

WINTER 2019

CAPITAL education



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Pre-K, magnet lotteries March 13

Applications are available through March 1 for the lottery to enroll children in City School District of Albany prekindergarten programs for the 2019-20 school year.

The pre-K lottery is March 13 at Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science and Technology (TOAST). It is held together with the annual magnet lottery, which enrolls students beginning in kindergarten at the district's four themed elementary programs.

To learn more about the magnet lottery, please visit albanschools.org/magnetprograms.

For pre-K, the district offers full-day programs at all 12 neighborhood elementary schools, including the magnet schools, the bilingual Dual Language Program and 18 community locations.

To be eligible for pre-K, children must be 4 years old by Dec. 1.

Pre-K applications are available at albanschools.org, at all schools and community pre-K providers, and at Central Registration, 75 Watervliet Ave. Please see page 3 for a list of pre-K programs.

Please note that the district does not provide busing for pre-K students.

After the lotteries, the district sends letters to all families who submitted applications. If your child is awarded a seat, you must register by the deadline indicated in the letter. If you do not register by that deadline you risk losing your child's spot.

You can call our Magnet Office at (518) 475-6551 if you have questions about either lottery.

Student achievement



A choice to get her education back on track

It's highly unusual for a student to go from failing every class one semester to Principal's List the next. But that's exactly what Kiasha Jacobs did.

Jacobs attributes her academic turnaround to a transfer to the Choice Program at the Tony Clement Center for Education, formerly the district's Alternative Learning Center, which provides academic and social-emotional programs to students in grades 7-12.

"I needed more attention (at school) and when I got it, it was great for me," said Jacobs, a sophomore.

The structure and smaller class sizes at Clement have made all the difference, she said.

The first class Jacobs failed as a freshman was math. She spiraled in the rest of her courses after that.

Now math is her favorite subject and she credits her teacher Colleen Maguire, who she describes as strict but fair, with her current academic success.

"I am being pushed hard and I appreciate that," Jacobs said.

When she's not studying – and she reserves plenty of time for that – Jacobs helps to care for her five younger sisters and performs with the Tone Setters step team. She also said she now enjoys reading Shakespeare and is considering a career as a midwife.

"I'm really glad to be where I am now," she said.

Jacobs' success in Clement's Choice Program – which provides students the opportunity to make up course work in math, history, biology and ELA in one quarter – qualifies her for a return to Albany High School.

But students for whom Clement is a better fit can also opt to remain through graduation, with case-by-case principal approval.

"This is my chance," Jacobs said, "my opportunity to get it done."

District enters a new era in equity

The City School District of Albany entered a new era in the development and distribution of programs and resources in January when the Board of Education adopted the district's first Equity in Education Policy.

A diverse committee of parents, educators, support staff and community partners began meeting in October with a single mission: create tenets that recognize and support all students and employees regardless of race, religion, language, immigration status, income, learning type, sexual preference/identity, and physical and mental ability.

The committee's goal was not only adherence to basic civil rights for underserved populations, but also to increase graduation rates and academic success, and eliminate the achievement gap between white students and students of color.

"The City School District of Albany is committed to eliminating racial

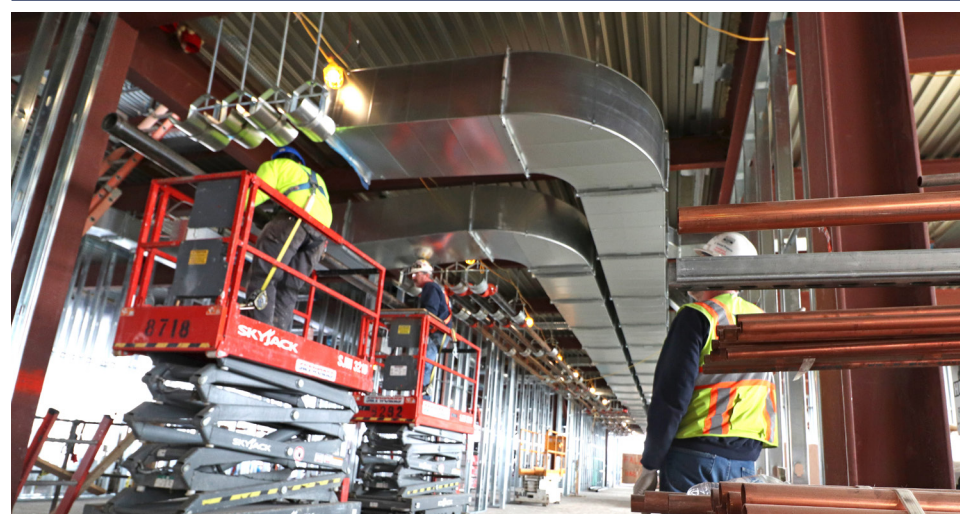
predictability of student success," said Board President Anne Savage. "We are working every day to provide our faculty and staff the tools and training they need to help every single student in Albany achieve his or her goals.

"The other members of the Board of Education and I are so proud to have worked with the superintendent and her staff to adopt the Equity in Education Policy to guide and support that work going forward."

When the committee began its work in the fall, it first researched similar policies at other districts around the country.

