Thank you Board of Education!

At the October 13th Regular Meeting, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Robert Feirsen thanked Garden City’s Board of Education for their outstanding service to the school district. The Board works diligently to maintain the district’s nationally recognized educational program, serving without pay. Pictured here are (seated): President Angela Heineman and Vice President Tom Pinou; and (standing left to right) Trustees Bob Martin, Laura Hastings, and William Holub.

Garden City Salutes Our Veterans!

Celebrating our veterans on Veterans Day, and every day, is one important way Garden City Public Schools instills respect for all those who sacrificed through military service to our country. At Stewart School (top), 23 veterans were honored by the entire student body. Click here to view a video tribute. At Hemlock (above), four veterans, including Board Trustee Bob Martin, shared their stories with the whole school. To view a brief video of each Veterans Day event, click on the images above.

Students across the district got involved in the voting process this election season in a variety of ways. Mock elections were held at Garden City High School with social studies coordinator Jeannette Balantic reporting results (864 votes): the winner of the 4th Congressional District race was alum Kathleen Rice who captured 56% of the vote; the winner of the Senate race was Wendy Long with 45% of the vote; and the Presidential race winner was Donald Trump with 59% of the student vote.

At the primary schools, teachers read books about the election process and held class mascot elections. Inside Ms. Maro’s voting booth, Principal Jean Ricotta at Locust (above, left) displays a ballot for mascot “Piggy” or mascot “Elephant” that students filled out (above). In Mrs. Joyce’s class (right), students watched as their teacher tallied the class ballots: “Piggy” won by a healthy margin!

Please join us on Thursday, Friday, or Saturday, November 17th - 19th as the high school Masquers present Arsenic & Old Lace, the hilarious dark comedy based on the over-the-edge activities of the Brewster family. Show times are 4 p.m. on Thursday and 7 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.

Attention Senior Citizens: A special performance for Garden City’s senior citizens, students, and teachers will take place on Thursday, November 17th. A FREE buffet dinner will be provided for our senior citizens by the Garden City Teachers’ Association (GCTA) at 3:30 p.m. in the high school library. Kindly RSVP for the senior citizen dinner and show by calling (516) 478-2222. To purchase all other tickets, click here.
Students and staff in Garden City Public Schools marked National Unity Day on October 19th with a variety of anti-bullying awareness activities. Everyone wore orange to show support, hope, and unity. Above, nearly 600 of Stratford’s students and staff coordinated to create a huge peace sign on the school’s playing field. At Stewart (above, right), students formed the word on the back playground. The middle school staff (center, right) joined for a photo before launching the school’s “No One Eats Alone” campaign.

At the primary schools, social worker Mrs. Martinez (right) read the book One by Kathryn Otoshi and led students in a discussion about uniting for kindness, acceptance, and inclusion.

High school students in Claire Ellerman’s Art 4 class channeled the spirits of famous artists by carving and painting “in the style of” on the pumpkins above. Education meeting. Purchase of these robots was made possible by a grant from the GCPTA. Thanks to an additional GCPTA grant, Stewart and Stratford third and fourth graders will have their own hands-on experiences with coding. Starting in early November, third graders began working with game-building software to practice coding (left). During “Game Builders Academy,” students learned how to create their own “sprites” (characters) and self-generated mazes. “The feedback has been nothing but pure excitement for the students!” shared Stewart technology teacher Judith Conforti. In Advanced Placement (AP) Studio Art class, teacher Shawn Uttendorfer knew the

What’s New(s) Across the District?

High School Start Time

The research is clear: teenagers run on a circadian rhythm that does not lend itself well to a school day that begins too early. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) “almost 70 percent of high school students are sleep deprived.” A host of complications from lack of sleep can ensue, including accidents, inattention, and depression. With a very active student body - nearly everyone participates in athletics, clubs, community service, and/or work, - a 7:40 a.m. start time can be a real challenge for Garden City High School students.

To study the issue, the high school’s Site-Based Team (SBT) gathered information and met for discussions last school year, ultimately presenting its recommendations to the Board of Education at the June 14th meeting. Principal McLaughlin explained the detrimental effects of sleep deprivation on students’ well-being, and the SBT’s recommendation to push back the start time. As evidence, she presented a chart of the number of students who signed in late from September 2015 through May 2016. The increasing pattern of lateness was clearly identified as the school year progressed. Click here to view the SBT’s 6/14/16 presentation.

The work continues this school year with the High School Start Time Steering Committee, a panel of parents, students, principals, and district administrators. Simultaneously, a feasibility study is being conducted in cooperation with Garden City’s Transportation Department. “Whatever we do,” explained Superintendent Dr. Robert Feirsen at the initial meeting of the Steering Committee on November 2nd, “there will be a cost/benefit analysis. We may need to purchase additional buses. We have a tiered system for our buses with no real down time.” But, Dr. Feirsen reminded the Committee, “This is an open-ended question; we have no predetermined ideas. The Board of Education is ultimately going to decide whether to go forward.”

