



Our Schools

FARMINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT | SPRING 2018 | FARMINGDALESCHOOLS.ORG

Superintendent John Lorentz Retires from the Farmingdale School District



In September of 1958, a kindergartner named John Lorentz stepped into a classroom at East Memorial Elementary School, never imagining that someday he would be at the helm of the entire Farmingdale School District. Now, after seventeen years—with twelve as Superintendent—Mr. Lorentz is saying his final farewell to the Daler family.

Farmingdale has given him the very best things in life; he met his wife Rita in 10th grade French class. When he graduated from Farmingdale High School in 1971, he joined the U.S. Army National Guard. Once his service was completed, he graduated New York Institute of Technology with a B.S. in Accounting. His first job out of college was for the Hazeltine Corporation, and after earning his MBA in Finance at C.W. Post College, Mr. Lorentz went after his calling. He began interviewing with other industries until an aunt—who was a school secretary in Plainview—suggested school administration. Intrigued, he applied.

“Most superintendents don’t have a business background,” Mr. Lorentz explained, “they go from teacher to superintendent.” John melded his business skills with his school administration education and worked in several districts—including Herricks, Longwood, Connetquot and Three Village—before being tapped by the Farmingdale School District in 2001.

“At first, I thought it was kind of weird, you know that saying ‘you can never go home,’ but when I got here, I really liked it,” said Mr. Lorentz. “And I brought everything that I learned from other districts here. We made a lot of changes to the business office and earned credibility with the community to get our budgets through. We put details into the presentations so people knew what they were getting. You can only accomplish things through trust.” He leaves Farmingdale School District with stable finances and a stellar staff.

What will he miss the most? “The people!” he answers with a big smile. “I love the people that work here. I’ve hired many of them—it’s been so fun! But everyone gets a limited amount of time in life. It was time. I’ve made my contribution here.”

FOR THE FOURTH TIME, FHS ROBOTICS COMPETE AT THE VEX ROBOTICS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP!

In March, all three Farmingdale High School Robotics teams competed in the Southern New York State VEX Championship at the Harvey School in Katonah, NY. The teams, working together, finished second place out of 50 teams in both Match Play and Robot Skills categories—earning them a spot to compete in the world championship match for the fourth consecutive year. At the 2018 VEX Robotics World Championship, held in Kentucky this past April, Farmingdale finished in the top half of their division and came in 280 out of 11,217 teams in the world. Congratulations to our impressive Farmingdale Robotics teams!



What's Happening in Our Schools

Green vs. White at Albany Avenue Elementary School

Albany Avenue Elementary School kicked off winter recess with teachers versus teachers for the annual Green versus White basketball game. Dressed in Daler colors, a packed crowd of fourth and fifth grade students cheered enthusiastically from the bleachers, holding up signs of support for their team, while the rest of the school watched the game live streamed from their classrooms. The basketball game was the culmination of a two-week food drive sponsored by the school. For each can of food a student brought in they received a raffle ticket for a chance to win prizes—items like toys, hats, and jump ropes—which were awarded after the game. It was close, but in the end the White Team took home bragging rights, winning 109-106.



Saltzman Elementary School Students Bring History to Life with Interactive Museum

Saltzman East Memorial Elementary School recently brought historical figures to life with an interactive living history museum! More than 50 students dressed in period clothing and recited speeches for a live audience of parents and peers. Dressed as Anne Frank, Mickey Mantle, Susan B. Anthony, Babe Ruth, Amelia Earhart, Audrey Hepburn and many more, the young Dalers truly brought these amazing figures from our past back to life. In the weeks leading up to the event, students in grades K-5 researched inspirational figures and learned about their impact on historical events. Attendees were able to move freely among the student actors, asking them questions about past decisions that have impacted us today. The living history museum is part of the Farmingdale School District's initiative to immerse students in history in fun, engaging ways.



