



# Our Schools

FARMINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT | FALL 2018 | FARMINGDALESCHOOLS.ORG

## BOARD OF EDUCATION PROUDLY INTRODUCES NEW SUPERINTENDENT PAUL DEFENDINI

Surrounded by educators his whole life, Paul Defendini seemed destined to become one. “Everywhere I turned there were teachers around me,” he said. “My father was an eighth-grade math teacher, my mother taught kindergarten, my wife is a guidance counselor, and my sister is an elementary school teacher. I was good with kids and I wanted to give my life to something important. But I also had an administrative role in my head. For as long as I can remember, I had a vision of becoming the superintendent for Farmingdale School District.”

There is no question that Mr. Defendini is Farmingdale through and through. He attended Woodward Parkway Elementary School, Weldon E. Howitt Middle School, and Farmingdale High School—where he met his wife at homecoming. They have twins (a boy and a girl) who currently attend Northside Elementary School.

Through college he worked as a cleaner at Saltzman East Memorial Elementary School, where he met a mentor who would help shape his outlook on life. “His name was Sam Mollimo,” said Mr. Defendini. “He was a cleaner and he didn’t believe in sitting down. He would say, ‘why would I sit when I could get up and help someone out there?’ He believed in serving the organization. It really had an effect on me. I learned about commitment to others around me from Sammy.”

For a few years, Mr. Defendini lived in Bethpage, then Commack, but says, “it didn’t feel right,” so he and his wife moved back to Farmingdale. For four years he taught eighth-grade general and inclusion classes at the middle school—and was briefly tapped to be the dean of students—before being appointed school business administrator. He was later promoted to assistant superintendent for business, and accepted his new superintendent role at the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year.

Mr. Defendini is excited that the new position will give him the opportunity to connect back to the kids. “Having been a teacher here, I miss the classroom environment,” he said. “Now I’ll be visible in the schools again. I want the kids to know who I am. If they can’t ID me, then I’ll know I’m not doing my job!”



*“I love the value system in Farmingdale and the quality of the people in this town. It was a part of my upbringing and lives inside me. I feel responsible to commit myself to it. I care a lot!”*

– Paul Defendini, Superintendent of Schools

“We are proud to have chosen Paul as our next superintendent and we are wholly confident that he will lead the Farmingdale School District into a new era of impressive scholastic achievement, both on the fields and courts of competition, and more importantly, in every classroom across the district,” said President Michael Goldberg, speaking on behalf of the Board of Education. “Paul is committed to the challenge of overseeing a wonderfully diverse community of students and he strives to provide every student with the means to fully realize his or her academic potential.”

# What's Happening in Our Schools

## ROAR Assembly

The student body of **Albany Avenue Elementary School** had a great time participating in Let Me Hear You ROAR! (Respecting Others and Accepting Responsibility), the students' first multi-grade assembly of the new school year. Principal Joseph Valentine and Assistant Principal Victoria LoRusso led an interactive conversation that encouraged children to think about the kind ways they should treat each other, not only in the classroom, but also in the hallways, the cafeteria, and the playground. Next, faculty members put on a game show called Let Me Hear You ROAR! Teams of three students from each grade competed against their teachers, answering questions about manners and good behavior. In the final round, Principal Valentine and Assistant Principal LoRusso stepped up to the microphone to compete against a team of students from a mix of grade levels. It seems Farmingdale School District is turning out some very bright students! The children beat out their teachers and principals easily. Each competitor was awarded a Dale r t-shirt, emblazoned with paw prints and the letters ROAR.

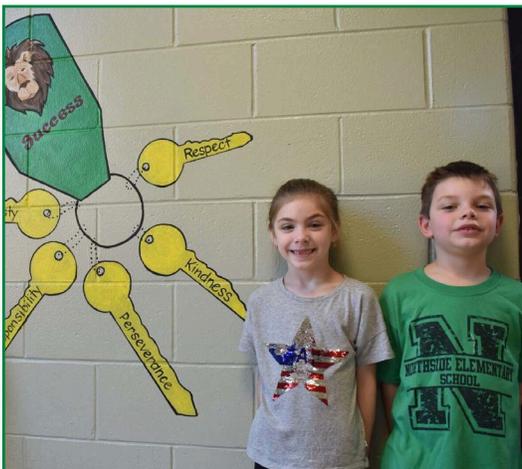


## International Dot Day

Students at **Saltzman East Memorial Elementary School** were encouraged to “make their mark” on International Dot Day—a global celebration of creativity, courage, and collaboration. The inspiration behind the event is the children’s book *The Dot* by Peter H. Reynolds, which tells the story of a caring teacher who challenges a young female student to be brave enough to “make her mark” and explore her creativity. International Dot Day began when a teacher introduced the book to his class in 2009. It’s since gone on to become a global phenomenon, which teachers use to ignite and inspire confidence and courage in their classrooms. The young Farmingdale students were encouraged to come to school dressed in clothing that contained a dot pattern—which made for a very colorful school day! After reading the book with their teachers, children were instructed to design a dot that was as unique as themselves. What began as a tiny dot on a piece of paper turned into a fun day of creative exploration for all.

