



SUPERINTENDENT'S *Brief*



SUPERINTENDENT ANIBAL SOLER, JR.

WEEK ENDING MAY 26 2022 | VOLUME 1 ISSUE NO. 42

Good afternoon,

I'm sure that most of you are looking forward to the long holiday weekend. I know it's been difficult week, and everyone is tired as we enter these last weeks of the school year. I appreciate you. Please hang in as we are almost there.

In light of the events in Uvalde Texas earlier this week, I understand the anger, sadness, fear, and certainly the restlessness that everyone in our school community is experiencing. It hurts beyond belief to imagine being a parent of one of the 19 innocent children or the parent, friend, or colleague of Irma Garcia, a teacher who died trying to shelter the children in her class. Our hearts hurt for all of them and their loved ones. We want to be able to make sense of something so senseless and expect that it will never happen again. We all want reassurance that when our children leave for school in the morning, they will return home safe and well in the afternoon. Afterall, our schools are supposed to be beacons of hope and promise. Parents should feel confident that children are shielded from harm and safe in our care.

As such, I do want our school community to know that the safety of our students and staff is always paramount. Our schools have safety and emergency plans that are developed in partnership with local law enforcement. We follow security practices and protocols for planning, prevention, and response and work closely with the Schenectady Police Department. We continue to evaluate safety measures and are committed to doing everything we can to ensure are schools are safe environments. Under the lead of the District Director of School Climate and Safety, we re-established our district level and building level safety teams. These teams meet regularly to discuss ongoing safety concerns, issues, and protocols as well as to learn about and discuss general best practices and create emergency plans. The district team is comprised of community stakeholders, while the building teams utilize their own staff. We have added community engagement officers (CEOs) to the teams this year and collaboratively work every day to improve safety conditions around the district. These safety teams also work in conjunction with our district's extensive threat assessment team with the goal of providing a safe learning environment.

A critical aspect of school safety is limiting how visitors enter and always knowing who is inside and where they are. We have taken additional steps this year by enhancing and upgrading the district surveillance system which allows our administration and security personnel to monitor activities within and around our schools much easier. This enables us to find vulnerabilities and address them immediately. We are working to be sure we have clear camera views of all exterior doors and the surrounding areas so it can be monitored throughout the school day.

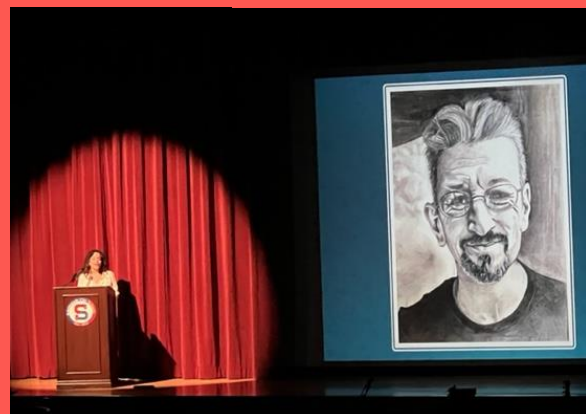
We have added twenty safety team members who walk the halls of our schools throughout the day and while doing so strive to build relationships with students. These relationships are important to the safety process because students are much more likely to "see something, say something" when they can report their concerns to a trusted adult. We have budgeted enough to double the number of safety team members for next year. By the time school opens in fall, we plan to have at least one easily identifiable uniformed safety team member in every school.

As part of our safety enhancements, we have also created a central control room which is staffed by a safety team member dedicated to assisting with surveillance and communication to all schools. We are in the process of upgrading our access control system and re-coring of all exterior doors, so we have an account of who comes and goes from each of our schools. Access control updates also allow us to quickly restrict access to our buildings at the push of a button.

All district schools utilize the Raptor Visitor Management tool which scans photo ID's, checks against the NYS Sex offender Registry and produces visitor passes for temporary use. Our buildings conduct annual safety drills which include at least four lockdown drills and eight fire drills. With the addition of the CEO's and safety team members, we are better able to utilize our drill to identify vulnerabilities and make any adjustments.