No One Eats Alone Day: Making New Lunch Buddies at Northside Elementary School

The school lunch hour can be a tough time for many students, especially those who struggle to make friends. That's why the Wellness Committee at **Northside Elementary School** recently hosted a lunchtime initiative called No One Eats Alone Day. Students were assigned to tables with classmates they didn't know, but quickly got to know. The Wellness Committee supplied a number of games, ice-breakers, and activities for the children to share, and brought in students from Farmingdale High School to lend support and initiate conversation. Originated by the student-led nonprofit, Beyond Differences, No One Eats Alone Day is a nationwide program that's been adopted in all 50 states and reaches over a million students. The mission is to end social isolation, create a culture of belonging, and encourage students to spot peers who might feel left out and include them. It's such a simple act—but one with far-reaching and positive effects, particularly for children who just need a friend. Strong evidence points to social isolation being the precursor to bullying, and schools that encourage a culture of inclusion have far fewer instances of bullying and depression. Students look forward to embracing No One Eats Alone Day on a more regular basis.



'Makey Makey' Music at Woodward Parkway Elementary School

Fourth graders at **Woodward Parkway Elementary School** unveiled an imaginative array of musical instruments that they created during recess. Under the direction of music teacher Emilie D'Andrilli, students used an invention kit called "Makey Makey," a program that tricks your computer into thinking that everyday objects—cans, boxes, fruit, etc.—are keyboards. Circles of soda cans became the building blocks for a drum kit, a box of cereal was turned into a guitar, and bananas provided the keys for a piano. Students connected their instruments to a circuit board and computer and played music for one another. When Assistant Principal Jennifer DeHayes tried tapping on the banana keyboard she had mixed results. "Adults have to press hard," Ms. D'Andrilli explained with a grin, "it's easier for the kids—they're more water-soluble. Students have a smaller frame, and they conduct electricity more efficiently."



Howitt Middle School Students Fold A Thousand Cranes for Peace

Beginning in October of 2017, a group of dedicated students at **Weldon E. Howitt Middle School** gathered at lunchtime and after school to fold 1,000 pieces of rainbow-colored paper into origami cranes. Their club, “Cranes for Peace,” was inspired by a recent visit that social studies teacher Lynne Kennedy-Johnston made to Japan. She visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, which she described as “breathtaking, with many acres.” Built to convey the horrors of nuclear war, the park features a memorial called The Children’s Peace Monument—created in memory of a young Japanese girl named Sadako Sasaki. Sadako was only two-years-old when the United States dropped the atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. She survived the blast, but in sixth grade she developed Leukemia. A friend told her that if she folded one thousand paper cranes her wish to live would be granted. Sadako immediately began folding cranes, but sadly, was able to complete only 644 before she passed away in 1955. She was only twelve years old. The Howitt Middle Schoolers’ 1,000 symbols of peace pay homage to Sadako, and they are on their way to Japan, where they will be displayed at the memorial in the near future.



Common Options: Farmingdale High School Hosts Elective Fair & Career and Technical Education Showcase in the Commons

The Commons at **Farmingdale High School** was abuzz last winter with students attending both day and evening showcases to learn about the elective classes available to them as students of the Farmingdale School District. The 3rd Annual Elective Fair, organized by



the Guidance Department, was an opportunity for educators to put their classes on display with colorful booths and tables. Grades 9-11 mingled among the offerings, asking questions about the curriculum, course load, and what grade levels were eligible to enroll. Pupils currently registered in each elective were also on hand to provide a student perspective. Categories included: graphics, auto tech, robotics, child development, painting, video production, theatre, sign language, mythology, and much more. Additionally, various high school clubs were in attendance, providing teens with a sampling of the clubs’ activities.

That same evening, the Commons was transformed into the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Showcase. It was the second year for the event, which brought 8th graders from Howitt Middle School and their parents to come and learn about the classes awaiting them in high school. Through CTE, students can earn college credit via SUNY Farmingdale and earn a CTE Endorsement for a particular career path. The teens were introduced to classes in Business Education, Family and Consumer Sciences, and Technology.

