



# SUPERINTENDENT'S *Brief*



SUPERINTENDENT ANIBAL SOLER, JR.

WEEK ENDING MAY 06 2022 | VOLUME 1 ISSUE NO. 39

Dear Schenectady Community,

I hope this note finds you well and that you had a good week.

First and foremost, I wish to close the week by saying “thank you” and giving a huge shout out to all the teachers in our district. *Teachers Appreciation Week* is designated as a time to celebrate and honor educators who mean so much to us. They are selfless, caring, dedicated, inspiring, supportive, creative, and loving. Despite many challenges, they never give up. Teachers are superheroes who touch lives every day and sometimes don’t even realize the impact that they have. If you haven’t already, please say “thank you” and let those teachers who make a difference in your life or your child’s life know how important they are.

Earlier this week there was an incident at Schenectady High School in which a student, who was not authorized to be on campus due to suspension, showed up wearing a ski mask and gloves. After being approached by members of the school administration and safety team, he fled toward the fields behind the school. Our campus Community Engagement Officers (CEOs) followed and tracked him down immediately. They found that he had a bag with BB gun that was an imitation handgun. The student was arrested by police and will also face school consequences that are outlined in our code of conduct. We determined that the student came into the school through a door, that is not typically used as an entrance, opened by another student.

Safety in our schools is of paramount importance. We are always concerned when someone can get inside our school without permission and in this case with a weapon. I am grateful to the administrative and safety team who took all the appropriate steps including notifying the CEOs, who were in the school, when the student ran. They have the knowledge and training to respond to situations such as this. Fortunately, no one was injured.

Our next steps are to explore and implement measures that will prevent anyone who is not authorized to enter the school. This work is underway.

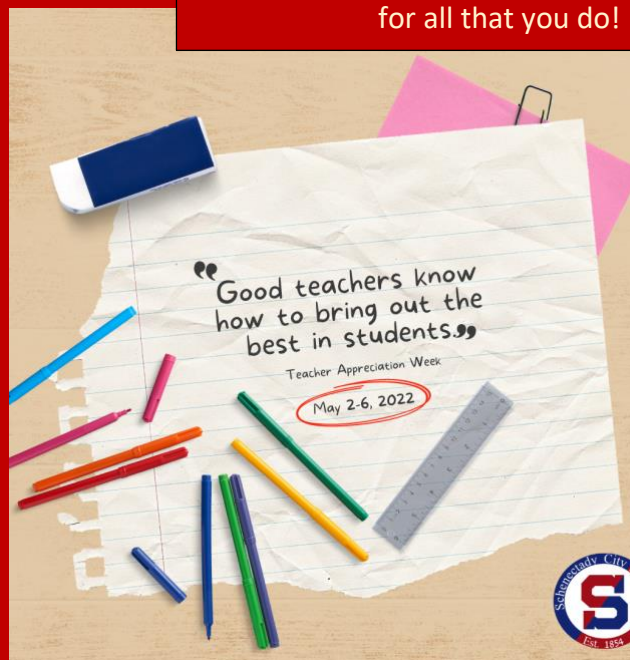
It’s also important for us to recognize and understand that the student who came into the school with an imitation gun is a teenager. He’s a young person who is enrolled in our school, who made a very bad choice. As one of our students, we care and are committed to supporting him. We will work with this student and his family to determine resources and supports that will help get him back on track and on an appropriate educational path.

We all play a role in school safety. I ask that all parents talk to their children and that when anyone in our community suspects or sees something that looks out of line, please report it. If you see something say something.

I had the pleasure of attending the Capital Region BOCES Career and Technical School signing day yesterday at which 16 students accepted paying jobs that they will begin immediately following June graduation. Congratulations to Nazias Harris, a Schenectady High School senior, who signed to work at Rem Tool and Manufacturing, a local Schenectady Company.

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**Thank you teachers**  
for all that you do!



## TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK

To celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week, we asked Schenectady High School students to leave a shout out for their favorite teachers. [Watch the video to see all of the answers](#)

Congratulations to Nazias Harris (next to Supt. Soler) who signed a letter of intent to work at Rem Tool and Manufacturing immediately following graduation.



The 2022-2023 Budget Vote and School Board Election is coming up on Tuesday, May 17. Polls will be open noon – 9 p.m. Our budget mailer will be hitting mailboxes in the next few days. Four candidates are running for two open board seats. We asked each candidate to provide profile information which is included below. Budget, board candidate and voting information is also posted on our website [here](#).

Congratulations to Mary Liebers, a 2018 graduate of Schenectady High School and a senior at Macalester College in Minnesota, who received a prestigious Fulbright U.S. Student Program award from the U.S. Department of State and the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board. Mary is the daughter of school board member Ann Reilly. See page 3 for more information on Mary and what this award means for her.

