

YOUR SCHOOLS

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKVILLE CENTRE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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DATES TO REMEMBER

March

- 14 Board of Education Budget Work Session
- 27 Board of Education Meeting & Budget Work Session
- 29 Schools Closed—Easter/Passover Recess

April

- 9 Schools Reopen
- 17 Board of Education Meeting — Preliminary Budget Hearing

May

- 2 Board of Education Budget Hearing & Public Work Session
- 15 Annual Election & Budget Vote
- 23 Board of Education Meeting
- 25-28 Schools Closed— Memorial Day
- 31 Board of Education Public Work Session

To All Rockville Centre School District Residents

If you believe that your school-age or preschool child may have a disability, please contact Dr. Noreen Leahy, Assistant Superintendent of Schools for Pupil Personnel Services and Special Education, (516)255-8928, or Dr. Orly Gadon, Chairperson of the Committee on Special Education/Preschool Education at (516)255-8942.

Rockville Centre Students Excel in Music

Each year over 100,000 student musicians from across New York State participate in auditions for New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA). The levels of participation vary from 1 – 6 with increasing difficulty and requirement for proficiency. Students are selected to participate in various honors groups based on the scores they receive at NYSSMA auditions. Those groups include All-County, the Long Island String Festival Association (LISFA) and All-State. This year 36 elementary school students, 29 middle school students and 40 high school students were selected for All-County, 9 students were selected for LISFA and 8 were selected for All-State. In addition, 7 were selected as All-State Alternates.

The All-State experience is a true achievement for a New York State student musician. The experience begins with sophomore and junior student musicians and an accompanist preparing a higher level NYSSMA solo, which must be selected from repertoire lists in the current NYSSMA manual. Last spring over 6,400 students from across New York State prepared for All-State evaluations in the hope of being selected. Out of 2,900 students who received scores of 98 or higher, 883 All-State musicians were selected. We are proud that among those students selected were Julia Baxley, Lily Coll, Victoria Devine, Will Dragovich, Ailish Egan, Angela Sourial, Rachel Stempler and Peter Weiss. The following students were selected as alternates; Colette Brancaccio, Kyle Conneely, Julia DeLuca, Jaclyn Jahn, Liam Maliner, Julia Pandolfo and Avary Trump.



Pictured l to r: Lily Coll, Angela Sourial, Ailish Egan, Julia Baxley, Rachel Stempler, Victoria Devine, Peter Weiss and Will Dragovich.

Covert Students Study Shakespeare

At Covert School, Mr. Figaro and his STELLAR students studied the history of the Globe Theatre where William Shakespeare's plays were performed. The times were much different in London during the 1500's when Shakespeare was alive. The Black Plague ravaged the entire continent of Europe and people were badly affected by famine. Students were happy to study his literature but relieved they hadn't lived during his time.

In this STELLAR curriculum students are presented with challenging texts such as A Midsummer Night's Dream, Hamlet, and Romeo and Juliet. These plays foster higher level reading skills such as inferencing, drawing conclusions and prediction.

To make a lasting impression, the culminating project was a performance of the play they studied. Fourth graders, with the help of costume designer Barbara Klein, performed A Midsummer Night's Dream in the Stellar Centre for parents and their peers. They also brought their performance to a Board of Education meeting. The study of Shakespeare's plays has been a huge success.



Hewitt's New Blog Club— "Hewitt Happenings"

Hewitt has created an online school blog, "Hewitt Happenings," facilitated by Mrs. Danielle Cannon and Ms. Jessica DiBrita. The motivated, hardworking, computer-skilled 5th grade reporters are building Hewitt's Masterpiece! Using a school blog application, called Seesaw, students have been busy interviewing Hewitt School staff, writing movie and book reviews, sharing popular topics and motivational quotes.

Students choose assignments to work on at a Blog Club meeting and they share the information using photos, videos, drawings, texts, PDFs and links. Seesaw empowers students to independently document information. Blogging gives the club members an authentic audience; their classmates, parents and teachers. The Hewitt Blog is a simple way to share what is happening in the community. Parents, teachers, students and friends can check out the blog for weekly updates and happenings around Hewitt School by visiting blog.seesaw.me/hewitthappenings!



Riverside Coding Week

Throughout the year Riverside students in grades K-5 have the opportunity to experiment with computer coding in STELLAR classes. Learning the fundamentals of coding helps students become better readers, writers and mathematicians. Coding also fosters the important skills of collaboration and communication.

Students start their "Road to Code" curriculum by learning the fundamentals of coding as they physically build 'arrow roads.' They apply this basic knowledge and practice their coding skills by using the Coding for Kids app on their iPads. As their coding skills become more advanced, the students begin to write code using iPad apps such as Tynker, Scratch Jr. and Lightbot. Students also work on programming using websites such as BotLogic, Kodable: Hour of Code, and Coding.org.

