



# What's Right with Spackenkill!

January 20, 2017

**Spackenkill Union Free  
School District**

A tradition of excellence with a  
vision for tomorrow

Dear Spackenkill Families, Students, and Staff,

A reader of our Mission Statement will note that the phrase “continuous improvement” is embedded in this statement. When a school district is committed to continuous improvement it means examples like updating our social studies and ELA curricula as required. Pictured in this newsletter are ELA and social studies teachers updating our curriculum. At the elementary age level, continuous improvement means reading—reading aloud with your children at night, encouraging independent reading with your children—and that’s why I’m so proud of the Parents As Reading Partners and having been part of their program at the Boardman Library. Of course, we can also improve how we treat others, and I salute School Social Worker Mrs. Phillips for working with the children of Nassau to encourage them to be sensitive to the name calling that occurs among young children and please refrain from hurtful comments. I was astounded to learn that our Science Olympiad team came in second out of 32 teams and hardly a comment was made! I am proud as a peacock of the work of these students and their advisors, Amy Matts and Kathy Prisco. Continuous improvement for high school students means thinking about your plans after high school, whether college, military, or career and technical fields. So I thank our guidance department and Ms. DeFrest and High School Social Worker Ms. Klein for sending students over to BOCES CTI to explore various options that may serve their interests. Finally, a Superintendent should embrace that same value of continuous improvement for him- or herself. I want to assure you that I will work hard to become a better Superintendent every day I am in the District.

Sincerely,

Mark Villanti, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

## Science Olympiad Team Victorious



The High School’s Science Olympiad team (*above*) recently attended an invitational competition at Columbia High School in East Greenbush. The team placed second overall (out of 32 teams). Kudos to the team and to advisors Amy Matts and Kathy Prisco on this outstanding accomplishment!

## Sophomores Visit CTI



High School Guidance Counselor Kathleen DeFrest, along with School Social Worker Joann Klein, recently brought a group of sophomores to the Career and Technical Institute at Dutchess BOCES to explore career possibilities—from veterinary to automotive. “The kids loved it,” said Ms. DeFrest (*pictured with the students above*). “They were excited by the many options.”

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### Curriculum Writing Across the District



Social studies teachers from grades 6-12 gathered on January 11 for a day of curriculum writing at Hagan School (above, two left photos). They developed strategies for instructional plans and grade-level topics. Grade 6 English teachers were hard at work on curriculum writing at the District Office on Friday, January 13 (above, two right photos).

### Spackenkill Elementary Night

Spackenkill Elementary Night at Boardman Library had an amazing turnout, reported Yvonne Laube, Organizer and Co-Chair of Parents As Reading Partner (PARP) 2017.

“The kids and their families really enjoyed themselves,” she said. “Some families had never been to the library before and many new library cards were issued.”



Left: The evening included games and special guest readers from the community. Below left: Spackenkill Superintendent Dr. Mark Villanti reads to an attentive audience. Below right: Nassau teacher Carrie Spiegel tells students a tale.

### No Name Calling Week



This past week was No Name Calling Week at Nassau Elementary School, with the goal of spreading kindness. School Social Worker Mrs. Phillips (above, with kindergarten students) went into three lunch periods on Thursday, January 19, to talk about name calling and the importance of “calling people by the names they were given.”



Afterward, students watched a short video called “Kids Speak Out About Name Calling,” which offered ideas for how to handle name calling situations. Strategies included ignoring the name caller, walking away, telling the other person to stop, and telling an adult. As one kindergarten student put it, “We should all be nice to each other!”

#### Mission:

Inspired by a tradition of excellence and a spirit of continuous improvement, the Spackenkill School District will provide all of our students with the academic and social skills necessary to pursue their goals and become responsible citizens in an interdependent global community.

Please email newsletter submissions and ideas to Mary Forsell at [mary.forsell@sufsdny.org](mailto:mary.forsell@sufsdny.org)  
Issues of the newsletter are available on the Spackenkill website:  
[www.spackenkillschools.org](http://www.spackenkillschools.org)

#### Vision:

All Spackenkill graduates will be lifelong learners who are inspired to pursue their dreams and contribute to the global society.