Have a restful and fantastic weekend. To all of you who are mothers, I wish you an amazing Mother's Day.

Sincerely,

Anibal Soler, Jr.  
Superintendent of Schools

### School Board Candidate Forum

The League of Women Voters will host a **School Board Candidate Forum** on Wednesday, May 11 from 7 – 8:30 pm. in the Schenectady High School Auditorium.

Keep an eye on your mailbox for our annual budget publication. To find out more information about the budget, [watch this video](#) or [visit this page](#) on our website.



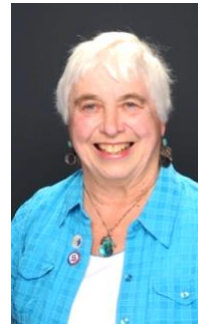
### SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION

On May 17, voters will elect two members to the Board of Education. Four candidates are running for the two open seats. Information on each is below and on the ballot in the following order.

**VIVIAN PARSONS** - I am a life-long city resident and graduate of Schenectady Schools. I have three beautiful children, including one daughter who graduated from the district and another attending now. I currently work as the Director of Admissions for an Assisted Living Facility. I am running for the Board of Education to promote a healthy school environment for all children. That includes supporting the expansion of the community engagement officer program but also pushing for additional community schools funding in order to increase access to health and wellness for our students. Children cannot be expected to learn unless they have proper nutrition, Healthcare, and of course, feel safe. Finally, I believe in setting high expectations for our children and making sure Schenectady Schools offer the most rigorous academic programs rooted in research, data and science. I believe every student can succeed and it is the job of the school board to give them and their teachers the proper tools necessary and create a safe environment to support them.



**CATHERINE LEWIS** has been a member of the SCSD Board of Education since 2010, serving as its President for her first seven years on the board, and again in 2021-2022. She is also the Area 7 Director for the New York State School Boards Association, representing school districts in Albany, Columbia, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren and Washington counties. She has co-chaired the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee since December 2020, which provides advocacy, training, and information to school boards in support of their mission to govern the state's public schools. Cathy has an extensive record of nonprofit service, including leadership positions on the boards of directors of organizations directly serving PreK-12 students, including the YWCA, Girl Scouts of Northeastern New York, Hometown SAFE, Inc. Her other significant service activities include a term on the Schenectady City Council and officer positions on Habitat for Humanity and the Visiting Nurse Service Foundation. Cathy graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University with a bachelor's degree, and from Union College with a master's degree in Business Administration. She is retired after a 44-year career at General Electric. Her and her husband Brad have resided in Schenectady for most of their adult lives.



**KRISTEN HOLLER** is a life-long resident of Schenectady and mother of two current students of the district. After earning a B.S. in Community & Human Services Administration, Ms. Holler became the first executive director of Albany Barn, Inc. in 2013, and founded Electric City Barn in Schenectady's Hamilton Hill neighborhood in 2018. Kristen has worked in both administrative and direct service roles for Planned Parenthood of Greater NY, Schenectady ARC, Bethesda House of Schenectady, and Umbrella Senior Services. Board and volunteer service includes Albany Chefs' Food & Wine Festival, Rosa Venerini Early Childhood Center, Goose Hill Neighborhood Association, Zonta Club of Schenectady, Mission Accomplished Transition Services, and Habitat for Humanity. Ms. Holler has served as a coach for Schenectady Little League and mentor for the Capital Region Chamber's executive mentorship program, SUNY Empire Leadership Institute, and UAlbany Emerging Non-Profit Leadership Academy.



**EMILY WILLEY-AULET** is a life-long resident of Schenectady, Schenectady High School graduate, and Mother to many students of the district. Emily is a Foster Mother. After earning a B.S. in Criminal Justice, Emily founded The Emily Willey Foundation, a youth outreach program serving the youth and families in Schenectady. Emily has created access to literacy, winter gear, basic hygiene necessities, and more through her foundation's Our Community Libraries project. Emily has organized holiday toy drives and breakfast with santa events, celebrating holidays with hundreds of community members. Emily serves as a coach for Girl's On The Run, at Girl's Inc. Emily is a Muse for The Working Group on Girl's. She has served as the Albany Prevention Family Specialist & Teacher at Berkshire Farms Center for Youth, and has been awarded the NYS Assembly's Woman of Distinction Award, and The Schenectady County's Human Rights Award.







