

# A Message from the Spackenkill Superintendent



**One District, Multiple Paths to Excellence**

March 12, 2021

Dear Spackenkill Community,

Yesterday, I visited Nassau to check in with our first and second graders and their teachers. The fact that the students returned full time on a five-day schedule is big news. It was amazing to see how the students interacted, meeting new friends and starting fresh. When I visited the classrooms, the students were already fully engaged in their work, and they hadn't even been in school for an hour!



Above: First graders settled into their new schedules. Teachers had conversations with the students about how they felt returning full time.





Above: Second grade students met some of their peers in person for the first time and participated in group activities. Teachers commented that former hybrid students were helping new in-person students get acclimated.

### Visit to Hagan

I visited Hagan last week and walked the halls with Mr. Farrell to see first-hand how in-person and remote learning is going.

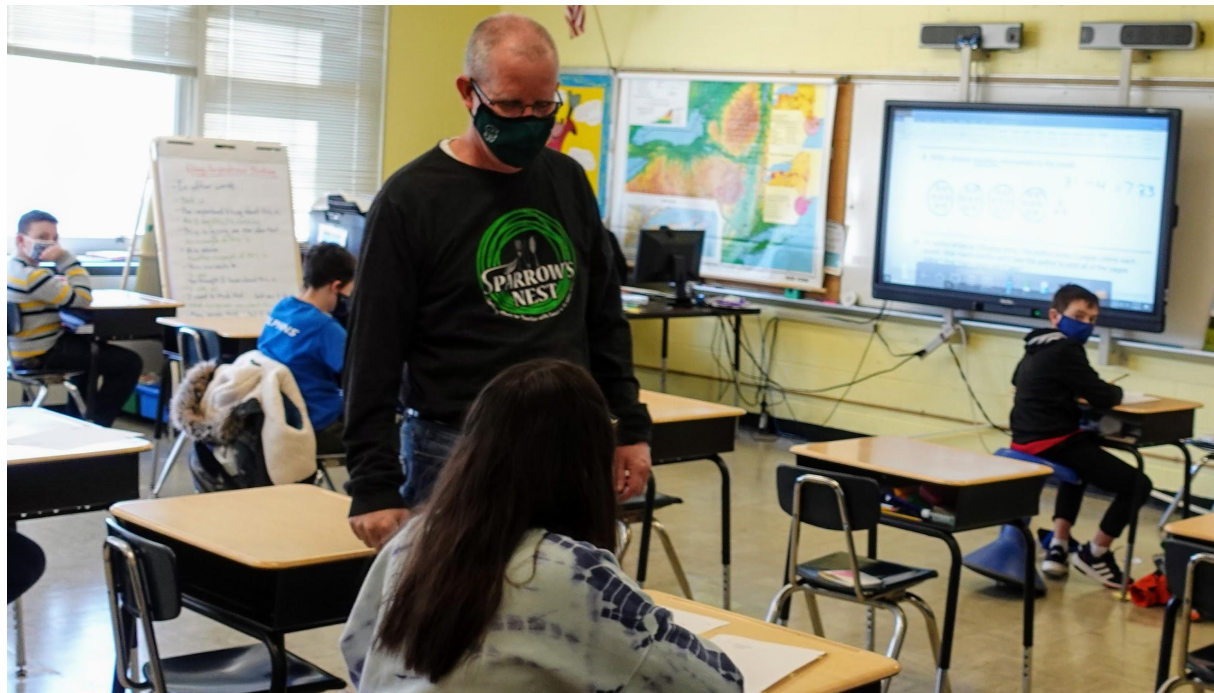


Above: Dr. Fanuele visited Ms. Tomasetti's third graders.





Above: Mrs. Stout conducted online learning for her third graders.



Above: Mr. Alnwick's fourth graders were hard at work.





Above: When the Superintendent and Mr. Farrell stopped in on Mr. Merrill's class, they found the students engaged in an escape room math-themed activity. The students were given five doors to "escape" from. After working collaboratively to solve the problems, students then have to manipulate their answers to find the unlock codes. This activity has students practicing their skills for adding and subtracting fractions with unlike denominators, as well as increasing their number sense when looking for the codes.

### **BOE Update**

At our next Board meeting on March 23 at 6:30 pm, we will hold a voluntary budget hearing and another hearing at the May 4 Board meeting. At these meetings we will take questions from the community after our presentations. We'll have more details in our next newsletter.

At our last Board meeting on March 9, the District honored outgoing Board President Tom Keith, Jr. To commemorate his 11 years of service and steadfast dedication to the District, the Board presented Mr. Keith with a watercolor depiction of all Spackenkill Schools. We welcome Dr. Richard Horvath as the new Board president.