It then addressed the language that should be contained within the document and stressed the importance of how building, district and board leaders would determine if the policy was being implemented properly.

(Continued on page 7)



Rebuilding Albany High

The footprint and interior framework of Albany High School's new academic building are nearly complete. Crews are now hard at work installing infrastructure such as heating and cooling systems and plumbing. The new three-story, 120,000-square-foot structure is part of Phase I of the rebuild, and is expected to be completed in January 2020. Learn more at albanschools.org/rebuildingAHS.

From the superintendent All in for equity



Superintendent
Kaweeda G. Adams

In business, equity means assets minus liabilities. In education, equity means access and opportunities. The same word, but two different meanings.

Many times, when we hear the word equity in the educational setting, we may focus on race or ethnicity. While racial equity is a large component of the challenges we face, equity related to poverty, privilege, curriculum access,

academic programs and behavioral supports must be addressed at a systemic level.

To that end, the City School District of Albany Board of Education has adopted an Equity in Education Policy (see details on page 1). The new policy is about providing pathways for each student to be prepared to access the myriad opportunities that may facilitate success.

It is a blueprint of what the district needs to do so that the barriers preventing students from reaching their potential in school are removed.

The new Equity in Education Policy sets forth specific steps that the district will take to reduce systemic disparities that have impacted the success of minority students and students with disabilities.

The district is engaging in a multi-year process of providing all faculty, support staff and administrators with professional development in research-based, culturally relevant practices that consider students' cultural backgrounds in our educational interactions and guide the practice of formulating our teaching and learning plans.

As educators, we have a responsibility to overcome our own biases and ensure our interactions with students and families promote caring relationships and engaging learning experiences that positively shape students' lives and affect their ability to learn.

We engage in ongoing professional development to enhance our emphasis on culturally responsive teaching and learning. In recent years, we have analyzed our discipline procedures and practices, and completed internal and external evaluations to monitor our progress to closing the achievement and behavioral gaps among our students.

Enhancing our educational structure and emphasizing equity throughout our system is a shared responsibility for all stakeholders.

I am confident that our collective will to tackle the difficult issues embedded in our society will allow us to achieve our vision: to be a district of excellence with caring relationships and engaging learning experiences that provide equitable opportunities for all students to reach their potential.

Please join me in being **All in for Equity**, because together, we are **All in for Albany!**



**CAPITAL
education**

Capital Education is published by the City School District of Albany.

Please direct comments about the newsletter, story ideas and questions to

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or rlesko@albany.k12.ny.us, or

Lisa Angerame at (518) 475-6066

or langerame@albany.k12.ny.us.

City School District of Albany

1 Academy Park

Albany, New York 12207

Voices | Q: Tell us about the best book you read this school year.



My favorite book I have read this year is *Dork Diaries* because it's sooooo FUNNY! It was FUNNY because Nikki (the main character), her sister and her friends Chloe, Zoey and Brandon always say something silly or funny. For example, they tell jokes and have pillow fights. Another reason why *Dork Diaries* is my favorite book is because sometimes it is about real school stuff like math, social studies and ELA. I like to read that kind of school stuff because I can learn something new.

– Samya Jenkins, third grade
North Albany Academy



The best book I've read this year is *The Hungry Caterpillar*. Here are five details why I like the book. I like the book because of how the caterpillar eats everything it sees. In the beginning, the caterpillar doesn't turn into the butterfly. Then, the caterpillar keeps eating. When he keeps eating he gets bigger. As the caterpillar gets bigger he eats more food. He eats the foods I like to eat, like cake, blueberries, strawberries and oranges. I think the caterpillar chose those foods because he has to eat a lot of food before he can turn into a butterfly.

– Jordan Kubisch, second grade
Giffen Memorial Elementary School



This year I read a book called *Bud Not Buddy*. This book is about a boy who is living during a tragic time period, the Great Depression. Bud's mother dies and he is forced to go to an orphanage. Next, Bud is put with a foster family, but little does he know that the son of the foster family is a horrible child. Bud decides to take his suitcase and run away. On the way, he meets hobos and one of his old friends from the orphanage. Finally, after a long journey, Bud finds his family and plays saxophone with them. This was a really good book and I'm glad I read it.

– Maggie MacCallum, sixth grade
Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School



The 48 Laws of Power. This book is about self-improvement and psychology. The author, Robert Greene, writes in a way that helps you understand while still being very honest to the point of being a little too honest. The book has many historical anecdotes and examples, and I enjoyed reading it. The book is a book I would recommend to anyone. One of my favorite laws is #4: "Always say less than necessary," to only speak when you have something important or meaningful to say. Actions speak louder than words.

– Enger Paulino, freshman
Albany High School



The best book I have read this year is *The Hate U Give*. It was touching and inspiring to stand up for what's right and what you believe in. *The Hate U Give* is "T.H.U.G.," shortened. It means what you teach the next generation will affect everyone. I believe it is the hate "we" give, because it is not just one person or community of people, it is everyone.

