



Our Schools

FARMINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT | WINTER 2019 | FARMINGDALESCHOOLS.ORG

FARMINGDALE INITIATES NEW COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The Farmingdale School District is initiating a new communications strategy as part of our commitment to both serve and connect with the community. With resident engagement among our top priorities, the district is now poised to launch a multi-tiered communications plan using fun, innovative methods that will not only provide the district with ways to share news and information on a variety of platforms, but will engage the entire Farmingdale community in a meaningful way. One of the first tools residents will be invited to participate in is called Thoughtexchange. A marriage of an online survey, a town hall meeting, and a social media interaction, Thoughtexchange provides a new, collaborative platform for the community to participate in discussions about important topics.

“We want to learn what’s important to residents and make decisions based on their input,” said Superintendent Paul Defendini. “Thoughtexchange will allow us to be truly responsive to the Farmingdale community. This won’t just be the collection of data; it will help us synthesize the thinking and ideas of the community.” Participation in a Thoughtexchange begins with answering open-ended questions about education in our schools, then continues with reviewing and rating the best-liked ideas. All exchanges are confidential. The powerful analysis capability of this platform will assist us in deciding the best courses of action in the future.

COMING SOON TO YOUR INBOX, THE DALER DIGEST!

The Daler Digest is a monthly summary of the top news stories from the Farmingdale School District. This condensed, link-based e-newsletter will provide stories and information about the district’s most recent academic, athletic, and musical achievements.



DALER DIGEST

WE HAVE RELAUNCHED THE OFFICIAL FARMINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT FACEBOOK PAGE!



Our social media account will disseminate information regarding programs and events, and will be used to make important announcements about board of education meetings, emergency alerts, and weather-related closings and delays. The page is strictly positioned as an information tool, with specific guidelines for the community to follow. No outside posts will be permitted, and all commenting will be closely monitored to ensure a respectful environment for all our visitors.

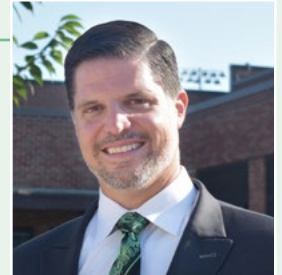
We look forward to sharing all the wonderful news about our district in all these new ways!

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2019 WALL OF FAME HONOREES!

*Community members are welcome to attend the induction ceremony to be held
Monday, April 29, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. at Farmingdale High School*

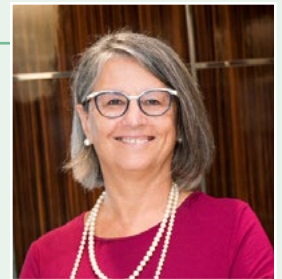
PAUL DEFENDINI – Class of 1997

Paul Defendini is the recently appointed Superintendent of Schools for the Farmingdale School District. He received his undergraduate, master's and administrative degrees from Hofstra University. Paul previously worked as an English teacher and Dean of Students at Howitt Middle School. In 2007, he was appointed School Business Administrator, and in 2010 was named the Assistant Superintendent for Business. In 2016—under his direction—Farmingdale passed the bond referendum for the sports complex and aquatic center at Howitt Middle School. He was appointed Superintendent in 2018. Paul serves as the President of the Nassau Association of School Business Officials and received the Jenkins Award from the Farmingdale Council of PTAs. He is an assistant PAL lacrosse coach, a Cub Scout leader, and works with the PB&J gang at St. Kilian Church. His two children currently attend Northside Elementary School. Based on his professional accomplishments, as well as his community commitments, the Wall of Fame Selection Committee views Paul as an excellent role model for our students.



