

A Message from the Spackenkill Superintendent



One District, Multiple Paths to Excellence

February 26, 2021

Dear Spackenkill Community,

Our secondary students enjoyed their Hybrid 2 schedules this week. I stopped in at Todd Middle School and Spackenkill High School and saw many smiling faces. There was energy in the air and it was great to visit with teachers, staff, and students.

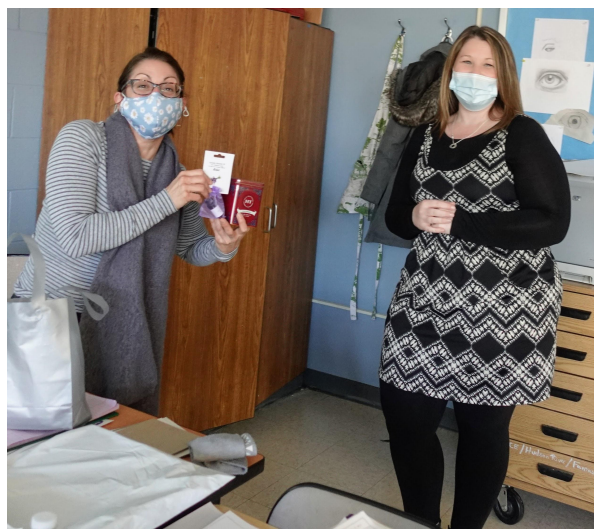
A nice surprise was seeing Kindness Week in action at both schools. This “secret Santa”-type event pairs up teachers and staff, who exchange tokens of kindness. It’s a new tradition at all of our schools.



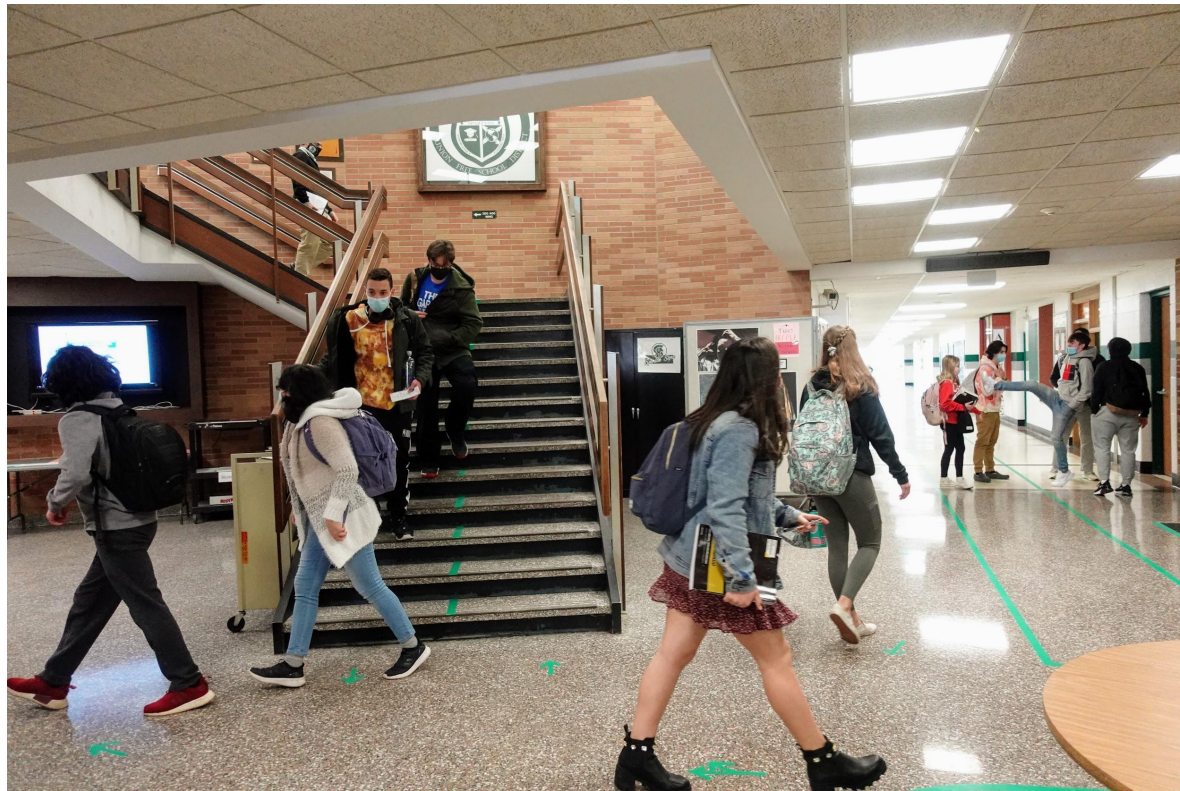
Above: Todd Students report to class following social distancing guidelines.



