



A national award-winning district
Schenectady City School District

Spotlight on Schenectady

Everybody counts.
Everybody learns.



Everybody **counts.**

Everybody **learns.**

www.schenectady.k12.ny.us

**Dear Students, Families,
Staff & Community Members:**

I hope this 2019-20 edition of "Spotlight on Schenectady" finds you in good health and good spirits. As we reflect on the school year, one that was certainly like no other, I can't help but think about the character, passion, care and resiliency of the SCSD staff, students, their families and our entire community. I am grateful to all of you.

We were into the second semester when schools were forced to close due to COVID-19, and teaching and learning transitioned to an online platform. There were many unknowns and very little planning time to transform school, from how we knew it, into something that would look very different.

In Schenectady fashion, our amazing students, families and staff rose to the occasion. We had our remote learning platform operational immediately and everyone stepped up to do their part. Our teachers not only had to learn a new platform for delivering instruction, but they also worked tirelessly to connect with students and engage families. It's because of this effort that we had an 80% participation rate. During this time, we also deployed buses into the community, serving 271,428 meals and providing 4,800 Chromebooks, ensuring that students had the tools that they needed.

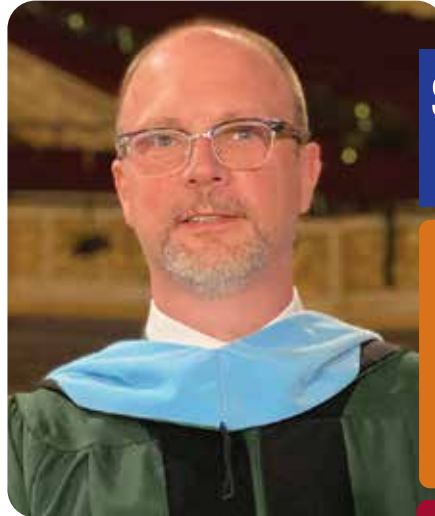
Before the COVID-19 pandemic arrived, we launched our five-year Strategic Plan, the roadmap that focuses our efforts toward our goals. I am pleased to report that we met our first goal when the Class of 2020 finished with a 73.8% June graduation rate. That is the highest it has been in more than 13 years.

While it is unfortunate that our year ended in such a way that we couldn't shake hands, or even exchange smiles, we remained "in this together" and have much to celebrate.

I am proud to be serving as interim superintendent because of you, how much you care and the opportunities that you create for our kids. Congratulations to our Class of 2020 graduates.

Thank you for your support and all that you do. We are always #strongertogether.

Dr. Aaron T. Bochniak, Interim Superintendent of Schools



**Supporting Students
During COVID-19**

271,428
MEALS SERVED
(pick-up or delivery
via bus routes)

4,800
CHROMEBOOKS PROVIDED



» SCSD organized 15 Drive and Wave community parades while in-person classes were cancelled during COVID-19.





DIVERSITY HIRING RATE

In 2019-20, the SCSD workforce was made up of 1890 staff members, of which 941 were teachers. The district is committed to growing a staff that mirrors the diverse student population in Schenectady.

Dr. Patrick Jean-Pierre, Assistant

District Director of Diversity, Recruitment and Retention, outlined several methods the district uses to reach and retain qualified and diverse candidates.

- » Partnerships with universities, colleges and school community stakeholders
- » SCSD presence at education recruitment fairs
- » Marketing and branding recruitment materials focused on equity and SCSD core values
- » Opportunities to connect through Affinity Groups
- » Implicit bias training for staff

National Board Certification

SCSD features 72 National Board Certified teachers. That is the most in any district across the state, with the exception of New York City. Seven SCSD teachers

earned their certification in December 2019, the most in a single year at the district since 2012. National Board Certification is considered the gold standard in education.

2019 SCSD NBCT

- » Carrie Britt
- » Joshua Conway
- » Kelly Egan
- » Kathleen Ferguson
- » Nicole Hannon
- » Christine Neumann
- » Amy Tyler

STRATEGIC PLAN: FOUR PILLARS*

SUCCESS



PASSION



PARTNERSHIPS



EFFICIENCY



**Stories about work that directly supports the pillars of our Strategic Plan will be identified by one or more of these icons.*

Contents:

Supporting Students during COVID-19.....	2
Student Voice: Class of 2020	4
Graduation Reimagined	5
Students Surprised With At-Home Supplies	6
Black Lives Matter Movement.....	7
Strategic Plan	8-9
Teacher of the Year/Retiree Recognition....	10
Book Mobile Goes Virtual	11
Athletic/Fine Arts Highlights	12
Student Activists Join Urban Schools Conference.....	13
Summer Enrichment Program	14
Budget Summary/Capital Project	15

DIVERSITY RATE OF NEW HIRES

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
FACULTY (INCLUDES PPS)	13.8%	14%	22.2%	18%	24%
ADMINISTRATION	0%	12.5%	23%	100%	32%

About us and Our schools

The Schenectady City School District serves nearly 10,000 students in grades pre-K through 12, making it one of the largest school districts in the Capital Region.