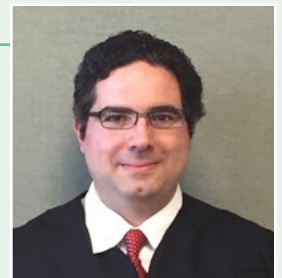
CAROL KELLERMANN – Class of 1969

Carol Kellermann has worked with many charitable organizations, most recently as Chief Executive of the Citizens Budget Commission, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to influencing change in the finances and services of New York City and state governments. She received both her undergraduate and law degrees from Harvard University. Carol served as the Chief Executive of the September 11th fund, a \$500+ million charitable fund created to provide assistance to victims of the terrorist attacks. She was also the Chief Executive of Learning Leaders, the oldest school volunteer program in the country, with over 10,000+ volunteers in NYC's public schools. Carol has worked with organizations such as CUNY, Alliance for Young Artists and Writers, PENCIL, and has consulted for the Fresh Air Fund, the Bush Clinton Katrina Fund, and the American Trial Lawyers Fund. Based on her professional accomplishments, as well as her community and charitable commitments, the Wall of Fame Selection Committee views Carol as an excellent role model for our students.



STEVEN TISCIONE – Class of 1995

Judge Steven Tiscione was appointed a United States Magistrate Judge for the Eastern District of New York in 2016. Prior to that, he was an Assistant United States Attorney from 2005-2016. Steven was also appointed to the position of Chief of the International Narcotics and Money Laundering Section. He is a graduate of Hofstra University and Yale Law School. Steven is the three-time recipient of the Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force Award of Excellence, the Federal Law Enforcement Foundation's Prosecutor of the Year Award, The Federal Drug Agents Foundation's "True American Hero" Award, and the prestigious Attorney General's Award for Exceptional Service. Based on his professional accomplishments and his contributions to society, the Wall of Fame Selection Committee views Steven Tiscione as an excellent role model for our students.



BOND UPDATE: PLAY BALL!

In the fall newsletter, we discussed the completion of Phase One of Farmingdale's community-focused, public school sports complex and indicated that Phase Two—the baseball and softball fields—would be ready in Spring 2019. Well, spring has nearly sprung, so here's an early sneak peek at the beautiful new ball field!



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR SCHOOLS

SHARK TANK IN THE CLASSROOM

Fourth and fifth grade students at **Albany Avenue Elementary School** participated in an innovative lesson project that was patterned after the television series *Shark Tank* and geared toward teaching students the basics of business. "Their enthusiasm and creativity were truly on display during their presentations!" said Alyssa Sudmann, the teacher who designed the lesson. Students devised a variety of products, with names such as Creative Cases, U-Pencils, Kindness Points, Lego Bookstands, Smartpack, Up Goes the Art, Homework Finder, Rollerpacks, and Homework Helper. Students then presented their ideas to a panel of Farmingdale "sharks" that included teacher Megan McDonald, Assistant to the Superintendent for Elementary Education Dr. Jennifer Olsen, Assistant Principal Victoria LoRusso, Principal Joseph Valentine, and Superintendent of Schools Paul Defendini.



STEAM NIGHT AT NORTHSIDE



Northside Elementary School's Shared Decision-Making Committee planned and facilitated the school's first ever STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) Night, which was attended by more than 170 students, parents, and guardians. There were many highlights in this night of learning and community building. The STEAM

stations featured Candy Dots and toothpick 3D structures, cup stacking, rubber bands and sticks, fruit snack estimation, bubble fun, Quiver Vision, aluminum foil boats, and lava lamp creation. The stations provided students and families with an engaging entry point into conversations about concepts connected to STEAM. The Civic Responsibility Club assembled the Northside STEAM Express Train to collect unwrapped donated toys for families in need during the holiday season. Students in the club also created thank you cards for family donations and helped facilitate STEAM activities. Special thanks to all faculty and staff who gave their time as volunteers, to Kristen Cummings, Director of Science, for her support, and to our amazing Northside families for their donations and positive energy!

READING IS MAGIC!

Saltzman East Memorial Elementary School kicked off its Pick A Reading Partner (PARP) program with an interactive magic show. The theme this year was *Reading is Magic*. A three-week calendar, packed with activities—such as book bingo and a living history museum—was distributed to the student body to help get them excited about reading. Many students got creative with the first activity, which was wearing a readable shirt on kick-off day. During two assemblies, students were invited on stage to assist the magician with his magic tricks. While he amazed them with his wizardry, students learned about the importance of reading and were introduced to new book titles.