Above left: Dr. Fanuele chats with Mrs. Grega about her classroom feeling more energized as a result of Hybrid 2. Above right: Mrs. Rogers demonstrates this week's science presentation. Please note the life-like emoji on the screen depicting Mrs. Rogers and Mrs. Walsh.



Above left: Mrs. Romani shows off her Kindness Week gift from Mrs. Gil: chocolates, tea, and essential oils. Above right: Mrs. Rubin, who organized the Todd event, received some chocolates, too.



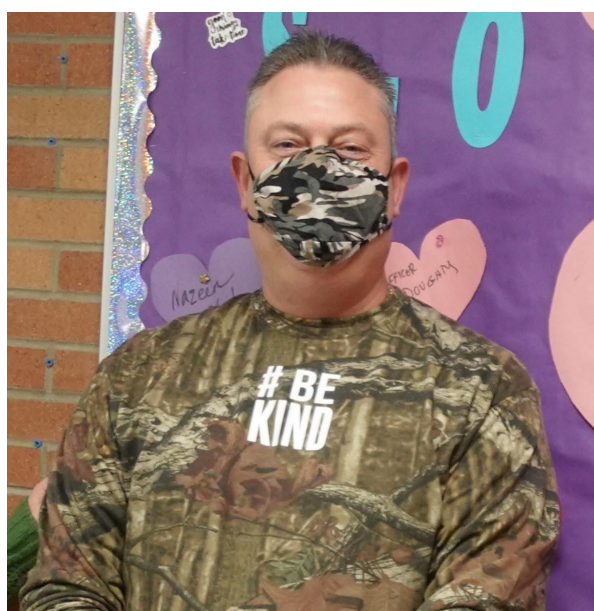
Above: High School students change classes following floor arrows and lanes.



Above: In the High School library, Dr. Fanuele presents Principal Malkischer and Assistant Principal Ken Lewis with the book *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, by Doris Kearns Goodwin. Former Superintendent Dr. Villanti chose the book to be donated as a commemoration of his superintendency.



Above: Principal Malkischer with Lara Bogdan (left) and Kim Sottile (right) next to a Kindness Week bulletin board. Mr. Malkischer wears a kindness shirt, a homemade gift from both teachers.



Above: A closeup of Mr. Malkischer's Kindness shirt.



Above: The Kindness Elf created a pretty corner outside a high school classroom.

Update on In-Person Plans

There is much conversation about social distancing around the county, state, and the nation. At our weekly meeting with the Department of Behavioral and Community Health (DBCH), superintendents and health officials discussed proposed shifts in social distancing protocols. We expect to hear more guidance from the New York State Department of Health next week. However, the DBCH meeting was encouraging for bringing back more students in person and we hope that health officials continue to go in this direction. We will discuss current guidance at our Return to School Committee meeting next week.

As you probably know, full-day kindergarten starts on Monday. We can't wait to see our youngest students back five days a week.

Following our Grade 1 parent/guardian survey, the Grade 2 survey went out this week. Please return the survey to your principal by today so that Nassau can start making plans for future attendance possibilities.

Registration News

If you have a future kindergartner for the 2021-2022 school year or you know of new kindergarten families, please spread the word that Kindergarten Registration is now in progress online:

https://www.spackenkillschools.org/parents/online_registration/kindergarten

To register new students in grades 1-12, please visit this link

https://www.spackenkillschools.org/parents/online_registration.

COVID-19 Update and Dashboard

Our county's 7-day rolling average positivity rate on the [New York Forward dashboard](#) remains below the 5 percent mark.

