

# Our Schools

The Community Newsletter of the Farmingdale Public Schools • Spring 2012

## Enhancing Anti-Bullying Efforts in Our Schools

Bullying is certainly not a new problem in schools; however, in recent years, incidents of bullying have become a focus of increasing attention, and as a result, parents, teachers, schools and communities are more aware than ever before of the need to take clear action to address this serious issue. The Farmingdale School District has facilitated a positive, bully-free school environment, and now, as part of the *Dignity for All Students Act*, signed into New York State law in 2010, schools across the state will address bullying through the core curriculum. Through a multi-pronged approach, the new guidelines will enhance our existing efforts to ensure that bullying is not tolerated in our schools, and that our students know how to handle bullying situations if they should occur.

### **The Bullying Problem**

Bullying affects children's ability to learn and grow emotionally. If a student does not feel comfortable in his or her educational climate, it will impede overall performance as well as personal development. **The National Education Association believes that many children miss school every day due to fear of attack or intimidation by other students.**

### **Farmingdale's Response to Bullying**

For over a decade, the District has implemented anti-bullying initiatives and positive character education programs. Dr. Joseph Volpe, a psychologist at Farmingdale High School, addressed school violence concerns in a faculty member forum. "We wanted to take a proactive approach to help both our faculty and students in combating bullying and violence in schools."

In addition, each spring Dr. Volpe visits high school health classes using resources from the American Psychological Association to help students identify the warning signs of an impending threat. The health teachers continue the discussion about the negative impact that bullying has on the victim, the witness and the bully.

In our District, we address bullying at every age level. The fundamental goal for the Friends of Rachel Club at Howitt Middle School, for example, is to create a safe learning environment for all students by

re-establishing civility and delivering proactive antidotes to school violence. The club's objective is to create a safe environment for students to meet new people and make friends who want to positively impact the culture of the school. Under the supervision of Laurie Syvertsen, members of the Friends of Rachel Club will learn to identify bullying and foster a school and community that will help students feel comfortable standing up for themselves and others in a positive way. As an extension of the Rachel's Challenge organization, the Friends of Rachel Club operates with the mission to inspire, equip and empower all students to create a permanent positive culture change in their school, starting a chain reaction of kindness and compassion.

**According to the National Bullying Prevention Center, many fourth through eighth graders nationwide report being victims of bullying.** Farmingdale is addressing this by working directly with students in these transitional grades. With the help of Saltzman East Memorial psychologist Stephanie Gibbons, the District is implementing *Steps to Respect*, a bullying prevention initiative and holistic approach to bullying. "Beginning in third grade, children learn to form friendship skills, manage emotions and understand empathy; we want these children to know how to recognize and report bullying when it happens to them or a fellow student." The program emphasizes respect for others and teaches children how to use assertiveness and social skills in difficult situations. Pam Ball, a District social worker, uses the Committee for Children's violence prevention curriculum in a program she calls *Ease the Tease*, in which students learn 10 tools to handle bullying. In addition to teaching students how to report instances of bullying in schools, Farmingdale is addressing cyberbullying, an issue that has emerged with the growth of violence in the media. The Dignity Act legislates that school boards must adopt policies and develop guidelines for training programs, instruction and counseling. The Board of Education Policy Committee is working to put the bullying prevention and intervention policy in place by the end of this school year. School administrators and teachers will be working with the State Education Department to successfully implement the law, which goes into effect on July 1, 2012.

Farmingdale faculty and staff are eager to incorporate the new lessons and instructional materials to complement and build upon our existing programs. It is the District's commitment to ensure that every student in our schools has the greatest opportunities for learning and growing in a safe, secure and emotionally positive school climate.



