



# SUPERINTENDENT'S *Brief*



SUPERINTENDENT ANIBAL SOLER, JR.

WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 03 2021 | VOLUME 1 ISSUE NO. 20

Happy Friday,

I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving and short break last week. Hanukkah began at sundown on November 28. I therefore wish to extend "Happy Hanukkah" to those in our community who celebrate. It's hard to believe that our holiday recess is coming up soon and begins just three weeks from today.

Yesterday I attended a beautiful memorial and celebration honoring the life of Reverend Phillip Grigsby, who passed away on November 23. It wasn't very long after I arrived in Schenectady that I learned how significant Reverend Grigsby is to our community. He was a warrior for our children and the families in Schenectady. As most know, Reverend Grigsby was the leader of SICM or Schenectady Community Ministries for more than 30 years. He began many initiatives over the years and worked to ensure that families have what they need including food, housing and access to programs and services. He established the summer meals program that serves our children and families throughout the city during the summer. He was a collaborator, trailblazer, and an advocate who fought for equity and justice. I've heard so many from our community speak about Reverend Grigsby's commitment, care, and the amazing impact that he has had on Schenectady. He was admired and respected. While Reverend Grigsby will be missed, his legacy will carry on.

On Wednesday evening, members of our executive leadership team presented the [2021-2022 Academic Report for the first quarter](#) to the board of education. Thank you to so many for hard work on this. The data was presented and reviewed with awareness of the impact that COVID-19 has had on both testing participation and outcomes. There is promising news. As we look at achievement and first quarter interim results in comparison to 2019-2020, there are grade levels and places where we see some dramatic improvement. Thank you for your role in this. We also know that we have work to do. We are in this work together and we are going to do it. Our Office of Teaching and Learning is working with our school leaders and teachers. We will continue to provide and expand coaching and mentoring across the district and will ensure students and teachers have access to programs, services, and interventions that will lead to improved academic outcomes. Above all, we must do everything possible to make sure our students are coming to school. Once they are in our classrooms, we know our teachers can make a difference.

This week, we kick-off our alumni profile campaign. Each week, we will share a new profile in my brief, on our social media sites and on our district website. If you are a graduate of Schenectady schools, we would love to profile you. [Click here](#)

We've had some questions about what happens this winter if we have a "snow day." If we close school due to inclement weather, we will have a traditional snow day with no school. We will not transition to remote learning. In the event that we exceed our allotted number of emergency closing days, we will revisit our plan and may need to make changes. If that happens, we will let you know.

Have a great weekend.

Anibal Soler, Jr.  
Superintendent of Schools



Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara visited Van Corlaer with Superintendent Soler, Deputy Superintendent Rutnik and Executive Director of Elementary Schools DiCaprio.



Schenectady High School's National Honor Society Induction Ceremony was held Monday, November 29. Congratulations to these hard-working students for their achievements in academics, leadership, community service and character.



[www.schenectady.k12.ny.us](http://www.schenectady.k12.ny.us)  
518-370-8100



# Alumni Profile

***"I love working in the district I grew up in because my teachers were my safe place, and now I get to be a safe place for my students."***

***JONAI TRUMPLER***

**Teacher, W.C. Keane Elementary  
SHS Class of '93**



This week's featured SCSD alumni is Jonai Trumpler, a second-grade teacher at Keane. Jonai was inspired to become a teacher by the great teachers she had in Schenectady growing up.

**"I went into teaching because I had amazing teachers. The teacher that inspired me the most was Mr. Ziskin. He was my ninth-grade English teacher and he passionately acted out each book of Shakespeare as he taught us about him."**



Last week there was a press event at Schenectady High School announcing the "Grow Your Own" partnership with SUNY Schenectady, Cazenovia College, and Clarkson University. The purpose of the program is to create a pipeline for high school students to earn their SUNY Schenectady Associate Degree while in high school, before moving on to Cazenovia College and then Clarkson University to complete their education. They'll then return to our district to student teach and ultimately be hired as teachers. [Watch the press event here.](#)



Season 1 Episode 3 of the Schenectady Patriots Podcast is out. This week's episode features interviews with student athletes from Varsity Girls Basketball and Varsity Wrestling. Subscribe and listen [on Spotify](#) or [on Apple](#).





## COVID-19 UPDATE

Here is the report on COVID-19 positive cases for the period November 19 (8 a.m.) – December 3 (8 a.m.) (Two-week period)

**Total of 73 cases**

**62 students, 10 staff members & 1 transportation staff**

- Central Office: 2
- Central Park: 5
- Hamilton: 1
- Howe 3
- Keane: 2
- King: 1
- MPMS: 2
- Oneida: 8
- Paige: 2
- Pleasant Valley: 2
- SCLA: 1
- Schenectady High School: 15
- Van Corlaer: 4
- WIEC: 1
- Woodlawn: 6
- Yates: 12
- Zoller: 5
- Transportation: 1

## IMPORTANT REMINDER

If you are experiencing any symptoms of illness or are waiting for COVID-19 test results, do not come to school or work. You should instead do the following immediately:

### STAFF MEMBERS

Stay home, contact your supervisor and email Lindsay Baroody at [Lindsay.Baroody@neric.org](mailto:Lindsay.Baroody@neric.org) or call 518-312-8848

### STUDENTS

Parents please keep your child home and contact your school nurse.

