

Valley Stream #30

public schools

www.valleystream30.com

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR Superintendent of Schools

Dear Valley Stream 30 Community,

It seems hardly possible that so much of the school year has flown by already. It has been a very productive first half of the year in so many ways.

The fall brought the implementation of our new science curriculum units in fifth and sixth grade, as well as the inclusion of our Foundations phonics, spelling and handwriting program in the third grade. District and building administrators and teachers have adjusted the math curriculum maps to align them directly to the new expectations for math performance set with last year's New York State math assessment. New grammar lessons have been added to grades 3-6 to support new writing expectations included in the New York State English Language Arts assessment and two new writing units have been incorporated into the grades 1-6 ELA curriculum. Our reading teachers have all been trained in yet another resource to support our struggling students, Leveled Literacy Interventions (LLI), and we are seeing much success with this program in grades 1-3. Utilizing our Response to Intervention (RtI) program, the District has been successfully working to provide students in need with early intervention services and regularly monitor their progress to ascertain if our supports are best working to meet the needs of each student.

This winter, more than 90% of our K-6 students are in the emerging or established zones on our AimsWeb benchmark and progress-monitoring tool. Additionally, this year, more than 90% of our kindergarten students reached the benchmark for nonsense word fluency, a key indicator of future reading success. These encouraging results demonstrate that our articulated program of early intervention and our curriculum innovations are paying off by providing students with a sound educational foundation and better preparing them for the later grades.

Working toward our goal of 21st century learning, 82 classrooms in the district are now equipped with interactive white boards, and technology becomes further integrated into the curriculum each day as a tool to help students learn deeper and better. Our art and music programs continue to flourish, with the students performing beautifully during school concerts and creating eye-catching artwork to adorn the halls. Our after-school enrichment program continues to offer a variety of opportunities to support children's development of varied interests, and our new Academic Intervention Services Academy is making a difference for those students who previously struggled on the state assessments.

Now, as we are in the midst of budget season, we will all need to work together to maintain and build on these successes in one of the most difficult economic climates in recent years. Due to the decrease in state revenues and the increase in District costs, such as the New York State Retirement and Pension System, and other contractual expenses, our District will need to make significant budget reductions in order to present an affordable budget to the public on voting day. This will not be an easy challenge to meet. In the budget update article featured on page 2 you will find more details, as well as a listing of the remaining Board meetings, where you can share your input, ideas, and suggestions. It is my sincere hope that by working together and making the hard choices together, Valley Stream 30 will find ways to create a budget where reductions impact programs the least, and educational excellence continues to remain Valley Stream 30's hallmark.

Sincerely,
Dr. Elaine Kanas



Six Valley Stream School District 30 fifth graders were selected to participate in this year's All-County Music Festival.

Students Selected for All-County Festivals

Whether during school concerts or performances in the community, the outstanding musical talents of District 30 students are evident throughout the school year. This winter, as a testament to their musical capabilities, more than twenty District 30 student-musicians were selected to participate in this year's All-County Music Festival sponsored by the Nassau Music Educators Association.

These band, chorus, and orchestra students were selected as All-County musicians in recognition of their solo performances during the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) program and through teacher recognition. Congratulations to the following students: (Clear Stream Avenue) **Danae Antoine, Joninne Douglas, Judymae Jolibois, Fasih Khan, Michelle Mata, Miracle Onuoha, Moises Rodriguez, and Yael Weiss;** (Forest Road) **Naomi Caquias, Nefissa Kemech-Charles, Isadora DeCarvalho, Britney Dunn, Alyssa Eyssalenne, Tyler Marie Reyes, and Natalia Walawender;** and (Shaw Avenue) **Meaghan Adams, Gabrielle Phanord-Alexis, Aneesah Ali, Mutahira Bhatti, Justine Brackenridge, Derrick Choi, Justin Nin, and Benjamin Puca.**



Several Valley Stream School District 30 sixth-grade students were selected to participate in this year's All-County Music Festival.

BUDGET Development Update

Not long after the start of the 2010-2011 school year, the District began to plan ahead by revisiting its long-range financial plan, in particular concentrating on the 2011-2012 budget.