YOU ARE INVITED TO  
THE 2012 WALL OF FAME  
INDUCTION CEREMONY

**Tuesday, May 1 • 6:30 p.m.**  
**Farmingdale High School**  
**Thomas W. Guilford**  
**Lecture Hall**

### **2012 Inductees**

**Timothy M. Dillon • Class of 1977**  
Timothy Dillon, a lifelong resident of the Farmingdale community for 52 years, was an entrepreneur and a community mainstay. Following his graduation from Farmingdale High School, Mr. Dillon learned the trade of small engine repair and ultimately owned his own successful repair business, the Wantagh Mower Corp., for over 25 years. He lived his life giving back to the community he loved. As a valued member of the Farmingdale Fire Department for 34 years, he rose through the ranks from volunteer firefighter to chairman on the Board of Fire Commissioners. He was a member of the Farmingdale Village Downtown Revitalization Committee and performed numerous acts of charity for his friends, neighbors, community members and strangers alike. His life was a shining example of how it is possible to have a lasting impact on the world around us without going far from home. Mr. Dillon passed away in May 2011.

**Anne Di Prima • Class of 1966**  
Anne Di Prima is a teacher, coach, administrator and mentor with the Bethpage School District. A highly regarded athlete from Farmingdale High School, she received her B.S. from Adelphi University, where she was a three-sport athlete. She later earned her M.S. from Hofstra University. Ms. Di Prima has earned numerous local, county, state and national accolades for her teaching expertise, coaching accomplishments and contributions to the growth and development of women's athletics. Viewed as a role model and inspiration, she is an individual who leads by example and is known

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Non-profit  
Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Farmingdale Union  
Free School District

SCAR-RT SORT  
RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER

**Farmingdale UFSD**  
Administrative Offices  
50 Van Cort Avenue  
Farmingdale, New York 11735

**BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
Shari Bardash-Eivers, President  
Stephen G. Wilson, Vice President  
John E. Capobianco • Russ Catanzaro  
Tina Diamond • Kathy Lively • Rick Morrison

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



## Important Upcoming Budget Dates

The Board of Education is hard at work developing Farmingdale's 2012-13 school year budget proposal. Our long-term goals include maintaining our excellent programs, insulating our programs from fluctuations in state aid and other revenue, and adopting a tax levy acceptable to our residents. Because of the tax levy cap for the 2012-13 school year, the Board has many decisions to make in preparing next year's budget, to be proposed to the public on **May 15, 2012**. We strongly urge you to attend the upcoming Board meetings. While it is always important for community members to learn about the budget process and join the discussion, this year is an especially critical one. Mark your calendar now and plan to take an active role in the budget process. For more information, please contact District Clerk Josephine Murray at (516) 752-6552.

### Wednesday, March 14

Board of Education  
Special Meeting  
Budget Workshop  
Howitt E. Cafeteria • 8 p.m.

### Wednesday, March 21

Board of Education  
Special Meeting  
Budget Workshop  
Howitt E. Cafeteria • 8 p.m.

### Wednesday, March 28

Board of Education  
Special Meeting  
Budget Workshop/  
Public Input Session  
Proposed 2012-2013 Budget  
Howitt E. Cafeteria • 8 p.m.

### Thursday, March 29

Community Summit Expo  
and Health Fair  
Voter Registration  
Farmingdale High School  
Gym • 6-8 p.m.

### Tuesday, April 3

Board of Education Meeting  
Adopt 2012-2013 Budget  
for Voter Approval  
Howitt E. Cafeteria • 8 p.m.

### Tuesday, April 17

Board of Education  
Special Meeting  
Adoption of BOCES  
Administrative  
2012-2013 Budget  
Howitt E. Cafeteria • 8 p.m.

### Saturday, May 5

Voter Registration  
Howitt East Lobby • 3 - 8 pm

### Tuesday, May 8

Board of Education  
Special Meeting  
Public Hearing of 2012-2013  
Proposed Budget  
Howitt E. Cafeteria • 8 p.m.

### Tuesday, May 15

**Budget Vote and Election**  
6 a.m. - 9 p.m. Howitt E. Gym

## Voter Information

### Who is permitted to vote in the school annual budget vote and election?

Only registered voters are permitted to vote in the annual budget vote and election. All residents who are registered for either school district or general elections are eligible to vote without re-registering, provided they have voted in a general or a school election within the last four years.

