SOUTHERN WESTCHESTER BOCES

Board Links

BOARD TO BOARD NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2024

Center for Special Services

Tappan Hill School partners with Scarsdale to provide inclusive experiences for students



▶ Students from Southern Westchester BOCES' Tappan Hill School in Tarrytown have been participating in collaborative monthly classes at Edgewood Elementary School in Scarsdale.

The opportunity to engage in inclusive classroom and physical education activities comes as the result of a partnership between SWBOCES and Scarsdale Schools. The visits began in January with five Tappan Hill students participating and will continue into June.

While at the Edgewood School, the Tappan Hill students attend a Physical Education inclusion class along with their own physical education teacher and the inclusion physical education teacher from Scarsdale. Following that, they visit a regular education third-grade classroom.

In all, each visit is a little over an hour and allows students from both schools to engage and interact with one another, providing a shared, inclusive experience.

The Tappan Hill students are selected and accompanied by Physical Education teacher Diane Storm, a sign language interpreter and a teacher aide.

Principal Phyllis Rizzi expressed her gratitude to her Scarsdale colleagues for creating a positive, enriching and welcoming experience.

"The staff not only provided a nurturing environment for our children but also allowed us to connect with many new friends," Ms. Rizzi said. "We look forward to continuing to be a part of this fantastic school district over the next few months."

Eric Rauschenbach, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education and Student Services at Scarsdale Schools, said the partnership has provided opportunities for special education students to interact and have physical education and mainstreaming opportunities with their general education peers.

The collaboration has provided an opportunity for students to come together, he said, giving the regular education students a chance to gain empathy and understanding from the experience.

"Our general education kids get an opportunity to be mentors to and to interact with kids who think differently than they do," he said, "and they get an opportunity to get to know them on a level more than they would otherwise."



A Message from the Board President

Fellow school board members,

Allow me to take this opportunity to thank you, your superintendents and your administrative teams for your support of Southern Westchester BOCES this school year. You have our sincere gratitude for your vote of confidence for our 2024-2025 budget and my personal thanks for my re-election to the SWBOCES Board of Education. Your commitment to our educational community and dedication to ensuring the success of our schools is commendable.

This marks our third consecutive budget vote and trustee election to meet with unanimous approval. Your endorsement enables us to continue providing high-quality education, resources, and opportunities for our students. With your support, we can maintain and enhance our programs, invest in innovative teaching methods, and create an environment that fosters growth and achievement. As our partners, I hope you will share your thoughts on how we can continue to improve, and even recommend new programs and offerings.

We would welcome an invitation to attend one of your board meetings so that you can hear directly from our administrative team about the programs and services we provide in support of your district. We would welcome as well the chance to discuss how we can grow that relationship together. Thank you, as always, for your support.

John Filiberti

Board of Education President (Eastchester)
Southern Westchester BOCES



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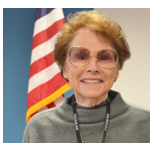
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Center for Adult & Community Services

Pipeline Partnership with WCA Benefits SWBOCES Healthcare Students

▶ A partnership between Southern Westchester BOCES and the Westchester County Association is benefiting students in our Center for Adult & Community Services healthcare programs as well as local employers. Since 2022, the WCA's Healthcare Talent Pipeline Program (HTPP) has successfully placed more than 100 jobseekers in the booming healthcare field.

"Our partnerships across the region make it possible to build bridges from funding to training to employment," said SWBOCES' Director of Adult & Community Services Tracy Racicot. "Our teachers and staff are deeply committed to quality training in areas of high employment demand. WCA has been the leader in the healthcare sector in bringing together regional partners. We look forward to continued collaboration and success for our students and the entire community."



Funded by Westchester County, the HTPP brings together partners like SWBOCES and others to work with regional employers. The program's economic impact is estimated at more than $3.5 million a year.

"WCA is very grateful to Westchester County for additional program funding so we can continue to work with our partners to train more job seekers this year and help healthcare employers fill 100 more in-demand positions," WCA Director of Workforce Development Jason Chapin said.

Students earn a credential, receive job readiness training and connect with employers. Westchester County funds $1,000 stipends for expenses for those qualified.

Mr. Chapin said the program reached 40 new enrollees this semester and 108 total hires. The 2024 goal is to train and place another 100 participants.

The program helps participants overcome employment barriers while addressing skills shortages. The healthcare sector projects a 30% increase in jobs by 2028.