– Tamyia Reese, freshman
Albany High School



Ranger's Apprentice is my favorite book series I've read so far! There are three main characters that go on adventures together. Sometimes they are captured and other times they are sent on missions. Halt is one of my favorite characters because he has a cool personality, is mysterious and has some of the funniest quotes. The book shows you each character's story so you can get to know them individually. There are 12 books in the series and I've read 10. When I'm done, my next reading adventure will be the companion series, *Brother Band Chronicles*. Stay tuned ...

– Zae'vitar Smith, sixth grade
Edmund J. O'Neal Middle School of Excellence

Our vision, mission and goals

In the fall of 2017, the City School District of Albany developed the following vision statement, mission statement and goals under the leadership of Superintendent Kaweeda G. Adams. These values guide the district's work in all areas as we work together to raise achievement for each of our approximately 9,500 students.

Our vision

The City School District of Albany will be a district of excellence with caring relationships and engaging learning experiences that provide equitable opportunities for all students to reach their potential.

Our mission

The mission of the City School District of Albany is to work in partnership with our diverse community to engage every learner in a robust educational program designed to provide the knowledge and skills necessary for success.

Our goals

- Increase student achievement in early literacy, close the achievement gaps and increase graduation rate by focusing on the unique factors that impact student success
- Enhance the delivery of quality instruction by providing our teachers and staff with high-level, meaningful professional development
- Build our leadership capacity and increase accountability through ongoing professional growth opportunities designed to improve effective leadership in our organization
- Empower families to support the success of their children through relationships of mutual respect and clear and effective communication
- Partner with our diverse community, including local businesses and community leaders, to engage and empower stakeholders in the wrap-around services needed to support our students



to promote student growth and proficiency



Technology transformations

The City School District of Albany is now better positioned than ever before to embrace current technology and plan for future technology. And the district has both staff and students to thank.

“This allows our student volunteers to grow academically and further their technological knowledge,” said Wyld, himself a 1998 Albany High graduate.

“We are positioning ourselves to further support 21st-century learning,” said Technology Coordinator John Wyld.

Another advance for the district in the coming months will be a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) guest network. This enables students and staff who agree to a district Acceptable Use Policy to access wireless on their mobile device.

The district goal to increase technology accessibility in classrooms and buildings began this academic year with the transition from desktop computers to Chromebook carts.

This change is important as educators incorporate technology into instruction. The network also will be available for families and outside presenters to use while in district buildings.

Currently, Chromebook carts – which allow for mobile learning at a third of the cost of desktop computers – are in use at four elementary schools. The five-year desktop replacement plan is for every two classrooms to share a Chromebook cart at every school and throughout all grade levels.

None of these technology improvements could occur without significant upgrades.

Chromebook carts are being assembled, wired and programmed by volunteers at the Student Help Desk at Albany High School.

During the December holiday break, the district’s Office of Assessment, Accountability and Technology Innovation team members worked tirelessly to transfer the district’s Internet and voice service providers.

In addition to other duties, the 11 student volunteers have been tasked with assisting in the mobile technology shift and are responsible for the configuration of 35-40 Chromebook carts in use throughout the district.

The overhaul impacted every building, allowed for improved main data center communication and installed back-up power units for use during power outages.

This hands-on experience is proving to be invaluable to those considering a career in technology.

“It was a major infrastructure upgrade and a huge event for us and the district,” Wyld said. “It was necessary to support technology growth for years to come.”

Non-public school transportation deadline April 1

State law requires Albany parents and guardians whose children will attend a non-public school in 2019-20 to submit to the district a written request for transportation by April 1.

must submit a written request for transportation within 30 days after establishing residency.

The purpose of this deadline is to enable districts to budget funds and make necessary arrangements to provide reasonable and economical transportation. This applies to students who will attend private, parochial and charter schools.

In order to qualify for transportation, students must meet the requirements under the district’s Transportation Policy.

Please note that students attending middle school and high school will be transported via CDTA buses.

Visit the Transportation section at albanschools.org for that policy.

Requests should be mailed to:

Denise Towne
Director of Transportation
City School District of Albany
75 Watervliet Ave.
Albany, NY 12206

For non-public students who move into the city after the April 1 deadline, parents and guardians

For more information, contact the Transportation Department at (518) 475-6170.

Albany public schools’ pre-K programs: Lifelong learning starts here

The City School District of Albany offers quality full-day prekindergarten to Albany families at 30 schools and community locations. Learn more about our pre-K programs at albanschools.org or by calling (518) 475-6551.

Neighborhood schools

Arbor Hill Elementary School
1 Arbor Drive • (518) 475-6625

Delaware Community School
43 Bertha St. • (518) 475-6750

Eagle Point Elementary School
1044 Western Ave. • (518) 475-6825

Giffen Memorial Elementary School
274 South Pearl St. • (518) 475-6650

New Scotland Elementary School
369 New Scotland Ave. • (518) 475-6775

North Albany Academy
570 North Pearl St. • (518) 475-6800

Pine Hills Elementary School
41 North Allen St. • (518) 475-6725

Schuyler Achievement Academy
676 Clinton Ave. • (518) 475-6700

Sheridan Preparatory Academy
400 Sheridan Ave. • (518) 475-6850

Themed programs

Albany School of Humanities (ASH)
108 Whitehall Road • (518) 475-6575

Dual Language Program at Delaware Community School
43 Bertha St. • (518) 475-6750

Montessori Magnet School
45 Tremont St. • (518) 475-6675

Thomas O’Brien Academy of Science and Technology (TOAST)
Lincoln Park • (518) 475-6875

Community-based programs

ACAP Head Start (four locations)
(518) 463-3175 ext. 135

Early Learning Center
25 Monroe St.

