

# The Bulletin Board

News from the Hicksville UFSD

## Cultivating Community CONNECTIONS

The district has expanded on its ongoing commitment to maintaining open lines of communication and fostering partnerships throughout the Hicksville community. Several ways to move this goal along were presented at a Key Communicators roundtable meeting in January that was hosted by Superintendent of Schools Dr. Carl Bonuso and featured representatives of the district, Hicksville business owners and community members. The meeting — one of several held throughout the year — served not only as a way to encourage forward-thinking dialogue premised on collaboration, but also as a forum to brainstorm and exchange creative ideas.

### Decal Displays

One of the ways the district has looked to increase the visibility of partnerships throughout the community is the presentation of a brand-new Hicksville Schools logo decal that businesses have been encouraged to display on their storefronts. The logo, designed by high school art teacher Craig Mateyunas, features a prominent orange and black Hicksville “H” with the word “Pride” across it, which is surrounded by the names of each of the district’s nine schools in a circular pattern.



“This decal would be a sort of ‘thank you’ letter, and would represent support in both ways,” said Dr. Bonuso. “We would hope it says that ‘our school system supports you, just as you all support us.’”

### The IKEA Idea

In addition to designing the decal, Mateyunas also spearheaded an initiative designed to garner exposure for students’ remarkable artwork while simultaneously beautifying a community staple. On March 2, a grand opening ceremony was held at the IKEA in Hicksville to unveil an art exhibit featuring beautiful works created by students in the high school’s Portfolio, Photography, Painting and AP classes. Each student’s work was mounted in an IKEA frame, and prominently displayed in the month-long exhibit.

“[The] high school has an extensive art program, filled with talented and creative students who are very excited about having this opportunity to highlight their hard work and dedication,” Mateyunas said. “One of my goals as the advisor of the Hicksville Chapter of the National Art Honor Society, is to find venues where we can highlight [their] achievements. I am very thankful to IKEA for being so enthusiastic and supportive of our students and programs.”

### Work-Based Learning

High school students benefit from the district’s collaboration with Nassau BOCES to establish a shared work-based learning program. This program is a partnership among the student, school and an employer that formally integrates classroom instruction with ‘real-world’ work experience.

There are several advantages to the integration of the work-based learning program: students cultivate flexibility, are



willing to take on challenges, have up-to-date technology skills that can be put to use, undergo a screening process, and can receive high school credit for their work experience so that they are more committed employees; employers, who make the final hiring decisions, have the opportunity to become involved in the educational process by providing feedback to the school and allowing BOCES to be more responsive to employer needs, in addition to helping students see the connection between academics and the world of work; and the program coordinator not only helps to save money on recruitment by providing qualified students to interview, but also remains in regular contact with employers to address concerns and obtain regular feedback on student performance.

The work-based learning experiences include internships, shadow opportunities, field trips, community service, workplace tours and guest speakers, and students have two employment options: cooperative work experience and short-term internships. Short-term internships provide students with the opportunity to participate in an unpaid work experience to gain an in-depth view of a career that interests them. Cooperative work experience is a type of paid employment that offers students the learning opportunity to transition from school to post-secondary education and/or work; here, students can also earn high school credit.

“Being an intern has been such a great experience for me,” said senior Samantha Garcia about her dentist internship. “This internship provides such great advantages because I have already started learning about all the different equipment and being able to interact with patients. It has been my dream to become a dentist and this program is a huge step toward achieving that goal.”

## Planning for PARENT CENTER

The district is in the planning stages to unveil a brand-new Parent Center in September 2017. The purpose of the Parent Center will be to provide parents and families with resource information, education, and the support needed to raise students who are resilient, safe, confident and lifelong learners. In addition, the center will connect families, school and community resources to help improve student well-being, provide enrichment and enhance academic achievement.

The center will feature several resources, including computers, books and supplies, to facilitate functions such as workshops and informative sessions. It will be led by support services specialists, with assistance from district staff members and members of the Board of Education.

The specific location of the center is still yet to be determined, as are its hours of operation, although district Director of Special Education Claire Hochheiser said that the goal will be to have both day and night hours.

A resolution to form a Parent Center Committee was approved at the Board of Education's February meeting.

# BILINGUAL Benefits

The district's bilingual program for eligible first- and second-grade students is celebrating its second year. Housed at Old Country Road, there are approximately 40 students enrolled in the program, which accommodates English language learners in an effort to help them acquire English proficiency while they continue to master age- and grade-appropriate content areas.