Center for Interscholastic Athletics

Bench Bad Behavior initiative promises to leave a lasting impact

▶ Prior to the National Anthem at the Westchester County Center basketball championships, athletes, fans and coaches are transfixed. The butterflies are palpable, as is the optimism and the intense focus. It's the ideal moment for a crucial message about sportsmanship and a new initiative by Section I and its member schools: **Bench Bad Behavior**.

The Bench Bad Behavior pledge originated with the National Federation of State High School Associations. It seeks to restore civility and encourage positive behavior at interscholastic athletic events. It stresses the importance of learning, growing and developing character through athletics and implores fans and participants to refrain from criticizing athletes, coaches and officials.

"Promoting sportsmanship is a major priority for Section I Athletics," said Executive Director Todd Santabarbara. "The Bench Bad Behavior initiative is an important component to that. We as an organization were pleased to see so many of our schools unite behind this positive message and hope it can continue to resonate with our fans, student-athletes and coaches."

The pledge was shared by schools during the season and throughout the postseason. Two players, one from each team, read the pre-game message. The live reading was also accompanied by a pre-recorded public service announcement played on the arena's video boards.

"I loved the message and everything Bench Bad Behavior stands for," said Rye boys basketball player Quinn Monaghan. "We talked about it in practice before our first game in the County Center, and we were reminded that being respectful on and off the court is our number-one priority."

One person practicing sportsmanship is better than 100 people trying to teach it, said Briarcliff High School Athletic Director Chris Drosopoulos, a co-chairperson for Section I girls basketball.

"This has been a collaborative effort with our coaches, our student-athletes, our leadership, our administration, and our parents," he said.

It is an effort that Section I believes will leave a lasting impact.

77

Number of Section One high schools in the four-county region served by the Center for Interscholastic Athletics in organizing and managing athletic programs

36

Section 1 championships planned and facilitated across three seasons every school year

68,227

Number of student-athletes who participated last school year across the three seasons (grades 7-12) in Section One sports supported by the Center for Interscholastic Athletics



2024 TELL Awards celebrate innovation in education

Five teachers and two leaders from across the Lower Hudson region were honored at the 2024 TELL Awards on April 10. Hosted by the Lower Hudson Regional Information Center's (LHRIC) Technology Leadership Institute, the TELL Awards (Transforming Education through Leadership and Learning), celebrate teachers and leaders who leverage technological innovation to transform learning experiences.

"Tonight, we are here to honor educators and leaders who have made significant strides in reshaping education through the integration of technology," said Dr. Ellen McDonnell, LHRIC Executive Director. "It is clear that these individuals will continue to lead the way towards a more innovative and inclusive educational landscape for generations to come."

The outstanding teachers honored were: **Logan Krause**, Visual Arts and Design Teacher from the Hendrick Hudson; **Ariel Sanzo**, Cybersecurity and Special Education Math Teacher in Suffern; **Chris Casal**, K-5 Technology Teacher in Scarsdale; **Marina Pisto-Lombardo**, a 3rd Grade General Education Teacher in Pocantico Hills; and **Meghan Hak**, an elementary STEM Teacher in Tarrytown.

District leaders **Alana Winnick**, Educational Technology Director in Pocantico Hills, and **Rocco Varuolo**, Coordinator of Instructional Technology, Business Education, and Library Media Services in White Plains, were honored for their roles in driving educational innovation and advancing collaboration.

Career and Technical Education campus opens its doors for informational session

High school students and their families got a detailed, inside look at Southern Westchester BOCES' Career and Technical Education campus in Valhalla during the Spring Open House.

Some students who attended are enrolled in programs there while others are considering joining. The event allowed students and families to see inside classrooms, meet teachers, and tour the campus.

The evening began with a meal prepared and served by Culinary Arts students.

Teachers provided guided tours and answered questions. They described a typical day, explained the curriculum, and detailed what is expected of students.

"If I won the lottery, I would be a full-time student," said Letizia Noce, Pre-Engineering and Cisco teacher. "There are so many opportunities for the motivated student to learn because of the resources SWBOCES provides."

Representatives of local colleges and technical institutions handed out pamphlets and spoke about potential career paths that align with SWBOCES programs.

"The goal is to connect with students and hopefully to get to know them a little better," said Cody Black, High School and Community Relations Presenter for The College of Westchester. "We have a great relationship with SWBOCES, and we accept a lot of students from component districts."

After 15 Southern Westchester BOCES students took home medals earlier this year, including eight for first place, at the SkillsUSA Regional Conference, 11 more returned home with awards from the HOSA Spring Leadership Conference in April. Congratulations!

