



# Community Update

February 2022

An update on important news and highlights from around the City School District of Albany.



## Middle school feeder alignment moves forward for 2022-23

The City School District of Albany's Feeder Alignment Committee is moving ahead this winter with research into new enrollment patterns for each of the district's three middle schools. The committee is comprised of district parents, staff and three members of the Board of Education.

The group has been working since July – board members joined the work in December – to determine equitable enrollment patterns for North Albany Middle School, Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School, and William S. Hackett Middle School. These new enrollment patterns will take effect in September, beginning with students currently in fifth grade who will be moving to sixth grade next school year. Students currently in grades 6-7 at Hackett, Myers and North Albany will remain at their schools until they move on to high school.

The committee's work represents the final phase of a multi-year process to provide equitable elementary and middle school experiences for all students. The committee anticipates making recommendations to the Board of Education in February. The board then will work toward selecting a final enrollment pattern in March. You can watch all of the feeder committee's meetings at [albanschools.org/committee](https://albanschools.org/committee).

# 2022-23 legislative priorities include Foundation Aid, pre-K funding

Superintendent Kaweeda G. Adams provided testimony Jan. 26 before the New York State Legislature's Joint Public Hearing on the Executive Elementary and Secondary Education Budget, emphasizing the district's legislative priorities for the 2022-23 school year.

Fully funding Foundation Aid remains the district's top priority.

The City School District of Albany currently receives about \$23 million less annually than the state's complicated school-funding formula indicates it should receive, placing an additional burden on local taxpayers.

The state has indicated over the past year that it is committed to fully funding all New York school districts by the 2023-24 school year, and Governor Hochul's recently announced budget proposal for 2022-23 continues to reflect the state's commitment to that goal.

Superintendent Adams noted in her Jan. 26 testimony that the district is grateful for this commitment and the state's emphasis on equity for all students.

## District priorities for 2022-23 also include:

- ▶ Support for social-emotional and mental health supports
- ▶ Equitable prekindergarten funding
- ▶ Support for English as a New Language and refugee students
- ▶ Expanded Child Safety Zone criteria that will allow districts to transport more students, which would improve safety and address chronic attendance challenges

The district has offered full-day pre-K programs since 1990. However, the state's funding formula continues to support more than half of the district's seats at the half-day level, while newer pre-K funding streams for other school districts cover full-day programs.

To close this equity gap, the district spends about \$1 million annually to support pre-K. These funds could be directed toward other programs and services if the state would update the way it supports pre-K in districts like Albany, which was among the first in the state to recognize the benefits of full-day programs for child development.





## Magnet, pre-K applications open through March 18

Families city-wide can apply through March 18 for our magnet and 4-year-old prekindergarten lotteries. Both lotteries will be held April 13. The magnet lottery is for grades K-5 in our four magnet programs, which focus on unique themes:

- ▶ **Albany School of Humanities (ASH)** embeds art, theater and music
- ▶ **The Dual Language Program** offers English/Spanish bilingual education
- ▶ **Montessori Magnet School** uses the Montessori method to guide learning
- ▶ **Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science and Technology (TOAST)** focuses on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math)

The April pre-K lottery is for the 4-year-old programs at all of our elementary schools – including our magnet programs – as well as community locations city-wide. Children must turn 4 by Dec. 1 to be eligible for the April lottery (the lottery for our 3-year-old pre-K programs will be held in June).

For more information on the lotteries, and to learn more about the programs, eligibility and magnet open houses (planned for the week of Feb. 14), please visit [albanyschools.org/lottery](http://albanyschools.org/lottery).

---

## Bridging the gap between police and school

The school district partnered with the Albany Police Department for two events in late January to help new police recruits develop a deeper understanding of the school district and its students.

On Jan. 25, Albany High School's Junior ROTC program welcomed 27 police recruits for a breakfast forum at school, the first in a series of conversations planned between the school and police in the coming months. The recruits learned about the JROTC program, and the JROTC cadets quizzed the recruits about why they want to be police officers, how they can work to benefit youth and more. The goal? To overcome bias and preconceived notions police might have about Albany High students and vice versa.

The effort is an expansion of Time to Talk: Community and Cops Collaborating –T3C3. The program joins Albany police officers and community members for monthly meetings. T3C3 and the Jan. 25 event were the brainchild of district parent and community advocate April Purcell-Bacon. Purcell-Bacon worked with Sgt. Ben Peterson and Officer Tim Geisel to form the Community Liaison Program at Albany High. Going forward, the JROTC cadets will set up and run monthly meetings between police officers and a variety of Albany High students, part of a community-service learning project.

Also part of the T3C3 Community Liaison program, Superintendent Kaweeda G. Adams met with the police recruits the following day for another opportunity to provide them with a well-rounded view of the district and its students. Through reflection and conversation, the superintendent and the recruits considered perception and perspective. They discussed how influences from home, school, the community and social media shape the identities of students, and that these influences affect student behavior and reactions to situations.

## Albany High boys' basketball resurgence

Led by high-scoring senior Isaiah Austin (pictured at right), the Albany High School boys' basketball team is enjoying its best season in many years this winter.

The Falcons were 11-4 overall and 9-2 in the Suburban Council after beating Schenectady on Jan. 28. That includes a 6-0 conference record in January.

Heading into February, the team's only loss of 2022 was a 62-60 non-league decision Jan. 25 against Newburgh Free Academy. Austin scored a career-best 39 points in that game. His eight 3-pointers in that game set a school record. Austin also had 35 in a win at Shaker on Jan. 20. He is among the top scorers in Section 2 this season, averaging nearly 23 points per game. That includes a seven-game stretch in January in which he averaged 30.



The Falcons have a big home game against Suburban leader CBA on Feb. 1. Albany High finishes the regular season at home vs. Colonie on Feb. 11.

Then it's time for the Section 2 Class AA playoffs, where the Falcons will be trying to return to the championship game for the first time since their heartbreaking double-overtime loss to CBA in 2006. The Falcons' last sectional title came in 1997.

### 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 · Partner with our diverse community  
Build our leadership capacity and increase accountability  
Empower families · Enhance the delivery of quality instruction



## Board of Education

**Anne Savage**  
*President*

**Vickie Smith**  
*Vice President*

**Sridar Chittur, Ph.D.**  
*Secretary*

**Hassan I. Elminyawi**

**Ellen Krejci**

**Damarise Mann**

**Tabetha Wilson**

**Kaweeda G. Adams**  
*Superintendent*

## Follow us online

Read about the stories in this update and much more by visiting us online.

**albanschools.org**

  @albanschools  
#allinforalbany