In anticipation of further financial challenges dictated by the current economy, District administrators and members of the community began exploring existing District programs and initiatives. In December, the administration presented to the Board of Education and community the 2010 Building Condition Survey and five-year facilities plan. This information provided an integral frame of reference for the building tour conducted on Saturday, January 22. In addition to the building tour, the District hosted a budget forum (detailed to the right). During the Board's January Work Session, a summary of the feedback from the forum, as well as an overview of the projected budget, was presented. At that time, the Board determined that the continuation budget, which took into account maintaining existing programs and initiatives with slight adjustments for enrollment projections, inflation, rising healthcare and pension costs, and contractual obligations, was neither financially feasible nor sustainable in the long term.

Shortly after this meeting, the newly-elected Governor submitted his proposal for a property tax cap, which, if approved, would go into effect for the 2012-2013 school year. The Senate has passed this proposal, while the State Assembly has expressed reservations. In addition to his proposed tax cap, the Governor also released a proposed executive budget, which has a profound impact on District 30 not only for next year but also in the long term. Under the proposed executive budget, the District's state aid would be reduced by \$662,000, or an 11.78% reduction.

Given this information, the administration has been working towards presenting a budget to the Board that reflects the community's desire to maintain existing programs but modifies them in order to meet the realities of the current economic climate. Valley Stream 30 is not alone in building a financial plan that will enable the District to navigate these financial challenges while preserving the integrity of the programs offered.

As this year's budget process is certain to be a challenging one, the District invites all residents to become a part of the process and help to shape the future of District 30. The District will be devoting time during the March 21st and March 28th Board of Education meetings to discuss the budget development process. These meetings will take place at 8:00 p.m. in the library at Shaw Avenue School. Additionally, all budget information will be posted to the District website.

Residents Provide Input During Budget Forum

On January 18, Valley Stream 30 hosted its first community budget forum at Shaw Avenue School.

Despite the blistering, wintery conditions, the Valley Stream 30 community's dedication to education shined through. The evening opened with an overview of the District's current financial outlook and challenges, as well as highlights of programs and initiatives currently offered.

As part of the evening, attendees had the opportunity to share, in small roundtable discussions, their values and recommendations for the Board of Education to consider during the budget process. Additionally, the community members had the chance to provide input on ways to modify programs and initiatives in order to have the least impact on students during these challenging financial times. Five predetermined questions, which focused on enhancing budget communication and modifications to curriculum and facilities initiatives, were explored. The overall sentiment and feedback expressed during the forum noted that the community wants to maintain the existing programs but modify them to meet the realities of the current economic climate.

The information presented, ideas generated, and answers to questions posed are available for review on the District's website.

District Program to Be Shared Statewide

Valley Stream 30's successful summer school program has been recognized by the School Administrators' Association of New York State (SAANYS) as an exemplary program. Superintendent Dr. Elaine Kanas and Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Gerard Poole, have been invited to present information about the program to New York State school administrators at the May 20, 2011 SAANYS conference.

IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMS CAPTIVATE STUDENTS

The students of Shaw Avenue School have been very fortunate to experience many wonderful cultural arts programs this school year, including the Transformations Storytelling assembly, which incorporated the art of traditional folktales and magnificent face painting. As the presenter, Christopher Agostino, told the stories, he transformed student volunteers faces into characters from the story, including tigers, sharks, and lizards.

Another program at Shaw Avenue this year was the dynamic bully prevention assembly, Box Out Bullying. This program entertained and engaged the students through interactive, live theater. The Shaw Avenue students learned why bullying is wrong, why standing up to bullying is right, how to recognize bullying when it is happening, and a few ways to stop bullying.

Exploring Literacy Lessons

In a continued effort to support students' learning in the area of English Language Arts, the District has implemented several literacy-based initiatives throughout grades K-6.

This year, grade three teachers have been implementing the Foundations program during their daily instruction. This program is a phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics and spelling program for grades K-3. Teachers are incorporating a 30-minute daily Foundations lesson into their language arts classroom instruction. These lessons focus on carefully sequenced skills that include print knowledge, alphabet awareness, phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, decoding, vocabulary, fluency, and spelling.

Fifth and sixth-grade students are participating in book clubs, which are noted to be an authentic way to engage students in inquiry, discussion and analysis around rich literature. The grade levels' teachers are utilizing trade books to support the book clubs and helping students to extend and deepen their understandings around the content, themes and literary elements of books they read with their classmates. A team of teachers is working to create resources for their colleagues, including a scope of mini-lessons to guide teachers' work with book clubs.

Based on models of best practice in writing instruction, Writing Fundamentals units deliver proven research-based instruction. Each grade has various units of study that take students through the writing process as they work towards publishing pieces of writing. One of the strengths of the program is that each unit includes mentor texts that teachers use to model writing skills and strategies for their students. Units of study teach students about various elements of the writing craft and structures of different genres. This approach impacts their writing skills across all curriculum areas.