Hackett Boulevard Head Start
21 Hackett Blvd.

Nathan Lebron Early Learning Center
170 Ontario St.

Olivia Rorie Center
7 Morton Ave.

Albany Jewish Community Center
340 Whitehall Road • (518) 689-0039

Arbor Park Child Care Center
96 Second St. • (518) 465-8466

Capital Milestones Childcare
3 Harriman Campus Drive • (518) 457-3210

Children’s Place at the Plaza Swan Street Building, Core 2
Empire State Plaza
Crystal Room Pavilion • (518) 474-4736

Children’s Place at the Plaza State Education Building
10 N. Hawk St. • (518) 474-2918

A Child’s Place at Unity
50 Philip St. • (518) 434-0815

DIGI Preschool Academy Inc.
82 Madison Ave. • (518) 818-0976

Ernestina DiCioccio Bilingual Day Care Center-Centro Civico
230 Green St., 1st Floor • (518) 465-1145

Nursery School at The College of Saint Rose
Saint Rose campus (half-day program)
(518) 337-2337

Infinite Care
43 Quail St. • (518) 432-2750

St. Anne Institute
160 North Main Ave. • (518) 437-6735

St. Matthew Lutheran School
75 Whitehall Road # A • (518) 463-6495

Temple Israel
600 New Scotland Ave. • (518) 438-7858

Trinity Nursery and Daycare
215 Lancaster St. • (518) 436-4514



#allinforalbany

Eagle Point Elementary School is making a difference in the world, one step at a time. On Jan. 29, English as a New Language teacher Laurie Sasson explained to (left to right) Benjamin Coons, Kevin Gjini, Shaista Haidari, Caden McCulloch and Rizwan Siddiqui how their UNICEF fitness watches track activity. The more exercise these third-graders complete, the more points earned towards the release of “Ready to Use Therapeutic Food” (RUFT) packages for children in third-world countries.



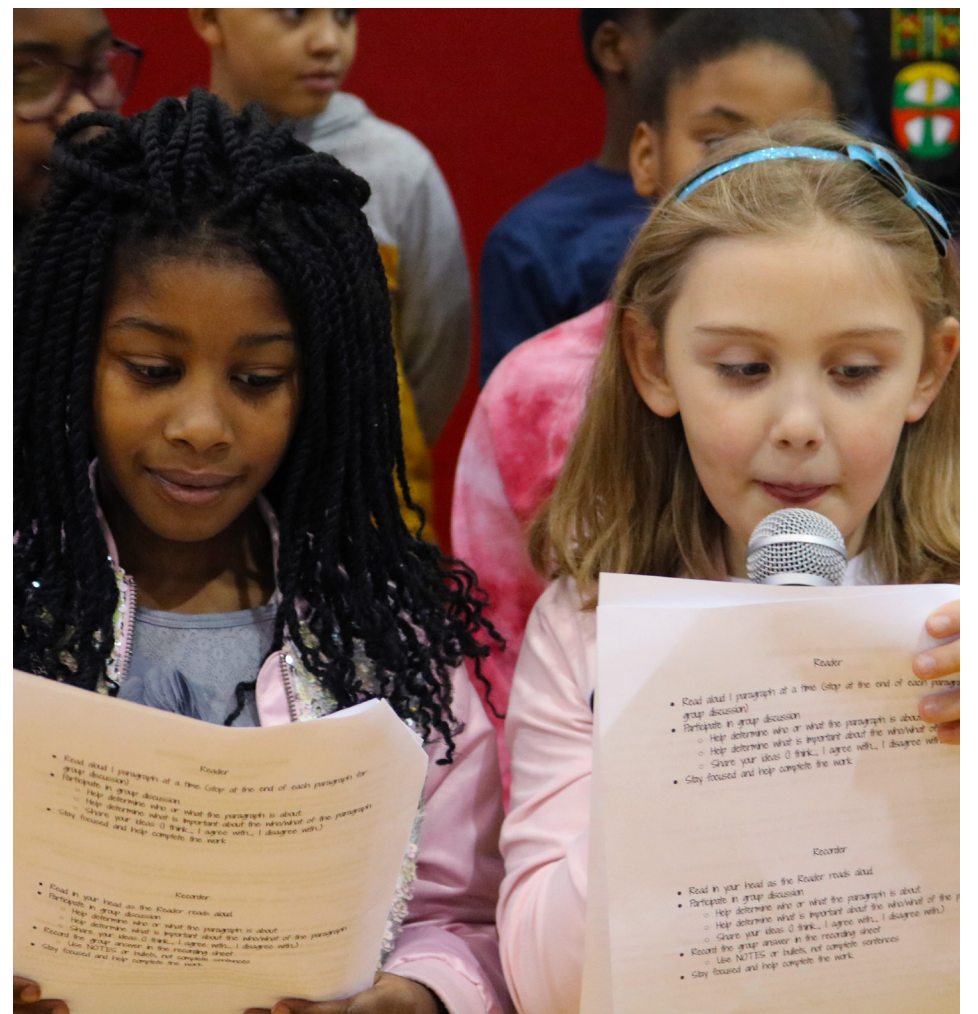
Albany International Center students in Ruben Blancovich’s World History 1 class shared lunch and life stories with each other and staff on Jan. 18 at an intercultural conversation and communication session. Blancovich, center, is pictured with Ed Die Soe, left, and Orquis Milan Rosario, talking about issues ranging from stories of where they were born to questions of right and wrong to discussions of childhood memories – and much more.



Albany High School senior Seth Montojo was truly “all in for Albany” on Jan. 10, when he joined students, staff, Principal Jodi Commerford and Superintendent Kaweeda G. Adams as they rolled up their sleeves to donate blood. The 68 pints of blood collected could help save the lives of up to 204 people locally and across the country. Albany High holds blood drives three times each school year. Mark your calendar – the next one is May 2.



On Jan. 24, sixth-graders in Bridget Smith’s second-period English Language Arts class at Edmund J. O’Neal Middle School of Excellence teamed up to discuss and write about the finer points of the book *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan. Working together, from left, are Kevin Wood, Smith and Anthony Dudley.



G’ahnah Skervin, left, and Chloe Start acted as emcees during Pine Hills Elementary School’s Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. celebration on Jan. 18. The student-led assembly, filled with music, art and facts about the civil rights leader’s life, showcased students in prekindergarten-grade 5.



On Jan. 17, Albany School of Humanities (ASH) fifth-grader Natalya Chajon, left, and fourth-grader Adrienne Kelly enjoyed their weekly visit with pooches Bruno Mars, left, and Merlin from Therapy Dogs International. Some 20 pups certified through Therapy Dogs International visit ASH each week. In some cases, students read to or alongside the dogs. For others, the canines provide a calm, furry and friendly presence.



Edanyi Gonzalez Ulloa, left, and AmenRa Walker of Wendy Corcione's second-grade class at Delaware Community School had the right idea for a good thing to do on the dreary and cold day that was Jan. 29: Pick up a book and read!



Army National Guard sisters Jessica (right) and Erica Gonzalez, just finishing up their tours of duty in Kuwait, came straight to William S. Hackett Middle School from the airport Feb. 1 for a joyous reunion with their children, sixth-graders Christopher Sang (student at left) and Breannie Jackson. Jessica, a staff sergeant, and Erica, a specialist, both had been deployed since March 2018 and hadn't seen their children since. A twist of fate allowed them to be on the same flight home, and they reached out to Hackett Principal Michael Paolino (center) to arrange the surprise visit at school.



Naomi Sumter-Giles, left, and Tahlayah Captain got their Namaste on at a yoga session on Jan. 28 at Schuyler Achievement Academy. They were among the students in Beth Cino's fourth-grade class who had a session with Nikki Rogers of Yoga Nikki 518. Schuyler is a community school, and yoga is one of several initiatives the school has undertaken this year to support health and wellness.



Budding scientists at Arbor Hill Elementary School put their hypotheses to the test on Jan. 25 with an incline plane experiment. Gary Brown, Ni'Vianna Stratton and D'Amar Ocasio (left to right) took notes as Nathan Isio Undel, assisted by third-grade teacher Erin Heid, determined how friction affects distance.



Students in Steve Costello's fifth-grade class at Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science and Technology (TOAST) kicked off their study of the Revolutionary War on Jan. 22 with a virtual tour of Dey Mansion in Wayne, N.J., the location of one of Gen. George Washington's headquarters that's now a museum. Led by technology teacher Deb Whipple, students and Costello used virtual-reality goggles to walk through each room of the mansion and discuss what they saw. That includes Jayden Lozada, left, and Kendall Smith.

Important special education reminders

The City School District of Albany has an obligation to evaluate students who may have disabilities to determine their eligibility and need for special education, special accommodations or other programs.

If you believe your child has a disability that requires special education or special accommodations, we encourage you to contact your child's building principal.

You also can call Catie Magil, chair of the district's Committee on Special Education (CSE), at (518) 475-6150 to discuss whether your child should be referred to the committee or the "504 Team" for a full evaluation.

If your child attends a non-public school in Albany, you may request an evaluation to determine eligibility and need for special education by writing to the Committee on Special Education, 75 Watervliet Ave., Albany, NY 12206.

For a student found eligible before April 1, a parent may request services to begin within 30 days of the determination.

If you plan to enroll your child in a non-public school in Albany in 2019-20, you must provide a written request for services to the

Committee on Special Education by June 1. We urge you to provide your request as soon as you know your plans so we may work with you and develop your child's plan early.

Please note that there is an April 1 deadline for requesting transportation if your child will attend a non-public school in Albany (see related story on page 3).

If your child will attend a non-public school outside the City of Albany in 2019-20 and you want services, you need to request the services in writing from the public district where the school is located, also by June 1.

The district's Committee on Special Education will develop an Individual Education Service Plan (IESP) for students with disabilities attending non-public schools. An IESP is developed in the same manner and includes the same contents as an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

The district does not provide services to non-public students found eligible for accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Please contact the Special Education Department or Catie Magil at (518) 475-6150 if you have any questions.

State tests on the horizon

Each year the New York State Education Department requires schools around the state to administer tests that measure student skills in English Language Arts, math and science.

The tests begin in third grade in ELA and math, and students take them every year through eighth grade. Students in fourth and eighth grade also take science tests. Students throughout the state take the same test at the same time.

Other exams State Ed issues include:

Regents exams – high school exams that measure ability in ELA, math, science, social studies and foreign language.

New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) – these tests in ELA, math, science and social studies measure the progress of students with disabilities in grades 3-8

New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) – these tests measure the progress of English-language learners from kindergarten through grade 12.

Please make sure your child comes to school well-rested and with a good breakfast so he or she is prepared to do his or her best on the days of the exams.

MAR 11	through	JUN 7	Alternate assessments in ELA, math, science and social studies (dates vary from school to school; families will receive a letter from school indicating the dates)
APR 2	through	APR 4	ELA exam, grades 3-8 (make-ups April 5-9)
APR 8	through	MAY 17	Speaking part of NYSESLAT exam begins (dates vary from school to school; families will receive a note from school indicating the date)
MAY 1	through	MAY 3	Math exam, grades 3-8 (make-ups May 6-8)
MAY 6	through	MAY 17	Listening, reading and writing parts of NYSESLAT exam (dates vary from school to school; families will receive a letter from school indicating the dates)
MAY 22	through	MAY 31	Performance part of science exam, grades 4 and 8 (dates vary from school to school; families will receive a letter from school indicating the date)
JUN 3			Written part of science exam, grades 4 and 8 (make-ups no later than June 13)
JUN 18	through	JUN 26	Regents exams in a variety of subjects, grades 8-12



Albany High School junior Ahnysha Jackson (24) has sparked an outstanding season for the girls' basketball team. Jackson is averaging 17.5 points per game and has been recognized by the Times Union and WNYT/Ch. 13 as one of the top players in the area.

Albany High girls holding court

Albany High School girls' basketball coach Decky Lawson cites history as one of the reasons the team is having such a successful season. History as a team, and history with him as their coach.

Seven of the 14 players are seniors and most have played for Lawson since they were in elementary school and enrolled in the Junior Falcons program.

"We have been talking about this moment for a long time," Lawson said.

That familiarity has shown on the court.

Albany High has been among the leaders in the Suburban Council and in the state all season. When *Capital Education* went to press, the team was 16-2 and ranked No. 9 in the state among Class AA schools.

"To be known locally is a wonderful thing because everywhere the girls go, someone is talking about how great they're doing and urging them to

keep up the hard work," Lawson said. "This is a big part of our success."

"But being ranked in New York is a true honor. We can hold our heads up high and our school, student body and staff can be proud of us."

Albany High recorded 13 wins in a row to start the season before losses to Shenendehowa and Colonie. The team got back on track with wins over Schenectady, Guilderland and Troy through Feb. 6.

Games against Shaker and Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake remained on the schedule before sectionals, when Albany High will be seeking its first Section 2 title since 2013, Lawson's first season as head coach.

"It's my job to keep our scholar-athletes focused and hungry," Lawson said. "It's tough, but I'm here to motivate and make them believe that they can do what others say that they can't."

Volunteer spotlight

Name: Chuck Manning

Age: 72

Occupation: Retired as both CEO of Versatrans Solutions and partner in Creighton Manning Engineering

Volunteers at: Sheridan Preparatory Academy, twice a week for the past seven

years, helping fifth-graders with reading, math or other projects.

Why he volunteers: A member of First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany – just up the street from Sheridan Prep – Manning said that making a difference in the community is part of the philosophy of his religion. "We believe what you do here counts," he said.



Check us out online!



At albanyschools.org, we have an Online News Center to provide you with as much news as possible about the great people and programs in the City School District of Albany. Stop by to read more about any of these stories and additional articles, including:

- Albany High grad rate continues to rise
- State identifies nine district schools in Good Standing

- FirstView bus-tracking app available
- Winter weather reminders
- New AP-IB coordinator looks to the future

Also be sure to check us out on Facebook and Twitter by following @albanyschools.

You can also sign up for email notifications and emergency text alerts through School News Notifier at albanyschools.org/SNN.

Awards & achievements

Albany High student looking presidential

Albany High School senior **Ondia Logan** is on the short list of nominees for the 2019 Presidential Scholars Program, one of the nation's highest honors for high school students.



Some 161 Presidential Scholars are chosen each year from among 3 million high school seniors throughout the country – at least one young woman and one young man from every state.

Assemblymember John McDonald recommended Logan for the program, and State Education Department Commissioner MaryEllen Elia nominated her Dec. 19.

Albany High is one of just two Capital Region schools with a 2019 nominee.

Student artwork on national journal cover

Artwork by Montessori Magnet School second-grader **Laila Pupons** served as the cover photo on the November issue of *Language Arts*.

