



# SUPERINTENDENT'S *Brief*



SUPERINTENDENT ANIBAL SOLER, JR.

WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 04 2022 | VOLUME 1 ISSUE NO. 28

Good afternoon and happy snow day Friday,

I'm going to start my brief this week by acknowledging our Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Union leadership for coming to the bargaining table with open minds, flexibility, solutions, and for engaging in a collaborative process. Negotiating is never easy, but this team came with a focus on how to make our district and their department better and how to best 'give and take' to do that. I am happy to share that, as a result, we came to a mutually beneficial agreement that was approved by the board of education Wednesday evening. Congratulations to the members of the O&M Team and thank you for all that you do for our district. I am confident that the terms of the agreement will serve to help with recruitment and make your department whole. Thank you for the partnership and collaboration.

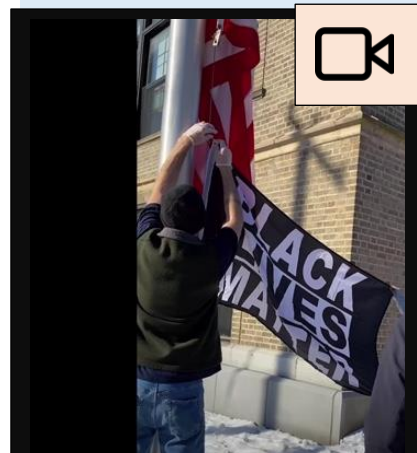
While we should celebrate the history and accomplishments of African Americans throughout the year, this month, Black History Month, serves as an important reminder to raise our voices and take notice. Let's honor and recognize those who have shaped our history and celebrate those of you who are making a difference today and inspiring the future.

Oneida Middle School had an exciting Black History Month kickOff Tuesday when OSAR (Students for Anti-Racism) held a ceremony and raised a Black Lives Matter flag outside the school. It was a proud moment for the students, staff, and our district. It sends a strong message that our students do matter, their voices are heard, we stand together against hatred and racism and strive to advance racial equity. OSAR led the initiative with a proposal asking for permission to hang the flag in honor of Black History Month. Tuesday morning, we could feel the sense of happiness and pride as the students stood together carefully watching the flag raise and then began cheering. They then came together for a celebratory song and a few remarks. This is just one example of the activities and celebrations that I know took place across the district. Let's continue these wonderful celebrations throughout the month. Please share your pictures and video clips on social media so we can all enjoy.

Last week I mentioned how we were launching a process to explore how we can improve the secondary school experience. Phase I of the process began this week. We held some listening sessions with students, parents, and high school staff. We will hold a session for school community members next Thursday, February 10 at 6 p.m. The meeting will be offered both in-person at the high school or you can attend virtually if you prefer. We also encourage anyone in our school community to participate in [the survey](#) which is open through February 11.

Mr. Gillooley presented an [overview of the district reserve accounts and fund balance](#) Wednesday evening. He spoke about the 2022-2023 NYS Executive Budget and what it means for us. Based on the proposal, which includes the Governor's promise to fully fund Foundation Aid the next two years, we would receive an increase of nearly \$16 million or 13.79%. Mr. Gillooley explained that our approach to building the budget will be a combination of zero-based and a school-based approach. That means that we will be examining and re-evaluating programs through the lens of equity. Each school will also build their budget based on their enrollment and needs, and every teacher will receive an allocation to purchase supplies and materials. We are seeking school community input from all stakeholders as we develop the budget proposal and ask you to please participate in our [Budget Development Survey](#). Our next budget presentation will be held on February 16. It will include overview presentations on district general support including operations and maintenance, and security as well as an overview on transportation.

Stay safe and have a great weekend.  
Anibal Soler, Jr.  
Superintendent of Schools



To kick off Black History Month, Oneida Students for Anti-Racism (OSAR) raised a Black Lives Matter flag outside of the school building. This group of students put great effort into getting feedback from their classmates and presenting their proposal in front of the Board of Education last month. Watch the video [here](#).



Secondary redesign sessions got underway this week. [Click here](#).

## re-design

### SECONDARY REDESIGN PROCESS

#### COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION

February 10, 6 p.m.  
Schenectady High School Commons  
Or Virtual Participation [Here](#)  
Or Dial 1-929-251-6065  
Pin: 999 753 401#

#### SECONDARY REDESIGN SURVEY

If you are not able to attend our listening session, please participate in the online survey [here](#).

## budget

### 2022-2023 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL COMMUNITY SURVEY

Please participate in our Budget Development Survey [here](#).



# Alumni Profile

***"Being able to teach in my community is the best feeling in the world. I walk into school with a smile everyday knowing that I'm teaching in my community. Schenectady is who I am, and I proudly brag about it."***

***Christopher Rogers***

***Spanish Teacher, Mont Pleasant Middle School  
SHS Class of 2016***



This week's featured alumni is 2016 graduate of Schenectady High School and current teacher at Mont Pleasant, Christopher Rogers. He was inspired to pursue a career in teaching because of the positive relationships he built in Schenectady schools.

"There were so many teachers who inspired me, but Señora Weinman and Señora Higgins were the most influential. They are the reason I fell in love with the Spanish language and culture. They were and still are one of my biggest cheerleaders. Their passion and kindness have made a major impact on me."

## Did you graduate from Schenectady Schools?

If you are a graduate of Schenectady Schools, we would love to feature you in an alumni profile. To share your information, [click here](#).

## SAFETY ALERT: TIKTOK CHALLENGE

The Center for Family and Recovery has brought a social media drug trend alert to our attention. There is a recent challenge on TikTok, called the "Benadryl Challenge" that encourages viewers to take large doses of the antihistamine to induce hallucinations.

Experts say excessive doses of Benadryl can cause serious health issues, even causing death in some situations.

The manufacturer of Benadryl has posted a warning about the challenge and TikTok officials said they have been removing posts that publicize the challenge. There is more information online [here](#).

When visiting Paige School, please be sure to use the front main entrance. All other doors are locked and the alarm will sound if opened.

**REMINDER FROM PAIGE**

## IN THE NEWS



Spectrum News: Schenectady Elementary School Installs Book Vending Machine. [More Here](#)



## COVID-19 UPDATE

Here is the report on COVID-19 positive cases for the period January 28 through February 4 (8 a.m.)

### Total of 96 cases

26 Staff | 70 Students

- Central Park: 4
- Hamilton: 6
- Howe: 7
- Keane: 4
- King: 2
- Lincoln: 3
- MPMS: 10
- Oneida: 11
- Paige: 1
- Pleasant Valley: 10
- SCLA: 4
- Schenectady High School: 13
- Van Corlaer: 2
- Washington Irving: 3
- Woodlawn: 4
- Zoller: 9
- Multiple Building Staff: 1
- Central Office: 2

Approximate Percentage of School Population COVID-19 Positive this week:

- Students: .07%
- Staff: 2.17%
- Percentage of Students and Staff: .66%

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

## 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 January schedule is available [here](#).**

**New York State [Vaccination Schedule](#)**

## VACCINATION RESOURCES

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

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

## 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

To better streamline communication with Lindsay Baroody, please follow the new guidelines AND self-report using this [link](#) when you have:

- have tested positive
- have COVID symptoms and need to test
- have been directly exposed and need to quarantine

### STUDENTS

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

## COVID TESTING

### DO YOU NEED A HOME TEST?

If you need a rapid test, please contact your school nurse. Your child's school may be able to provide a test kit.

### FREE TESTING SITE

Schenectady County Public Health opened a new COVID-19 testing site located at Ellis McClellan Campus (600 McClellan St.) for students, families, and district staff. Make an appointment [here](#).

### Free Test kits from [COVIDTESTS.GOV](#)

Every home in the U.S. is eligible to order 4 free at-home COVID-tests. Order them now [here](#).