## Veteran Dad Surprises Daughters

A simple surprise planned for three sister students turned into a school-wide welcome home party at **Woodward Parkway Elementary School**. When Principal Patrick Klocek and Assistant Principal Jennifer DeHayes learned that Captain Anthony Telesca of the Army National Guard—just home from Iraq after a nine-month deployment—was planning to surprise his daughters at school, they sprang into action, and with only twenty-four hours to go, organized a joyful event. As Captain Telesca and his wife, Allie, arrived at Woodward Parkway, the 4th and 5th grades were outside, cheering and waving colorful welcome home signs. Then, one by one, Captain Telesca walked into the classrooms where his daughters—who had no idea that their dad had returned to Long Island the night before—reacted with a mix of tears, shock, and happy smiles. After gathering his girls, Captain and Mrs. Telesca walked the school hallways surrounded by applauding K-3 students and their teachers.



## Keys to Success Contract

**Northside Elementary School** is in its second year of a character education initiative focused around the five Keys to Success: Respect, Kindness, Honesty, Responsibility, and Perseverance. Children in each grade level are asked to explore how each of these words can exist in school and in life outside of school. During grade level kickoffs with teachers and administrators, students brainstormed specific examples of how they can demonstrate each of the keys. To further promote this important message, families received a document outlining how students can “give five” throughout various areas of the school, including classrooms, hallways, assemblies, riding the bus, lunch, and recess. Parents were encouraged to make use of the document as a resource to support a conversation at home with their children and further strengthen the home-school connection. Parents and students then signed the document, pledging to do their best to “give five” all year long. September culminated with a school-wide read aloud designed to promote the importance of being a great friend. All of Northside is looking forward to the first Keys to Success Pep Rally where students will receive Keys to Success character awards. Each activity helps to reinforce Northside’s newest mantra: “Be the nice kid!”

## 6th Grade Meet and Greet

**Weldon E. Howitt Middle School** held its annual “Meet and Greet” at the end of September. Sponsored by the Howitt Middle School PTA, it was an evening of music, games, food, and activities, designed to help students make the transition from elementary school to middle school. It also gave sixth-graders a chance to become better acquainted with one another, as they merge with students from the district’s four elementary schools. Students were accompanied by their parents, who spent time meeting with administrators and teachers for a Q&A session. Meanwhile, the Class of 2024 had a blast in the gym, participating in a fun meet and greet dance. The event is just one of many that the Farmingdale School District organizes to build community relationships and foster a collaborative learning environment.



## Class of 2019 Scholar-Artist

A **Farmingdale High School Senior** was named a Class of 2019 Scholar-Artist by the Long Island Arts Alliance (LIAA) during a ceremony held at the Tilles Center for the Performing Arts at LIU Post. Each year, the Long Island Scholar-Artist Program—sponsored by the LIAA—recognizes high school seniors who excel both academically and as artists. Alexander plays the trombone and is one of only four students on Long Island to receive the program’s most prestigious award for music this year. Nominations are submitted by an authorized school official (e.g., principals, teachers) on behalf of students who demonstrate superior academic achievement and excellence as practicing artists within their chosen discipline of music, visual arts, dance, theater, or media arts.



## BACK TO SCHOOL WEEK AT FARMINGDALE

New Superintendent of Schools Paul Defendini began the 2018-19 school year with Superintendent’s Conference Day at Farmingdale High School. In his remarks, Mr. Defendini shared the wisdom he’s acquired from his role models, and expressed his deep passion and enthusiasm for all things Farmingdale. Speaking from the heart, his inspiring presentation concluded with a standing ovation from the audience of Farmingdale educators, administrative staff, and support staff.