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REMEMBERING BILL ZISKIN



A beautiful, moving "William Ziskin Celebration of Life" was held at Schenectady High School last Saturday. Hundreds came out to share memories and express appreciation for Mr. Ziskin and how he shaped the lives of so many.



Our work is never done. We continue to assess the safety and security of all schools and adjustments and make improvements as needed with the goal of making our schools safe environments for all.

I know that we, as well as students, will continue to talk and be rattled about the events that took place in Texas. I encourage parents to talk with their children and listen to their concerns. It is important to do the best we can to be supportive and responsive to children and be prepared for a variety of reactions. Counselors and social workers continue to be available in school to provide support to students and staff.

As always, please encourage all children to tell an adult if they see something that doesn't seem right on social media, in school, or in the community. It takes all of us working together to keep our schools and our community safe. Thank you for your partnership and cooperation. Don't ever hesitate to contact us if you have questions or concerns.

Last weekend I had the honor of attending the William Ziskin celebration of life at Schenectady High School. Hundreds came out for an incredibly moving celebration of a man who had such an incredible impact and helped shape the future of so many students in our district. I wish that I had the opportunity to meet Mr. Ziskin who created such an inspiring legacy. The Black Box at Schenectady High school will be named in Mr. Ziskin's honor in December.

Congratulations to DeVaughn Miller who was presented with the Scholar/Athlete Award by the National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame.

Congratulations to the SHS Girls and Boys Track and Field Teams. They brought home thirteen ribbons and ten Sectional patches from last night's Section 2 Track and Field Championships. The SHS 400-meter relay team won the Section 2 Championship. Congrats to members Jelani Wells, Deron Davis Dior Roberts and Che. Way to represent.

Have a great four-day holiday weekend. Please relax, unplug, and have some fun. When you return, we have less than four weeks of school.

Sincerely,

Anibal Soler, Jr.
Superintendent of Schools



Congratulations to Senior DeVaughn Miller who received the Scholar-Athlete Award from the National Football Foundation & College Hall of Fame.



On Tuesday May 24, the Sayles School of Fine Arts Dance Department presented their end of the year performance, the *Project Dance Field Show*, on the Larry Mulvaney field at Schenectady High School. Dance faculty members Moses Oscar, Eric Hatch, and Sheila Los incorporated over 260 student dancers.

The opening number of the show also included students from the Mont Pleasant Middle School Dance advisory group, directed by Lindsay Redick. Tuesday evening's performance welcomed one of the largest audiences the dance department has seen, with close to 1,000 friends, family, and community members showing up to share their love and support for the Dance program.

The evening concluded with a tribute to the 50 Class of 2022 dancers, who as members of the senior class, together took their final bow. It was a wonderful night celebrating our dancers and the community that they have built at SHS. If you missed Project Dance. You can [watch it here](#).

PROJECT DANCE



The Schenectady high School Prom will be held Friday, June 3, at the Hall of Springs in Saratoga. Prior to the prom, at 4:45 p.m., there will be a walk-in event on the McClellan St. side of SHS. For those who are unable to attend in person, we will be livestreaming the walk-in on our Instagram page. Make sure you are following [our Instagram](#) so you don't miss it.

PROM WALK-IN



Alumni Profile

"One of the aspects I love about teaching where I attended school is the relationship I'm able to build with my students based on our many shared experiences."

Kelsie Voris

**Teacher, Grade 4, Woodlawn Elementary
Schenectady High School, Class of 2014**



This week's featured alumnae, Kelsie Voris, is a 2014 graduate of Schenectady High School and a grade 4 teacher at Woodlawn. She credits the array of opportunities she had while attending Schenectady high School with inspiring her to bring as many opportunities to her students as possible.