## RESOURCES

- [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#)
- [New York State Department of Health](#)
- [Schenectady County Public Health](#)

Please continue to watch for COVID-19 news and updates





## WELCOME TO SCHENECTADY

Congratulations! If you are new to the district, welcome to our team.

### Instructional Appointment

Matthew Davis, Mont Pleasant Middle School

### Teaching Assistant

Runda Ubdalla, Keane Elementary School

### Management Confidential

Brette Bateman, Executive Secretary II, Superintendent's Office

Leah Hall, Student Engagement & School Attendance Specialist

MikaElla Hernandez, Restorative Practices Specialist

### Culture & Community Engagement Specialists

Michael Medina, Mont Pleasant Middle School

Maleke Robinson, WIEC

Carmen Soto, Schenectady High School

### Security Monitors and School Safety Officers

Corey Brown, Security Monitor

Tracey Canty, School Safety Officer

Damian Folds, Security Monitor

Ashanti Harper, School Safety Officer

Christopher Lewis, School Safety Officer

Marquis McNeil, Security Monitor

Ferose Mohamed, Security Monitor

Joseph Pagano, School Safety officer

Jered Spraker, Security Monitor

Marc Washington, School Safety Officer

Anthony White, School Safety Officer

### Tutors

Emily Solomon, WIEC

Gabriel Vega, WIEC

### Paraprofessionals

Maria Prasad, Paige Elementary School

Attiya Qamar, Yates Elementary School

Jennifer Rivera, Keane Elementary School

Anna Young, Schenectady High School

### Lunch Monitors

Emaliee Hall, Pleasant Valley Elementary School

Dion Jones, Torres, Van Corlaer Elementary School

Congratulations to the members of our team and our partners at the Schenectady Police Department who collaborated and learned side by side at our **Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools (TCIS)** training that took place over two weekends in January. Thank you to Social Worker Laura DaPolito for leading this training.

## DON'T MISS OUR VIRTUAL CAREER EXPO

WE ARE HIRING FOR AN ARRAY OF POSITIONS

**February 17, 4 – 8 p.m.**

**For more & to register, [click here](https://schenectady.careerfairexpo.com/)**



**#schenectadyrising**



www.schenectady.k12.ny.us  
518-370-8100

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH

# HONOR RECOGNIZE CELEBRATE INSPIRE



## What is your My Brother's Keeper story?

In 8th grade, I was very immature.

JAHEIM COPELAND:  
SENIOR, SCHENECTADY HIGH SCHOOL

#MBKSchenectady

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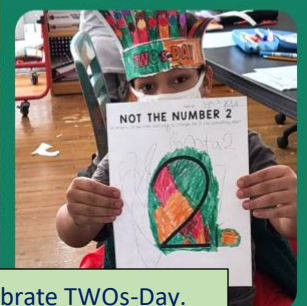
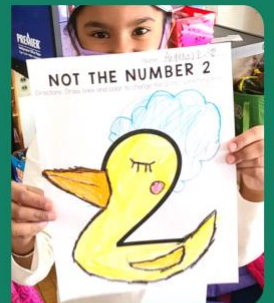
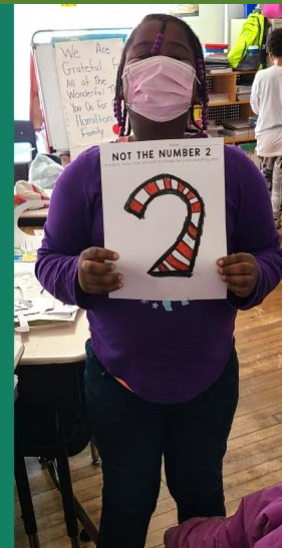
Watch for more on MBK later this month!

Meet Schenectady High School Senior Jaheim Copeland, a member of My Brother's Keeper Schenectady, who credits working with his mentors through MBK for helping him mature as person, become a leader on the football field, and strive to continue his education in college after graduation.



Students at King Elementary School were treated to an African drumming performance to celebrate Black History Month. [Click here](#) to check out the video highlights.

Photo of the Week



Hamilton students celebrate TWOs-Day.