The original piece of art, which Pupons created when she was a first-grader at Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science and Technology (TOAST), was spotted last May at the annual 1st Friday art show at the Albany Institute of History & Art.

Language Arts is a journal that focuses on issues concerning children from preschool through middle school. It is published by the National Council of Teachers of English.

Students win Creative Expressions contest

Five City School District of Albany students were among area winners in the Black History Month Creative Expressions contest sponsored by Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Alumnae Chapter of Albany.

Winners of the written entry category included Albany High School junior **Mikayla Williams'** essay, "Black History Month: A Need for Change," and William S. Hackett Middle School sixth-grader **Rowan Hoehn's** essay, "Through the Eyes of a Child Slave."

Art entry winners included "Colors Within Black and White" by Albany High senior **Annette Smalls**, "I Have a Dream Scene" by Hackett seventh-grader **Cole Solomon** and "The Jackson Five" by Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science and Technology (TOAST) fifth-grader **Lord Hannah**.

The students are being featured in public-service announcements throughout February.

Falcon rolls perfect game

Albany High School freshman **Michael McNeil** rolled a perfect game in the Falcons' match against Shenendehowa on Jan. 18. McNeil is the first Albany High bowler to roll a 300 (that's 12 strikes in a row!) since **Jahlil Young** against CBA in December 2016.



AHS student artists honored

Three Albany High School students created clay pieces that were accepted into this year's "Art in 3-Dimensions" juried high school show at Mohonasen High School. There were 242 submissions and 76 pieces accepted for the show, which is on display at Mohonasen through Feb. 28.

Congratulations to senior **Moe Sandar**, and juniors **Laurel Stix** and **Julian Rodriguez!**



Help ASH win \$25,000

Sixth-graders (from left to right) DeMarion Everett, Sei'Mir Roberson and Roman Philpot worked on a project in art class reminding the Albany School of Humanities (ASH) community to vote! ASH is one of just 19 schools in New York chosen to participate in the Project Fit America contest. If ASH is one of the top four online vote-getters, the school receives upwards of \$25,000 for state-of-the-art outdoor and indoor fitness equipment. You can help ASH win this competition by casting your vote (once a day per email address) at albanyschools.org/voteASH through Feb. 28.

Pine Hills student is school district spelling champ

Friday, Jan. 11 was a docile day at William S. Hackett Middle School. D-O-C-I-L-E, that is.

Correctly stating those six letters earned Pine Hills Elementary School's Jonah Bouget, a fifth-grader, first place in the City School District of Albany's 2019 spelling bee.

It took nine rounds for the 15 school spelling champs to trickle down to two finalists. Words like "offal," "barbarous" and "gangrene" eliminated the top speller from every elementary and middle school in the district until it was just Bouget and Hackett eighth-grader Hannah Goldstein on the stage.

You could feel the pressure in the auditorium and also see the emotion on the students' faces after the judges nodded "yes" or "no" once a word was completed.

"Of course I was nervous," Bouget said. "But I thought to myself, 'just spell the words.'"

Eagle Point Elementary School's Alina Gasanova and Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School's Isaac Allen, who tied for third, qualified to join Goldstein and Bouget at the Capital Region Spelling Bee at Proctors Theatre in Schenectady on Feb. 13 (Capital Education *went to press before the event*. You can visit albanyschools.org to find out how the district students fared in the regional bee).

For the district bee, students in grades 4-8 competed first at the building level and those winners advanced to the district-wide competition.



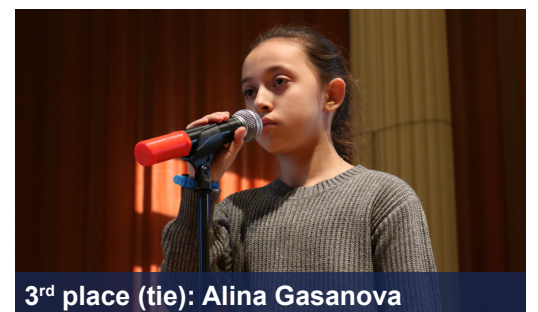
1st place: Jonah Bouget



2nd place: Hannah Goldstein



3rd place (tie): Isaac Allen



3rd place (tie): Alina Gasanova

Equity (continued from page 1)

The committee's draft policy then was presented to additional administrators, parents and groups of students for feedback. The committee considered those comments and amended the draft before an initial presentation to the board in December.

The committee updated the policy with the board's input and the board approved the final policy Jan. 3.

"Drafting this policy strengthens the district's ability to actualize our vision for all students," said Vibetta Sanders, the district's principal on special assignment for culturally responsive education. "The voices around the committee table ensured that we created a policy that honors our district mission.

To read the Equity in Education Policy in full, head to albanyschools.org/equity.

