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SCHODACK

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



JANUARY 2018

Community Invited to Capital Project Open House

New science classrooms opened in Maple Hill High School in January as a major focus of the district's Capital Project was completed.

The state-of-the-art labs and classrooms, including the glass-fronted rooms facing Maple Hill Road, follow a new music and art wing that was completed last fall along with a more secure entrance, a two-story atrium, outdoor classroom, modern library and resurfaced track.

"It really is a beautiful learning environment for our students. It's remarkable to see it take shape. As each piece is completed it adds to the district's vision for the school," said Superintendent Jason Chevier. "We truly appreciate the patience of faculty, staff and students who have made the progress possible."

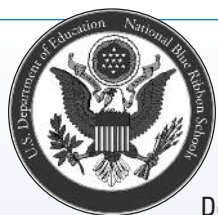
The community will have an opportunity to see the renovations themselves during an Open House scheduled for **Saturday, March 3 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**



"We want our community to see this beautiful building and all the opportunities it provides our students," said Mr. Chevier.

While the building additions are complete, Director of Facilities Matt LaClair noted that renovations to older classrooms will continue through the summer. Other work will include new lockers, new carpeting in the auditorium and landscaping in front of the school. The project is expected to be completed in September 2018.

Capital Project renovations at Castleton Elementary were largely completed in the fall, with only some finishing touches left. School improvements included a more secure entrance, a new parent lobby, an innovative learning lab, and renovated art room and health office.



MHHS Named a National Blue Ribbon School

Maple Hill High School was named a 2017 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education in September, the only school in the Capital Region to receive the honor.

This recognition was awarded to 342 schools throughout the country and only 19 in New York State. An estimated 0.25% of all schools in the country have ever received the award.

"This award is a great honor and a credit to the hard work and talent of our dedicated faculty, staff, and administration who work tirelessly on behalf of the students of our community. Without the support of parents, the Board of Education, and our community partners this achievement would not be possible," said Superintendent Jason Chevier.

The National Blue Ribbon School Program honors public and

private elementary, middle and high schools where students achieve very high learning standards or make notable improvements in closing the achievement gap.

Maple Hill High School had a graduation rate of 99% in 2016, the highest in the Capital Region.

"The National Blue Ribbon Award is a true testament to all that occurs at Maple Hill High School and the entire Schodack CSD and community on a daily basis. Caring faculty, staff, and community members surround all the students in the district. Students are pushed academically and socially and are given the freedom to not only excel but to make mistakes and learn from them. I am so proud to have been a small part of that culture where students come first and everyone looks out for one another," said Ron Agostinoni, former principal of Maple Hill High School.

Teachers Collaborate to Engage Students

Teacher Allison Streeter has never seen her 8th graders so engaged in their “The Giver” project thanks to a collaboration with a new teacher.

For years, students read the novel about a dystopian society and then worked in groups to build websites for their own utopias, choosing aspects from the book they would keep and debating what government and education systems should look like.

But when Mrs. Streeter mentioned the project to Teacher Carly Mead, her colleague jumped in with an offer to help students add new elements such as videos, pic collages, and other multimedia apps.

“I’ve done the project for years and students always do a great job,” said Mrs. Streeter. “But Carly took it to another level where students created these professional looking websites with apps on every page. What they were able to create was just awesome.”

Students were so excited about the project that many spent hours at home creating videos, designs for flags, and other elements for their classroom presentations.

Seeing students so excited to use technology that truly connected to learning in the classroom made the collaboration incredibly rewarding, Ms. Mead said.

“What most impressed me was the students’ ability to very quickly apply the technology in a very relevant and meaningful way,” said Ms. Mead. “Students connected their utopias to the novel, which is what Allison’s main goal was, and made critical connections from what they learned in the novel and then what they developed in their own utopias.”

“I was so impressed how students worked together in small groups and created roles together for their utopias,” added Assistant Principal Jodi Sullivan. “The project gave them an opportunity to create their own background knowledge which is so powerful.”



Nathan Porter Named Master Teacher

Physics Teacher Nathan Porter was named a Master Teacher this year by New York State, an honor given to educators for their dedication to providing innovative STEM education and enthusiasm for sharing their successful practices with colleagues.

Mr. Porter joins Maple Hill High School teachers Leonard Bacon, Janice Balogh and Kaitlin McGann who were named Master Teachers in previous years.

“Nate’s recognition as a master teacher, as well as our other master teachers, certainly shows how dedicated our faculty are to their profession,” said Superintendent Jason Chevrier. “We are very proud of them.”

The Master Teacher Program was created in 2013 in an effort to strengthen K-12 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education. Partnering with the State University of New York, the program connects educators across the state who have a passion for STEM learning.

“The New York State Master Teacher Program continues to show New York’s commitment to developing a strong relationships with educators who are dedicated to their craft, act as leaders for colleagues and other industry professionals, and incite passions for STEM learning for their students,” said SUNY Chancellor Kristina M. Johnson.



Students & Teacher Honored by Rotary

The Southern Rensselaer County Rotary Club honored Maple Hill High School students and a special education teacher with Community Hero Awards on Dec. 5.