Since we started the school year, we have had 53 positive COVID-19 cases. [You can see the breakdown by school on the NY State Report card](#): Please continue to consult the NY State Report Card for updates. It's important that, even if they are remote, if a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, they should email their principal so that we know what's going on in the community and can continue to make informed decisions.

Earn While Your Children Learn



Applications are being accepted for part-time food service workers. [Applications are available online by clicking here](#). Download, print, and mail or bring to the dropbox at District Office, 15 Croft Road, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603 (located behind Todd Middle School). If you have any questions, please contact Lisa French: lisa.french@sufsdny.org, 845-463-7836

Apply to Youth Leadership Program



Rising sophomore and juniors, [click here](#) or on the image above to apply for the Chamber Foundation's Youth Leadership Program. Many Spackenkill students have participated in this program to improve their leadership skills and participate in community service.

French Club Celebrates Mardi Gras

The High School French Club's Mardi Gras event took place on February 17. This year the club hosted a "fête en kit" event, or "party in a bag," so that they could meet all health and safety measures. All participants wore masks and practiced social distancing. In each Mardi Gras kit was a portion of jambalaya (Cajun & Creole rice dish), a slice of king cake (a cross between a coffee cake and a French pastry), and a can of lemon/lime soda. Each kit also included Mardi Gras beads and an information sheet with fun facts about Mardi Gras and tips on how to celebrate safely at home. Three lucky kits also included a small plastic baby. Traditionally, this figurine (or "fève") would be baked inside the king cake, and whoever received the slice with the baby would enjoy luck and prosperity throughout the year. Additionally, the courtyard outside the cafeteria was decorated in the official colors of Mardi Gras (green, purple, and yellow), and there was jazz and zydeco music to enjoy. Laissez les bons temps rouler ! Thank you, club advisor and French teacher Brittany Hart, for keeping us in the loop about this great event. Enjoy the photos below!



Meet the Musician Series Continues



The Meet the Musician series continued at Hagan with a Google Meet visit from professional cellist Sarah Bish, Spackenkill High School class of 2010. Ms. Bish made her solo debut in 2008, performing with the Hudson Valley Philharmonic after winning first prize in the Virtuoso-in-Progress Concerto Competition, while she was a student at Spackenkill High School. She holds degrees in cello performance from Cleveland Institute of Music and the

University of Massachusetts-Amherst. She is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Music Arts degree at Rutgers University. Ms. Bish is the chair of the cello department at Thurnauer School of Music in Tenafly, New Jersey, and on faculty at Silver Music School in New York City and Luzerne Music Center during the summer. She resides in Fort Lee, New Jersey. Her brother Evan, a bassist, previously appeared in the Meet the Musician Series.

During the Google Meet with Ms. Valentine's orchestra students, Ms. Bish demonstrated the range of the cello and different ways of using the instrument by playing some of her favorite songs. "The cello has a special sound, a warm, rich sound. It sounds like chocolate," she said. "The cello has a huge range and can play very low, like the shark scene in *Jaws*, or play very high, like a violin."

Students enthusiastically asked many questions, including:

Why did you choose the cello?

When I was little, I wanted to play the "jello," but I think it's because I loved the low sound.

Who inspired you?

My teacher and family

When did you decide to become a professional cellist?

When I was in high school

What is your least favorite thing about the cello?

Sometimes it's not fun to practice. Sometimes I don't sound good.

How did Spackenkill shape you into the cellist you are?

I only went to Spackenkill in high school. I was a sophomore when I started. Going to a new school could be scary but I immediately felt so connected with the music program, the orchestra, and string ensemble. I felt very safe there.

See and hear Ms. Bish performing Franz Schubert's Sonata in a minor D. 891 "Arpeggione". https://youtu.be/6_TSWuhyCLg



Above left: Ms. Bish answers questions from Hagan students. *Above right:* Ms. Valentine hosted the event.

FACS Students Bake Treats

This week, Todd FACS teacher Mr. Scanlon taught his 7th graders how to make individual mug brownies. Thank you to Mrs. Romani for taking the pictures. It was the “divine sweet shop” aroma that drew her down the hall into his classroom.



Looking forward to nicer weather ahead!

Sincerely,

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



