

Valley Stream #30

public schools

www.valleystream30.com

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR Superintendent of Schools

Dear Valley Stream 30 Community,

Whew...2010-11 seemed to fly by, filled with the many initiatives and challenges District 30 and other school districts across New York State have had to address. This includes formulating a budget in a more-than-challenging economic climate that helps students to meet new, higher state test score benchmarks – all while striving to attain the important goals that the District has set for our students' growth and development as part of Valley Stream 30's continuous quest to achieve and maintain excellence.

This issue shares examples of the work that has been completed by staff in order to help students achieve at the highest level...work that could not be accomplished without the support of our parents, guardians and community members of Valley Stream 30. Highlighted on these pages are the instructional and curricula goals accomplished, as well as the District's progress toward goals set in the Five-Year Strategic Plan.

The coming year brings yet more initiatives and challenges, both internally and externally determined. We continue to move forward in the second year of our Five-Year Plan (see District website, www.valleystream30.com, for complete plan), as well as build on last year's instructional goals that expand student learning, particularly in the areas of both creative and non-fiction writing, science, sustainability education and correct grammar usage. Responding to new State education law, the District is working collaboratively with principals and teachers to develop a new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) process that specifically links teacher and principal evaluations to student growth. We are also refining our K-2 curriculum maps to meet the demands of the new Common Core Curriculum Standards. (Grades 3-6 common core curriculum, per state regulation, is to be implemented in 2012-13). In addition, we face new challenges in formulating budgets that continue to support and expand our program offerings for students within the context of recently passed legislation that potentially caps income to New York State school districts.

Just as your partnership has been essential to all that we accomplished last year, it becomes increasingly crucial that we engage all members of the Valley Stream 30 community in our efforts, drawing on your insight, partnership and ingenuity as we work collaboratively to meet these new challenges. This year, we will be exploring new ideas to help broaden our communication and partnership with you, the members of our community. This includes expanding our budget forums, providing video newsletters on our website and planning events that are specifically inclusive of families who are new to the community and perhaps even to our country. Please do not hesitate to call or email us with suggestions you may have to accomplish such expanded communication and community involvement. Your suggestions will be most valued and appreciated.

I wish you all a wonderful, relaxed rest of the summer and look forward to welcoming you all in September to what I am sure will prove to be, with your collaboration, another successful year in Valley Stream 30!

Sincerely,
Dr. Elaine Kanas

Update on District Goals

Each year the Valley Stream 30 School District, using student assessment information, NYS curriculum requirements, strategic planning goals and school board expectations, develops an important list of instructional goals to accomplish. The goals are developed by a Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Council (CIAC) which meets throughout the year to provide the framework for ongoing professional development. The CIAC is composed of teacher representatives from all grades and subjects, as well as building and central office administrators.

The council met this past June and reviewed the progress made toward the completion of goals for the 2010-11 school year. The goals were successfully achieved through professional development, faculty collaboration and planning meetings. Last year the District set 24 goals to accomplish in 2010-11. These goals, as well as a review of their success, are available on the District website.

Several examples of these goals are:

Implement two writing units from the Writing Fundamentals Kit in grades K-6:

This goal was met successfully. Professional development was implemented. There was District-level training for teachers, as well as push-in training. The units were added to the District Curriculum Pacing Guide.

Implement Foundations in grade 3:

This goal was met successfully. There was year-long professional development for all third-grade teachers on this phonics, handwriting and spelling program. We also trained our own District facilitators.

Continue technology integration throughout the curriculum areas:

This goal was met successfully. Teachers were trained in the use of District technology tools such as laptops, SMART tables, interactive whiteboards and online resources. Curriculum was piloted that integrated technology into the content area, such as Integrated ELA/Social Studies and Sustainability curriculums. The computer teacher in the District piloted the use of green screen technology into grades 2 and 3 social studies media presentations. Online resources to promote the integration of technology and literacy were utilized by staff, including blogging, interactive writing resources and game development.

The CIAC set new goals for the 2011-12 school year at the June meeting. These goals will be reviewed at an upcoming Board meeting and will be posted to the District website.