Thanks to a grant from the Rockville Centre Education Foundation, which funded Dash and Dot robots, the students improve their coding skills by planning out a series of instructions and creating algorithms. The students test out their algorithms and debug the programs when necessary. Incorporating coding skills into the curriculum is an enjoyable way to teach the very important skills of problem-solving and perseverance.



Watson School is Beautiful

Watson's third grade girls are learning a wonderful lesson on just how beautiful they are. "Beautiful Me" is a unique self-esteem program which teaches, unites, and empowers participants to live with confidence. Through hands-on activities the girls become aware of their special talents, attributes and unique qualities and are encouraged to be the very best version of themselves. This occurs when they realize some very simple lessons; they do not have to look like a magazine advertisement to have worth; kindness matters; each individual is unique. Differences are exactly what makes them beautiful in the first place. Students learned to listen to each other and be aware of how words and actions impact others. Since the 2013/2014 school year, over 100 beautiful Watson girls have completed the "Beautiful Me" program funded by the Hance Family Foundation. The Foundation was created by Jackie and Warren Hance after their three daughters died tragically in a car accident. Their mission is to honor the lives of their three beautiful girls by promoting programs that build self-esteem in young girls.



Wilson's Running of the Torch!

On Friday, February 9th the students and staff of Wilson Elementary School kicked off their Olympic Celebration. The school was a sea of red, white and blue to show their support for TEAM USA in the Winter Olympics. The Olympic torch made its way around the hallways. The torch run promoted sportsmanship and friendship among the children. Olympic Assemblies were held to introduce the Olympic Mascot and provided the children with a bird's eye view of the Olympic Stadium in Korea.

During the official Olympic Games, the students will participate in curriculum-based activities designed to promote the knowledge of Global Unity. Each class has selected a participating country to research and track during the games. Students and staff will be plotting the medal count throughout the events. Classes will enjoy books such as G is for Gold Medal. Hands-on STEM activities will give the students a chance to learn about the different sporting events. GO USA!



South Side Middle School Challenge Day

Challenge Day is a social emotional program designed to build connections and forgiveness between young people and to inspire youth to become positive forces of change in their schools and communities.

During the full-day activity, 8th grade students and staff are challenged to step out of their comfort zones, open their hearts and build connections with others. Trained Challenge Day Leaders guided participants through a carefully designed series of games, activities, and trust-building exercises that break down the walls of separation and create new levels of empathy and respect.

Organized by Assistant Principal Rose Cammarata, and with the assistance and cooperation of the staff at South Side Middle School, Challenge Day continues to provide the venue for our 8th graders to pause and connect with peers in a new, enlightened way.

This program is supported by our PTA and School District, which supports our commitment to promoting a positive school climate where all children are celebrated.





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Hewitt 4th & 5th Graders Learn the Ukelele

This year General Music and Chorus teacher Christina Toomey, is working with 4th and 5th graders at Hewitt using the ukuleles in two different units. The students learned two chords and are in the process of learning a third one. With just a few chords they can already play various traditional folk songs, partner songs, and sea shanties on their ukuleles. Hewitt Elementary School received these ukuleles and an interactive video curriculum from a Rockville Centre Education Foundation grant. In a November episode of "Exploring our Schools," Dr. Johnson spoke with Ms. Toomey and two of her students about the ukulele and how it has been integrated into the Hewitt School music curriculum. The students were excited to share what they had learned. (Click [here](#) to watch the "Exploring Our Schools" episode about the Hewitt Ukulele Program.)

Hewitt students will continue to learn songs they hear on the radio, which will act as yet another enhancement in their everyday lives. Christina Toomey said, "I've enjoyed being a part of this first year using the ukuleles. It's so exciting to see how joyful students become when they can play various songs. Students are beginning to get ukuleles for their birthdays and I know they'll be applying what they've learned in class at home and for their own impromptu performances!"



Student Directed Plays

IB Theater Arts students showcased their multidimensional skills in January when they presented plays they wrote, cast, directed and produced. Students began thinking about their plays a full year prior to the production. They came up with a theme, developed a concept, wrote a script, auditioned for the characters, built the set, created the costumes, ran rehearsals and prepared for opening night.

The evening featured 6 plays; "The Rules of Comedy," "How to Succeed in High School Without Really Trying," "The Greek Mythology Olympiaganza," "Appropriate Audience Behavior," "Breaking Badly" and "The Actor's Nightmare." Each play had a different theme, cast and crew. The plays dealt with topics such as thriving in high school, ending relationships, combating nightmares, Greek Mythology, dealing with rude behavior and how to make people laugh.

In total, approximately 130 students were involved in this production. The plays can be viewed online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGlmkKbSCjk>