

REFLECTIONS

WINTER 2017 NEWSLETTER

Red Hook Central School District



Message from the Superintendent

Through the Eyes of Children: An Opinion

Our children are watching and learning. Every day. Every minute. You know this. How we, as adults, react to our President Trump's unorthodox communication methods is very important. It will, in part, determine the future of our democracy.

Life is full of examples and non-examples. Children learn from both. When they hear someone in authority disparage another person, what children learn depends on the reaction of the adults around them. And, what children learn may impact their success as they navigate a public school system that demands a high level of decorum, mutual respect, and thoughtful consideration of issues.

Whether you admire the unorthodox qualities of our new President or you abhor them, the fact remains that our children are learning. Do you know what your child thinks about this past election and our new President? If not, you should ask. You may be surprised by what they (or their friends) think.

The success of our democracy does not depend on complete agreement on every issue. It depends on public schools producing citizens who approach problems with a humble disposition, a willingness to listen, and the maturity to change an opinion based on new information. If we get that right, everything else will fall into place.

Mill Road
Elementary School

Linden Avenue
Middle School

Red Hook
High School

Red Hook Central School District

9 Mill Road
Red Hook, NY 12571

Tel. 845-758-2241

www.redhookcentralschools.org

The mission of the Red Hook Central School District shall be to develop in its students the knowledge, intellectual integrity, and social consciousness to prepare them to accept the obligations and opportunities found in a complex society. The District seeks to provide a challenging educational environment that fosters and rewards the values of respect, responsibility, honesty, integrity, and community service in all its members.

Parenting is hard work. Thank you for all you do!

Paul Finch
Superintendent of Schools

Welcome New Administrators!

My name is Dr. Kitty Summers and I taught in the Albany City School District as an elementary teacher for 15 years. I then became an elementary principal at Harmony Hill School in Cohoes City School District. After I received my Doctorate in Educational Leadership from The Sage Colleges, I moved to district-level positions. I have worked as an Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and Director of Special Education for the last five years, and am excited to join the Red Hook Central School District team.



Kitty Summers, Ed. D.
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum,
Instruction and Staff Development
845-758-2241 Ext. 55210

My name is Phil Campbell and I am the new Principal of Red Hook High School. I am a 1990 graduate of Red Hook High School, and this is my first position as principal. Prior to coming to Red Hook, I was an assistant principal at Somers High School and a math teacher at Briarcliff, Arlington, and Coleman Catholic high schools. My wife, Dawn, has been an AIS Math teacher at Mahopac Middle School for the past 13 years. We have four children ranging in ages from 4 to 10. In my spare time, I coach youth soccer. I am currently finishing up my dissertation in order to receive my educational doctorate from Western Connecticut State University.



Phil Campbell
Principal, Red Hook High School
845-758-2241 Ext. 15100



Understanding the Fund Balance

When the Office of the New York State Comptroller released its report on the financial management of the Red Hook Central School District, it contained statements that many people could interpret as critical of the District. Many of the statements in the report might lead the reader to conclude that the District was maintaining too much fund balance.

The main reasons for maintaining a fund balance are to smooth out dramatic shifts in revenues and expenses, and to provide for future liabilities without negatively impacting taxpayers on an annual basis with those

Red Hook CSD Fund Balance Compared to NYS School Districts	
District	Rank
Wainscott	1
Red Hook CSD	464
Within 2% of Fiscal Stress	577
Fiscal Stress	604
Hempstead	672

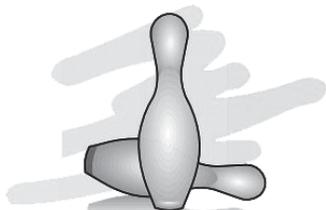
irregularities. Most school districts in New York State maintain fund balance levels higher than Red Hook Central School District for these purposes. In fact, Red Hook Central School District ranks 464 on a list of 672 districts around the state when measuring fund balance as a percentage of budgetary expenditures. The chart shown here provides a visual of how Red Hook CSD compares with districts around the state. Our fund balance places us in the second lowest quartile. If our fund balance were to decrease we would approach levels where the Comptroller would issue a demerit for fiscal stress for not maintaining enough fund balance. It is the responsibility of the Board of Education to monitor and modify fund balances appropriately.

Red Hook Athletes Give Back to Their Community

Several Red Hook athletes volunteered to help with fall cleanup at the new Red Hook Community Center at 59 Fisk Street. These athletes, coordinated by Mr. Stutz and Mr. Cassata, represent the beginnings of an organized effort to have our athletes become more involved in their community.



Charity Bowling Event A Great Success!



Michael Brown, a teacher at LAMS, does such a wonderful job raising funds for our local community. Much time and effort goes into the charity bowling event. It has been one of our best fundraisers to support low-income families. The event raised \$3,289.00 from RHCS faculty and staff. The Ascienzo Family Foundation's more than matching grant, raised the total to \$7,737.00. We will send \$787.00 to the scholarship fund, which is approximately 10%. The families receiving our food gift certificates, are identified by the student services staff at each of our buildings. Our thanks go out to them for devoting their time and energy in distributing these funds.

Thanks to all who supported this effort!

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Things have really been cooking in Food Services this year!

During these past few months, we have been busy cultivating relationships and expanding our Farms to School initiative.



We take pride in serving products sourced from local farms as well as purchasing products from New York State businesses. For example, we've been able to source menu items from a new upstart local vendor Farms2Tables.

We purchased kale, leeks, cauliflower, fennel, rainbow carrots, pears and other items from Rexcroft, Holmquest and Rock Steady farms. It has been exciting to introduce these items to our district's salad bars. Farms2Tables represents more than 30 local farms.