The district's bilingual teachers have made it a priority to facilitate students' transition into the English language general instructional program. They also prepare students to meet New York State Learning Standards by providing the academic, linguistic, cultural and social experiences that support lifelong learning and effective participation in the life of the community in several ways:

- *Provide classroom activities to promote language development in English and in the student's primary language*
- *Incorporate the background knowledge of students to increase comprehension by linking content area concepts to their personal, cultural or academic experiences*
- *Tailor classroom lessons to help to develop listening, speaking, reading and writing skills*
- *Encourage parental support for students at home.*

An article by Fred Genesee, a specialist in second language acquisition and bilingualism research, titled "The Home Language: An English Language Learner's Most Valuable Resource," indicates that research has shown that bilingual students exhibit significant academic and cognitive advantages, including:

- *Achievement in literacy and other academic subjects, which are as high as and often better than that of English language learners in English-only programs*
- *The development of positive relationships between students' level of bilingual proficiency and their achievement in math and reading in English*
- *Being able to transfer many skills and knowledge from their first language to facilitate their acquisition of reading skills in the second language.*

This is the first year of the program at the first-grade level. The district looks forward to expanding it to accommodate additional grade levels in the future, as needed.

"The expansion of our bilingual program recognizes and ensures the value of native language instruction in schools and affirms the value of diversity in our multilingual society," said Lisa Estrada, district supervisor of ENL, world languages and activities.



## INTRODUCING:

### Inna Mishiev

The district is proud to welcome to its esteemed team Inna Mishiev, assistant director of pupil personnel services and special education for grades 6-12.

Prior to coming to the district, Mishiev served as supervisor of special education in the Mount Vernon City School District and was a special education teacher at J.H.S. 190 Russell Sage in Forest Hills, New York before that. She has also held special education-related positions in Lawrence Public Schools and J.H.S. 259 William McKinley.

Mishiev holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Queens College and master's degrees in special education from the College of Staten Island and administration and supervision from Touro College. She also holds a Grades 5-9 Generalist teaching certification, and School Building Leader and School District Leader certifications.



# Inside the Schools:

# Partnerships Abound

Each school in the district has showcased its commitment to collaboration in various ways. Whether it's through a program that parents and community members are instrumental in helping to execute, or through an ongoing partnership with an organization that annually aids character education, Hicksville schools understand the importance of collaborating for success.



### *Burns Avenue: Box Tops for Education*

Families were asked to cut out the box tops of a variety of products as part of the Box Tops for Education program, which ultimately helps provide materials, supplies and programs for the school. After parents helped students cut them out, they were sent to Box Tops for Education, which in turn raised funds based on the amount that was collected.



### *Dutch Lane: Books Alive*

Parents and teachers teamed up to present Books Alive to students. As part of the annual event, the mentors showcased Readers Theater, through which a variety of written works were presented in play format. Parents and teachers read entertaining and engaging scripts to emphasize the importance of reading.



### *East Street: Parents' Reading Incentives*

In order to encourage students to continue fostering their love for reading, parents

teamed up to create reading incentives. In addition to arranging for an author to visit the school, parents purchased books for each student, which were then signed by the author. At the conclusion of the program, students were treated to a parent-run carnival.



### *Fork Lane: Boys and Girls Club*

The school community came together to collect canned foods for the Hicksville Boys and Girls Club. The club, which has been a community staple for years, benefitted by receiving several donations as a result of students' and staff members' efforts, and students learned the importance of charitable endeavors.



### *Lee Avenue: New York Islanders*

As part of an annual tradition, the school teamed up with the New York Islanders. With their Sparky the Dragon mascot joining them, representatives of the organization led a variety of interactive activities to teach students about the importance of teamwork and collaboration.



### *Old Country Road: Target Field Trip*

Third-grade teacher Christine Palmieri applied for, and was selected as a recipient

of, a Target Field Trip Grant; as a result, the school's entire grade level will supplement its science lessons with a visit to the Queens Zoo in the spring. The \$675 grant, which will cover the costs of the trip, will provide the third-graders with the opportunity to observe and analyze zoo exhibits, and participate in an educational program on animal adaptations.



### *Woodland: Jump Rope for Heart*

First-, second- and third-graders participated in the American Heart Association's Jump Rope for Heart program. Students learned the importance of active lifestyles and raising funds to support cardiovascular health.