Our incredibly diverse population of students speak more than 30 different languages. Our schools, filled with culture and richness, foster awareness and acceptance. Students not only learn to value and respect people of all races, backgrounds and cultures, they appreciate the differences and are prepared to be citizens in a multicultural world.

The district is comprised of 11 elementary schools (pre-K through fifth grade), three middle schools (grades 6-8), one high school with a satellite campus (grades 9-12) and an adult education center. The neighborhood school that a student attends is based on residence.



**Follow Schenectady
City School District**



Check us out:
@SCSSchools



Instagram account:
schenectadycityschoolist



**YouTube
Channel:
Schenectady
City School
District***

*Any story with this icon means there is an accompanying video on our YouTube Channel



Class of 2020 Student Voices...

"My class endured a global pandemic. In the midst of losing loved ones, familial problems resulting from being quarantined at home and adjusting to online schooling, seniors persevered. The Class of 2020 is a resolute class. Social distancing made us stronger, more creative, and more passionate about our community than ever before. I know my class is special and that we will all do great things in the future."

» **Niya-Hope Glenn**
Howard University
Chemical Engineering



» **Mya Burns**
(Valedictorian)
Hamilton College
Undecided

"I know I never believed that my senior year would end three-quarters of the way through as a result of a global pandemic, and in hindsight, I would cherish and appreciate every day in school a little more."



» **Evan Linen**
Utica College
Communications
and Psychology

"Schenectady has helped me develop an open mind and look at things from a different perspective than my own. One of the biggest things I learned by being in Schenectady is being an active member of a team and learning to step up as a leader when the time is needed."



» **Maram Ahmed**
(Class President)
Undecided
Neuroscience

"The legacy of the Class of 2020 will be our voices. We were never silent. We always spoke on the injustice and inequality happening in our own community and even school. We are leaving behind that it's OKAY to be different and accepting of everyone."



» **Christopher Ginter**
Clarkson University
Civil Engineering

"Success is a mindset and I was able to make the most out of what my school has offered me to attain success. I took part in the IB program, said yes to all of the opportunities that were offered to me, made multiple connections with others and was exposed to a lot of different ideas."

Graduation

Reimagined

**Virtual graduation ceremony
produced at Proctors Theatre**



Mya Burns stood on an empty stage inside an empty Proctors Theatre. Her Valedictorian speech was full of encouragement.

"I was actually kind of glad to deliver it in front of nobody because I get anxious," Burns said, after recording her speech in early June 2020. "However, it didn't feel normal."

COVID-19 derailed many typical graduation traditions, but the district improvised. Burns and a few select classmates and administrators, taped a virtual graduation ceremony at the longtime site of Schenectady's graduation.

The video went live at 9 a.m. June 26, 2020, the originally scheduled date and time of graduation. The production included all the traditional elements of Schenectady High School's event, including student and administration speeches and the reading of every single graduate's name.

Members of the Class of 2020 walked across the stage at the high school. They received their diplomas and took pictures with family following COVID-19 guidelines set by the state. Each graduate also received a link to a personal website with congratulatory wishes from friends and family. Nearly 6,000 submissions were received and shared.

CLASS OF 2020:

17

**IB diploma
candidates**
(completed full IB
program of study)

84

**IB certification
candidates**
(completed IB subject
course of study)



» The diploma presentation at SHS was live streamed on the district's YouTube Channel and is available for viewing.

CLASS OF 2020

566 GRADUATES

73.8% GRADUATION RATE*

*Highest June graduation rate since 2007. Students with disabilities had a 59% graduation rate.

CLASS OF 2020

Top 10 Students

1. Mya Burns, *Hamilton College*
2. Ariel Khemraj, *Quinnipiac University*
3. Nicholas Dwarika, *College of St. Rose*
4. Jennifer Bernacet, *College of St. Rose*
5. Niya Hope-Glenn, *Howard University*
6. Syed Shihaan, *University of Rochester*
7. Christopher Ginter, *Clarkson University*
8. Christian Mora, *Hudson Valley Community College*
9. Mariah Ashley, *Stony Brook University (SUNY)*
10. Olivia McLeron, *Vassar College*



A national award-winning district
Schenectady City School District

Schenectady



6 Everybody counts. Everybody learns.



» Isabella Smarro with club staff member Emma Lindenfelser (left).