Guided reading is a context in which a teacher supports each reader's development of effective strategies for processing novel texts at increasingly challenging levels of difficulty. During guided reading time, the teacher works with a small group of students who use similar reading processes and are able to read similar levels of text with support. Guided reading-leveled books were purchased for all of the buildings to enhance existing guided reading libraries. These additions will arm teachers with resources so they can better match texts to readers.

Embedded within the schools' daily instruction is more than just a list of skills and concepts that students will acquire, but, rather, instructional practices that follow a rigorous curriculum using research-based methodologies, which are engaging and challenging. All of these initiatives can be attributed to the dedicated work of both the District's teachers and administrators in a continuous effort to respond to the increasing demands of not only the students of today, but also of the learners they will become tomorrow with the ongoing support of the Board of Education.



Embarking on Virtual Field Trips

With the help of Technology teacher, Keri Rothman-Kaufman, third-grade students throughout the District are embarking on Virtual Field Trips. During their adventures, the students are learning about different communities around the world as near as Washington, D.C. and as far away as China and Brazil. Working in pairs, the students research specific landmarks from a designated area and share the facts that they learned while standing in front of a green screen.

Using the green screen technology and a videotape of their presentation, the students can be magically transported to the location they had studied by inserting scenery behind them. The unit is a great cross-curricular lesson that incorporates social studies, research, writing, and technology skills.

Under the Big Top

The circus was in town at the Forest Road School when the students had the opportunity to participate in the National Circus Project, which was sponsored by the school's PTA. The program, which kicked off with a school assembly showcasing some of the performers' talents, was designed to teach the children a variety of circus skills. During the week-long program, each grade level attended workshops with the trained professionals. The school's fifth and sixth graders were also scheduled for small group, targeted workshops helping them to develop their individual talents in the following areas: plate spinning, stilt walking, juggling, miming, balancing, skateboarding, acrobatics, and the manipulation of various circus items, including the devil sticks and the diablos. An amazing amount of instruction was given in a short period of time and, most importantly, the students learned valuable lessons in teamwork, perseverance and self-confidence. This year's program concluded with a fifth and sixth-grade performance for their families, showcasing their newly-acquired skills!

2010-2011 Board of Education

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Dr. Elaine Kanas, **Superintendent of Schools**

Dates to Remember:

March 21

Board of Education Work Session
8:00 p.m. @ Shaw Avenue Library

March 28

Board of Education Meeting
8:00 p.m. @ Shaw Avenue Library

March 30

Early Dismissal 11:15 a.m.
Clear Stream Ave./
Forest Road/Shaw Avenue
Parent Teacher Conferences
12:30-4:15 p.m.

March 31

Early Dismissal 11:15 a.m.
Clear Stream Ave./
Forest Road/Shaw Avenue
Parent Teacher Conferences
12:30-2:50 p.m.

April 11

Board of Education Work Session
8:00 p.m. @ Shaw Avenue Library

April 18-25

Spring Recess - Schools Closed

Kindergarten Registration Information for the 2011-2012 School Year

Registration for District 30's kindergarten program will take place during the week of April 11th at all District schools during the hours of 9:00-11:00 a.m. Children eligible for kindergarten must be born on or before December 1, 2006.

Additionally, each school conducted a pre-kindergarten meeting during the second week of March. Kindergarten registration packets were distributed during these meetings. Anyone unable to attend can request that a packet be sent home with a sibling or mailed to their address.

Celebrating Founders!

Clear Stream Avenue recently celebrated the school's Founders Day, a commemoration of the founding of the PTA organization. Stephanie Cooke led the Clear Stream chorus in two numbers that evoked the spirit of unity and community. Artwork created by Leslie Freiberg accentuated the evening by adding colorful aquatic themes to the stage. The highlight of the evening was when the four PTA presidents participated in a candle-lighting ceremony that served as a symbol of renewal to their commitment to education and dedication to the students of Valley Stream 30.

OUT-OF-DISTRICT TRANSPORTATION REQUEST DEADLINE – APRIL 1

In accordance with Board of Education policy, transportation requests for the 2011-2012 school year, for students attending non-public schools, must be written and received by the District no later than April 1, 2011. In an effort to contain costs and keep pricing competitive, District 30 is part of a twelve-school district transportation purchasing consortium.