### *Hicksville Middle School: Valentines for Veterans*

As a way to honor and celebrate local heroes, Elizabeth Hoover's and Marta Giovagnoni's Home Base advisory groups created Valentine's Day cards and duct tape flower pens for veterans. Two baskets of beautiful and heartfelt creations were delivered to a veterans' home on Valentine's Day.



### *Hicksville High School: Safety Poster Contest*

As part of an annual program, National Art Honor Society students participated in the Fire Safety Poster contest hosted by the Hicksville Fire Department. Four standout artists were honored for their incredibly vivid and informative works: Humdia Barakzai, Jack Immanuel, Sejal Luthra and Lillian Zheng.

**Board of Education:**

**Phil Heckler, President**

**Brenda Judson, Vice President**

**Michael Beneventano, Secretary**

*Trustees:*

**Kevin J. Carroll**

**Steven Culhane**

**Carla Hoene**

**Lynda Parmely**

**Carl Bonuso, Ed.D.**

*Superintendent of Schools*

\*\*\*\*ECRWSS\*\*\*\*

**Postal Customer**

**Hicksville, New York 11801**

[www.hicksvillepublicschools.org](http://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org)

## Committees Convey Collaborations

The district's many specialized committees are each charged with tasks and responsibilities to ensure optimal functioning in their respective areas of focus. These committees are comprised of individuals who are able to serve different purposes and fulfill various roles and offer perspectives based on their own experiences and specializations. The foundation of these committees is the collaboration that takes place among its members to ultimately achieve common goals.

• **Facilities and Safety Committee:**

This committee looks at the district as a whole. The Board of Education tours each building, working with the architect, administrators, building principals and PTA, in conjunction with the Building Conditions Survey, to identify capital work that will enhance safety, security and building infrastructure. The committee also works to review the districtwide safety plan, which includes emergency protocols, drills, prevention and intervention strategies.

• **Policy Committee:**

This committee is charged with reviewing, revising and maintaining the district's Board Policy Book. This undertaking is a multiyear project that current Board Vice President Brenda Judson spearheaded prior to trustee Carla Hoene assuming responsibilities in January. The committee works with the New York State School Board Association to dissect and review each individual section of the book. It is comprised of administrators, teachers, parents and the board. The review process consists of a first reading, followed by adoption of any changes and finally submission to the NYSSBA.

• **Finance Committee:**

This committee analyzes and constructs the long-range revenue, expenditures and reserves plan as a basis of projections for the next three to five years. Through the budget process, this fiscal plan supports the recommendations of the Curriculum Committee and Facilities and Safety Committee while remaining tax levy compliant. It also works to identify efficiencies, reallocate resources and identify savings.



• **Curriculum Committee:**

One of the focal points of this committee is student performance. Over the past few years, the committee has worked to raise graduation rates by recommending programs and courses to at-risk students. It has also addressed Advanced Placement courses through the College Board, vocational education opportunities in partnership with BOCES, and offered college courses forging partnerships with local universities. In addition, it has worked to introduce new elementary curricular programs, such as the recently adopted Reading Street program and Go Math! It also discusses professional

development opportunities for staff, and topics including district curriculum, courses, textbooks and assessments. The committee is comprised of board members, parents, faculty and administrators.

• **Bond Committee:**

This committee works to ensure a smooth transition of debt service, such that new bond principle and interest payments will replace current debt scheduled to retire in 2018. Its charge is to identify infrastructure and educational enhancements that will support the Board's educational goals for students, ensure safety, and protect the taxpayer's investment in the district. The committee meets to review and prioritize projects, conduct site visits, and discuss funding sources. It is comprised of board members, administrators, faculty, community members and the district architect.

• **Smart Schools Bond Act Committee:**

The charge of this committee is to allocate \$1,575,321 — the district's share of the state's \$2 billion bond — to finance educational technology and infrastructure to improve learning opportunities for students. The committee allocated funds to improve school connectivity at the elementary and secondary levels, add and replace classroom learning technologies such as interactive whiteboards, and enhance security at each building's entrance with vestibule reconstruction, including additional cameras and card swipes. Use of these funds need to be approved by the state, but does not need to be repaid by the district. On Feb. 15, the Board of Education approved a Preliminary Smart Schools Investment Plan that is posted to the district's website for public review. On March 22, the board will vote to approve the Final Investment Plan. It will then be submitted to the state for review and approval.