CPR First Aid Team Event
Gold: Paola Gonzalez, junior, New Rochelle
Gold: Jocelyn Lopez, junior, Port Chester
Bronze: Isaiah Nieves, junior, Eastchester
Bronze: Nathaniel Stone, junior, Ardsley

EMT Team Event
Silver: Connor Kwon, senior, Ardsley
Silver: Kaliyani Hartung, senior, Eastchester

Veterinary Science
Gold: Jaidyn Clark, junior, White Plains

New York Achievement Award
Eric Garcia, junior, New Rochelle
JJ Hetzer, junior, Pelham
Gabrielle Marcelin, junior, New Rochelle
Jahani Valverde, junior, Pelham

Two students were elected to statewide HOSA offices: JJ Hetzer of Pelham, Parliamentarian; and Gabrielle Marcelin of New Rochelle, Reporter



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SWBOCES NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Southern Westchester Board of Cooperative Educational Services, its officers and employees, does not discriminate against any individuals, including but not limited to students, employees or applicants on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, creed, sex, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, citizenship status, marital status, partner status, genetic information, predisposing genetic characteristics, weight, military status or service, political affiliation, or domestic violence victim status.

This policy of nondiscrimination includes access by students to educational programs; counseling services for students; course offerings and student activities; recruitment, appointment and promotion of employees; and employment pay and benefits. This policy also provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

Inquiries regarding this policy should be directed to the Compliance Officers at Southern Westchester BOCES, 17 Berkley Drive, Rye Brook, NY 10573. (914) 937-3820.

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SWBOCES IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

The job of BOCES is to support learning in schools and communities by providing services and supports they are not able to provide individually.

Follow @SWBOCES on Facebook, X, Instagram and LinkedIn to keep up with all we do to support our region's schools!

Strengthening Communities: Highlights from the 2024 School Library System Annual Joint Conference

▶ School librarians and administrators from across the region gathered at Southern Westchester BOCES' Harrison campus for a day of learning, networking and celebrating community connections.

The School Library System Annual Joint Conference on April 12 was co-hosted by Dutchess, Putnam/Northern Westchester, and Rockland BOCES, and the Yonkers Public Schools. The theme this year centered around, "Connecting Communities: Promoting Success for all Students."

Dr. Mary Elizabeth Wilson, Senior Director of the Center for Professional Learning & Curriculum Support, opened the conference by emphasizing the importance of community in creating welcoming and affirming environments for all students.

Dr. Jennifer Cannell, Supervisor of the School Library System at SWBOCES, greeted attendees and introduced the first keynote speaker, Bridget Crossman, an elementary librarian at Lake George Central School and author of "Community Partnerships with School Libraries."

Crossman's keynote session, "Turn the Heat Up with Community Partnerships," became emotional when Crossman shared her "why," telling attendees about her own experiences feeling isolated until a new community welcomed and celebrated her.

"You have the power to change someone's narrative," she told the group.

A series of engaging morning and afternoon breakout sessions followed, including "A Detailed Dive Into One School Library and Public Library Collaboration," with Jennifer Brinley and Shana Frazin from Scarsdale. Two sessions "Harnessing AI in Schools with the Support of Libraries" and a panel discussion on Media Literacy spoke to particular challenges of current times.



The exhibit hall buzzed with activity all day as sponsors Discovery Education, Sora/OverDrive, and others, shared information about their products and services. Authors Veera Hiranandani and Phil Bildner signed books during the lunch break.

The closing keynote from Ibi Zoboi, a native of Haiti and author of numerous titles, shared her personal experiences as a four-year-old coming to the U.S., finding her place and continuing to do so in a world that's changing at warp speed.

Zoboi has appeared on CBS This Morning and The Reid Out, along with prison reform activist Dr. Yusef Salaam, an Exonerated Five member, as co-authors of the 2021 Walter Award and L.A. Times Book Prize-winning "Punching the Air."

Reflecting on the conference's theme, Dr. Cannell said, "Together, school librarians and community partners create authentic and engaging learning opportunities for students. Our theme was developed to honor the essential relationships that school librarians intentionally foster in an effort to ensure student success."

The School Library System Annual Joint Conference is a beacon of collaboration and inspiration for school librarians and administrators in the region, and continues to promote success and inclusivity in educational environments.

142

The number of school districts spanning nine BOCES regions served by the Hudson Valley RBERN, a division of the Center for Professional Learning & Curriculum Support.

162

The number of participating libraries supported by the Southern Westchester BOCES School Library System. It is also a division of the Center for Professional Development & Curriculum Support.