Next steps for the Committee include a review of the transportation study findings when completed, gathering information about start time for other K-12 districts, considering the implications of any starting time changes, conducting a parent survey, holding a community forum next spring, and presenting its findings and recommendations to the Board at the May 9, 2017 Work Session.

In conclusion, Dr. Feirsen emphasized, “If the Board decides to move forward, there would be no change in the schedule until the 2018-2019 school year.”

All-in for Technology

The district’s 1:1 technology Initiative for grades 4-12 is in full swing this fall with the roll out of 825 more Chromebooks and 100 more iPads (plus two additional iPad carts to facilitate classroom use), bringing the total for individual student devices to 1,475 and 690, respectively.

Coding, the basis of all computer programs, has been taking place even in the earliest grades. Pictured below, students at Homestead demonstrated how to program “Dash,” a small robot, to move in a prescribed sequence at the October 13th Board of

Storybook Parades

A cool, brightly sunny day dawned as the perfectly non-spooky backdrop for students throughout the district who anxiously awaited their schools’ Halloween Day festivities. There were fairy princesses, spooky witches and goblins, and all manner of costume characters that wowed with their inventiveness. Readers can view an album of Storybook Parade and Halloween photos from all seven schools by simply clicking on the three storybook characters below!
Garden City Achievers

Nat’l Merit Scholarship Semifinalist
Garden City High School senior Eileen Farrell was recently named a 2017 National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist. Eileen is pictured above with guidance counselor Jim Malone and Principal Nanine McLaughlin. Eileen is the high school’s 21st Semifinalist since 2009. Ninety percent of all Semifinalists advance to the finalist level based on the completion of additional requirements.

Nat’l Merit Commended Students
Congratulations to nine Garden City High School seniors who qualified as 2017 National Merit Scholarship Commended Students. Pictured above are (front row, left to right) James Rumsey, Alyssa Degruccio, Seunghyun Woo, Steffy Jeswin, and Craig Sotomayor; (back row, left to right) Constantine Kenny, Michael Nygaard, Jack Keenan, and Tyler Okada.

NHRP Scholars
Selected from a pool of 250,000 students, three high school seniors were recently named 2017 National Hispanic Recognition Program (NHRP) Scholars. Recognized by The College Board, high-achieving PSAT/NMSQT NHRP students hail from across the U.S. and its territories abroad. Pictured are (left to right): Craig Sotomayor, Camille Mojica, and Matthew Giraldo.

New Record! National AP Scholars
At 1,293, Garden City High School students sat for more Advanced Placement (AP) exams last year than ever before. Students who achieved scores of 3+ (5 being the highest score) totaled 473. The number of Scholars designated by The College Board was 238, up from 185 in 2010. The total number of Scholars with Honors increased to 64. At 79, Scholars with Distinction tied with 2013 for the highest number; and the high school had an amazing 31 National Scholars for 2016 – more than double last year’s total of 14 National Scholars!

National Siemens Science Semifinalist
For the second year in a row, Brandon Gong was named a National Semifinalist in the 2016 Siemens Competition in Math, Science & Technology. Brandon is pictured with Principal Nanine McLaughlin and science teacher Dr. Steven Gordon. “I’m amazed and very grateful,” remarked Brandon. “It was many hours of work and it’s a good feeling to be recognized as a Siemens Semifinalist.” Brandon discovered a method to reduce the effects of a toxic protein found in Alzheimer’s Disease using human nerve cells and predisposed fruit flies.

NYSSMA All-State Musicians
Congratulations to six high school music students were selected as All-State Musicians for the annual NYSSMA Conference to be held in Rochester, NY on December 1st-4th. Pictured above are (left to right): music teachers Stephen Mayo and Margaret Gullotta, Seungmin Woo (Violin), Andrea Choi (Violin, alternate), Ann Ambach (Soprano I), Rose Kelly (Jazz Soprano Voice, alternate), Alixis Grace Spera (Alto II), Alan Jian (Bb Clarinet), music teacher Dr. James McCrann, and Coordinator of Music & the Arts Dr. Nina Prasso.

All-County Musicians
A record 87 young Garden City musicians were selected as Nassau County All-County Musicians. The students from grades 5 -12 are scheduled to perform in various vocal and instrumental concerts to be held at the Tilles Center, C.W. Post, Long Island University in January, 2017. “Congratulations to our talented students and their dedicated music teachers - thank you very much for all that you do,” shared Dr. Nina Prasso, coordinator for Music and the Arts.

Marching Band
The high school Marching Band, pictured above with Director Daniel DellaMonica (far left), has consistently placed first or second in U.S. Bands competitions in its division this season. “They received a number of first place scores and awards for Best Music, Overall Effect, Visual, Guard, and Percussion,” explained Mr. DellaMonica. “Additionally, the Marching Band students were heavily involved in community service by participating in a variety of school and community events.