## Alumni Profile

***"All of the opportunities, classes and experiences Schenectady offered me kept me engaged, and help me develop into a well-rounded musician."***

***Douglas Stefaniak***

**Program Director, Pathways Through Music  
Schenectady High School, Class of 2013**



Our featured alumni this week is Douglas Stefaniak, a professional musician, Program Director for Pathways Through Music, and Senior Instructor at Orpheus Academy of Music in Austin, Texas. Douglas credits the music teachers at Schenectady High School for preparing him for a career as a professional musician and a mentor for young musicians.

"I have two teachers that helped me get to where I am today. Mr. Aronstein convinced me to join his after-school guitar program at Central Park Middle School. If it weren't for his support and all the time he gave us, I would never have started this journey. I also owe a lot to Mr. David Gleason, who was my teacher for music theory, IB music, and jazz. Mr. Gleason was a great teacher, but an even better role model. My dream is to provide the same mentorship and opportunity that I got from him."

**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](#).

### Mary Liebers, SHS Class of 2018, receives Fulbright Award

Congratulations to Mary Liebers, a 2018 graduate of Schenectady High School and now a senior at [Macalester College](#), who is the recipient of the prestigious Fulbright U.S. Student Program award for the 2022-2023 academic year from the U.S. Department of State and the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

As a Fulbright participant, Mary will study, conduct research, and teach abroad for the 2022-2023 academic year. She will teach English in Germany.



During the summer of 2020 Mary served as an AmeriCorps literacy tutor for low-income indigenous youth in the Twin Cities. She also assisted in creating and implementing a plan to distribute food to students' families each week. This past school year, Mary worked at Open Door Learning Center in Minneapolis, MN, tutoring adult learners in ESL, math, and basic computer skills.

She is an English Literature major with a minor in German.

While at Macalester, Mary ran cross-country and indoor and outdoor track. She also was on staff for the college's only student-run lit magazine, sang in the Macalester Chorale, and co-hosted a jazz radio show.

The [Fulbright Program](#) is the U.S. government's flagship international educational exchange program and is supported by the people of the United States and partner countries around the world. The Fulbright Program is funded through an annual appropriation made by the U.S. Congress to the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Participating governments and host institutions, corporations, and foundations around the world also provide direct and indirect support to the Program.

## COVID-19 UPDATE

Here is the report on COVID-19 positive cases for the period April 29 – May 6 (8 a.m.)

### Total of 100 cases

44 Staff | 56 Students

- Central Park: 3
- Hamilton: 12
- Howe: 2
- Keane: 1
- King: 2
- Mont Pleasant: 3
- Oneida: 7
- Paige: 5
- Pleasant Valley: 2
- SCLA: 1
- Schenectady High School: 33
- Van Corlaer: 6
- Woodlawn: 5
- Yates: 3
- Zoller 14
- 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 SCHOOLS 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 on school buses but are still advised in some situations. This applies to everyone.

Please use the following mask requirements after testing positive or when exposed to COVID-19.

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

- They feel that mask-wearing is necessary for personal protection.
- 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, everyone recommended that anyone exposed to COVID-19, wear a mask for a full 10 days.

Reporting that exposure and test for COVID-19.

- Monitor yourself for symptoms.
- Any 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 week after the last date of exposure to prevent detection.
  - If asymptomatic, seronegative, and not fully vaccinated, a 10-day home quarantine is advised.

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 counter (OTC) rapid antigen tests taken 36 hours apart (three test kits with at least one 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, anyone who tests positive for COVID-19, must do the following:

- Isolate for five days.
- Stay away from others who are not fully vaccinated or test positive (if asymptomatic).
- Monitor yourself for symptoms (re-emergence).
- You can return to school on day six if asymptomatic or if symptoms are resolving.
- The last 10 following positive test, a small number for entry is advised and go to the school bus.

## 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

### Middle Managers Association

Bryan Stockley, IT Technician  
Jeannine Teta, IT Technician

### Congratulations!

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

### Paraprofessionals

Tracy Heller, King  
Rebecca Hoffman, MPMS  
Tammi Peters, MPMS  
Nicholas Small, SCLA

### Tutor

Christine Nowak, WIEC

## REMINDERS

### SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

A Summer Enrichment Program interest survey was sent out to parents through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal. If you are not registered for the parent portal, 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](mailto:portal@schenectady.k12.ny.us)

### PRE-K

2022-2023 Pre-K applications are due May 11. More information and the online application is available [here](#). If you have questions or need help with the application, call 518-881-3405.



### Teacher Appreciation Celebration on WIEC



MLK teachers showed off the bravery of a lion when they participated in a BMX stunt show held at the school this week. [Watch the video on](#)

Monday was National Decision Day for high school students who are choosing to pursue college. The Schenectady High School Class of 2022 shared these photos in celebration of the occasion. We are #SchenectadyProud

