

# A Message from the Spackenkill Superintendent



## One District, Multiple Paths to Excellence

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November 24, 2020

Dear Spackenkill Community,

With Thanksgiving almost here, I want to express my personal gratitude for how our community has faced difficult challenges and rose to the occasion. Thank you, parents and students, for being with us every step of the way in helping us to reopen. Your feedback and support has been amazing, not to mention your flexibility in dealing with changing schedules, daily health checks, filling out surveys, and watching our videos and Board meetings as we work together to keep ourselves safe (and sane) during this unprecedented time.

I am also thankful for our amazing teachers and staff for all they have done to make learning possible. A shout-out to our nurses, psychologists and counselors, custodians and grounds workers, food service workers, and bus drivers, who have been right there on the front lines with us, ensuring that students feel secure and welcome. Our building principals and administrators have been working around the clock since last summer to keep our school district safe and our learning environments productive, whether in person or remote. I cannot thank them enough for their tireless efforts.

Please keep in mind that we all need to be super-vigilant over this Thanksgiving break (and beyond) to stay healthy. I'm reminding you to please follow New York State guidelines for indoor and outdoor gatherings and to continue to practice appropriate hand-washing hygiene, social distancing, and mask wearing. There's a chance that areas in the county might be designated yellow, orange, or red zones due to increased viral spread of COVID. [To learn more about Cluster Zone Restrictions, please visit the New York State Department of Health website.](#)

### **Elementary Art Teacher Awarded Top Honor**

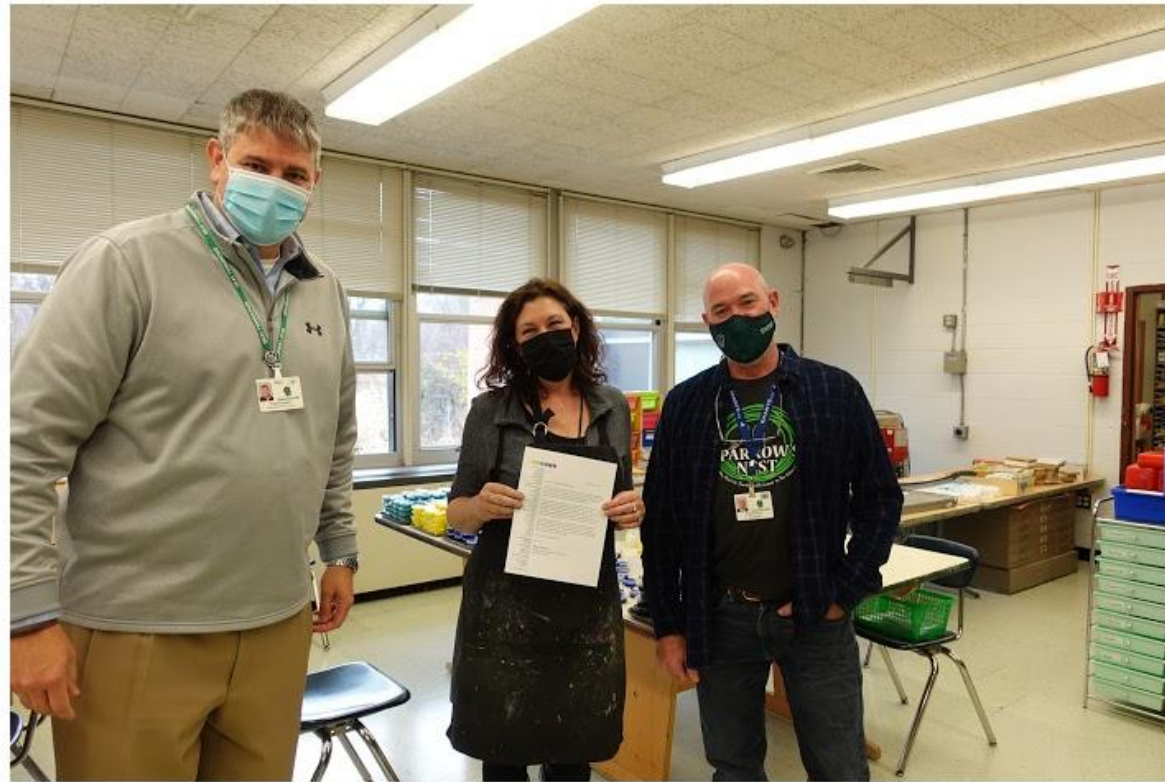
Our own Elementary Art Teacher, Sharon Ciccone, has been named State Art Educator of the Year by the New York State Art Teachers Association (NYSATA). This is the organization's most prestigious award. Mrs. Ciccone has been a dynamic force at Spackenkill for over two decades.

On Saturday, November 21, NYSATA honored Mrs. Ciccone in a virtual ceremony. Here are just a few of the remarks made by NYSATA members about Mrs. Ciccone:

"Her young students are the luckiest students on earth."

"She is the most amazing elementary art teacher I have ever encountered."

"She is humble and dedicated, professional, supportive, nurturing, groundbreaking."



Above, top row: Dr. Fanuele and Mr. Farrell congratulate Mrs. Ciccone in person on being named NYSATA State Art Educator of the Year. When they walked into her art room at Hagan, she was in the midst of pouring paint into vials for students to take home. Bottom row: A slide from last Saturday's ceremony honoring Mrs. Ciccone.



Above: With the help of Hagan monitors and substitute teachers, Mrs. Ciccone packed up painting and drawing kits for 650 elementary students so that they could practice their art at home.

In her acceptance speech, Mrs Ciccone talked about the joy of being in the classroom, but also the way remote learning has also uncovered some positives—for example, many students who didn't thrive in large settings are doing wonderful artwork remotely. "When something difficult comes before us, we can change the story," she said.

Mrs.Ciccone would like to thank all of the monitors and substitute teachers who helped her make the 650 drawing and paint kits that went home to all of the elementary students in the District. "The elementary art students are fully remote for art classes and the kits help make a more authentic hands-on experience. In the visual arts, artists communicate ideas, feelings, and observations through the medium," she said. "An artist must be knowledgeable about the materials, tools, and techniques in a medium and develop skills in using them. Meaning is shaped by the materials, techniques, and forms it makes use of, as well as the ideas it creates in its viewers. The kits are essential to being an artist."

Congratulations to Mrs. Ciccone and thank you for your dedication.



Please click on the image above to view a video of art work from Spackenkill students, courtesy of the Art Department. Thank you to Mrs. Ciccone, Mrs. Elder, Mrs. Romani, Mr. Romani, and Mrs. Stong.

#### **Spack Onstage Airs Remote Performance**

This past weekend, Spack Onstage performed *Is There Life After High School?* in two Livestreamed shows. Kudos to the cast and everyone behind the scenes for this innovative and entertaining event. Thank you to advisor/music director Holden Maiorana and director/choreographer Dave Bethards for pulling it all together. [Click here to read the program.](#)



Above: The cast blended their voices for remote musical performances.

Please note that we will return to school on Monday, November 30th, continuing our in-person Hybrid 1 plan. Have a Happy Thanksgiving!

Sincerely,

Paul M. Fanuele, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools



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