



Bulldog

BULLETIN

OCTOBER 2024

Message from the Superintendent

Welcome to the October issue of the Bulldog Bulletin! This month, we have a lot to be proud of. Our staff works so hard to create engaging and impactful opportunities for our students and that is evident in many of the stories in this edition. You will find ways to support our local school PTOs and the Foundation for Beacon Schools in this issue as well.

Thank you for a great start to our school year!

—Matt Landahl

BHS Receives State Sports Recognition



Beacon High School was named the 2024 recipient of the New York State Public High School Athletic Association's (NYSPHSAA)

Sportsmanship Promotion Award.

The award is given based on a survey that helps athletic departments evaluate their policies and procedures for promoting good sportsmanship which include modeling appropriate behavior and addressing issues before they escalate. "It's nice to see the state recognizing the efforts that we've been putting in collectively as a district," athletic director John Giametta said.

Over the years, Giametta and other administrators have made sure large sporting events are properly staffed and multiple security measures are present to create a pleasant and safe atmosphere for both athletes and visitors.

"It works hand in hand; if you create that positive atmosphere it typically results in positive behavior from everyone," Giametta said. "We couldn't do anything in the athletic department without the support of everybody around us."

While the recognition is nice, Giametta and his department will not rest on their laurels. They continue to find ways to improve as policies and procedures are updated.

"It's a continuous effort," Giametta said. "We keep reflecting on how our events are run and how we can make it better and more enjoyable."

All Beacon elementary schools now offer before care for parents to drop their children off before school starts every day.

Elementary Before-Care is a Hit!

Orser noted that there have been inquiries from parents for a program like this.

Now parents can drop their children off at school making it more convenient than dropping them off at a daycare and having a bus picking them up from there.

"They don't need to worry about the multiple transports," Orser said of parents. "Having the before school program has been helpful for the community."

During a Sept. 20 session at Glenham, first grader Molly had a blast building a house made with magnetic tiles and using Play Doh, but counted playing the board game Trouble with facilitator Carolyn as her favorite part.

"I like this program," Molly said.



It is the first year this service has been offered and the district partnered with the Healthy Kids Programs to make it a reality. Parents can drop off their children as early as 7 am where they can play or do their homework and have a snack under the watchful eye of local parents, who are more than familiar with Beacon.

"It's great because it's our own community members who are running the program," Glenham Principal Cassandra Orser said. "This is something that we've been trying to get into the buildings for a long time."



Beacon's Food Services Department has worked behind the scenes planning



some great menus featuring local produce in October for National Farm to School Month.

Every building's cafeteria will feature locally harvested foods at lunch, including kale for salads and a hearty Tuscan kale and bean soup, roasted carrots and onions for fajitas and cabbage for an Asian inspired salad.



The featured vegetables are from Dagele Brothers Farm in Goshen.

Food Service

Director Karen Pagano noted that Beacon schools served 370,000 meals last school year and are on track to serve even more this year, adding that



buying local foods is a large piece of this mission.

"We are so excited to be able to serve our local bounty for Farm to School Month and throughout the year," Pagano said. "Schools have amazing buying power and it is our mission to provide the healthiest options from the most local resources possible."

Be sure to check out Beacon's Meal Viewer site to see the daily menu items.

A big thanks to all our food service staff who work hard every day to feed our students.



Beacon Administrator Co-Leads Crucial Forums

Six forums focusing on potential future graduation requirements in New York, geared toward educators and the public, began this September and are co-facilitated by a familiar face from Beacon.

The district's Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Student Support Dr. Sagrario Rudecindo-O'Neil was part of the Blue Ribbon Commission which is proposing these transformations:

- Adopting the New York State Portrait of a Graduate.
- Phasing out diploma assessment requirements by eliminating the need to pass the Regents exams or a +1 Pathway assessment to graduate.
- Redefining credits by adding career and technical education and financial literacy requirements.
- Moving to one diploma statewide with advanced designations.
- Requiring all state teacher preparation programs to provide instruction in culturally responsive-sustaining education practices.

Rudecindo-O'Neill applied to be part of the commission and said she was selected because of her work around equity and inclusion and being a bilingual educator. She noted that the commission's work started after a 2019 "On Board" newspaper article where Dr. Betty A. Rosa, Commissioner of Education & President of the University of the State of New York, noted that students of color and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds had barriers preventing them from graduating, and is seeking ways to make graduation requirements more equitable.