New for this year, is a pilot program offered by the USDA which allows our department to use commodity dollars to procure local produce to help strengthen the Farms to School Initiative. Ginsberg Foods is a local, approved vendor from which we receive local apples from Yonder Farms.

It's important we support our local farms that have quality products. Continue to look for local produce on each of our Mill Road Elementary (K-2 and 3-5), Linden Avenue Middle School, and the High School salad bars and menu selections.

We would also like to thank the Mill Road Garden class. Our kitchen is a contributor to their composting program. We provide trimmings from the fresh fruit and vegetables from our salad bar preparation.

Thank you for your continued support.

Larry Anthony and your entire Food Service Staff



CDOS - Career Development and Occupational Studies



In a very short time, our career development and occupational studies program (CDOS) has gone from non-existent to placements at various job sites around the county. Students have been placed at: IXL, Ferncliff Nursing Home, J&J Gourmet, Village Pizza, The Baptist Home, Taste Budds, Funshine Pre-School and the Cat Cafe. Our students are learning workplace skills/ behaviors and are on the road to becoming more employable. These students work with a job coach, who gathers information from the

employers in the development of a career plan and an employability profile. We have also developed work-based learning experiences within the school district in the areas of food services, and facilities and grounds.

Ms. DeSimone, high school FLEX teacher, is primarily responsible for the growth of the program. Ms. DeSimone works closely with the employers, job coach, students and parents in developing work-based learning experiences for our students. When the students complete the required curriculum and the mandated amount of work-based learning hours, they are eligible to graduate with a CDOS Certificate.



Model U.N.



Dr. Socorro Reyes, a policy analyst, governance adviser, legislative specialist, and women's rights advocate, came to speak with the Model U.N. group on December 22nd. She discussed her involvement with international relations, her struggles as a woman in international politics, her motivations for working with the United Nations, and ways for young people to get involved.

Update on the Community Foundations Grant

Amy Carr, Jen Quinn-Carl, and Barb Shoemaker have been collaborating on a coding venture for grades K-5. During Computer Science Week, students began using the Osmo coding system (which was purchased with grant money), and working in the computer labs to participate in the Hour of Code. In the near future, Grade 5 will be using the Sphero SPRK Edition Coding Robots during math in some exciting, hands-on iPad lessons.



Students using the Osmo Coding System.

Mill Road Primary is Composting!

During the month of November, with the help of our garden teacher, Mrs. Doherty, each class competed in a 'Compost Challenge'. The compost materials collected from each classroom's waste were weighed and brought to the garden to make our own fertilizer. In total, our school collected 235 pounds of compost material! Congratulations to Mrs. Valentine's class for winning the competition. They collected 40 pounds of compost materials and won the Golden Compost Trophy! Awesome work!



Congratulations to the RoboRaiders at the Albany Qualifying Tournament!

In addition to being a Finalist Alliance Robot, we achieved the following:

dedication our programming team has invested this year.

First Place "Think" Award for the best engineering and engineering notebook documentation. We have never received this award before. The students have improved their writing and math skills a lot this year to win this award.

We are also grateful to our two parent mentors from IBM, Steve Kocik and Susan Zichittella, who have donated many hours of their personal time to mentor robotics club students after school and on weekends.

Second Place "Inspire" Award for the second place "best overall team." To obtain this award, the team had to score highly in all judged categories. Inspire is the highest and most coveted award in the competition.

Our team advanced to the Empire Region Championships at Pace University held on February 5 and the Vermont State Championships at UVM held on February 10-11. Thank you again for your continued support of our amazing students on the Robotics Team!

Third Place "Control" Award for the use of sensors and programming of the robot. Given that none of our students have had formal instruction in computer science/programming this is quite an accomplishment and speaks to the amount of personal time and

GO RoboRaiders!

Yvonne Pierce and Dwane Decker

*Red Hook High School
Robotics Team Coaches*

In spite of the fact that our robot was not 100% finished, we still made it to the finals, and lost to some tough teams in the last match. (It also did not help that our alliance partner robot broke down!) Our team is especially proud of the awards they won, which are based on an interview with the judging panel, our engineering notebook, and our community service, as well as robot performance.

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- PAUL FINCH, *Superintendent of Schools*
- DR. KITTY SUMMERS, *Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Staff Development*
- TOM CASSATA, *Director of PE, Health and Athletics*
- JOE DECARO, *Director of Pupil Personnel Services*
- BRUCE MARTIN, *Business Official*
- JEFF POPP, *Director of Transportation*
- DONNA SEELBACH, *Director of Technology*
- PERRY SHELDON, *Director of Facilities and Operations*
- LARRY ANTHONY, *Director of Food Services*

Board of Education

- EDWARD MERCIER, *President*
- DAWN MORRISON, *Vice President*
- RYAN MCCANN
- JOHANNA MOORE
- MAGGIE ROTHWELL
- ELENA MASKELL, *Clerk of the Board*

For further information visit us at:
www.redhookcentralschools.org

Welcome to Our Team!

The Red Hook Central School District is pleased to welcome the following teaching staff members to our learning community.

- Rebecca Shaffer Sermini - Science at LAMS
- Cori Witkiewicz - Math at RHHS
- Tanya French - Guidance at RHHS
- William Serino - Technology at RHHS
- Claire Kane - Math at RHHS
- Alison Jones - Special Education at RHHS
- Michelle Keene - CS Science at LAMS

* Reminder about Free or Reduced Breakfast/Lunch Program

Applications for your student(s) to receive Free or Reduced Breakfast / Lunch may be submitted at any time during the school year. If you qualify for these programs, your student(s) can receive both breakfast and lunch. Children who are well nourished are better learners and are in better health. Please send your application to the Food Services office at Mill Road School. The application is available on either the school website or by calling us at 845-758-2241 Ext. 38100 to have a copy sent to you.