Shaw Avenue Welcomes New Principal

Johane Ligondé is the new principal at Shaw Avenue School. A native of Haiti, Johane grew up in an inequitable educational system; her childhood experiences helped to shape her great passion to serve under-represented youth and make it possible for them to obtain not just an equitable education, but an excellent one. Johane has worked as an English and literacy teacher and served as the principal of a Pre-K-6 international school on the island of Anguilla.



Johane views literacy as the great equalizer. Her work with K-12 teachers to improve literacy instruction and students' literacy skills is driven by the need to raise the level of rigor in literacy curriculum, vertically aligning curriculum across grade levels and to national common core standards. Her research interests include the use of social emotional learning to combat micro-aggression and system-wide reform to address micro-inequities in schools.

Most recently, Johane was the Curriculum Director of ELA, Reading, and Social Studies in the Lawrence School District. She is currently a doctoral student in the Urban Education Leaders Program at Teachers College, Columbia University. She received her B.A. in English from the State University of New York at Albany, Master in the Arts of Teaching (M.A.T.) in English Education from Union College, and an Ed.M degree in Educational Leadership from the Summer Principals Academy, Teachers College, Columbia University.

Strategic Plan Update

Last year, a committee of parents, teachers, administrators and community members completed more than a year-long work process to recommend to the Board of Education, for adoption, a Five-Year Strategic Plan that maps the future of Valley Stream 30. At the June 27, 2011 Board of Education meeting, an update on the District's progress toward meeting those five-year goals was provided to the Board and the public. The plan sets 10 overall goals and lists process goals to be accomplished each year until the plan's 10 broad goals are fully accomplished. Thanks to the hard work of District staff, parents and VS 30 community members, all process goals targeted for completion during the 2010-11 school year were successfully accomplished.

Some examples of process goals completed include:

- **21st Century Learning:** All new curriculum projects adopted or piloted in 2010-11 incorporated the 21st century learning skills of critical thinking, creativity, innovation, problem-solving, collaboration, flexibility, adaptability, global awareness and environmental literacy.
- **Science:** New inquiry science units were implemented in fifth and sixth-grade classrooms (Ecosystems and Sustainability in grade 5 and Plant Experiments and Chemistry in grade 6).
- **Social Studies:** Technology-based integrated ELA/Social Studies curriculum was piloted in several grades.
- **Physical Education and Nutrition:** District-wide, K-6 Physical Education and Fitness framework was completed.
- **Student Behavior:** There was a Board of Education review and revision of the Code of Conduct, which included parent and teacher input.
- **Staffing Standards:** Hiring rubrics were developed for all professional staff openings.
- **Student Enrichment:** An after-school Academic Intervention Services Academy was implemented.
- **School Facilities:** A Five-Year Building Condition Survey was completed to form a road map for recommended building improvement projects to be budgeted over the next few years.

For a copy of the VS 30 Five-Year Strategic Plan and a full accounting of all progress this year, please visit our website at www.valleystream30.com.

Adopting a Common Core

This past year, New York State, along with much of the nation, adopted the Common Core Standards. The Common Core Standards are the next generation of K-12 standards, designed to help ensure that all students are college and career ready in literacy and math no later than the end of high school. These standards will replace the 2005 NYS standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics. For the upcoming year, students will be assessed in the 2005 New York State Standard; however, in 2012-13, students across the state will be assessed in their mastery of the Common Core Standards.

The Valley Stream 30 District has taken proactive steps over the past year to prepare for the implementation of the Common Core Standards. Several examples of this were the District's decision to set rigorous benchmarks for reading levels, pilot an integrated English Language Arts and Social Studies unit that targeted content area reading and writing, and add genre-based writing units last year in each grade.

The District will continue aligning the curriculum to the Common Core next year. Some examples of this will be the District-wide implementation of a common approach to the instruction of grammar skills, additional genre-based writing units, an increase in the amount of time students are engaged in informational text, elevated reading benchmarks, the development of common writing rubrics and writing benchmarks, the development of academic vocabulary lists by grade, and the alignment of our Math Connects curriculum to the Common Core. In addition, across the year, administrators and staff will participate in professional development designed to train them in the Common Core expectations and to develop lessons that are aligned to the new standards. A parent workshop on the Common Core will be offered, as well. For more information on the standards please visit: <http://www.corestandards.org/>.