A secondary conference day was also held at FHS for high school and middle school teachers to receive professional development training. One of the big districtwide initiatives this year will be the examination of best practices for assessment in order to produce meaningful grades for every student in Farmingdale’s school system. All teachers attended a workshop to learn practical steps for integrating common grading practices to ensure fair and equal assessments, then split off into independent choice sessions that pertained to their particular subjects and interests. Each elementary school also held their own building-wide training sessions, with principals, assistant principals, and instructional coaches reviewing multiple forms of data to create small group instruction in literacy and math. Teachers reviewed each student’s literacy folder from the previous year to create personalized reading plans for them.

## ATHLETIC FIELD AT HOWITT MIDDLE SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION UPDATE



Phase One of Farmingdale’s community-focused, public school sports complex and aquatic center is complete, and students have already put the eagerly anticipated multi-purpose field to use. The project continues with Phase Two—the construction of the baseball and softball fields—scheduled to be completed by the spring of 2019. The architectural plans for the aquatic center are currently under review at the state level, and Farmingdale administrators hope to receive an approval by the end of the year.

# MEET THE NEWEST DALERS!

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*One of the best parts of every new school year is welcoming new educators, principals, social workers, administrators and more to our district. Each and every year, our newest employees bring fresh perspectives, unique voices, and special talents to our children and our community, and we know this group will be no different. Welcome to the Farmingdale School District!*



**Alanna Schaffer**  
 English Language Arts  
 Farmingdale High School



**Anjany Smar**  
 Assistant Principal  
 Saltzman East Memorial



**Christie Schneider**  
 English Language Arts  
 Howitt Middle School



**Courtney Weber**  
 Special Education  
 Farmingdale High School



**Fernando Beltran**  
 School Social Worker  
 Saltzman East Memorial



**Franco Zagari**  
 English as a New Language  
 Howitt Middle School



**Jaclyn Gould**  
 Special Education  
 Howitt Middle School



**Josseline Morales**  
 School Social Worker  
 Farmingdale High School



**Maryanne Mangione**  
 English as a New Language  
 Saltzman East Memorial



**Michael Boyd**  
 Science  
 Farmingdale High School



**Michelle Dello Iacono**  
 Technology  
 Howitt Middle School



**Nicole Pignataro**  
 Elementary Health  
 Districtwide



**Raquel Cerrata**  
 School Social Worker  
 Albany Avenue & Northside  
 Elementary Schools



**Richard Pellegrini**  
 Social Studies  
 Howitt Middle School



**Sarah Parente**  
 Special Education  
 Northside Elementary



**Shira Harwood**  
 English Language Arts  
 Howitt Middle School



**Susan Desario**  
 Special Education  
 Saltzman East Memorial





**Farmingdale School District**  
Administrative Offices  
50 Van Cott Avenue  
Farmingdale, New York 11735

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## CAR-RT SORT RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER

# DALERS WIN HOMECOMING GAME!

The Farmingdale Dalers won their homecoming game against the Syosset Braves by a score of 28-0! Spirited Farmingdale football fans reveled in the beautiful autumn evening to watch the game and the halftime performances—which were nothing short of spectacular.

“The game was won by tremendous defense all night long,” said Head Coach Buddy Krumenacker. “Many opportunities were created by consistent defensive play which set us up for great field play. Not to mention, we are Dalers!”

At halftime, the Homecoming Court was announced. There were also performances by the magnificent high school marching band, the junior varsity and varsity cheerleading teams, and the Dalerettes. Everyone in the stands were on their feet, cheering wildly for the fantastic show the Farmingdale students put together.

Just prior to the game, a pep rally—crackling with energy—was held inside the high school gym. FHS Principal Dr. Samuel Thompson kicked it off with welcoming remarks, and was joined by Dale, the beloved Farmingdale lion mascot (aka Alayna Camisa.)

Then—with the pep band and drum line pounding away— members of the football team were announced one by one, before tearing through a Let’s Go Daler’s banner. Performances by the junior and varsity cheerleaders, the Dalerette’s, and the Step-N-Daler’s immediately followed.

Senator Kemp Hannon presented a proclamation to the Farmingdale High School Girls Varsity Lacrosse Team and the Varsity Leaders Club for winning the 2018 NYSPHSAA Community Service Challenge Champions for their community service work with Bella Inzerillo, a young Farmingdale girl currently in treatment for brain cancer. Bella attended the rally with her family, and also received a proclamation from the senator.

“Our students, athletes, teachers, coaches, administration, board of education members, parents, and community all came together for one night to celebrate Homecoming,” said Director of Athletics Jeanne Berkoski. “Thanks to their tireless efforts, Homecoming 2018 was one to remember!”