“Our school is so heavily diverse in talent and this magazine 100% shows it in a positive way. That’s also how I came up with the [magazine’s] name.”

» **Isabella Smarro**

Student takes over Literary Magazine Club, publishes ‘Diversity’

The life of a student publication, produced annually by the high school Literary Magazine Club, was in jeopardy in 2019-20 because it did not have an advisor to lead the charge. That was, until Schenectady High School senior Isabella Smarro stepped up.

“I’m very proud of myself for taking over such a huge project,” Smarro said, after grabbing the reins when English teacher Andrew Davis couldn’t continue to serve as the club’s advisor anymore. “This magazine has never been run by a



» ‘Diversity’ cover artwork by student Grace Lindenfelser

student, so I feel very accomplished.”

After learning the process of creating and publishing a 60-page magazine, Smarro said she developed an even deeper sense of pride as a Schenectady High School student.

“Our school is so heavily diverse in talent and this magazine 100% shows it in a positive way,” Smarro said.

“That’s also how I came up with the [magazine’s] name.”

‘Diversity’ went live on the district website in May 2020. It includes personal poetry, breathtaking artwork, powerful photography, songs and a short essay. Most importantly, Smarro said it provided students an outlet to be creative and express themselves.

“I think that all kids feel emotion, but when writing about it and knowing that others are doing it too, they feel a sense of comfort and ease.”



Delivering support one package at a time

Izzo uses grant money to surprise students with at-home supply kits

She calls her students “Izzo’s Incredibles.”

Chelsea Izzo, fourth grade teacher at Yates Elementary School, wasn’t going to let COVID-19 interrupt their special bond.

A week after in-person classes were cancelled, Izzo landed a \$1,000 Donors Choose grant to buy school supplies to support her students’ online learning. Donors Choose is a national nonprofit that helps teachers raise money for supplies.

“I truly believe that our kids at Schenectady deserve the world and I was just happy to give them this opportunity,” Izzo said.

Based on individual needs, Izzo spent about \$45 per student on Amazon. Everyone in her class received at least two

books at their reading level. She also picked out games, art supplies and snacks. Some families expressed the need for basic hygiene products. Once Izzo completed each personal supply list, Amazon delivered the packages directly.

“Most fourth graders aren’t used to receiving mail addressed to them, let alone a package of things that interest them,” Izzo said. “They are just awesome, unique and deserving kids.”



“I truly believe that our kids at Schenectady deserve the world and I was just happy to give them this opportunity.”

**Chelsea Izzo,
Fourth Grade Teacher**





CircleUp!

zeroes in on Black Lives Matter movement and anti-racism work

Tough conversations are happening at Schenectady High School and students are taking the lead.

Following the death of George Floyd, the district held four virtual restorative circles specifically focused on the Black Lives Matter movement and anti-racism.

“My generation is the catalyst for political change,” Teen Advocacy Group (TAG) member Niya Hope-Glenn said. “I’m so honored to be a part of that change.”

TAG is a student group of social justice advocates whose goal is to ensure everyone is represented. TAG members Xiaya Green, Rennie Glasgow, and Elizabeth Tchako facilitated three of the four Black Lives Matter and anti-racism circles. Over 150 students and staff members participated.

“I’m a firm believer that our actions and awareness now will allow our children to reap the benefits of a more equitable nation,” Hope-Glenn said.

High School Dean of Student Engagement Molly Schaefer said the district also held a few staff-only circles to address what anti-racism work should look like district-wide.

“We asked questions meant to open a dialogue about the needs within our school community and how to close the gap between racial unconsciousness and racial consciousness,” she said.

To bridge the equity gap, restorative circles are used to give all participants an equal opportunity to participate and voice their opinions. In 2019-20, the high school made community building circles a normal practice in all classrooms.

Some questions they considered include:

- How are you dealing with everything going on and what is your coping strategy?
- What is something you can do for the community to support people of color?
- What do we need at this moment?



TOGETHER WE LEARN

“We stand with our Black and brown students, families, teachers, staff and members of our community. We continue our dedication to equity and yearn for a future marked by empathy and inclusion.”

» *Dr. Aaron T. Bochniak,
Interim Superintendent of Schools*



A national award-winning district
Schenectady City School District

Schenectady



Our Roadmap for Continuous Improvement



The strategic plan, launched in July 2019, defines the district's vision for success through 2024. The plan was developed with input from stakeholders from all corners of the school community. It serves as our roadmap for continuous improvement and a touchstone for district goals, priorities and key strategies. Our work is guided by our core values of equity, collaboration and learning and our four pillars of excellence. Key indicators let us know that we are making strides and moving forward on the path to success.

PILLAR 1:

STUDENT AND GRADUATE SUCCESS

- Ensuring the success of all students inside and outside of school
- Making school a place where students have a sense of pride and that they belong
- Developing good citizens who have genuine respect for school and the community

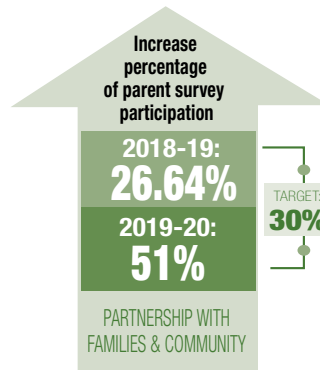
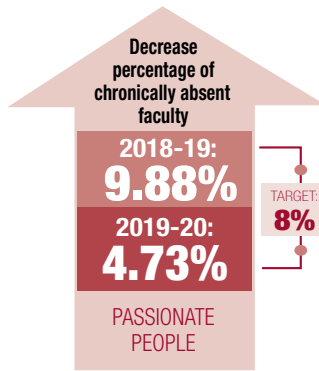
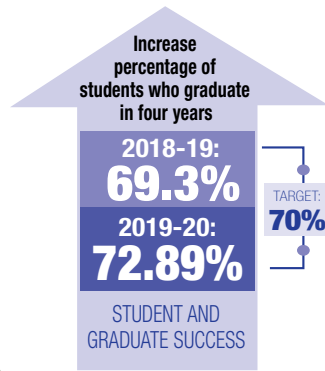


PILLAR 2:

PASSIONATE PEOPLE

- Being passionate about our work, dedicated to student success and we are all guardians of equity
- Reflecting the diversity of the community
- Providing exceptional customer service

PILLAR TARGET MEASURES



EFFICIENT SYSTEMS AND EQUITABLE RESOURCES

In 2019-20, three systems were identified to examine and improve:

- Computerized User Accounts
- Requisitions and Purchase Orders
- Progress Monitoring and Response to Intervention



PILLAR 3:

PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES & COMMUNITY

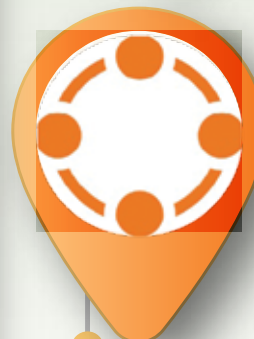
- Partnering with all families and the community
- Working together to improve
- Ensuring two-way communication and inclusivity



PILLAR 4:

EFFICIENT SYSTEMS & EQUITABLE RESOURCES

- Engaging stakeholders and listening to others
- Ensuring that others know what to do and how to navigate the system
- Working together to move in the same direction
- Ensuring equity





Retiree Recognition

Combined, these principals have 133 years of experience in education. We thank them for their passion and dedication to the Schenectady City School District. Congratulations on your retirement.

• John Sardos

- Keane Elementary Principal
- 30 years in SCSD, 39 total

"As I look back over the past 30 years it's been about people.



When it all shakes out in the end it has always been about the children. Each and every one of those 5,400 days, I got to spend with the

greatest kids in the world. I would like to thank the City of Schenectady for sharing them with me."

• Mariann Bellai

- Van Corlaer Elementary Principal
- 30 years, all in SCSD

"I had an amazing experience as a student in the Schenectady City School District, grades K-12. After I graduated



from college, I wanted to give back to the community, which helped me become who I am today. I can't imagine working

anywhere else. Reaching students to help them move forward in life has been a strong goal of mine. Creating those lasting relationships was a focus for me."

• Diane Wilkinson

- Schenectady High School Principal
- 29 years in SCSD, 32 total

"I became who I am today in part due to the amazing people who have been



a part of my life while working in the Schenectady School District. It was a gift to be a teacher and administrator in this district and I will forever be grateful to have

been given the opportunity to be the best that I could be, on behalf of the students of SCSD.

• Michelle VanDerLinden

- MLK Elementary Principal
- 30 years, all in SCSD

"It's been a privilege to have spent my entire career in the Schenectady



District Teacher of the Year



The Schenectady City School District named Patty Wood, a first and second grade teacher at Hamilton Elementary School, the 2020 Teacher of the Year. Wood, a former Schenectady student, is praised for her enthusiasm as an educator who inspires a love of reading in her students.

"Thank you so much to all the boys and girls," Wood said during her surprise ceremony. "No matter how hard a day I have, I am always so excited to come back the next day and read with all of you."

41

RETIREES

"Congratulations to our all of our administrators, teachers and staff members who retired in 2019-20"

City School District. The energy, the community, and most importantly the students have made me the adult I am today. I love how our students have the voice and freedom to push everyone's thinking. I love how important community



is. And most of all, I love the dedication that everyone has for success."

Fab Lab helps protect local medical personnel in fight against **COVID-19**

“What can we make that will benefit our community?”

The SCSD's Fab Lab is normally on the move, visiting all classrooms district-wide. The school closure due to COVID-19, however, left the district's mobile technology trailer idle.

It got Fab Lab Coordinator Katy Perry thinking.

“What can our 3D printers do that's something real?” said Perry, who is also the district's STEAM Coach. “Something that will provide protection for people in our society to help solve some of our global problems.”

The answer: face shields for local frontline workers fighting coronavirus.

“All of us wanted to do more than be bystanders,” Perry said.



Perry, Jac Cohn (HS technology), Vincent Kemp (HS technology), Amy Sarah LaMena (HS science) and David Preston (SHS Class of 2020 principal) collaborated with Voorheesville technology teacher Kyle Turski. After the Fab Lab printers created the face shields' forehead and chin reinforcement pieces, Turski finished assembling the product.

Face shields have been donated to Glendale Nursing Home, Ellis Hospital, Beverwyck Assisted Living Community and the office of Albany County Executive Dan McCoy.

Part of the Fab Lab's mission is to provide community outreach and Perry said this is that next level of engagement.

“It helps show students what manufacturing can do that is positive.”



The Book Mobile goes virtual



» SHS library media specialist Kristina Graves helping a student at one of 25 Book Mobile stops in 2019.

The coronavirus forced the district to park the physical Book Mobile. So, the SCSD made the entire selection available digitally. More than 900 titles and 2,000 e-books can be browsed or downloaded at schenectadyreads.com (starting June 2020).

“This team works tirelessly to figure out how to get these

amazing books into the hands of our students, our teachers, our administrators and our community,”

said Kerri Messler, Keane Elementary School principal and former literacy and library coordinator.

When the Book Mobile gets back on the road, it'll be better than ever. Northland Transportation donated a used school bus that will create ample space for more book options. Previously, Book Mobile team members were using their own cars to make stops and store books.

Students helped renovate the bus as part of the 2019 Summer Enrichment Program. They ripped out old bus seats, laid new floors, built benches and bookshelves. High school students also designed artwork that will adorn the bus. The renovations are being funded by a \$15,000 grant from SEFCU. Watch for the bus in summer 2021!



YouTube Channel:
Schenectady City School District

The Book Mobile's collection got a boost when the SCSD won \$15,000 in books as a semi-finalist in the Follett Challenge. The SCSD entered its #schenectadyreads campaign. The program aims to unite the district and community through a shared love of reading.

» *Kristina Graves, library media specialist at Schenectady High School, won a 2020 American Association of School Librarians' (AASL) Inspire Special Event Grant. The grant provides up to \$2,000 in funding that will bolster the book mobile. Graves is one of just six school librarians nationwide to win.*



A national award-winning district
Schenectady City School District

Schenectady



2019-20



YouTube Channel:
Schenectady City
School District

Blue Roses Theatre Company performances:



- Shrinking Violets and Towering Tiger Lilies (seven short plays)
- Anon(ymous)
- Urinetown the Musical

A virtual reading of three different student-written one-act plays is available on YouTube

Fine Arts Highlights

- Traveling Art Show at City Hall (artists congratulated by the mayor)
- Empire State Plaza Art Show featured Hamilton, Oneida and MLK student works
- All-City Band Concert (select district-wide students performed on the mainstage at Proctors)
- Frozen Jr. performed at Oneida Middle School
- Schenectady County Music Association Festival and Suburban Council Music Festival performances
- Dance Performance Ensemble participated in the Daily Gazette Holiday Parade, SHS Holiday Concert, Project Dance, Urban



» "Digital Self-Portrait Triptych" by sophomore Alyssa Gangaram won second place (Computer Design as Fine Arts category) at the 2020 Capital Region Media Arts Festival.

School Conference, 21st Century Conference, MLK's inaugural Black History Month Celebration

Gibson rewrites record books during historic season



Alexis Gibson will always be the first.

