Dear Spackenkill Community,

May and June are extremely busy across all of our schools. For example, our high school auditorium is in use almost every night in May! There are so many examples of the high energy and activity in the district that are too numerous to highlight. There are a few items that I want to feature.

Art Fair last Friday night at Hagan. As I traveled from one student exhibit to another, I could hear family members pointing out with pride their child’s work! Art teachers Roberto Romani, Janet Stong, Jodi Sibilia, MaryBeth Romani, and Sharon Ciccone make this event even more special with their interactive activities. Thank you, families, for attending with your teens and children. Most of all, students, congratulations on your creative and interesting art works!

Author’s Day at Hagan and Nassau last week. This event was also so enjoyable. Thank you, PTA, for supporting this author visit. Bruce Hale was so engaging and the students were so responsive!

Board Candidate Forum next Wednesday. We have not had a contested election since I have been in the district. This year we have two excellent candidates. Past Board President Mike McCall has volunteered to serve as the moderator. We will also livestream/ videotape the meeting. Thank you to both PT(S)As for offering up questions.

STEM teachers and students. How proud you must be learning that US News ranks the high school #31 in the country for STEM performance.

BOE Meeting on Tuesday, May 7th. Brett Hasbrouck, Director of Technology, will present preliminary Plan 3 for the district Smart Schools Bond. We will also hold a budget hearing. Finally, Athletic Director Marco Lanzoni will provide an update on athletics and also an offering by a private company to live stream our athletic contests.

Please see flyer(s) that might be of interest:

Hudson Valley Young Writers Programs

Drowning Prevention Seminar Schedule

Pinewood Derby Championship

A tradition of excellence with a vision for tomorrow
Mark your calendar for May 21st, when our budget vote and trustee election will take place at the high school from 7 AM to 9 PM.

my best,

Mark Villanti, Ed.D.,
Superintendent of Schools

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**MEET THE CANDIDATES NIGHT**

*Save the Date: May 15th*

Come out and meet the Board seat candidates on May 15th at 6 pm at Spackenkill High School's Black Box Theater. The event is sponsored jointly by the PTA/PTSA.

*The following two candidates are running:*

- Click here to read about Daniel G. Koehler.
- Click here to read about Vickie Setzer.

**ANNUAL VOTE & ELECTION:**

*Click here for information about upcoming budget vote on May 21st at Spackenkill High School from 7 am to 9 pm*

*Click here to download Absentee Ballot Application*
Valedictorian and Salutatorian Announced

We are proud to announce the valedictorian and salutatorian for Spackenkill High School's Class of 2019. Valedictorian Rachel Li (pictured far left) will be attending Harvard with a major in Chemistry. Salutatorian Grace Katz will be attending Georgetown University with majors in Biology and Government. Congratulations to these outstanding students!

SHS Is Named a Best High School for STEM

U.S. News has ranked Spackenkill High School #31 nationally as a Best High School for STEM (science technology, engineering, and math). To be included in the Best High Schools for STEM rankings, a public high school first had to be very highly ranked in the 2019 U.S. News Best High Schools rankings. That meant that the top 1,000 nationally ranked high schools were eligible for the STEM rankings. Those eligible schools were then judged nationally on their level of math and science participation and success, using Advanced Placement STEM test data for 2017 graduates as the benchmark to conduct the analysis. Congratulations to students and staff! Click here to read more about.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spackenkill High School</th>
<th>School Data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poughkeepsie, NY</td>
<td>98% GRADUATION RATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#31 in STEM Rankings</td>
<td>86.8 STEM RANK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#960 in National Rankings</td>
<td>Enrollment 9-12</td>
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Elementary Author's Day Encourages Creativity
Last week was Author's Day at both Nassau and Hagan. Thanks to the PTA, the schools welcomed author Bruce Hale, who flew in from California to inform and entertain our students. The author of over 50 books, Mr. Hale gave presentations to each grade level and had lunch with the students.

