

# Our Schools

The Community Newsletter of the Farmingdale Public Schools • Fall 2012

## Among the Benefits of the New Common Core: An Exciting Approach to Math for Every Learner

This school year, teachers across the District are using new approaches to math based on the latest research and practice. The Math in Focus program provides interactive lessons that include model drawing, and “mental” math, for example — strategies that have been shown to develop higher-level thinking and help students *make sense* of math. Schools that have used these methods have found that students learn far more than “how to get the answer”; they are able to grasp mathematical concepts more easily and apply them to real-world situations.



The *Math in Focus* program is also paced in such a way that students are able to dig into each topic more deeply, rather than being exposed to many topics in quick succession with only a brief time to grasp the material before moving ahead. One of the greatest strengths of this program is that it allows for different learning rates and styles, so that every child can experience success.

The Math in Focus program is consistent with the new Common Core Standards, designed to address the ways teachers teach and students learn in order to ensure that, upon graduation, our children have the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and careers. Developed at the national level, the Common Core Standards (for both mathematics and literacy) are based on input from leaders in both education and business, and draw on the most effective models from across the country and the world. The core curriculum changes are being integrated into schools across the United States to ensure consistency in education, from grade to grade and from school to school.

To prepare for these instructional shifts, Farmingdale teachers and administrators executed a pilot program at the Northside Elementary School in 2009-10 school year. Elementary schools Districtwide fully adopted the K-2 program in 2011.

An important component of the Common Core Standards is the development of more effective school leadership. The Farmingdale administrative team and Board of Education openly and eagerly embrace this direction, and we continue to seek ways to improve the learning experience for every student of this District. This year, the Districtwide focus for improvement is aimed at the following areas:

- Creating and sustaining a shared vision of learning
- Enhancing school culture and instructional programs
- Promoting a safe, efficient and effective learning environment
- Increasing and enhancing a sense of community
- Focusing on integrity, fairness and ethics
- Approaching the educational experience from political, social, economic, legal and cultural contexts

As we move forward together in the interest of the children of this District, we encourage you to become involved, to attend Board of Education meetings and District events, to meet with your children’s teachers — in short, to become involved in whatever ways you are able. Together, we have the ability to ensure that the students of Farmingdale Schools receive the best education possible and have the knowledge and skills to be successful as they move from grade to grade, and from graduation to college and beyond.

## 2012 – 2013 Board of Education Meeting Schedule

All Board meetings are open to the public, and we encourage all District residents to attend. Regular monthly meetings take place in the Weldon E. Howitt East Cafeteria at 8 p.m., located at 70 Van Cott Avenue in Farmingdale. Shari Bardash-Eivers returns as Board president for the 2012-13 school year with Steve Wilson serving as vice president. Serving as trustees are John E. Capobianco, Russ Catanzaro, Tina Diamond, Kathy Lively and Rick Morrison.

- **December 5**
- **January 16**
- **February 6**
- **March 6**
- **March 13** - Budget Workshop
- **March 20** - Budget Workshop
- **April 10** - Budget Workshop/Public Input Meeting
- **April 17** - Special Meeting-Adopt Budget for Voter Approval
- **May 1**
- **May 14** - Special Meeting-Public Hearing 2013-14 Proposed Budget
- **May 21** - **BUDGET VOTE**  
Howitt E. Gymnasium 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- **May 29** - Recognition HS Auditorium 7 p.m.
- **June 5**
- **July 10** - Organizational Meeting
- **August 28** - Special Meeting - Tax Levy

For School District Information and Board Meeting Agendas, Sign on to: [www.farmingdaleschools.org](http://www.farmingdaleschools.org)

## What’s for Lunch? More (and Healthier!) Choices Than Ever Before

The Farmingdale School District joins schools across the country in offering a new and improved lunch menu this year. The menu offers a broader variety of healthy, good-tasting meal options that align with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s school meal regulations and is available in all cafeterias throughout the District. To see the District’s full lunch menu, visit [www.farmingdaleschools.org](http://www.farmingdaleschools.org).

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## *A Message From Your Board of Education*

The Farmingdale Board of Education would like to take this opportunity to welcome everyone back to school. We hope that you enjoyed the summer and are ready for an exciting year.

Every summer, the Farmingdale School District Board and administration meet to discuss important issues concerning our students' needs. As always, a priority this past summer was to ensure a safe environment that is conducive to student learning.

In other developments, high school renovations have included the guidance, psychology and deans' office spaces, making them more accessible to our students and their families. A complete middle school auditorium renovation is underway. Window projects are planned for the Howitt Middle School, Albany Avenue and Saltzman East Memorial Elementary schools, along with many small building projects to enhance the learning environment.

In terms of academic advances, the Common Core math curriculum using Singapore strategies was introduced last year in Kindergarten. This year, it will be implemented in grades three through five. The Response to Intervention Program that began last year at the elementary schools will expand to the middle school this year. In addition, the new evaluation system initiated last year for all ELA and math teachers in grades three through eight will be implemented for all administrators, teachers and pupil personnel staff this school year.