Adelphi Leadership Prize
Five Garden City High School seniors, Andrew Nagel (center, left), Mairead Pfaff (absent), Seunghyun Woo (center), James Rumsey (center, right), and Suzanne Sanossian (absent), were awarded this year’s Adelphi Prize for Leadership. This year’s recipients, recognized for their exemplary academic achievement and community service, are pictured here at the October 13th Board of Education meeting with Board President Angela Heineman and Superintendent Dr. Robert Feirsen.
device would open a whole new world of design for his students. "These large screen iPads have a wide variety of capabilities that enable students to experience a whole new medium," explained Mr. Uttendorfer (left). "Through the use of the Google-based app, See Saw, we can use the iPads for group critiques." Each student posts his/ her work through the app, and classmates can comment in real time to teacher- posed questions such as, “What do you find interesting about the piece,” “What is one way the artist could improve the work?” “What could be the next step?” Mr. Uttendorfer monitors the critique on his own device while guiding the discussion to accomplish the lesson goals.

The AP Studio Art students recently visited NYC’s High Line, Chelsea Market and the Whitney to capture images to, in turn, manipulate on the iPads (right). The device allows students to import the photos and create layers, adding gestural line drawings, colors, and/or effects with a pressure-sensitive stylus. “The students have enthusiastically embraced the new devices,” said Mr. Uttendorfer.

For digital natives, devices like these are second nature, but that doesn’t mean every new device on the market makes it to a district classroom. “One of our guiding principles is ‘students first, not stuff,’ shared Superintendent Dr. Maureen Apparius (above), along with our grades 2-12 building administrators, presented the findings of and recommendations resulting from the 2015-2016 Panorama Survey. Using a tool developed by the Harvard Graduate School, students at Stewart and Stratford, Garden City Middle School, and Garden City High School completed questions measuring four areas: sense of belonging, interest in subject (science), grit, and learning strategies. The good news is that the overwhelming percentage of responses indicated positive outcomes in each category. As noted by the principals, however, the focus for a follow-up survey will be to address the few outliers identified in each category. “Our eyes are focused on every single child,” Principal Linda

Garden City’s Board of Education and district administrators work diligently to select and retain outstanding teachers to provide our students with a robust educational program and the tools needed by teachers to deliver that program effectively and efficiently. But how do our students perceive their own place in the district? At the November 9th Board of Education Work Session, Assistant

Superintendent Norton commented as all the presenters nodded in agreement. To view each survey, click on the building names. To view the Panorama Survey presentation, click here.

Practicing Mindfulness

Acknowledging the academic pressures students face every day and coupled with a goal of creating a universal sense of belonging, high school students can now benefit from the Stress Reduction Center located in the high school library. “On a typical day, over 500 students utilize the library,” explained librarian Mrs. Margaux Calemmo. “Some attend to study or use the computers to complete assignments. Others access the library’s print and digital resources. There are those who visit to decompress and recharge.” Inspired by the “Maker Movement,” Mrs. Calemmo created a “do it yourself” (DIY) station as an outlet for students to unwind while promoting creative thinking. Students have access to an array of activities (right), including crochet materials and patterns, duct tape projects, jewelry making supplies and tools, brain teasers and crossword puzzles, Spirograph crafts, origami, young adult coloring pages, chess and games, and Rubik's cubes. “The library is the one place in the school where students are not expected to know all the answers; it is the place they go to find answers. By encouraging experimentation with DIY projects, students can problem solve in a supportive environment and collaborate with friends. Our Stress Reduction Center is designed to put them on the path toward mindfulness.”

What’s New(s)?

Dr. Rita Melikian, Director of Educational Technology. Just like with the needs of the AP art students, “We carefully review the need and function to find the best fit.”

Panorama Survey: Student Engagement

Keep up with the latest weather closings, school news, and sports announcements by following the district’s twitter feeds:

District: GCUFSD
High School: Garden City HS
High School Athletics: GC_Athletics_
Stewart: StewartSchoolGC
Stratford: StratfordAveGC
Locust: LocustSchoolGC

Show with entertainment by the Lady Trojan cheerleaders, kickline, and the award-winning Marching Band. To view an album of photos from the day’s events, click here or on the car below.

2016 Homecoming

Homecoming arrived early this year, but with absolutely no less Trojan spirit. The week prior, each school celebrated with daily themes culminating in high school athletic team members visiting for special assemblies. September 17th dawned warm and sunny, the perfect day for the 2016 Homecoming Parade and football game. Grand Marshal Tom Flately (right) led the marchers through the Village, terminating at Garden City High School. The football game was a complete blow-out with a 59-0 Trojan victory. Game-goers enjoyed a lively halftime

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