A Message from the Superintendent

Dear Class of 2020,

My heart goes out to each of you and the class of 2020 will be forever imprinted in my recollections as the most outstanding HS graduation in the history of our district. Each of you has simultaneously had the opportunity to measure the depth of your boredom AND the intricacies of your imagination. To be sure, you have certainly visited the outer limits of your patience with technology BUT... you did it, you made it work and you crossed your virtual graduation stage. Bravo to each and every one of you.

I would like to give a special shout out and thank you to two seniors who have worked in partnership with the district and demonstrated exceptional service. Thank you to Rachel Perri who served as the student member of the Board of Education for the 2019-2020 school year. Rachel’s reports were thorough and comprehensive. Rachel not only reported about FDR happenings, she also selected a specific school to spotlight and celebrate each month. Next, I would like to recognize Matthew Hoffman who served on the District Leadership Team for three full years. Matthew’s perspective and input helped keep the adults focused and centered on students’ needs and student values. Thank you again Rachel and Matthew. You have both made a positive and lasting impact.

In closing, Eleanor Roosevelt once said, “It takes a good home and a good school to prepare young people for citizenship in a democracy.” In these past few months, more than any other time in history, we relied on families to partner with us in teaching and learning. Thank you to all the families of our class of 2020 seniors – you were truly a group of unsung and unrecognized heroes.

To the senior class... You are also heroes... Your isolation kept you safe, your families safe and indeed our greater community safe.

 Gregg Popovich (coach Pop) said “The measure of who we are is how we react when something doesn’t go our way.” Graduation certainly did not go the way you wanted but in my estimation... the FDR class of 2020 reacted to this crisis with courage and bravery and I applaud you and will continue to appreciate you as the resilient and wonderful heroes that you are.

Congratulations!

Greer Rychcik, Ed.D.
Greer Rychcik, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools

RRS Principal’s Challenge Foster Learning

At RRS, quarterly Principal’s Challenges were developed to encourage families to foster a life-long love of learning. Each quarter, families were asked to create something and bring it to a PTA sponsored event. The creations are varied and focused on a variety of skills that can inspire children to discover a new passion, explore their creativity and use problem solving and critical thinking skills.

The first challenge was inspired by the book, “The Dot” by Peter Reynolds. Students and their families were challenged to create a piece of art that starts with just a dot on a page. Completed artwork was displayed and everyone was invited to take a gallery walk.

The second challenge was based on the book, “The Most Magnificent Thing”, written by Ashley Spires. The book celebrates being an engineer, having a growth mindset and never giving up. Families were invited to build a cart using Legos and to write a program for an Ozobot, or small robot, to move the cart. Stations with the materials needed to complete the challenge were set up at the RRS STEAM Fair on February 4th.
**Aviva Kafka, New Superintendent**

Deputy Superintendent Aviva Kafka will succeed Dr. Greer Rychick as the next Superintendent of the Hyde Park Central School District on November 2nd. The Board of Education approved the appointment at its March 12th meeting.

“I am delighted to step into the Superintendent role this coming fall,” said Kafka, who has worked in the district for 18 years. “We have accomplished so much for students and we can look forward to building on the positive momentum, even in these unprecedented times.”

Kafka began her tenure in Hyde Park as principal of Violet Avenue School. In 2010, she was named Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Services and had oversight of special education, English as a new language, safety, discipline and health services. She was named Deputy Superintendent in 2016 and is responsible for the instructional program and pupil services for the district’s 3,600 students. She is also the district’s director for the Advancement Via Individual Determination program (AVID), which assists students who will be the first in their families to attend college.

“Aviva’s ability to mobilize initiatives has resulted in tangible improvements in all areas of learning and student support systems,” said Rychick.

“Her work in our district has truly been value-added and enduring.

As the next superintendent, she will bring with her a wealth of experience in all facets of district leadership and the highest level of professional integrity.”

Kafka began her career as a kindergarten teacher. She earned her School District Administrator Certification from SUNY New Paltz in 2000. She earned her Masters of Science in Early Childhood Education from Bank Street College and a Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts from Antioch College.

She is a cabinet committee member of the New York State Council of School Superintendents and was presented the Mid-Hudson School Study Council Excellence in Administration Award in 2008.

“Ms. Kafka is a proven leader in our district who shares our vision of providing quality education opportunities for all of our students,” said Jeffrey Danielson, Board of Education President. “We are confident she will build on her contributions to the Hyde Park Central School District and successfully lead us through the challenges ahead.”

**PBIS at HMS WORKS**

This year, the PBIS committee at Haviland Middle School led by teachers Kaitlin Scarpelli and Andrea Zolotas, created experiences that resonated with children both pre-coronavirus and at home during Covid-19 isolation, Joe Sullivan, assistant principal said. “Their consistent leadership is exemplary,” he said. HMS saw a decrease in in-school suspensions and other disciplinary actions this year, and the Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) program is partly responsible.