Plans are underway for full implementation of the Dignity for All Students Act with coordinators in each school to plan staff training and respond to any questions or concerns from students and families. Our Dignity Act coordinators, as well as a newly developed Student Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and our Code of Conduct, are all posted on the District website: [www.farmingdaleschools.org](http://www.farmingdaleschools.org).

In an effort to optimize nutrition and promote healthy lifestyles, the Farmingdale School District joins those across the country in serving up a new and improved lunch menu to its students this year. The revised menu, available in all cafeterias throughout the District, offers a broader variety of healthful meal options that align with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's school meal regulations.

We all value the high quality of our schools and programs, and ask that parents and community members become and remain active in District meetings, committees and events. We encourage you to get to know your children's teachers and participate in monthly PTA and school Board meetings, all of which are listed on the District calendar. We continue to believe that a major strength of the Farmingdale School District is our ability to work cooperatively and respectfully together. In that spirit, we wish each of you a successful and rewarding year.

Very truly yours,

### **Farmingdale Board of Education**

President Shari Bardash-Eivers  
Vice President Stephen G. Wilson  
John Capobianco  
Russ Catanzaro  
Tina Diamond  
Kathy Lively  
Rick Morrison

## **Farmingdale Welcomes New Administrators**



### **Jennifer DeHayes**

Jennifer DeHayes joins Farmingdale this fall as the new assistant principal at Woodward Parkway Elementary School. Ms. DeHayes started her career in the Middle Country School District, where she served as a third and fourth grade teacher at Holbrook Road Elementary School. Prior to her start at Woodward, she developed a strong foundation of English Language Arts (ELA) instruction as a literacy teacher at Holbrook and was a member of the professional development and science writing curriculum committees. She also coordinated Holbrook's Arts in Education program.

Ms. DeHayes received her B.A. from St. Joseph's College and her M.A. in reading from Long Island University. She received her state certification as a school administrator from Stony Brook University.



### **Patricia O'Regan**

Having served as the assistant principal at Woodward Parkway Elementary School for the past six years, Patricia O'Regan is the new principal at Saltzman East Memorial Elementary School. Before coming to Farmingdale, Ms. O'Regan taught several grade levels in Massapequa Public Schools for 10 years. Ms. O'Regan also assumed the role of elementary summer school principal, a position in which she implemented and organized the six-week program for students in pre-kindergarten – sixth grade. Most recently, she revitalized the character education program at Woodward Parkway, which taught students the value of making a good decision.

Ms. O'Regan received her Advanced Graduate Certificate in school district administration from SUNY at Stony Brook and earned her master's degree in reading from C.W. Post Campus of Long Island University. She received her bachelor's degree in math and elementary education at Molloy College.



### **Marissa Sciremammano**

Formerly the coordinator of mathematics for students in grades K-12 in the Lindenhurst School District, Marissa Sciremammano joins the Farmingdale family this year as the new director of mathematics K-12. Ms. Sciremammano began her career as a middle school math and science teacher at J.H.S. 162 (The Willoughby) in Brooklyn and continued to Brentwood Middle School, where she taught math to seventh grade, home-schooled and at-risk students. While at Brentwood, she also taught the alternative learning program at East Rockaway High School. Ms. Sciremammano's extensive classroom and administrative experience has equipped her with exceptional qualifications for assuming her responsibilities as Farmingdale's Director of Mathematics K-12. In this position, she will oversee, develop and revise the math curriculum to meet the needs of students Districtwide in accordance with New York State's Common Core standards.

Ms. Sciremammano earned her professional certification in building and district administration from the College of St. Rose and completed her master's degree in secondary math education at Pace University. She received her B.S. in consumer science from the University of Wisconsin.

# What's Happening in Our Schools

## Albany Avenue

Across the nation, schools are working to facilitate bully-free school environments as part of the new Dignity for All Students Act. To start off the new school year on a positive note, students at Albany Avenue are spending time each week to take a stand against bullying and learn how to handle difficult situations. Dressed in Daler Green, the children recite the *Say Something Pledge* each Wednesday morning:

*I pledge to say something if I see someone being bullied. I pledge to care about others.  
I pledge to respect myself and others. I can make a difference!*



## Northside

Approximately 200 students, parents and siblings — some even joined by their pets — filled the sidewalks surrounding Northside Elementary School in early October to celebrate *International Walk to School Month*. These families made the choice to walk to school as a way to promote exercise as part of the Wellness Committee's program. Once at Northside, the students were greeted by parent and staff volunteers who presented them with bottled water, donated courtesy of Priestly Chiropractic in Farmingdale. Thank you to all who helped foster this healthy event!