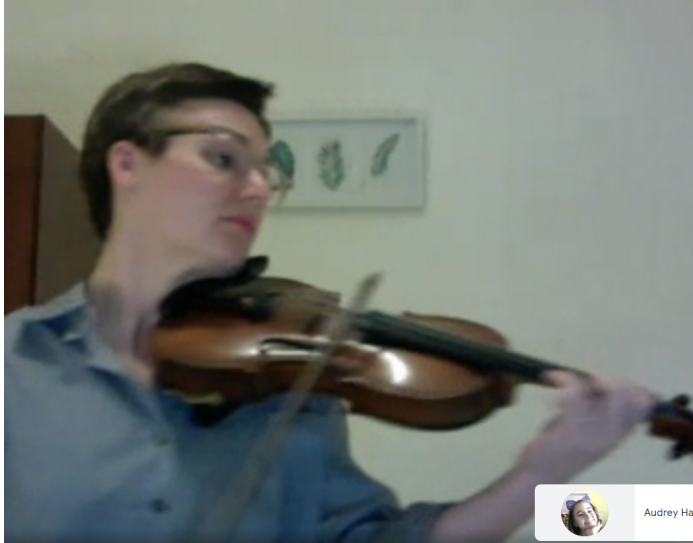


Above: The Board of Education presented outgoing BOE president Tom Keith with a watercolor depiction of Spackenkill Schools.

### **COVID-19 Update**

Since we started the school year, we have had 60 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 when 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.

### Meet the Musician Series



Spackenkill alumna Amanda Bailey performed for the Hagan Strings students on Thursday, March 11. Ms. Bailey began taking violin lessons at age five and played in the orchestra at Hagan Elementary School when she was a student of 3-5 Strings Teacher Ms. Valentine. Ms. Valentine organized and hosted the event.

After graduating from Spackenkill High School, Ms. Bailey went on to study violin performance at SUNY Fredonia and DePaul University. Influenced by hip-hop music, she feels just as comfortable performing classical music on world tours with Yo-Yo Ma as rapping with her violin (as her alter ego Lil Sharp) alongside artists like Chance the Rapper. She joined the students for the concert on a Google Meet from Berlin, Germany, where she resides.

During the presentation, Ms. Bailey asked students to name the instruments in a big orchestra. She demonstrated different techniques using both the violin (hers dates to 1723!) and the viola, and played pieces by Bach and Beethoven and even demonstrated her violin while rapping. The students were very enthusiastic during the presentation. They applauded and asked many questions, including:

**What is your favorite song?**

Any solo Bach.

**Do you prefer playing the violin or the viola?**

I don't prefer one over the other but I probably play the violin more.

**What is your favorite orchestra piece?**

Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings.

**Why did you move to Berlin?**

I wanted to try something new.

**What made you want to rap with your violin?**

When I was growing up, my sister, who was a little bit older, was always listening to hip hop and rap and I was learning the violin, so I learned them at the same time. It wasn't until I lived in Chicago that I tried to put the two together.

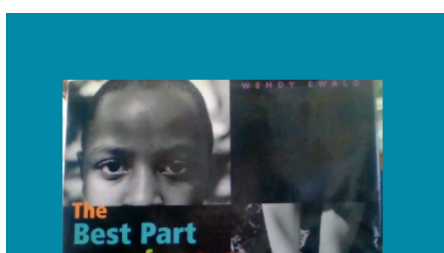
**Who inspired you to play the violin?**

Two people. I was watching Itzhak Perlman on television and there was a closeup of his hands playing and I said, "I want to do that!" Also, Miri Ben-Ari, the hip-hop violinist who I also saw on television.

Check out Ms. Bailey's website below:

<http://www.amandabaileymusic.com/>

### Second Graders Do Their Best



Mrs. Zanca and Mrs. Christolon's second graders completed a self-reflection project based on the book *The Best Part of Me* by illustrator Wendy Ewald. Each

student chose his or her "best part" and brainstormed reasons why. Technology Integrator Mrs. Byrne came in and taught a lesson on taking a picture with the Chromebook, inserting it into a Google Slide, and changing the characteristics of the picture and text. The slides are now a class book that really captures the personalities of the students! [Click here to view the book.](#)



### STA Scholarship Is Open!

High School Seniors, [please click here](#) to access the STA Scholarship Application. The deadline to apply is April 26, 2021.

The atmosphere at our schools is so positive, and we wouldn't have been able to accomplish this return to more in-person time were it not for the cooperation and efforts of our community. Please continue to wear masks and observe social distancing so that we can keep everyone safe and move forward with our return to normalcy.

Just a reminder: This coming Monday, March 15, grades 3 and 4 students are attending full time on a 5-day schedule. On the same day, grade 6 students are returning 4 days a week following the Hybrid 2 schedule. Looking forward to seeing them and enjoying the longer light of Daylight Savings Time!

Sincerely,

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



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