At Nassau, he read his popular book “Big Bad Baby” to the kindergartners and showed them how to create illustrations using basic shapes and even drew his most iconic character, Clark the Shark. He talked about how he gets his ideas from everyday life. "Do something creative with your day," he said. "Write, sing, or tell a story."

At Hagan, Mr. Hale told students stories about how he became an author. Admitting he was a bit of a trouble maker as a child, Mr. Hale credited books and stories for turning his life around. "I believe all it takes to make a reader is the right book." The author quoted Albert Einstein saying, "Imagination is more important than knowledge" and added to that, "Imagination is the source of knowledge."

Mr. Hale had to work hard. It took over eight years of rejections and a lot of trial and error to get his first book published. “Make beautiful mistakes,” he encouraged the students. “Make a mistake and you’ll come out with something better.”

Above: Author Bruce Hale at Nassau Elementary School. The author and illustrator demonstrated his drawing techniques and invited students to add their own touches.
Above: At Hagan Elementary School, Mr. Hale encouraged students to follow their dreams.

Community Enjoys District Art Show

The annual District Art Show had an amazing turnout last Friday! Tons of families and administrators showed up to support our talented art students and all of their hard work. Roberto Romani had his Art Honors students speaking about the Memory Project and Janet Stong ran a print making activity for the
district families to explore, create, and take home. Sharon Ciccone’s scavenger hunt had all the families weaving in and out the art works. It was such a positive atmosphere. Many of the art works featured written insights about the compositions from the young artists.

In addition, Diana To and Sabah Choudhury, co-presidents of the National Art Honor Society, documented comments from some of the guests about their feelings on the artwork.

Click here to read attendees’ comments about the artwork.

Click here for a full gallery of images from the event.

See a slideshow of the event.

STAR Exemption Update

If you currently receive your STAR benefit as a reduction on your school tax bill (the STAR exemption), you may receive a greater benefit if you switch to the STAR rebate check. Credit. Click on this government link to learn more. If you have questions, please call the Town of Poughkeepsie Tax Collector’s Office: (845) 485-3611.

Parent/Guardian Survey Available

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) is developing a Parent Dashboard to increase transparency and make information about school performance and other school-level data easier for parents and the public to access. NYSED is gathering feedback from parents and stakeholders to guide the work of developing the Parent Dashboard. NYSED will use this feedback to identify the data that is most useful to parents and the public. Please take this five-minute survey.

French Students Expand Horizons

Middle School Students Dine Out

Middle School is not always a time for adventurous eating, but Todd’s 8th grade French students got a chance to go outside their comfort zone and experience a taste of France like never before thanks to our local French Brasserie (left, the group with teacher Madame Daunt pose outside the restaurant). Everyone had a chance to try some of France’s finest classic dishes thanks to the generosity of Spackenkill alumnus Charles Fells, owner of the Brasserie 292 restaurant in downtown Poughkeepsie.

The 8th grade French students enjoyed a family-style luncheon at Brasserie 292, where students were able to dine on famous charcuterie, confits, cheeses, escargots, moules, steak-frites, and several French sauces. It was a mixture of traditional French culinary delights and some incredible desserts. Merci to Brasserie 292 for this opportunity!
Above left: Students enjoy pomme frites (top) and try escargots for the first time (bottom).

Above right, top and bottom: For dessert, there was creme brulee and mousse au chocolat.

Intro to Haitian Culture

Local poet and author Jerrice Baptiste visited Madame Hart’s French students last month to talk about her native country, Haiti. The author of eight children’s books illustrated by April Natula with Haitian themes—including “Tu Es Ma Belle” and “Egg: A Poetic Tale of A Day in Haiti”—she spoke about the beauty of Haiti and its people. Speaking French, she passed around photos of the country as well as her books to give students a sense of what life is like in this largely rural and scenic country of 10 million people, with Port au Prince as its capital. The students took turns reading a poem in French about Haitian life. The students were particularly interested in hearing about what life was like for Ms. Baptiste as a girl growing up without her mother, who moved to America to earn money for the family. When Ms. Baptiste joined her mother here as a 13 year old, she was in culture shock and spoke no English, but ultimately excelled in school and went on to receive a Bachelors Degree in Psychology and a Masters Degree in Education from Hunter College in New York City.
HESC is pleased to announce that the Excelsior Scholarship Application is now available.