"The number one thing that was important to me is that we decouple the Regents from the graduation requirements," Rudecindo-O'Neill said. "Ninety percent of the commission agreed."

The Assistant Superintendent considers it an honor to have been a part of this process to help remove barriers for students and represent Beacon on such a level. She noted that any feedback families and educators has been welcomed.

"That's going to help with an implementation plan," Rudecindo-O'Neill said of the feedback. "It was a dream come true to be a true agent of change; it was one of the reasons I went into education."

Be sure to click on the links below to register and attend the next forums taking place at Beacon High School on Oct. 16.

- [Educator forum: 4:30 – 6 pm](#)
- [Public forum: 6:30 – 8 pm](#)

THE POSITIVITY PROJECT CEO VISITS SARGENT

Since last school year, Sargent students and staff have embraced a curriculum known as the Positivity Project, designed to improve relationships between people, and it's proven to be successful, so much so that its higher ups have taken notice.



Positivity Project CEO and co-founder Jeff Bryan visited Sargent in September to meet with students exhibiting 24 character traits the organization came up with. When Bryan visited classes with Principal Cathryn Biordi, students shared when they have used the traits. Some thought of perseverance when they had to complete tough math lessons.

Bryan was impressed to see his creation used effectively at Sargent where students are excited to share about and learn new character strengths. The goal of the project is not to ignore negativity, but to use the character strengths to overcome adversity.

"The kids are happy; they're talking about character strengths and they know their character strengths," Bryan recalled. "It was great to be here."

FIRST USED BOOK SALE COMING TO SOUTH AVENUE

The South Avenue PTA is starting a new chapter ... in terms of fundraising that is. This year marks its first ever used book sale scheduled for **Nov. 21 and 23 at South Avenue** with all proceeds directly supporting the PTA.

Wanted: Used Books!

South Avenue Elementary School is collecting used books in very good condition for our first ever used book sale!

- ✔ Board books
- ✔ Picture books
- ✔ Chapter books

- ✔ Graphic novels
- ✔ Young adult
- ✔ Adult fiction/non-fiction

DONATION BIN located at Beacon Recreation Dept.
23 W. Center Street, Beacon

OR email info@southavenuepta.com to request pickup within Beacon

COLLECTION OPEN NOW THROUGH NOVEMBER 8!

Please note, we cannot accept books with water damage or torn/missing pages, used workbooks/coloring books, games or puzzles.

All proceeds directly support the South Avenue Elementary School PTA!

Everything from picture books to graphic novels, in good condition, can be donated in a bin at the **Beacon Recreation Department at 23 W. Center St. until Nov. 8.**

The idea for this event came about following feedback from parents who noted that the books for sale at the biannual book fair were too expensive. A committee formed to organize the sale and they will keep prices low ranging from \$1 to \$4 per book.

"It's much cheaper than buying new and the stuff we're getting is in good condition," book fair chair Laura Hado explained. "We're excited about it."

The event is perfect for families who have books they want to get rid of and also serves as a way of reducing waste. Committee member Ryan Green even came up with a tagline to highlight this effort called "Reduce, Recycle, Read."

Hado and the committee hope for a great turnout and a large variety of titles to choose from for both students and their families.

"We already have many bins of books," Hado said. "It's great for kids to see the adults in their lives reading as well."

Anyone with questions about the fair or to request pickup within Beacon for book donations can email info@southavenuepta.com.

BCSD Shows School Pride During Annual Parade

Students representing Glenham, Forrestal, Sargent, Rombout and BHS marched proudly through Main Street in Beacon for the annual Spirit of Beacon Day on Sept. 29.

The theme of this year's day was "Unity in the Community" and that message seemed to resonate as students and their families, as well as staff came together showcasing colorful banners with their respective school's name.

Additionally members of the BHS band provided live music for everyone to hear. A fun time was had by all!



Hispanic Heritage Month Project Dots Rombout's Hallways



Rombout students in foreign language teacher

Karen DeCandia's class honored Hispanic Heritage Month with a rather unique project that got their brains working.



Scattered throughout the school hallways were pictures of famous Latinos

including singer Gloria Estefan, baseball player Roberto Clemente and Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor each with mini biographies in Spanish.



Students had to translate into English using the skills they learned in class.



JVF Café Setting Encourages Student Reading

Pam Citoli's and Laura Regg's third grade classrooms at Forrestal were feeling more like a chill coffeehouse than a school Sept. 16 when they offered a unique opportunity to instill a love of reading in students.