The eighth grader is the first girl in the 19-year history of the SCSD girls' swim program to qualify for the New York state meet. And on her way into the history books, Gibson also broke six district records.

"It made me feel nervous, happy and excited," said Gibson, who qualified in the 100-yard butterfly.

"I couldn't wrap my head around the whole magnitude of it all until I was getting on the bus heading to state finals."

The SCSD swim team merged with South Colonie in 2019-20. Gibson became the first girl to qualify for states for both schools.

SCSD/South Colonie swim coach Travis Herron said it felt like a weight had been lifted after Gibson's historic race at Sectionals.

"It was very surreal," he said. "This was one of my proudest moments as a coach."

Athletic Achievements:

State Qualifier

- » Alexis Gibson: Swimming, 100-yard butterfly
- » Shemar Delphin: Indoor 55m
- » Seven Terry: Bowling

Section II Champions

- » Girls' Bowling: Class A (first title in program history)
- » Shemar Delphin: Indoor 55m

Section II All-Stars

- » Seven Terry: Football- AA Offensive Player of the Year, Bowling

- » Jeremiah Davis, Marquize Barmore, Ganesh Govindan, Jah Haggray, Chris Davis, Diego Fernandez: Football

Suburban Council All-Stars

- » Abus Mohamad Ali: Soccer
- » Nicolette Knauf: Soccer
- » Shazim Permaul: Cross-Country

Suburban Council Excellence in Leadership

- » Nicolette Knauf
- » Seven Terry

Spring sports season cancelled due to COVID-19.

GROUT RUN:

Shazim Permaul won the Division II race at the 81st Everett Grout Cross-Country Meet. He was the first SCSD male winner since Linton's Phil Tama in 1963.



BOWLING:

The girls' bowling team won the Section II Class A title (February 2020). It's the first Section II title in program history.

"They maintained their composure. They adjusted when they needed to and they kept each other up. They worked as a team and won as a team. They will go down in SHS history."

- Karen Daffner, Varsity Girls' Bowling Coach





Urban Schools Conference



YouTube Channel:
Schenectady City School District

Student activists join conference for the first time

The strength of student voice stood out among nearly 1,000 educators in attendance at the third annual Urban Schools Conference in November 2019. For the first time, Schenectady High School students presented at the professional development event that focuses on the unique challenges urban schools face.

"Teachers get to learn from students, and the bottom line is that it is important," senior Ricarlo Grevely said. Grevely is a member of the high school's Teen Advocacy Group (TAG), which works toward ensuring more equitable outcomes for students.

The TAG students hosted one of 15 breakout sessions during the conference: "Disengaged to Empowered: How Student Voice and Engagement Can Change the Culture of Your School."

"The teachers were very accepting of what we had to say," senior TAG student Isabella Smarro said.

In addition to their presentation, the students were submerged in a conversation about race equity led by keynote and nationally renowned speaker Dr. Jamila Lyiscott. The students ate lunch with Lyiscott, a spoken word artist who focuses on racial justice and youth activism in education.

"I'm somebody's ancestor right now," Lyiscott said during her thought-provoking speech. "That means I have to consider what my wildest dreams are."



Professional Development

Third Annual Trauma Sensitive Schools Institute

Approximately 140 SCSD staff members attended this two-day institute designed to help all staff develop trauma-sensitive practices, in order to respond to students more therapeutically.

Summer Teaching and Learning Institute

Nearly 300 SCSD teachers attended the week-long program to learn effective strategies in literacy and math.

"That was really inspirational because I am a Black woman and can connect on a deeper level," junior TAG student Elizabeth Tchako said about Lyiscott's message.

The conference offered multiple Edcamps and speakers. A variety of breakout sessions and workshops focused on how the district can meet the needs of students through the lens of social-emotional health, engaging students with trauma, culturally responsive practices, excellence through equity, student voice, parent and community engagement, literacy and mindful art.



» Students L to R: Ricarlo Grevely, Julia Campbell, Xiaya Green, Elizabeth Tchako and Isabella Smarro at the Urban Schools Conference. Capital Center, Albany



"I think it's beautiful and amazing because y'all are having the hard conversations."
- Dr. Jamila Lyiscott



Instructional Coaches Academy

Instructional coaches, school principals and the coach coordinator received extensive training that included new strategies to help students to improve reading comprehension and use accountable talk in the classroom. In turn, eight coaches provided professional development to four schools.