**If your child is exposed to a person who tested positive, you will receive a phone call immediately.**

## COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

Schenectady County continues to offer free COVID-19 vaccinations at a variety of locations throughout the month. All PODS are open to walk-ins. **The December schedule is available [here](#).**

## [New York State School COVID Report Card](#)

### CHANGE TO COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

The Department of Health notified us this week of the following change in protocol:

Fully vaccinated staff and students along with those recently recovering from COVID-19 who exhibit symptoms can test to stay in school. If they provide a negative test result – either antigen or PCR test – exclusion is not required. Unvaccinated staff and students will still need to take a PCR test, which can take longer to get results, or be out for 10 days.

### PROTOCOLS FOR WINTER SPORTS

Winter sports protocols for each team in the Suburban Council are posted [here](#).



## NYS VACCINATION SITES FOR CHILDREN & ADULTS

COVID-19 VACCINES, including booster doses and pediatric doses for 5–11-year-olds, are free and widely available statewide. Visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) or text your zip code to 438829 or call 1-800-232-2344 to find locations near you.

A list of NYS vaccination locations and availability is [here](#).

### VACCINATION RESOURCES

All you need to know about COVID-19 Vaccine and Children [English](#) [Spanish](#)

10 Questions about the COVID-19 Vaccine Answered [Here](#)



## WELCOME TO SCSD

New to our team! Welcome!

### Instructional Appointments

Stacey Johnson, Special Education, Central Park

### Management Confidential

Jonna Miller, Restorative Practices Specialist

### Secretarial

Joelle Lamori, Office of Planning & Accountability

### Paraprofessionals

Shainia Baker, SHS

Vanessa Chattergoon, Van Corlaer

Keisha Edwards, SHS

### Lunch Monitors

Robert Thompson, Howe

## EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM FOCUSES ON TEAM-BUILDING



Last week the district's Executive Leadership Team held a full day retreat to work on team building. Thank you to Capital Region BOCES for allowing us to use your facility.

Above: Anibal Soler Jr., Shaun Mason, Joe DiCaprio, Carlos Cotto, Lynne Rutnik, Karen Corona, Lorenda Chisolm, Terry Gillooley, Andrea Tote-Freeman, Jeffrey Russo

Below: Thank you to Dennis Green, interim principal at Schenectady High School, for presenting to the team on Trauma Sensitive Schools.



### PICTURE OF THE WEEK

Rocky the Therapy Dog  
Schenectady High School Yearbook Picture



## FARM TO SCHOOL & FOOD SERVICES

November was Native American Heritage Month.

Many of the foods we enjoy around the holidays have been cultivated for thousands of years by indigenous people in our country, including the Haudenosaunee people in New York State, or "People of the Longhouse". In Schenectady, Mohawk people grew corn, beans, squash, sunchokes (ground potatoes), ground cherries, strawberries and blueberries among other crops. They were renowned as farmers and held the Three Sisters (corn, beans and squash) as sacred staples. [Click here](#) for more and a recipe for Three Sister Stew.



# YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO THE OPENING OF THE 38TH ANNUAL TRAVELING ART EXHIBIT

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 5:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.  
SCHENECTADY CITY HALL

We are proud to have the  
opportunity to honor the student  
artists in our district. We look  
forward to sharing this occasion  
with the community.



The **McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act** is a federal law that protects the educational rights of students in temporary housing. It defines "homeless children and youths" as any student who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Students who are living with relatives, friends, or others because they lost their housing, those living in a shelter, motel, or hotel or those with inadequate housing (i.e., no heat, running water etc.) are students who are protected under McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act.

## Services available to students:

- Free school meals
- School supplies and clothing assistance
- Sports and extra-curricular equipment assistance
- Transportation to school from a temporary location (when beyond the district mileage requirement)
- In school counseling; community resources referrals
- Advocacy

**If you know a student who may qualify for assistance, please contact the Liaison for Families in Temporary Housing, Mary Breslin at (518) 410-0290**

## FEDERAL IMPACT SURVEY

Each year we ask families to complete a very brief Federal Impact Aid Survey. This is important because the district is entitled to receive aid for students whose parent or guardians meet certain qualifications. The survey includes only three questions. Please take a minute to participate. Click [here](#).



Willie Deane, SHS Alumni and author, spent some time with students at Van Corlaer last week.



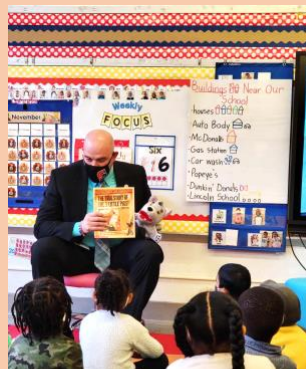


## Hamilton's Holiday Parade STEAM Challenge



Students at Hamilton participated in a STEAM challenge last week that included designing a float on an Ozobot and programming the parade route. Check out the coverage of this event from Hamilton's Third Grade News, co-anchored by Christian Rossler and Heather Williams. [VIDEO](#)

The 42nd annual Concerned for the Hungry Thanksgiving baskets were distributed at Keane Elementary last weekend. The event brought volunteers from various community partners and Schenectady High School together to help distribute more than 1,000 Thanksgiving baskets to families in Schenectady.



## MYSTERY READER

Superintendent Soler had a fun time as a mystery reader at Keane.



The SHS JROTC Cadets had the honor of meeting Assemblyman Santabarbara at Keane Elementary School when they were helping with the Thanksgiving baskets.