### Can anyone register to vote?

A person who is not registered may register to vote if he or she is a citizen of the United States, at least 18 years of age and a resident of the district for at least 30 days.

### Where can I register to vote?

Residents may register in the Office of the District Clerk. The last day to register is Thursday, May 10, 2012.

### Can I vote if I will not be in town on the day of the election?

Absentee ballots are available. Please contact the Office of the District Clerk to obtain an application for an absentee ballot and/or information regarding the absentee ballot process. Note that individuals who are designated as "permanently disabled" by the Nassau County or Suffolk County Boards of Election will be sent an absentee ballot automatically.

### If I have questions about voting, who should I call?

If you have any questions regarding registration, eligibility to vote or absentee ballots, please contact District Clerk Josephine Murray at (516) 752-6552.

## Legislative Action Committee Goes to Albany



In January, the Farmingdale Legislative Action Committee went to Albany to present the District's 2012-2013 legislative proposals and to pursue increases in both federal and state aid for education. The committee, comprising students, teachers, administrators, community members and the Board of Education, advocated for the District's current programs and addressed property tax levy cap concerns.

"The trip to Albany was a tremendous opportunity for everybody involved, especially our student representatives," said Superintendent John Lorentz. "We were able to communicate directly with our local legislators and hear their views on the direction of our state government as well as the State Education Department."

The committee met with representatives of state senators Charles Fuschillo, Carl Marcellino and Kemp Hannon and assemblymen Robert Sweeney, Joseph Saladino, James Conte, Fred Thiele, Steven Englebright and Harvey Weisenberg, as well as officials in the majority finance's and state comptroller's offices.

The proposals the Legislative Action Committee made in Albany included:

- The State must recognize regional cost differences to ensure that dollars allocated to Long Island schools have the same buying power as dollars allocated to schools in other regions.
- Districts should be permitted to establish a Teacher Retirement System (TRS) reserve and support a minimum contribution to the retirement system to smooth out spiking rates.
- School construction projects should be exempt from Wicks Law. Exemption would reduce project costs by millions of dollars.
- School districts should be permitted to use the Employee Benefits Accrued Liability Reserve (EBALR) to offset state aid reductions.
- The State must ensure that the funding of charter schools does not adversely impact funding of public schools and that charter schools are held to the same financial audits and academic standards.
- Districts should be allowed to print fewer ballots for specific election, budget and bond votes. When a district uses digital machines, it must print a set of 90,000 ballots for each election even when there are far fewer voters.

The District will meet the tax levy cap by using reserve funds to preserve essential programs. This, however, is not a long-term solution. Remaining within the tax cap does not allow replenishment of the reserve funds. Within a few years, the reserves will be depleted. When that point is reached, for the district to remain within the tax cap class sizes must increase and programs will be eliminated, increasing the challenges for student achievement and educational opportunities.

## WALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

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for instilling self-worth, confidence and self-esteem in her students and the athletes she works with. She continues to give back to the community as a coach for children and members of the Amputee Athletic Association.

### Neal Wolkoff • Class of 1972

Neal Wolkoff is the Chief Executive Officer of ELX Futures, L.P. He received his B.A. from Columbia University and later earned his Doctor of Jurisprudence from the Boston University School of Law. He began his career as an attorney in the Division of Enforcement for the Commodities Futures Trading Commission, and has appeared as an expert witness for the Department of Justice. Mr. Wolkoff held the title of chairman and chief executive officer of the American Stock Exchange and chief operating officer of the New York Mercantile Exchange. A guest lecturer at MIT's Sloan School of Management and the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs, he has frequently appeared on television and radio. Mr. Wolkoff has been widely quoted in the press, and has had his editorials published in *The Wall Street Journal* and *Financial Times*. He continues to be an active supporter of the Celiac Disease Foundation of Columbia University.

