



SUPERINTENDENT'S *Brief*



SUPERINTENDENT ANIBAL SOLER, JR.

WEEK ENDING APRIL 29 2022 | VOLUME 1 ISSUE NO. 38

Happy Friday,

I hope everyone had a restful yet fun recess, and great week back. It's hard to believe that there are only eight weeks of school remaining. It's going to go fast.

Earlier this week, I had the pleasure of attending the Schenectady City School District Educational Foundation Celebration at Proctors. It was a fun, celebratory and well-attended event. It was great to see so many faces on hand for this festive event that recognizes achievements of our students and staff as well as those who support and bring awareness to the foundation and all they do for our district. Congratulations to Aneesa Waheed, a 1994 graduate of Schenectady High School and our district's last three teachers of the year, Patty Wood, Rick DeCarr and Carrie White, who were all recognized by the foundation. We are extremely grateful to the SCSD Educational Foundation for the grant funding and opportunities that they provide to our teachers. Since 2006, the Foundation has awarded 418 grants worth over \$330,000. If you are interested in volunteering, fundraising, or donating, more information is available [here](#).

On Wednesday evening, the Board of education approved the [2022-2023 calendar](#). I am pleased and excited to share that the biggest change is the addition of Phagwa/Holi as an observed holiday on March 7. Holi is a Hindu festival that is celebrated by many families in our district. It represents the arrival of spring and the triumph of good over evil. It is a festive day when family and friends come together to throw a rainbow of colors in the form of powder. I am grateful to those in our community who came to the board meeting to express gratitude to our district for recognizing and observing this holiday. Thank you also to those who took the time to talk with me and members of our board of education about the significance of this day in our community. Having open dialogue and working to understand and problem-solve with our minds open, is how we move forward collaboratively.

I'm pleased to share with you that since we did not use all our emergency closing days this year, there will be no school on Friday, May 27 (the Friday before Memorial Day). District offices will be closed.

A public hearing on our 2022-2023 Budget proposal will be held on Wednesday, May 4. The budget vote and school board election will be held on May 17. The \$239 million budget proposal reflects a \$20 million or 9.29% increase over the current year with no increase to the tax levy. The budget proposal includes the addition of 41 teachers, 4 assistance principals, 3 special education teachers, 2 speech therapists, 8 library media specialists, 7 attendance paraprofessionals, 6 school counselors, 2 social workers, 4 restorative practice specialists, 29.5 positions to support school climate and safety, extended day opportunities, expanded athletic opportunities, summer enrichment, extracurricular activities, support to our secondary redesign and community school initiatives, and infrastructure and facility upgrades at our schools.

2022 SCSD EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION CELEBRATION



Superintendent Soler with Teachers of the Year Carrie White (2022), Patty Wood (2021), and Rick DeCarr (2020) at the SCSD Educational Foundation Celebration held Tuesday at Proctors.



HOLI ADDED TO CALENDAR

At Wednesday's board meeting, board members voted unanimously to add Holi as a day off from school for the 2022-23 school year. Holi is a Hindu celebration of spring, known as "The Festival of Colors." [Watch this video](#) on our YouTube to learn

more about Holi and hear public comments from community members during the meeting.

2022-2023
CALENDAR

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Four candidates are running to fill two seats on the board of education. The four candidates, who will appear on the ballot in the following order, are Vivian Parsons, Cathy Lewis, Kristen M. Holler, and Emily Willey-Aulet. Information on the candidates will be posted online soon. [Click here](#) for more on the budget, capital reserve fund proposition, election and voting information.

Today I had the honor of being a panelist at the virtual New York State My Brother's Keeper (MBK) symposium. Hundreds of students, parents, educational leaders, advocates, and experts from across the nation came together for the fifth symposium hosted by New York State on MBK. It was a great event, and I am proud to have been a participant and to have the opportunity to share what we are doing to empower our young people.

I wish to extend a huge "thank you" to the Rotary Club of Schenectady for their generous donation to the 21st Century Program's community pantry. Building programs and providing opportunities to our community, like community pantries, are all part of our work to make our schools the central hub of supports and resources for families. We will be talking much more about our community school initiative soon.

Just a reminder that applications for 2022-2023 Pre-K are due May 11. More information and the online application is available [here](#). If you have questions or need any help with the application, please call our Pre-K office at 518-881-3405.

Next week is Teacher Appreciation Week. Teachers work hard and deserve recognition every day, but next week is a special time dedicated to expressing gratitude and honoring those teachers who make a difference in your life or a child's life. Please take a moment to say "thank you" and give a shoutout to your favorite teachers on social media. Be sure to include

#schenectadyteachersshine

Have a fantastic weekend. Relax, unplug, and enjoy.

Sincerely,

Anibal Soler, Jr.
Superintendent of Schools

We will be sending a **Summer Enrichment Program** interest survey out to parents next week. The survey will be sent through our parent portal, [Infinite Campus](#). **You must be a registered user of Infinite Campus to receive the survey and access information about our 2022 Summer Enrichment Program. Not registered? No problem.** If you are not registered, please do so today [here](#). Once you sign up, watch for an email. Your registration will be activated within 24 hours. If you have questions or have difficulty accessing your account, text to 518-900-7318 or email portal@schenectady.k12.ny.us



Budget Vote and School Board Election

Tuesday, May 17

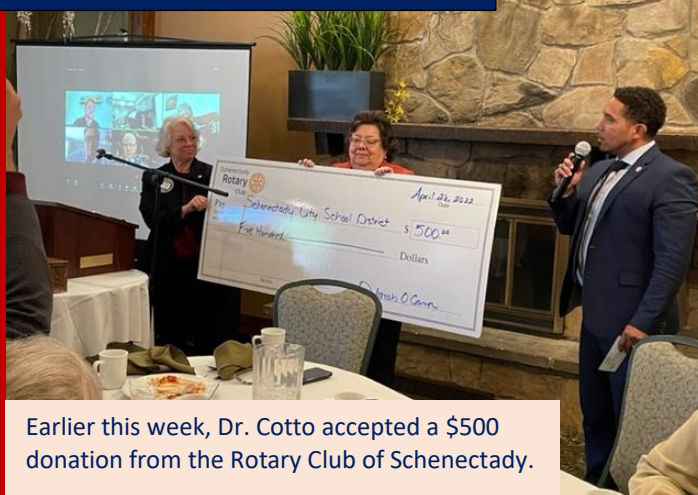
Polls are open noon – 9 p.m.

More information on [our website](#)

#NYSMBK #WeAreMBK. #ChangingTheNarrative



Thank you to Rotary Club of Schenectady



Earlier this week, Dr. Cotto accepted a \$500 donation from the Rotary Club of Schenectady.

Picture of the Week

Patriots Pride



Muhammad H. sporting his brand-new Patriot Pride gear!



Alumni Profile

"I love being able to relate to my students and being a positive role model for them. I want them to know that regardless of their circumstances, they too can be successful through hard work and determination."

Menchy Yarbrough

**School Counselor, SHS
Schenectady High School, Class of 2000**



This week's featured alumnae is Menchy Yarbrough, a school counselor at and graduate of Schenectady High School, who credits her own school counselor with inspiring her to pursue a career helping students.

"My school counselor was extremely supportive throughout high school. I lost my mom my junior year and she went above and beyond to make sure I had what I needed to be successful. I knew then that I wanted to give back and be that support for students especially those dealing with similar circumstances."

Did you graduate from Schenectady Schools?

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

FROM THE OFFICE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

[April Newsletter](#)

The Schenectady City School District has adopted a new K-12 diagnostic assessment tool called i-Ready. It will be used to assess student learning in reading and mathematics in a digital form, three times throughout the year. We will be transitioning from STAR, the program we currently use, to i-Ready in the fall of 2022.

i-Ready reading and math is aligned to the Next Generation Learning Standards for both English Language Arts (ELA) and math and gives teachers a more accurate prediction of how students will score on state assessments.

i-Ready will help us determine each student's need, personalize their learning, and monitor progress throughout the school year. It provides data for us to increase a student's learning gains.

The assessment takes approximately 45 minutes for reading and 45 minutes for math in grades K-5 and 60 minutes for each assessment in grades 6-12. The assessments will not be administered in one sitting. Depending on grade level, they will be administered in 15-30 minute or 20-40-minute windows.

If you have questions about i-Read, please do not hesitate to contact your school principal. You can also learn more by visiting [here](#).

About i-Ready

What Is i-Ready?



Answers to additional FAQs can be found [here](#).

iReady Welcome Videos

[Video](#) (English)

[Video](#) (Spanish)

COVID-19 UPDATE

Here is the report on COVID-19 positive cases for the period April 15 – April 29 (Two Weeks)

Total of 61 cases

38 Staff | 23 Students

- Central Park: 2
- Hamilton: 2
- Howe: 1
- Keane: 1
- King: 2
- Lincoln: 1
- Mont Pleasant: 3
- Oneida: 7
- Paige: 2
- Pleasant Valley: 2
- Schenectady High School: 22
- Van Corlaer: 1
- Washington Irving: 2
- Woodlawn: 8
- Yates: 3
- Zoller: 1
- Central Office: 1

[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 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](#)

COVID-19 RESOURCES

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

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-19 PROTOCOLS

ATHLETE VACCINATION NOTE

Only athletes who participate in high-risk sports are required to be vaccinated for COVID-19. This change was approved by the board of education on April 6 and is in accordance with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH). The change goes into effect immediately.