BRINGING NEW VISION TO HOWITT MIDDLE SCHOOL

Howitt Middle School has a new student, this one of the four-legged kind! For the next year-and-a-half, a Black Labrador retriever puppy named Skipper will be attending school at the side of physical education teacher Stephen Messina, training to be a guide dog. Howitt’s active environment is a great training ground for a puppy that might someday provide “eyes” for a blind person—and presents a wonderful opportunity for the entire student body to participate in community service. The idea of becoming a puppy handler came from Mr. Messina’s daughter, Jenna, who thought it was a great way to give back. Skipper is the second puppy Mr. Messina has taken in for the Guide Dog Foundation of Smithtown; his first dog, Doug, was partnered last summer with a veteran in Louisiana, whose eyesight is severely diminished by diabetes.



Skipper and the children of Howitt Middle School are learning the in’s and out’s together. When the yellow vest goes on, the children know it means hands off—and Skipper is learning that the vest means it’s time to go to work. With a wink, Mr. Messina confides, “When the vest is off I can’t get down the hall! Everybody wants to pet the puppy. So, if I need to get somewhere quick, I put the vest on.” Mr. Messina also hosts an after-school Puppy Club at Howitt to teach the children about what it takes to raise a guide dog puppy, and how they help people who are visually impaired.

“It’s hard to say goodbye,” said Mr. Messina, “but when you go into this program, you know you’ll be helping somebody, and whoever gets him needs him more than me.”



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

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Music and Fine Arts News

Orchestral Ensembles in Farmingdale *All-District Strings Concert Draws Packed House*

In February, Farmingdale High School hosted the All-District Strings concert, bringing together student musicians from all six Farmingdale schools. Nearly 300 students performed to a packed house inside the high school auditorium. The program led with the All-District Elementary Orchestra, followed by the Howitt Middle School Orchestra, the Farmingdale High School Symphony Orchestra, and finally the Farmingdale High School String and Symphony Orchestra. “This concert is one of my favorites!



Everyone in the audience can see and hear the level of growth that takes place from the elementary to the high school level. Our students learn so much working with the orchestra directors,” said Rose Marvel, Director of Fine Arts. “Kudos to Ms. Mannino, Mr. Gelfer, Mr. Szabo, Mrs. Felker, Mrs. Cocheo and all of our students for their hard work and dedication. The performances were absolutely stellar.” The grand finale brought students from every grade level together to perform a John Williams trilogy, which included music from *Star Wars*, *Jurassic Park*, and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. The All-District Strings concert is staged every three years, alternating with All-District Band and All-District Chorus.

FROM THE SPORTS DESK

Farmingdale High School Varsity Winter Teams Achieve Scholar-Athlete Status

For the 26th consecutive season, the Farmingdale High School Varsity Teams have achieved scholar-athlete status. At the end of each sport season, the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHAA) honors those teams that excel in the classroom. The Farmingdale Winter Teams include 253 students, participating on nine teams in the sports of basketball, wrestling, swimming, track, bowling, and cheerleading. “Amazing!” said Assistant Superintendent Glen Zakian. “We are so proud of the athletes and coaches for an accomplishment that has become another example of excellence and tradition in Farmingdale. Go Dalers!”



Farmingdale High School Wins “Best High School Spirit” The Dalers Top the List in Bethpage’s 2018 Best of Long Island Contest

Once again, the Dalers have proven that when it comes to school pride, they’re in a class of their own. The Dalers recently won the *Best High School Spirit on Long Island* award in Bethpage’s 2018 Best of Long Island contest. The Farmingdale School District also received the award in 2014. In Farmingdale, school spirit is more than thoughts, pep rallies, and green-and-white attire. The actions and intentions of the school community exemplify what it truly means to be a Daler. Students know that an optimistic spirit and good behavior is key to presenting their school in a positive light, and this win is particularly rewarding for those who work so hard to make the school a progressive learning environment.