This is the second Starbucks Café held as a way to get students to not only read, but to explore different genres of books.

"It introduces the genres so we do it in the beginning of the year as a fun kickoff to reading for the rest of the year," Regg said.

While Citoli and Regg, cannot claim ownership of the clever name, they did make the classrooms feel like a coffeehouse with covered tables, soft music and juice for students to sip as they read. "It really kind of feels like a café in here," Citoli said. "They really like it because it's something different."



Sargent Airplane Tour Takes Off

Third graders from Sargent had a blast in late September when they toured the interior of a C17 cargo plane stationed at Stewart Airport.



The officers on duty explained to the students about what the plane is used for, how the floor of it can be used for seating and what it can carry including up to 400 people, three helicopters, 25 tanks and even an orca whale in a tank. They also gave some advice to the young learners.



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Sargent Airplane Tour *cont'd...*

"They explained to the kids how you can do something like that," Principal Cathryn Biordi recalled. "There's a whole lot of math and a whole lot of science that goes



into being able to transport that kind of stuff in the air."

For Miles Derevjanik, he most enjoyed seeing the flight deck with the many buttons used to control the plane.

"The plane we saw was absolutely massive," Derevjanik said. "It was really exciting."



Beacon Athletes Work

GIRLS SWIMMING

Swimming is not usually thought of as a calm or quiet sport, but senior Saniyah Wiltshire finds it to be a great way to escape the hustle and bustle of the school day.

"It's my calming space," Wiltshire said. "This is where I can be Zen."

While Wiltshire is hoping to make some sectional cuts, she really wants to have fun more than anything else during her last year.

"I just want it to be a good year for everyone," Wiltshire said.

For senior Holly Whittemore, swimming is a rewarding activity which starts her day off on the right foot. She appreciates the support she has received from coaches Larry Collins and Michelle Green and teammates.

"After practice, I always feel good," Whittemore said. "I love the girls in my lane, they're very supportive."

Whittemore's main goal for the year is to shave off time during laps so she



can achieve more wins. Her advice to potential swimmers is to do their best.

"It is very hard," Whittemore advised. "You have to keep coming and trying,"

GIRLS TENNIS

Sophomore Farrah Vancott is new to both the sport and team and chose to join simply because she needed something to occupy her time outside of school. It turned out to be a good choice.

"I like how it gets me up in the morning," Vancott said. "I picked it up faster than I thought I would."

For Vancott, her major goal for the season is to improve in her game and have fun.

Toward a Good Year!

She credits coach Catherine Niebuhr-Oriani and her teammates for making her feel welcome.

"Everyone's really nice," Vancott said. "It doesn't feel like there's any judgment here."

While senior Willa Freedman played tennis with her father and brother and went to a tennis camp growing up, she did not join the team until sophomore year. She is glad she did.

"When I joined it was great, the team was awesome," Freedman said. "I had the best time and I'm sad it's my last year."

For Freedman, her goal is to have the best last season she can and help her teammates in any way possible. Her advice to new tennis players is to consistently practice and try their best.

"Really get down to the basics and don't pressure yourself too much," Freedman said.

[Click here...](#)



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24TH | 7-10PM | THE ROUNDHOUSE



Celebrate our public schools and help us to sustain and grow the Foundation for Beacon Schools.



Turkey Trot returns to Sargent



The yearly Turkey Trot on **Nov. 9th** consists of a 5K run that takes participants on a scenic run down on the trails to Long Dock Park before having to tackle a steep hill on Knevels Avenue leading them back to Sargent.

"Over the past couple of years, we've coined it as Mt. Knevels," Sargent Principal Cathryn Biordi said. "It's an iconic little end to the race."

The 5K begins at 9:30 am, and a Kids Fun Run, offering a shorter run at Sargent led by physical education teacher Ryan Koval, begins at 9 am. It is a true community event with members of BHS' National Honor Society club providing water at stations throughout the 5K and the BHS cheerleading team assisting the Fun Run.

"It's been a fun tradition for the past couple of years," Biordi said. "Anybody can come and we hope to have a nice turnout." **Be sure to click here to register.** All money raised goes toward Sargent's PTO to help with its endeavors to support the school.

Since Thanksgiving is not too long after this, participants are being asked to bring a canned or non-perishable food item as part of a food drive that goes to Fareground Food + Community.