At the organization’s annual event, students Elaina Champigny, Rebecca Roe, Rachel Jung and Hunter Pomakaij as well as Teacher Kaitlyn Castle were celebrated for not only their success in school but their efforts to help the community through involvement in organizations and volunteer activities.

Congratulations!

Capital Project Internship Leads to Job for Graduate

An internship with Turner Construction gave alumna Sarah Plitnick '14 an opportunity to play an important part in Maple Hill High School's Capital Project.

It also led to a full-time field engineer position with the construction management company when she graduates this spring from the Rochester Institute of Technology with a degree in Civil Engineering Technology.

"Sarah has been our go-to communicator," said Principal Jacqueline Hill. "If we notice something needs to be worked on or isn't working properly, we go to Sarah who communicates it to the appropriate people. She's a stickler; she follows through and gets the job done for us."

In addition to working daily with administrators and contractors to ensure the small details of the Capital Project are completed, Ms. Plitnick also keeps logs for changes, assists in overseeing construction activities, and maintains the schedule.

"Sarah has been a stand-out in this year's co-ops [interns]," said Project Executive Marty Griffin. "She works as the hub of communication and administration."

Working closely with school administrators in a school she graduated from was not only enjoyable but helped her adjust to the work, noted Ms. Plitnick.



"It was like I was going somewhere I was comfortable with which made the job transition much easier," said Ms. Plitnick. "Working with everyone has been really cool and I love where the school's going and just seeing how everything is coming together."

When graduates visit Maple Hill High School, Ms. Plitnick often takes them on a tour, giving her the opportunity to see the school's transformation through their eyes.

"To me, every day the school changes a little bit so I'm used to it," she said. "Seeing them react to the new parts of the school is kind of crazy because they're like 'wow, this looks so different' and it makes me realize how it really

does, in a cool way."

Ms. Hill spoke with pride about how Ms. Plitnick has also changed, from a Maple Hill student to a graduate pursuing a career.

"It's great because I've known Sarah since she was in Middle School so to see her transform into this professional who we can trust is incredible," said Ms. Hill. "We will miss having her but we are very happy that she gets to move forward in her career and gets to take what she learned here at Maple Hill and create a great experience for another school district."

CES Students Surprised with Books



Every Castleton Elementary School student received an advanced copy of "Mr. Lemoncello's Great Library Race" in October as author Chris Grabenstein made a surprise visit to the school.

"You are the first kids in America to have this book," said Mr. Grabenstein as teachers handed out copies to students during a morning assembly.

Mr. Grabenstein told students they inspired his new book by his previous visit to CES and their enthusiasm for his books. The author's books have been hugely popular with students who have held gala events at the school library in honor of the "Mr. Lemoncello's" series.

Mr. Grabenstein visited the area so he could watch the premiere of "Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library," which was made into a Nickelodeon movie, with Schodack CSD students.

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School Leadership in Place After Restructuring

Schodack CSD proudly named Jacqueline Hill Principal of Maple Hill High School in November, part of an administrative restructuring as the district transitions to two school buildings in September 2018.

Ms. Hill has been with Schodack CSD for 10 years. She was previously Middle School Principal after serving as a special education teacher. Ms. Hill succeeds Ron Agostinoni, who left in July to become Principal of Shenendehowa High School.

“Ms. Hill was selected after an extensive search with stakeholder groups of students, parents, faculty and staff,” said Superintendent Jason Chevrier. “Her commitment to students, knowledge of our community, and embodiment of Maple Hill’s values made her a clear choice for the position.”

Ms. Hill will become Gr. 7-12 Principal in September and remains deeply involved in the Middle School. Karen Harris, a retired Schodack teacher who is a certified district administrator, was named Middle School Principal for the remainder of the school year.

Jodi Sullivan, a teacher and teacher leader with Chatham CSD for the past nine years, was named Gr. 7-12 Assistant Principal in July. Ms. Sullivan has great familiarity with the Schodack community having attended Castleton Elementary and Maple Hill Middle School.

“Ms. Hill and Ms. Sullivan have already made a great team for Maple Hill,” said Mr. Chevrier. “They are student-focused, they embrace where we are headed in terms of innovation and creativity, and have a strong working relationship with faculty, staff and parents.”

With the hiring of Ms. Hill and Ms. Sullivan, Michael Bennett has returned to his original role as Assistant Superintendent for School Administration after serving as Acting



High School Principal. Mr. Bennett oversees curriculum, instruction and pupil personnel services for the entire district.

The district also hired Brian Carey as Director of Business and Support Services in October to succeed Monica Kim, who left in August to take a position with Onteora CSD. Mr. Carey has spent the past 13 years working with public schools. Most recently he served as Business Manager at the Northeastern Regional Information Center (NERIC).

“It’s exciting to have our administrative team in place as we transition to K-6 and Gr. 7-12 schools in September,” said Mr. Chevrier. “I’d like to thank everyone who filled in over the past six months so we could take our time to get the right people and involve staff, students and parents in the interview process.”