# What's Happening in Our Schools

## Albany Avenue Joins District Schools in PTA Reflections Contest

Albany Avenue is proud of its students who participated in the National PTA's *Reflections Program*, in which they were encouraged to create art inspired by this year's theme, "Diversity Means..." Annually, more than half a million students participate in the Reflections Program through their local PTAs. The program allows students to use their art education to pursue artistic expression in six different arts areas: dance choreography, film production, literature, musical composition, photography and visual arts. Students across the District took part in the program, and many continued on to the regional level; several of those students will go on to the state level. Albany Avenue congratulates AnnaBella Barbuto, a second grade student in Mrs. McAuley's class, who won first place in the visual arts category at the regional level. Her entry will be going on to the state division.



*Mrs. McAuley's second grade class participates in creative writing and reading activities.*



*Students enjoy relaxing and having fun while practicing valuable reading skills.*

## Northside Students Enjoy Their First Family Reading Night

Northsiders enjoyed their first Family Reading Night, held in conjunction with the Farmingdale Public Library. It was a collaborative effort between school and community and was well attended by primary and intermediate students alike. Prior to the event, students received applications for library cards which were distributed to them during the evening. In addition, the children's librarian showed a movie based on the book *Seven Blind Mice*. Following that, families engaged in reading their favorite books while cuddling on blankets and pillows. During the book readings, teachers posed trivia questions about characters from classic literature. Lastly, eight Eric Carl books, along with accompanying stuffed animals, were raffled off as door prizes.

## Saltzman East Memorial Students Celebrate 100th Day

In February, children at Saltzman East Memorial joined together for the 100th Day of School celebration. Kindergarteners and first graders played number games, created artwork and used computers to celebrate this milestone. This occasion is an opportunity for students to apply classroom mathematics lessons creatively. Interactive math experiences allow students to become more familiar with number systems while building on their achievements of the year thus far. To add to their enjoyment, some students and teachers dressed as 100-year-old men and women!



*Mrs. McCue's first grade class celebrating 100 days of school.*



## Woodward Parkway Awards Outstanding Students

In recognition of students' exceptional accomplishments, Woodward Parkway held an Outstanding Student assembly. The Outstanding Student Award is given to two students per classroom in grades three, four and five who show consistent or improving academic progress, a positive attitude, consistent effort, and excellent character. Students are chosen by their classroom teachers to receive the award, given out three times a year. Awards are also given in art, music and physical education. We are very proud of all of our students!

*Outstanding Student Award winners proudly display their certificates.*

## Howitt Middle School Holds Early College Fair

The Howitt Middle School counselors held the Early College Awareness Fair in January. Representatives from 12 colleges were on hand to answer students' questions and explain what colleges look for in applicants. As always, the college representatives praised our students for their engagement and enthusiasm. Teachers wore gear from their own colleges and were asked to be prepared to answer student questions throughout the day. Parents were also invited in this year to meet with the college representatives, and were given tips to keep in mind when planning for their children's academic and financial futures.



*A representative from Oswego University speaks to Howitt students about the college process.*



*Farmingdale students will compete in the New York State Science Olympiad competition that begins Friday, March 30.*

## FHS Science Olympiad Team is Finalist in Countywide Competition – A First in District History

The Farmingdale High School Science Olympiad team recently placed seventh out of 72 teams in the New York State Division C Western Long Island Regional competition, held at Kellenberg Memorial High School in Uniondale. The teams represented 38 districts in Nassau County. This the first year in school history that a Farmingdale team finished in the top tier of the challenge. Farmingdale fielded three teams for the regional competition. Team A placed 7th; Team B finished 38th; and Team C finished 31st. Events such as magnetic levitation car races, forensic exams, rock and mineral identification, chemistry lab and astronomy comprised the challenge. Each team member had to perform at a high level in order for the team to score well overall. Our team looks forward to attending the New York State Science Olympiad Competition at Canisius College in Buffalo at the end of March. Congratulations to all of our Science Olympiad participants!