GRAMMY AWARD WINNER AND FARMINGDALE ALUMNI TIM KUBART PERFORMS CONCERT AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Grammy Award-winning musician Tim Kubart came home to Farmingdale to put on a very special show! Performing at **Woodward Parkway Elementary School**, the same school he attended as a child, Tim Kubart played songs from his *Building Blocks* album, which was just nominated for a Grammy for Best Children's Album. The coolest part for Dalers? *Building Blocks* includes the song, "We are Growing," which features back-up vocals from Woodward Parkway third graders! Mr. Kubart said *Building Blocks* is inspired by his happy memories from his years attending Woodward Parkway. His first album, *Home*, won the 2016 Grammy for Best Children's Album. Currently, he's a cast member in Post Modern Jukebox, and hosts a spin-off called Post Modern Juicebox. "This is the best thing we do all year," said Mr. Kubart. "It's an absolute party, and everyone has such a good time." All the young Dalers were super excited to see him. They danced and sang along to his songs with great enthusiasm.



HOWITT MIDDLE SCHOOL HOSTS FARMINGDALE LIBRARIANS



Reading teachers at **Howitt Middle School** recently hosted two librarians from Farmingdale Public Library to chat with students about the benefits of signing up for a public library card. This outreach was a way to teach children about all the databases available to them and inform them about specialty programs,

e-books, audio books, reading clubs, and more. "These sessions provided great synergy for us," said sixth-grade reading teacher Merle Goess. "Librarians want more children coming to the library, and we want to get more children reading." Librarians brought new titles for the children, taught students about the label system that helps them identify new and specific genres of books, and helped them come up with thoughtful questions during the session. The middle schoolers came away with the knowledge that the public library isn't just a building with a collection of books, but a new world of information and programs waiting to be discovered.

WORLD WAR II VETERAN BRINGS HISTORY TO LIFE FOR FHS STUDENTS

The experiences of a World War II veteran were described in vivid first-person detail during a recent meeting of the **Farmingdale High School** History Club. Ninety-three-year-old Farmingdale resident William Geandomenico spoke to students about his experiences serving in the 8th Infantry Division of the United States Army from February 1944 to January 1946. Animated and energetic, Mr. Geandomenico shared memories that ranged from the mundane task of peeling potatoes to his most dramatic moments on the front line. Mr. Geandomenico was honored with two Purple Hearts, a Bronze Star, and was commended for his participation in the liberation of prisoners from a concentration camp. "This was a rare and awesome opportunity for our students to engage with a primary source from World War II," said teacher Jim Hughes.



ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS AND TECHNOLOGY

127 FHS STUDENTS INDUCTED INTO NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY

Last December, 127 Farmingdale High School juniors and seniors were inducted into the National Honor Society (NHS). Selection into the National Honor Society is based on fidelity to the four tenants of the society: scholarship, service, leadership, and character. All students must have a 90 or above unweighted average to be admitted. The induction ceremony was attended by parents, school administrators, and approximately 40 teachers—who were identified by the inductees as their educational mentors.

FHS HOSTS SECOND ANNUAL VEX TOURNAMENT

Farmingdale High School hosted its second annual VEX Robotics Competition earlier this winter. The tournament included 37 high school teams and 35 middle school teams from the New York area. High school students competed in a challenge called Turning Point, and middle schoolers competed in a challenge called IQ Next Level. The purpose of the competition is to explore innovation through robotics, celebrate student accomplishments, and encourage friendly competition.



All three of the Farmingdale High School teams—The Robodalers, VEXcalibur and VEXistential Crisis—qualified previously to this competition to advance to the NYS finals to be held in March at East Rockaway High School. Farmingdale’s robotics teams have consistently qualified for the Southern New York State VEX Championship and have advanced to the VEX World Championship (held every April) for the past four years. “By qualifying for States in the first two regional tournaments of the season, the teams have a great opportunity to experiment with various designs and programs to expand the robots’ capabilities,” said team coach Ann Grady. “There’s still a lot to learn, and I’m excited to see what they will be competing with at States.”