FITNESS FUN

While many Valley Stream 30 goals center around students' intellectual growth and meeting the ELA and Math New York State assessment standards, the District's strategic plan incorporates other elements that take into account the importance of developing the whole child. One of these goal areas is physical education and nutrition. This past year, the physical education teachers from all three Valley Stream 30 elementary schools worked together to create a District-wide physical education curriculum that meets New York State standards and is designed to develop the "healthy child." You can find the curriculum online on our website, www.valleystream30.com. Spiraling content and expectations through the grades as the children grow and develop, the major conceptual areas that define the curriculum include: movement concepts, body management, locomotor movement, manipulative skills, rhythmic skills, fitness concepts, muscular strength/endurance, flexibility, aerobic capacity, body composition, self responsibility, social interaction and group dynamics.

In addition to student in-class learning, the District and PTAs also sponsored some fitness-related workshops for parents and families, including a presentation by Shaw Physical Education teacher Eric Van Keuren on a 10-minute exercise program families can perform together each morning to build personal fitness. The District will be repeating this program several times during the 2011-12 school year. Please check the building and superintendent newsletters for specific dates and times. All families and students attending will have the opportunity to enter themselves into a fitness challenge program.

SUMMER CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

No sooner had school ended and we waved goodbye to the children than the facilities team was off and running to get the schools ready to welcome back students on September 7.

In addition to the routine repairs and maintenance that occur in July and August, the District is replacing all windows at Clear Stream Avenue, Shaw Avenue and Forest Road Schools in August. All corridor ceiling and lighting at Shaw Avenue School is also being replaced during the month of July. This work is in keeping with the District's commitment to the Five-Year Strategic Plan and ensures that the facilities of District 30 promote health and safety

and optimize student learning opportunities.

The replacement of the windows and lighting was identified as essential in the Five-Year Plan, primarily due to age and wear and tear. However, there are other benefits that these initiatives will afford. For example, the new windows will improve the natural light coming into the classrooms. This is environmentally friendly and promotes energy-efficiency, saving on utility costs. It also provides a brighter, more inviting learning environment for children, which can be linked to student productivity.

Rest assured, our buildings are getting some much needed 'TLC' over the next two months.



Valley Stream UFSD #30
Valley Stream, New York 11580-3032

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

Dates to Remember:

September 7

Schools Open
(Kindergarten
Half-Day Dismissal)

September 12

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

September 19

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

September 20 (Tentative)

Clear Stream Ave./Forest
Road/Shaw Avenue
Meet the Teacher Night 7:30 p.m.

September 29-30

Rosh Hashanah -
Schools Closed

October 10

Columbus Day -
Schools Closed

Honoring Our Educators

Once again, the District is proud to honor its teachers and faculty members for their dedication and service to the community's students. With gratitude and appreciation, the District thanks the following professionals for their work in District 30 and wishes them well as they retire from their posts. Additionally, having met the rigorous standards put before them, several educators were granted the high honor of tenure. The District looks forward to a long and successful partnership with these dedicated professionals. Congratulations to this year's retirees and tenure candidates:

Retirees:

John ComcowichShaw Avenue Psychologist
Dennis RizzutoShaw Avenue Cleaner
Theresa McGrady.....Shaw Avenue Teacher/Security Aide

Teachers Appointed to Tenure:

Laura ArgentoForest Road Elementary Classroom Teacher
Anthony AucielloShaw Avenue Special Education Teacher
Sharon BenyaminyForest Road Speech Teacher
Maureen HotzakClear Stream Elementary Classroom Teacher
Natalie NelsonClear Stream Elementary Classroom Teacher
Sebnem OzsirkintiShaw Avenue/WAKC ESL Teacher
Amy PernickShaw Avenue Assistant Principal
Crystan SerraForest Road Elementary Classroom Teacher
Sarah TauberShaw Avenue Elementary Classroom Teacher
Eric Van Keuren.....Shaw Avenue Physical Education Teacher
Lauren Weick.....Shaw Avenue Elementary Classroom Teacher