6s Tournament in Oshawa, Ontario, competing against teams from Canada and the Haudenosaunee! Ellie suited up for the U-19 team; Lucy competed with the U-17s. Both teams went undefeated in pool play and won their semifinal matchups to set up an all-American championship! In the final, the U-17 squad came out on top with a 16-9 victory with Lucy scoring twice! Ellie turned in a stellar performance anchoring the U-19 defense.

Congrats to both on an outstanding weekend representing IHS on the international stage!



BOARD OF EDUCATION

RECOGNITION WEEK



THANK
YOU



JOBS! JOIN OUR TEAM

**WE'RE
HIRING!**

CLICK ANYWHERE ON
THIS GRAPHIC TO SEE
CURRENT OPENINGS



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Superintendent of Schools: Aaron Johnson, Ed.D

Assistant Supt. for Finance: James Brennan

Assistant Supt. for Human Resources: Brenna Farrell, Ed.D

Assistant Supt. for Instruction: Chrissy Miga

Board of Education (pictured): Kevin Schoepfel, Melissa Bohrer, President, Matt Sullivan, Vice President, Kate Copeland, John Vay, Tamara Wall, Gary Adams.

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- **Facebook** (*@WestIrondequoitCSD*)
- **Instagram** (*@westirondequoitcsd*)
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