# MUSIC NOTES

## 88 Farmingdale Students Perform in All-County Festival

Farmingdale is proud to announce that 88 talented student musicians were chosen to participate in the prestigious Nassau Music Educators Association All-County Music Festival. The festival was held this past January at the Tilles Center for the Performing Arts. Students were chosen based on teacher recommendations, as well as on their scores in the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) Adjudication Festival. In addition to the group performances, Brianna Iannello, Olivia Gordon, Sabatina Mauro, Thalia Rios and Brianna Molloy all preformed solos. Ellyn Eivers was the principal horn, Matthew Rocha was the principal trombone and Leah Ragno was the principal bassoon. Gregory DeAngelis was the lead trombone. Matt Malanowski performed piano improvisation solos in each of the five jazz songs. Brian Entwistle soloed on the bass trombone. Farmingdale congratulates all of these talented performers!



### All-County Division I: grade 5

(L to R) Front row: Mia Valenti, Leigh Corrado, Brett Williamson, Vitale Yenze; row 2: Gianna Vitelli, Samantha Dunn, Sydney Moore, Kyle Clark; row 3: Michelle Leverich, Victoria Pina, Jessica Finkel, Julianne Malanowski; row 4: Jamie LaGattuta, Katherine DeMaria, Imani Finegan and Woodward Parkway music teacher Becky Korn.



### All-County Division II and Division III: grades 6, 7 and 8

(L to R) Front row: Tyler Looney, Sara Maughan, Katherine Lee, Jared Cacace; row 2: Sam Croes, Suraj Muralidharan, Summer Kester, Emily Jacobson; Row 3: Nadina Espinosa, Evan Torres, Michael Anzalone, Trevor Clark; row 4: Kathleen Krieg, Alexander Campanella, Zachary Carillo, Kaitlyn Meriam; row 5: Albany Avenue band teacher Matt DeMasi, Howitt chorus teacher Jessica Mischke and Howitt band teacher Joe DeAngelis.



### All-County Division IV: grades 9 and 10

(L to R) Sabatini Mauro, Steven Lensky, Emily Grote, Brendan Hopkins, Thomas Perna, Caeley Looney, Molly Retinger, Samantha Kellman, Ellyn Eivers, Victoria Martin, Michael Fernandez, Robert Mattia, Christine Dentato, Andrew Muscarella, Matthew Rocha, Michael LaGattuta and Matthew Carlin.



### All-County Division V: grades 11 and 12

(L to R) Front row: Jennifer Mazzola, Annais Sierra-Avalas, Valerie Florko, Carly Mignone, Sarah Wieseahn, Daniel Desroshers; row 2: Kayla Martin, Haley Eivers, Cynthia Burhans, Emily Finkel, Brianna Iannello, Courtney Sack, Amanda Senk; row 3: Chorus director Michelle Lindsley, Duncan McCloskey, Hannah Soluri, Kevin Cantone, Robert Ginsberg, Mary Natale and Michelle Fink; not pictured: Thomas Liebau, Emily Hynes, Salmineo Sherman, Samantha Stanislaus, William Pickett, Alexander Cox and Joanne Kang.



### High School All-County Jazz

(L to R) Front row: Olivia Gordon, Brianna Molloy, Thalia Rios; back row: Chorus director Michelle Lindsley, Brian Entwistle, Gregory DeAngelis, Matthew Malanowski and band director Gina Pellettiere.



## FROM THE SPORTS DESK



### Farmingdale Diving Team Division Championships

Dalers diving team members James Mangione, Chris McGlynn, Nick DiTaranto and Jon Gonzalez all placed in the top ten at the Division A championships. This championship event took place at Eisenhower Park in East Meadow. James Mangione won the competition to become the first boys' diving champion for Farmingdale since Gary Alaimo in 2010.

### FHS Featured on MSG Varsity's 'The Challenge'

Farmingdale High School competed on MSG Varsity's quiz show *The Challenge* on Sunday, February 12. The students faced off against Freeport High School in the opening round of the MSG Varsity Tri-State Challenge Championship. The victory against Freeport granted Farmingdale students a trip to New York City, where they won against Sacred Heart in the first round. Though the team fell to Roslyn in the second round, we are proud of our students' accomplishments. Way to go, Dalers!