In order to apply, students must meet eligibility requirements, including:

- Be residents of New York State
- Plan to attend a SUNY or CUNY two or four-year college
- Complete 30 credits per year toward their program of study
- Be on track to graduate on time with an Associate's Degree in two years or a Bachelor's Degree in four years

To complete the application, you will need:

- 2017 IT-201 NYS Income Tax Return(s) for you and your parent(s) or your spouse, as applicable

More information can be found at besc.ny.gov/excelsior.
FACS Awards

Congratulations to Chastity Robinson, 8th grade student and recipient of the NYS AFCSE Student of the Year Award! Ms. Robinson was nominated by Todd FACS teacher Albert Scanlon and honored at this year’s Hudson Valley Northeast Chapter of the NYS Association of FACS Educators Awards Banquet, held at Mahoney’s Steakhouse on April 25th.

Students Team Up for Fundraiser

Ninth graders Vanessa Aagaard and Nadine Deeb baked up 600 cookies in the high school cafeteria on Thursday for the Cookies for Kids, which raises money to fight childhood cancer. Vanessa began baking for this cause back in fourth grade and did this alongside Alex’s Lemonade Stand, and Nadine joined forces with her in middle school. Today, LEO Club supported the cause by helping to bag the cookies, two to a pack, to be sold by donation in faculty rooms across the District all week. High school students will be able to buy the cookies on May 7th and 8th, and the cookies will also be sold at concerts on May 8th and 9th.
Music Department Out and About

Last weekend, the Spackenkill music department was well represented in the community! Spackapella performed at Hudson Valley KidVenture this past Sunday at Dutchess Community College (photo of performance at left). The kids did a great job and the audience enjoyed their energetic performance.

Meanwhile, across town, the Spartan Jazz Band was the toast of the Cup of the Valley Coffee & Tea Festival at The Culinary Institute of America. It was a great opportunity for them to perform for the community on this stage, complete with the professional lighting and video as well as top-notch sound equipment, which allowed people to see and hear their performance on screens throughout the entire Marriott Pavilion.
Above: Spackapella poses with Dr. Villanti and chorus director Holden Maiorana.

Above: The Spartan Jazz Band, led by Victor Catanzo, performs at the Culinary Institute.

Breaking News

Students in Mrs. Zanca’s and Mrs. Vilcox’s second grade classes created egg drop contraptions for their April STEM activity. The students were challenged to design contraptions that would protect eggs from breaking or cracking from a high fall. Chicken eggs are able to withstand 100 pounds of weight.

The students used a variety of materials: egg cartons, straws, cotton balls, tape, Styrofoam, cardboard tubes, and plastic bags. They had 10 minutes to draw their designs individually, and then 15 minutes to design in teams, followed by 25 minutes to build their egg protectors. The students tried a variety of approaches, adding cotton balls and straws to the egg cartons to pad them and cushion the fall. One team created a contraption that looked like an ice cream cone! The egg holders were dropped from increasingly greater heights. Many survived and the students analyzed the reasons for what led to success.
THE STATE ASSESSMENTS

What Parents Need to Know

Every spring, the Grades 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics Tests are administered to students across New York State. These annual ELA and Math tests for students in grades 3-8 are required by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015. The tests are designed to measure how well students are mastering the learning standards that guide classroom instruction and help to ensure that students are on track to graduate from high school with the critical thinking, problem solving, and reasoning skills needed for success in college and the modern workplace. The tests also show how schools and districts are progressing with the learning standards and can support professional development for teachers. Click here for the Parent Toolkit for the 2019 tests.

Upcoming PTSA Meetings

April 8th High School

https://asp.schoolmessenger.com/spackerkill/editstationeryemail.php
May 13th Todd
June No meeting

All meetings at 7 PM in middle or high school library

15 Croft Road, Poughkeepsie, NY

(845) 463-7800

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.

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

Please submit story ideas to mary.forsell@sufsdny.org