At mid-year, the committee held the first PBIS Extravaganza - a combination pep rally and teamwork-focused event using a Minute to Win It format. Each grade level designed shirts and signs for their teams. Ten activities, including Soda Shake and Mummy Wrap kept everyone happy. Sullivan played MC for the event while teachers managed each station.

“I won the Soda Shake,” eighth grader Carter Bernhard said. To do so, he had to get all the balls trapped inside two soda bottles from one side to the other. He feels the PBIS program brings the school together.

“It’s definitely helped me stay positive. I think it’s a really great program and I love all the people that are part of the PBIS team,” he said.

When Covid-19 closed the schools, the PBIS team didn’t skip a beat, and kept up the positive vibe. Using Instagram, the team posted content, including weekly challenges, such as a sports challenge, cooking challenge and a Chalk the Walk positive message challenge.

For the final celebration of the year, the team chose a virtual talent show. “We wanted to close out the year with the same energy and momentum because that’s important,” Sullivan said.
Valedictorian
Juliet E. Pearson has appeared in school plays, performed in NYC plays, appeared in two films, has a weighted average of 100.5, and volunteers as a therapeutic figure skating coach for students with disabilities. She is graduating after only three years of high school as the valedictorian.

Pearson attended Netherwood Elementary School. She graduates with 15 college credits through Advanced Placement, Marist College and Dutchess Community College credit classes. Pearson takes acting and vocal lessons at Melissa Mulligan Vocal Studio and ballet at JG Dance.

She was cast as Wednesday in the “Addams Family” musical at FDR and as Sophie Sheridan in a production of “Mamma Mia!” As for her film roles, Pearson has appeared in “Extra Innings” and “Other Girls.”

Pearson is treasurer of the National Honor Society, a peer leader for FDR Sources of Strength program and secretary for the International Thespian Society.

Pearson will be attending the School of Music at Fredonia for musical theater. Her goal is to perform on Broadway and have a political platform focused on feminism, equality and climate change.

Salutatorian,
Matthew J. Sweet has led by action and example, school counselor Ms. Jenkinson said.

At FDR, Sweet was a member of the bowling team for three years - two as captain, part of the crew team for a year, a member of the National Honor Society, student government and yearbook club.

Outside school, Sweet operates a lemonade stand to benefit the Claudio Cares Foundation during the spring and summer and works a part-time job at Dairy Queen.

Sweet attended Regina Coeli School through seventh grade before attending Haviland Middle School. Upon graduation, he will have earned up to 42 college credits through Advanced Placement, Project Lead the Way classes, and classes awarding credit at Marist College and Dutchess Community College. His classwork has included advanced classes in computer science including Python and Java, engineering, calculus and physics. He has a weighted average of 100.37.

Sweet will be studying computer science Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and looks forward to new experiences and meeting new people.
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The District hosted its annual STEAM Fair after school on February 28 in the FDR cafeteria to celebrate science, technology, engineering, the arts and math. This exciting exhibition included group fun and visitor participation. Students from grades 5 through 12 competed for top scores in their respective elementary or secondary divisions. Winners were to compete in the Dutchess County Regional Science Fair, but the event was cancelled.

The full venue offered visitors the opportunity to explore student-created research displays, demonstrations, participation experiences, and industrial art. These included one physics station, one robotics/computer science station, and one technology (industrial arts) station. The two art stations featured a multi-faceted ceramic station and the National Art Honor Society. The HPCSD STEAM Expo also welcomed Marist undergraduate students from a STEM class to facilitate three of the stations.

Kim Knisell, Director of the Math and Science Department, commented on how she was pleased with the increase in attendance this year. She also said, “We had a well-rounded showing that encompassed much of the work we are doing around science, technology, engineering, art, and math. We also had over 35 high school volunteers who did a great job promoting the activities and working with our younger students.”

This year’s HPCSD Science Fair and STEAM Expo Winners:

Elementary Division
1st place - NPE - Noah White
1st place - NPE - Cassie Buttitta
2nd place - VAS - Trinity Jordan
2nd place - VAS - Schyler Tan
3rd place - VAS - Lily Broomhead
3rd place - VAS Shannon Evans

Secondary Division
1st place - HMS - Peyton McFarland
2nd place - HMS - Celeste Gorres
3rd place - HMS - Riley Marden

Congratulations to the Class of 2020 who celebrated graduation on June 25 at Hyde Park Drive In. The Hyde Park Central School District is proud to announce the FDR Class of 2020 “Top 20” students:

Juliet Pearson Matthew Sweet
Lindsay Meghan
Holland Odell
Nicholas Riana
Moffitt Cave
Jeremy Mona
Dickinson Nesheiwat
Rachel Natalie
Perri Colaizzo
Steven Alexandra
Graulau Jr. Ellis
Robert John
Reining Muraco
Alexander Dai-loi (Jesse)
Lopez Vo
Kyle Daniel
Mulkins Burger
Allison Zoe
Villalobos Naselow

OUR MISSION: The Hyde Park Central School District empowers our community to strive for excellence and embrace the opportunities of our globally connected world.