May the Tech Be With You

This virtual event, held May 4, 2020, helped teachers find new ways to increase student engagement through the use of technology during the COVID-19 closure. More than 140 teachers and administrators participated in 28 different Google Meet sessions presented by SCSD colleagues. SCSD media specialist Mike Sheridan and sixth grade teacher Rick DeCarr created the first-time event. By popular demand, organizers offered a second version in June 2020.



A national award-winning district
Schenectady City School District

Schenectady



14 Everybody counts. Everybody learns.



YouTube Channel:
**Schenectady City
School District**

Summer Enrichment Program

expands for second
straight year

SCSD answers age-old question:
*"What are my kids going to do over
the summer?"*

**SUMMER SCHOOL HAS NEVER BEEN MORE
POPULAR.**

A record 1,567 applications poured in for the Schenectady City School District's Summer Enrichment Program (SEP). In its third year, the four-week long program expanded from

SCSD Educational Foundation

During the 2019-20 school year, the SCSD Educational Foundation awarded 38 grants totaling \$33,042 in grant funding. Since 2006, the Foundation has awarded 380 grants worth over \$309,000.



allowing kindergarten through sixth graders, to accepting students in grades pre-K through 8.

Students focused on a mixture of academics, social-emotional learning and relationship building. The program blends computer-based math and literacy with activities such as swim lessons and tennis lessons (new in 2019).

"To see the kids laughing and learning when they don't even know they are learning makes it all worthwhile," program director Sara Schneller said.

In 2019, enrollment grew by nearly 300 kids to over 1,350 students. The program, made possible through the use of federal funds, added sites at all three middle schools and the high school to accommodate the additional students.

Organizers focused on grade-specific project-based learning (PBL) in 2019. The experiences included service learning options (grades 5-8) by collaborating with community partners like Boys and Girls Clubs, miSci and the Schenectady County Public Library.

"We feel it's something very valuable for students to help make them confident learners," Schneller said about PBL. "It's hands-on and relevant."

District data found that 60% of students attending SEP saw an increase in their reading achievement while enrolled. The program is designed to help combat summer slide, where students lose academic gains made during the previous school year. Another goal is to provide students a safe, fun, and educational environment for part of their summer. Students are served three meals a day plus snacks.



SEP at a GLANCE

8
SITES

20
Days

122
classrooms

1,371
Students
(pre-K through 8)

197
TEACHERS

114
Engagement
specialists

17
Social workers/counselors

10 NURSES

2019 PROJECT- BASED LEARNING

- **FIRST GRADE:** STEM Fairytale Design
- **SECOND GRADE:** Engineers as Problem Solvers
- **THIRD GRADE:** Thriving Neighborhood Artwork
- **FOURTH GRADE:** Promoting our Community
- **GRADES 5-8:** Mural Madness, Book Mobile Building, Food for Thought

2019-20 Budget Summary

\$202,446,363
General Fund Budget

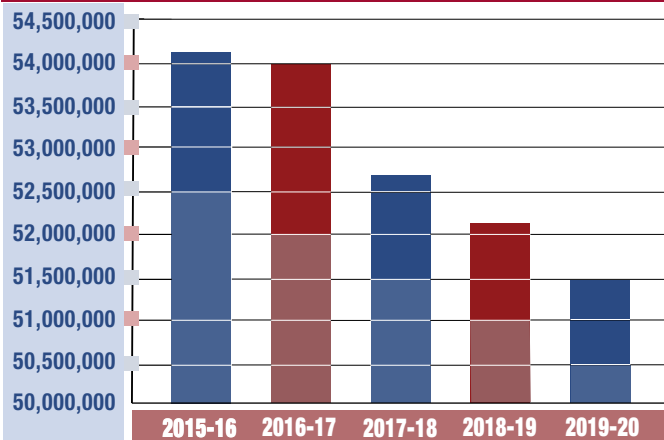
4.12%

Change from Previous
Year

-1.44%

Change to Tax Levy

Year-to-year Tax Levy



2019-20 Tax Levy

The SCSD continued its commitment to providing taxpayer relief in 2019-20. The tax levy was reduced to its lowest level since the 2008-09 school year, while boosting programs and services. As a result of careful planning and spending and \$7.7 million more in New York State Foundation Aid, the SCSD passed a budget where the tax levy decreased for the fourth straight year.

Capital Project Update

Phase I of the SCSD Long Range Plan is nearly complete. MPMS heating work is expected to be finished by summer 2020.

Phase II, a \$64.5 million referendum approved by voters in 2017, includes phased work to seven elementary schools and Schenectady High School.