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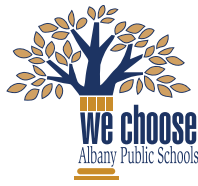
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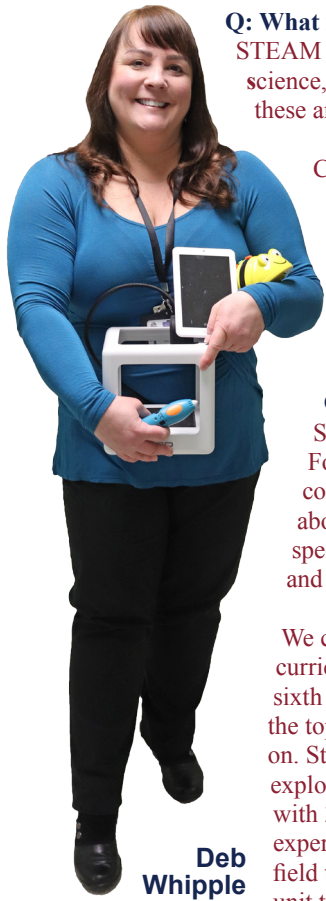
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Leading the way Art Flynn and Deb Whipple Teachers at TOAST

Art Flynn and Deb Whipple are truly a dynamic duo at Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science and Technology (TOAST), the district's science and technology-themed elementary school. Flynn's science lab is a monument to the natural world, jam-packed with a healthy dose of gadgets and gizmos. Whipple's computer lab next door contains a wealth of high-tech equipment from 3D printers to virtual-reality goggles.

Both are veteran teachers and veterans at TOAST: Whipple started there in 1995 and Flynn started there in 1997. They're frequent collaborators, and together they blend the natural and man-made worlds for TOAST students.



Deb Whipple

Q: What is STEAM education and why is it important?

STEAM education is an approach to teaching and learning that includes science, technology, engineering, the arts and math. We incorporate all these areas into computer and science classes at TOAST.

Collaborating with classroom teachers and teachers in other special areas is vital to making STEAM successful; having everyone on the same page creates an engaging, exciting and positive learning environment. STEAM provides opportunities throughout the day for problem-solving, collaboration and higher-level thinking through project-based learning. These skills will provide experience for occupations of the future.

Q: How do you get elementary students excited about STEAM?

STEAM is fun! Topics follow the students all around the school. For example, if we're learning about honeybees in our fourth-grade computer and science classes, students also are learning about bees in their fourth-grade and other special-area classes. Everything is connected, and this is empowering to students.

We currently use The Flying Classroom curriculum with students in third through sixth grade, and they like it because the topics are engaging and hands-on. Students research topics, build, explore using virtual reality, create with 3D pens and printers, draw, experiment and conclude with a field trip that encompasses the unit topic. We are excited about teaching STEAM. Our students see

how passionate we are, and that motivates them to want to learn, discover, explore, experiment and create.

Q: What person of science/computer science inspires you most, and why?

Flynn: Astrophysicist and science communicator Neil deGrasse Tyson is the director of the Hayden Planetarium in New York City. He has a fun and direct approach to science and science education. I get many ideas from reading his books and listening to his podcast "Startalk." I also like Bill Nye and his approach to teaching science.

Whipple: If I could only choose one person who has inspired my career in computers and technology, it would be Steve Jobs, one of the creators of Apple. I admire him because he was an entrepreneur. He was innovative, passionate, persistent and confident, and he wasn't afraid to pursue his ideas and dreams.



Art Flynn

Alumni achievement



Ryan Artis '01

Remaining focused and studious has paid off for Ryan Artis.

A self-described introvert, the 2001 Albany High School graduate is now an intellectual property attorney at Riverside Law LLP, advising clients from around the country and globe in patent and trademark matters.

Though a kid of few words, he was an outstanding student, taking honors and Advanced Placement classes, performing in concert and marching bands, and playing on the tennis team. School came first, always.

His parents stressed education and expected him to be the first in the family to earn a four-year degree straight out of high school. Besides support at home, Artis was among the first Albany High students to take part in Capital Region Sponsor-A-Scholar, a program that matches promising high school students with a person who mentors them throughout high school and beyond.

Many people at Albany High supported him. But guidance counselor Kimberly Baker stood out.

"Ms. Baker was extremely pivotal in keeping me on the right track," Artis said. "She gave great advice about things both in and outside the classroom, and it stuck with me."

As he considered colleges, Artis' first impulse was to get out of the Capital Region. But a visit to the Union College campus in Schenectady changed his mind.

"I loved the campus and programs right away," he said. "It's where I saw myself."

The full scholarship didn't hurt, either.

Artis graduated from Union in 2005 with two bachelor's degrees: one in electrical engineering and one in industrial economics.

His first job out of college was program director at 15-LOVE, a nonprofit in Albany that provides tennis and educational programming to inner-city kids. He spent two years there while preparing for law school.

Artis moved to Cleveland to attend Case Western Reserve University School of Law, receiving a J.D. in 2010. He developed an expertise in intellectual property law and went on to work at a medical devices company before joining Riverside Law. He spends time between an office in Philadelphia and a home office in Loudonville.

The quiet kid from the South End now advises clients all over the world, is on the board of directors for 15-LOVE, and keeps in touch with his Albany High guidance counselor and kids from the community. In addition, he's married and the father of two.

Words of wisdom: "If you're a kid growing up in Albany, high school is not an obstacle. It's actually a remarkable platform. The academic and extracurricular opportunities are really second to none. Take advantage!"