## Saltzman East Memorial

The children in Christine Linsalata's kindergarten class participated in a reading and writing workshop to learn kindergarten power words "I" and "can." Students were paired with classmates to read their *I Can* books. These books allow the children to practice and gain confidence as readers. Students in the class expressed their excitement for reading by saying things such as "Now, I can read to my baby brother," and "I am proud that I am a reader." As part of this exercise, students practice their reading exercises at home as well.



## Howitt Middle School

To begin the school year, Howitt Middle School students reconnected with each other at the PTA's Meet and Greet in September, an event that allowed children to welcome new Howitt classmates as well. At the Meet and Greet, students danced to a live DJ and played games while the PTA served drinks and snacks. Parents and families were given the opportunity to meet one another while receiving important information on the new school year from administrators.

## Woodward Parkway

Fifth grade students in Kerry Miltenberg's class have enhanced their understanding of the scientific method by conducting their own experiments with paper airplanes. Ms. Miltenberg infused math, literacy and fun into the science lesson. The students considered the variables, which included the weight of the paper used, the shape and design of the planes and the velocity at which the planes were thrown. After constructing the planes, the students flew their creations across the classroom to observe flight patterns and estimated the distance traveled. The fifth graders wrote summaries of their findings after the experiment was complete.



## Farmingdale High School

In September, more than 800 Farmingdale High School seniors and their parents participated in a forum on driving safety. Representatives from the Nassau County District Attorney's Office and the Nassau County Police Department discussed the dangers of texting and driving, as well as driving while intoxicated. To understand the impact of irresponsible driving, high schoolers heard personal accounts from convicted motorists who were devastated by the consequences of their actions. Students also engaged in a mock arrest and a field sobriety test.



## A Record Number of Farmingdale Students Earn Prestigious All-State Designation

A total of 16 Farmingdale students were selected to perform in the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) All-State Festival this year. These outstanding musicians, including 15 ensemble musicians and one alternate, represent the highest number of Farmingdale High School students ever selected for this distinguished event.

Each year, NYSSMA sponsors approximately 145 solo and ensemble festivals in New York State, where students are evaluated on their performances. Rating levels range from one through six, with six being the most difficult. Many students start this evaluation process in fifth or sixth grade. For each level, the music is more demanding; students are judged on all aspects of performance, including tone quality, technique, musicianship, interpretation, musicality, dynamics and sight reading ability.

By 10th grade, they become eligible to compete for the All-State audition if they have achieved outstanding proficiency on level six. The All-State competition is rigorous; students from across New York State compete for a spot in the festival, with only the most talented and skilled performers being chosen. These students perform before an adjudicator who issues a score and evaluation sheet; then the judges make a recommendation to the state committee. Students also need recommendations from their ensemble director, music administrator and high school principal.

Receiving the nomination to All-State is an extremely high honor, but being accepted only marks the beginning of much preparation. Students receive their music in October and must learn it by December, when they participate in intense rehearsals for three days, followed by the All-State concerts and culminating in the annual state conference. Farmingdale High School is most proud of its All-State students and alternates.



(L-R) Row 1: Fine Arts Director Rita Zirpolo Padden, Orchestra Director Sam Gelfer, Chorus Director Michelle Lindsley, Nicole Kohlweiss-Mixed Chorus, Samantha Stanislaus-Women's Chorus, Gregory DeAngelis-Wind Ensemble, Thomas Liebau-Symphonic Orchestra, Women's Chorus Director Claire Zatorski and Wind Ensemble Director Gina Pelletiere. Row 2: Kelli Shahinian-Mixed Chorus, Brendan Hopkins-Mixed Chorus, Olivia Gordon-Vocal Jazz, Ellyn Eivers-Wind Ensemble and High School Principal Glen Zakian. Row 3: Mary Natale-Chorus Alternate, William Picket-Mixed Chorus, James Pawlowski-Symphonic Band and Alexander Cox- Mixed Chorus. Row 4: Emily Hynes-Women's Chorus, Matthew Rocha-Wind Ensemble, Michelle Fink-Mixed Chorus, Matthew Malanowski-Instrumental Jazz

## ★ ★ ★ FROM THE SPORTS DESK ★ ★ ★

### Homecoming 2012

Farmingdale students, alumni, staff and community celebrated Homecoming 2012 with much pride, enthusiasm and excellence. Thank you to the students, marching band, football team and cheerleaders who worked hard to make this day a success!



### Farmingdale Athletes Awarded for Excellence

The New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) recognized Farmingdale as a **2011-12 Scholar/Athlete School of Distinction**. To achieve this accolade, **all varsity teams** maintained a combined grade point average of 90 percent or better during the 2011-12 school year. The District's athletes displayed their talents both in the classroom and on the field. Farmingdale is one of only a handful of schools across the state to have received this distinction.

On receiving the award, Farmingdale High School Principal Glen Zakian said, "I am so proud of our student athletes for earning our school this incredible honor; it demonstrates the hard work and dedication that the students have for their academics and school teams."

Congratulations to the students, coaches and teachers who helped make this achievement possible!