**SCHENECTADY CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
COVID-19 PROTOCOLS
MARCH 23, 2022**

The following is a summary of the updated guidelines and protocols provided by the New York State Department of Health on March 15, 2022.

UNIVERSAL MASKING NOT REQUIRED

The general mask mandate for schools ended on March 15, 2022. As such, masks are no longer required to be worn in schools or at other locations that are subject to the same mandate. This applies to all persons.

Please use the following guidelines regarding mask wearing or when exposed to COVID-19.

The Department of Health recommends students, teachers, and staff wear masks when:

- They have not been vaccinated against COVID-19.
- They were exposed to someone diagnosed with COVID-19.
- They were exposed to COVID-19 in a setting within the previous 10 days.
- They are unable to socially distance and have discussed the need to mask with their healthcare provider.

IF YOU ARE EXPOSED TO A PERSON WHO TESTED POSITIVE

Regardless of vaccination status, it is highly recommended that any person exposed to COVID-19 wear a mask for a full 10 days.

Exposure that requires a mask for 10 days includes:

- A person who has been exposed or potentially exposed should be tested for COVID-19 as follows:
 - Consider testing immediately upon learning of the exposure or potential exposure.
 - At least 1 day after the last date of exposure to prevent exposure.
 - If asymptomatic, quarantine, and wear a mask for 10 days from exposure (start).

A person with lab-confirmed COVID-19 within the last three months does not need to get tested unless they develop symptoms. If you need a COVID-19 test kit, please contact your school nurse.

IF YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS

Regardless of vaccination status, anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 should stay home from school/work and tested as if positive or test before school/work for the day, or until other criteria are met for school attendance (i.e., resolution of fever) whenever it is longer.

If you have COVID-19 symptoms, you can return following a negative lab test, lab antigen test or two negatives over the course of 10 days (rapid antigen tests taken 36 hours apart (three test kits) with the ones provided at school).

If you or your child have symptoms and are not sure what to do or if you need a COVID-19 test, please contact the school nurse.

IF YOU TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

Regardless of vaccination status, any person who tests positive for COVID-19 must do the following:

- Stay home for 10 days.
- Stay away from others who are not fully vaccinated or test positive (if asymptomatic).
- Mask around the person(s) if asymptomatic.
- You can return to school or work if asymptomatic or if symptoms are resolving.
- The last 10 days counting from the time you were tested for virus is called your isolation period.

COVID TESTING

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](#).

FREE TESTING SITE

To make an appointment at the Schenectady County Public Health testing site located at Ellis McClellan Campus (600 McClellan St.), click [here](#).

Please continue to watch for COVID-19 news and updates



WELCOME TO SCHENECTADY

Operations & Maintenance

Robert Bever, Custodian, Schenectady High School

Tutor

Elena Grande, WIEC

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

FROM THE OFFICE OF PLANNING & ACCOUNTABILITY



APRIL NEWSLETTER

CONGRATULATIONS FARM TO SCHOOL

We are pleased to share that our district was accepted into the 2022 NY Farm to School Institute Program. We were selected from an incredibly competitive applicant pool and were selected because of our potential for future farm to school programming.

This is a comprehensive year-long learning opportunity to develop and refine our Farm to School program and to bring more NY grown foods into the cafeteria and classroom. Through this training and educational program, we will receive support in creating our program and connecting with farmers and will share and have access to best practices and resources.

STEAM CAMP WRAP-UP



During spring recess, the district hosted five STEAM camps for elementary students across the district. Students attended the camps from 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. each day of break and worked on projects such as 3-D printing, bike building, robotics, and chemistry. Check out this [PreK/Kindergarten class from Yates](#) and these great [invention ideas from MLK and Pleasant Valley](#) students.

PANCAKE BREAKFAST AT ZOLLER

COMPUER PROGRAMMING CONTEST



Godson-Kemfon Umoren (left) and Vickram Nauth (right) represented Schenectady High School at Siena's 34th annual High School Programming Contest on Friday April 8th.

Schenectady High School computer science teacher, Stephanie Young, entered the team in the Siena competition for the first time. They correctly completed the first problem in 7 minutes which is amazing!

In the fall, Umoren will be attending RIT and Nauth will be attending SUNY Oswego.



Prior to spring break, Zoller held a pancake breakfast for kindergarteners and 5th graders who participated in the Schoolyear Sugaring program.



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