Phase II work in 2019-20:

- New fire alarm systems in Lincoln and Zoller Elementary Schools
- New ductwork and rooftop at Schenectady High School
- Installation of new learning commons and addition at King Elementary School
- Installation of new security vestibule entrance and main office at Zoller Elementary School
- Installation of new learning commons and elevator at Woodlawn Elementary School

Upcoming work includes remaining classroom renovations at Woodlawn and King Elementary Schools and the beginning of major renovations to Hamilton, Pleasant Valley and Yates Elementary Schools.

LET'S TALK!

The Schenectady City School District is dedicated to fostering positive relationships, building trust and effectively communicating and engaging with our parents, staff, students and community members. In order to do this, we always maintain an open line of communication and hear what you have to say about important topics and current initiatives.

We are listening.

Let's Talk! provides you with an opportunity to share what's on your mind anytime, from anywhere. We are here to listen 24/7 and will respond to your questions, comments and concerns. There is a team behind each specific topic ready to assist you.



A national award-winning district
Schenectady City School District

Schenectady



Schenectady City School District

108 Education Drive

Schenectady, NY 12303

518-370-8100 Fax: 518-370-8173

www.schenectady.k12.ny.us

2019-2020 Board of Education

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| » John Foley,
President | » Dharam Hitlall |
| » Katherine Stephens,
Vice President | » Cathy Lewis |
| » Andrew Chestnut | » Ann M. Reilly |
| | » Bernice Rivera |

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Albany, NY
Permit No. 765
ECRWSS

Postal Patron

*More than 100 teachers and staff members
line up outside Mont Pleasant Middle School
for a "Drive and Wave" community parade.*



Produced by the
Schenectady City School
District in cooperation
with the Capital Region
BOCES Communications
Service, Aug. 2020

» Karen Corona, Editor » Lindsay Quackenbush, Editor » Justin Cortese, Contributor

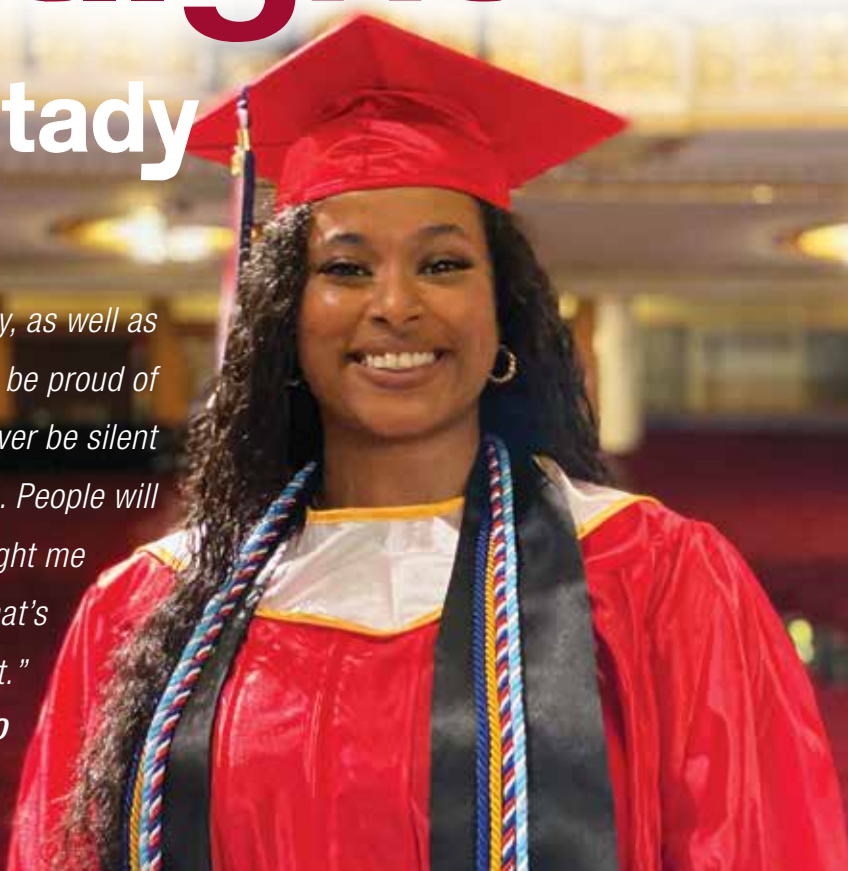
Spotlight on Schenectady

A national award-winning district
Schenectady City School District



*"The Schenectady community, as well as
the high school, taught me to be proud of
my own skin and to never be silent
because you aren't alone. People will
always have your back. It taught me
that diversity and fighting for what's
right is important."*

**Maram Ahmed, Class of 2020
(Class President)**



2019-20