THIRD ANNUAL CTE SHOWCASE



The third annual Career and Technical Education (CTE) Showcase was held in the Commons of Farmingdale High School on February 7, 2019. The evening showcase was an opportunity for Howitt Middle School 8th graders and their parents to learn about all the class options that await 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 students were able to meet and interact with teachers and learn which classes aligned with their interests. Projects created by the carpentry and woodworking students were put on display, and tasty appetizers—prepared by culinary students—were passed among all the attendees.

MUSIC NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR STUDENTS WHO WERE SELECTED TO PERFORM IN THE 2019 NMEA ALL COUNTY MUSIC FESTIVAL



NMEA Division I



NMEA Division II



NMEA Division III



NMEA Division IV



NMEA Division V

ALL DISTRICT BAND PERFORMANCE

On February 7, 2019, Farmingdale High School hosted the All District Band Concert, bringing together student musicians from all six Farmingdale schools. Three-hundred and thirty students from select fifth and sixth grade bands, the Howitt Middle School Wind Ensemble, and the Farmingdale High School Wind Ensemble performed to a packed house. Each year, the All District Concert is a showcase that demonstrates the level of growth that takes place from the elementary to the high school level. It alternates every three years with band, orchestra, and chorus. The grand finale brought all the students together to perform “Armed Forces on Parade” and “Stars and Stripes Forever.”

‘FAME’ AT FHS!

The Farmingdale Playcrafters put on a stellar performance of *Fame*, the musical, at Farmingdale High School. It tells the story of aspiring students at New York City’s High School of the Performing Arts in the 1980s.

“This was one of the more challenging shows to direct because of the intense singing, choreography, and dancing involved,” said Director Jessica Mischke. “But in nine weeks, these students put in a staggering amount of hard work and truly pulled off an incredible performance.”





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

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FROM THE SPORTS DESK

ATHLETES SIGN LETTERS OF INTENT



A group of 16 senior student-athletes at Farmingdale High School signed their letters of intent on December 3, 2018, signifying their commitments to college sports teams. The seniors gathered in the lecture hall of FHS where they were joined by family members, coaches, Superintendent Paul Defendini, Assistant Superintendent Glen Zakian, Principal Dr. Samuel Thompson, Assistant Principal Jed Herman, and Director of Athletics Jeanne Berkoski. Director Berkoski led the remarks and turned the microphone over to the high school coaches, who gave a short biography of each athlete and announced the name of the college that they would be attending in the fall.

ALL FALL VARSITY TEAMS ACHIEVE SCHOLAR-ATHLETE STATUS

For the 28th consecutive season (nine years), all Farmingdale High School varsity teams have achieved scholar-athlete status. At the end of each season, the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHAA) recognizes varsity teams that have a total grade point average of 90 or above for 75 percent of the team's roster. The 2018 fall teams included 340 students participating in football, boys soccer, girls soccer, girls cross country, boys cross country, girls tennis, girls swim, girls volleyball, boys volleyball, golf, cheerleading, the Dalerettes, and the Steppin' Dalers. "Our Daler athletes continue to achieve great success on and off the fields," said Director of Athletics Jeanne Berkoski. "Kudos to their teachers and coaches. Go Dalers!"



MOVEMENT AND MINDFULNESS IN THE CLASSROOM



This year, Farmingdale implemented an elementary school initiative to get students moving in the classroom. A list of interactive games and academic activities were devised by a committee for elementary school teachers to use at their discretion, depending on their day and lesson plan. Many of the classroom activities are timed to tie in with the district's physical education units. At Northside Elementary School, for example, fifth-grade teacher Regina Bates incorporates Northside's Five Keys to Success (respect, kindness, honesty, perseverance, responsibility) into her kinesthetic approach to teaching. She challenged students to interpret each key into a physical representation. At Albany Avenue, first grade teacher Jacqueline Brown uses a tool called Go Noodle to keep her students engaged between subjects. Whenever her class needs an energy lift or a calming moment, she streams a short video on her whiteboard from the Go Noodle collection. This helps focus her students' attention and strengthens the community feeling in her classroom.