"I also love getting my elementary students excited for the many amazing programs the Schenectady City School District has to offer! One of my fondest memories from high school was the trip I took to Puerto Rico with Mrs. Hawk and the Women's Choir. Watching how hard Mrs. Hawk worked to get us there, along with seeing how our music impacted the people of Puerto Rico is something I will never forget and a huge part of the reason I am a teacher today."

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](#).

REMINDERS FOR FAMILIES

PRE-K REGISTRATION

We still have open seats and are accepting applications for PreK (students who will be 4-years-old on or before Dec. 1).

You can complete the [online application](#) or pick up a paper copy at schools or central office.

If you have questions or need help with the application, call 518-881-3405.

SUMMER ENRICHMENT

Summer Enrichment applications are due June 1. More information [here](#). The application is available in the Parent Portal under the survey tab. If you need to register for the parent portal, [click here](#).

If you have questions, please contact us through Let's Talk or by emailing portal@schenectady.k12.ny.us

UNIFIED SPORTS DAY COMING SOON



UNIFIED SPORTS DAY
TUESDAY, JUNE 21, 10 A.M. - 12 P.M.
SCHENECTADY HIGH SCHOOL TURF FIELD

EVENTS INCLUDE

- Track & Field
- Bocce ball
- Softball
- Soccer

• Transportation to and from provided
• Lunch provided
• Nurses on site

Please apply sunscreen to your child the morning of the event.
For more information contact Matt Ronca: roncam@schenectady.k12.ny.us

COVID-19 UPDATE

Here is the report on COVID-19 positive cases for the period May 20 – May 26 (8 a.m.)

Total of 40 cases

13 Staff | 27 Students

- Central Park: 2
- Hamilton: 1
- Howe: 2
- Keane: 2
- Mont Pleasant: 1
- Oneida: 6
- Paige: 5
- Pleasant Valley: 3
- Schenectady High School: 10
- Van Corlaer: 5
- Woodlawn: 2
- Yates: 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.



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



Keane Family Fun Day and Girls on the Run



Keane students, faculty, and staff participated in the Girls on the Run 5K at Central Park Saturday morning. The event had an amazing turnout and we are #SchenectadyProud. Keane also held their Family Fun Day in the afternoon Saturday. More than 300 people attended to enjoy the sunshine and company of their school community. There was something for everyone. #SchenectadyRising



PHOTO OF THE WEEK

A very curious Pre-K student from Mrs. Shubert's class at Hamilton observes a butterfly closely.



Students from Mrs. Libertucci's class recently collaborated with Niskayuna High School students to build and stock 2 Little Free Libraries.

Mrs. Libertucci's 11th grade English classes collaborated with Niskayuna High School students to install and stock two Little Free Libraries in our community. The two libraries are located at Girl's Inc. and the Steinmetz Boys and Girls Club. The classes chose titles and topics that they thought best represented our community and student body, and even created handmade bookmarks and kindness rocks to add a personal touch.

[Watch the video](#) on our YouTube channel to see more!

Little Free Library Collaboration

Blue Roses Theatre Company presents Student-Written Play Series

Friday, June 10 at 7 p.m. & Saturday June 11 at 2 and 7 p.m.

Black Box Theatre at Schenectady High School

[More Here](#)





Our district was featured in this week's USDA Food and Nutrition Services newsletter for our seven edible gardens at various schools in the district as well as our Farm to School education initiatives.



We were so excited to see great turnouts at both our Youth Soccer clinic and our Youth Swimming clinic. Varsity coaches and players worked with our future Patriots to help build their skills and fundamentals.



HOWE CHALK WALK



Howe Elementary School held a Kindness Chalk Walk today. Students designed the bus loop with a kindness theme and then participated in a kindness chalk walk parade.

ZUMBA FUNDRAISER AT SCHENECTADY HIGH SCHOOL

Schenectady High School had a great Zumba fundraising class this week. Staff from many schools and community members participated. \$650 was raised for citizens of Ukraine. The event was spearheaded by Meegan Mostransky.

